

THE REAL THING —OR IS IT INTERACTIVE VIDEO?



Steven Rosen gave the Wow! factor to both static and interactive exhibits at Coca-Cola Olympic City.

Coca-Cola wanted to create a world-class signature event that was statesmanlike, hospitable, and fun.

Atlanta rolled out the red carpet to the world for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. As a proud global corporation with hometown roots, Coca-Cola wanted to create a world-class signature event that



Titan lamp bar accommodated more than 400 spots, floods, ellipsoidals, and automated fixtures, as well as power.

showed their sponsorship as statesmanlike, hospitable, and most of all, fun for consumers and the media alike. Coca-Cola Olympic City was just such a “shining” event, where the attendee could feel what



To underscore an almost palpable energy he felt from the artifacts, the designer lighted each artifact as sculpture.

it's like to be part of the Olympic Games and share in the experience of a lifetime.

Coca-Cola Olympic City (CCOC) was located adjacent to Centennial Olympic Park in the heart of downtown Atlanta. The complex included special live shows at the CCOC Amphitheater, an interactive play area for kids, and the cornerstone of Coca-Cola Olympic City—three 20,000 ft² exhibition tents that housed the Olympic Museum Gallery, the Discovery Channel Experience Theatre, the Reebok Stage, and SportsLab.

My goal for these three pavilions, given an extremely limited budget, was to create a lighting environment that was at once sophisticated and fun—to boost the Wow! factor for visitors as they arrived in each tent. Where possible, I used theatrical lighting techniques to create visual interest in layers. Ambient pools of light provided visibility for visitors throughout, template pattern projections provided visual depth and a sense of place, while accent spotlights on exhibits and key graphics led the eye to important visual information.



He had to come as close as possible to the look of a permanent museum, within the budget of a temporary installation.

Available Light Inc. was brought into the project by Krent/Paffett Associates, an exhibit design firm in Boston. KPA and Available Light have collaborated on projects ranging from the Virginia Air & Space Museum in Hampton Roads, VA, to the forensic science exhibit Whodunit? for the Ft. Worth Science Center, to the original touring SportsLab. KPA designed the exhibitry in all three CCOC tents to be visually compelling, visitor interactive, and technologically state-of-the-art.

The Discovery Channel Pavilion

At the Olympic Museum Gallery, within The Discovery Channel Pavilion, visitors were treated to a computer-automated interactive journey through 100 years of Olympic history. In addition, attendees viewed priceless artifacts on loan from the Museum of the Olympics in Lucerne, Switzerland. I perceived an ethereal, yet tangible, energy in many of the artifacts on display: Carl Lewis' running shoes, a 1928 discus, a test model of the 1996 USA Bicycle Team's secret weapon, and a case of

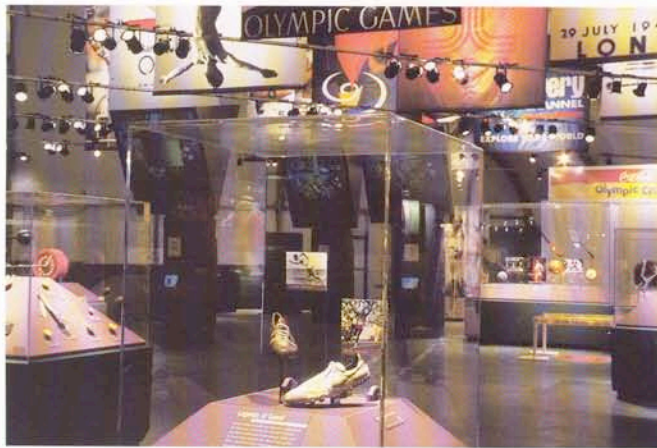


PAR38 HIR spotlights on exhibits and key graphics directed the visitor's eye to important information.

Olympic torches from past games. To underscore this "aura" about the artifacts, we dramatically illuminated each object as sculpture. Lighting levels were kept to a minimum where necessary to preserve those artifacts constructed of organic materials.

It was important to me to come as close to the look of a permanent museum exhibit as possible, within the budget limitations dictated by a temporary installation. BML Stage Lighting of Raritan, NJ, installed approximately 800 ft of Titan lamp bar. The lamp bar served the dual purpose of providing hanging positions for lighting fixtures and serving as the cable chase for power distribution. The Titan lamp bar gave me a slim profile that was neat and clean. Power was fed to the lamp bars at the extreme ends to eliminate the visual cable clutter usually associated with a temporary run.

From the lamp bar, BML installed more than 350 PAR lamp-holders (with either 100 W PAR38 HIR spots or the quartz 250 W flood lamp with light blocking screens as required), 50 Altman Shakespeare Ellipsoidal spotlights (with the long-life



To preserve organic materials, as in Carl Lewis's track shoes, some light levels had to be kept to a minimum.

HX601 lamp), and four Martin Roboscan Pro 518s (housing the Philips MSD 200 lamp).

Although these were a terrific solution for the overhead lighting positions, evenly illuminating the large expanses of wall graphics and photo murals from the lamp

bar system proved to be prohibitively expensive. Most of the readily available wall-mounted lighting arms on the market drop the fixture to a height below the top of the exhibit wall, which was not acceptable either. The simplest solution was to design our own angled lighting arm that suspended the bottom of the fixture just above the top of the exhibit wall. Custom fabricated by BML, they terminated in a Juno trackhead fitting, upon which we mounted a wallwash track unit with integral barndoors.

Also housed in the Discovery Channel Pavilion were two other significant attractions. The Reebok Stage was a small theater area used for autograph signings, press conferences, etc. The Experience Theatre was a single-image three-projector video presentation celebrating the human Olympic spirit, pro-

Four Martin Roboscans projected the logo. Split into four gobos, the pieces danced on the wall surface.

duced by the Discovery Channel. For both of these spaces we specified a discrete lighting console and dimmer system. For the Experience Theatre, an AV interface not only controlled the lighting (houselights, accent lighting, automated effects, and onstage spotlights) but also the pneumatic entrance and exit doors.

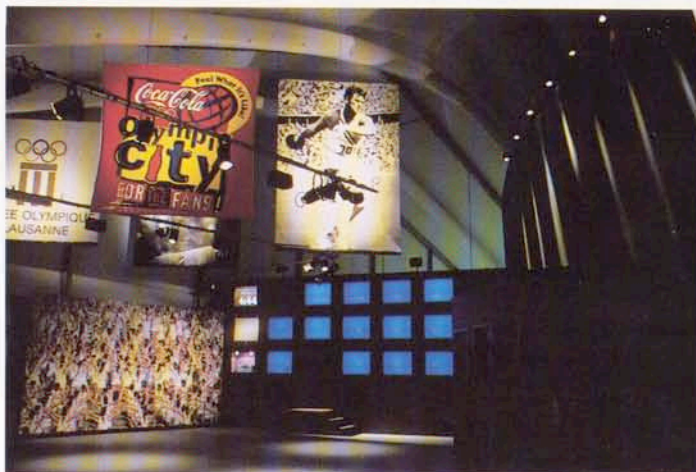
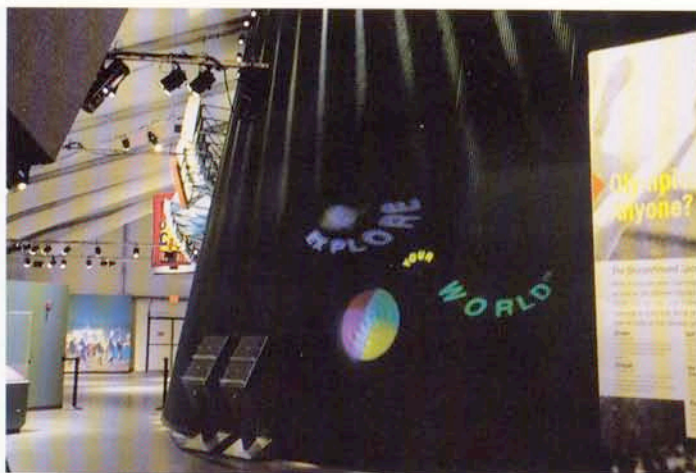
The exterior wall of the Experience Theatre became a canvas for some additional dramatic lighting touches. We used four Martin Roboscans, each with a custom glass gobo, to project the Discovery Channel logo onto the wall. Split into four parts, pieces of the logo would float, dance, and rotate on the wall surface, and invariably join together to create the finished logo. We also mounted 80 low-voltage PAR36 pinspots along the top edge of the circular theater structure. My intent was to lend a sense of mystery to the enormous semi-conical shaped Experience Theatre; this ring of light slowly and rhythmically “chased” in an alternating pattern of four circuits around the building.

SportsLab

Within the two CCOC SportsLab pavilions, visitors were invited to compete head-to-head with virtual Olympic athletes in a variety of computer-simulated Olympic Game contests. SportsLab is a touring participatory theme park and a unique showcase for state-of-the-art entertainment technology. Preceding the CCOC installation, the original SportsLab—housed in two 50,000 ft² inflatable structures—weighed in as one of the largest touring attraction entertainments of all time. Dozens of sports were presented to the public in a participatory format.

“As an original sponsor of the touring SportsLab, Coca-Cola believed that CCOC was the perfect home for a mini version of the original,” said Ed Krent, principal of KPA. “We tailored existing formats to apply to summer Olympics sports.” Various sports represented at the CCOC SportsLab included track and field, mountain biking, basketball, gymnastics, and baseball.

The lighting treatment designed for the original SportsLab



Low-voltage pinspots along the top edge of the circular theater chased in an alternated, four circuit pattern.

was one of total immersion: a system of thousands of computer-controlled lighting fixtures representing over 1 million W suspended from a network of a ground-supported rock and roll truss. Given a lighting budget of under \$2/ft² for the temporary SportsLab at CCOC, we were forced to search for unquestionably simpler, more economic solutions.

Working with the Atlanta-based electrical contractor, Alison-Smith Co., and the electrical engineering firm of Newcomb & Boyd, Available Light developed a lighting plan of 400 W metal halide high bay fixtures that brought the level of illumination up to a base of

about 45 fc. In order to keep direct light from hitting visitors in the eyes and to control glare on a multitude of video screens, we custom-fitted the metal halide fixtures with metal waffle louvers. We got a few strange looks from the electricians, but our glare problems were solved!

In addition to metal halide downlights, BML Stage Lighting installed about 80 PAR fixtures and 20 ellipsoidals to accent graphics and bring some sense of the original's theatricality to the CCOC SportsLab experience. Attractions such as running, which had about 50 running feet of rear projection video running parallel to the track, demanded a complete theatrical lighting solution in order to keep light off the screens.



The author: As principal of Available Light, Boston, Steven Rosen enjoys a career that spans performance, architecture, corporate theater, and special events. Available Light is a theatrically based design firm specializing in lighting design for special spaces and events. Mr. Rosen is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829 and the US Institute of Theatre Technology, and serves on the Northeast regional board of the Designers

Lighting Forum. He holds a BFA in theater from Webster University in St. Louis and an MFA in Stage Design from New York University. He has taught at the NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Emerson College, and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society; he has guest lectured at the Rhode Island School of Design, Harvard University, Northeastern University, Wheelock College, and Princeton University.