

Press information

Contemporary art in focus: Zumtobel illuminates “URBAN NATION” – the unique Urban Art museum in Berlin

Façades become screens, a courtyard doubles as a temporary exhibition space, workshops and events fuel a creative dialogue: The concept behind the URBAN NATION MUSEUM FOR URBAN CONTEMPORARY ART in Berlin intrigues and excites with its fusion of diverse art forms and truly unique architecture. Exhibition rooms, a courtyard and an innovative interchangeable façade were created for the modular-designed museum in line with plans drawn up by the internationally renowned GRAFT architecture studio. A clear prerequisite for the success of the project is the holistic interplay between architecture, art and light. With this careful balance in mind, a differentiated lighting solution from Zumtobel has now been realised throughout the museum.

Dornbirn, 9th of October 2017 – The [URBAN NATION MUSEUM](#), under the artistic direction of Yasha Young, invited guests to a two-day opening event starting on 16. September 2017. Under the motto “UNique. UNited. Unstoppable.”, the museum presents contemporary Urban Art crafted by a series of national and international artists. The impressive new venue has been shaped by architects from the [GRAFT](#) studio, who pooled their innovative and creative resources to transform a former residential and commercial building from the Gründerzeit period in the Berlin district of Schöneberg.

The result is an all-embracing centre for Urban Contemporary Art and a creative setting for artists, offering space for exhibitions, workshops, debates, cross-media work and archiving. The implementation of the plans formulated by the GRAFT architecture studio demanded a client-oriented lighting solution to help maximise the effectiveness of the overall concept. Zumtobel immediately impressed by meeting the needs of the architects from GRAFT and simultaneously tailoring its offer to fulfil the specific requirements of the museum.

URBAN NATION is an initiative from the “[Berliner Leben](#)” foundation (Berlin life), which was founded in 2013 by the Gewobag housing association. URBAN NATION has already worked with artists from all over the world, including Shepard Fairey, D*Face, Maya Hayuk, Cyrle., Word To Mother, Miss Van, The London Police, Herakut, Snik and Evoca 1. The museum has gained increasing prominence by providing a stage for Urban Art that shines on an international scale, acting as a mouthpiece for Urban Contemporary Art and simultaneously making this art form accessible to visitors and residents. This was certainly evident at the official opening, when the museum hosted a two-day local festival to stimulate a public discourse between the city, artists, residents and those who just happened to be passing by.

Progressive and surprisingly spacious – the museum interior

GRAFT used the reconstruction of the interior to translate the 19th-century architecture into 21st-century design. Suites of rooms, the likes of which can normally be found in fine baroque palaces, create a real sense of space. At the same time, the rooms themselves stretch upwards over two storeys, leading to unexpectedly generous levels of spatial perception and offering a vast range of possibilities in terms of artistic expression. A defined route connects all the exhibition areas, helping visitors see and experience the fascinating works from various distances. The exhibition rooms feature [SUPERSYSTEM II](#) mounted horizontally at the side of the route. Standard versions of the Maxi spotlight (with DALI control) are combined with a trimless profile, delivering exactly the kind of additional flexible lighting solution that was requested by both the architect and the owner.

Zumtobel used the lighting solution for the multi-storey rooms to place a strong focus on the uniform illumination of the walls in the exhibition spaces, while at the same time including the option to set effective lighting accents. This is achieved with the help of the [INTRO](#) ceiling luminaire family. Extensive adjustment options mean that INTRO can be adapted to suit the different forms of architecture and thereby provide high-quality, tailored and efficient light throughout the rooms. [INTRO liteCarve®](#), a spotlight for vertical surfaces, and [INTRO M](#), a brilliant LED accent spotlight with a high light output, both play a major role here. The liteCarve® reflector technology developed by Zumtobel facilitates the homogeneous and effective illumination of niches and walls, along with a precise and balanced right-angled light distribution, while the reflector itself makes sure that the light is directed accurately and fully indirectly onto the vertical exhibition areas.

A fine interplay – the façade

The modular and partially interchangeable façade developed by GRAFT serves as a creative canvas for artists. When the exhibition changes, these customised exterior elements become extra exhibits in the museum's collection. The shifting façade is impressively showcased by vertical illumination from [BLADE MAX](#), a flexible linear lighting system developed by the [acdc](#) brand of the Zumtobel Group. Coloured RGBW fittings add a special character to the window apertures on the fourth floor.

Communicative lingering – the courtyard as an exhibition space and venue

In addition to the actual exhibition, visitors have the chance to appreciate numerous art installations even before they step inside, as the courtyard of the URBAN NATION Museum doubles as an event venue and presentation space for contemporary sculptures. The harmonious solution from Zumtobel subtly raises the quality of time spent in this space – as well as offering flexible lighting for the changing compositions. Floor-recessed MAGNA luminaires from [acdc](#) and [SUPERSYSTEM outdoor](#) Accent, a product from Zumtobel that incorporates three swivel-mounted LED tubes, combine to create the perfect lighting conditions in the courtyard.

When it comes to lighting management, one single app-based system can cover it all. Whether it be for the exhibition and event spaces, library, offices, emergency lighting or even the coloured light on the building façade, the [LITECOM](#) system from Zumtobel Group Services (ZGS) regulates the

complete installation and offers simple and flexible lighting control for the whole URBAN NATION building.

Zumtobel and GRAFT – a successful partnership

Zumtobel and GRAFT Architects have already been working together on a number of projects, including the design and development of the [CAELA](#) decorative functional luminaire in 2015. This LED fitting fuses a noble appearance with modularity and versatility to produce an impressive lighting solution. Thanks to its high efficiency and innovative light distribution, CAELA is suitable for a wide range of lighting tasks.

GRAFT Architects is a renowned German architectural firm, with studios in Los Angeles, Berlin and Beijing giving the company a strong international presence. Famed for its willingness to experiment and passion for adopting innovative approaches to volume and space, GRAFT will design the German pavilion for the Architecture Biennale 2018, working closely with curator Marianne Birthler, the former head of the Stasi documentation authority in Berlin.

Photo captions:

(Photo credits: Zumtobel)



Fig. 1: The concept behind the URBAN NATION MUSEUM FOR URBAN CONTEMPORARY ART intrigues and excites with its fusion of diverse art forms and truly unique architecture.



Fig. 2: Architects from the GRAFT studio have transformed an old building in the Berlin district of Schöneberg into an impressive museum.



Fig. 3: The rooms stretch upwards over two storeys, leading to unexpectedly generous levels of spatial perception and offering a vast range of possibilities in terms of artistic expression.



Fig. 4: A defined route connects all the exhibition areas, helping visitors see and experience the fascinating works from various distances. SUPERSYSTEM II provides the ideal lighting conditions for the full range of exhibits.



Photo 5: Zumtobel used the lighting concept for the rooms to place a strong focus on the uniform illumination of the walls and the option to set effective lighting accents.

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About Zumtobel

As a leader in innovation, Zumtobel develops sustainable lighting solutions tailored to the needs of people in their respective applications. With a comprehensive portfolio of high-quality luminaires and intelligent lighting management systems, the Austrian company provides optimum indoor and exterior products for working and living spaces - the right light for every activity at any time of day. The applications office, education, presentation and retail, hotel and wellness, health, art and culture and industry are now perfectly complemented with portfolios for living and outdoor areas. Zumtobel is a brand of Zumtobel Group AG with its head office in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg (Austria).

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