Singapore River One brings its underpasses to life with Raffles Design Institute

Singapore River One (SRO) is a private sector-led partnership charged with the place management, enhancement and marketing of the Singapore River. SRO has a singular focus on making the Singapore River precinct an attractive destination by actively managing the social, physical and economic environment.

Industry sector: Sign & Display

Business name: Singapore River One

Headquarters: Singapore

Testimonial from: Michelle Koh, executive director, Singapore River One

Business name: BusAds Pte Ltd

Headquarters: Singapore

Testimonial from: Alvin Yapp, director of Corporate Affairs

HP presses: HP Latex 360 Printer

Challenge

"The challenge with enhancing a public underpass is that pedestrian movement through the underpass should remain accessible as it is a very functional and high traffic space."

Michelle Koh, executive director, Singapore River One

Bringing the riverside to life

Singapore River One (SRO) started its first Underpass Art Installation project in January 2013 with the goal of using visual arts as the medium for the transformation and rebranding of the Singapore River. Through this project, SRO hopes to kick start the reactivation of the underpasses, thereby encouraging exploration along the entire stretch of the Singapore River, increasing footfall and boosting spending.

"There are several underpasses by the river and we had already painted the first three with murals so for the fourth, we wanted to try something different such as adhesive prints," explains Michelle Koh. "That led us to discussions with Raffles Design Institute because we wanted to engage its students and give them a stake in the development of the river. They came up with wonderful designs; the challenge then was to find the best way to produce them."

The underpass is a public space so the first priority was to ensure that pedestrian access was maintained even during the installation of the artwork. "We couldn't afford the sort of downtime that was required by the previous mural paintings which was why using the printed approach was more practical."

SRO evaluated the available print technology and decided to opt for HP Latex Printing Technologies for quality, speed and environmental impact, while partnering with print service provider BusAds Pte Ltd, whose wealth of experience printing outdoor advertising was invaluable.

Solution

"When we were faced with this project, there wasn't a doubt in our mind that we should go to HP straightaway. Why go to the second best when the best is available?"

Michelle Koh, executive director, Singapore River One

Speed and quality at flexible sizes

HP and BusAds recommended using the HP Latex 360 Printer to produce the prints. Designed with the environment in mind, HP Latex Printing Technologies offer a compelling new printing alternative for a wide variety of outdoor and indoor applications. Together, HP Latex Inks and HP Thermal Inkjet Technology provide durable, odourless prints; sharp, vivid image quality; application versatility; and high productivity.

"The Singapore River Project is one of the most exciting jobs we've faced. It is a public tunnel that's about 32 metres long . It presented one challenge, the prints had to be applied direct to the tunnel walls which is an uneven surface, comments Alvin Yapp, director of corporate affairs, BusAds Pte Ltd.

"A lot of attention was given to the alignment and how to make it look seamless, so that at one glance it flows without any joints."

The overall project in terms of printing and installation was completed within just 3 days, with a further day to apply the prints. The result is two murals – 'Early Days' and 'Back to the Past', which illustrate scenes and people from Singapore's rich and storied past.

"We were very grateful that HP understood our objectives and wanted to also work alongside with us," adds Koh. "And we've been very happy with the partnership because everybody understood where their expert areas lie."

Result

"I was happy that there wasn't any of the residual, unpleasant adhesive smell that you associate with adhesive prints. In addition, the colours came out very vividly and the resolution was sharp."

Michelle Koh, executive director, Singapore River One

Durable, high quality outdoor prints in an instant

SRO was impressed by the speed within which the prints were produced as well as the high quality finish. These factors, combined with the durability of the finished product and the lack of any chemical odours, mean it is unsurprising that the organisation is delighted with the results.

"Looking at the quality of the prints, we are pleased with the results. And the plus point is that the underpass disruption was only two days: one for prep work to get the walls ready and one to apply the adhesive prints," says Koh. "Working in a confined space, the fact there was no residual chemical odour was also a significant advantage for the people installing prints and for the public using the underpass. We also ensured public access to the underpass was still possible."

SRO expects the murals to last for at least two years even in the extremes of the local tropical climate: I think, considering the durability of HP print quality, we're confident the murals will easily surpass two years.

"We hope to engage HP to produce various advertising materials to support other festivals," concludes Koh. "We will have significant demand for promotional prints so we intend to maintain our relationship with HP for a very long time."

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