



How Lumicrest LED lighting helped solve Kinsman Robinson Galleries
biggest business challenge

The Kinsman Robinson Gallery story

“What makes this show better than the last one?” asks Mr. John Newman, quite rhetorically. “It’s not more art work. It’s not better quality art. It’s the ability to light it up.”

The internationally recognized and unparalleled artwork exclusive to one of Toronto’s most prestigious fine art galleries, Kinsman Robinson Galleries (KRG), is undeniably impressive. But look above the art and you can see why Mr. Newman, Associate Director at KRG, is admonishing so much praise.

This past summer, KRG outfitted all 2,000 square feet of their multi-level gallery (including offices and other work areas), with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting. Since the gallery exhibits works of globally renowned and respected artists—pieces often valued at over \$100,000—one might consider jumping in to such a new technology a gamble.

But Mr. Newman doesn’t view retrofitting the gallery with LEDs a risky act. Rather, he views it as an innovative, thoughtful undertaking, necessary to the success of the gallery.

Figure 1

Kinsman Robinson Galleries - Norval Morrisseau exhibition



The business challenge

In such an esteemed gallery as KRG, having high quality lighting is an obligation, an essential requisite. In fact, Mr. Newman identifies gallery aesthetics as their biggest business challenge. Since KRG represents only 15 artists (most galleries represent 60), it is paramount to the success of the business to constantly—and consistently—show the works of these talented artists in the best possible way. “If it’s not as beautiful as it can get, people aren’t going to buy it.”

Prior to LED lighting, KRG used halogen lamps—a technology Mr. Newman never liked. “Halogen lights are hot, they have UV, and they have obvious hot spots...When you took a photograph, you always had a dark room with spots, and that just exemplified what needed to change.”

The necessary leap

So why did KRG wait until this year to retrofit their gallery with LEDs? “I’d been reading about LED lighting for years,” said Mr. Newman, “but we were waiting for certain things. One of our requirements is to be able to dim, so that technology needed some waiting for.”

With LEDs still not developed to the extent required by KRG, Mr. Newman said they had no choice but to remain using halogen lamps.

The heat and ultraviolet (UV) emitted from halogens is especially threatening in an art gallery, which displays irreplaceable, one-of-a-kind pieces. The high heat of halogen bulbs pose a risk of fire, while UV can damage artwork, much in the same way it can bleach floors, carpets, and leather furniture. As a result of the weighty downsides of halogen, KRG knew they needed LEDs.

“But when do you jump in?” asks Mr. Newman. “We did this year, because we saw a product that had all the ingredients we needed.”

Mr. Newman explains that the LEDs that now light KRG include the dimmable feature they so long coveted. Moreover, they provide a broader, cleaner, and more even light—much different from the “yellow” light, with “obvious hot spots,” produced by the halogens:

“AND THAT’S THE KEY THING ONCE WE LIT THE PLACE UP WITH LEDS: IT’S A WHITER, CLEANER LIGHT. THE WHOLE PLACE HAS A NICER LIGHTING TO IT...IT’S A

BROADER LIGHT THAT COVERS THE WHOLE WORK. THE YELLOW LIGHT OF HALOGEN CAN BE WARM AND DO POSITIVE THINGS IN THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT IN GENERAL IT IS DILUTED. IT'S NOT CORRECT TO PUT FINELY PAINTED PAINTINGS UNDER THAT LIGHT. YOU SHOULD BE SEEING IT UNDER WHAT THE ARTIST AT LEAST CHECKED HIS PAINTING UNDER, WHICH IS DAY-LIGHT WHITE.”



While the aesthetics provided by LEDs helped KRG to solve one of their biggest business challenges, it also solved other challenges along the way. Mr. Newman explains that with each new art exhibit, almost all of KRG's 60 light bulbs need to be reallocated to accommodate new or relocated pieces of art. One of the big problems with the halogen bulbs is that they are not robust:

“WITH THE HALOGEN, YOU COULD JUST BE UNSCREWING IT FROM THE FIXTURE AND YOU COULD HEAR THE

Figure 3

Mr. John Newman, holding a PAR30 bulb in front of Norval Morrisseau's "Mythical Thunderbird"



FILAMENT RATTLING AROUND...IF YOU JUST MOVED A LAMP, YOU'D HAVE TO TAKE IT DOWN VERY GENTLY. AND IF YOU DIDN'T LET IT SIT TO COOL DOWN BEFORE YOU TRIED TO REINSTALL IT, THE FILAMENT IN THE BULB WOULD GO...THEY DON'T LAST. THEY'RE HOT, SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO UNSCREW IT FOR A HALF HOUR. LEDS MADE IT EASIER TO DO THE THINGS YOU NEED TO DO WHEN CHANGING SHOWS."

Mr. Newman recounts his experience with accidentally dropping an LED bulb from 3 feet on his very first day of installation—and his surprise when it didn't break. "You know what that would have been if it was a halogen? It would have been a sweeping job! But it's like nothing ever happened with the LED bulb. It just worked."

Other challenges LED lighting solved include:

- Operational costs: "While I have yet to receive an electricity bill, the fact that I can unscrew a light after it has been on all day lets me know we're not filling the place with extra heat right there. We know the savings is there."
- Gallery heat: "We did have a heat problem. In the summer, we were putting on our A/C units, because at any given time we have about 60 lamps on in the gallery, and that would just heat the place up enough that at certain times it would just be critical mass."
- Maintenance: "We already know all the time and effort that goes into ordering new bulbs, getting these boxes, where to keep them all... that's a lot of extra money out just sitting around." We don't need extras now."
- Showcasing gallery: "We can light up the display window at the front of the store at night to showcase our works because of the low amount of electricity now used."

As impressed as Mr. Newman is with all those advantages, they are just "added benefits" to what he views as their true value:

"THE BOTTOM LINE FOR US IS AESTHETICS; THE QUALITY OF LIGHT... BRINGING OUT ALL THE DETAIL AND SUBTLETY IN THE ARTWORK. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW BEAUTIFUL YOUR ART IS, IF PEOPLE CAN'T SEE IT PROPERLY, IT'S NOT GOING TO SELL VERY EASILY."

The difference

Mr. Newman certainly notices the difference with the new LED bulbs, and knows that other people who handle high-end products, or products that need to be viewed under the best possible light, will notice the difference as well: “Other people who sell high-end items will notice the difference for sure. Jewelry is one thing, of course you don’t want a yellow light on a blue stone or it’ll be green. It’s that times ten for us with paintings on the wall”. And fortunately for KRG, they aren’t the only ones who have noticed a difference in aesthetics:

“OUR CLIENT’S REMARK ON HOW BEAUTIFUL THE GALLERY IS. MANY DON’T REALIZE WHAT HAS CHANGED; THEY JUST KNOW THE ARTWORK LOOKS BETTER. AND THAT’S ALL YOU CAN WANT.”

KRG is currently showcasing internationally known artist, Norval Morrisseau. “We have 47 works up under beautiful LED lighting.” Mr. Newman is proud of this show in particular, not just because of the calibre of the pieces, but of the high quality light that is now lighting it up. “Morrisseau has some really big works, 8ft x 8ft panels. With the LED lights, it looks very nice and even. With halogen, you would see 4 bright spots on the wall.”

As for the downsides of LEDs, Mr. Newman admits the up-front cost can be intimidating, but after conducting a return on investment analysis and talking with others, the choice was simple:

“WE LOOKED AT RESULTS AND TALKED TO PEOPLE. MOSTLY WE LOOKED AT TECHNICAL RESULTS, SUCH AS REPLACING A LARGE NUMBER OF BULBS WITH LEDS... ELECTRICITY COSTS BEFORE AND AFTER. WE DEFINITELY KNEW WHAT THE SAVINGS WERE GOING TO BE, AND WE COULD CALCULATE HOW RIDICULOUSLY QUICK WE WOULD SEE A RETURN ON OUR INVESTMENT. WE HAVE TO MOVE THEM ONCE A MONTH, AND WITH THE HALOGENS THEY WOULD BREAK AND WE’D HAVE TO REPLACE THEM, SO THERE’S THAT COST SAVINGS TOO.”

So why didn’t KRG invest in compact fluorescent bulbs, which are more energy efficient than halogens and cost less than LEDs? “They flicker. They’re ugly. You can’t compare LEDs and compact fluorescents.”



Lumicrest's PAR30 LED lamp provides industry-leading output power and efficacy thanks to high-efficiency, high-reliability LED source and driver electronics. The lamp's innovative lens design creates a pleasing, glare-free light suitable for use in all indoor and unexposed outdoor down-lighting applications. The lamp also delivers the high CRI and ultra-consistent color temperature control critical to multi-lamp applications in hotels, restaurants, schools, office buildings, casinos, retail operations and other public spaces. With a life expectancy of 40,000 operating hours, this UL-registered lamp will provide more than 27 years of service at 4 hours per day.

The right LED bulb

Selecting an LED bulb can be a difficult process. There are a multitude of different LED manufactures available, all of whom do LEDs slightly differently. With very few technical standards in the LED lighting industry, it's difficult to know what constitutes a quality bulb—and Mr. Newman discovered this first hand during his research. But after talking with Lumicrest Lighting Solutions, he was confident that he had found what he was looking for. Since Lumicrest handpicks the best LED bulbs in the world, subjects them to one of the industry's toughest testing and inspection regimes, and offers a guarantee that the bulbs will deliver optimum performance, Mr. Newman had no doubt he was making the right purchase decision:

WHEN YOU'RE SPENDING \$40-\$50 PER BULB, YOU WANT
THE BEST AVAILABLE."

With LED lighting showing off their artist's works in the best possible way, KRG has full confidence in the technology and bulbs they selected. "To be honest," says Mr. Newman, "I'm still waiting for someone to tell me what the really big deficiencies are with LEDs. So far, there's nothing."



About Kinsman Robinson Galleries

Kinsman Robinson Galleries, a fine art gallery located in the Yorkville area of Toronto, possess an exclusive stable of some of the country's leading artists—including four who hold the prestigious Order of Canada.

For more information about Kinsman Robinson Galleries, you can reach them through the following channels:

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About Lumicrest Lighting Solutions

Lumicrest Lighting, a Toronto based LED lighting supplier, sells the best in commercial and industrial LED lighting at the lowest cost of ownership. Each and every bulb sold is subjected to one of the industry's toughest testing regimes to ensure it performs the way you expect them to.

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