

## Lights of the City: NYC's African Burial Ground Memorial & West Side Intermodal Ferry Terminal



At NYC's African Burial Ground Memorial, trees illuminated with grade recessed CMH 39W-MH uplights signify hope and define the park perimeter. Concealed low-voltage underwater fountain luminaires with 50MR16/Q/twist-lock lamps reveal the slender moat and give form to the central chamber.

*Photos: John Bartelstone*

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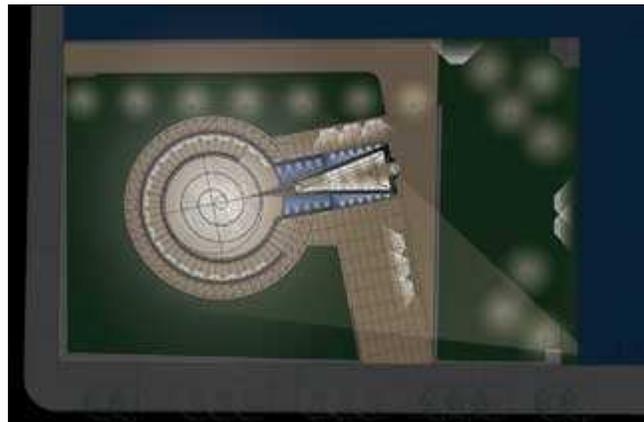
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## Lighting Reflects Cultural & Archaeological Significance of African Burial Ground Memorial

by Carolyn Schultz, Marketing Coordinator and Domingo Gonzalez Associates, Architectural Lighting Design

From the 1690s until the 1790s, both free and enslaved Africans were buried in a seven-acre area in Lower Manhattan outside the boundaries of the settlement of New Amsterdam, later known as New York.



Lighting unifies disparate park elements (grounds, benches, court, reflecting pool, and chamber) with a soft overall glow. A Photocell/timeclock activated preset lighting control system makes the monument a good neighbor, allowing the park service to de-energize select lighting elements as needed.

Lost to history due to landfilling and development, the grounds were rediscovered in 1991 as a consequence of the planned construction of a federal office building. The rediscovery of this burial ground was widely acknowledged as one of the most significant archeological findings in twentieth-century America.

In 1993, the site was designated a National Historic Landmark and New York City Landmark. In 2006, President George W. Bush added the designation of National Monument, and thus entrusted it to the National Park Service.





**The cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth are celebrated inside of the Libation Chamber. Complementing the highly specular interior, 3000°K 20W-MR16-MH uplights suggest the heavens.**

Opened in October 2007 to the public, the memorial at the African Burial Ground honors the memories of the estimated 15,000 to 20,000 African men, women and children buried at the site. According to the brochure distributed at its dedication, it is “the only U.S. National Monument that memorializes the struggles of Africans forcefully brought here and so many others of African descent who have endured the injustices of slavery, segregation, and discrimination.”



**From the 1690s until the 1790s, Africans, both free and enslaved, were buried within a seven-acre site on the outskirts of the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. When the site was rediscovered during a construction project bordered by Duane and Elk Street in Lower Manhattan, National Historic Landmark status soon followed, commemorated by the African Burial Ground National Monument.**

### **Project Approach**

In 2007, Domingo Gonzalez Associates (DGA) completed work on the lighting design for the Memorial. Undertaken as a pro-bono effort, DGA's role was to develop a family of sustainable, cost-effective lighting solutions responsive to the memorial's cultural significance and commemorative character. Throughout the project's development and execution, the designers and lighting equipment manufacturers donated services and equipment.



**Consistent with the memorial's mission, all luminaires and lamps were donated by manufacturers. The designers accepted no fee for this effort. Serene and contemplative, the lighting bears nighttime witness to spirits long lost but not forgotten.**

The foundation of DGA's approach began with respect for the site's historic significance.

"The lighting was designed to be intimate and respectful, while contributing to a sense of dignity and peace for the memorial and what it represents," explains Domingo Gonzalez, principal.

Discreet grade-recessed 20-watt CMH MR16 uplights draw the eye to ceremonial Sankofa court symbols. Deeply shielded 1000-watt PAR64 metal halide floodlights, located atop the adjacent federal office building, evoke tranquil moonlight. All luminaires are easily accessible for maintenance.

Trees, illuminated with grade-recessed 39-watt CMH PAR20 uplights, signify hope and define the park's perimeter. Concealed low-voltage underwater fountain luminaires with 50-watt MR16 halogen flood lamps reveal the slender moat and give form to the central Ancestral Libation Chamber. Somber yet welcoming, this chamber is flanked by stone benches, lit with 3000 K LEDs tucked securely underneath, offering respite and contrast.



**Somber, yet welcoming, the Ancestral Libation Chamber is flanked by stone benches. 3000°K LEDs are tucked securely underneath, offering respite and contrast.**

A time clock/photocell-activated preset lighting control system makes the monument a “good neighbor,” allowing the Park Service the opportunity to de-energize select lighting elements as needed.

“It was an extraordinary team effort to showcase an important part of American history and archeology,” says Gonzalez. Serene and contemplative, the lighting bears nighttime witness to spirits long lost but not forgotten.



**The lighting was designed to be intimate and respectful. Discreet grade-recessed 3000°K CMH 20W-MR16-MH uplights draw the eye to ceremonial court symbols, while surrogate moonlight reveals a cosmogram, symbolic of life and death.**

### Award Winning

The African Burial Ground Memorial project's design has won the following awards:

- 2007 G.E. Edison Lighting Award of Excellence
- 2008 N.Y. Construction Award of Merit
- 2009 NOMA Design Excellence Honor Award



**Tranquil moonlight is evoked by deeply-shielded 4000°K 1000W-SPL-PAR64VNSP-MH floodlights located atop the adjacent Federal Office Building. All luminaires are easily accessible for maintenance.**

### The Project Team

**Architectural Lighting:** Domingo Gonzalez Associates

Principal, Domingo Gonzalez, LC, has been the lead lighting designer for more than 1,500 projects worldwide. He has garnered over 30 design awards, including LDI Architectural Lighting Designer of the Year in 2001.

**Designer:** Nancy Lok, LC, LEED AP

**Landscape Architect:** Elizabeth Kennedy Landscape Architects

**Construction Manager:** HRH Construction

**Architect:** AARRIS Architects

**Electrical Contractor:** B & G Electrical  
**Engineers:** MGJ Engineering

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## **West Side Intermodal Ferry Terminal - A Dynamic, Functional Space for Efficient Transportation**

**by Carolyn Schultz, Marketing Coordinator and Domingo Gonzalez Associates,  
Architectural Lighting Design**

While driving along New York City's West Side Highway a bright, light-filled glass building suddenly becomes visible along the Hudson River shore. This eye-catching facility serves as a key transportation connector for commuters and visitors to the city that never sleeps.



**Like the Empire State Building, the West Side Ferry**

**Terminal is a New York City landmark that can be seen from the Hudson River. The terminal is at Pier 79 at the end of 39th Street, opposite the Jacob Javits Convention Center.**

*Photos: John Bartelstone*

As part of the on-going revitalization of New York City's Hudson River Waterfront, in 2005 Domingo Gonzalez Associates (DGA) completed work on the West Side Intermodal Ferry Terminal, a new 30,000 square foot, \$37 million dollar transportation complex serving New York and New Jersey. The building is located at Pier 79 at the end of 39th Street, opposite the Jacob Javits Convention Center.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation, was commissioned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to create a dynamic and functional space that supports efficient transportation. This new terminal, designed by William Nicholas Bodouva + Associates (WNBA), was intended to contrast the existing, relatively uninspiring older terminal that consisted of a canopy-covered gangplank leading from a boxy, enclosed waiting room. Its amenities were designed to attract new residents and visitors to the neighborhood formerly known as "Hell's Kitchen." One of its attractions is its cruise-ship-like decks complete with inviting outdoor seating and appropriately themed nautical lighting.



**The six-slip West Side Ferry Terminal wraps around the Lincoln Tunnel's imposing tan brick ventilation towers. Simple vertical elements lamped with 3500°K T8 fluorescent sources reach skyward (right). Across the street (left) are Hudson River Park's signature Triboro Bridge Tunnel Authority (TbTA) poles with 175-watt metal halide lamps.**

**TBTA poles were originally introduced in the 1950s and '60s to replace the wooden lampposts that lit parkways during the 1920s and '30s.**

### **A Challenging Lighting Design Scope**

Lighting for transportation facilities must facilitate way finding so travelers can find their destinations quickly and easily. In addition the lighting design must work in concert with the architecture, signage, and many other systems, while revealing form and celebrating civic identity. Transportation lighting should be functional, aesthetically pleasing and welcoming.

DGA's scope of work included the development of alternative architectural lighting solutions for all key public areas of the ferry terminal complex including the main terminal hall, entry lobbies, concessions, exterior frontages and landscaped plaza areas, connector link, piers and ferry barge.

The variety of end-users was a challenge considered throughout the project's development. The terminal's design had to meet the needs of short-haul commuters, water taxis, and high-speed long distance services—all for destinations at numerous points along the Hudson River in New York and New Jersey.



**The terminal affords spectacular river views, inviting passengers to linger. Seventy-watt metal halide bollards nest within the railing, ensuring unobstructed viewing and sufficient illumination.**

Another challenge was the project's location, but the project team got around that, literally. The six-slip terminal wraps around the Lincoln Tunnel's imposing tan brick ventilation towers. The two-story main waiting room is clad in a structural glass system to foster a sense of transparency. Curving vestibules on either side of the vent stacks signal the terminal entrance clearly and create an architectural transition between the 145-foot high towers and the low-rise terminal and plaza.

"We were brought on board to help realize the vision of a sculptural, illuminated glass box adjoining the ventilation towers," explains DGA Principal Domingo Gonzalez. "The building [glows] from within, producing an animated jewel-like effect."

Metal halide PAR 38 spotlights are integrated into the structure of the pavilion, lending glitter. Within the main hall, custom combination linear fluorescent and metal halide PAR 30 floodlights provide ambient lighting and a wash of color, while the glass baffles of the luminaires march along the ceiling plane, echoing the form of the architecture. Walls are washed with light, enhancing the view into the facility.



**Covered walkways lead to the ferry slips, rendered inviting by closely-spaced wet-location listed F32T8 3500°K fluorescent fixtures. Excellent uniformity reinforces logical transitions from walkways to boarding areas.**

Covered walkways are lit with functional wet-location linear fluorescent luminaires. At waterfront viewing decks, 70-watt metal halide fixtures are integrated with the railing, preserving the nighttime vista. Land-side approaches to the terminal are lit by integrated handrail lighting (linear fluorescent) and minimal, vertical linear fluorescent

pedestrian-scale light poles. All exterior and pavilion lighting is controlled via open-loop photosensor, contributing to the project's compliance with the Energy Conservation Construction Code of New York.

The redevelopment and adaptive reuse of New York City's Hudson River waterfront over the last decade has become an important civic priority and a unique design opportunity. A five-mile waterfront system, a new at-grade boulevard, residential and commercial development all work synergistically to suggest that a city's possibilities are perhaps only limited by its ability to imagine. The new West Side Intermodal Ferry Terminal is one of the most recent successful chapters in the ongoing story of New York's revitalized waterfront.



**On the north and south plazas, fluorescent handrail lighting lamped with F32T8 3500°K lamps articulate the stairs.**

#### **West Side Intermodal Ferry Terminal Project Awards**

- 2006 IIDA Award of Merit
- 2005 GE Edison Lighting Award of Excellence
- 2005 NY Construction Best Marine Project

#### **About Domingo Gonzalez Associates**

*Founded in 1985, Domingo Gonzalez Associates (DGA) brings to architectural lighting design a dynamic creative vision and philosophy that allows clients a clear window into the design process. The firm has extensive experience with virtually all interior and exterior building and project types, including parks, plazas, monuments, corporate and educational facilities, transportation, hospitality and mixed use complexes.*

*In New York City, DGA is particularly proud of its efforts that virtually encircle lower Manhattan with light: from the Hudson River Park, to Battery Park City to 59th Street via Route 9A. From the Washington Square Arch to the George Washington Bridge, DGA's contribution to New York City's nighttime environment is vibrant.*

### Project Staff

**Architectural Lighting:** Domingo Gonzalez Associates

Principal, Domingo Gonzalez, LC

Senior Designer, Mi-Seon Lee, LC

**Architects:** William Nicholas Bodouva + Associates (WNBA)

**Construction Manager:** Skanska USA

**Electrical Engineer:** Joseph Loring & Associates

**Landscape Architect:** Thomas Balsley Associates

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### Comments

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