



Light, architecture and sustainability in the expansion of a cultural icon São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP)

The São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), one of the most important cultural landmarks in Brazil, has begun a new stage with the inauguration of the Pietro Maria Bardi building, its largest expansion since it moved in 1968 to the emblematic building designed by Lina Bo Bardi. An Italian Brazilian architect, Bo Bardi left a deep mark on modern Latin American architecture, with a vision that combined functionality, accessibility, and social commitment. His design of the MASP, raised on red pillars and with a "free opening" that functions as a public space, is today a symbol of São Paulo.

Project data

Project:
São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), Brazil

Architecture:
Metro Arquitetos Associados

Lighting design:
Fernanda Carvalho Lighting Design + Acenda

Project Manager MASP:
Miriam Elwing

Distributor:
e:light

Photography:
Santiago Chaer

The extension, led by METRO Arquitetos Associados, respects the scale and language of the original building, avoiding competing with its monumentality. The new volume, a sober prism on a transparent base, is connected to the MASP by means of an underpass that facilitates functional integration between the two buildings, optimising the circulation of the public and the transport of works of art. This transformation implied a double challenge: to adapt an old residential block to contemporary museum demands, and to create a new museum that would dialogue with the architectural and symbolic legacy of Bo Bardi.

„The main challenge was to design a building that would expand the iconic headquarters designed by Lina Bo Bardi, in order to respectfully dialogue with its architecture.“

(Miriam Elwing, Project Manager MASP)

Sustainable architecture and responsible design

One of the most distinctive elements of the new building is its perforated and pleated metal façade, which acts as a protective "skin". This architectural solution controls the incidence of natural light, reduces the thermal load and improves energy efficiency, reliev-

ing the air conditioning system. The timeless design, with simple shapes and durable materials, reflects a sustainability that goes beyond the technical: it is an architecture designed to last, without the need for major future interventions.

The project has obtained LEED certification, thanks to its intelligent ventilation systems, its efficient thermal envelope and its respectful integration with the urban environment. This sustainability vision aligns with the values of ERCO, whose lighting technology is designed for [durability](#), efficiency and flexibility.

Museum lighting: precision, comfort and versatility

The lighting of the new MASP was developed by Fernanda Carvalho's lighting studio and Paula Carnelós's studio (Acenda) with a technical and curatorial approach that prioritizes visual comfort and the conservation of the works. The galleries, with a clear height of 4.95 meters, allow a generous spatial experience, while the light accompanies the visitor without interference.

The ERCO [Eclipse](#) luminaire family was chosen for its adaptability: A single typology can be used to achieve a wide range of effects, from uniform wallwashing to spotlighting of display cabinets and sculptures. Thanks to its interchangeable optics, accessories and [dark light technology](#), Eclipse allows the light to be adjusted to each work and space without the need to change luminaires, which reinforces its sustainable nature.

"From the beginning, we prioritised light quality and flexibility. We created a system to configure different atmospheres and lighting scenes." (Fernanda Carvalho + Paula Carnelós: Lighting Designers)

In the red room, dedicated to telling the story of the MASP, a lighting balance was achieved between the general lighting of the space and the punctual lighting of the display cases. The meticulous work of illuminating the display

cabinets from above, with levels similar to the walls, made it possible to maintain visual coherence without the need to increase the power, even on deep red surfaces. This strategy, based on the principles of human visual perception, made it possible to achieve high efficiency at reduced light levels.

Thanks to [dark light technology](#), the visitor circulates through the space enjoying visual comfort, observing the works both on the walls and in the centre of the rooms without glare. The ceiling grid allows the luminaires to be positioned flexibly, adapting the beam to each construction site, even when it is not mounted on the wall. This ability to adapt is key in a museum that is constantly changing its exhibition narrative.

"The creative freedom offered by the precise and flexible lighting system consolidates the museum's status as an international benchmark." (Fernanda Carvalho + Paula Carnelós, Lighting Designers)

In addition, ERCO luminaires are designed for a service life of more than [20 years](#). Its design responds to criteria of functionality and longevity, not to passing fads. This philosophy allows the lighting system to remain current and efficient over time, adapting to the changing needs of the museum without compromising its aesthetics or performance.

A museum for the future

With five new galleries, educational spaces, technical areas and a comprehensive improvement in air conditioning, security and lighting, the new building doubles the total area of the MASP and increases its exhibition capacity by 66%. This expansion not only transforms the physical structure of the museum, but also the cultural experience of its visitors.

„The new building responds to the need to expand the exhibition space and support areas, as well as to the excellence of the facilities."

(Miriam Elwing: Project Manager MASP)

Luminaires used in the project



Eclipse OnTrack
spotlight

About ERCO

ERCO is an international specialist for high-quality and digital architectural lighting. The family-owned company, founded in 1934, operates globally in 55 countries with independent sales organisations and partners.

ERCO understands light as the fourth dimension of architecture – and thus as an integral part of sustainable building. Light is the contribution to making society and architecture better and, at the same time, preserving our environment. ERCO Greenology® – the corporate strategy for sustainable lighting – combines ecological responsibility with technological expertise.

At the light factory in Lüdenscheid, Germany, ERCO develops, designs and manufactures luminaires with a focus on photometric

optics, electronics and sustainable design. The lighting tools are developed in close collaboration with architects, lighting designers and electrical designers. They are used primarily in the following applications: Work and Culture, Community and Public/Outdoor, Contemplation, Living, Shop and Hospitality. ERCO lighting experts support designers worldwide in transforming their projects into reality with highly precise, efficient and sustainable lighting solutions.

If you require any further information on ERCO or image material, please visit us at www.ercos.com/press. We can also provide you with material on projects worldwide for your media coverage.

Copies and links requested.

For further information or image material
please contact:

ERCO GmbH

Katrin Klein
Content Manager / PR
Brockhauser Weg 80-82
58507 Lüdenscheid
Germany
Tel.: +49 2351 551 345
k.klein@ercos.com
www.ercos.com

mai public relations GmbH

Arno Heitland
Senior PR Consultant
Leuschnerdamm 13
10999 Berlin
Germany
Tel: +49 30 66 40 40 553
ercos@maipr.com
www.maipr.com

