

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE & MasterColor® Metal Halide Lamps

A • C A S E • S T U D Y

With MasterColor® technology, metal halide lamps are finally fulfilling the long-standing promise of energy-efficient and superior color HID lighting for retail applications. MasterColor, invented by Philips Lighting Company, offers superior light output (and energy efficiency), excellent color rendering and – perhaps most critical – outstanding color stability over the life of the lamp. The recently completed renovation of the Saks Fifth Avenue store in Skokie, Illinois, shows how MasterColor solves both lighting and construction problems.

Like most retailers, Saks faces the twin challenges of keeping its stores visually up-to-date while controlling costs. In Skokie, this meant renovating the twenty-year old store without changing the ceiling. Keeping the ceiling lowered the renovation cost considerably. While good for the budget, it seriously limited the options available to lighting designer Cynthia Turner, Vice President and Director of Lighting at the New York office of FRCH Design Worldwide.



“MasterColor has a ‘true’ 3000° K color temperature, which is a little warmer than most other metal halide and so blends better with the halogen and warm fluorescent sources,”

–Saks Fifth Avenue’s Lighting Designer Cynthia Turner, FRCH Design Worldwide (New York, NY).



Let's make things better.

Philips Lighting Meets The Challenge

The original ambient lighting consisted of recessed downlights with 175 watt deluxe mercury vapor lamps. Although deluxe mercury was promoted for retail lighting applications in the 1970's, the technology would not be used today, especially for an upscale retailer. The color is unappealing, and as the lamps age, the light turns greenish, light output falls, and energy efficiency declines. New lighting was required.

With the design goals of raising the light level, improving the lighting color, and lowering the operating costs (all without disturbing the ceiling), Turner decided to retrofit the existing downlights to use MasterColor® metal halide. The MasterColor lamps at just 100 watts produce 30% more illumination than the old 175 watt mercury system. The color is significantly better and much more consistent over time. And, the energy cost for lighting dropped by almost 50%, a major reduction. For the retrofit, Turner required properly contoured new reflectors, along with standard metal halide sockets and ballasts. The existing ceiling frames and wiring were retained, avoiding significant costs.

Turner observed that using conventional metal halide lamps would have produced neither the light levels, nor the color quality desired by Saks, especially over time. Additionally, MasterColor has much lower UV, a benefit to retailers concerned about fading merchandise. Another option, compact fluorescent, which is often used in new stores, would have required more light fixtures (and ceiling modifications) to realize the design goals.

Turner also likes MasterColor because it combines well with other sources, an important element in retail lighting design. MasterColor has a "true" 3000° K color temperature, which is a little warmer than most other metal halides and so blends better with the halogen and warm fluorescent sources. In the Saks installation, halogen PAR lamps provide the accent lighting. In other installations, Turner has mixed fluorescent ambient lighting and MasterColor accent lighting.



Benefits of MasterColor

- High color rendering (up to 85 CRI)
- True 3000° K correlated color temperature
- Superior color maintenance (+-200°K at end of life)
- PAR and ED17 models
- High luminous efficacy (up to 93 lumens per watt)
- Superior lumen maintenance (80% at 40% rated life)
- Standard metal halide ballast and sockets

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www.lighting.philips.com/nam
A Division of Philips Electronics North America Corporation
Printed in USA 4/97 P-5300

Produced by:
Lighting Application Consultants,
Application Marketing,
Philips Lighting Company

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