

Robe Pushes Forward the Vibrance for VW at IAA Summit 2021 Munich



Bold, bright, vivid – with the assistance of Robe moving lights – this was the look central to Lucas Conradi's lighting design for the Volkswagen booth at the IAA Mobility 2021 expo in Munich, underlining and complementing the energy and excitement generated by the popular German automotive manufacturer's new brand design, first introduced in 2019.

This was the first international automotive expo open to the public to be staged since the pandemic triggered global lockdowns in March 2020. The client and booth designer was Mutabor Brand Experience, and the lighting equipment was supplied by Cologne Hunters.

Lucas, from creative and technical event planners IXPI, was both project and technical manager as well as LD for this booth, and he picked the 15 x Robe FORTES and 36 x ESPRITES to be a major part of the stand's lighting art.

Both fixture types offer Robe's world-first LED TRANSFERABLE ENGINE, an intelligent, powerful, and eco-friendly solution that enables different engines – high powered, high CRI, 'tungsten' – to be used in the same high-quality fixtures.



Four Robe RoboSpot remote follow spotting systems, controlling four of the FORTEs, were specified for the flurry of events and presentations during the expo's press day, and there were also 58 x Robe LEDWash 800 luminaires fitted with beam shapers and top hats dotted around specific areas of the stand highlighting cars and the pop-up press area / broadcast studio.

The slick and clean architectural styling of the booth was defined by the new brand design, complete with vibrant 'sky' video screens, coloured plexi panels and other illuminated set pieces in the ceiling and around the stand that shaped the booth. There was a compact double deck / VIP area along one side of the stand with a panoramic view of the bottom deck.



A spectacular wide LED screen at the back of the stand played out a range of timecoded info-content also linked to lighting cues, and in front of the screen at one end was the new VW ID LIFE concept car which attracted plenty of attention.

Celebrity visitors on press day included German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Lucas chose to work with Robe for several reasons. In addition to finding the products super reliable, they are light in weight – with roof weight loading in mind – and offer a great feature set.

The stipulation from VW – and in keeping with the new brand guidelines – was that all the stand lighting should be LED for max energy efficiency.

The power and very specific quality of light required to light high profile auto shows like this narrows the choice of manufacturers down considerably, and FORTE and ESPRITE with their brightness, high CRI and TE technology are both favourites for this genre of lighting.

And while Lucas needed fixtures that could produce the excellent variations of whites essential for lighting cars,

he also needed to be able to produce a full and dynamic range of creative show lighting effects.

These two latest generation Robe fixtures ticked all the boxes.

In a homage to quality retro, LEDWash 800s – from Robe's first-generation LED wash products which also became auto show favourites in their day – came into the frame. Used with the top hats and beam shapers, these were seamlessly integrated in the building structure to illuminate cars, exhibits and the broadcast studio.

Lighting cars is an art of its own, so parameters like CRI and colour temperatures are critical, and both FORTE and ESPRITE score here. Lucas remarks on the consistency of output of both and of using LED in general in this context, compared to discharge fixtures.

Lighting was programmed and run on a grandMA2 system.



The main challenges for lighting the stand were the variety of action taking place on the booth! While showcasing VW's latest vehicles was the main focus, there was a wide array of other activities – press conference, broadcast / streaming events, talks, keynotes and other presentations, plus continuous video content loops playing out across the various screens all demanding practical but not distracting lighting for this lively environment.

In addition to illuminating the cars, lighting cues were developed to match the video content and emphasise the colours and scenic vibrance of the environment. Co-ordinating everything and keeping up with the tight schedule plus responding quickly and deftly to changes related to events and presentations demanded a lot of flexibility and tight organisation.

Being project manager and LD ramped up the pressure on Lucas, but he also found this combination of job titles and responsibilities worked favourably in terms of being able to efficiently run multiple elements. On site, Anne Wohlgemuth and another colleague from IXPI supported him with project management and focussing of the cars.

Lucas pointed out the importance of a professional and experienced team which was further enhanced by Wolfgang Krämer from prefocus and Ben Schiller. Wolfgang programmed and operated lighting for the booth overall while Ben was responsible for press conference lighting.

Photos: by Louise Stickland