

Press release
Dornbirn, May 2010

Shining treasure house

Zumtobel implements a special lighting solution at the Museum of Islamic Art



B1 | The Museum of Islamic Art in Doha cannot fail to impress with its magnificent architecture and fascinating lighting scenarios.

Right at the heart of the desert state of Qatar, a magnificent treasure is hidden: on a floor space of about 45,000 square metres, the first autonomous Museum of Islamic Art in Doha accommodates art treasures of the Middle East from thirteen centuries. An artificial island set up especially for the Museum building, some 60 m from the seaside promenade in Doha, with a palm-fringed driveway emphasises the extraordinary status of the Museum.

For the spectacular building complex with its precious exhibits, the lighting designers of Isometrix in collaboration with Zumtobel produced a lighting solution individually adjusted to match the room use: unobtrusive in design and with focussed lighting effects, more

than 2,000 Zumtobel Starflex spotlights put the Islamic artefacts into the right light. The specially designed spotlights installed in the exhibition rooms were fitted with special actuators so that they can be aligned fully automatically via an intelligent control system. Thus, a technically sophisticated lighting scenario was created which sets the stage for magnificent works of Islamic art.

The Emir of Qatar offered the commission of designing this marvellous museum building to the 91-year-old Chinese-born American architect Ieoh Ming Pei, who intensely studied Islamic architecture before starting with the building project. The nearly windowless building complex composed of various cubes stands

out against the azure sea and is visible from afar thanks to its shining façade made of French Chamois limestone. The rather austere exterior surprises the visitor with an amazing openness inside: "If you want people to come and stay, then you must create space for them and exciting pathways through these spaces", describes star architect Pei his unique museum concept.

No ornament breaks the rectilinearity of the pyramid-shaped building. Only when entering the museum, visitors will discover the oriental motifs typical of the Middle East: vaulted ceilings, stone floor inlays and widely curved stairways in the atrium evoke the memories of 1001 Arabian Nights. The architectural highlight of the five-storey building



is a cuboid block featuring four lighting slots, which conceals a steel dome – invisible from outside – refracting the sunlight a thousand times.

No daylight enters the spaciouly designed galleries, which are subdivided into permanent and temporary exhibition rooms. The masterworks mainly displayed in showcases are exclusively illuminated with artificial lighting. UV filters attached to the spotlights ensure particularly gentle illumination of sensitive exhibits. In terms

of lighting design, however, the focus was on fully automatic spotlight control. For this purpose, Zumtobel added specially built-in actuators to the Starflex spotlights. Via this intelligent control system, the 1,200 spotlights mounted in the exhibition rooms can be aligned fully automatically, and pivoted and swiveled individually by up to 45°. In the temporary exhibition halls, another 850 Starflex spotlights have been mounted. The spotlights are provided with a variety of

radiation angles allowing targeted illumination of the exhibits. By systematically using accessories such as honeycomb louvres, filter glasses or barn doors, many other fascinating lighting scenes can be produced.

By implementing this impressive project, Zumtobel was able to further strengthen its position as an international partner and specialist in the field of high-quality museum lighting.



B2 | Starflex spotlights with fully automatic control are a special solution by Zumtobel, which was designed especially for the Museum in Doha.

Fact box**Museum of Islamic Art in Doha/QA**

Client:	Qatar Petroleum, Doha/QA
Architecture:	leoh Ming Pei, New York/US
Interior design:	Wilmotte Associes SA, Paris/F
Lighting design:	Isometrix, London/UK
Electrical installations:	Mecury Qatar, Doha/QA
Lighting solution:	Zumtobel Starflex special solution: 100W QT 12 spotlights for tracks, 100W QT 12 spotlights with innovative pivotable system



B3 | The art objects displayed in protective showcases are brilliantly highlighted by accent lighting.

More information:



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