

Architect: s1 Architektur, Henning Zippke, Ansgar Schmidt, Berlin
Photographer: Edgar Zippel
Project location: Berlin

14 oz. store, Berlin

Quality meets quality - in all its facets. In the Cumberland House on Kurfürstendamm, the 14 oz. store combines quality brands with impressive architecture and a well-balanced lighting experience. Logotec spotlights accentuate the products and the interior. They are part of a formidable overall composition.

Shopping should be an event, a pleasant and familiar experience. The products, the atmosphere and the surroundings must all be conducive to engaging in this experience. The store's message must be understood. The 14 oz. Store on Kudamm is dedicated to one goal. Selling the customer a garment is not what it's all about; owner Karl-Heinz Müller sooner wants to see "our customers treat themselves to their wardrobe here".

In designing the store, its concept was to view the customer not just as a buyer, but indeed to welcome each as a human being. "We in fact take all the senses of the human being into account. In other words, what people see, what they hear, what they feel, what they can taste, what they can smell; that is very, very important." To this end, Müller and the architects of s1 Architektur from Berlin made a point of incorporating even imperceptible

aspects: "We, for instance, have a subtle room fragrance in here that actually goes unnoticed."

The store in Cumberland Haus was an opportunity for the two architects Ansgar Schmidt and Henning Ziepke to create something that would seem as if it had always been there. "You come in here and you don't look around and wonder whether the furnishing actually works. It was simply there," says Ziepke. He continues, "It is natural, it is lived, some in different places, mind you, but this composition was the job here, and that is important." The customer feels comfortable because everything is just right – the quality of the merchandise, of the materials, the ambiance.

A good example of this unique quality is the large steel library that takes a special role in the room. Originally from the Palais Lichtenstein in Vienna, it was removed there more than 15 years ago. "It was still available and in containers, a large collection of individual items, to put it positively," recounts Ziepke, not without a smile. It took five articulated lorries to bring this "puzzle" to Berlin and into a large warehouse where it could be set up in one piece. "The full length of it was assembled in a separate hall to see how it works," describes Schmidt. Piecing it all back

together proved well worth the effort – the library became the “Denim Wall” which is now a central element of the store.

Crucial to it all was the right light. It needed to integrate with the room, tie into it and underpin its comprehensive approach. But that alone – developing a rigid concept – is not all, argues Schmidt – “devising a plan and saying, ‘that’s how it’ll be illuminated’, won’t do it, in my opinion.” It’s about creating a lighting concept. “And the other thing, I believe, is that you need to open yourself up far more in your thinking to the aspect of light,” says Schmidt. “In other words, not be so stuck that you say, I’ll put some tracks on the ceiling, add a few projectors, some spots, and that’s it.”

A lighting concept needs to develop. The LED Logotec spotlights from ERCO used in the store manage the balancing act between economic efficiency and modern lighting concept with the required variability, quality and, especially, excellent light.

This enabled 14 oz. to make changes even as constructions were already under way – and just as well, believes Schmidt. “You’ll not have the right light mood until you really see it.” Variable here was also the light colour. Jeans in blue tones, for instance, require cooler light and so they were illuminated using neutral white LEDs; whereas areas with predominantly

leather goods were bathed in warm white light. This approach significantly enhances the product appeal.

The process culminates with the Store of the Year 2013, picked by the HDE, Germany's main retail association – a store where the customer feels comfortable, not least thanks to the right light. Karl-Heinz Müller, after all, knows one thing for sure: "Light is extremely, extremely important; only the right light helps you truly see each item and inspire an enthusiastic response."

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