

AWARD of MERIT

Cité de l'Océan et du Surf Museum, Biarritz, France



LIGHTING DESIGNER
L'Observatoire International
Hervé Descottes
and Nicolas Dufils

PROJECT OWNER
The City of Biarritz
Hervé Capdeville

PHOTOGRAPHY
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The oceanographic sea-side museum Cité de l'Océan et du Surf glows calmly when darkness falls. The lantern effect is achieved with the use of uninterrupted peripheral coves with dimmable high efficiency fluorescent fixtures turning on in synchrony with sunset. Inside, ceiling of the exhibition areas is convex, reminiscent of the nearby sea and its waves. Absolutely no fixtures were allowed in the ceiling, so the light scheme offers a totally uncluttered and smooth horizontal surface.



"The ambition of the project working with the concept of 'under the sky - under the sea' is to connect with the ocean horizon while fusing with the landscape. The dialogue of sea and sky is established early in the experience of the place. The main exhibition space below is shaped by the giant curve with a pressure pushing down, which is lifted up by the light rolling in from the main entrance. It is analogous to being on a rolling sea, when you dip down in a valley of water and are spatially enclosed. Then the sea lifts you on top of a roll and you can see in every direction."

— Steven Holl, Architect for Cité de l'Océan et du Surf, as interviewed by The Huffington Post (August 2011)