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Crestron Shows Hamptons Art Museum in Best Light

Challenge

After seven years of planning and fundraising, the new home for the Parrish Art Museum opened its doors in late 2012. Because the Parrish, founded in 1898, is the oldest and largest museum serving the Hamptons, the nation's oldest artist colony, trustees took their time to build something truly special.

Their efforts have resulted in a striking new building by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron, set on 14 acres of meadow in Water Mill, New York. The technology inside is striking as well. Given the demands on the lighting and AV controls and on video distribution, integrator Bri-Tech, Inc. based these systems on technology from Crestron.

Solution 1: Lighting Control

"The requirements in the Parrish Museum are much more demanding than in any home or commercial structure," explains Brian McAulff, Bri-Tech president. In addition to rigorous control of temperature and humidity, lighting levels must be controlled as well to avoid damage to the artwork. Although the architects included skylights to provide each gallery with soft, natural light, they planned their size and placement carefully to limit lighting levels.

ARUP® of New York, the lighting designer, supplemented the skylights with long lines of Nippo® Seamlessline fluorescent fixtures, which electrify the tubes from behind, rather than at the ends, to allow smooth and continuous illumination without socket shadows. These fixtures are dimmed with Bartco Astara Universal PWM interfaces, which use digital pulse-width modulation to provide extremely consistent illumination across each tube and from fixture to fixture. The demands on the lighting controls are challenging as well.

"I thought at first that the museum would want a fixed lighting level, as in most daylight harvesting systems, bringing the artificial lights up as clouds gather or the sun goes down," McAulff explains. "But instead, they wanted a living sky effect, with the galleries brightening and darkening as the sunlight levels change. Our challenge was to allow curators to set maximum levels, depending on the fragility of the artwork,



Photo courtesy of Parrish Art Museum

and also to set minimum levels for evening hours and dark days, but to let the light fluctuate within those limits.”

To further complicate the setup, local codes required the museum to provide an emergency lighting system, and the museum wanted to make sure it would operate within the same minimum and maximum limits to keep artwork as well as patrons safe.

McAulff says Bri-Tech engineers designed lighting controls using Crestron photo cells to read the lighting levels in each gallery, then signal a Crestron PAC2® processor and, through it, a series of Crestron GLX-DIM6 and GLX-DIMFLV8 dimming panels, which supply the voltage to each PWM interface. There are 18 Crestron Green Light® panels in six cabinets. Each cabinet covers one third of the museum, with three for standard power and three for emergency power. Curators can set maximums from the Apple® iPad® equipped with the Crestron app, or from a Crestron Cameo® keypad, one of which is wall mounted in a recessed corner of each gallery.

Solution 2: Audio Visual Systems

The AV systems in the Parrish are also unusually sophisticated. Working from specifications by Shen, Milsom & Wilke, Bri-Tech engineered sound and video systems for a large, multipurpose auditorium that can be used as a theater, a presentation room or a space for receptions.

Bri-Tech based the final designs on Crestron DigitalMedia™ technology as well as Crestron control. DigitalMedia uses

twisted-pair and fiber optic cable to create a super-high-bandwidth IP network to carry high-definition video and audio signals in their native formats without compression. Other components in the auditorium are high-end as well. The room includes Christie® projection, Crestron DVHPD video processing, a Crestron PROCISE® 7.3 surround sound processor, Biamp AudiaFLEX DSP, EAW® loudspeakers, JVC and Tascam® digital video and audio recorders, and ClearOne® audio conferencing.

Bri-Tech also installed input and output plates in the lobby and several of the galleries, so that programs taking place in the auditorium can be seen and heard throughout the facility. Curators can also set up video art installations using the computer and DVR sources in the equipment room. A Crestron DM® 16X16 switcher allow users to switch sources located in the auditorium, equipment room or galleries to any or all displays and sound systems in the facility. Staff can control these systems with Crestron touch screens wall-mounted in the auditorium and equipment room or with their iPads.

In addition to the lighting and AV systems, Bri-Tech installed the security, access control and climate control systems for the Parrish, tying each into the Crestron processor to provide monitoring and synchronization.

“Our choice of Bri-Tech and Crestron turned out to be a great decision,” says Justin Fulweiler of Ben Krupinski Builder, the general contractor for the project. “The execution and reliability has been well above our expectations.



Photo courtesy of Parrish Art Museum

It's been one of the most successful technology implementations our firm has been involved with."

"Crestron is the only platform we use for control and video distribution," McAulff adds. "We feel Crestron's is the most robust platform available for control. If you do custom work like we did at the Parrish, you can't be limited by your control system. And no one touches Crestron on video distribution. I know there will be no legacy issues with DigitalMedia. I'm comfortable that, no matter what the future brings, in terms of video and audio technology, DM will handle it."



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