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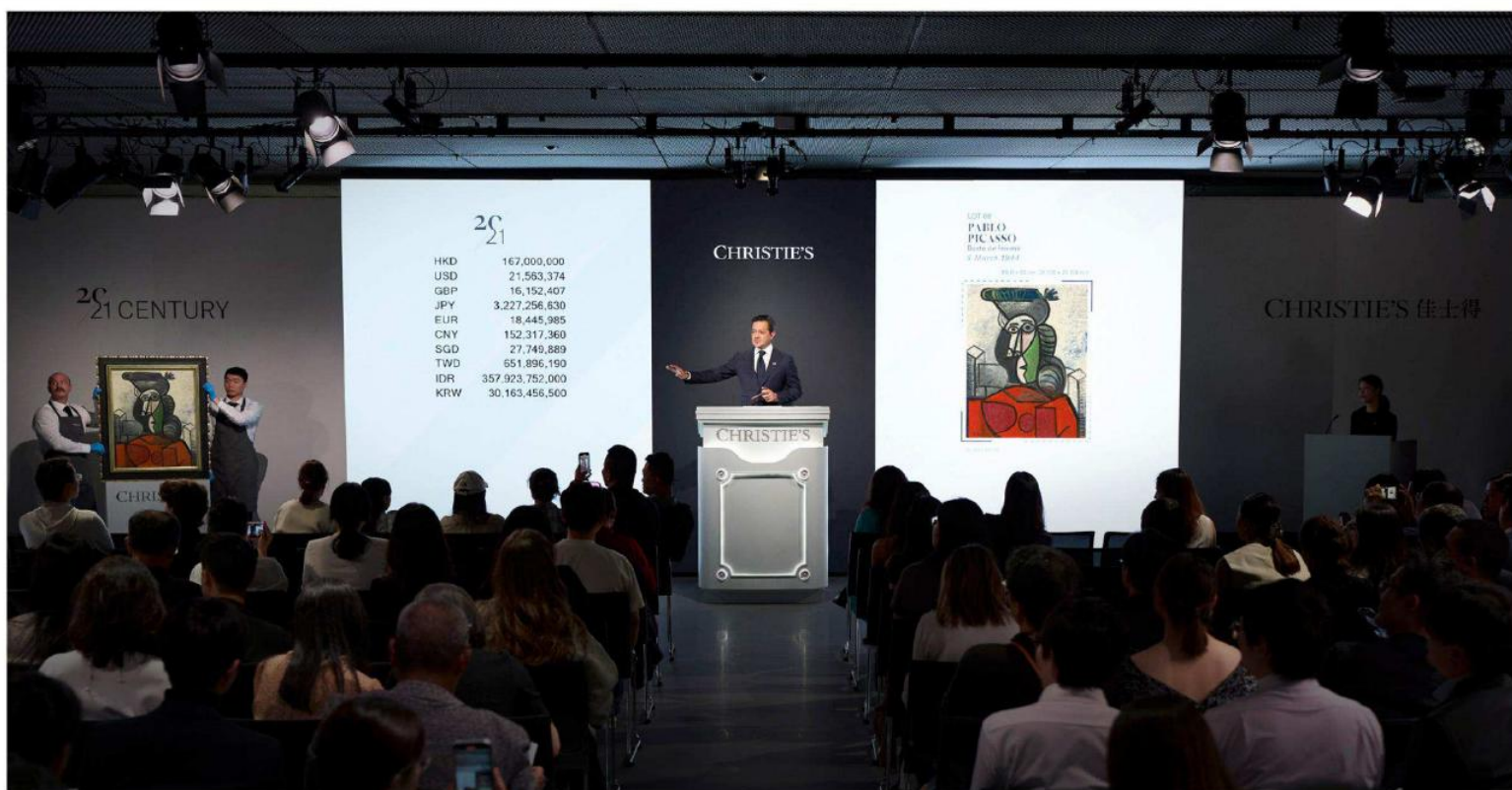
Inavation Awards

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EXQUISITE TASTE

Christie's new headquarters in Hong Kong raises the bar for AV





HIGH-END TECHNOLOGY

The AV systems at Christie's new Asia Pacific headquarters in Hong Kong blur the lines between theatre, event, corporate, and much more. It is no wonder that the project won the Applied Excellence honour at the Inavate APAC Awards 2025. **Hurrairah bin Sohail** reports.

In the rarefied world of high-end art and luxury auctions, the setting is as critical as the collection itself. For decades, Christie's, one of the world's most distinguished international auction houses, conducted its business from Alexander House in Hong Kong and hosted sales at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The experience of these spaces was memorable for Christie's but the evolution of the business necessitated a move.

To evolve Christie's invested in a move to a world-class headquarters in Hong Kong that would not only house its operations but also match its ambition and help it bring its vision to life.

Christie's has created a gallery and event space together with workspaces, bringing its core operations in-house and providing a seamless, state-of-the-art environment and experience for its clients. The company decided to relocate to The Henderson, a new architectural landmark in Central, Hong Kong, designed by the famous architectural firm Zaha Hadid Architects. Its new facility spans four floors, from the sixth to the ninth, within the building.

Technology played a pivotal role in enabling the outcomes Christie's desired. Dino Tech was the

consultant for the project while AVIT served as the technology integrator.

Joanne Chung, senior project manager at AVIT, discusses the brief that was received by the technology professionals: "They wanted a state-of-the-art, world-class gallery and event space. Christie's wanted to overcome the challenges they faced with their old space and what they set out to do was really evolutionary."

The gallery and event space

The requirements of the gallery and event space, which are spread across two floors, were extensive. The technology selected and deployed had to enable the space to be flexible enough to host a variety of events, from private viewings and intimate gatherings to large-scale, high-stakes public previews and auctions. Most importantly, the event space had to be ready to host the Spring and Autumn sales, the biggest and most important events on the Christie's calendar.

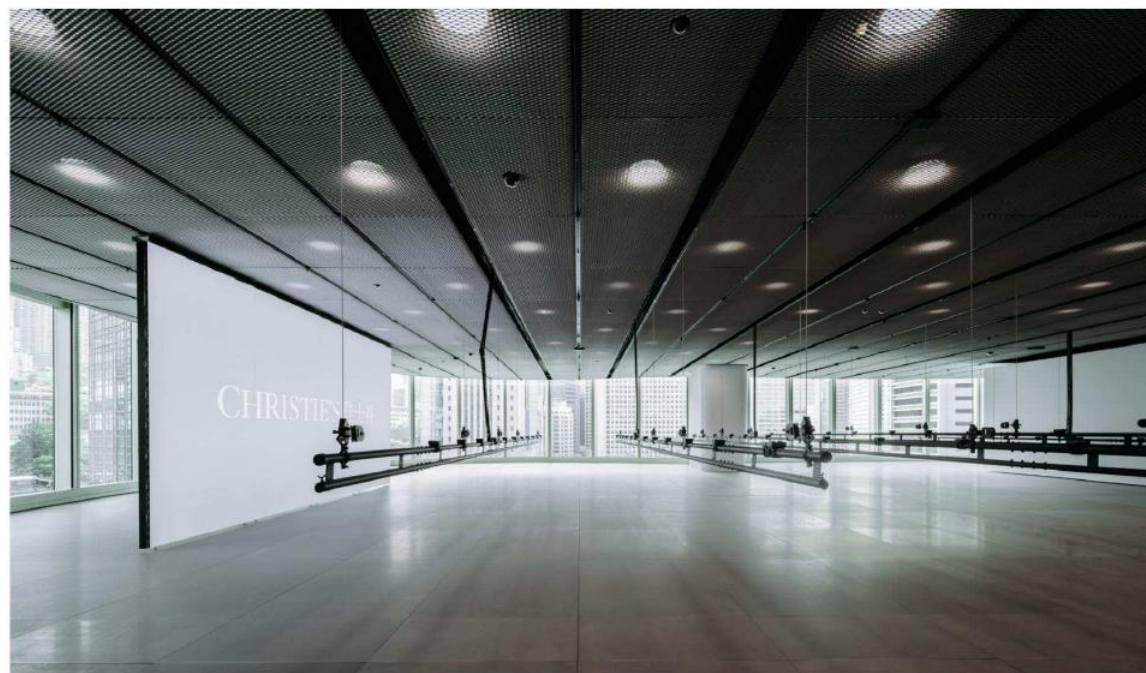
To ensure the event space performed according to Christie's requirements, the technology professionals had to achieve a delicate balance between cutting-edge technology and architectural elegance. Their goal was to make the technology powerful yet invisible, ensuring that the focus

remained squarely on proceedings.

The event space at Christie's has been designed as a single, column-free space. This open-plan design is complemented by a videowall display, offering maximum flexibility for different event formats. The display of choice was an Absen P1.2 LED videowall measuring 7.2m by 3.4m powered by an Analog Way processor. The twist is that the LED videowall is modular and moveable.

Chung from AVIT elaborates: "LED has become ubiquitous for events. But the LED at Christie's is unique. It can be deployed out in sections or as a whole. The LED videowall moves not by manual labour but with machinery. This cuts down on setup time, and the event space can be turned around quicker. We have the capability to roll it out as sections or as a large-format screen which can display content in 4K or 6K. It truly delivers on the requirement of flexibility."

Automating the movement of such a high-resolution display, accomplished with Trak-kit, came with its own set of challenges. Amornthep Tantikovit (Tan) from Dino Tech elaborates: "If you think about LED screens, so many times you go into a public space and see lines between the LED modules. You notice the misalignment."



We were involved in designing the backbone of the interior infrastructure, and this meant we could plan appropriately for the requirements.

Joanne Chung, AVIT

Christie's strived for perfection, with an allowable margin of less than 1mm required for all alignments. To ensure a flawless display, the Trak-kit system was pre-programmed to leave a small gap between panels during movement to prevent damage. On-site engineers then manually close the gap for perfect, seamless alignment during events, ensuring the visuals are presented without any distracting lines.

Installing the videowall was not straightforward. One of the primary technical hurdles was the relatively low ceiling height of 3.5m. AVIT worked diligently within the constraints to ensure that all obstacles were overcome.

The Absen videowall on the Trak-kit system is evidence of the 'theatre technology' approach taken by the AV professionals. This approach can also be seen guiding the lighting system in the space.

A key component of the lighting set up is the motorised winch and lighting bar system. This system can also be discreetly hidden within the open-cell ceiling, providing a versatile platform for hanging different AV and stage lighting equipment. This not only enhances the visual flexibility of the space but also streamlines the event preparation process, further reducing the need for manual labour and setup time.

Crestron NVX encoders and decoders are used for transmission of video signals over the IP network.

On the audio side, Xilica speakers are used to provide sound. The Xilica speakers are PoE and Dante-enabled and this was critical in matching the flexibility of the display. The Xilica speakers can be individually zoned, and this allows the space to truly be divided as needed. LEA amplifiers provide power while a Q-SYS DSP manages the audio system. Bose EM180 speakers are used for directional audio as well.

Tan from Dino Tech sheds light on the selection of the audio DSP: "The feature set of Q-SYS is what led us to choose it, specifically the channel count and processing capability. There are other brands available, but the overall software-based architecture allows us to add features by buying licenses. I would say we have sufficient processing power for future expansion as well. This facility is intended to last for decades, and we have put effort into the design of the AV system so that it is relatively future-proof."

The AV-over-IP systems allow for flexibility and AVIT's expertise resulted in an exceptional deployment. Chung from AVIT details: "One of the good things about this project was that we started from scratch with the design. We were involved in designing the backbone of the interior infrastructure, and this meant we could plan appropriately for the requirements of the products that were going to be deployed. This worked really well

because we had no network limitations, or any limitation that would make the final outcome less than perfect. You can see how detailed the thinking was at the very beginning, allowing us to accomplish our targets for the client."

Security was a top priority for Christie's, and the AV professionals put the client's mind at ease.

Tan from Dino Tech says: "The Christie's network is actually at the very far end from the AV and control process side. The AV media will never touch that network. The only interaction is at the switch management tier of network traffic."

Chung from AVIT adds: "We are using a lot of networking from the speakers to the video transmission. We have an IT specialist team that put in a really good plan for what we foresee will happen on the network. In addition, we monitor the AV network so that we can accurately communicate with the Christie's network team about the traffic and network activities for each function and for daily operations. We were able to clearly explain how AV will use the network and assure the client that security will not be an issue."

A Crestron control system has been deployed, allowing the users to control the event space with the help of a GUI on an iPad.

While the event space is designed to be easily operated by the staff, provisions have been



Tech-Spec

Video

Absen P12 LED tiles
AJA Kumo 3232 12G-SDI
Analog Way Zenith 200 processor and PictureAll media server
Blackmagic ATEM Constellation 8K, HyperDeck Studio 4K Pro
Brightsign media players
Cisco Webex codec, soundbar
Crestron NVX encoders and decoders
Panasonic AW-UE160K camera

Samsung displays
Trak-kit LED Track System

Audio

Bose EdgeMax EM180 speakers
DPA microphones
LEA Connect 354D amplifiers
Q-SYS Core 610 DSP
Shure ULX-D & Microflex wireless microphones
Tannoy CVS6 speakers
Xilica CL6.5 ceiling speakers
Yamaha DM7 Compact mixing console

made to ensure that trained professionals can step in and use the system as they see fit.

Tan from Dino Tech details: “A lot of manual human operation is required during a sales event. Most of the time, when we look at a very well-programmed, well-structured user interface on an iPad, everybody thinks about automation. But automation only does 70% to 80% of the job. The human touch required to operate a live event requires somebody sitting in front of a mixing desk and a camera control mixer to direct the show. We have accounted for this.”

A Yamaha DM7 Compact mixing console and a Blackmagic 20-channel 2ME console are available for managing live events. With the ability to convert SDI signals and bring them onto the network, the NVX deployment allows for immense flexibility when it comes to routing and managing video signals.

The client space and the workplace

While the auction and gallery spaces are the main attraction, the new headquarters was designed to be a fully integrated and client-focused environment. The journey continues to the eighth floor, which houses the client hub and private viewing rooms. This space was

conceptualised to provide a more personalised and intimate experience for Christie’s most valued clients.

Upon arrival, visitors are greeted by a striking Absen P1.2 LED videowall and Samsung displays are used across the spaces.

Performance was a top-of-mind consideration for the videowall as Chung from AVIT details: “The colour calibration was a really high requirement. The content being shown on the displays and in the private rooms is jewellery and handbags. Christie’s wanted these luxury objects to be rendered as close as possible to reality and this is why we have chosen premium display products that could deliver the performance levels we needed.”

The AV systems were meticulously calibrated to ensure the colours of the images were as true to life as possible, providing an authentic representation of the objects.

Over in the corporate and meeting room spaces on the eighth and ninth floors Cisco VC systems have been deployed, allowing the Christie’s team to connect seamlessly with clients and global team members. Cisco soundbars are pressed into action.

Crestron AirMedia wireless presentation and collaboration gateways allow Christie’s specialists

to share information about artworks from their own devices. This interactive experience enhances client engagement and allows for more dynamic, in-depth discussions about the pieces on display.

The use of Crestron room booking systems further optimises space usage, ensuring that meeting rooms are efficiently managed and always available when needed.

Shure Microflex microphones are strategically placed on the meeting room tables to ensure crystal-clear audio during these important discussions.

The success of the Christie’s project – its new Asia Pacific headquarters in Hong Kong – is a testament to the close collaboration between the client, the architect and designer, and the AV team. By working together from the early stages, they were able to create a space that perfectly aligns with Christie’s vision for its future in the Asia Pacific region.

Tan from Dino Tech concludes: “The end result has definitely been delivered according to the vision of Christie’s and according to the vision of the parties involved with the project thanks to tight collaboration. I think we hit the mark of creating a facility that fulfils Christie’s priorities not just for now but into the future as well.”