



## New light for an ancient jewel: ERCO relighting of the Ara Pacis Museum, Rome

The Altar of Augustan Peace is one of the most important ancient monuments in Rome. In 2006, Richard Meier & Partners created the glass building of the Museo dell' Ara Pacis, which protectively surrounds the altar. The original lighting concept for the building has now been converted to energy-efficient, low-maintenance LED spotlights and wallwashers, supplied by ERCO. This [new and highly sustainable lighting system](#) convinces in terms of quality of perception and economy – as well as scoring with energy savings of around 85%.

### Project data

[Link to the reportage](#)

[Link to the film](#)

Client: Roma Capitale, Italy

Architecture: Richard Meier & Partners Architects, New York / USA

Light planning (original concept 2006): Fisher Marantz Stone, New York / USA

Photography: Marcela Schneider Ferreira, Florence / Italy

In honour of Emperor Augustus, who had victoriously returned to Rome, the Roman Senate commissioned a magnificent marble altar in 13 BC. The provinces had been pacified following decades of civil war and the Pax Augusta promised stability and prosperity. The deeds of the celebrated ruler and his family, vividly and three-dimensionally depicted on the enclosing walls of the Ara Pacis Augustae, were intended to become a model for the citizens of the empire. Since 2006, the Altar of Augustan Peace, one of Rome's most important ancient monuments, is housed and can be admired in the Museo dell'Ara Pacis in the vicinity of banks of the Tiber. The airy building designed by Richard Meier & Partners includes areas for temporary exhibitions in addition to the large glazed hall with the altar.

A total of 218 LED lighting tools from ERCO now illuminate the museum and its central exhibit of the ancient altar in new light. The

aim of the conversion from halogen lighting to contemporary LED illumination was, in addition to improved energy efficiency, to increase the quality of visual perception of the monument and the associated spatial experience. The [original lighting concept](#), based on the idea of 'positive contrast', was retained: it not only uses nuanced levels of brightness to create perceptual hierarchies between the exhibit and surrounding space, but also builds up additional contrast through the use of different colour temperatures. General lighting with a warm white light colour defines the space around the Altar of Augustan Peace. Carved entirely of Carrara marble, the monument itself is set clearly apart from its surroundings thanks to the powerful directional lighting with a neutral white light colour.

## An impressive spatial and artistic experience due to nuanced lighting

The tour through the museum leads from the entrance hall through a corridor into the main exhibition hall with a height of about 12.50 metres. A row of [Lightcast](#) recessed luminaires (32W LED/3000K) provides the general lighting for the axis of movement. [Parscan](#) spotlights (24W LED/3000K) with flood distribution (28°) and Parscan wallwashers (24W LED/3000K) make the special dimensions of the room perceptible through uniform vertical illumination of the walls, whilst simultaneously emphasising their quarystone surfaces of fine Roman travertine. Parscan spotlights with narrow spot distribution (6°) and an 8W LED module set precise beams of light on a row of ancient busts marking the transition into the main hall.

## 85% energy savings: relighting with maintenance-free ERCO LED luminaires

In the exhibition hall with the altar, Parscan spotlights (24W LED) with a warm white light colour of 3000K and spot distribution (16°) provide general lighting. The sacrificial altar itself, enclosed by four walls, is illuminated by Parscan spotlights (8W LED) with neutral white light colour of 4000K and narrow spot distribution (6°). This directional accent light

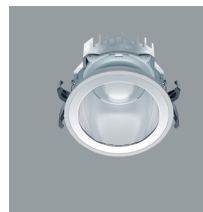
creates an expressive interplay of light and shadow on the ornate marble reliefs and enables the depicted figures to be emphasised in a sculptural way. A specific challenge for the lighting design in the central hall around the Altar of Augustan Peace was the changing daylight that enters through skylights and through the two fully glazed sides of the building. With the help of sensors and [Casambi Bluetooth control](#), the new lighting now responds accordingly: light intensity is regulated in such a way that the marble reliefs on the exterior surfaces of the altar are optimally illuminated, with the monument standing out against its surroundings in a radiant white. In addition, further pre-defined light scenes can be called up depending on the season, time of day and use of the museum.

All Parscan spotlights with LED were mounted on existing [ERCO track](#), which kept installation effort and costs low. The new lighting system with ERCO LED lighting tools, commissioned by the City of Rome and generously sponsored by Bulgari, represents a sustainable investment. Maintenance-free and with a long service life, its connected load is only 8.4 kW compared to the 57 kW of the old system, which means it consumes around 85% less energy.

## Luminaires used in the project



Parscan



Lightcast



Option

## Copies and links requested.

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## 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.



