

# The National Museum of American Jewish History

## Case study



▲ The “Dreams of Freedom” exhibit had special projection requirements.

## Making history personally meaningful

The National Museum of American Jewish History is the only museum in the U.S. that focuses solely on Jewish history and culture in America.

Josh Perelman, chief curator and director of exhibitions and collections, explains that the “goal of the museum is to create a visitor experience that makes history exciting and accessible, and brings the story of American Jewish life to a broad audience.”

The narrative of Jewish history and culture in America told by the museum’s exhibits begins in 1654 and serves as a lens into the overall history of the whole nation. It’s that wider perspective that makes the museum relevant for anyone who comes through the door, not just for a specific audience.

As a 21st century history museum, Perelman knew that the museum needed to gather various resources and technology, if it wanted to appeal to visitors’ different learning

styles and backgrounds. Technology helps Perelman create immersive experiences for individualized learning, giving museum visitors a broad overview or letting them explore a topic more deeply.

The museum’s relocation to a new site in November 2011 presented the perfect opportunity for Perelman and a “dream team” of designers, architects, a media producer and an AV integrator to develop new core exhibits.

Perelman’s work creating a strategy and plan began five years before the new site opened. The team worked for more than a year on making the experiences Perelman wanted to create into a reality.

It was AV exhibit designer, David Rome of RomeAntics of New York City, who specified that the new exhibits use Christie® products because he likes “the reliable, brightness of Christie projectors.”

### Customer:

The National Museum of American Jewish History

### Location:

Philadelphia, PA, USA

### Industry/market:

Museums

### Partners:

- Electrosonic
- Local Projects
- RomeAntics

### Requirements:

- Clear images in a high-ambient light environment
- Curved projection
- Reliable performance
- Partner and customer service

### Summary:

The National Museum of American Jewish History uses technology to bring history to life and make the museum’s exhibits meaningful for each museum visitor.

### Products:

- Christie DS+750 projector

### Results:

Christie products were critical components of the exhibits shown at the new Museum site, which opened in November 2010.

Bryan Abelowitz, AV integrator with Electrosonic, met the challenge of bringing all the hardware and software together to create the exhibits. He used 21 Christie DS+750 1-chip DPL® projectors for the museum's medium and large projection screens. The Museum still has an Electrosonic technician on site who performs day-to-day operations and maintains the AV systems.

One exhibit that both Perelman and Abelowitz are proud of is the introductory experience to the museum's third floor called "Dreams of Freedom." This exhibit looks at the mass migration of between 2 to 2.5 million European Jews to the US from 1880 to 1924.

This is a piece of history that has been covered in television and movies and as part of most US schools' curricula. People are familiar with the story. The Museum wanted an exhibit that would be just as informative as the formats people had already seen, but would be different and new.

Perelman's team created a Corian® sculptural surface in a wave form that's based on the shapes of letters and the ocean waters over which the Jewish immigrants traveled. A movie is projected onto this surface using three Christie DS+750 projectors, image-masked to replicate the shape of sheets of paper. Providing 7,500 ANSI lumens of brightness and DLP image quality and color accuracy, the Christie DS+750 is capable of doing the "hard and unusual work" of projecting onto the curved screen. "Dreams of Freedom" is shown in a light-filled space. Again, the Christie DS+750s are up to the challenge, and the images are not diminished by the high-ambient light.

In the 18 months since the new location opened, Perelman notes that "Christie has been completely accommodating in terms of making sure their products are well maintained and performing.... The Museum appreciates [Christie's] consistent follow through and input."

#### Contact Christie

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▲ Christie projectors were able to overcome the challenge of the high-ambient light in the exhibit areas.



▲ The new museum located in Philadelphia, PA

Photo credits: Electrosonic

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