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Louvre Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



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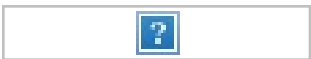
## **The first universal museum in the Arabian world: ERCO at the Louvre Abu Dhabi**

- Client: Tourism Development & Investment Company, Abu Dhabi / United Arab Emirates

- Architecture: Ateliers Jean Nouvel with HW architecture, Paris / France
- Lighting design: 8'18" Lumière, Paris / France
- Place: Abu Dhabi
- Country: United Arab Emirates
- Website: [www.louvreabudhabi.ae](http://www.louvreabudhabi.ae)
- 1.2.2018

## **Lighting tools from ERCO for a new and superlative museum project—the branch of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi designed by the French star architect and Pritzker Prize winner Jean Nouvel opened its gates to the public in mid-November.**

Jean Nouvel (born in 1945) initially intended to study art before taking the decision for architecture. In his home city of Paris he has already created three outstanding museum buildings—the Institut du Monde Arabe (1987), Fondation Cartier (1994) and the Musée du Quai Branly (2006). The completion of his newest design has been eagerly awaited: the branch of the world-famous Musée du Louvre was officially inaugurated on 11 November 2017 in the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is "the first universal museum in the Arabian world, the first of the 21st century," stated Jean-Luc Martinez, Director of the Paris Louvre. Jean Nouvel's spectacular architecture combines contemporary Western design with an Arabian heritage. LED lighting tools from ERCO, partly implemented as special solutions, ideally highlight and display the exquisite art including paintings from Bellini, Manet, Picasso and Cy Twombly.



© Louvre Abu Dhabi, Photography Roland Halbe - Architect: Jean Nouvel

## **The architecture: a Medina-like museum city beneath a circular dome of steel**

For Jean Nouvel, light and geometry form the fundamental principles of Arabian architecture. In accordance with this credo, he has arranged a total of 55 white, cuboid buildings below and adjacent to a circular steel dome on a ground area of 100,000 square metres for the Louvre Abu Dhabi, according to the example of an Arabian Medina. Alleyways and corridors lead through the conglomerate of exhibition rooms, auditorium, café and restaurant. The complete construction is shadowed by the gigantic steel dome with a diameter of 180 metres. This is supported by four pillars, and with 7,500 tonnes weighs almost as much as the Eiffel Tower. The eight layers of aluminium and stainless steel create a pattern with star-shaped apertures. These are reminiscent of traditional palm frond covers in the alleys of Medina, and during the day cast subtle shadows onto the ground. From the start of planning this play of light and shadow, called the "rain of light", was an essential element of the fundamental design concept. The exhibition rooms are subdivided into galleries displaying the museum's permanent collection in chronological sequence, and rooms that will accommodate a total of four temporary exhibitions per year.



© Louvre Abu Dhabi - Photography Marc Damage - Architect: Jean Nouvel

## **A highly complex lighting concept with ERCO LED lighting tools for a superlative museum**

ERCO LED luminaires are used in a total of 23 gallery rooms and their connection rooms as well as in the imposing entrée of the Louvre Abu Dhabi. The lighting designer Rémy Cimadevilla from 8'18" Lumière in Paris consistently followed through on Jean Nouvel's architectural concept to place his trust in the long-term experience of ERCO in the museum lighting sector. The light illuminates the rooms as well as the paintings and sculptures contained within and can be flexibly adapted to changing scenarios. In accordance with the lighting concept from 8'18" Lumière, ERCO developed several technically sophisticated special spotlight and wallwasher solutions for the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Jean Nouvel's design specifies that each of the 23 cuboid exhibition buildings has different dimensions; the individual rooms also differ in terms of materials and interior construction. Some are implemented

as "bronze galleries" with dark lamella ceilings and some as "glass ceiling galleries" with light ceilings combining daylight and artificial light.



© Louvre Abu Dhabi, Photography Mohamed Somji - Architect: Jean Nouvel

## Individual lighting solutions for the permanent exhibition galleries

"With the lighting concept for all exhibition rooms of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a continuously high level of flexibility was needed so that even the permanent collection areas could be repeatedly rearranged," explained Rémy Cimadevilla. The only exception is the first gallery that as the "grand vestibule" functions simultaneously as a large-sized entrée and exhibition room. The 8'18" Lumière team installed Quintessence directional spotlights with a 3000K light colour and narrow spot light distribution in accordance with a precisely defined grid pattern. Thanks to higher current feed of the LEDs the luminous flux of the luminaires could be increased by around 40%, giving the almost nine metre-high white ceiling the look of a sparkling, starry sky.

The bronze galleries on the other hand have the appearance of palace halls and their wall and floor surfaces are completely covered with attractive natural stone slabs. Black Parscan LED spotlights for track with connected loads of 15W are positioned between the dark steel lamellae of the ceilings. The arm of the luminaire was extended to correspond to the lamella height. This enables these lighting tools to be flexibly aligned to the exhibits, and optional snoots and honeycomb louvres achieve glare-free accent illumination.

The individual gallery rooms are interconnected via narrow passages. The architects purposely designed these transition spaces with significantly lower ceiling heights than the exhibition rooms - creating an imposing impression when visitors enter the subsequent gallery room. ERCO constructed special luminaires based on their Pollux with 6W LED module to enhance the spatial effect in the passages. The luminaire head was separated from the transadapter for this purpose to become an separate component next to the DALI control gear in the track.

For the "glass ceiling galleries", 8'18" Lumière developed an intelligent lighting system that intentionally combines controlled and proportioned daylight with artificial light. Wallwashers with 4000K light colour were installed that create a line of light via corner connectors in accordance with the room geometry. The team headed by Rémy Cimadevilla combined the neutral "architectural" light of these with warm white light on the artworks together with daylight entering from above through the light ceilings to create a lighting concept emphasising the high quality of the rooms. "The light becomes increasingly cooler from bottom to top, ranging from 3000K on the artworks and wall surfaces at eye-height to 4000K on the upper wall areas, and then to 6000K and higher in the area of the glass ceilings," explained Rémy Cimadevilla. "In this way we create a genuine landscape of light that reflects the high standard of design of this museum project."



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**About the author:** Kristina Raderschad has run an editorial office in Cologne since 2005. A qualified interior designer (Dipl.-Ing.), her articles, reports and interviews on architecture and design are published worldwide—in magazines such as AD Architectural Digest, A&W, ELLE DECORATION, HÄUSER, MARK or WALLPAPER\*.

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