RWA After Hours

Client Royal West of England Academy **Location** Bristol, UK

Brief

Known for showcasing world-class art from global and local artists alike, Bristol's oldest gallery the RWA aspires to be a beacon of inspiration and cultural fulfilment for people from every background. The work shown in the beautiful Grade II listed building brings cultural diversity right into the heart of the community, and is the type or versatile space that can be everything from a pop-up shop to a live music venue – as well as an incredible presentation space for talented artists.

This February, the RWA amplified their incredible exhibition - Africa State of Mind – with an After Hours event, and needed a dynamic and bold lighting design to echo the vibrancy of the work. The exhibition features stunning pictures from photographers across the African continent, so the RWA wanted to evoke memories of an African sunset to show off their external and multi-use internal spaces, including the grand dome and entrance hall foyer.

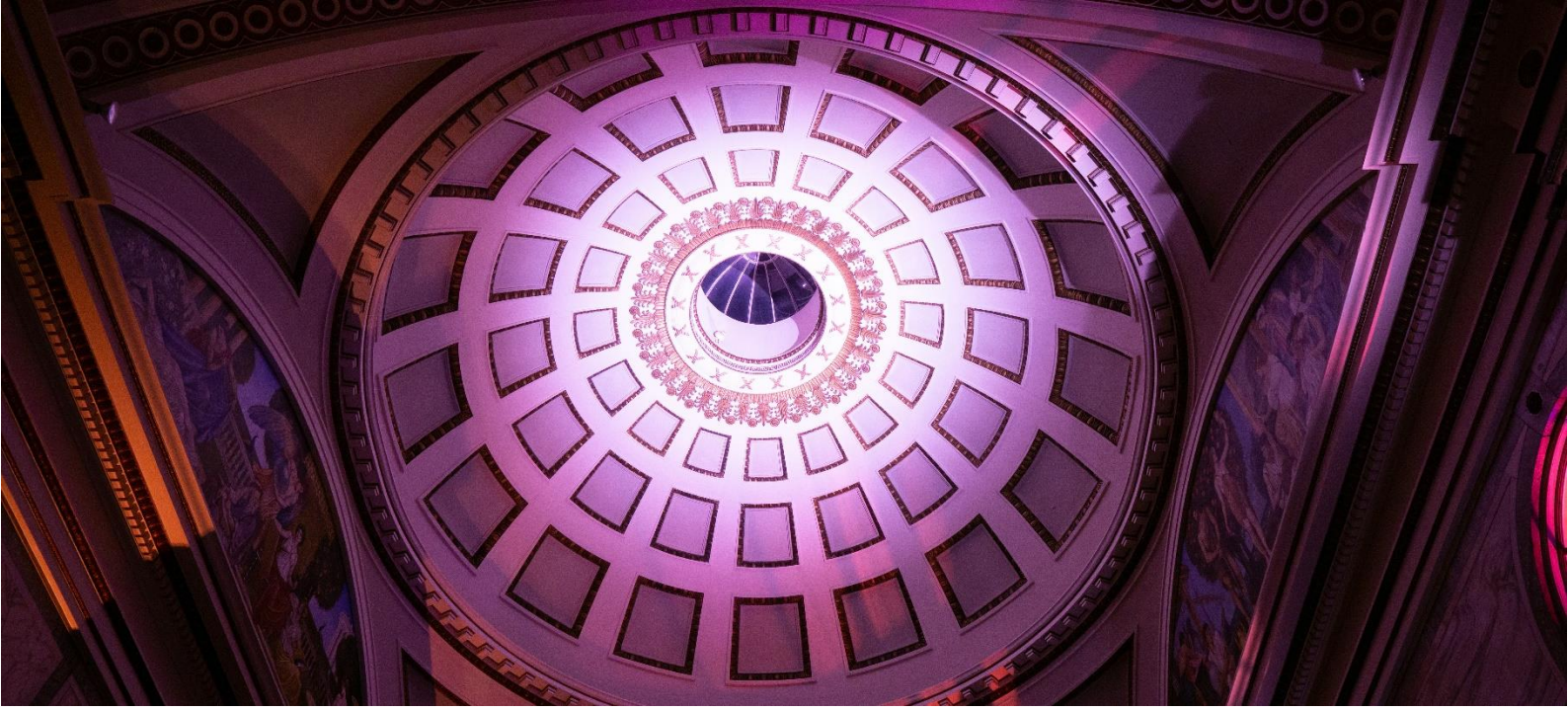
Having already worked with GDS to transform their gallery and workspaces in 2019, they were the first choice of lighting partner for this ambitious project.

Approach

In order to achieve the rich colours the RWA desired over such a large scale area, GDS used 2 DTS FOS 100 's, 3 DTS Brick and 3 DTS X-Brick fixtures to create a carefully crafted, even wash of light over the entire façade of the impressive building. The entire uppermost tier of the gallery was lit using just a single X-Brick fixture, emitting an impressively high output that made it possible to programme the lighting scenes in broad daylight.

To mirror the natural beauty of sundown on the Sahara, GDS programmed a lighting scene using gradients to create subtle, ambient transitions through 5, minute-long colour sequences of vivid red, amber and orange into rich purple and deep indigo.

The hard-working fixtures were controlled using DMX/RDM and the waterproof DMX and Powercon True connections on the X-Brick made them a perfect choice for all-weather outdoor use.



The internal lighting scheme needed to compliment the eye-catching design outside without detracting from the work or intricate architecture inside the RWA. GDS used uplighters and 2 DTS Alchemy 5's to light up the famous dome. The 6-colour light engine and soft edged beam of the Alchemy 5 helped create a custom-tailored gradient of light, achieving a

stunning soft ambience that elevated the work. Uplighters were also used to bathe the entrance hall and grand staircase in amber-white, burnt-orange, blue and purple, enhancing the space beautifully.

Outcome

The sold-out event was an incredible success, and the striking lighting even drew people in off the street. DTS fixtures were so bright, the entire display was visible in natural sunlight, making for a speedy, straightforward set-up and delivering stunning results. The elliptical beam diffusers DTS supplied with the bricks also allowed for incredible versatility in beam angle, making them an ideal choice for one-off events and temporary shows such as this.

The popularity of this event puts the RWA well on target to achieve their goal of attracting 40% more visitors and community users to the space, which in turn helps to secure the future of the gallery. The ingenuity of using a bold lighting display to attract new audiences also highlights the creativity of the team and their commitment to fulfilling their vision of promoting the enjoyment of art to the widest possible audience.

Product Manager Hallam Smith who created the display added, "*Lighting up such an impressive façade in our home city of Bristol was a wonderful opportunity, and we were blown away by the ability of the DTS Brick range to create such an impressive result with only a small number of luminaires. Collaborating with the RWA to create a lighting scheme for their evening event was the perfect scenario to showcase the impressive light output of the DTS Brick range, and we were delighted with the outcome.*"

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