To the Chinese, the dragon is anything but the bloodthirsty beast featured in European fairytales. It is a divine mythical creature that brings with it ultimate abundance, prosperity and good fortune. Its five-toed variant as depicted in this woodcarving from the Palace Museum in Beijing’s “Forbidden City” symbolised the Emperor as the rightful occupant of the dragon throne. Today, we are fascinated by China because of its economic dynamism, its many contrasts and its vast cultural treasures, an extensive and exciting working environment for designers, architects and providers of high-quality lighting solutions.
Originally, we had had the idea of devoting an entire Lichtbericht to Asia, with an overview of the different countries and cultures throughout the region. However, the result became a purely Chinese Lichtbericht. The material available to us proved so diverse and exciting that we wanted to focus all our attention on the Chinese culture.

The Imperial Palace in Beijing was once the “Forbidden City.” Today, large parts of it are a public museum, and since 1999 ERCO has been working with the Palace administration helping to consolidate museum lighting tasks and transforming a listed building into a coherent turnkey concept. An exciting and multifaceted project in a Palace with 9999 rooms.

These days, modern China is developing at break-neck speed carrying the old China along with it. For architects and urban planners, the country is an experimental hotbed of industrial clamour. Very much in contrast, the company seat of Zhongtai Z58 in Shanghai seems a place of pure tranquillity. It was built by the Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma. Whether in architecture or design, modern China is beginning to define its role and provide its own impetus. Without doubt, it will be exciting to watch the further interaction between the cultures.

If you travel from Beijing to Tibet using the Tibet Express, you will pass along the highest railway line in the world. After five years of construction, it was finally finished in 2006. Over a stretch of 1,142km, you have the privilege of enjoying scenery of breathtaking beauty. The final destination is the new station in Lhasa, professionally illuminated thanks to outdoor luminaires from ERCO.

The Jinsha Site Museum offers the traveller a journey back to the magic of ancient China. Purely by chance, excavation work carried out in 2001 uncovered finds which date back over 3,000 years to the ancient culture of the Jinsha kingdom. To date, the number of artefacts discovered have increased to well over 6,000, a sensational insight into the early history of Southwest China.

I.M. Pei, the American star architect, was born in Suzhou. That he could build a museum there must have been a tremendous joy to him. The result is a modern yet traditional piece of architecture. An architecture that conjoins ancient and modern times.

It remains to say that China is an exciting subject and will continue for many years to surprise us all. A Lichtbericht completely dedicated to China barely begins to show the amazing diversity through such projects as the railway station in Lhasa and the “Forbidden City” in Beijing. But here and in just one edition, we offer a fascinating glimpse of the traditional entwined with the modern, all helping to build an insight into the China of today.
Dubai
The new retail district at “Dubai Festival City” includes a number of car showrooms: five makes, five concepts – all with light from ERCO. Photos: Charles Crowell, Dubai

Jeep Chrysler Dodge
Fitted with parallel T16 light structures suspended at different heights, this showroom by the Americans seems rather plain and sober, yet powerfully dynamic.

Honda
Cars, motorbikes and outboard engines from the Japanese brand are presented in a spacious hall under TM and Stella spotlights mounted on Monopoll tracks and structures.

Lexus
The Emirates are a key market for premium brands such as Lexus. Great store is set by a perfect and discreet service in the showroom. Brilliant light from TM spotlights with metal halide lamps gives these classy limousines the appropriate shine.

Volvo
Insise, Quinta TM spotlights on suspended tracks accentuate the vehicles. Outside, Parasco floodlights in corporate blue emphasise the curves of the elegant, oval glass and steel structure.

Dubai
The French brand Pimkie is present even on the Persian Gulf, catering to young, fashion-conscious females. In this shop, black Eclipse spotlights, mirror balls and asymmetrical ceiling panels with recessed spotlights create a sparkling club style atmosphere.
Architect, Lighting designer: Pimkie Interior Design Team

Beijing
The historical Nan Xin Chang district houses a total of nine well-preserved, original rice granaries built early in the 15th century to supply the Emperor’s court in Beijing. Subject to stringent conditions for listed buildings, these ancient walls were transformed into stores and restaurants. The entire district was designed like a park and illuminated using Beamer projectors.
Landscape architects: Dongcheng Landscape Administration Bureau, Beijing Lighting designer: Beijing Z Lighting Design Co., Ltd.

Tokyo
Within close proximity of the popular Jingu Gaien parks, Café Spira is located on an avenue lined by maidenhair trees. Inside, it is lit by Quadra directional luminaires and downlights. In the evening, its terrace presents a view onto magnificant gardens effectively shown off to advantage using Bramer projectors and other lighting tools from the ERCO outdoor range.
Café Spira, Tokyo Architect and lighting designer: Nikken Sekkei, Tokyo

Aomori City
Way up in the north of the main Japanese island of Honshu we find Aomori, a city in the prefecture of the same name. The new art museum here provides spacious galleries for the collection, which includes large-format works by Marc Chagall. The gallery is illuminated by Eclipse spotlights and wallwashers mounted on tracks.

Dubai
For elegant furniture in Dubai, Aati Furniture has been the No. 1 address since 1982. One of its stores is situated on Sheikh Zayed Road, a much-frequented arterial road leading to Abu Dhabi. The ambient lighting in the loft style showroom is provided by Lightcast downlights for metal halide lamps, integrated into black, painted cable suspension bridges. Spotlights from the Castor range produce additional accent lighting on the exhibits.
Aati Furniture, Dubai Architect: Aati Contracts, Dubai (interior design)

Dubai
Only few competitors present this mix of electronics, media and the relevant services such as Internet access or mobile phone contracts at such a high level of quality and in such trendy fashion as the Virgin chain. Red dominates here as the corporate colour, while a multitude of spotlights on singletons or recessed in the ceiling provide the right lighting effects for such an abundant product offer in the branch at the Mall of the Emirates.

Pimkie Shop, Mall of the Emirates, Dubai Architect and lighting designer: Pimkie Interior Design Team

Tokyo
A must for Dubai tourists, the Goldbouk. Hundreds of small shops vie for the customers’ attention, not last with goods displayed in glaring light. After consulting with ERCO Dubai, this jewellery shop took a huge step toward visual comfort by opting for Lightcast downlights for metal halide lamps and complementary Starpoint downlights for halogen lamps.
GB Diamonds Shop, Dubai www.dubai-city-of-gold.com
Bright prospects

Palace museum, Forbidden City, Beijing
View into the "Universe in the Mind - 60 Years of Painting by Liu Guosong" exhibition (26 April - 26 May 2007).
Photo: Michael Wolf, Hong Kong
When Wang Yinong talks about the Imperial Palace in Beijing, about the centuries-old throne rooms, the former royal bedchambers and hidden gardens, he may as well be reminiscing about his own home. In some ways he is. “I grew up here as a child,” says Wang. His father had once worked as a bookkeeper in the administration of the “Forbidden City”, as the Chinese call the Palace. “For me, the Forbidden City is like a home,” he says.

The secret paths of his childhood still come in useful to Wang, who today is Vice Director of the Palace administration. True to the legend, the Forbidden City has 9999 rooms in which the Emperors of China resided until 1924, and thus is ten times bigger than Buckingham Palace in London. A tangle of temple halls, residential buildings and accommodation for concubines and eunuchs, it’s hard not to lose yourself in here. A city within a city. “So far, only a part of the complex is open to visitors,” explains Wang.

With the paint in the centuries-old halls coming off, termites eating away at the old wooden pillars, the roofs being leaky and the ornate wall paintings fading, Beijing’s Imperial Palace is currently undergoing the biggest renovation in its history. The task of the century: since 2002, up to 2000 craftsmen and restoration specialists have worked on returning the Palace to its former glory. The cost: 100 million Yuan per year – around ten million Euros. The work is scheduled to be finished by 2020 – in time for the 600th anniversary celebrations.

“The renovation is very costly and complex,” says Wang. He is sitting in his office inside the Forbidden City, grey walls with a curved roof. “In former times, this is where the sons of the Emperor would live,” recounts Wang, pointing toward the green tiles. In contrast, all other buildings in the Forbidden City have yellow roofs – once the symbol and privilege of the Emperor.

“Our aim is to restore the buildings as close to their original state as possible,” explains Wang. Hence the Palace administration sought out Beijing’s master craftsmen, 70- and 80-year-old men, some of whose families had worked in the Imperial Palace for several generations – many a forgotten technique was rediscovered.

In terms of lighting for the buildings and exhibitions, however, the Imperial Palace administration opted for contemporary technology and thus has been working with ERCO since 1999. “ERCO sets the highest standards in museum lighting,” says Wang. After all, the conditions for the preservation of historical monuments are strict, even with regard to lighting. “Hammering nails into the wood to fix the spotlights in the old Palace halls was, of course, not an option,” explains Ricky Zhang from the ERCO Representative Office in Beijing. Instead, the lighting installations were mounted on special fixtures that did not require structural interference or changes. “Protecting the historical structures is a top priority for us,” says Zhang. ERCO’s expertise in museum lighting also paid off in the illumination of photosensitive exhibits and paintings.

One of the results of this cooperation is Qianqinggong – the Palace of Heavenly Purity. Once the private chambers of the imperial family, the hall later served regents as an audience room in which they also received foreign envoys. It was last officially used in 1922 when Emperor Pu Yi, who had already been deposed by that time, was married. Visitors and tourists, who can only peer into the lavishly furnished interior from outside, mostly do not realise that the hall is fitted with almost two dozen concealed ERCO floodlights. “Our aim was to boost natural daylight as inconspicuously as possible,” explains Zhang. Visitors are thus given an authentic taste of the imperial era.

Another highlight of the Palace complex, the “Hall of Supreme Harmony” (Taihedian), is currently being renovated. “The hammering and renovating is still ongoing. At 29 metres, this hall is the tallest building in the Forbidden City, here, China’s Emperors were once crowned, hence the lavish interior of this building. Mythical creatures decorate the eaves. When it rains, 1142 marble dragonheads spew out the water. The terrace is adorned with bronze tortoises and cranes, symbols of luck and eternal reign. The renovated hall will reopen to visitors in time for the start of the Olympic Games in the summer. Around 100 ERCO spotlights will then present it in the right light.”

For Wang and his colleagues the work, however, continues. 30,000 visitors flock to the former Imperial City on any given day. On record days, this figure could even be as high as 100,000. “The visit should be a special experience for each individual”, says Wang. “The Forbidden City becomes a huge museum. This is our job.”


ddms.org.cn


dds.org.cn


The Forbidden City is the key attraction in Beijing not only for foreign tourists but also for the increasing stream of visitors from the Chinese provinces. Members of a tourist party recognise each other by their different coloured caps.

The “Forbidden City” in Beijing are now museums. Renovation and maintenance are permanent requirements. For the Palace museum administration, high-quality lighting from ERCO is a long-term investment.

Interior and lighting design: Display & Exhibition Department, Propaganda & Education Department, Forbidden City, Beijing Photos: Michael Wolf, Hong Kong

www.dpm.org.cn


Originally, the “Palace of Heavenly Purity” (Qianqinggong) was designed to be the residential palace of the Emperors. Today, it houses exhibitions of life at the imperial court and is a popular background for souvenir photos.

Adjacent buildings to the west of the “Hall of Protecting Harmony” (Baohedian Xiwu): traditional craft methods are used in the restoration. The painters for example, still prepare their red paint as in olden days, using a mixture of pig’s blood and ground bricks, which is then daubed onto the wooden pillars using silk pads. This makes the paint stay on for longer. The yellow roof tiles are also baked using traditional methods.

The Palace of 9999 rooms

Today, large parts of what was once the “Forbidden City” in Beijing are now museums. Renovation and maintenance are permanent requirements. For the Palace museum administration, high-quality lighting from ERCO is a long-term investment.
Forbidden City

The residential buildings to the west of the central axis, including their furnishings, have been preserved or restored to give an impression of daily life in the Palace. In the “Hall of Mental Cultivation” (Yangxin Dian, right) in the south of this sector, Empress Cixi attended to the affairs of state, hidden behind a curtain, until 1908.

Many of these buildings are closed to visitors and can only be viewed through windows. Lighting tools such as Focolare floodlights are arranged outside the field of vision to provide glare-free illumination of the rooms.

Accent lighting emphasizes the details of the magnificently painted halls decorated with intricate woodcarvings. Installing the lighting systems without tampering with the substance often requires talent for improvisation.

The “Palace of Earthly Peace” (Kunninggong, top and left) is the last of the three rear palaces. During the Ming dynasty, it was used as sleeping chambers for the Emperors.
Today, the “Hall of Military Courage” (Wuyingdian) is a gallery for temporary exhibitions of historical and modern works of art. The lighting technology used here is of maximum quality and includes Optec wall-washers and spotlights.

In the gallery, Pollux projection spotlights conjure up traditional Chinese ornaments of light on the ground.

In the annexes to the Palace (Dongxiwu), the Palace museum displays items from its vast collection of time-honoured art treasures of the imperial court.

Display cabinets in the annex to the Palace (Dongxiwu): reliefs and clay figures along with wall paintings give an idea of life at the ancient imperial court.

In the historic surroundings of the “Hall of Military Courage” (Wuyingdian) and effectively bathed in light, the painting by Liu Guosong, a contemporary artist from Taiwan, has a suggestive effect.
Where buildings dance into the sky

By Dr. Oliver Herwig

New beginnings! An excavator flattens a brick wall, dust whips up and wood splinters; tomorrow will see the start of something new! Something big and something skinny. A shopping mall perhaps, or an office complex. The Middle Kingdom is vibrating with energy!

"The construction problems of today are enormous," complains Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky as early as 1956 after her trip to Asia, when detailing the dimensions of a country that puts all European experiences in the shade. The famous architect comes up with a dozen comparisons to describe the Middle Kingdom, making it even a little tangible. "In such a country, to tackle even the most urgent building tasks," she concludes, "is inconceivably difficult and complex even in a planned economy."

Planned economy? Nothing could be further from the truth today. The dragon has developed turbocapitalistic traits. Two-digit growth rates, gigantic export surpluses and booming stock markets. Such change needs signs. China adorns itself with the icons of international building culture: office buildings, TV towers, museums, sports facilities, even regional parliaments and entire cities from the Far East has also set about trying to rise to a level of cultural achievements of all times. This process is accelerated by the increasing transfer of ideas, uses and amalgameation, the consequence of which will feature there itself soon. China is setting new standards. East and West are entangled on a huge experimental ground that is the third modernism. Nothing seems too fancy, nothing impossible. China in everything, and everything at the same time is a stage for rationalism and representative architecture, late postmodern ascendency and ultramodern features. The result is not only solidums but also ideals of a society on the cup of a new tomorrow.

The art market in China paints a similar picture to architecture. Recession is a word just not in the state of the art. This is implemented in cooperation with local partners in Phase Two. The increasing transfer of ideas, uses of form and construction design rings in Phase Three: national and international companies (or hybrids and independent agencies of globally operating architectural firms) compete for follow-up orders and further development measures. International and Chinese architects now feature side by side with torchbearers of Chinese provenance. Phase Four finally catapults local architects and civil engineers trained to global standards into key positions in building design and development.

@PostMapping {}
Weiss, was asked to comment, she said that China was “like the transrapid of architecture.” Speed creates new categories. People no longer have any inclination for standardised urbanity under the banner of Mao. Shanghai capitalism expresses the together. Opposites do not disappear they are integrated, as shown by Shi Xinxing. The 39-year-old painter of photorealistic fake pictures has the great Comrade Mao pose next to Marilyn Monroe or adds him to the famous photo of the victorious powers on Jalta. “This type of absurd picture concoction,” says Xinxing, “which can hit you deep down, proclaims that in the eyes of each individual, everything can have an entirely different explanation.”8

If there is one thing that has become clear over the past few years it is this, even the world of architecture is only a market, a global distribution process of ideas, forms, styles and names. While some universal brands have a determining influence once the borders remain below the radar of press and public. They are accepted, occupied, used and at best, tolerated. The same is true in China. But the sheer mass of the spectacular and speculative buildings never ceases to amaze. The Middle Kingdom has become the measure of globalised modernity and its new ideas. Kuma’s Green House in Shanghai or the converted Centre for Contemporary Art in Beijing have taken the first steps. Highly advanced technology is combined with time-transcending thinking. As Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky once put it: the particular charm of the traditional Chinese residential building is its “gradual transition from the stony streets teeming with people to the actual living space, the atrium … [here you feel far removed from the hustle of the city].”9 Even Kuma can’t do more.

**Literature (selection)**

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**Footnotes**

2. Dercon, Chris: Lang lebe die Partei! Kunstgalerien schnitten wir Plüü aus dem Boden, und alle meinen Sarkas - Eine Reise durch Chinas künstlerische Kul
4. Dercon, Chris: Lang lebe die Partei! Kunstgalerien schnitten wir Plüü aus dem Boden, und alle meinen Sarkas - Eine Reise durch Chinas künstlerische Kul

Ms. Emma Jiang (below) is the Vice President of Zhongtai. Her husband, Kepei Cheng, is the founder and CEO of Zhongtai. Holding that operates in different sectors of the booming building and real estate industry. Both are design fans and sell top
class European brands such as ERCO in China.
The essence of innovations is more than a collection of creative ideas, inventions or research results. It is the implementation of these to bring about a change for the better, to benefit the people who will use them. Some are additions to, and updates of, existing ranges, but predominantly, they include several completely new product ranges. New developments provide the opportunity to link state-of-the-art technology with the results of ERCO’s own research and development to produce designs which are as innovative as the technologies used in these products. The following pages introduce our key innovations for indoor areas.

**Cantax**

Design: Naoto Fukasawa

Based on ERCO’s latest developments in lighting technology, the Cantax range is a logically structured system which provides a professional quality of light in shops, galleries, restaurants or residential areas, while making a striking, highly contemporary design statement with a shape made up of basic geometric forms. As with Emanon spotlights, ERCO has provided Cantax with the new Spherolit reflectors, which are available in four light distribution patterns by way of interchangeable reflectors. When using an appropriate wallwash version of the Spherolit reflector, the light distribution pattern can even be changed to that of a wallwasher without altering the outer appearance of the spotlight. Alternatively, Cantax is also available with the classic lens wallwasher technology for vertical illumination. Naturally, the Cantax range with its spotlights, wallwashers and accessories also comprises exclusive ERCO technologies such as DALI-compatible Light Clients or the varychrome spotlight with colour-compensating LED technology. The housing and bracket on one side with concealed cables are of cast aluminium with black or white powder coat finishes.

The use of metal gobos, glass gobos or structured lenses enables the lighting designer to produce a wider range of lighting effects. Eventually, many methods and effects used in stage lighting and then applied to shops and shop windows, presentations or trade fair stands, find their way into architecture. For these applications, the time was right to develop, from scratch, a new range of spotlights—a system which would consolidate the progress of lighting technology over the past few years, effortlessly offering creative designers the opportunity to implement the principles of “tune the light”. Lighting equipment which would enable the creation of scenographic effects, a familiar aspect in stage shows and at events, or even for continuous, day-by-day operation. This new range of spotlights, Emanon, consists of a striking, integrative housing design for highly differentiated lighting equipment, from standards including spotlights for low-voltage halogen or Hit lamps to ERCO specialities such as LED varychrome spotlights or technical innovations such as the DALI-controlled Goborotator. In terms of heat management, this range also follows a new path—the thermally stressed components such as lamp, lampholder and reflector are installed in a cylindrical metal carrier with controlled ventilation which is situated between the high-quality plastic shells of the spotlight housing. The flat part of the housing provides a thermally separated space for the electronic or DALI-compatible control gear. Its dimpled surface identifies a gripping zone to adjust the luminaires during operation.
Indoor Innovations 2008

Compar

The development of the Compar recessed spotlight was based on a degree on the requirements of the retail sector in the area of shop lighting. The Compar range provides a combination of innovative lighting technology, rational detail solutions and flexible system design. As a result, all the spotlights have Spherolit reflectors for a superior quality of light. The light distribution patterns include the rotationally symmetrical narrow spot, spot, flood and wide flood reflectors and the Spherolit reflector, wallwash, for asymmetrical light distribution. The new display lens produces a brilliantly precise, horizontally spread beam of light. In contrast to the sculpture lens, its only structuring are the grooves for light distribution, and it features an anti-dazzle cap for defined visual comfort. The beam angles vary depending on whether the display lens is combined with a spot or a flood reflector.

Compact HIT

Compact HIT represents an entirely new approach to downlight lighting and is made possible only by the exclusive ERCO innovation of Spherolit reflectors. In order to achieve a revolutionary combination of light efficiency, compact recessing dimensions, visual comfort, and cost-effectiveness, the Compact HIT follows an alternative path to Darklight technology, a characteristic of the remaining ERCO range of downlights. The exclusive use of energy-efficient metal halide lamps with a connected load of 20W to 70W ensures high illuminance from the wide beams emitted by Spherolit reflectors with a wide flood light distribution. The attractive, almost magical appearance of Compact HIT in the ceiling is defined by bright reflections and with the non-reflective safety glass, making it ideal for prestigious rooms in the retail sector or in administrative buildings.

Nadir IP67

Since the unusual direction of their light attracts attention, lighting designers like to use recessed floor luminaires even in indoor areas. However, recessed floor installation is usually more complex than mounting the luminaires to or in the ceiling. Consequently, when the Nadir recessed floor luminaires for indoors were completely redeveloped, ERCO focused its efforts not only on the usual sophisticated lighting technology, but also directed attention to a safe and simple mounting solution with superior finish. The height-adjustable frame of the recessed floor housing now compensates for dimensional tolerances between floor slab and finished floor. The shallow recess depth of 100mm makes the luminaires suitable for many applications in architecture. The front covers are round or square; particular highlights in the range include luminaires with special characteristics such as the grazing light wallwashers or with innovative lamps such as LEDs.

Floor washlights

The complete redevelopment of the ERCO range of floor washlights focused on two aspects – the integration of modern light sources such as LEDs and more flexibility in terms of trim detail design. In addition, ERCO's design engineers devised reflectors with a new surface that proves particularly scratch-resistant and easy to clean. Apart from its excellent reflection capacities, the satin matt silver coating ensures that the discreet luminance of the reflector surface provides just the desired effect and turns the floor washlights into an architectural element. The light sources themselves are fully concealed from view and protected against the ingress of dust and dirt by using a Softec lens as safety glass. Low-maintenance light sources such as metal halide lamps or maintenance-free LED lamps underline the fact that the ERCO floor washlights are truly efficient and economical lighting tools.

The selection of light sources, both metal halide lamps and high-pressure sodium vapour lamps, wattages and light distribution patterns allows for differentiated lighting concepts with a uniform appearance in the ceiling.

The spotlights with display lenses are particularly suitable for the efficient illumination of product presentations in a linear arrangement, such as tables and shelves.

Easy mounting and the compact dimensions of Compact HIT are aspects which have a positive effect on the overall cost-effectiveness of a building project.

For a flush surface and to compensate dimensional tolerances, the position of the luminaires can be precisely adjusted during mounting using height adjustment screws.

The position of the fixing brackets can be adjusted for both the square and the round floor washlights to suit all common ceiling panel thicknesses.
Light control with Spherolit technology

Previously, the reflector contour was crucial in directing light. However, new Spherolit reflector technology is based on the actual surface structure of the reflector. Similar to conventional faceted reflectors, this reflector is divided into individual areas. These individual areas are not flat but consist of three-dimensional, spherically domed segments. Due to the different radii of the spherolites, the reflector characteristic can be controlled over a wide range. The result is spotlight reflectors that have the same basic geometry, i.e. diameter, depth and focal point, but different light distribution patterns, from narrow spot to wide flood. Because of the same contour, luminaires can now be designed for flexible applications in which reflectors can easily be exchanged.

Due to multiple reflections, spherolites direct the light and produce a particularly uniform beam with a slightly soft edge. The light is spread wide to prevent a reflection of the light source on the object or surface, as is common with conventional mirror-finish reflectors. A combination of Spherolit technology and mirror-finish, anodised aluminium results in a very high light output ratio.

Whereas uniform spherolites in a reflector produce a symmetrical light distribution pattern, reflector segments with different spherolite shapes provide an asymmetrical light distribution with even wall washing characteristics.

Flexible design with exchangeable reflectors

In addition to the quality of light, the key advantage of Spherolit technology for designers is the fact that the light distribution pattern can be flexibly adapted to suit changing requirements. Different sized objects in shops or exhibitions and new lighting concepts require adjustable lighting systems for optimal accentuation of the exhibits. The Spherolit reflectors for spotlights are available with four light distribution patterns for differentiated accent lighting. Due to the mechanical fastening using retaining springs, the reflectors can be exchanged without tools very quickly. Metal halide lamp versions with anti-dazzle caps on the cover glass especially for spot reflectors to minimise unpleasant light intensities.

For vertical illumination, the Spherolit wallwasher reflector is available with a specially formed segment for asymmetrical light distribution. Its generally uniform beam produces a focal point in the upper third of the wall to emphasise decorative objects or lettering placed higher up in shops or product presentations to produce a long-distance effect. This wallwasher technology ensures a high light output on the illuminated surface.

Another perfect solution for applications such as in museums or prestigious rooms is the classic lens wallwasher technology because of its complete uniformity across the entire wall. The wallwasher attachment ensures additional glare control.

Thomas Schielke

Double focus

Due to the system of different light distribution patterns, appropriate beams accentuate objects of varying sizes. The reflectors are easy to exchange, adapting the beam diameter to suit different exhibits.
Final destination: Lhasa

Our author Harald Maass, correspondent for the “Frankfurter Rundschau” in Beijing, took the train across the highest rail track in the world to Lhasa in Tibet, where lighting tools from ERCO are used all around the new station.

The train’s tannoy is playing a Chinese pop song. “Your heart is too soft,” croons the voice. Xiao Wang pours hot water from a thermos flask over his pot noodles. It is lunchtime as the compartment is nice and cosy. Each seat is fitted with a transparent plastic tube issuing oxygen. Without this breathing aid, most of the passengers would get altitude sickness on the journey. A large part of the trip takes us above 4000m. The highest pass on the Tibet line is the “Dongfang 8” type Diesel engine, which the “Dongfang 8” type Diesel engine needs to tackle lies at an altitude of 5000m – 200m higher than the Andes railway in Peru. The Tibet railway, which cost around 3.3 billion Euros to build, is the highest railway in the world.

“Breathes in the thin mountain air. For him, the perpetual ice of the Himalaya glaciers is drifting by, the compartment is nice and cosy.”

The Tibet Express passes the snow-capped peaks at an altitude of 5000m, well worth a photo or two for the travellers. Meanwhile, the dining car is serving a Chinese-style breakfast.

The train journey from Beijing to Lhasa takes approximately two days. Passengers while away the time by playing cards or sleeping, whichever they can find a spot.

It was not until three decades later that China’s engineers finally found a solution to the problem and the plan became reality. In the summer of 2006, after five years of construction, China opened the Tibet railway line from Qinghai to Lhasa, which covers a total of 1142km. It is one of the most spectacular projects ever to have been tackled in railway history. The line goes through seven tunnels and across 286 bridges. It was not until three decades later that China’s engineers finally found a solution to the problem, which tends to shift and undulate throughout the seasons. Pipes filled with ammonia, which were rammed several metres into the ground, ensure that the ground does not heat up and crack during the summer months. The sun has almost disappeared behind the mountain peaks by the time the train reaches the plateau of Lhasa. Xiao Wang clears the set of cards away which he and his fellow compartment occupants had played to pass away the time. He shoulders his big bag, which is made of denim and holds his belongings. Slowly the train rolls into Lhasa, the Tibetan-looking man and child, however, will stay behind in Sichuan for the time being.

The Great Chairman Mao Zedong had been the first to dream of a railway line to Tibet. In 1973, he had told the King of Nepal, “I won’t sleep until the railway line to Tibet is finished.” All attempts to lay tracks across the Himalayas, however, had failed due to the perpetual ice, which proved unsuitable as subsoil for the tracks.
Today, tourism is a key economic factor for Tibet, its development a clear guideline from Beijing. The streets, alleys and traditional restaurants, however, are still undeniably indicative of everyday life in Tibet.

Icons of the Tibetan culture and the main visitor attraction in Lhasa – the Potala Palace. Today, this castle-like former seat of the Dalai Lama houses a museum and remains a destination for Tibetan Buddhist pilgrims.

The atmosphere in the old part of Lhasa is dominated by a particularly special blend of spirituality and commerce, of tradition and emerging tourism. Countless stores and travelling hawkers offer Buddhist devotional objects, ritual masks or habits.
Jinsha Site Museum
The mystery of the golden sand city

A futuristic museum building near Chengdu (Sichuan province) presents 3000-year-old archaeological finds on a site where ancient and modern China meet.

Today, the site houses a museum. On grounds covering 300,000 sqm, visitors can view the remnants of the city of “Jinsha”, a name that translates as “golden sand”. Many of the 6000 items excavated in 2001 are actually made of gold and jade. In addition, archaeologists unearthed tens of thousands of shards and pottery items. “The Chinese normally use gold for jewellery – earrings, bangles and necklaces etc. The people in Jinsha, however, used the gold for religious sacrificial ceremonies,” explained Sun Hua, archaeologist at the University of Peking.

Experts suspect that the Jinsha people for ritual sacrifices once used the site. The items exhibited in the museum include a wafer-thin gold mask, barely 20 centimetres wide and eleven centimetres high. For archaeologists like Sun, this is a highly unusual find since gold masks in olden days were not actually produced in China; they were prevalent predominantly in Egypt and in the Middle East. Even the many elephant tusks discovered in Jinsha have the researchers baffled. Zhu assumes that they were used as religious implements or offerings. A drawing on one of the golden vessels shows a kneeling man carrying an elephant tusk on his back. “We do not know to which god these elephant tusks were offered as a sacrifice or in which rituals they were used,” says Zhu Zhangyi, Vice Curator of the museum. So far, no written records that might shed some light on the life of the Jinsha have been discovered.

To allow visitors to discover the world of the Jinsha, the museum is set up as a theme park. At its centre stands the exhibition hall, which looks like a gigantic, diagonally cut cylinder. The glass roof is decorated with ritual Jinsha symbols, their shadows slowly wandering across the round walls throughout the day. A huge park surrounds the exhibition hall. 389 million Yuan, around 38 million Euros, were invested by the government of the Sichuan province to have this museum built. Since its opening last summer, the number of visitors has topped 100,000. The excavations, however, are far from completed. To date, scientists are still searching the area around the museum for relics in the hope of finding out more about this mysterious empire of the Jinsha. 2000 graves have already been uncovered, but bulldozers are no longer in use. To protect the fragile finds of gold and jade, archaeologists today are digging with shovels, and at times with their bare hands.

The story of the Jinsha museum begins with a strange noise. In 2001, when construction workers were digging a new road on the outskirts of Chengdu, a bulldozer workers were digging a new road on the outskirts of Chengdu, a bulldozer could suddenly be heard making an unusual scratching sound. The earth beneath held a number of hard items, which, on closer inspection, turned out to be ancient objects, made of jade, bronze and gold. These were the remnants of a bygone culture, presumably of the more than 3000-year-old Jinsha kingdom in the mountains of Southwest China.

The construction workers, of course, did not know that, but they did realise that these soil-encrusted items must be of some value. They grabbed what they could and carted them away. But they were not to keep their treasures for long. When the authorities got wind of this lucky find and experts inspected the construction site, it became clear that they had come upon an archaeological sensation. Within days, the police seized well over 100 finds which the construction workers had abstracted.

For long, when the Jinsha Site Museum was still under construction, there were no written records that might shed some light on the life of the Jinsha people. The builders, of course, did not know to which god these elephant tusks were offered as a sacrifice or in which rituals they were used,” says Zhu Zhangyi, Vice Curator of the museum. So far, no written records that might shed some light on the life of the Jinsha have been discovered.

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Harald Maass

Architect: Pan Solution International Design Co., Ltd, Beijing
Photos: Michael Wolf, Hong Kong
www.jinshasitemuseum.com

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The mystery of the golden sand city

The glass roof of the central rotunda is decorated with ornaments of the Jinsha culture, a delightful play of light and shadow and a popular place for the obligatory souvenir photo.

The museum building rises like a wedge from the park-like layout of the archaeological site on the outskirts of Chengdu.

The central rotunda is modelled using directed light to make them stand out from the darkness of the exhibition halls. Optec spotlights with different light distribution patterns and types of lamps are mounted on suspended ERCO tracks.
Chinese museum makers love dioramas, Chinese museum visitors, love digital cameras. Baudrillard and co. would be thrilled about this complex simulacrum, an image of an image of an image. The elaborately and skillfully detailed panorama representations are complemented by multimedia presentations.

The actual excavation sites are exposed underneath a glass floor, dramatically lit using discrete spotlights mounted on the steel support structure.
For the opening of the building, the architect invited 100 of his best friends and members of his family to Suzhou. “My grandfather used to have a house and a garden here,” said Pei.

Today, two of the gardens of Suzhou are a world heritage site of the United Nations. Many historical canals and buildings have been destroyed in the building boom over the past years but the government has now finally set about preserving Suzhou as an historical garden city. For Pei, the museum is a kind of return to his roots but does not mark the end of his work. “There are always new challenges ahead in life,” remarked the 90-year-old genius.
Backlights

German Design Award 2008 for ERCO
On 8 February 2008, ERCO was presented with the “Design Award of the Federal Republic of Germany 2008” in Silver for its Grasshopper projector. The reception for the launch proved to be a gathering of personalities from the design scene. The exhibition of the 25 award winners within the scope of the “Ambiente” trade fair met with great interest. The speech in honour of Manfred Lamy, who received the Celebrity Design Award for 2008 in recognition of his life’s work, was given by Klaus J. Maack, ERCO’s Managing Director of many years’ standing.

www.designpreis.de

Moving images in the Light Scout
Explanatory films and animations are the optimal communication medium for scenographic lighting tools that introduce design dimensions such as time or movement to lighting design. Consequently, ERCO increasingly uses short tutorial films to demonstrate complex issues. The general availability of broadband Internet access has revolutionised the provision and distribution of film clips to ensure a simple process. All ERCO tutorial films available to date are now combined in the Download section of the Light Scout and available as a podcast via iTunes.

www.erco.com/film

Scenographic light with Light System DALI (top) or dynamic effects with the Emanon Goborotator (left): two examples of innovations that are optimally introduced using film and animation.

www.euroshop.de

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TEDA Monument, Tianjin
TEDA as an abbreviation stands for "Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area". Founded in 1984, this area at the fringes of the harbour town of Tianjin was one of the first special economic zones in China. Designed by Isozaki, this monument made of curved stainless steel shells was set up in 2004 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the TEDA. Working closely with ERCO Japan, Isozaki developed the lighting concept to include Tesis uplights and Beamer spotlights.

(Design: Arata Isozaki & Associates, Tokyo)