

DESIGN PROFILE



New-York Historical Society Museum & Library

AV Design Helps Relive the Rich History of New York

The New-York Historical Society Museum & Library, which explores the political, cultural and social history of New York, underwent a three-year, \$70-million renovation that now features a new 3,400-square-foot space. Electrosonic designed and supplied the audio, video and control systems for the renovation of the city's oldest museum. Platt Byard Dovell White Architects and Lee H. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership were the design team on the project.

The Robert H. and Clarice Smith New York Gallery of American History forms the new Great Hall. Built by DCL in Boston, digital signage at the theater entrance provides visitors with information about the



DiMenna Children's History Museum, Newsies Exhibit

museum's offerings. With the help of AV consultant TAD, Electrosonic designed a system of signage software and players, which Unified Field used to craft content.

Near the admissions desk, an interactive 'living painting' by Small Design Firm is displayed on a 2x5 videowall made up of ten narrow-mullion 55-inch monitors. The painting on the videowall initially appears static, but a computer application running in the background makes the painting come alive as visitors step into the range of the integrated motion detector.

The New York Rising exhibit uses five rotating display housings containing portrait oriented 46-

Robert H. and Clarice Smith New York Gallery of American History, Highlights from the Collection



inch touchscreens. When a visitor rotates one of the touchscreen cases, the images on the touchscreen pan with it, highlighting the artifacts on the wall directly in line with the display.

Adjacent to the Smith Gallery is the 420-seat Robert H. Smith Auditorium, a multi-purpose space for presentations and performances in the evenings, and an 18-minute multi-screen media experience titled “New York Story” during the day. The presentation features a three-projector system and begins on four 6-foot wide screens that expand to ten as the tale unfolds. For the finale, the screens lift up to reveal a 72-foot wide backscreen. The stage machinery was by PDO and LA Propoint. Electrosonic designed the projection system to cover the three screen planes.

The theater’s full presentation system allows for everything from a complete band set up to a simple PowerPoint presentation; it features a projector, connections for up to 18 microphones, Blu-ray/DVD players and podium control for a computer. Outside the theater, Electrosonic’s design equipped the Smith Gallery and Dexter Hall with fixed speakers and portable special events AV systems that allow presentation in either gallery with local or theater generated media.

Kids experience their own history at the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, the first ever museum devoted to children’s history, designed by Lee H. Skolnick and fabricated by Explus, Superior Exhibits, Murphy Catton and DCI.

Electrosonic’s design consulting team provided design services for the auditorium and portions of the Great Hall and Dexter Hall. Working with Donna Lawrence Productions, the team created two full-scale mock ups of a theater section to test the design of the multi-screen projection.

The design consulting team also devised an innovative solution for the auditorium’s sound system. Since the main screen had limited space behind it for speakers, Electrosonic hid the speakers in the apron and ceiling of the stage, giving the illusion that sound is coming from the center of the screen. The design consulting team continued its audio role post-installation, supporting Donna Lawrence Productions with the final audio mix on site.

Barbara K. Lipman Children’s History Library

