Martin Audio ADORN pendants perfect for Museum of Art



A sensitive installation of Martin Audio’s ADORN ACP-55T pendant speakers has been undertaken at the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) West Building Gallery in Raleigh, NC, by RMB Audio. Knowing that the installation required multiple architectural and art curator approvals, the integrators knew instinctively that the

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stylish pendants would provide the most aesthetically discreet, yet consummately effective means of sound distribution. According to RMB Audio owner, Cooper Cannady, 16 of the shallow pendant speakers were selected for their 150° conical coverage (117 Hz to 20 KHz ± 3dB, -10db @73 Hz) and off-white finish which matched the ceiling. These were approved by the architectural committee after careful review. The speakers are paired to cover the wall-to-wall open space. Three areas of the gallery were zoned for audio isolation to control the social gathering adjacent to the art exhibitions. The ACP-55T pendants were hung at 15ft height across three selected zones in the gallery to mitigate sound leakage into other areas.

“Well-articulated speech is the most critical parameter for the sound system application,” notes Cannady, “and Martin Audio ACP-55T pendants deliver high sound pressure level for speech and background music for daily operation.” The Martin Audio partners had reviewed there options carefully. But according to Cooper Cannady the choice was obvious. “I knew the project needed a 150° cabinet spaced symmetrically across the gallery,” he said. “Ceiling units could not be considered in these circumstances.”

The installation coincides with the 12th anniversary of NCMA’s Thomas Phifer–designed West Building - home of the ‘People’s Collection.’ It is the first sound system to be permanently installed in the gallery. Previously, mobile carts would be delivered to the space, and without the ceiling elevation, clarity was lost. The building’s 2010 completion marked not only an award-winning architectural achievement in museum design but also a breakout project for New York City-based Thomas Phifer and Partners.

The continuous ceiling sky light design brings natural light to the exhibits. The continual skylight introduced the challenge to examine how sound can be introduced into the space that is intelligible coverage for the gallery and blending into the ceiling vaulted lighting. Martin Audio’s compact two-way ADORN ACP-55T were specifically designed for background and foreground applications requiring premium performance and cost competitiveness in spaces with open ceiling architecture such as this.

Stated Martin Audio’s director of marketing, James King, “Adding these pendant speakers to our popular ADORN range has proved to be a winner. In retail spaces and venues with open ceiling architecture specifiers are coming to realise that not only do they meet the aesthetic requirement, but sonically they also provide consistent all-round coverage with absolute clarity, due to their wide-dispersion pattern.” Summing up the installation, Cooper Cannady also confirms their discreet profile. “If you didn’t know where to look for [the speakers] you simply wouldn’t see them. “The ADORN pendant design blends into the gallery ceiling; it does not distract the museum attendees and most significantly, spoken word is highly intelligible in the large space.”

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