Press information

Technically highly sophisticated lighting solution for the Old Port of Marseille, France

As the European Capital of Culture 2013, Marseille has invested around 660 million euros in the development of a new cultural infrastructure and has made some lasting changes to the image of the city. Traffic-reducing measures have been introduced in the Old Port, the heart of the old city centre, which has now become a place for people to stroll and enjoy the surroundings and views. The idea for the lighting stems from Yann Kersalé. Selux have developed and realised a technically highly sophisticated lighting solution.

The place where the Greeks cast anchor and founded their colony "Massalia" 2600 years ago has become an inviting urban space that has recently undergone considerable renovation. Landscape architect Michel Desvigne together with teams from Foster + Partners / Tangram Architects have completely redesigned the entire 100,000 square metre area. What had once been a quaint old port area had turned into a major traffic intersection with multiple lanes, and was certainly not attracting people to use the location as a leisure spot any more.

The ring road around the harbour has been scaled back, the dock area transformed into a large square for pedestrian and events, and a modernist shelter from the sun that goes by the name of "Ombrière" added. Spencer de Gray, Head of Design at Foster + Partners in London, describes the projects as "an invitation to the people of Marseille to again stage and enjoy events, markets and festivals in this grand space".

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The lighting concept developed by Yann Kersalé lends the space a new dimension. Seventeen 16.5 metre and eight 23.5 metre high custom designed Olivio pole-top design luminaires structure the space and at the same time illuminate the extensive promenade area right up to the water's edge. The ultra-tall slimline poles trigger associations with the masts on sailing ships. The luminaires are equipped with 90 Watt or 140 Watt Cosmopolis lamps and arranged spirally around the upper sections of the poles in different sized groups. Their natural, organic design provides a subtle contrast to the geometric layout of the pedestrian square.

A major component of Yann Kersalé's lighting design are the 2.5 metre high "LED Skins": ultra-flat, reflective stainless steel housings with laser-cut designs, and equipped with RGB LEDs. These clad the eight large poles in the centre of the port area, similar to the bark on tree trunks. The resulting, amorphous looking surfaces can be used as LED screens for displaying video art created especially for this location by the artist himself. Different videos are shown depending on the time of year or the specific occasion. Images and patterns in light that evoke associations to flowing water underscore the intricate link between city and sea – and reflect the centuries-old history of the citizens of Marseille and how they connect to the Mediterranean.

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Project:	The Old Port of Marseille
Client:	MPM Marseille Provence Métropole
Architect:	Foster and Partners / Tangram architects
Landscape Architect:	Michel Desvigne
Lighting Designer:	Yann Kersalé – AIK
Electrical Engineering:	Ingérop Conseil et Ingénierie
Electrical Installation:	Citeos / Cegelec
Photographer:	Xavier Boymond
Selux Products:	Olivio Floracion. Sistema. Candelabra.

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About Selux

The Selux Group is a leading provider of sustainable lighting solutions for both interior and exterior applications. By acting sustainably, Selux is able to maintain high standards when it comes to energy efficiency, ergonomics and product design, Selux is a global company and is operational in Europe, North America and Australia employing 500 staff. Following intensive growth of 15% in 2011, in part due to large-scale projects, Selux was also able to increase its turnover by 1.2% in 2012 to 82.93 million.

Implementation of the „Evolution" future project, which was initiated in 2011, continued across the breadth of the group in 2012. „Evolution" includes sustainable investments in sales, process and innovation structures as well as the continuation of the product offensive. To strengthen its international alignment, in spring 2012, Selux standardised and redesigned its corporate identity.

# The Old Port of Marseille, photographer: Xavier Boymond

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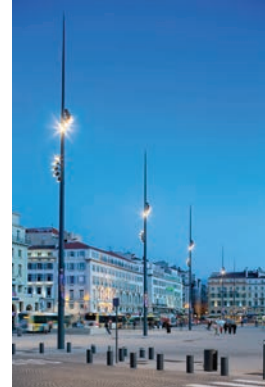
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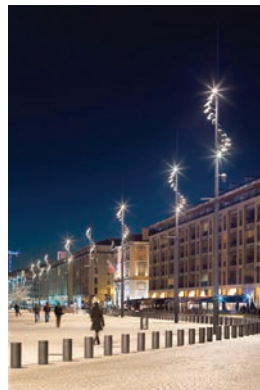
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Manufacturer contact:
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