

Hangar Hang-ups

Client: The Smithsonian Institution/The National Air & Space Museum,
Washington, DC

Graphic Production: The Color Place, Dallas, TX

Input Device: Howtek Scanmaster 4500 drum scanner

Output Device: Durst Lambda 130 laser photo imager

Finishing Equipment: GBC Pro-Tech Orca III laminator,
Sealeze roller press

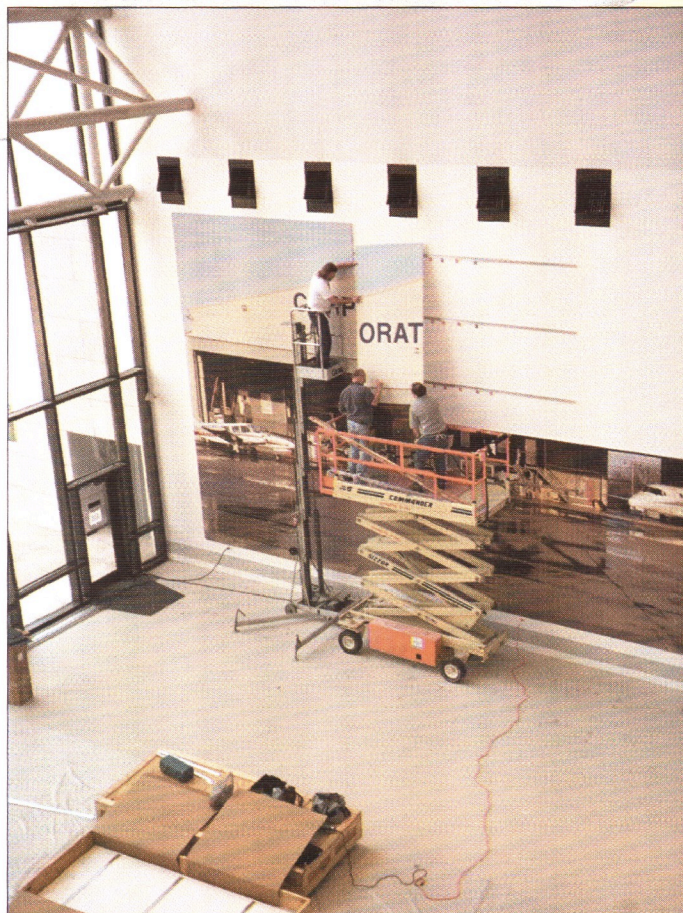
Three-dimensional "environmental-graphic design" is a fast-growing specialty in the exhibit and display-building field. In this niche, large-format graphics are often used as backdrops to help create a desired atmosphere. For example, when the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, DC, wanted to add a "you-are-there" feel to an exhibit of corporate airplanes sponsored by the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), The Color Place created a 20 x 40-ft mural of a hangar as a backdrop. Dubbed "Corporate Flight," the mural helps exhibit viewers imagine that they are on the tarmac, preparing for boarding.

Production of the backdrop started with an 8 x 10-in. transparency supplied by photographer David Almy of the NBAA. A Howtek Scanmaster 4500 was used to input the file for output from a Durst Lambda laser photo imager.

"Although the original scan produced a digital file of about 1 GB, the final file size was reduced to approximately 600 MB," explains Richard Oliver of The Color Place. "This 'smaller' file allowed us to do some retouching of the image relatively quickly. And for a mural of this size, the lower resolution is fine."

With the Durst Lambda 130, the mural was output in 4 x 20-ft vertical sections on 50-in. rolls of Kodak C-Print media. Each panel was laminated with Seal's 3-mil Print Shield Lustre overlaminant film and mounted onto two 4-ft x 10-ft x 5/8-in. pre-sanded, edge-painted furniture-grade, birch plywood panels laid end-to-end on their 4-ft sides. Seal's Print Mount Ultra adhesive and a 54-in. Sealeze roller press was used to mount the prints. Each of the 4 x 10-ft mural panels was created by cutting through the print to separate each plywood panel into two. In all, the company fabricated 20 panels.

The panels were hung with Panelclip®, a mounting system trademarked by Brooklyn Hardware (Portland, OR). The system uses an upward-pointing hook strip mounted to the wall and a downward-pointing hook strip mounted to each panel. To facilitate installation, three aluminum Panelclip strips were precisely positioned on the back of each panel before they left the shop, using a custom-made template of the clip spacing used on the pre-hung Panelclip wall rails. The panels were numbered, then loaded into two crates in the reverse sequence in which they would be hung. At the museum, a crew of three Color



Place installers spent slightly more than two days hanging the panels onto 12-ft aluminum Panelclip rails that had been shimmed to compensate for small imperfections in the flatness of the wall. To make sure the plywood panels would properly align, a "biscuit cutter" was used to apply small alignment biscuits along the edges and across the horizontal seam.

How did a company in Dallas get a government job in Washington, DC? "Diligent, persistent research to find the right people," says Oliver. He notes that other companies that have bid on government projects can be found through government publications. From that information, it's possible to partner with exhibit design and fabrication companies that are bidding on museum projects.

In business for 26 years, The Color Place offers scanning, graphic design, and digital file assembly for professional display and exhibit builders nationwide. In addition to Durst Lambda and high-resolution photographic film output, The Color Place offers electrostatic and inkjet printing, finishing, mounting, and installation services.

The Color Place: 800-676-7174