

StudioNews



Photos: Dak Dillon Photography

TV & FILM

Vikings Broadcast Studio: A Game-Changing Environment

Chicago Scenic Studios, under the scenic direction of design firm Provost Studio, fabricated and installed the new 1,750 sq. foot TCO Studios broadcast set for the NFL Minnesota Vikings. Chicago Scenic also worked with Lighting Design Group for lighting design and infrastructure, and Primeview Inc., for the on-set AV technology.

The studio set is divided into four sections: the main anchor desk and wall for traditional broadcasts, an informal area for more relaxed content, a social/interactive area featuring an 86-inch touchscreen, and a stand-up area equipped with three vertical screens.

The goal of the TV set design and construction was to feature cutting-edge technology that showcases the team's vast video content. Chicago Scenic built the main anchor desk and platform, monitor wall enclosure and platforms, flooring, stand-up position and social media area. Additionally, Chicago Scenic crafted lighting arrangements and light boxes for each area.

Fan engagement is critical to the success of any major league team, and the new studio aims to provide Vikings viewers with insider access, while maintaining typical broadcast techniques.

"There was a heavy amount of drafting involved on this project," Project Manager Angelo Petratos said. "It's all about being able to bring the designer's vision to

life through our fabrication capabilities and successful collaboration."

Many aspects of the studio were new challenges to Chicago Scenic, including customizable signage capable of accommodating myriad advertisers and sponsors. Incorporation of technology into the space was also unique; the touchscreen monitors act as more than a focal point providing hosts the ability to break down plays, highlight important moments and visibly interact with images of the game.

The scenic pieces were fabricated in the Chicago Scenic facilities, shipped to Minnesota after completion, and a crew of 8 team members, lead by Juan Arriaga and Jason Jones, completed the installation.

Chicago Scenic drew on their vast history in fabricating broadcast studios to successfully complete this project. That history includes the award winning webcast studio recently completed for William Blair Investments.



We design,
build, and
manage
solutions.



chicago scenic
studios, inc.

Royal Caribbean International



Photos: Royal Caribbean International Cruise Lines

The Observatory™ is the newest series of Escape Rooms launched by Royal Caribbean International onboard the newly “amplified” Independence of the SeasSM and Mariner of the SeasSM. Both ships recently underwent massive renovations to the tune of over 100 million dollars per ship.

The Observatory™ is a high tech, fully immersive escape room experience. The concept for the Observatory Saga is the brain child of SVP, Entertainment Nick Weir, in collaboration with Puzzle Break, Design Duo, Chicago Scenic Studios, David Warfel Lighting Design and produced by Alison Frazier.

Players find themselves in an environment that transcends time and space, and features rich wood bookcases, alcove light boxes, and a magnificent 8-foot-long aluminum and steel telescope on a rotating platform. Once inside the Observatory™, guests collaborate with friends old and new, as they attempt to find the clues, solve the puzzles and unravel the mystery before time runs out.

Puzzle Break, cofounded by Nate Martin and Lindsay Morse, the first American escape room company and creator of the first escape games on the high seas, designed the puzzles of the game, including clues that overlap and paths that trace the clues back to the source of the solution. Design Duo, comprised of production designers Gerry Hariton and Vicki Baral, crafted the specific elements of the game and brought Puzzle Break’s vision to life and coordinated with Chicago Scenic

on materials and concepts. Chicago Scenic fabricated and installed the finished product, while Chicago office of tech company Creative Technology integrated the digital components into the puzzle. Lighting design by David Warfel, Graphics by The Imagination House and a custom soundtrack by David Roppolo culminate in a truly incredible guest experience.

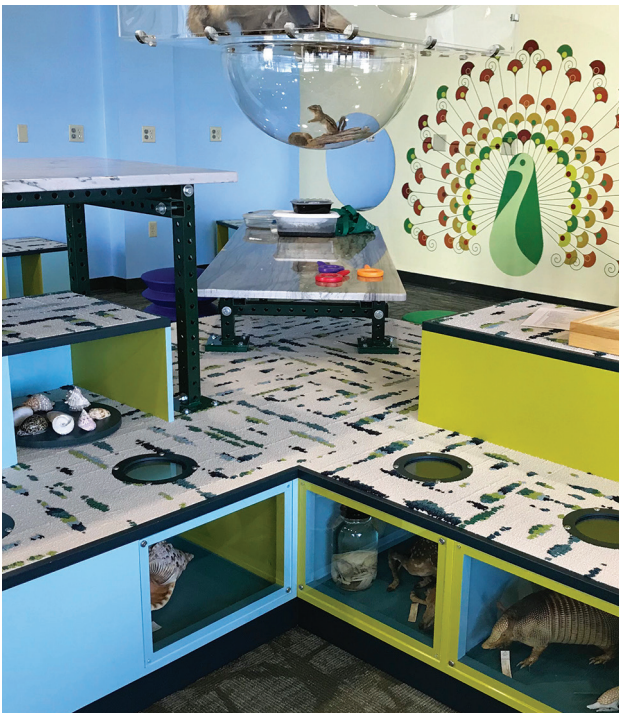
Part of the design focus for “The Observatory™” was seamless integration—how to make the scenic environment blend into the puzzles while still leaving clues for game players to decipher.

As part of the design process, before fabrication was complete, Chicago Scenic recruited 120 people to test the escape room’s challenging puzzles. Over the course of four days, teams of at least four people from ages 13 and older visited each room at least four times to determine whether Puzzle Break’s concepts were too easy or too difficult, and whether or not the puzzles could be completed in the allotted desired time. Based on the testing results, the Puzzle Break team then made adjustments to ensure the finished puzzles were solvable, challenging and engaging.

“Value engineering for this project was a challenging juggle to control costs while ensuring that the integrity of the build and the longevity of the pieces was preserved,” Chicago Scenic Project Manager Doug Pokorny said. “I’m confident that the solutions we came up with for this project will survive the constant play while still following and surpassing the original aesthetics of the design.”

Pokorny said the team worked well together and it was their strong, open communication that drove the project forward. “It’s all about staying connected and sculpting trust,” Pokorny said. “Know your capabilities and use them to establish great working relationships.”

While much of the project took place in-house, Chicago Scenic sent a team of project managers, scenic painters, and carpenters to install the escape room when the ship was in dry dock. Chicago Scenic’s team members travelled to the Bahamas and Cadiz, Spain to reassemble the pieces of the escape room that they fabricated shipped weeks before. The space was tight and confined, but Chicago Scenic coordinated schedules with Royal Caribbean crews so each group accomplished their tasks on time.



Photos: Dennis Harezlak

MUSEUMS

SPROUTS Learning Lab teaches science by playing with a purpose

Chicago Scenic Studios partnered with Peter and Sharon Exley of Architecture is Fun to create the Sprouts Learning Lab, an interactive exhibit where science is brought to a child’s level as they touch, experiment and play, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History in Rockford, IL.

The creation of SPROUTS emerged from the concept of using a discovery approach in exhibit design; Burpee wanted an exhibit centered around the development of a child’s natural curiosity to encourage children to role play as different scientific careers for a meaningful experience.

The entire exhibit was specifically designed low to the ground, making sure young children could touch and interact with pieces of the collection. The focal point of the exhibit is the U-shaped multi-level “Conversation Pit,” a main interactive seating and display area. The structure has many open and closed built-in cubbies where children have the opportunity to touch and play

with museum artifacts such as seashells and cranium skeletons.

To the side of the “Conversation Pit,” a set of steps lead up to a large maroon T-Rex silhouette on the wall. Children can place objects in various shadow boxes anchored to the wall to give the Dino a “mini makeover,” complete with new teeth and claws. The “Dino Wall” is made from an acrylic vinyl dinosaur decal and provides touchable specimens, not only giving children the opportunity to discover, but to also “connect the dots” and figure out what piece goes where.

As you look overhead, a majestic owl prepares to take flight while just underneath a sleepy badger cozies up to a perky, energetic chipmunk. These and more creatures are housed in three five-sided acrylic vitrine boxes Chicago Scenic constructed, with domes protruding on each side. The boxes were secured to the ceiling using Klem clamps and telestrut, providing a strong, sustainable connection. Hanging directly

above the “Conversation Pit” is the “Cloud of Wonder,” an assortment of taxidermy animals perched atop suspended, adjustable rails. Chicago Scenic worked with Burpee and Architecture is Fun to create a design concept, including technical drawings, a materials list and list of recommended collection pieces to purchase and display.

Project Manager Jacqueline Johnson worked closely with Burpee Museum staff to find materials that were both affordable and durable, and provided value engineering solutions to the challenge of the large project. Through strategic design, Johnson said she feels the exhibit was a success and encompassed the look and feel of the original concept.

“When you’re designing for children, safety, durability, and flexibility are our top priorities,” said Johnson. “We used high quality materials that are durable enough to withstand tremendous use, as well as rounding all corners so the exhibit’s edges weren’t a safety hazard.”

THEATRE

Northwestern’s “Starry Variety Show” features shining stars and dazzling designs



Photo: NU School of Communication, Jasmin Shah, and Sean Su

Northwestern University’s School of Communication hosted “A Starry Night”, an alumni benefit to raise funds and celebrate the department, as part of their 2018 spring events.

The stage was aglow with alumni stars such as Heather Headley (Broadway’s The Lion King), Ana Gasteyer (Saturday Night Live) and host Stephen Colbert (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert). Colbert also appeared in a video monologue alongside fellow alum Seth Meyers (Late Night with Seth Meyers).

Chicago Scenic collaborated with Northwestern MFA student designers to take their design concepts and bring them to life.

Chicago Scenic had several rolls in the event, including partial set design, and scenic construction and installation of the main deck, which featured a custom curved facade, the proscenium arch crafted from aluminum tube, and MDF-covered chrome vinyl shards with programmable internal LED lighting.

The proscenium posed a challenge because of required weight specifications, but Chicago Scenic’s metals and carpentry teams were up to the challenge. The truss needed to support the weight of the internal lighting, and was blacked out on the inside, outside and upstage faces to prevent light

leak. The downstage face was a projection screen dressed in a scrim.

The shards in front of the screen added a dazzling effect, and were divided into large panels pre-wired with LED nodes. Chicago Scenic’s custom-designed pixel-mapped shards were programmed to twinkle at various times, in a variety of speeds and colors, and with a variety of effects.

Chicago Scenic performed as much work as possible offsite so the time the team spent in the Gala space was solely dedicated to efficient installation. With an event of this size and numerous moving pieces, Chicago Scenic needed to be as thorough as possible.

Four supervisors were assigned to oversee the load in and out, and local labor was employed to assemble and strike.

Project Manager Stefan Koniarz said this project especially demonstrated Chicago Scenic’s exceptional collaborative efforts. “We can take design concepts, like the ones from Northwestern MFA students, and make them a reality through technical design and feasibility.”

Koniarz noted communication as one of the key factors in the success of this project.

LOOKING BACK

40 Years of Sports Entertainment

Chicago Scenic may have started as an off-loop theatre set design and construction company, but it has grown to be so much more. Over the years, we have developed relationships with local and national sports professionals. Here is a look at some of our sports related projects.



1994
World Cup



2007
NFL Opening
Day Ceremony



2007
Chicago Bears
Celebration



2012-
2016
Big Ten Network
Studios



2015
Pepsico's NFL Draft
Helmets



2013 &
2015
Blackhawks Stanley
Cup Celebration



2014-
present
NFL Honors



2015
Chicago Bulls
Advocate Center



2015
Adidas Pop Up
Store



2016
Chicago Cubs
World Series
Celebration

CORPORATE BRANDING & EVENTS

Golden Arches Make a Home in Chicago

Photo: Kindle Communications



Chicago Scenic project managed the grand opening corporate event to provide tables, chairs, and dozens of red and gold umbrellas to seat and shade the 200+ guests that attended the building's unveiling.

Guest safety was a priority, so Chicago Scenic's team installed a wooden curb extension between the curb and parking bollards to prevent tripping.

While Chicago Scenic's crews are accustomed to working on fast

turnarounds, the grand opening event posed a challenge as the team was under a strict 2-week timeframe. Chicago Scenic helped coordinate the day of the event for Producer Pam Kalish from Kindle Communications and Fuse Creative Group.

Project Director Gary Heitz said that projects like this one give Chicago Scenic's team the opportunity to demonstrate their reliability and ensure project success even under tight deadlines.