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ERCO LED spotlights in the Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden, Germany



A new look at old masters

ERCO in the Old Masters Picture Gallery / Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden

- Client: Sächsisches Immobilien- und Baumanagement, Dresden

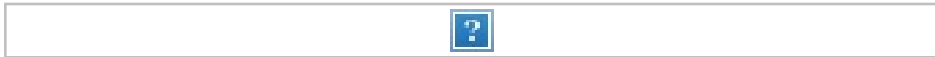
- Architecture: Sächsisches Immobilien- und Baumanagement, Dresden; Sunder-Plassmann Architekten; Sichau & Walter Architekten
- Interior design: KKS Architektur und Gestaltung, Dresden; A-Team, Dresden
- Electrical planning: INNIUS GTD GmbH, Dresden
- Lighting design: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden; Pontonero-Light, Dresden
- Photography: Edgar Zippel, Berlin
- Art logistics: Hasenkamp, Dresden; Fissler & Kollegen, Leipzig; A-Team, Dresden
- Place: Dresden
- Country: Germany

The new hanging in the Old Masters Picture Gallery and Sculpture Collection up to 1800 sets Baroque opulence in scene. Almost 900 Parscan and Pollux spotlights from ERCO aid the sensuous, lively presentation of art. Goethe and Dostoevsky in their times were highly impressed by the splendor of the Dresden Old Masters Picture Gallery. Founded in 1560, it achieved renown throughout Europe in the 18th century due to the specific collecting activities of the Saxon electors. In 1855 it moved into the building designed by Gottfried Semper at the Dresden Zwinger, where today it still displays key works of the European Renaissance and Baroque. In February 2020, the Old Masters Picture Gallery reopened following a seven-year renovation period.



Baroque, Renaissance and Antiquity in dialog

The museum restored numerous antiquities, paintings as well as picture frames during the building's modernization, and in a new display for the first time integrated the sculpture collection up to 1800 into the gallery. An opulent, sensuous presentation of over 700 paintings and approximately 450 sculptures is the result. Conceived under the Director Stephan Koja, the exhibition of sculptures and paintings, including masterworks by Raphael, Titian, Rembrandt, Rubens and Cranach, establishes new points of contact. Upon the backdrop of Antiquity, the Baroque and Renaissance periods are thus rendered more comprehensible.



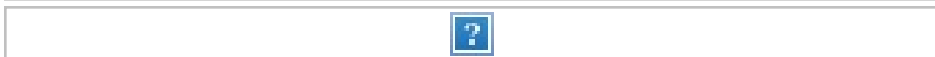
Colored wall hangings in the cabinets reference the traditional classification according to schools: works by Italian artists hang on red, works by Spanish and French artists on blue, and green forms the background for the Dutch and German schools. In addition, the halls and cabinets are subdivided into appropriate themes - for example Venetian painting and Dutch still life.

"It was important for us that the artworks are accessible and approachable for visitors so that they can be understood without detailed prior knowledge," explains Koja.



Orientation, drama, sharpness, brilliance

The new lighting concept makes an important contribution to this objective. Daylight ceilings and large windows let in natural light, whilst the newly installed luminaires from the ERCO Parscan and Pollux spotlight ranges structure the abundance of artworks and direct the gaze of the viewer to essential aspects. "The accent light brings out nuances in the paintings and can emphasize the fold and drape of a toga carved in marble for example," states Stephen Koja



The artificial light also creates a sense of drama: "It sculpts contours and surfaces so that the

sculptures appear to step out of their niches." In parts, the lighting can even compensate for varnish restoration: if the clear varnish layer typical of the Old Masters on the oil paintings takes on a yellowish hue, color filters with cool light restore brilliance, depth of field and luminosity in the paintings.

The point-precise accentuation is made possible thanks to Hi-trac with spacing of more than five meters, installed in the vault of the classicist museum building in keeping with heritage requirements. To counteract possible glare in the rooms with heights of up to eleven meters, ERCO honeycomb louvers were integrated into the luminaires to limit the light beam and increase visual comfort.



Making characters perceptible

A 1:100 model of the gallery with all exhibits served as a basis for the detailed lighting design. "There are many aspects to consider when illuminating art, some of which only become apparent during commissioning of the lighting on location: for example the different visual axes in the room, the reflection of a frame or the facial expression or direction of view of a sculpture," explains lighting designer Paul Göschel of Pontonero-Light who illuminated the sculpture collection. The most difficult task is illuminating faces that reflect character.



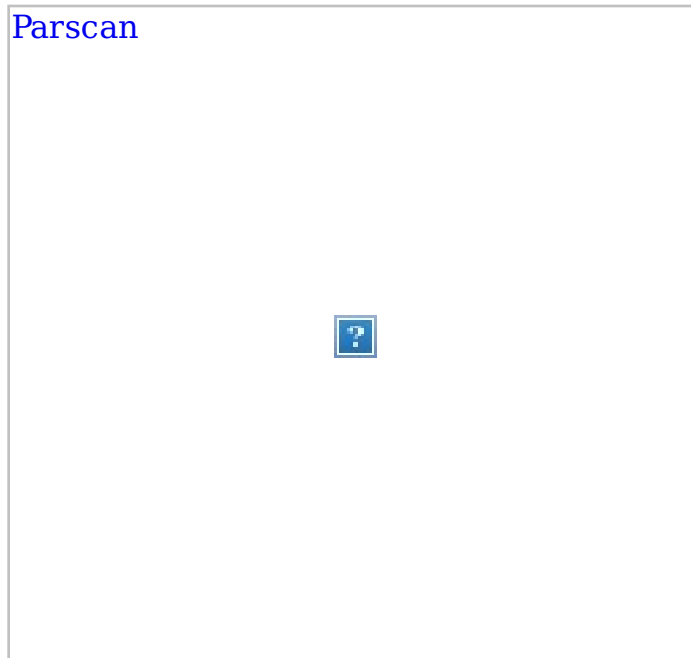
"People always first look their counterpart in the face, even if it's a sculpture. This is why illumination has to be in a nuanced way—and if possible without high-contrast shadows under the eyes and nose."

With several luminaires per exhibit and with the help of interchangeable Spherolit lenses and framing attachments, Göschel displays each object in a targeted manner. "Through precisely contoured beams of light, the artworks seem to radiate from within." As a consequence, it is not surprising that museum experts at the opening ceremony from all over Europe were just as impressed as Goethe and Dostoevsky.



About the author: Wiebke Lang is a journalist for design, architecture and branding. A graduate designer, she has been writing about the design of the world within the context of social, economic and technological developments for more than 15 years. Following a post as co-curator of the Vitra Design Museum, she worked as a freelance editor and author for trade magazines and cultural institutions. She then headed the corporate communications team at ERCO and was editor-in-chief of the specialist magazine designreport before working independently as an author, presenter and communications consultant.

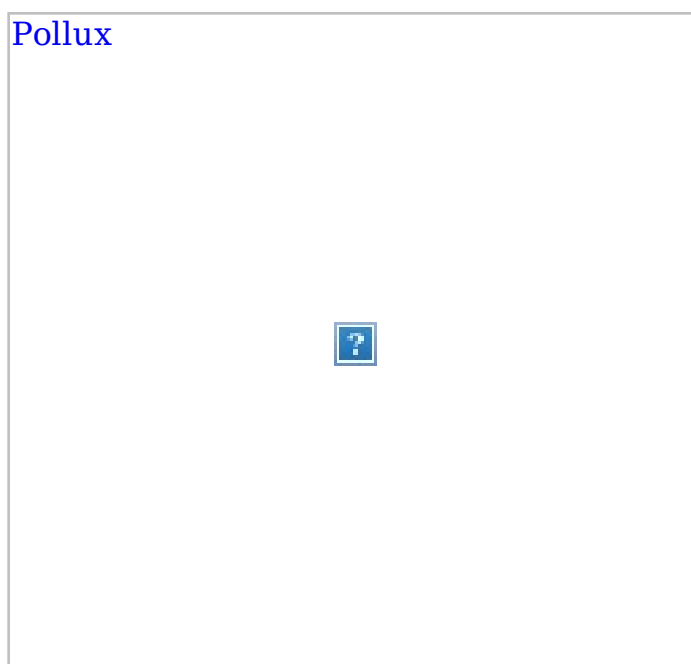
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