Projections in Fashion

as Collina Strada Launches Its Latest Collection

For this year's New York Fashion Week, boutique brand Collina Strada enhanced its SS17 collection with visual projections. Hillary Taymour, the label's founder, approached artist Soliana Habte and projection manufacturer Optoma about designing a system that would add "another layer of texture, color, and movement" to the fashion line, already renowned for finding unusual shapes in ordinary apparel.

Habte designed moving imagery of paint in various colors mixing together and flowing down a block of wood. The models stood in front of the image, making it appear that their outfits were subtly changing color. Optoma's product manager, Brian Soto, oversaw the projection aspect of the show. "Optoma was chosen as the technology partner because we have the right image-blending and warping capabilities that could bring the designer's vision to life," he says.

The runway show took place at Pier 59 Studios, at Chelsea Piers. The task of determining the proper number and arrangement of projectors fell to Soto. "We all wanted to have some ambient projection; that was very clear," he says. "What wasn't clear was how we were going to project this, if we were going to use one projector or several projectors stacked together. We could have done a two-by-two array. Or we could have done a very large image, like, vertically—in a four-by-one arrangement. There is no limitation on what you can do; it all depends on the equipment. We came to the conclusion that we would have a row of pro-jectors to cover most of the wall and emphasize the beauty of image-blending."

Initially, the event was to take place in a 40'-wide room, suggesting that five or six projectors would be required. However, a last-minute change of vision and venue forced Soto to improvise. The show would now take place adjacent a conspicuously large window. "Now what [Taymour] wanted to show was day and night as a background on the models, so we changed the room and minimized the number of projectors." The final count became four EH320 1080p ultra-short-throw projectors, and two GB-200 image-blending and wrapping processors, to create the final 20'-long-video display, made up of 6,000 x 1,080 pixels. For his media

server, Soto used a PC Windows 10 with an i8 processor, 16GB RAM, and an AMD W9100 multi-output graphics card.

The media content for the projection background required some last-minute fine-tuning in order to blend in with its new environment. The original aspect ratio was slightly different to the final aspect ratio with the projector array. Nevertheless, Soto managed to position the content to fit across the four projectors, keeping the correct aspect ratio for the new setup.

Still, there were concerns that the light would dim the brightness of the projected image's colors. "That's why I originally had planned to use five projectors and to join them together to increase the brightness," says Soto. "But it worked out all right. These short-throw projectors are very bright and they have a very good color gamut."

Despite all the various setbacks, Soto is satisfied with the final results.

"I feel that it worked out very well. Bearing in mind that the venue was changed all of a sudden, we had programmed a different room, all the press of getting it ready, the carpet on top, the equipment setup together—I think it worked out very well and the image looks reasonable so I'm quite glad with this." Soto adds, "Optoma projectors are very flexible and easy to set up, so despite the on-site changes, we ended up with great results and are happy that we were able to partner with Hillary Taymour during New York Fashion Week."—**Elaine Miraglia** 🔊