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Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany



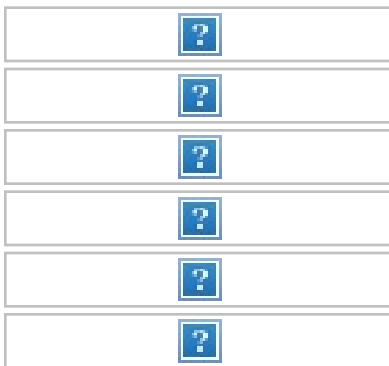
**New colours and new light:
the gallery rooms of the Hamburger Kunsthalle
after refurbishment**

- Client: Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg / Germany
- Architecture: LH Architekten, Hamburg / Germany
- Lighting design: ECE, Hamburg / Germany
- Photography: Frieder Blickle, Hamburg / Germany
- Place: Hamburg
- Country: Germany
- Website: <http://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de>

Following in-depth refurbishment, the gallery spaces of the Hamburger Kunsthalle shine in fresh colours and brilliant LED light from ERCO. Once again the outstanding quality of light of the lighting tools from Lüdenscheid was decisive.

The Kunsthalle Hamburg holds one of the most important collections of art in Northern Germany—both in terms of quality and quantity. The museum founded in the 19th century is centrally located in the Hanseatic city between the main railway station and the Alster. It consists of three striking buildings that are architecturally contrasting and yet interconnected: the so-called foundation building inaugurated in 1869, the extension building constructed from 1909 to 1921 and the Gallery of the Present opened to the public in 1996. Following completion of the overall refurbishment of the museum complex last year, the Kunsthalle now radiates in a fresh and contemporary splendour. Light from ERCO plays a central role in the heart of the museum, the gallery rooms.

The modernisation of the Hamburger Kunsthalle, which was carried out between 2014 and 2016 helped by a donation from the Dorit and Alexander Otto Foundation and with planning by the Hamburg offices of LH Architekten, consisted of a variety of conversion, extension and refurbishment measures. The return of the main entrance into the foundation building as part of this project won high public approval, and with it the spatial re-conception of the exhibition area making it more visitor-orientated. The new wall colours in the galleries of both older buildings also achieved a high degree of attention, as did the relighting in these exhibition spaces in association with extensive upgrading to energy-efficient LED light.



Summary of the lighting concept: wallwashing plus accents

The lighting concept for the gallery rooms of the Kunsthalle was created in collaboration with the team of curators, ECE and Ralf Suerbaum, the technical manager of the museum. Fundamentally it can be abbreviated to "general lighting from wallwashing plus accents on artworks". The wallwashing provides the basis of the lighting solution for the gallery spaces and also supports visitor orientation. The precisely aligned spotlights perfectly emphasise the individual artworks. As a consequence, light and brightness are always where they are needed. The illumination of the rooms is calm and harmonious whilst any dramatic effects and spectacular displaying is intentionally avoided.



Uniform wallwashing as a decision factor

The decision to install ERCO lighting tools for implementing this concept was based on a sampling process on site. The essential criteria were the quality of light and above all the uniformity of light distribution with the wallwashers. "In terms of wallwashing ERCO beats all competitors in the market technically" stated Ralf Suerbaum, summarising the result of the sampling operation. In his opinion ERCO's sophisticated lens systems and the careful selection of high quality LEDs were decisive. Even though energy-related considerations were originally not important when the decision was taken for ERCO lighting tools, Ralf Suerbaum is still proud of the fact that power consumption was cut by precisely 50% in the gallery rooms equipped with ERCO wallwashers—along with, as he says, "significantly higher-quality illumination of the halls and the exhibits displayed in them."

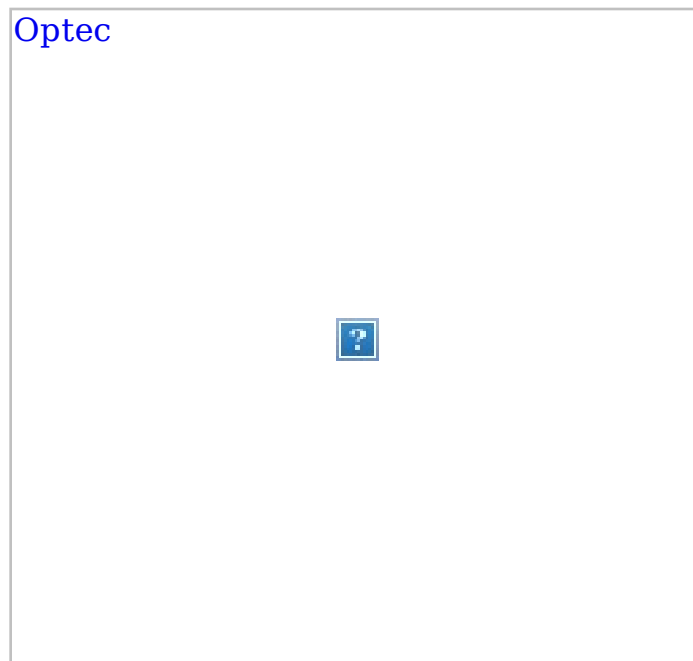
ERCO Light Board with wallwash light distribution and a connected load of 30W are used for the wallwashing in the Hamburger Kunsthalle. As an alternative, Light Boards with oval flood lenses and 15W connected loads were installed in the smaller rooms. For accenting the artworks, Optec spotlights are used that have connected loads of between 5 and 9W according to their distance to the artworks; these are fitted primarily with spot or narrow spot lenses. All luminaires feature a 3000 Kelvin warm white light colour spectrum. Suerbaum justifies this principle decision with the character of the collection and architecture of the museum. Neutral white light, according to his estimation, would have an excessively cool and technical appearance within this framework.

Both the responsible managers at the Kunsthalle and the public at large are completely satisfied with the results of the relighting. Visitors described the museum's new lighting solution as 'fresh' and 'a lot more chic' reported Suerbaum. The gallery rooms actually do appear noble, graceful and dignified as well as being pleasantly fresh, friendly and inviting. Personally he would have liked to see the track positioned differently here and there to optimise the lighting solution, but compromises had to be made due to reasons of heritage protection. Overall though, he is certain that the quality of light at the Kunsthalle was never as convincing as it is today.



About the author: Mathias Remmele works in Berlin as a freelance publicist and exhibition curator for topics relating to architectural and design history. As a critic he focuses on contemporary developments in these areas. He is also a lecturer at the School of Art and Design in Basel.

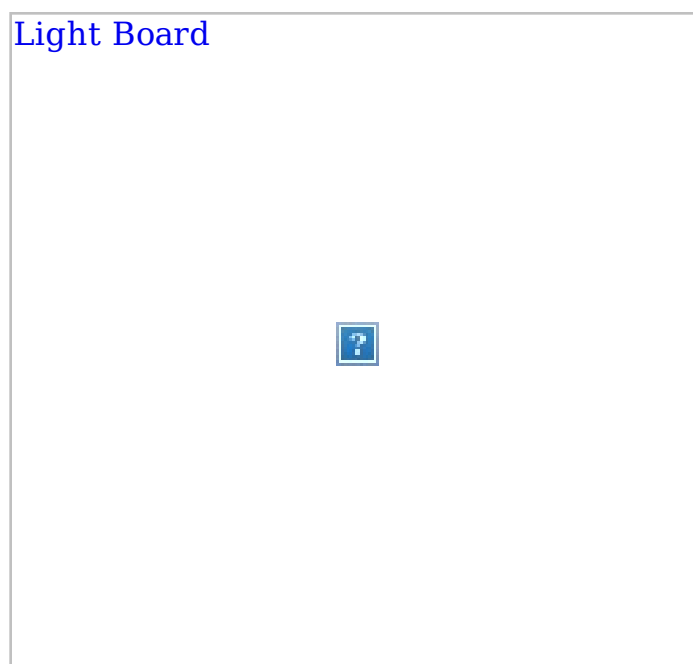
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