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All Smiles for Robe

Smile Licht En Geluid Utrecht BV is a happy, positive and busy design and technical production company based in Utrecht, the Netherlands! Smile by name ... smile by nature!

Even more happiness has recently been generated with the purchase of Robe moving lights - 12 Robe VIVA CMYs and 32 x LEDBeam 150s - to assist in the creative illumination of a wide and eclectic range of events.

The company was founded in its present format by Remko Vossen in 1998. The name already existed, however Remko took it from a disco based operation to a full-blown professional production facility which has become very well known locally and across Benelux.

Smile supplies lighting, sound, AV, staging, and expertise to the events sector and has a reputation for imaginative flair and offering innovative technology and high standards of excellence. They have just moved into a large and spangly new warehouse and office space in Lage Weide, in the west of the city of Utrecht, which is clean and well organised.

The vibrant office area upstairs screams creativity with its cool industrial design and the main meeting room is dominated by a large piece of graffiti art across the entirety of one wall, created by Utrecht's exclusive equivalent of Banksy!

There are 12 smiling full time staff ... and as the name implies, the positive energy abounds!

These were the first Robe moving lights Smile has bought for some time ... because their original ColorWash and ColorSpot 250s - purchased from around 13 years ago - are still going strong!

With the changing needs and demands of events today, they needed to upgrade some of the kit and get some good, reliable, all-purpose LED moving lights onboard for their work - 70% of which is in the corporate world. For most of this they also create the lighting design as well as supplying the kit and crew, explained Remko, so they wanted lights that could produce "nice, crisp gobo projections and that had a good, bright white output."

The LEDBeam 150s essentially replace old PAR 64 cans and bring a host more features and flexibility to the party! "We also needed a fixture to provide ambient lighting effects that could be focussed from the desk" added Guus Smorenburg, Smile's first full time LD. This speeds things up on site considerably.

Guus adds that they also work "brilliantly as table centres for dinner events. They are capable of refined and subtle movement, precision changes, etc., all of which allows us to be more creative and have fun when lighting a space or a presentation."

In fact, the first gig shortly after the fixtures were delivered by Robe's Benelux distributor, Controllux, was the Choice Hotel Awards staged at the Kromhouthal in Amsterdam, an impressive 150 metre

long former boat engine factory, complete with fabulous original steel-clad pillars and cranes, which is now a chic-but-edgy event and conference venue.

The LEDBeam 150s lit the tables and were also used as specials for the entertainment segment of the event. Guus was immediately struck by the brightness and the "beautiful" range of colours.

"Reliability was the main thing with Robe" stated Remko, and from a rental company POV that's always key. He's still amazed that the original ColorWash and ColorSpot 250s are still earning their place all these years later - obviously they only go on certain types of events, but there is still plenty of scope for them, especially on the events with tighter budgets!

In fact, he knew Robe even before they were 'Robe' through using Movitec products in the early days of his career, when Robe was an OEM manufacturer.

For all their larger shows, Robe is now the moving light brand of choice, and they often bring in additional BMFLs and MegaPointes as needed.

While they did look at other brands for reference before making this latest investment, all roads led back to the Czech manufacturer. "It's black and white for us. Robe has a wide range of finished products ready for delivery, and they are keeping way ahead of the competition now".

The VIVAS are regularly out on numerous events, and the LEDBeam 150s are in use every day. "It's a great product with an excellent ROI, superb value and exceptionally reliable ... and that ticks all our boxes" concludes Guus, adding that they also enjoy the great service and support from Controllux.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland



