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Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, Great Britain



**Rembrandt placed in the right light: ERCO
installs the latest lighting technology in the
world's oldest art gallery**

- Architecture: Sir John Soane (1753-1837)
- Lighting design: Peter Suschitzky
- Photography: Gavriil Papadiotis, London / Stefanie Gartmann, Cologne
- Project: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Rembrandt's Light'
- Place: London
- Country: Great Britain
- Website: www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Dulwich Picture Gallery, the world's oldest specially built art gallery, has marked the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt's death with an extraordinary exhibition celebrating the role of light both in the creation and content of his work. In a bold and innovative move, the gallery invited award-winning cinematographer Peter Suschitzky to create lighting specially tailored to the exhibition, 'Rembrandt's Light', using a new ERCO LED lighting system with wireless Bluetooth control.

The gallery in south-east London, designed by Sir John Soane and opened in 1815, has upgraded part of its existing halogen lighting to a Casambi Bluetooth-operated system featuring ERCO's Optec LED precision spotlights with 12W LED Modules. The new technology enabled Suschitzky to illuminate the seminal works by the Dutch master - 35 paintings, etchings and drawings - in unique ways, bringing to life the exhibition's theme of light and storytelling.



Star Wars and Rembrandt

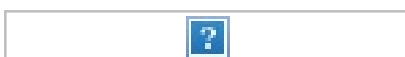
Suschitzky is known for his work on films such as Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, The Rocky Horror Picture Show and Mars Attacks!, and as cinematographer (director of photography) on 11 of David Cronenberg's films. 'If Rembrandt were alive today, I believe he might have been a cinematographer,' says Jennifer Scott, Sackler director of Dulwich Picture Gallery and co-curator of Rembrandt's Light. 'As our exhibition explores, he used light to transport the viewer into the narrative.'

'I have been inspired by the work of the greatest Old Masters throughout my life,' said Suschitzky. 'Rembrandt seems to me to have been striving to find a universal truth in the human condition and used light to create motion and emotion. This parallels cinematography, where sculpting light and directing the gaze of the viewer to the desired place in an image is essential for powerful storytelling.'



Manipulation of light

Arranged thematically, the exhibition traces how Rembrandt manipulated light: from evoking a meditative mood, to lighting people, to creating impact and drama. 'We wanted to use the lighting to draw out the different themes of the rooms and the moods contained within Rembrandt's paintings,' says Helen Hillyard, Assistant Curator at the Gallery and co-curator of Rembrandt's Light.



Helen Hillyard



'For example, the first room is bold and dramatic - tapping into Rembrandt's unique ability as a storyteller - while the final room is intended to be rich and sensual, creating an intimate atmosphere for the artist's most personal works. The new LED lighting system has allowed us to unlock some of the key messages of the exhibition through our own manipulation of light.'



The Bluetooth-enabled ERCO luminaires allowed individual switching and dimming of the fittings, with control and programming through an iPad and iPhone. A range of interchangeable tertiary lenses - including narrow beams, floods, wide floods, oval floods and framers - were used to precisely shape the light on each artwork.

Exciting potential

'What is really exciting right now is that if you need the Bluetooth system to do something, then essentially you can build it,' says Alexander Moore, Head of Exhibitions at the Gallery. 'We have a photography exhibition coming up which will require some of the lights to be on timers which are activated wirelessly by the visitor. We are also exploring interactive lighting designs which can actually be controlled by the visitor. The important thing is that we have now exposed ourselves to these new developments and can be a part of the conversation.'



With a wide range of light distributions and high quality photometrics, the Optec series covers the full bandwidth of display lighting requirements: high-contrast accent lighting, floodlighting of exhibits, uniform illumination of walls, or sharp-edged beams for striking effects. According to Moore, it was both the product and the service which influenced the decision to select ERCO.

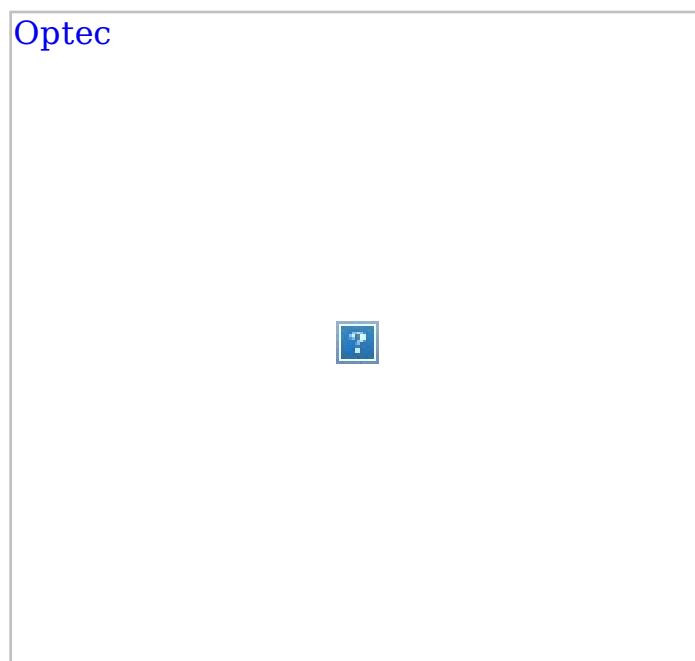
ERCO's close involvement

'It is important to say that as a charity we would always make detailed comparisons with other manufacturers whenever approaching a commission like this,' says Moore. 'We had not set out in search of a Bluetooth-controlled system, but ERCO brought that idea to us. They were selected partly because their product presented the best value for money - but mostly because of how involved they made themselves in the project right from the initial outreach. They have really become part of the family here and it is that kind of relationship which gels with Dulwich Picture Gallery culture.'



Jill Entwistle is the executive editor of *Lighting (Illumination in Architecture)* and has specialised in architectural lighting both as a magazine editor and writer since 1994. Jill is the author of three books on lighting, including *Detail in Contemporary Lighting Design* (Laurence King). She is the editor of the first BCO (British Council for Offices) Guide to Lighting.

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