LIGHT UP YOUR ART

Good lighting is fundamental for both presenting your collection at its best, and avoiding potential damage. There is much to consider from both a technical and aesthetic point of view, further to the specific considerations of being at sea.

TM Lighting is a British designer and manufacturer of a new generation of LED lighting products for the art world. Driven by an appreciation and passion for art, Harry Triggs and Andrew Molyneux, co-founded London-based TM Lighting in 2012, and set out to address the largely unsatisfactory way in which art is lit in residential settings, both on land and at sea. Having lit significant collections in numerous private and historic residences, including superyachts, their guiding principle was that good lighting can transform an artwork and its surroundings. "Choosing artwork is a very personal process that often elicits an emotional response, it is important to spend time thinking about the best way to present and showcase the work once you take it home, or onboard, so that the experience continues beyond the gallery. Until the launch of our new range, high-grade lighting was often inaccessible for private home or yacht owners – the sheer scale of old technologies was not suitable for homes. Our products give anyone with a love of art access to museum-grade lighting which is an exciting development with many possibilities" Andrew Molyneux.

Churchill Bar, *Regency Hyatt in London* © Tim Bol

Quality of Light

First and foremost, just as with homeowners, yacht owners wish their art collections to be seen in the best possible light. The perception of colour in artwork is our eye perceiving the light reflected off a canvas. This is the most important element to get right, especially when considering the use of LEDs. TM Lighting uses full spectrum, high colour rendition light which replicates all the colours of the rainbow and allows items like furnishings, textiles and clothing, as well as sculptures and paintings, to be appreciated in their full glory.

To be able to see an object, light must bounce off it. If that light only has 80% of the spectrum of colour in it, then you will only see 80% of the true colour of that object - so it may appear dull or faded.

"In the past, the old tungsten filament bulbs didn't light a picture well and would create only a glow at the top of the frame. The colour was too warm which distorted the colour of the painting, and the heat from the light damaged it." Triggs comments. "We have created a simple guide for when using LEDs that we call the 'three Cs';

Colour temperature, how warm or cold is the light? Too warm and it distorts the colour of the art, too cold and the atmosphere is not right in the space. We find 2700K is a good balance of warmth while maintaining colour accuracy. Then comes *Colour rendition*, this is hugely important as it reveals the work's true colours. Most LEDs do not exhibit the full spectrum of colour and are poor at rendering red, so the artwork can appear muted. We recommend 95+ CRI (colour rendering index) when lighting art. Lastly, *Colour consistency*. You should use a reputable manufacturer to ensure colour consistency from your LEDs." Triggs explains.

Why LEDs?

The majority of fading is caused by UV light, visible part of the spectrum, heat and human factors. LEDs do not have the damaging UV rays, which is important when lighting delicate items such as watercolours, textiles, delicate pigments and fabrics over a sustained period.

LEDs dramatically reduce the energy consumption and maintenance costs. "We advise only a careful selection of LED equipment be used to light art – it is essential that the product has a full spectrum of colour (95+CRI and above) to ensure all the colours in the artwork are vivid and vibrant." comments Triggs.

Energy efficiency

TM Lighting launched their first product, the TM Picture Light in response to the 2009 EU energy-saving directive, ordering the phase out of inefficient incandescent light bulbs, to reach climate protection targets. Continued research and development has led the companyto offer a product range that marries discreet design, with the flexibility offered by the very latest LED lighting technology, so as to create specialist luminaires that deliver a vastly superior quality of art lighting. Additionally, the products provide energy-efficient, cost-saving and conservation benefits for galleries, museums, and the home or yacht collection.

"LEDs are the ideal choice for boat lighting as they offer very low energy consumption, and robust and low maintenance owing to long lamp life of more than

35,000 hours. LEDs should be installed throughout the yacht, not just on the artwork." says Triggs "Our product TM ArtPoint is also ideal for yachts. It offers a flexible and highly discreet lighting product designed to meet the needs of homeowners with an evolving or rolling art collection, and the needs of lighting/interior designers working with clients' future art collections, where a gallery-style track and spotlight system would be overpowering. The product allows a much higher degree of flexibility to curate, rotate and rehang your artwork, before, during and after project completion, changing the size, mounting and location, whilst maintaining perfect lighting."

Private residence at Dovehouse Street in London, NBB Design © Courtesy of NBB Design

Tips for lighting your art collection

Finishes

The interiors of superyachts are not as susceptible to the elements as they once were owing to the technology available to control the environment, such as air-conditioning. However, it is always a good idea to consider appropriate finishes – bearing in mind the salt water atmosphere – especially on untreated materials such as aluminium and low grades of stainless steel. Appropriate plated, anodised and powder coated painted finishes should be used on lighting products on board.

If using picture lights, consider using a finish to match other features in the room such as door handles and other light fixtures. Alternatively, match the finish of the picture light to the frame, or wall colour to create a subtle, seamless look.

Presentation techniques

Lighting has a direct impact on the atmosphere of a room. You can create drama with the way you illuminate specific pieces. It helps to visualise the space like a theatre stage and to handpick pieces in the space that will become focal points to create life and movement. Three easy techniques can achieve very different atmospheres in the room onboard:

Casual solution:
Pick out a key picture within a group of artworks and light only this and let a little light spill onto other works.
Intermediate solution:
Use accent lights to project a pool of light onto a group of artworks.
Serious collection solution: Light every piece specifically using individual lights per artwork.

With each of these solutions, we are recommending the creation of a layer of vertical illumination; this provides the warmth of the reflected colour of the artwork into the room and adds depth to your lighting scheme. The best lighting schemes are made

UV / Infrared / Heat

Lighting is all-important, both directional and ambient, however too much light can damage a yacht's artwork. As on land, photography, watercolours and drawings need to be protected from natural light, so work with a reputable framer who can advise on highly protective anti-glare, anti-reflective, UV protected glass or acrylic (which weighs less) glazing solutions, and hang works with secure fixings away from direct light sources. Daylight is your collection's worst enemy but LEDs control the conditions to which the art is exposed as they emit no UV, infrared or projected heat.

We also advise using UV glass on windows and sunscreen blinds on board; from a conservation perspective, prevention is by far the best measure to protect your art collection from potential irreversible damage.

Positioning

Even with the best anti-reflective glass, there can still be reflection and glare on works of art. Minimise this by considering the location of the art and how the lighting is to be positioned. Consider the angle you will view your artwork from and aim to ensure that any reflections will not be seen directly. Correct placement of the lighting can help reduce visible reflections but this can be a challenge on boats with a lot of glazing.

Avoid positioning artwork in natural light that is high in UV radiation during the morning and high in infrared radiation during the evening. These wavelengths are outside of the visible light spectrum but are damaging to delicate pigments in artworks. Hanging in a position where light spills directly from the window onto the canvas can fade artwork.

Avoid placing artwork directly between large windows; your eye will struggle to see the artwork during daytime without significant artificial light levels to counter the contrast levels. Artworks with reflective glass, or a high gloss level, should not be mounted directly opposite large windows as you may generate undesirable reflections.