

# The Projection Studio designs 16th Cairo Arab Media Festival opener

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## Theatre and Television

UK based projection specialists The Projection Studio were commissioned by Cairo production company PromoSign to create a large format projection show for the Opening of the 16th Cairo Arab Media Awards staged at Media City in Cairo.

The Awards were aired live across 18 countries. The 13 minute piece was part of a visual spectacular including fireworks, that was projected onto a full size scenic replica of the old Cairo Stock Exchange building (also known as the 'Bourse') which is part of one of the current film sets being utilised at the studio.

Ashton became involved in the project via Egyptian producer Ashraf Haridy, who was aware of The Projection Studio's previous work and recommended him to the show producers, who wanted to up the production values at this year's Awards.

Once everything was confirmed, they had just 2 weeks to create and compile the artwork for the show, which celebrated the history of Egypt and the development of the Arab media – covering print, radio, TV, digital media and the internet. There was also a section for each of the 18 countries involved in the Awards event.

PromoSign already had some definite ideas about elements of the projection show, which Ashton adapted to produce the specific effects they required, and also added his own input. PromoSign supplied about a third of the original material and the rest was created from scratch or taken from archives to their brief. Ashton and Paul Chatfield created the PIGI effects from this material.

The creative process included 3D mapping of the building so the projections and artwork could be fitted precisely to the architecture, allowing it to be used as a true 3D surface rather than just having flat projections applied. Effects included moving images within the windows, rotating columns and mask-contra-mask effects.

Karen Monid edited a special soundtrack for the projected visuals using material sourced from the De Wolfe music library, and provided a bespoke 2-minute intro and outro composed for the show.

Ashton also designed the projection system, which consisted of 4 x 6K PIGI projectors with double rotating scrollers, two of which were used to fill the surface and the other two to achieve the cross fading and contra-masking. The throw distance was 60 metres, and the images covered the entirety of the 32 metre wide 'building'.

The show was programmed and run by Karen Monid using an OnlyCue system. The projectionists were Simon Schofield and Phil Supple.

Ashton comments, "It was an interesting show and involved some real pressure due to the short lead-time and intense schedule for preparation, so I am really proud of what we managed to achieve".

## A Note on the Old Bourse, Cairo

An initial international design competition for the Cairo Bourse was won by French architect Raoul Brandon in 1907, but this never materialized. Eighteen months later the Corporation of Agents de Change commissioned the Cairo firm of Edward Matasek and Maurice J. Cattai with the participation of Ernest Jaspar, to design and erect an Exchange Building.

Adorned with Matasek's trademark Hermes masonic busts and ornate stucco, the resultant edifice was the most beautiful building on the block. Trading started in 1909, and continued there until 1928, the year of the Wall Street Crash, when the Cairo Bourse relocated to its current building.

The Old Bourse building (opposite the French consulate) has been subsequently occupied by Lloyds Bank, the British Chamber of Commerce, the National Bank of Egypt and currently by the Watany Development Bank.

Photos Ross Ashton / Louise Stickland