



New light for the ancient Imperial Forums in Rome

One of the most prestigious lighting projects to be realised in Italy in recent years has been completed – the relighting of the ancient Imperial Forums in Rome premiered on 21 April 2015, right on time for the city's birthday. The project was planned by noted lighting designer and Oscar-winning cinematographer Vittorio Storaro. The lighting tools were supplied by ERCO.

Project data

Project: Relighting of the Imperial Forums Fori imperiali, Rome / Italy

Lighting designer: Vittorio Storaro, Rome / Italy; Francesca Storaro, Castel Gandolfo / Italy

Photographer: Vittorio Storaro, Rome / Italy (Photo 1, 4-9); Frieder Blickle, Hamburg / Germany (Photo 2-3, 10)

The ancient Imperial Forums in Rome are a prominent archaeological site in the "Eternal City" that enjoys a rich and unique heritage of art treasures. Five monumental public squares, once surrounded by majestic buildings, were constructed in the early imperial period as an extension to the Forum Romanum. Each named after the emperor who built them, the forums today may look like a disorderly collection of ruins, yet they still hint at the past glory and architectural splendour of this ancient metropolis. The night illumination of these formidable monuments was in need of an upgrade, requiring a new technical concept and lighting design. To that end, the institutes responsible for the forums commissioned internationally noted lighting designer Vittorio Storaro to come up with an innovative artistic approach to the illumination of three of the five imperial forums: for the Forum of Augustus, the Forum of Nerva and the Forum of Trajan with its famous Column of Trajan. For Storaro, who made a name for himself as a cinematographer winning as many as three Oscars with "Apocalypse Now", "Reds" and "The Last Emperor", light is central to his life's work. His design concept is based on the idea of writing with light to tell a story. Special

focus was given to differentiated lighting that brings out the various textures of the ancient squares and their defining architecture. For the implementation of his concept, the doyen – respectfully dubbed "maestro" in Italy – secured the assistance of his daughter Francesca Storaro, an internationally recognised architect and lighting designer.

The relighting specifications for the three forums posed a significant challenge to the lighting concept. The context stipulated use of the latest and most efficient LED luminaires for maximum luminous efficacy with minimum energy consumption. Equally, the clients attached great importance to the long life of the luminaires. Their primary thought, next to ensuring a sustainable investment, was to keep any necessary maintenance in this archaeologically sensitive area to an absolute minimum. The prime concern for the Storaros, meanwhile, was optimal implementation of their design concept, which required lighting tools with flexible yet precise light distributions. Given these factors, the decision to realise the prestigious lighting project with ERCO luminaires speaks for itself. It confirms once more

the excellent quality of ERCO products with respect to the criteria driving this decision.

For the relighting of the Imperial Forums, Vittorio and Francesca Storaro selected projectors, floodlights and wallwashers – Lightscan, Parscoop, Grasshopper and Beamer – alongside Lightscan and Focalflood façade luminaires from ERCO's extensive range of outdoor lighting tools. With different levels of luminous flux, the luminaires create a hierarchy of architectural details. Combined with the interchangeable ERCO Spherolit lenses, which enable individual and precise lighting solutions with six different light distributions, the result is a differentiated concept that achieves the high standards required by a narrative lighting project of such complexity.

Pinpoint lighting accents and the uniform wall-washing of structural elements direct the view of the visitor. Special attention is warranted for the grazing light of Focalflood, which emphasises the texture of the ancient ruins strikingly for

an almost three-dimensional effect. The specific use of neutral white and warm white light gives prominence to the architectural structure of the Imperial Forums. Luminaires with neutral white light illuminate the architectural elements peculiar to each forum, such as remnants of the large temples or the Column of Trajan. Warm white light is used as a contrast for all other objects and surfaces. This is one more aspect of ERCO LED technology that offers the lighting designers complete peace of mind: Thanks to the strict selection of only the best LEDs, ERCO lighting tools guarantee optimum colour consistency.

Luminaires used in the project



Lightscan



Grasshopper



Beamer



Parscoop



Lightscan



Focalflood

Copies and links requested.

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About ERCO

The ERCO Light Factory in Lüdenscheid is a leading international specialist in architectural lighting using LED technology. The family business, founded in 1934, now operates as a global player with over 60 subsidiaries, branches and agencies in over 40 countries worldwide. Since 2015 ERCO's portfolio has been 100% LED. Inspired by "light digital" as its leitmotif, ERCO in Lüdenscheid develops, designs and produces digital luminaires with focus on photometrics, electronics and design. Working closely with architects, lighting designers and engineers, ERCO develops lighting tools used primarily for applications in the following fields: Work, Shop,

Culture, Community, Hospitality, Living, Public and Contemplation. ERCO understands digital light as the fourth dimension of architecture – providing highly precise and efficient lighting solutions to support creative designers in turning their visions into reality.

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