



Rembrandt placed in the right light: ERCO installs the latest lighting technology in the world's oldest art gallery

The Dulwich Picture Gallery, the world's oldest art gallery, has commemorated the 350th anniversary of the death of Rembrandt with an exceptional exhibition celebrating the role of light in the creation and content of his works. In a bold and innovative move the gallery commissioned award-winning cinematographer Peter Suschitzky, who created a lighting concept specifically for the 'Rembrandt's Light' exhibition using a new ERCO LED lighting system and wireless [Bluetooth control](#).

Project data

Film: <https://youtu.be/Dcsw7ZkFLAk>

Architecture: Sir John Soane (1753-1837)

Lighting design:
Peter Suschitzky

Photography:
Gavriil Papadiotis, London

The gallery, located in South East London, designed by Sir John Soane and inaugurated in 1815, upgraded part of its existing halogen lighting to a Casambi Bluetooth controlled system incorporating [Optec](#) LED spotlights with 12W LED modules from ERCO. Thanks to the new technology, Suschitzky succeeded in illuminating the pioneering works of the Dutch master – 35 paintings, etchings and drawings – in a unique way and bringing the theme of the exhibition, light and narrative, to life.

Star Wars and Rembrandt

Suschitzky is well-known for his work on films such as *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Mars Attacks*, and as Director of Photography on 11 David Cronenberg films. "If Rembrandt were alive today he might have

become a cameraman," says Jennifer Scott, Sackler Director at the Dulwich Picture Gallery and co-curator of Rembrandt's Light. "As can be seen in our exhibition, he utilised light to put the viewer into the narrative."

"All my life I've been inspired by the works of the greatest of the Old Masters," explains Suschitzky. "In my opinion Rembrandt strove to discover a universal truth in human existence, and he used light to create movement and emotion. It's exactly like this in the art of film-making, where it's essential for strong storytelling to model with light and direct the viewer's gaze to the desired spot in the picture."

Working with light

The thematically arranged exhibition traces how Rembrandt worked with light, from

evoking a meditative atmosphere and illuminating people to the creation of effect and drama. "We aimed to use the lighting to emphasise the different themes of the rooms and also the moods depicted in Rembrandt's paintings," says Helen Hillyard, assistant curator of the gallery and co-curator of Rembrandt's Light.

"The first room for example is bold and dramatic – it demonstrates Rembrandt's unique ability as a storyteller – whilst the last room conveys lush sensuality and creates an intimate atmosphere for the most personal works of the artist. With the new LED lighting system I believe we've succeeded in communicating some of the key messages of the exhibition through our own work with light."

Bluetooth-compatible ERCO luminaires allow individual switching and dimming, with control and programming being implemented via iPad and iPhone. A range of interchangeable tertiary lenses – including narrow, oval, wide and floodlight distribution of light along with framing – have been used to achieve the precise illumination of each artwork.

Exciting potential

"The fascinating thing at the moment is that the Bluetooth system can be designed according to a specific requirement," explains Alexander Moore, the gallery's exhibition director. "We're soon going to present a

photography exhibition where part of the lighting has to be switched by timers that are activated wirelessly by the visitor. We're also busying ourselves with interactive lighting designs that can actually be controlled by the visitor. What is important is that we've now opened ourselves up to these new developments and can be part of the current discourse."

With its wide range of light distributions and high quality photometrics the Optec range of spotlights covers all the lighting requirements for exhibitions: rich-contrast accent lighting, floodlighting of exhibits, uniform illumination of walls and crisp-edged light beams for impressive lighting effects. According to Alexander Moore, the decision to go with ERCO was influenced by both product and service quality.

Close integration of ERCO

"We wish to emphasise that, as a charity organisation, we always compare producers in detail when awarding contracts like these," explains Moore. "We weren't looking for a Bluetooth-controlled system, in fact ERCO pointed us in that direction. The company was selected in part because their products offered the best price-performance ratio, but the most important reason was that ERCO involved itself in the project right from the start. ERCO really has become part of the family, and this kind of relationship is in keeping with the culture of the Dulwich Picture Gallery."

Luminaires used in the project



Optec

About ERCO

The ERCO Light Factory in the German town of 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 independent sales organisations and partners in 55 countries worldwide. Since 2015 ERCO's portfolio has been 100% LED. With this in mind, 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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