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AV in Action

THE ART OF LIGHTING CONTROL

LIGHTING CONTROL RELAY PANEL PROVIDES AN OPEN PLATFORM FOR POWER MANAGEMENT AND LIGHTING CONTROL FOR THE ART MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS' NEW PERMANENT GALLERY.

By AV Technology Staff

THE PROJECT

Works of art within a museum are priceless pieces of history. Equally important is the role lighting plays as a part of their appreciation. At the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, the lighting design

was a critical consideration for its new permanent gallery, the Dr. Clotilde P. Garcia Spanish Colonial Gallery. The two-room installation was designed to be separate in look and feel from the rest of the museum. It features royal-blue, jewel-colored walls that complement the various art, textiles, and artifacts from the Pre-Columbian and the Spanish Colonial period in Central American, Mexico, Southwestern America, and Peru as well as contemporary works by Hispanic artists who draw inspiration for Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial subjects. The pieces reflect how the Spanish Colonial period was a time of conquest, change, and influence. The wall color acts as a dramatic, rich backdrop that contrasts beautifully with the range of objects and paintings from the period.

UNIQUE DESIGN CHALLENGES

Wanting to impress upon visitors the powerful global interpretation of history from the 1600s to the early 1800s, the museum staff wanted a frame lighting system that would specifically highlight each piece. Texas-based Enlightening Ideas archi-



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tectural light designer Jerry Colmenero was tasked with bringing the museum's vision to life. Colmenero designed the frame lighting system that used LED fixtures to spotlight each art piece, helping to create a space that's both intimate and reverent of the history that shaped the town of Corpus Christi and the geography around it.

"When converting the former office areas into galleries for Pre-Columbian, Spanish Colonial and contemporary works, we wanted a completely unique look for the spaces," said Joe Schenk, director of the Art Museum of South Texas. "Having the lighting illuminate only the works of art created this very special look and feel which enhances the experience for the visitor."

Satisfying most lighting



Each day, about 30 minutes is spent manually turning on the rest of the 60,000-square-foot facility. The automated system in the Spanish Colonial Gallery eases that daily task, providing the staff with a self-sufficient lighting system, while preserving the life of the LEDs.

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The LCRP is easy to wire and setup versus traditional relay-based systems, allowing it to be quickly programmed onsite and easily expanded as more circuits are needed.

requirements, LED also provides an abundance of benefits, including improved intensity, spectral continuity, color variation, performance, and reliability. In addition, they offer lower power consumption, reduced heat loads, and longer lifespan than traditional lamps, making them an optimal choice for museum lighting installations. However, to reap the full cost efficiencies LEDs provide, the museum needed a way to automate turning on and off the lighting system in the galleries. Each day, about 30 minutes is spent manually turning on the rest of the 60,000-square-foot facility. The automated system in the Spanish Colonial Gallery eases that daily task, providing the staff with a self-sufficient lighting system, while preserving the life of the LEDs.

THE SOLUTION

Colmenero chose LynTec's Lighting Control Relay Panel (LCRP). The LCRP adds DMX

control to 4, 8 or 10- 20A circuits using latching relays fed by circuit breakers from any brand/model power panel. The LCRP series of lighting controllers are ideal in applications where control needs to be added to an exist-

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ing power panel, or when the environment only requires control of a small number of circuits. There's no need to replace existing panel boards. The LCRP is easy to wire and setup versus traditional relay-based systems, allowing it to be quickly programmed onsite

and easily expanded as more circuits are needed. The panel is available in a variety of slim designs that require up to 50 percent less space, allowing it to fit in to space-constrained electrical closets, and with its modular construction design, allows for cost-effective control of 4, 8, or 10 circuits per system and daisy-chainable for unlimited circuit count control. DMX controlled and non-controlled circuits can be mixed in the same panel for even more customization.

RESULTS

The LynTec LCRP panel gives the new permanent galleries the spotlight it deserves. With the power of DMX control, the staff at the Art Museum of South Texas can schedule the turning on and off the gallery's lighting system on command and directly control of all four circuits in the panel. In addition to automating daily on-off control, it provided

Colmenero with an open platform to create a flexible design that incorporates and controls all the lighting components needed to create the different lighting scenarios the museum envisioned for the galleries. It is programmed for two modes: art display mode and a maintenance mode. In art display mode, it turns on the 40 Altman ME Series Ellipsoidals LED framing projectors that are tied into an Altman Smart Track. The same track carries the high-voltage power for the LEDs as well as DMX data, and is energized by a start command from the LynTec panel. In maintenance mode, which can be achieved with a press of a button all the Altman fixtures turn off and the fluorescent overhead fixtures power on for room lighting to perform cleaning and general maintenance —eliminating the time-consuming step of manually locating the correct switch in the mechanical room to power on and off overhead lighting.

The system is also designed to provide easy, seamless manual control of individual fixtures

during tours. Museum staff can use a tablet to communicate with the Nicolaudie UE7 interface to turn on one light fixture, dimming the rest in the LEDs, while they talk to the group about a specific piece. At the end of the tour, they can hand command back to LynTec panel, which puts it back to its regular gallery setting.

Because of the simplicity of the system in the Spanish Gallery, the museum also built a children’s black box theater that also uses a LynTec panel to power the color-changing LED stage lighting. In addition to stage lighting control, Colmenero programmed the system to control the entrance lighting to the hallway that accesses the theater. This allows the museum to turn off the lights when the theater is not in use sparing staff the need to locate a switch at the end of the dark hallway.

“LynTec is the core of what makes these designs work,” said Colmenero. “It allows us to turn on and off the electricity when and where it’s needed. It gives us a power management so we don’t burn

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 ART MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS
 www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

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through the LEDs, extending their life span and protecting the museum’s investment. Finally, it gives us an open, flexible platform that’s essential to lighting design. And for the user, this is all at a touch of button. It couldn’t be easier.”

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