

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Digital Arts Panorama

Case Study



▲ San Francisco's Public Utilities Commission's Digital Arts Panorama, a seamless curved wall of Christie MicroTiles designed by Obscura Digital, engages visitors with a variety of constantly changing real-time information.

SFPUC LEEDs the way with interactive Christie MicroTiles wall

With the goal of delivering a powerful, permanent public installation in the lobby of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) headquarters, creative technology agency Obscura Digital and SFPUC personnel collaborated in the impressive design of a stunning interactive wall of Christie® MicroTiles®. "Our goal was an interactive educational experience that could excite both young and old alike," says Tyrone Jue, Director of Communications for the SFPUC. "We wanted a flexible and innovative platform that could connect people to the past and future story of our water, power and sewer systems."

Comprising a total of 160 Christie MicroTiles, the curved wall sits atop a superstructure pedestal custom fabricated by rp Visual Solutions and stretches 58' long. Officially named the Digital Arts Panorama, the video wall is controlled by a custom content management program developed by the Obscura Digital team which allows the SFPUC communications department to upload and manage information on the wall effectively and efficiently.

The content displayed on the wall includes a variety of real-time monitoring of various SFPUC holdings including current reservoir levels, the amount of hydro-electricity and solar energy being generated, as well as a complete diagnostic overview of the building itself, including electricity and water consumption levels.

"Our digital arts wall is an artistic and technological masterpiece fitting of the nation's greenest office building. It serves as a major focal point for the entire building and always leaves our visitors amazed. They say a picture is worth a thousand words – this digital video wall is worth at least ten-thousand on a bad day."

Tyrone Jue
Director of Communications
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

The Digital Arts Panorama features four interactivity modes, made possible by employing a series of Tyzx 3D stereophonic cameras and motion-tracking software – which recognizes people's movements as they make their way

Customer:
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Location:
San Francisco, CA, USA

Industry/Market:

- Government
- Power and utilities
- Public services
- Design and architecture

Partners:

- Obscura Digital
- rp Visual Solutions
- Webcore
- KMD Architects

Requirements:

- Curved-wall installation with off-axis viewing
- Interactivity
- LEED Platinum certification

Summary:
In the main lobby of the brand new building that houses the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, contractors designed and installed a stunning 4' tall by 58' long curved interactive display wall comprising 160 Christie MicroTiles to inform, engage and educate people visiting the award-winning, LEED Platinum-certified building.

Products:

- Christie MicroTiles (160)

Results:
The large bank of Christie MicroTiles offers a spectacular display providing the platform for an imaginative, interactive user-experience that informs, educates and engages the public. Strategic planning by Obscura Digital kept the installation within the allotted energy budget required for LEED Platinum certification.

along the wall and automatically changes the content on the display – providing an immersive and informative experience. Enhancing the overall impact of the display is an audio system comprising Meyer Sound components that plays ambient music. Explaining why Christie MicroTiles were chosen, Jue notes: “We looked at several different display technologies... eventually settling on Christie MicroTiles because of the minimal seams left between each tile, ease of installation with our curved wall and excellent image contrast and brightness.”

Key to the success of the installation was fulfilling the SFPUC’s mandate that the building achieve LEED Platinum certification – a strict, environmental standard used to designate environmentally-sustainable buildings. “We were given an energy budget we couldn’t exceed for the installation including the energy consumed by the display wall,” notes Nathan Houchin, Technical Director at Obscura Digital, on the tight restrictions his firm had to contend with. “We did look at other display technologies – projection and other modular displays – but we calculated that if we ran the wall for a certain amount of time during the day with 160 Christie MicroTiles, we could stay within the energy budget,” says Houchin, adding: “We chose Christie MicroTiles because we didn’t want to sacrifice resolution or be concerned about off-axis viewing and serviceability.”

Choosing Christie MicroTiles also helped the SFPUC building fall within the guidelines required to achieve LEED Platinum certification because of their low-amount of consumables. “At the end of a tile’s lifecycle, almost everything can be recycled and we wanted something that produced the least amount of waste possible,” shares Houchin. “We can sell the zero-consumables aspect of the Christie MicroTiles’ to our clients.”

In addition to meeting the LEED and operational requirements of the build, the Digital Arts Panorama also fulfills its function as an

information tool for the public and customers of the SFPUC. “The City of San Francisco is very fortunate to have such clean and healthy drinking water,” says Houchin, adding: “The SFPUC does an outstanding job of being stewards of this vital system that’s so important to the vitality of the Bay Area and the panorama shows all the types of infrastructure necessary to make this sort of water system work. Water doesn’t come from a tap first; this display helps people make that connection.” Further illustrating the importance of the water cycle, and the SFPUC’s place within it, is a diorama that depicts the key elements of the city’s water system. Additionally, through an agreement with the San Francisco Art Commission, artwork by local artists is displayed on a revolving basis, turning the display wall into a constantly changing, digital canvas.

As one of North America’s greenest and most environmentally-sustainable buildings, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission headquarters features several innovative and state-of-the-art architectural elements. The focal point of the progressive design and green achievements of the building at 525 Golden Gate Avenue is the visually stunning and interactively cutting-edge bank of Christie MicroTiles. “Our Digital Arts Panorama is an artistic and technological masterpiece fitting of the nation’s greenest office building,” states Jue. “It serves as a major focal point for the entire building and always leaves our visitors amazed. They say a picture is worth a thousand words – the digital wall is worth at least ten-thousand words on a bad day.”

Contact Christie

Contact us today to find out how your organization can benefit from Christie solutions.



▲ With zero-consumables and low-energy consumption, the Christie MicroTiles benefited the building’s LEED Platinum certification.



▲ Christie MicroTiles offer an impactful and versatile display unit that can be arranged in virtually any configuration.

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