

Applied Electronics Transforms Vancouver's Cambie Street Bridge into Virtual Ocean with Christie Projection Mapping

Vancouver, British Columbia



Canada Wild Productions' 'Uninterrupted' celebrates British Columbia's annual salmon migration as part of Canada 150 celebrations.

Applied Electronics and Christie brought the annual salmon run to Vancouver's Cambie Street Bridge in a striking projection mapping display for Canada's 150th birthday celebrations. With content provided by Canada Wild Productions and using eight Christie 3DLP® projectors, the attraction, titled 'Uninterrupted,' opened June 28, 2017 and ran into early Fall 2017. The cinematic spectacle celebrated British Columbia's annual salmon run, which sees millions of salmon migrate from the Pacific Ocean to their spawning grounds.

The film's director, Nettie Wild, wanted the film to strike an emotional chord with an urban audience. But she realized she couldn't project on most of the city's buildings, which are glass. She and her editor, Michael Brockington, then cycled around the city and stopped by Coopers' Park, part of which runs under the Cambie Street Bridge - and knew they had their spot.

"The Cambie Street Bridge has a perfect viewing area where people can see down the length of the bridge and get the idea of a river," said Betsy Carson of Canada Wild Productions. "We were looking at filming with five projectors in a 180-degree rig, which would allow us to bring the images over top of the audience and behind them on the pillars behind the playground area where they are viewing it from."

Chief technologist Anthony Diehl of Colours & Shapes said the Cambie Street Bridge was also chosen for its minimalist and clean, modern design. "It is really an exciting surface to work with," he added, "and we used that minimalism in the mapping."

However, unlike many projection-mapping projects that use tailor-made, computer generated content, the Cambie Street Bridge project would show the natural world without creating the fish digitally and controlling their movement.

"The fundamental challenge we had to figure out was how to tell a story using that bridge as your canvas.

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When you think of projection mapping still as an emerging medium and art form, a lot of what has been done, has been digitally generated content but we're looking at it as, 'How do we get them a canvas they can work with that still works with this style of filmmaking?' - it's easier said than done," said Diehl.

Acclaim from the City of Vancouver and Spectators

"The City of Vancouver has been extraordinary and has been enthusiastic about the project from the first time we showed the demonstration to them," said Carson. "They were open and willing to work with us to make this possible. During the demonstration, the chief engineer for the city watched 30 seconds of the video and said, 'We're in!'"

For Rainer Beyleveldt, who managed the project for Applied Electronics, this one stands out. "This is way brighter than I expected it to be and everyone did an awesome job. It was an awesomely cool project to work on with these people and with the Christie people. It was fun to have a part in this," he said.

The show runs from Tuesday through Saturday each week with attendance starting strong and growing by the day.

"People are quite moved by seeing something they imagined they would never see and it's having quite an impact on people. There are cheers and clapping at the end of the show," added Carson. "I think this is a new way for Vancouver to participate in public art and we really hope projection mapping will become more prevalent within the city."

"The reaction at the end with the cheering and clapping, feels really special - just how the whole piece night after night solicits this response," said Diehl. "The whole show is beautiful with an emotional quality to it where people are taken aback by the sheer scale of it, which is a spectacle in itself but it's the content that has this emotional ring to it that really connects with people."

