



Giving DaVinci's work new life by leveraging projection technology

The project started in November 2019 with what seemed to be a simple equipment order: Sensea Immersive contacted Panasonic to procure roughly a dozen projectors for an immersive exhibit based on the works and life of Leonardo DaVinci, produced by Crossmedia Group of Florence Italy. Similar exhibits had already been built in Italy and Mexico, and those teams were expected to be involved in the creation of the newest exhibit in Tsawwassen, British Columbia.

As the project moved from the planning stages to design, however, things became more complicated. At that point, Sapphire Sound, who was originally brought in as simply a supplier of Panasonic projectors, took on a larger role.

"We learned that for the production teams in Italy and Mexico, which are affiliated with this Canadian installation, it wasn't going to be easy for them to travel [due to Covid restrictions]," said Steve Klassen of Sapphire Sound.

“ When I got the original list [of products] from the Italian team, there were some other companies listed, Panasonic was going to be the only supplier that ticked all the boxes and kept the whole project under one roof. That's really important to us because, if there's a problem, we know who to contact. ”

Steve Klassen, Sapphire Sound



CHALLENGES

Sensea Immersive aimed to create a 360-degree immersive audio-visual experience to serve as an emotional conclusion to an entire exhibit honoring the works of Leonardo DaVinci. The team needed multiple projectors that could connect to a server and display a mosaic of video images that would combine for a seamless, single visual experience.

SOLUTIONS

Working with audio-visual experts from Sapphire Sound, the two teams decided to use seven of Panasonic's PT-VMZ60 projectors to cover the exhibit space. With the ability to develop up to 6,000 lm, these projectors also offer 1.6x zoom and Vertical/Horizontal Lens-Shift to perfectly align large-format pictures on screen in spaces big or small. Two PTRZ660LBU's, fitted with ETDLE060 lenses, were also utilized to project images on the floor. These projectors are able to connect to a server for a seamless integration of images that create an 360-degree immersive experience.

RESULTS

Launched in June 2021, the teams at Sensea Immersive and Sapphire Sound were able to create a wholly immersive experience unique to the exhibition space in Tsawwassen, British Columbia, bringing access to the famed experience, which has enthralled 3 million people around the world, to Canada. Coupled with a custom server, the team says these projectors boot up every morning, on schedule, thanks to an automated system, without downtime.

Finding reliability in uncertain times

To overcome the challenges presented by Covid-19, Sapphire Sound began working with Sensea Immersive to design a media server - custom built by Vancouver creative media company Colours+Shapes - that could run the visual playback and the audio aspects of the immersive experience.

According to Klassen, the reliability of the Panasonic projectors helped to create a strong foundation of an automated system that helped the creative team at Sensea achieve their vision. That reliability contributed to what Klassen called "flawlessness" of this project's projection system.

"We have nine projectors in there that, every day at 9 a.m., all turn on and link to the correct source and that's all thanks to the PJ Link capabilities of the projectors: They run all day and then turn off/on schedule," Klassen said. "They're the perfect companion for this kind of experience where the client can trust and rely on them to boot up."



Defining the vision

Sensea Director Filippo Pandolfini said the immersive DaVinci experience doesn't stand alone but serves as a conclusion to two other rooms that showcase examples of DaVinci's works, from his art to his inventions. The idea is to provide as much context and information as possible to convey the magnitude of DaVinci's impact through his various practices.

"We give a real 360-degree perspective to our experiences," Pandolfini said. "The challenge was trying to summarize every different aspect of who this man was in an experience that lasts an hour when you could fill up a space ten times the size and still barely scratch the surface."

Sensea Immersive Vice President Mick Kelly said that one aim was to use the immersive experience to provide an educational experience that would be unforgettable. Because the team wanted to educate as well as entertain, it was important they be able to offer this service at an affordable price to make the experience accessible to as many people as possible.

"We designed this whole show to be mid-market," Kelly said. "The education program is critical [and] school field trips will be starting up in the fall."

Pandolfini said that concluding this showcase with an immersive experience aims to "solder in" all of the educational information from the previous rooms of the experience to provide an emotional anchor and allow audiences to truly connect to the subject.



Meeting the needs of the project

To achieve the project's goals, Sapphire Sound was provided with a list of technologies that were compatible with the media. Considering all the needs, from price point to video quality and overall service, Klassen recognized Panasonic had the unique ability to meet these considerations from every angle.

"When I got the original list [of products] from the Italian team, there were some other companies listed, Panasonic was going to be the only supplier that ticked all the boxes and kept the whole project under one roof," Klassen said. "That's really important to us because, if there's a problem, we know who to contact."

Independently, the teams in Italy and Mexico have their own history with Panasonic equipment, according to Pandolfini.

"We've been set up with this format for eight years, and we started off using Panasonic basically from the start," Pandolfini said. "Here in Mexico, we've used Panasonic for the last four years."

The reliability both teams have experienced in their history with Panasonic, from overall visual quality to minimal downtime, would provide a solid technical foundation that would allow the teams to focus on executing the breadth of their creative vision.

"We have feedback stations at the end of the experiences and we're running right now around 94 to 95% of respondents marking 'Beyond Satisfactory, the vast majority are very pleased and pleasantly surprised by the depth."

Filippo Pandolfini, Director, Sensea Immersive



Finding the right fit

Analyzing the various possible solutions, Klassen said the teams ultimately picked seven of Panasonic's PT-VMZ60 - which offers features such as 6,000 lm brightness, 4k signal input and wireless connection - because it best met all the needs of the project.

"PT-VMZ60 ticked the boxes for price-point, but it also has a very flexible zoom lens," Klassen said. "So, shooting them across the room, we were able to get them mounted to the ceiling with quite a bit of ease."

The team also utilized two PTRZ660LBU's to project images on the floor. These projectors were fitted ETDLE060 lenses, a major component in helping the team achieve their vision for a completely immersive visual experience.

"Panasonic really is the total package. When I say, 'total package,' I mean, quality, color accuracy, uptime and the track record."

Reliable results

That reliability is a central concern when a main attraction of an experience hinges on several pieces of equipment operating to their maximum potential, Klassen said. Based on his previous experience with Panasonic's technology, he knows that reliability is not an issue.

"I can't tell you how many Panasonic projectors we sell in a year but so few of them have to go back for support and, when that happens, there's always somebody at Panasonic who's going to have our back. That's absolutely crucial and we're so thankful for that."

Pandolfini said the experience continues to surprise and amaze guests.

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 Fully immersive Da Vinci Experience
construction - Tsawwassen, BC

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