Culture creates locations
Urbanists speak of "placemaking" when anonymous public spaces become accepted locations that create identity. This is a process in which cultural institutions and their peripheral entities such as restaurants and museum shops play just as important a role as lighting. The new National Museum of Qatar is a perfect example of this strategy.
Foreword
The term "Bilbao effect" no longer needs to be explained to anyone in the world of culture: the pioneering role that cultural institutions and their design can play in the development of towns, cities and regions is now common knowledge. The emirate of Qatar, for example, uses cultural projects to create places with its new National Museum in Doha, our title project.

What is striking is the attention also paid to museum shops and restaurants: these peripheral facilities lower access inhibitions, create new or repeated occasions for visiting and may even become attractions in their own right. Vital transition zones are created between the spheres of culture and everyday life.

A particular urban success story is the High Line Park in New York – we present two cultural projects in its surroundings. These and other projects serve to illustrate various "placemaking" strategies. ERCO light already played its part in the legendary success of the Guggenheim Bilbao two decades ago – and you can use this potential for your projects as well!

Of course, time has not stood still since then. On the contrary: LED has in the meantime revolutionised museum lighting. We’re currently working intensively on the next generation of lighting tools for museums and will be presenting these next year – we’re confident that they will set new standards. See page 10 where we lift a corner of the curtain exclusively for Lichtbericht readers!

The Lichtbericht editors

The search for the ideal tool
How do lighting designers approach museum projects? Where are the technical challenges to be found and what do they require from the industry? We asked three internationally renowned specialists.

National Museum of Qatar, Doha
Making Doha: In Jean Nouvel’s “Desert Rose”, an urban planning process culminates that led from a palace ruin in the desert to a pulsating metropolis.

“A moment full of magic, drama and contrast”
An interview with Koichi Takada (Takada Architects, Sydney)

Kasmin Gallery, New York
New York gallery owner Paul Kasmin commissioned studioMDA with a new building in the immediate vicinity of the High Line Park. Two charismatic spaces for art were created – one under a roof and the other exposed to the open sky.

The Shed, New York
“A place for inventions, curiosity and for risky undertakings” is how director Alex Poots characterises the cultural centre “The Shed”, one of the most sensational architectural projects of the year.

Projects
Exhibition “Architecture and Landscape in Norway”, Nordic Embassies, Berlin
China Design Museum, Hangzhou
Belmont Forum, Cloverdale
Whitestone Gallery, Taipei

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Making Doha

The title for our cover story is borrowed from the opening exhibition of this spectacular new museum construction. Curated by Rem Koolhaas, Samir Bantal and Fatma Al Sehlawi, it elegantly sums it up: an urban planning process culminates in the form of Jean Nouvel’s “Desert Rose” that led from a palace ruin in the desert to a pulsating metropolis.

**Project: National Museum of Qatar, Doha**

An architecture that is both symbolic and functional: 539 interlocking discs of different sizes create the new museum complex, inspired by the crystals of sand and gypsum spar called desert roses. The cavity spaces between the discs function as thermal buffer zones. On the forecourt of the museum and raised by a sculptural human hand, Qatar’s flag rises to the sky. Tesis ground-recessed luminaires illuminate the flagpole and the work of art by the sculptor Ahmed Al Bahrani.

Koichi Takada, the interior designer of the museum shop, was also inspired by the nature of the emirate: with their curved walls and ceilings, the rooms are reminiscent of the Dahl Al Misfir cave awash with light, one of Qatar’s landmarks. The light traces the flowing contours and intensifies their dynamics. ERCO Parscan and Gimbal luminaires are part of this play of light and shadow that gives visitors the feeling of moving in a narrow and contorted cave.

In rooms such as this VIP lounge, the exterior and interior interlock to create the feeling of being transported into the inside of a desert rose. The ingress of intensive subtropical sunlight is filtered and is supplemented by ceiling-integrated lighting with ERCO Quintessenz downlights and directional spotlights.
...a field test for modern architecture and urban planning

Samir Bantal, OMA/AMO

The inaugural exhibition, designed by OMA/AMO, focused on the fascinating development process that Qatar’s capital Doha underwent over the past seven decades. The highly rapid growth of the metropolis on the Persian Gulf poses enormous urban planning challenges – and creating lively cultural institutions that provide a sense of identity, such as the new National Museum, is a constituent element of the state-controlled planning. Architectural quality is a top priority: Jean Nouvel is only one of eleven Pritzker Prize winners until now who have constructed buildings in Doha.

The Parscan spotlights are used in the rooms for temporary exhibitions. Nine different light distributions ranging from extremely narrow spot to wallwasher as well as four sizes make this luminaire the ideal tool for flexibly illuminating changing presentations. The spotlights, floodlights and wallwashers can be easily moved on the track installed flush with the ceiling.

Project data

Client: Qatar Museums
Architecture: Ateliers Jean Nouvel, Paris / France
Interior design & lighting design (museum shops, restaurants): Koichi Takada Architects, Sydney / Australia

Luminaires used

Parcan
www.erco.com/Parcan

Gimbal
www.erco.com/Gimbal

Quintessence
www.erco.com/Quintessence

Tesis
www.erco.com/Tesis
“A moment full of magic, drama and contrast”

Functionality and storytelling do not have to be contradictory: We spoke to Koichi Takada, the interior and lighting designer for the museum shops and restaurants in the new National Museum of Qatar.

In the architectural world, the project of the National Museum of Qatar by Ateliers Jean Nouvel had already caused a sensation at the opening of the building because of its spectacular shape which picks up on the crystalline structure of a desert rose. Without 3D software, it would not have been possible to even calculate or build the complex geometries. The façade and roof elements, with a height of up to 40 metres, consist of 539 interlocking discs that create cavities to protect visitors from the desert heat. The 52,000-square-metre structure has virtually no right angles and appears to defy the laws of static engineering. The architecture, whose technical finesse and regional symbolism can hardly be surpassed, bears witness to this small emirate’s self-confidence. This is yet another manifestation of the consistent cultural policy of a young, extremely dynamic country on its way to becoming a knowledge society. With cultural brands such as its new National Museum, Qatar is aiming to shape its public perception. The selection of Jean Nouvel as the architect was not surprising given his talent for repeatedly reinterpreting regional characteristics with a striking, contemporary architectural language. The other project partners also possess exceptional conceptual skills: the inaugural exhibition was curated by Rem Koolhaas’ practice OMA/AMO, architect Fatma Al-Sahlawi and the research team from Qatar’s Atlas Bookstore.

In the architectural world, the project of the National Museum of Qatar by Ateliers Jean Nouvel was an opportunity to create a unique experience for visitors to immerse in Qatar’s cultural heritage; the traditional and historical past, and the beginnings of the trade, nomadic lifestyle and beautiful natural environment. Through many discussions with the local Qataris, the design evolved to translate a story into a visual and memorable experience for visitors. For many people, the design evolved to translate a story into a visual and memorable experience for visitors. We saw our interior space - with organic walls and the lighting effect on the Nouvel’s architectural ceiling and interior feature with the contrasting lighting - as the result. And we love the drama that light enhances, colours, shapes and space and most importantly our mood. Lighting is an emotional design tool. During the design process for the museum, for instance, whenever we discussed the mood or emotion of each space, the lighting concept often dictated the design outcome. Our design features of canyons, medallions and desert rose inspired seating or ceiling-hung crystal pearls, with simpler application of spot lighting, up-lighting or ambient lighting. The Jiwan Restaurant’s ceiling features are inspired by traditional fishing nets, over four million pearl-like crystal beads are lit and suspended from the ceiling where the beads gently dance with air when guests move around, creating a lighting effect as if the guests were diving under water.

ERCO: What technical requirements should the lighting tools meet?

KT: We are careful not to go overboard with tools. Every smart technology that can come with so many confusing features. However, dimming is a basic tool and very reliable to find an ideal ambiance. Colour temperature is another feature that we are fussy about. Choosing warm or cool ambience can easily change the way people perceive or experience a space. Energy efficiency or low heat emission is also an important criterion while we design and support more energy efficient, “green” lighting.

ERCO: What were the biggest challenges in creating the lighting concept?

KT: Dealing with the complexity of the museum design. When we first received the drawings, it was impossible to understand the space in two dimensions. There were no straight lines; every surface was curved. We had to work almost blind-folded without any physical experience of the spaces. For the lighting concept, we were unable to apply a conventional sense of lighting design. Since the ceilings were curved and fitted, we could not rely on the traditional method of downlights. Instead, we designed the lighting concept within our design features of canyons, medallions and desert rose inspired seating or ceiling-hung crystal pearls, with simpler application of spot lighting, up-lighting or ambient lighting.

ERCO: The National Museum of Qatar is a cultural brand with great significance for the region. How does your lighting concept enhance this brand?

KT: We created an interior and lighting design that enhances the brand and explores the most innovative building and lighting technologies, fitting for a museum in a country of such growth and change. At the same time, we wanted to respect the history and acknowledge the truly unique heritage of Qatar. Designing the interior of the National Museum of Qatar was an opportunity to create a unique experience for visitors to immerse in Qatar’s cultural heritage; the traditional and historical past, and its development into a modern state as a cultural and innovation hub of the Middle East. While Nouvel’s architecture is a representation of the desert rose formation; a connection to nature, our six parts of the interior designs speak to the narrative of Qatar’s history. The designs are an embodiment of the Qatar’s history, nature, and the beginnings of the trade, nomadic lifestyle and beautiful natural environment. Through many discussions with the local Qataris, the design evolved to translate a story into a visual and memorable experience for visitors. For many people, the design evolved to translate a story into a visual and memorable experience for visitors. We saw our interior space - with organic walls and the lighting effect on the Nouvel’s architectural ceiling and interior feature with the contrasting lighting - as the result. And we love the drama that light enhances, colours, shapes and space and most importantly our mood. Lighting is an emotional design tool. During the design process for the museum, for instance, whenever we discussed the mood or emotion of each space, the lighting concept often dictated the design outcome. Our design features of canyons, medallions and desert rose inspired seating or ceiling-hung crystal pearls, with simpler application of spot lighting, up-lighting or ambient lighting.

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The search for the ideal tool

Lighting designers in museums use their work to shape the experience of art and architectural space. We asked three internationally renowned designers about their approaches and visions.

1. What is your fundamental approach to museum lighting?
2. What do you see as the most significant technical challenge in museum lighting today?
3. What would your greatest wish be regarding the “ideal” lighting tool in a museum?

1. The first step is always to talk to the museum managers, the curators and the restorers. In museum lighting there is no single, correct lighting solution. There are very diverse notions of good museum lighting ranging from the concept of a display to the discreet presentation with light. Experience and an openness to new approaches help the lighting designers in this sense. This is then followed by the process of developing a lighting solution with the architect. Whatever the solution, it has significant influence on the perception of the space, the architecture. In ideal cases, the ideas about the lighting of the museum can be combined with those of the architect to form a successful whole. Sometimes in this context a completely different solution may surprisingly also emerge which can inspire everyone involved.

2. Particularly in art museums and galleries, we miss the diffuse quality of fluorescent lamps. That enable truly diffuse, “soft” and largely shadow-free illumination of walls and rooms? Where are the small pivotable floodlights with attachment lenses etc... There’s also a parallel range of contour spotlights which includes versions sufficiently powerful for use in high rooms. And everything in tunable white with maximum colour rendering properties. That’s the future I like to think of.

3. There are three requirements that must be satisfied when designing the lighting of art museums. The first is the “protection of art pieces.” This entails the protection of various types of artwork from fading and deterioration caused by light exposure. The second is the selection of appropriate illuminance and colour temperature from the viewer’s perspective, maintenance of colour rendering, and removal of reflection glare. The third is the “quality of ambiance,” which involves utilizing the features of architectural design to create an art-viewing ambiance via light.

The combination of natural and artificial lighting seen in the Kimbell Art Museum in Texas, U.S. was recognized in 1972 still serves as my textbook to this day. My ideal is a dynamic art museum in which the architectural space itself serves as a gigantic lighting fixture.

Lighting fixtures for museums have already evolved with a certain degree of completion. However, the architecture itself must promote the illumination, and architectural designs that foster comfortable viewing space are critical in creating a rich art museum. In other words, I would like to develop systems and tools that can eradicate forms of lighting fixtures from museums altogether.

Hanspeter Keller

Hanspeter Keller worked for Swiss television after completing his training as an electronics and audio engineer. At the age of 25 he discovered his joy of light. He co-founded the company several years ago. From the very beginning the company specialised in lighting design for museums. In addition to the lighting designers, a separate department also manages the illumination of exhibition projects. Hanspeter has been the owner and managing director of the company for the past 12 years.

Suzan Tillotson

Suzan Tillotson founded Tillotson Design Associates with twenty-five years of lighting design experience. She has won over one hundred lighting design awards for her work and her projects include the new Bloomberg European Headquarters and London Millennium Theatre in London, UK, the Dec and Charles Wyle Theater in Dallas, TX, the BIBA Offices, Soho, Center North Plaza and South Campus and many others. Suzan has taught the New York IES Introductory Lighting Course, and numerous lighting design and rendering workshops. She has guest lectured on lighting design at several renowned universities, and taught lighting to graduate-level architecture students at Princeton University. Suzan graduated with a Bachelor of Interior Design from the Louisiana State University School of Architecture.

Kaoru Mende

Kaoru Mende was born in Tokyo in 1950. In 1990 he founded Lighting Planners Associates. The scope of his design and planning activities ranges widely from residential and architectural to urban and environmental lighting design. Mende is also the acting chief of the “Lighting Detectives,” a citizens’ group that specializes in the study of the culture of lighting. Mende has been involved in such projects as Tokyo International Forum, JR Kusto Station, Singapore City Center Lighting Master Plan, Ala.

Villas Uluwatu, Gardens by the Bay and Tokyo station.

Books Mende has authored include “Transnational Lighting Detectives” (Rikuyosha Publishing), “Designing with Shadows” (Rikuyosha), “SPA 1996-2015, Tale of Architectural Lighting Design” (Rikuyosha), and many others.

1. Quality of light and hierarchy is key in the overall visitor experience. We strive for an appropriate balance of varied lighting techniques and subtle transitions to not only aid visitors with wayfinding but also to allow them to experience different forms of art on a higher level – to see the layers of paint and the technique. We work with curators and facilities staff to establish project specific requirements such as daylight and UV considerations, art specific criteria including lighting and exposure limitations, as well as architectural room geometries, sequencing of spaces, finishes, material palettes, and controls. Our primary goal is to provide the most flattering lighting quantity and quality for the appreciation of each art type while balancing limitations such as maximum exposure times.

2. It has been our experience with most of our museum work that the balance between natural light and artificial light within gallery spaces is one of the most important decisions to be made. We carefully study the amount of existing and potential daylight contribution (taking care to avoid any direct light on art walls) so that we can properly evaluate not only its impact on the art in terms of foot candles, UV exposure, and glare but also to ensure that the visitors’ experience is as stimulating during the day as it is at night.

3. Research for our recent museum projects such as Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, The Shed, and Remai Modern has proven that LED technology has advanced to the point where it should be considered for museum lighting. It reduces maintenance, results in energy cost savings, minimises UV, offers 98+ colour rendering index, and can dim without the usual shift in colour temperature. The latest LED technologies even allow for on board dimming and controllable variation in the colour temperature from warm to cool. We see all of these things as tremendous opportunities and potential benefits for the viewing of various works of art.
ERCO Eclipse
The art of illuminating art

One system – 28,000 possibilities
From the display case to the atrium
Focused, wide, round, oval, square – light in every dimension
Candelight, daylight, colour and everything in between
Controlling and networking, wireless and wired
Playfully changeable with combinable accessories

January 2020
www.erco.com/eclipse
A place for invention

Listed by ArchDaily as one of the most important new architectural projects in 2019, The Shed is an extraordinary new shape-shifting cultural space in New York’s Hudson Yards on the west side of Manhattan. It has been described by its chief executive and artistic director Alex Poots as a new-model cultural institution, ‘a place for invention, for curiosity, for risk-taking’.

The latest in a line of prestigious US schemes that ERCO has been involved with, it was designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Rockwell Group. The eight-level base building – with two large gallery spaces, a 500-seat theatre, rehearsal space, artists’ lab and skylit event space – features a 37m telescopic shell that can extend out to create space for larger performances.

A steel structure clad in ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) cushions, the outer shell deploys from over the base building, gliding along rails on to an adjoining plaza to double the building’s footprint. The resulting McCourt space can be used for large-scale performances, installations and events. Elizabeth Diller called it ‘an architecture of infrastructure – all muscle and no fat’.

Avoiding glare in a space that can be reconfigured in multiple ways, and the cramped position for siting the fixtures were two central lighting challenges. It was also essential to provide the right intensity and uniformity to create a cool white, glowing lantern effect when viewed from the outside. ERCO worked with Tillotson Design Associates to create a solution that met all the criteria.

Lighting the East Facade are Kona projectors, but the key luminaire was the Grasshopper projector, customised with a remote driver box to save space, and special mounting bracket. Compact, with exceptional light output, high visual comfort and full adjustability, the fitting can be used for accent lighting, floodlighting and wallwashing.

Jill Entwistle

The installation of the ETFE membranes that form the shimmering, dynamic facade: a technical challenge, just like the illumination of these membrane cushions from within by Grasshopper projectors mounted to the steel structure.

Project data
Location: New York City, Hudson Yards
Architecture: Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York (Lead Architect), Rockwell Group (Collaborating Architect)
Lighting design: Tillotson Design Associates, New York
Electrical engineering: Jaros, Baum & Bolles Consulting Engineers, New York
Photography: Timothy Schenck, New York
Website: www.theshed.org

Luminaires used
Grasshopper
Kona

www.erco.com/grasshopper
www.erco.com/kona
The art of versatile lighting

The Kasmin Gallery, which won a Jury Award in the 2019 Architizer A+ Awards, is the fourth art space opened by Paul Kasmin in New York’s Chelsea. It is renowned for promoting both contemporary artists and representing some of the most influential artists of the 20th century, including Constantin Brancusi, Max Ernst and Robert Motherwell.

Designed by studioMDA and with lighting by ERCO, the gallery can be reconfigured as exhibitions change, with the lighting concept reflecting their diversity and modification. The main gallery area is an expansive column-free, 280 sq m space with 7m-high walls. The 28 trapezoidal concrete ceiling coffers each house a large skylight providing diffused daylight.

For maximum flexibility, studioMDA designed a grid lighting system using ERCO’s two-circuit track and highly versatile Light Board fittings. The ceiling grid provides the framework for the recessed, dimmable linear LED strip which delivers the general lighting. An optimal mix of individually dimmable, precision optic Light Board spotlights and wallwashers provide illumination to the artworks, their rectangular design echoing the ceiling geometry.

‘It was imperative that the lighting was embedded within the grid of the ceiling,’ says studioMDA founder Markus Dochantschi. ‘As with any gallery, it is critical to blend the lighting with the architecture, allowing both to fall to the background to grant precedence to the artwork.’

The angle and beam spread of Light Board fixtures can be tailored to the different exhibits. ‘As a result, different spatial experiences are guaranteed for the audience visiting each exhibition,’ says Dochantschi.

A lush roof garden, visible to the adjacent High Line’s six million annual visitors, creates a further 465 sq m of exhibition space. The sculptures displayed there are lit at night by ERCO’s powerful, glare-free and discreet 12W Gecko fixtures. Markus Dochantschi believes the lighting has been key to the gallery concept. ‘The specified lighting equipment provided an atmosphere to the space that was imperative for Kasmin Gallery,’ he says. ‘The Light Boards were chosen to provide an even wash of light along the walls, regardless of their height. Their interchangeable lenses makes this fixture ideal for gallery applications as it allows the space to adapt to any form of artwork being shown.’

Jill Entwistle

Diffuse, natural daylight and precise accent lighting with flexible Lightboard spotlights are the recipe for gallery lighting at the highest level.

Board fittings. The ceiling grid provides the framework for the recessed, dimmable linear LED strip which delivers the general lighting. An optimal mix of individually dimmable, precision optic Light Board spotlights and wallwashers provide illumination to the artworks, their rectangular design echoing the ceiling geometry.

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Jill Entwistle
Belmont Forum, Clovedale

Placemaking in Australian: In Belmont, a typical suburb of Perth in Western Australia, street art and murals are promoted to strengthen local identity – a “mural art commission” even exists with official guidelines. The Belmont Forum shopping centre is also taking part and provided walls for the artist Melski McVee (www.melsk-mcv.com), who decorated them with her colourful, imaginative natural and jungle motifs. Uniform, efficient illumination with Tesis in-ground wallwashers transforms the works of art into real eye-catchers at night.

Project data

Lighting design: Lighting Options Australia, Perth.
Photography: Matt Devlin, Perth
Website: www.belmontforum.com.au

Whitestone Gallery, Taipei

Koiz Shiraishi founded the Whitestone Gallery in Tokyo in 1967, and since then the pioneer of the Japanese art scene has expanded to several locations in Asia: initially to Hong Kong and in 2017 to Taipei on the island of Taiwan. There he commissioned the architect Kengo Kuma to design gallery spaces in the base storey of a commercial building. Our photos of the exhibition rooms and the timber-clad foyer were taken during an exhibition by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman in autumn 2018. As with many leading gallery owners worldwide, Shiraishi relies on light from ERCO: precise, high-efficiency Parscan spotlights, flexibly installed on suspended track.

Project data

Architecture: Kengo Kuma and Associates
Lighting design: Light and Licht Ltd.
Photography: Jackie Chan, Sydney
Website: www.whitestone-gallery.com

China Design Museum, Hangzhou

The China Academy of Art, the largest art university in China, is located in the Chinese provincial capital Hangzhou, 200 kilometres south-west of Shanghai. The educational establishment has an extensive art collection, including various Bauhaus originals. The university commissioned architects Álvaro Siza and Carlos Castanheira to build a new museum on the campus on the outskirts of the city to provide an appropriate setting for both temporary and permanent exhibitions of art and design. In the permanent exhibition area dedicated to western modernist design, exhibits and text panels are accentuated with light from Cantax recessed spotlights.

Project data

Architecture: Álvaro Siza and Carlos Castanheira, Porto
Photography: Jackie Chan, Sydney
Website: http://bwg.caa.edu.cn

Exhibition “Architecture and Landscape in Norway”

Nordic Embassies, Berlin

The building complex located on the edge of the Tiergarten zoo represents five countries simultaneously: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. These also operate the Felleshus Cultural Centre here, a form of community house. The programme includes exhibitions with a geographical focus such as Ken Schluchtmann’s photography, on show from 5 October 2018 to 17 January 2019 and consummately illuminated with Optec spotlights on track. The Berliner travelled and documented the Norwegian landscape routes with their incomparable blend of nature, architecture and works of art.

Project data

Exhibition design and lighting design: Blu Scope, Berlin
Photography: Ken Schluchtmann, Berlin
Website: www.nordschotschatten.org

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Exhibition design and lighting design: Blu Scope, Berlin
Photography: Ken Schluchtmann, Berlin
Website: www.nordschotschatten.org
The museum of applied arts and design, rich in tradition, is housed in a side wing of the Louvre. Far-reaching conversions have almost doubled the exhibition space, and the permanent exhibition dedicated to design since 1940 and redesigned by Normal Studio offers surprising glimpses and associations. As instruments for the exhibition lighting, lighting designers selected Parscan spotlights and ERCO track – an appropriate decision both in terms of quality of light and design quality.

Light is the fourth dimension of architecture