

Together we stand

A project characterised by synergy in design and cooperation between interested parties is more likely to succeed in meeting its architectural, functional and financial goals

Below and top right: The auditorium at the Borealium in St-Félicien, Québec, Canada

Bottom right: The Borealium makes use of local natural resources in its design

Designing a multifunctional entertainment facility requires careful consideration of cost, aesthetics, and its use to individuals and the wider community. From an architectural and design perspective, the project's specific context, location, surrounding environment and the nature of the building will greatly influence the design. Spaces must express clearly the building's missions and functions, and communicate the image of residing organisations effectively.

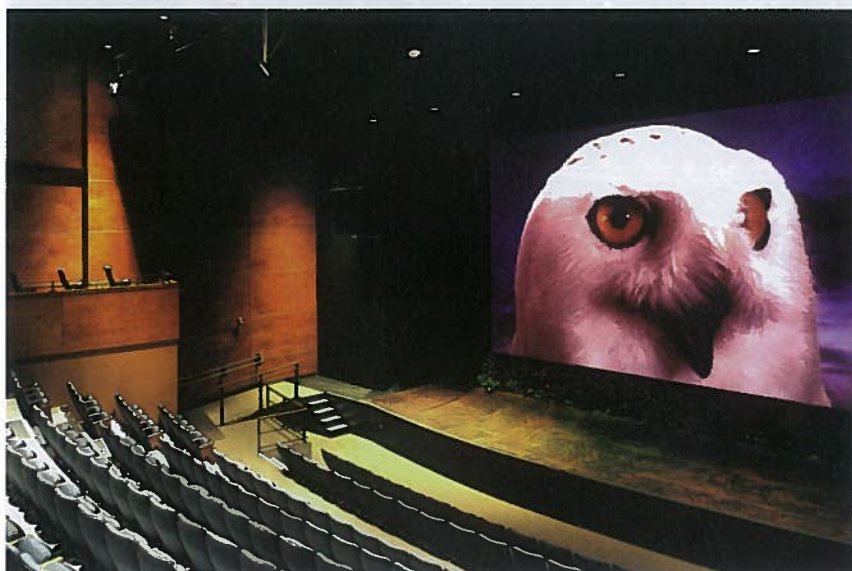
One answer to this challenge is an integrated design approach, in which synergy interlocks the design and operation processes, allowing

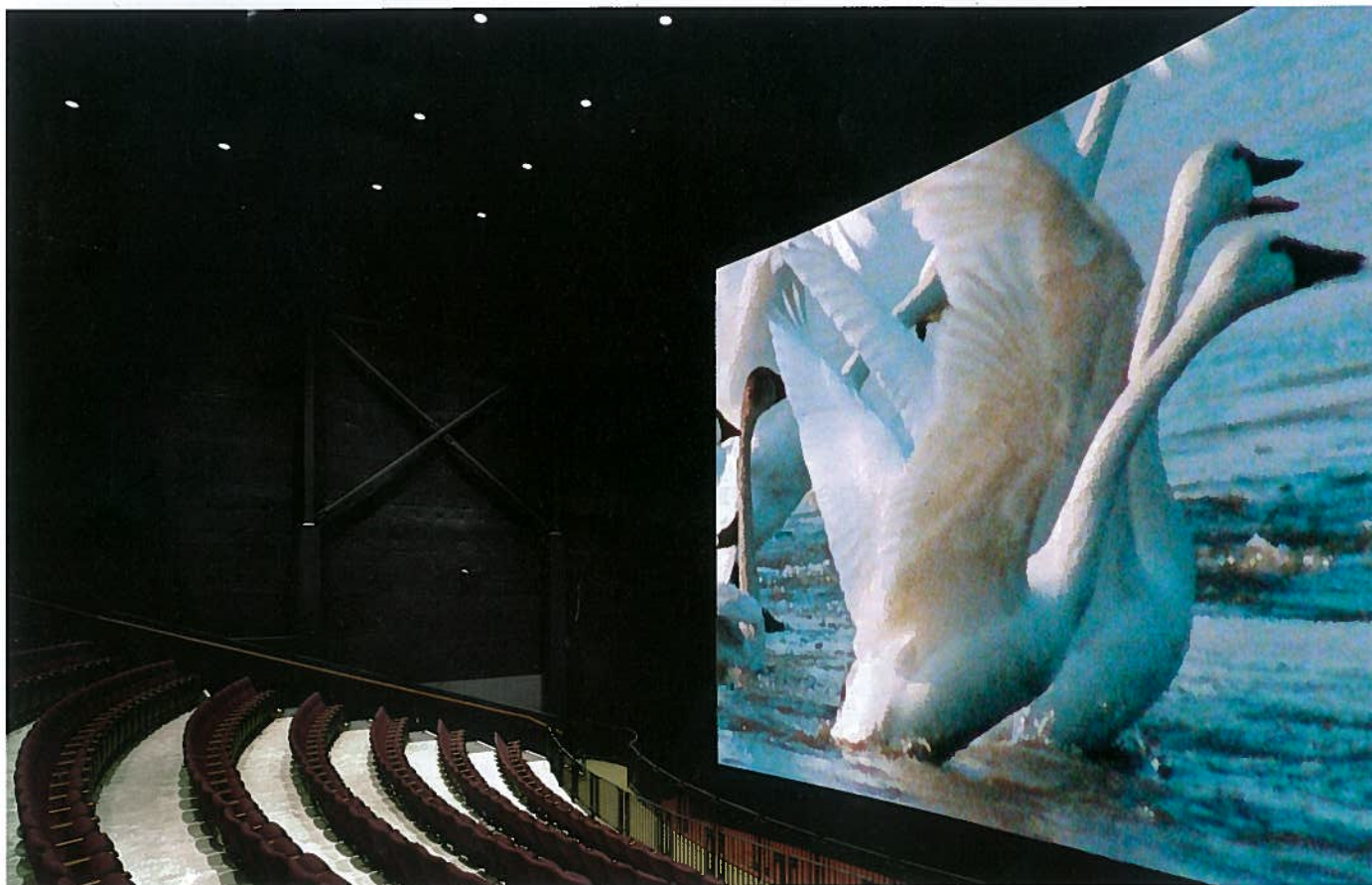
multiple disciplines to fully interact and reinforce one another. Architectural and design firms possessing comprehensive expertise on all aspects of construction and operation of facilities can ensure the most coherent and cohesive integration of every design component.

Improving functionality

Montreal-based Scéno Plus, founded in 1985, champions this integrated approach, offering a range of multidisciplinary services, encompassing architectural, theatre and interior design, as well as the design of technology and specialised equipment and systems. The firm also often acts as project manager for its works. "The common theme throughout Scéno Plus's achievements is a deep understanding of both architectural and operational design," says president Patrick Bergé. "We are always on the operation side, and our priority is aimed at improving functionality for performers and managers, as well as the entertainment experience of patrons. Of course none of this is done at the detriment of aesthetics," he adds.

Scéno Plus also offers its interactive virtual-reality software package, to help during the conceptual stage. "Communicating architectural concepts is much easier with an interactive virtual-reality animation, as the client can virtually walk around the designed spaces. All along the process, we work closely with our clients to ensure that the result is exactly what they expect. Our virtual-reality software facilitates their full understanding of the concepts we are putting forward."





The Borealium in St-Félicien, Québec, Canada, is a recreational facility that provides a convincing example of the benefits of this integrated approach. Scéno Plus led the project in close collaboration with the client and local authorities. The C\$12.5 million facility had to be sustainable and versatile, to accommodate its recreational, educational and research missions.

Bergé recalls the company's role in the project: "The client had limited experience in the design and construction of a public facility, and the selected team of building consultants knew little about issues related to managing facilities. In addition to leading all the detailed design components of the facility and the construction management, we enabled everyone to speak the same language and fostered a unique vision sustained by the emergence of creative ideas."

Environmental factors

Achieving an impressive cost-effectiveness of C\$2,600/m², the project also maximised economic benefits for the region, as the construction team consisted almost exclusively of local suppliers and consultants. Environmental factors were also addressed – the facility was

built using the region's natural resources, such as local wood essences and granite.

The complex features an educational trail that begins in a 235-seat auditorium and follows a visitors' trajectory to a 266-seat cinema with a giant screen. It also incorporates an external agora, documentation centre, laboratories, discovery workshop, exhibition spaces, administrative offices, a café and boutiques.

The facility greatly contributed to the revitalisation of the zoo, a major economic driver for the region, by improving its appeal throughout the year. It also enabled the client to pursue its educational and research missions more efficiently.

"Our firm deviates from the traditional planning and design process of relying on the isolated expertise of specialist teams. The synergy we develop between designers, performers and facility managers translates not only into a time and money saving process, but also into the harmonious and functional integration of all design components, to ensure our projects' success in the long term," concludes Bergé. ■

