

A Whole New

This year's new retail lighting options promise style and savings. Plus, they're cool, way cool. As in, cool to the touch. And for gallery owners this can mean no more hot spots on jewelry or glass and no more heat accumulation in small display cases. That translates to less heat damage to merchandise as well as savings on energy bills.

So what are these miracle lights that won't damage your valuable art pieces with ultraviolet or infrared rays, these lights that last a virtual lifetime (50,000 to 100,000 hours—11+ years)? Would you believe LED? That's right, the once lowly light-emitting diode, known historically as the light source for control panels, watches and kids' sneakers, has evolved. It is now a highly focused, brilliant light source—and one of the cool options being touted by lighting industry vendors.

Until recently, LEDs came predominantly in primary colors, with white not a strong color option. White—the presence of all color—is hard to create with a monochromatic, or single-color, diode. In the past the light came out weak, the color wasn't true and the diode had a short life span.

Now, though, many companies are offering a range of LEDs including several "colors" of white, created by using a mix of diodes or a phosphor coating within the LED package.

Move over,
incandescent,
fluorescent and
halogen; Cool
and the Gang are
capturing the
heart of lighting

BY GAEL HANCOCK

Compact and Easy to Install

According to Bruce Pelton, vice president of sales for **OptiLED** (866-678-4533), LEDs are going to mimic the evolution of the microchip in the computer industry: the price will fall, the capacity and output will skyrocket, and the lighting industry will be forever changed. His company manufactures several LED products, including white and colored lamps with both screw and MR16 bases and a low-voltage track system with a variety of connectors and fixtures—designed specifically for over-product or under-shelf applications.

With the LED's low voltage needs, think flexibility—both of the system itself and the installation. Many of the systems don't

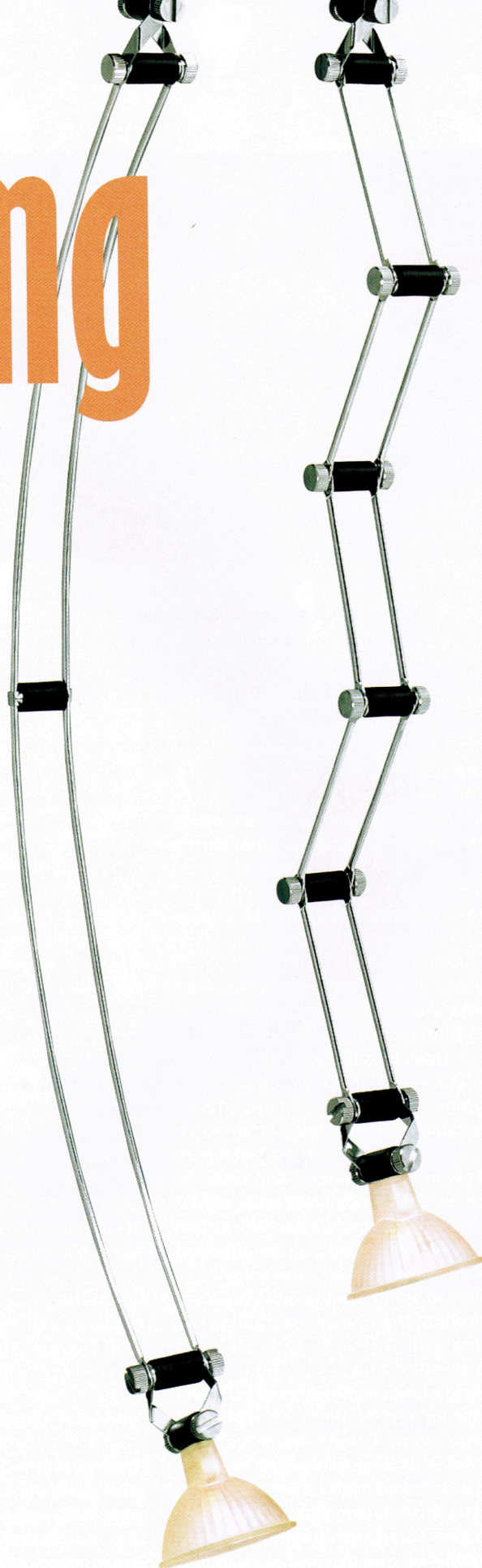
From left: Nora Lighting's Nora Rail, which can bend to match architectural and counter curves; Modular International Inc.'s Hocus Pocus variable stick mounts and lamp holders in setting; and OptiLED's Trak Spots.

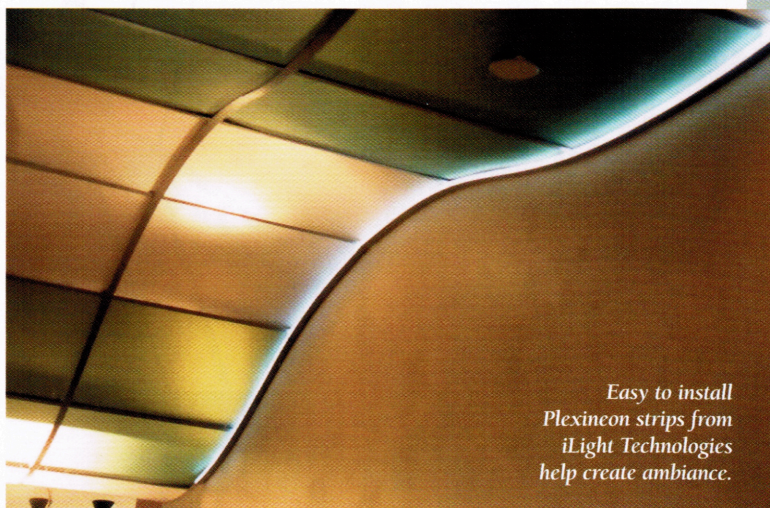
Torch Song

require a licensed electrician for installation, and some come in do-it-yourself kits. For example, **iLight Technologies Inc.** (847-328-7800) is showcasing Plexineon strips available in six colors plus three choices of white. The strips come in standard and custom lengths and bends and are field-cutable. They can be installed using a provided spring-mounted clip or with Velcro or double-sided tape for temporary lighting needs. Users are installing these strips to create "glow."

Existing display cases can be easily retrofitted with LEDs. **Ardee Lighting** (888-442-7333), for instance, has a Klikstrip™ of festoon lamps or spotlights for inside a display case or under a shelf. Ardee Lighting also has a lighted garment rod with motion sensor that lights the clothing when someone approaches.

Diodes are very small, so the reflectors and the "fixtures" can also be quite small. The LEDra Series by **Bruck Lighting Systems** (714-424-0500) includes tiny spotlights approximately an inch in diameter that can be wall- or ceiling-mounted or used in conjunction with any low-voltage track system.





*Easy to install
Plexineon strips from
iLight Technologies
help create ambiance.*

Other Cool-to-Touch Choices

Another lighting choice fitting in the cool category is fiber optics. Like the LED, this light source is cool to the touch, has no ultraviolet or infrared output and is an energy saver. Recently, **Band, Inc.** (845-758-4464), a lighting design and manufacturing company, worked with **Advanced Lighting Systems Inc.** (320-352-0088) to install a fiber optic lighting system in The National Archives, safely illuminating historic documents such as

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the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. "Those documents think they're sitting in the dark," says David Hammel, Advanced Lighting's director of marketing.

Fiber optic lighting requires a single light source or illuminator with fiber carrying the light to multiple fixtures.

Motion sensors and the timer switch are also making their way into the cool category. Though not inherently glitzy or romantic, they can create enchanting effects, draw attention to products and help lower electric costs. Imagine a darkened room of your gallery beckoning customers with a single lighted display case featuring one of your most outstanding pieces. As people walk into the room, additional lights come on highlighting the area's other works.

A timer unit on a window display can turn lights off late at night, switching to a motion sensor to turn lights on for security purposes if someone approaches the building. To get more information about this option, check with the technical department of **The Watt Stopper™, Inc.** (800-879-8585).

On the Right Track

What else is there? Think bangle bracelets for your ceiling—new track and cable lighting systems that are literally dripping with accessories. Some of the accompanying fixtures are even called pendants; usually glass or ceramic, they allow light to shine in all directions. **Nora Lighting** (800-686-6672) has come out with one of the first line-voltage (120 volt), flexible-track systems. Unlike the low-voltage systems, this track can accommo-

Delighted in Selling Lighting

Kim Fong's voice lights up when she talks about lighting. The founder of **Eclectic Electric Gallery** in Atlanta, Fong views light as "an amazing medium," which, when included in a piece, brings another dimension to it. "It actually emits itself into the room," she says. "No other medium does that."

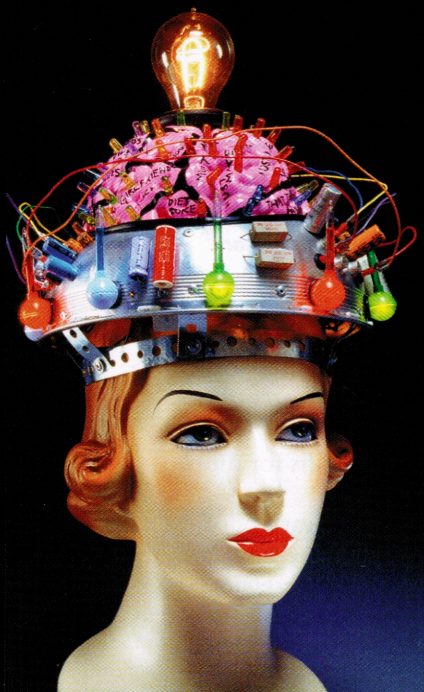
For most of the last decade, she has concentrated her gallery mix on artist-made lighted sculpture, adding accessories and 2-D work in the past couple of years. Early on, she focused on shows of the sculptural work, especially neon, which she herself works in.

Eventually Fong added functional pieces, and in recent years she has also gotten into lighting consulting and providing custom work, spurred first by requests from a restaurant and the Olympics committee when Atlanta hosted the Summer Games in 1996.

Currently she represents the work of nearly 200 artists, and most of her sales are from commissioned, custom and installed pieces. Another turning point came in 2002 when she opened a second store and partnered with Stuart



Neon work is underappreciated, in Fong's view. "People hear neon and think Vegas," she says, "but it can also be Michael Cain." Cain's "Dreamer" is of neon, metal and blown glass.



Sculptor Hilary Pfeifer, who curated the "Dee-light!" exhibition, also contributed this mixed-media work, "Mildred's Thinking Cap."

All sold at the opening, Diamond says.

Generally the gallery, which opened in Portland's Pearl district in April 2002, includes limited lighting works in its mix—the signature refitted blender lamps of Gavin O'Grady, included in the show, and found-object work of a new artist, John Gumaelius.

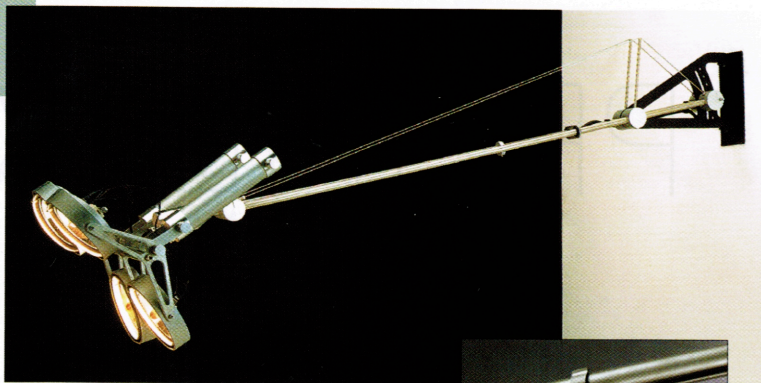
Another gallery that used a light-inspired theme for an exhibition last winter got some unexpected results.

The League of New Hampshire Craftsmen's **Gallery 205** promoted "Lighten Up!" as a way to both brighten the shorter, darker days of winter and give artists a chance to explore life's less serious side.

Humor and whimsy won out among the 29 artists who contributed to the Oct. 3-Dec. 12 show. "The craftspeople took from the show title and interpreted it in their own way," says gallery program manager Alyssa Shatford.

When the gallery committee discussed the show concept, the thinking was more on the spiritual aspects of light, Shatford says, and some artists did contribute candleholders, menorahs and lamps. But there was the light-hearted as well, notably a "Lighten Up with Ice Cream" sculpture and a work depicting a fruitcake recycling machine.

—N.W.



The flexible XYZ Arm from Modular International Inc. angles and extends, letting you put the lighting where you need it, and accommodates low- or line-voltage lamps. LEDra spots from Bruck Lighting Systems work with regular wall or ceiling mounts as well as with low-voltage track systems.



date a virtually unlimited number of lights and doesn't require transformers at given intervals.

Bruck offers the High Line, a low-voltage cable system that can be installed from the floor to the ceiling, wall to wall or wall to ceiling. This low-voltage system will appeal to the do-it-yourselfer and comes with the necessary mounting hardware. The system can support up to 300 watts of lights, which can mean lots of flexibility—six 50-watt bulbs, 15 20-watt bulbs or even 100 three-watt LEDs. And it can be outfitted with a wide variety of fixture and lamp options.

Some things are just hard to light—perhaps it's a pedestal-mounted statue in an open space, a three-dimensional wall hanging or a large grouping of baskets on the floor. One solution might be the extendable XYZ Arm from **Modular International Inc.** (412-734-9000). This scissor-like device comes in two sizes extending to lengths of 4 and 6 feet. The arm comes with a fixture that holds four low- or line-voltage lamps that are individually adjustable 360 degrees in one plane and 45 degrees in the other. This company also offers the Modupoint, a low-voltage lighting system featuring arcing and straight "sticks" ranging from 2 to 27 inches for mounting fixtures. These sticks simply plug in to single and double wall-mounts or track mounts and provide an astonishing amount of light.

Sophisticated, fun, bold, utilitarian—today's lighting options come in a range of styles with varying price tags. With a bit of research, you're sure to find a lighting system that will suit your needs, enhance your gallery's decor and highlight art objects to their best advantage. ■

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Gael Hancock writes from her home in Las Vegas, Nev., site of GlobalShop 2004, where she asked vendors what's new in lighting.