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BEST OF EUROSHOP 2014 LET THERE BE

LIGHT



EuroShop, one of the leading retail trade fairs in the world, takes place in Düsseldorf, Germany every three years. 2014's Expo did not disappoint. Staged in 17 pavilions, 109,000 trade visitors from 110 nations attended the event, with 2.8% of the total foreign visitors coming from India. It seems that three years between shows provides enough time for designers to create, fabricate and innovate for those attendees seeking "What's Next." Two aspects were the focus of EuroShop 2014; the staging and emotionalisation of the shopping experience through spectacular shop fittings, innovative lighting concepts, creative design ideas and extraordinary materials. Secondly, the omnichannel experience pervaded the Expo halls and educational sessions. Yet to me, one area in particular stood out from all the others.

In looking back at previous years, innovations that debuted at EuroShop related to fixturing and materials have helped to push the industry forward. This year, lighting was the highlight; specifically defined as all things related to illumination, digital integration, and lighting as a design element, i.e. an object, a frame, a pattern.



Lighting as Architecture

To some extent, store lighting plays an integral role in making products visible and appealing. Lighting impacts the space from many perspectives; from the fixtures, display and design elements, to the experience being seen as dynamic, ever-changing and localised. Today, lighting is reinvented beyond anything that might be typically thought of in traditional brick-and-mortar architecture.

However, one challenge is that many of these techniques require a degree of nuance; and by nuance, everything from foot candles to the use of sophisticated textures require the development and management of content relative to imagery and media. These also require a high degree of execution and maintenance -- all historic challenges within the Indian marketplace, but challenges that are constantly being addressed and overcome. In the future, these will be essentially seen as non-issues as the best and brightest of retail rise to both the challenges and the opportunity of next generation stores.

Sanjay Agarwal, MD at Future Research Design Company (FRDC) in Bangalore, also attended the show and explained, "EuroShop offered a vast intelligent and smart lighting solutions from a number of brands. The lighting portion of the Expo was more focused toward showing usefulness of lighting and how micro-





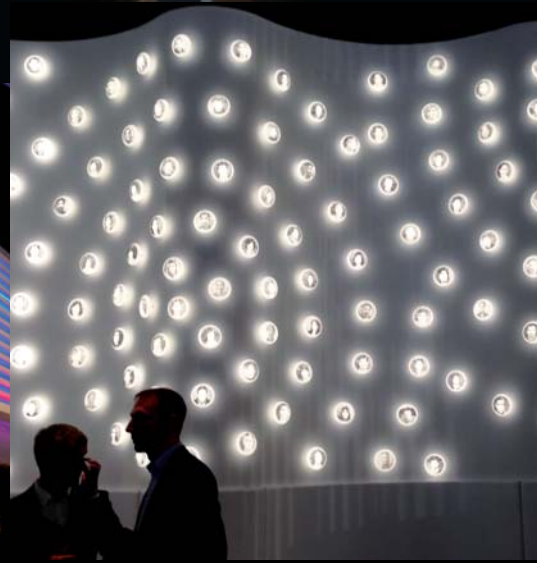
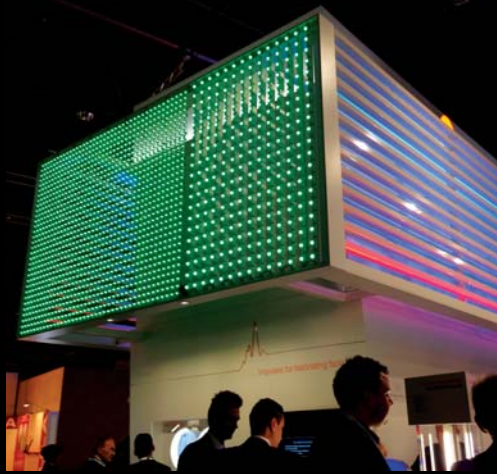
level jobs can be done with the intelligent use of lighting.” He adds, “Architectural spaces and design elements can be integrated with light modules which are miniscule and their long life is the key to today’s retail lighting.”

Lighting Is the Store

Given the impact of EuroShop’s lighting exhibits, their ability to be evocative -- mimicking a sunrise and a sunset, a starry night, or a thunderstorm -- was so dramatic, the outcome became quite compelling. Or in its positioning as a strategically focused and placed producer of highlight and focus, this use of lighting was another big change.

Today, they are literally integrating lighting into bookshelves, fixtures, under, below, within fixturing with devices that were no thicker than a small wire delivered the punch of lumens within a fixture display. If the show exhibits are any indication, the ceiling of the future will be the last and the least favourable option for the placement of lighting, with illumination being seen as an integrated element of all design objects of furniture and fixtures.

The role of lighting integration is essentially the summation of creating atmosphere consistent with the store’s marketing and positioning, integrated in terms of being part of the actual display and fixturing, rather than something that is independent and ambient. And lastly, integrated



in a way to be empathetic as to what is being sold in the environment. The following are some examples of the impact that lighting can have to become the integral element affecting the look and the feel of the consumer experience. Consider Lighting as:

While hesitating to some degree to focus so much only on one element of EuroShop, the silo thinking of lighting, or fixtures, or architecture as independent disciplines; one being the master, the other as servant, was rendered obsolete by EuroShop 2014. The rule of all these elements is clear; it is reminiscent of the way that a painter needs all the colors on his palette to render a masterpiece; and to do so in a real time integrated basis, rather than as a series of isolated steps.

Today’s retail designer cannot advocate either the inspiration or the execution, but rather must perform in the way that a conductor brings a special and identifiable sensibility to the sounds of an orchestra. The designer has the same obligation and opportunity to bring each of the players together, integrated, and focused on a single outcome. The role of lighting, digital and interactivity represents revolution in an industry that is much better known for evolution. **IR**



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