

CANADA - THROWS LIGHT ON ITS CULTURE



Photo: J P Camus

For the first time in the country's history, Canada's Museum of Civilization opened its door to the general public on July 1st — following a considerable contribution by Strand Lighting.

Located in Ottawa, the nation's capital, the \$300 million building represents a major advance in museum design.

Strand's most extensive work was in the 35,000 sq ft Arts and Traditions Hall, which showcases the multicultural aspects of Canadian culture and history.

Exhibition designer-in-charge of the Hall, Jean Pierre Camus ('JP'), made an extensive study of all available lighting techniques for museums.

The design, with its large structures holding AV equipment, historical reproductions and actual artefacts, demanded a unique solution. Theatrical luminaires offered the best approach, giving him the precision and control he needed to create a dramatic visual presentation. Enter Strand Lighting!

Past experience led JP to call Strand Lighting and his nearest representative, Servispec of Montreal. Over the next few months, the design evolved into a series of static and moving light displays which interacted with AV equipment and the central computer control for the museum.

Particular exhibits with light sensitive materials required precise light levels and several were so sensitive it was judged that these could only be illuminated when someone was

actually in front of the exhibit.

The challenge then was to find a lighting control that would do all of these things and still fit the museum's budget.

The choice to resolve the challenges? Lightboard M and CD80 24x1.2kW dimmer packs. The packs were installed directly into the exhibits themselves connected via multiplex control lines to the various control consoles.

Three Lightboard M consoles and 13 CD 80 dimmer packs (312 dimmers) were needed to manage the project. All the consoles were tied to the building computer system via the function key inputs. Function key commands to 'start' the exhibits at the beginning of the day and go to a 'night' setting at the end of the day were written. In addition, a myriad of cues were written to provide fixed and cycling lighting effects throughout the exhibit space.

Of particular note were those sensitive exhibits which could only be illuminated when a visitor was actually present at the display. A special motion detector and timer circuit was designed and developed by Servispec with the assistance of Strand Lighting to interface with the remote submaster inputs of the Lightboard M consoles. Whenever someone was 'sensed' standing in front of the exhibit the display lighting cue on the submaster would fade up.

Client: Canadian Museum of Civilization.
 Architect: Douglas Cardinal.
 Designer for Arts and Traditions Hall: JP Camus.
 Special Design Consultants: Sceno Plus, Montreal.

AFTER THE DINOSAURS...

Following the huge success of the Dinosaurs from China Exhibition at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff during 1987/88, the Museum is planning another major exhibition — this time at its centre in Llanberis, North Wales, Amgueddfa'r Gogledd.

Once again Light Relief have been asked to interpret and design the lighting and the sound for the exhibition entitled Power of Wales. Light Relief's Technical services manager, Mark Satchell, and his team duly descended on Llanberis at the beginning of July to start the preparatory work.

Recently the National Museum, Cardiff saw the opening of Robes of the Realm, an exhibition presented by Ede and Ravenscroft in the original 'Dinosaur' Exhibition Hall. The lighting was re-designed by Light Relief to show off the splendour of the impressive ceremonial robes in the exhibition, including the Queen Mother's Coronation robes and the ceremonial robes of the Prince of Wales in his office as Chancellor of the University of Wales.



Current projects include lighting and sound for music festivals, a firework display and installation of drama and video studios for a new college.