The design team anticipated a difficult transition from the vast, unobscured daylit park of the Gateway Arch to the subterranean levels of this new museum extension. Extremely well-lit interior surfaces mitigate the contrast with daylight and entice visitors to travel below grade.

At night, the new entry sequence acts as a centralized beacon, with tracings of light at the curved façade drawing patrons toward the glowing museum interior. The curved tri-wire wall rings the exterior plaza and continues into the interior canopy entrance. It is softly uplit by LED grazers within a recessed trough, subtly guiding visitors as they enter and depart the museum at night.

Once inside, a ceiling plane comprising a series of aluminum tubes provides indirect lighting. Carefully placed and aimed LED striplights concealed within certain tubes prevent dark zones in the ceiling structure. The painted-white vertical faces and undersides of the beams reflect light down through the tubes, creating a consistent glow for the entire ceiling plane.

The result is a vibrant, uplifting experience throughout the lobby and double-height exhibition spaces, with no visible light sources. Tunable-white LEDs and carefully managed dimming allow for beautiful day-to-night transitions.

Award of EXCELLENCE
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