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Swatch headquarters and Cité du Temps, Biel / Switzerland, Biel, Switzerland



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**At the center of time—ERCO illuminates Swatch headquarters and Cité du Temps, Biel / Switzerland**

- Client: The Swatch Group AG, Biel / Switzerland
- Architecture: Shigeru Ban Architects Europe, Paris / France with Itten+Brechbühl AG, Basel / Switzerland
- Interior design: Steiner Sarnen Schweiz AG, Sarnen / Switzerland
- Lighting design: Reflexion AG, Zurich / Switzerland; tokyoblue GmbH, Zurich / Switzerland (Swatch Museum / Omega Museum)
- Photography: Didier Boy de la Tour Photographe
- Place: Biel
- Country: Switzerland
- Website: [www.swatchgroup.com/en](http://www.swatchgroup.com/en)

**Shigeru Ban designed the new headquarters for the Swiss watch producer Swatch and the adjacent Swatch and Omega Museum as two aesthetically contrasting buildings. The playfully organic form of the Swatch building docks onto the classic body of the so-called "Cité du Temps" cuboid construction. ERCO LED luminaires illuminate both buildings according to their differing functions: cardanically adjustable Gimbal recessed floodlights generate glare-free general light for the office areas in the Swatch building. Parscan spotlights accentuate the exhibits in the Swatch and Omega Museum in the "City of Time".**

The Japanese architect Shigeru Ban has made a name for himself on a global scale with pioneering designs using cardboard and timber. At the Swatch and Omega campus in Biel, the Pritzker Prize winner with offices in Tokyo, New York and Paris has now realized his largest wood-based building complex to date: a total of 4,600 cubic meters of renewable raw materials were used to create the Omega Factory, the new Swatch headquarters and the neighbouring building with a conference hall and exhibition areas—the so-called "Cité du Temps". The highly impressive shell of the new Swatch headquarters with its organic shape and scale-like structure that is reminiscent of the body of a snake, consists of 7,700 timber elements. Each one was prefabricated to precise dimensions to enable quick and problem-free assembly on location. The wooden grid construction is filled with different honeycomb forms—the "scales" act partly as window elements, partly as solar panels or acoustic elements and also function as air-filled honeycombs for cooling and heating purposes. They support the sustainability of the architecture, ensure low energy consumption of the building and contribute to a pleasant working atmosphere. The open plan structure of the three office floors below the organically shaped shell is also designed to promote good communication between the employees.



## **Glare-free general lighting discreetly integrated into the architecture: cardanically adjustable Gimbal recessed floodlights from ERCO**

"The snake-like Swatch building is illuminated both functionally in line with its various uses, and also with architectural accents," explains lighting designer Roland Block, the project manager at Reflexion AG. "The lighting concept is integrated into the architecture as discreetly and unobtrusively as possible in order to enhance it to its best advantage." Glare-free general lighting with a warm white 3000K color was particularly important to the lighting designers.

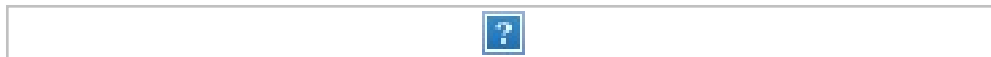


For this purpose recessed floodlights were installed, akin to light points, in the center of the wooden grid construction's honeycomb units. The housing color of the recessed Gimbal floodlights was matched to the color of the ceiling honeycombs as part of the „ERCO individual“ service. In addition, all luminaires were fitted with a special plug connection that could be quickly and simply plugged into the flat ribbon cables laid in the ceiling structure.

Gimbal's cardanic swivel mechanism enables its light beams to be precisely aligned to the curved shell of the building. The glare-free general lighting of the office floors, adapted via DALI to the specific daylight situation, is supplemented by indirect illumination of the building shell with Parscan spotlights and wide flood distribution (approx. 50°).



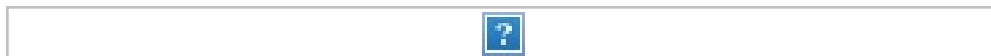
A pedestrian bridge connects the two buildings at the point where the organically shaped shell of the Swatch headquarters docks onto the cuboid Cité du Temps construction. Parscan spotlights in the interior and Kona projectors in the exterior zones create spectacular effect lighting for the architecture.



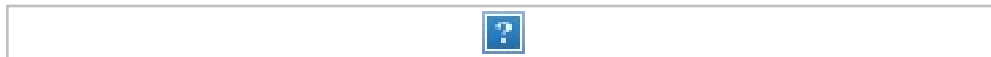
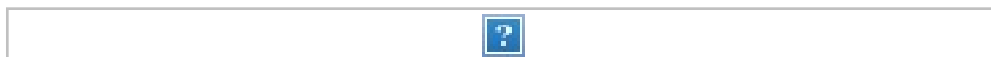
The cardanic suspension of the Gimbal luminaire allows the recessed ceiling floodlights to be pivoted into any direction and thus be ideally matched to the building's curved shell. In the new Swatch headquarters they ensure glare-free general lighting for the open work areas.



Gimbal recessed floodlights built into the honeycomb structure of the building shell provide glare-free general lighting of the office levels, adapted to the respective daylight situation via DALI. In addition, Parscan spotlights with wide flood distribution (approx. 50°) illuminate the underside of the wooden grid construction. The luminaires are mounted on pedestals along the glass railings.



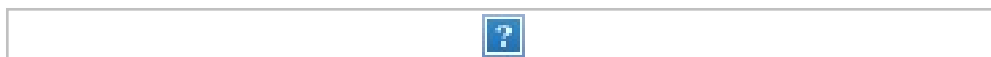
Quintessence recessed spotlights illuminate corridors and passageways on the office floors. Parscan spotlights equipped with Spherolit wide flood lenses (distribution approx. 50°) and neutral white 4000K light color are aligned to the trees in the building.



Quintessence recessed spotlights with wide flood distribution (approx. 50°) provide high quality, glare-free lighting in the corridors, circulation zones, access paths and staircases of the new Swatch headquarters.

## **Accentuated lighting of the exhibits in the Swatch and Omega Museum of the Cité du Temps: ERCO Parscan spotlights**

The lighting designers opted for exhibition lighting using a track infrastructure in the Swatch Museum and Omega Museum, each occupying one floor of the Cité du Temps building. Parscan spotlights with 12W LED modules illuminate the exhibits. According to the situation, the luminaires are equipped with interchangeable spot (approx. 15°) and flood (approx. 30°) Spherolit lenses. Specific timepiece models and details are highlighted with narrow spot distribution (approx. 6°). "For the lighting in the exhibition areas we specified a warm white 3000K color as the primary light source in order to optimally render the colors of the exhibits, but also the timber structure of the architecture," says lighting designer Roland Block. "The exhibition planners from tokyoblue GmbH also partially use accents in a 4000K neutral white light color." This allows the various materials of the valuable watches, such as different shades of gold, to be ideally accentuated.



In the Omega Museum in the Cité du Temps, Parscan spotlights mounted on track with spot or flood distribution accentuate the prized exhibits. Very narrow spot distribution (approx. 6°) also especially emphasizes individual watches and details.



"For the lighting in the exhibition areas we specified a warm white 3000K light color as the primary light source for optimally rendering the colors of the exhibits and also the timber structure of the architecture," says lighting designer Roland Block. "The exhibition planners from tokyoblue GmbH also

partially use accents in a 4000K neutral white light color."

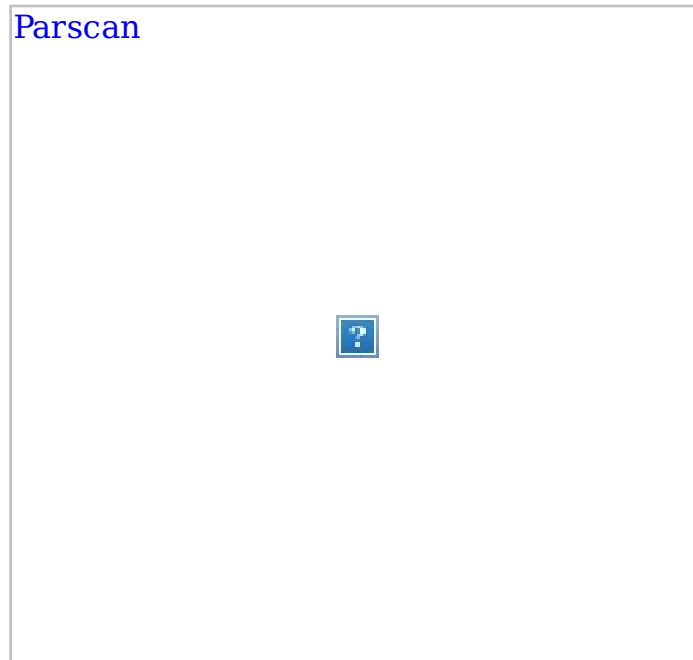


In the Swatch Museum housed on one floor of the Cité du Temps, Parscan spotlights mounted on track with narrow spot, spot or flood distribution create accentuated light on the exhibits with concentrated light in particular areas.



**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, ATRIUM, ELLE DECORATION, HÄUSER, AIT or WALLPAPER\*.

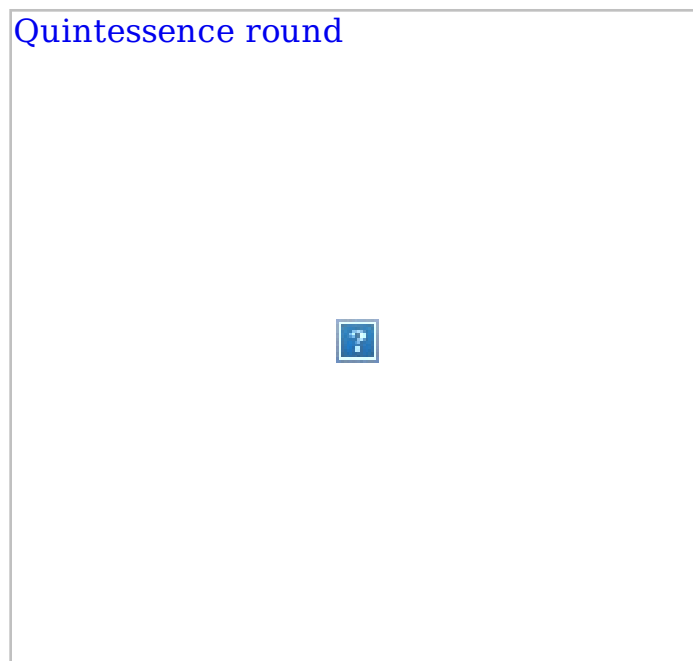
## Luminaires used



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### Parscan

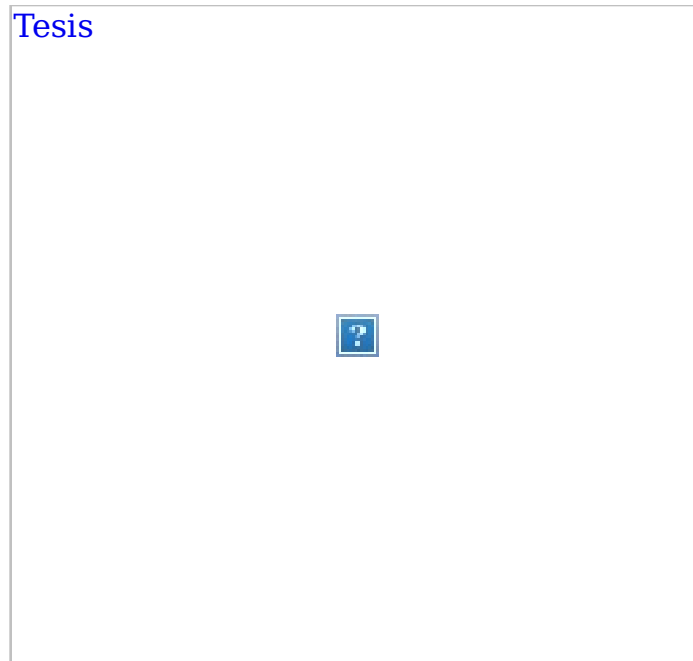
Luminaires for track



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### Quintessence round

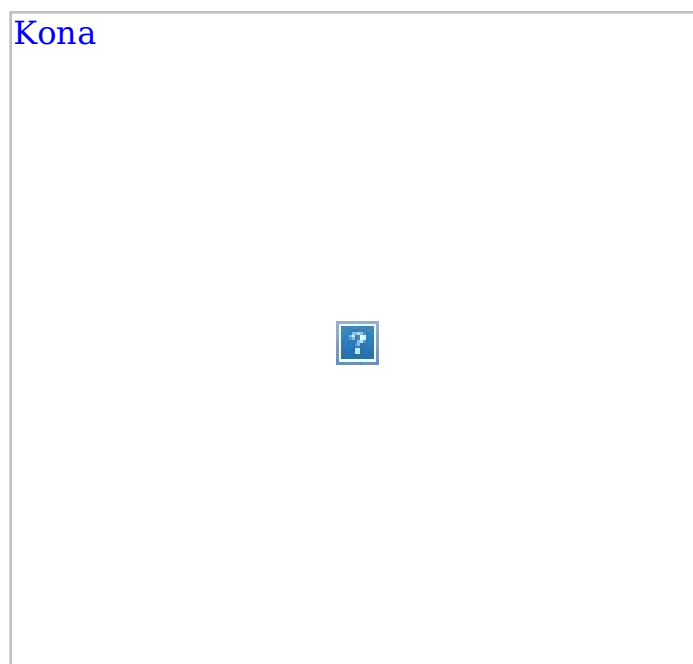
Recessed luminaires



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