

# Stage craft

An extravagant, multi-stage theme park production required specialist material and machinery expertise

Below and opposite: **Puy du Fou's latest production called for specialist masking drapes, printed fabrics, projection screens, rails and motion control systems from ShowTex**

**P**uy du Fou is a historical theme park based in western France and is home to extravagant shows in which thousands of actors and animals recreate historical stories. Now, Puy du Fou has taken things to the next level with its newest production – *Le Dernier Panache*. The team at Puy du Fou commissioned ShowTex for the production and installation of all the masking drapes, printed fabrics, projection screens, rails and motion control systems that bring *Le Dernier Panache* to life.

Performed in a completely custom-built and 360° rotating theater, the 2,400 members of the audience are immersed in the story on a multi-sensory level, smoothly rotating to watch the performance taking place on six different stages. ShowTex rose to the challenge and installed the most solid and sturdy stage technology suitable for intensive use, including more than 21,500ft<sup>2</sup> of custom-made technical ceilings above four of the six stages. These ceilings required 10 tons of steel profiles and aluminum tubes to create this indispensable system for hanging draperies and light sources.

*Le Dernier Panache* features no less than 32,290ft<sup>2</sup> of Galaxy 250 printed fabrics, an M1-certified soft material with a good weight to opacity ratio. However, this project did not involve traditional printing. Creating the life-size palace, for example, involved an extraordinary level of precision to achieve the required realism. All the elements were cut out and hand-sewn on LaserVoile for enhanced detail.

## Setting the stages

This space had to be used for several elements of the *Le Dernier Panache* production. Two printed backdrops of 2,150ft<sup>2</sup> were each equipped with a HiSpeed Roll-Up 8000 system measuring 69ft, as well as a mechanism at the back for a Roman curtain opening, which made it possible to change the set in the minimum amount of time. Additionally, one of the sets was fitted with two concentric ShowTrack tracks, each curved over a length of 102ft and equipped with a built-in RTD3000 motor for easy and efficient DMX or simple cable control.

To create the ultimate immersive environment, ShowTex opted to install a variety of large-scale





projection surfaces, including an impressive 9,690ft<sup>2</sup> panoramic screen made of FP SuperMat. The bottom of the screen is immersed in water and even hit by waves during the performance, so ShowTex had to ensure that the screen stayed tight at all times. Elsewhere, seven double-layered mobile screens featuring 18,300ft<sup>2</sup> of FiberCloth M0 reveal different scenes in the show and finally 6,460ft<sup>2</sup> of New Mesh was printed and cut in the shape of a giant lamp, providing an additional and sound transparent projection surface.

Thousands of feet of flame-retardant Molton CS were used for the production of masking drapes, legs, borders, backdrops and linings, ensuring minimum shrinkage in this sometimes humid environment. But the biggest challenge was that the installation had to be completed in just a couple of weeks, with all suppliers required to work closely together. Working day and night with the most specialized and experienced technicians, the ShowTex teams rotated in shifts to get everything done in time and proved once again that nothing is impossible. ■

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 LE DERNIER PANACHE - PUY DU FOU - THEATRE OF GIANTS

Over 3.000 m<sup>2</sup> of projection screens, 3.000 m<sup>2</sup> of printed fabrics, 1 km of masking drapes and various roll-up & stage track systems make up the 6 giant theatre stages.

 **ShowTex**

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