

# PROJECT PROFILE



## National Maritime Museum

### Britain's Maritime Heritage Brought to Life

The National Maritime Museum opened its new £36.5m Sammy Ofer Wing, housing 'Voyagers, a permanent gallery dedicated to helping visitors gain a richer understanding of Britain's maritime heritage at the beginning of July 2011. The gallery was designed by Real Studios, with audio-visual creative direction by the Light Surgeons. Electrosonic was selected by the museum to supply, install, commission and provide warranty of the audio-visual hardware. Special tools used during the project include 3D projection drawings and pixel mapping.

The Voyagers Gallery brings together hundreds of objects, innovative audio-visual presentations and newly-commissioned videos all in one space. The novel projection system will help the Museum to make maritime subjects relevant to visitors on a personal level, telling stories of adventures and discovery in a unique and imaginative way.

The main feature visitors see upon entering Voyagers is a 25 metre dynamic wave-like structure, featuring



A PufferSphere spherical projector appears to float on top of the Wave.

bespoke video projections and a specially-designed soundscape. Seven Panasonic projectors are used to display intensely coloured patterns of images and words which appear to wash over the wave's multi-faceted surface, simulating the rise and fall of the ocean.

The 'Wave' is used by the museum to show images from their archive collections; at one moment the Wave is dominated by two or three stand-out images, in the next, a series of film and image montages pulses from right to left, each a shifting mosaic of content that illustrates to visitors a key theme from the Museum's holdings.

At the far end of the structure a PufferSphere spherical projector appears to float on top of the Wave; a Christie projector placed inside its centre displays individual words and images onto the giant globe taking visitors on a visual journey into maritime history.



The show is controlled by a Medialon Showmaster ST and can be accessed remotely via the internet. This offers greater flexibility and allows the museum to receive feedback on the state of the projector lamps and filters, the on-going show, (of 6 possible) and manually set the shows start and end times.

A multichannel soundscape consisting of six ceiling mounted speakers and two wall mounted speakers fill the gallery with sounds of the sea; whistling winds, crashing waves and flapping sails mirror the movement of the Wave.

Behind the Wave is a 30-metre long object wall, housing over 200 artifacts; the Museum has taken the rather unusual approach of arranging them by emotion - anticipation, love, sadness, aggression, pride and joy.

The final element of Voyagers is a series of video portraits, 'Talking Heads'. These take the form of recorded first person accounts from ordinary and extraordinary people from all over the world - coastguards, émigrés, naval officers, schoolchildren - each with their own story.

A series of columns are placed towards the exit of the gallery through which the visitors pass to leave. Eight small video monitors inset in these columns show short films of people answering questions such as: "What does the sea mean to you?", "What is

your maritime story?", "What are your memories of the sea?" Specially recorded at the museum, they provide a sometimes humorous, sometimes thought-provoking and even provocative insight into how Britons, as inhabitants of an island nation, still maintain powerful and meaningful relationships with the sea.

Beneath the giant wave is an area where children can sit amongst images of fishes and marine life and play with shell shaped musical instruments.

"The new Sammy Ofer Wing creates a spectacular contemporary environment in which more people can appreciate the wonders of our world-class collections," comments Kevin Fewster, National Maritime Museum Director.



The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.