Avolites Ai servers pump up the party for Arcadia at Glastonbury UK

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The incredible Arcadia Spectacular stage pumped out some serious visuals at Glastonbury this year created and controlled by blinkinLAB's Tom Wall using an Avolites Sapphire Media and Ai server. The Spider stage is Arcadia's most monumental environment. Built from recycled military hardware, it is a 360-degree, interactive environment with a fully programmable DJ booth and integrated video mapping, amongst many other pyrotechnics!

2015 is the third year running that Tom Wall has masterminded the Arcadia visuals. This year's performance was called the 'Metamorphosis' show, and the returning spider was accompanied by some amazing new Ai powered costumes and zorbing balls, created by Light Initiative. "We created mapped animations for the projection on each face of the three legs, the LED screens installed inside and around the DJ booth, and this year for Light Initiative's alien eggs and alien jellyfish costumes!" explains Wall. Dave Whiteoak from Video Illusions originally conceived adding projection mapping and LED screens to The Spider, and approached Wall to create the content for the project.

"We debated using different media servers but went with Ai as it has some features out of the box that we would need, such as 7 outputs to cover all the different surfaces, as well as timecode control," says Wall. "Having the media server built into an ergonomically designed lighting desk is actually really useful, especially during the live DJ sections where nothing is rehearsed. Using the touch screen to select media and having sturdy faders and buttons available in one system to be able to control different layers of video is really useful. I worked with Ciaran Abrams from Avolites to create some customised elements such as routing buttons to be able to switch between different fixtures, or apply different effects.

"A lot of my work creating content revolves around 3D modelling and animation. Ai uses the same system of applying a 2D texture to a 3D surface as is found in all major 3D software. So when creating the 3D assets needed for mapping in Ai, I was happy to use this industry standard."

The stunning media content was projected onto the body of the spider. Avolites' Selvin Cooper mapped and supported the video projection for Arcadia, using six projectors he used provided by CPL.

"The projection mapping is a combination of 3D animation of metallic reptilian scales and machines that ripple and pulse along the legs, mixed with more graphical content inspired by retro-futuristic sci-fi computers and circuit diagrams," Wall continues. "The material has to work with the constraints of the structure which has quite a narrow space on which to actually project. "The LED screen content is also

quite constrained to the thin design of the screens. One of the screens represents the mouth, so on this we have a visualisation of the Spider speaking. We have also created a lot of graphical VJ content that fits with the overall aesthetic.

"For the jellyfish costume and alien eggs built by Light Initiative, we created pixel mapped animations that flash and pulse, highlighting different parts of the musical score." Tim Smith of Smash Productions once again oversaw the visual proceedings, evolving the lighting for the spider in conjunction with Colour Sound Experiment. Rachel Moule took control as lighting designer for the spectacular stage with support from Dave Cohen of MIRRAD, both operating from Avolites flagship Sapphire Touch consoles.