

# Create a Stunning Display with Our Art Gallery Lighting



Lighting is arguably the most significant tool for helping you display work in your art gallery. This is for two reasons: one, the artist's work, including its colours, should be as accurately and sympathetically represented as possible; and two, the viewer should be able to get the full impact of the artist's work. Without good lighting, none of this can happen effectively.

Toplightco has the technical know-how and tons of experience to help you create an art gallery lighting system that's cost effective and impactful. We've provided lighting for numerous UK art galleries – from the mighty Tate Modern to independents like The Hang-Up Gallery in Hoxton.

All the lights in our Art Gallery range have a CRI (Colour Rendering Index) of greater than 90. This is ideal for artwork. For more information about what CRI means for you, and other things to consider for your displays, read on...

## **A Quick Guide to Art Gallery Lighting**

There are a few factors when choosing lighting for your art gallery. You need to consider the quality of the light, how much light you need, and the temperature of the light. Here, we'll break that down for you and explain what each one means for your display.

## **Quality of Light, Measured by Colour Rendering Index**

The Colour Rendering Index (CRI) is the measure of how well a light reproduces colours on a scale of 1-100.

So, in your art gallery you should aim for your lighting to have a minimum CRI of 90.

Lights nowadays typically have a CRI of 70-80 – while this is relatively high, it is not high enough if you really want to show authentic colour to your fellow art lovers and patrons.

### **Light Amount, Measured in Lumens**

Lumens simply means ‘the amount of light produced’. What we’re looking for with perfect art gallery lighting is something that produces almost as many lumens as natural daylight.

So how much light do you need in an art gallery?

Well, by way of an example, 400-450 lumens is the amount of light typically emitted by the recessed downlights in your kitchen – and it is NOT ENOUGH in a dedicated art gallery!

For art gallery lighting you need something more like 1200-3000 lumens.

### **Light Temperature, Measured in Kelvins**

For light temperature, which is measured in Kelvins or ‘K’, you need your numbers to be around 3000-5000K. What do we mean by temperature? Here are some examples:

- 4000K is normally referred to as ‘cool white’. It's the colour you will find in many high street stores such as White Company
- 3000K is ‘warm white’ and is a more comfortable and subtle light
- 2700K is very warm white and preferable for your sitting room at home

And, although it’s clear by now you need higher numbers of lumens and Kelvins than your kitchen for displaying your artists’ work, what lighting you select is a personal choice and we will be happy to discuss that with you in detail.

### **A Quick Word on LED GU10 Lamps**

LED GU10 lamps have been a popular choice for people wanting to retrofit a more energy efficient light where they used to have incandescent or halogen bulbs in the past.

When LED became a feasible lighting source, manufacturers shoehorned LED chips into the GU10 body even though it wasn't designed to be LED. And therein lies the problem: it's a compromise and not designed from the ground up to be a good lighting source for an art gallery.

Nowadays, top-quality lights for use in commercial situations use Chip on Board (COB) technology (which, in a nutshell, is a much more efficient way of producing LED light) as well large reflectors and lenses for much more and much better light (3000 lumens and more).

## **Dimming LED's**

If you're wondering whether dimming your art gallery lighting is possible, the answer is: yes it is!

Furthermore, it is not like it used to be in the days of incandescent lamps. Then dimming was achieved by reducing the amount of voltage going through what was essentially a glowing hot wire inside a glass enclosure, with some gas swirling around inside. If you do that to an LED, it will flicker and die because it needs full power whether dimmed or not.

LEDs require a driver to make them light up. Sometimes these are enclosed within a lamp, sometimes fitted alongside in a box, and sometimes remotely on the end of a wire.

Ultimately, drivers are electronic, and some are dimmable, some are not. It's your choice whether to opt for dimmable lights.

So, what's the difference to you? Simple: the dimmable ones are more expensive!

## **Beam Angles**

Probably one of the first things you might consider when thinking about your gallery lighting is how you can move it around depending on the size and position of the artwork. This is where beam angles come into play.

How do beam angles affect the display?

Well, you just need to think of it as a spotlight on a stage. The quality of light from a single point will spread as it travels further from its source.

So, for example, a traditional incandescent lightbulb will have a beam of 360 degrees, as it's needed to light almost everything around it, but the light from it won't be very intense.

A light with a smaller number of degrees' coverage will be better placed to specifically illuminate artwork and this can be achieved by positioning

lights on a track that runs parallel to your display wall. The beam can be adjusted to point directly onto the art, so it's portable and effective.

Et voila! Perfect art gallery lighting!

Get in touch with us to talk about what you would like to achieve at your next exhibition.

**Links:** [Contact us](#) [Track Lighting](#) [See our CRI 90+ Lights](#)

Why not have an informal chat with one of our Advisors or ask us to come and make some suggestions? You can call us on 0207 183 5252 or click here for our Virtual or Physical [FREE Site Visit](#)