

State openings

A widescreen show is touring Italy for the next 18 months as part of an exhibition to celebrate the Italian Constitution's 60th anniversary. The international production effort used technology to tell the tale, and 10,000 visitors came to watch in the first few weeks



STARTING IN FEBRUARY, the Italian Houses of Parliament kicked off the celebrations to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Italian constitution with an exhibition called Parliament regeneration: from Costituente to Constitution.

Free to the public, the exhibition will tour 14 Italian cities between now and December 2007 and aims to attract over 500,000 visitors.

It is based around documents, newspapers, pictures and manuscripts from the period between April 25, 1945 (the end of WW2) and January 1948 (the promulgation of the Italian Constitution). At the end of the launch exhibition in the Italian Parliament building, just before the exit, the public enters a frescoed hall to watch a 10m x 3m Watchout multi-image show.

But that's only part of the story, because the production team from Italy and the UK were also responsible for managing the exhibition graphics and content, creating a database of material which was also used to create multimedia displays, the book of the exhibition, a DVD and a web site which visitors use to find out about the

exhibition and book timed tickets.

The Italian producer of the show, Aldo Di Russo from Unicity, used an English creative director, Phil Ogden, and an English Watchout show programmer, Darryl Williams, to help create the show.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY

'The purpose of the show', says Ogden, 'is to create atmosphere, to represent historical events and underline the importance of Parliament as the place of democracy.'

With so much history in place, the design also had to be accessible to young audiences, but 'the visual design is elegant and formal, making it suitable for a public service representing the State', Ogden adds.

'Fragmented historical events are organised to tell the story through pictures and historical documentation, using multi-layering of the media within the panoramic space.'

The historical sequences are linked to moving backgrounds and informative text (all accompanied by a powerful and emotional music soundtrack specially

SHOW ANATOMY

Client: Fondazione della Camera dei deputati (Italian Chamber of Deputies Foundation)

First showings: Rome Parliament building, Italy

Production: Aldo Di Russo of Unicity (executive producer); Phil Ogden (creative director); Darryl Williams of Go-Fusion, Watchout programming
Deliverables: Exhibition, culminating in a Watchout 3 screen soft edged digital show; plus DVD, book and web site.

Contents: Archive and library pictures, newspapers, manuscript documents, original sound-recordings.

Staging: 3 x NEC projectors with 25 per cent overlap. Show control by Dataton Watchout controlled by Touchdown in cluster mode. Sound from Audio Creative sound blaster with Dolby Surroundsound 5.1.

Contacts:

www.unicityonline.it

www.gofusion.co.uk

www.philogden.com

<http://fondazione.camera.it>



The international production team. From left: Williams, Ogden and Unicity executive producer Aldo Di Rosso

Main picture and below: Multi-image style programming is used to create a modern feel while using graphics, black and white archive photos and library footage 60 years old

composed by Alessandro Di Stefano).

Because the exhibition is thematic — covering topics such as election campaigns, the assembly, foreign policy, and voting — and because there are a lot of political and historical documents, the show is chronological and mixes pictures of daily life, photographs of political leaders addressing crowds and Parliament, post-war Italian cinema (Rossellini, De Sica, Fellini, Visconti) and contemporary industrial design (Vespa, Olivetti).

At the time when the constitution was established, 'Italy was broken up', says Ogden, 'so visually, everything is "paralleled" with its opposite'.

So the show's counterpoints include dictatorship and democracy, rich and poor, enthusiasm and sadness, people whooping with joy and people weeping from torture, monarchy and republic. Even the colours are contrasted — red was the colour of the republic in the post war election campaign and blue was the colour of monarchy in the campaign.

The programme goes on to cover the creation of a government of national unity, and concludes with 'a message for youth', that democracy and stability are the base for growth. That extrapolates into the message that 'Parliament is the base of democracy, so Parliament is the base of growth'.

IN CONTACT

But although the show was historical in nature, the production effort was right up to date.

'Apart from a couple of meetings, most of the concept, design & production was done "remotely" with Aldo in Rome and Darryl in Basingstoke', says Ogden, who linked to the others from his base in North Yorkshire.

'All three of us were in almost daily contact via Skype, which is a great way to work and communicate for free!

'These days, with broadband, scripts, storyboards, music files and images can be approved on the spot.

'Only the final Watchout programming and installation meant all three of us getting together'.

The producers describe the pace of the show as 'leisurely', which 'underlines the importance of rational thought and pondered decision making'. In the process, they seem to have practiced what they preached. □

