

# ADDING A NEW DIMENSION TO YOUR FESTIVAL

By Heather Pingry



Call it what you wish: 3D mapping, 3D projection or a variation of the two. The name can be confusing if you haven't heard of it but the concept is really quite simple: an artist or artists create a 3 dimensional video to display on a 2 dimensional object. Until recently, this has been utilized most often in advertising but several examples were created for purely artistic purposes. 3D mapping is mostly enjoyed in large cities on the east and west coasts of the United States and throughout Europe. Using this technology, buildings can come to life and appear to move and twist, even fall apart and be rebuilt. Or, a completely different image can be played out on the building. This is not just simply projecting a movie or video onto a screen or building nor it is a laser light show. If you haven't seen an example of this, Google "3D mapping," where there are several inspiring videos.

This art form can be added to festivals for several great reasons all with or without a specific product to promote. As a non-profit, any festival can create this programming to bring in a new sponsor or advertiser to create more revenue. As we all know, sponsorable assets can be hard to come by and 3D mapping creates a large and very attractive option. By

securing several smaller sponsors or one to two large sponsors, you have not only covered the cost but added revenue to your bottom line...all without worrying about weather or day of event surprises! A sponsor will typically not only want their name tied to the project but to truly activate as well. This will not only increase your revenue directly, but also indirectly, as the project increases attendance. Since this art form is so unique, word will quickly spread and some people that might not otherwise attend your event will come just to experience this. If your event runs for multiple days, I would suggest slightly changing or lengthening the projection each time it is shown so that it incentivizes guests to keep coming back night after night. This is also a great chance for an event to engage a younger audience and give it a "cool" factor.

Essential to the success of the project is hiring a 3D projection specialist. While most marketing/web design/sound production firms may be able to handle the logistics of the audio visual needs, measuring of building space, etc., an artist who is familiar with the software and has the artistic ability to create something that will blow your guests away is vital. Because this is such a unique medium, it is

often difficult and can be cost-prohibitive to implement. One solution is to work with as many local sources as possible and then spend the money needed to pay the experienced artist. By using local sources of marketing/web design/sound production firms, you can reduce your cost by in-kind trade and sponsorship opportunities as well as reducing needed travel expenses for pre-event work and planning. Of course, if you have travel partners, ask for their help in paying for the artists' airfare and providing transportation and lodging. Do be sure to have the artist on hand during installation and programming. As with any major undertaking, be sure to ask for references and to see examples of their previous work. The whole process will go much smoother if you have direct contact with this artist throughout the creation and execution. And, as with most budgeting considerations, be prepared for unexpected costs. Some might include extra shipping, electrical work, a structure to temporarily house the projectors, city/state/county permits, location use fees, etc.

Before undertaking a new component of this size, you need to have several stakeholders involved and on board. Obviously, you would first need the support

of your Board of Directors and staff. This project takes an enormous amount of time and energy away from your typical duties but can definitely pay off. You need to have a plan in place ahead of time of what extra work will be required and who will be responsible for each aspect of the project. The artist, sponsor and festival all need to be in agreement with regards to content and who has final artistic control. Most sponsors will want to be recognized and included in the projection but it needs to be outlined from the start on what amount or what type of programming that will entail. If your event site spans a variety of public and private property, cooperation and an understanding of the project between all entities involved is a must. Most events that take place in an urban setting will be working with local government and private property owners/management and tenants. Affected tenants need to be notified in advance of any changes to their daily routine, i.e. will their windows be blocked, can they leave their office lights on to work in the evening, etc. The sound system provider has to ensure that there is compatibility between the computer, projector and sound system, as well as ensuring that there are adequate electrical needs for the additional equipment. Food vendors, artists and sponsors who have an on-site location near the projection area need to be made aware of the project and its schedule as well as any implications for them (temporarily turning off lights, etc.). The emcee will need to be prepared to announce each time it will be presented. Your festival security needs to know all the logistic details so they can plan for additional security as needed. Finally, you may need permits in addition to your event permit. Even if it is not required, be sure to notify the appropriate local agencies.

For Tulsa International Mayfest's 40th anniversary, we included a 3D projection, entitled "3D Muve Music Wonderwall, sponsored by Cricket Communications and produced by GuRuStu Group." Our local web design firm GuRuStu Group was instrumental in this project. In addition, we used our local sound production company, Axiom Audio, to coordinate the logistics of light, sound, measurements, etc. GuRuStu Group donated their time and coordinated the hiring and supervising of the artist who had experience in 3D mapping. For our projection, we selected a building opposite from our main stage that was built in 1917 and has architectural interest. Our projection included the building dancing, twisting, windows breaking out and falling down. We also had some fun springtime aspects

like flowers growing and even had a thunderstorm in it, hoping that would substitute the much maligned rain we often get during Mayfest. It was our 40th anniversary and because of that, featured a birthday cake and an image of our poster art that unraveled like a flag on the building. It truly was awe-inspiring and each night the program length was increased to bring more to the show. While the bands were playing on the stage, the projectors were still in use to show the stage schedule, live twitter feeds, etc. It could also be used as another revenue generating tool as sponsors and others could advertise on it during the breaks.

We had previously tried unsuccessfully to add a wireless sponsor to our event and found that this was the perfect opportunity. Cricket Communications was promoting their Muve Music phones and our audience was their target market. The projection occurred at night at our main festival stage area, so those watching were demographically inclined to be interested in music. Cricket was wonderful to work with and they really got the big picture of the fact that Mayfest is an arts festival, first and foremost. Their advertising portion of the projection was small, but significant to them, especially in their Oklahoma/Arkansas market. They wanted to promote the arts and not include any lengthy videos or advertisements for Cricket. They also activated by being on-site and informing attendees about Muve Music phones. At IFEA's 2012 conference, we won a gold award in our budget category for best single new sponsorship program for this effort.

Mayfest held a media/sponsor preview of the event because most people in our area are unsure of what 3D mapping exactly is. Because it was our first year, we could show them examples online, but it was difficult to show them what ours would look like. We didn't receive as much pre-event media as we would have liked, but once guests saw the project on Thursday night, the word quickly spread. By Friday and Saturday nights, you could hardly walk through the viewing area. We're looking forward to featuring this art form in 2013 and know that we can build on the buzz of our 2012 success. We were able to increase our sponsorship revenue as well as food and beverage sales this year, due in part to the increased interest and attendance. Perhaps most importantly is that Mayfest's image was greatly improved. A 40-year old festival was able to tap into a new, younger audience, all the while amazing our typical festival-goer. If you would like to see Mayfest's 3D Muve Music Wonderwall from 2012, visit the website by [clicking here](#).

As festival and event staff or volunteers, you know the importance of evaluation and planning for improvements the following year. We had our showings scheduled at 9:15 PM, before our headline act went on stage for the night, then again at 11:00 PM, immediately following the band's performance and our closing time. We are planning to adjust our schedule this year to show in the middle of the band's performance instead of the end. It's too difficult to keep the audience's attention when they have been programmed to leave right when the last band finishes. So instead of hiring a band to perform one 90 minute set, we're having them do two 45 minute sets, with a 15 minute break in between. Also, we knew what time the sun set during those days, but didn't realize that it still wasn't dark enough for the projection to be bright enough to make an impact. Luckily, we discovered this during our tests leading up to the festival, but had to change all of our times we had published. Also, although we had meetings with individual stakeholders, several components did not come together until the last minute which did not allow us to gather all stakeholders on a regular basis. If I could give one tip on how to make this successful from the beginning, it is to bring EVERYONE who has any type of involvement into the room together from conception through execution phases and to start as early as possible in your planning. And, best of luck. 3D mapping might not be a good fit for every situation, but many events, art festivals especially, can benefit greatly from this new art form. I think you'll find it's really worth the effort.

**Heather Pingry** is Executive Director of Tulsa International Mayfest. 2013 will mark the 41st Mayfest, which is a free community event featuring the best in visual and performing arts. Pingry is a Leadership Tulsa Class 39 Graduate. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Leadership Tulsa and is Vice President of the Flagship Program Planning Committee. Pingry was a founding member of Tulsa's Young Professionals, where she co-chaired/chaired the Marketing Crew from 2005 – 2007. She is a member of International Festivals & Events Association and Tulsa's Deco District. Pingry holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and a minor in business administration from the University of Oklahoma. She and her husband, Stephen, who is a photo-journalist at the Tulsa World, reside in Tulsa with their daughter, Claire.