

Anolis for Stunning Maiden's Tower Installation in Istanbul

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Istanbul's famous Maiden's Tower, which stands on a tiny islet at the southern entrance of the Bosphorus strait, 200 metres from the coast of Üsküdar in Istanbul, Turkey, has recently re-opened after restoration, complete with a fabulous new permanent lighting scheme designed by Martin Kuhn and featuring over 75 Anolis LED luminaires.

Martin was working for AV specialist ASTEL and end client, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. He actually won a competition to design lighting for the newly renovated monument, also well known for its appearance in the 1998 James Bond Movie, *The World Is Never Enough*.

For the pitch, Martin researched the history of the structure and role in Istanbul's culture and heritage. Parts of the current Tower date back to 1721, although way before then, a wooden tower was likely the first ever construction on the islet as part of a custom ship station around 408 BCE - for vessels coming in from the Black Sea.

He wanted to create a meaningful and educative lightshow that represented the significance and importance of the Maiden's Tower.

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The bigger idea with the piece was that visitors could tune in to the narrative in their chosen language via a special website or an App whilst watching the lightshow and have a multi-dimensional experience.

With this in mind, Martin teamed up with one of Turkey's leading authors, Ayse Kulin, who storyboarded a short version which Martin, utilising Depence 3 software, then turned into a 3-minute video showcase for the client.

After successfully winning the job, Martin commissioned musicians and translators for the 8-minute narrative and musical piece, and designed and programmed the lighting and visual

Anolis for Stunning Maiden's Tower Installation in Istanbul

elements.



From the outset, the show part of the project was designed to be a permanent feature of the tower, and as it was conceived concurrently with the tower renovations, it was totally logical that “permanent” architectural lighting would be part of a broader show solution, so Martin quickly took over this aspect of the design as well.

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The result is elegant architectural lighting with the amazing benefit that – through the RGBW colour mixing – the whites can be “tweaked” to look best on the different surfaces and materials. “A tiny bit of colour had an incredible effect on the walls for example,” elucidates Martin.

The refurbished Tower also needed totally different – and more sustainable – architectural lighting than before.

Martin has designed several significant architectural projects over the last decade, but none of these had required particularly powerful lights or DMX control, so this was his first time utilising Anolis products.

“I was aware of the brand of course,” he said, “and having used Robe lighting fixtures on the various shows I design and knowing them to be reliable and well-made, I was certain that the same standards would apply to Anolis.”

Anolis for Stunning Maiden's Tower Installation in Istanbul



Some of the lighting positions were pre-determined by the building architecture and its position which is just a meter above sea level at high tide and buffeted by waves, blistering sea winds and a generally salty, corrosive environment.

As the architectural scheme emerged, it became a 'no-brainer' to re-utilise the previous inground luminaire positions, installing a modern light source, which had to be completely watertight and robust.

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After looking extensively at all the available options, Anolis came back as the best choice for its RGBW colour mixing, sustainability, and straightforward DMX control.

“Anolis ticked all the boxes, and I was surprised at how few brands have colour changing and wall washing lights with all this functionality!” Martin noted, adding that he was also impressed with the wide range of optical choices available for Anolis.

With plenty of ambient light to contend with from all over the city, it was essential that the Maiden Tower's lighting was intense and impactful.

Fifty-six Anolis Eminere 4ft in-grounds are used for the Tower's base wash, concealed in the battlements around its base, all fitted with 10 x 30-degree optics. They illuminate the Tower “beautifully and evenly,” explained Martin.

On top of the domed metal roof is a ring of 16 x Anolis Calumma S SC's lighting this area, concealed rigged on a small circular platform just below the roof perimeter, and on the top of the roof, on the highest ring, are 4 x Anolis Calumma S MC 4000's, shooting up the flagpole.



Anolis for Stunning Maiden's Tower Installation in Istanbul

None of the Anolis fixtures are running at full power as they are so bright!

There are some other flood fixtures in the lighting scheme and the visitor balcony is illuminated with 16 more inground fixtures, and there is a circle of beam moving lights installed around the base which are hidden in special cabinets in the sea wall remaining closed during the day and these are opened up for showtime.

Eighteen lasers in total are involved in the show. Eight projecting lasers are also hidden in similar sea wall compartments, one on a hydraulic lift that elevates to the correct level for delivering show graphics onto the Tower wall after the cabinets are opened.

A further 8 x 50-Watt lasers grace the top of the Tower's roof shooting 360-degree beams around the harbour.

Following the narrative, two 70 Watt lasers - one on the very top of the Maidens Tower and another installed on the Galata Tower - originally a watchtower 3 kilometres away perched on the highest point of the Walls of Galata in Old Istanbul town's European shore - interact creating a dramatic visual 'bridge' for the show's finale.

Control for the architectural installation and the show lighting is via a grandMA3 replay unit running grandMA3 software which was programmed by Marc Marlo Schelesnow, with laser control and programming courtesy of LASERFABRIK from Cologne.

Audiences can see and experience the Maiden's Tower architectural and show lighting from Istanbul's shores, or by boat, and enjoy the lighting spectacle from both European and Asian parts of the city. Uniquely cosmopolitan and vibrant, it is the only city in the world to spread out across two continents!

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The show has already proven a big hit with the public, drawing many people to watch the current shows per evening.

The lighting supply and installation was completed by Asimetrik which is also an Anolis distributor in Turkey.

Photos: By Amanda Holmes