



CASE STUDY

ODYSEA AQUARIUM

Transporting guests from the ocean's surface to its deepest depths in a 360-degree lobby projection experience.

→ Organization

OdySea Aquarium

→ Location

Scottsdale, AZ

→ Market

Entertainment and Experience

→ Solution

Christie, Q-SYS

OdySea Aquarium (OdySea), one of the largest aquariums in the Southwest and [a top ten aquarium in the United States of America](#), set out to change the first moment of every visit.

Guests no longer want to observe marine life. They want to feel totally immersed in it. That is why the aquarium started exploring where it could reshape the guest experience. The answer was an underwater lobby experience.



ENVISIONING THE ENTRYWAY

“We asked ourselves, how do you create that wow moment for people the second they walk in,” said OdySea Aquarium Vice President of Marketing, Julia Ponce. “What if we transformed our lobby so when you step in, you feel like you’re stepping into the bottom of the ocean?”

Seeking that “wow factor moment,” OdySea Aquarium staff looked at immersive art exhibits for inspiration. The team saw how projection could surround and shift a visitor’s perspective. Instantly, OdySea teams wanted to bring projection mapping to its lobby.

The aquarium partnered with CCS Southwest, now AVI-SPL, to implement AV systems and create the Aqua Lobby effect.

CONVERTING A LOBBY INTO AN UNDERWATER OCEANIC EXPERIENCE

OdySea chose Christie® HS Series laser projectors to display tranquil animated scenes of jellyfish, sea turtles, sea lions, and more. Aquarium staff relied on AVI-SPL to manage AV integration throughout the lobby.

“We knew with the size and scale and complexity of this project that we didn’t have the resources,” Ponce said. “We needed a one-stop shop that could coordinate the process.”

AVI-SPL tech experts installed and aligned projectors, infrastructure, power, and managed mapping.

Additionally, OdySea needed projection to go from floor-to-ceiling to ensure total immersion.

“We were really insistent that we go floor to ceiling,” said Ponce. “It has to be fully immersive so that you get that feeling like you’re stepping into the ocean.”

To create the floor-to-ceiling effect, the team positioned projectors to give visitors clear, shadow-free views. While positioning the projectors, the team ensured technologies worked in harmony with other immersive room elements, like nine suspended globe-shaped fish tanks and non-rectangular and curved walls. Ensuring projection lasers didn’t impact the well-being of the fish in the globes, while maintaining the floor to ceiling imagery, was a significant challenge the team worked hard to achieve.

AVI-SPL installed [12 Christie® projectors](#) across the space, adapting projection mapping to the curved wall and avoiding obstructions.





Mesmerizing surface-level and underwater scenes fill the 23-foot-tall room, making people feel as if they are right there alongside the marine life.

Combined, the system delivers more than 280,000 lumens of brightness, allowing the visuals to impact the visitor experience across the full height of the space.

Beyond projection, the team installed a [Q-SYS audio control](#) system to share soothing oceanic underwater sounds, and Christie Pandoras Box® Software and Server for content distribution and audio control. Experts also carried out electrical upgrades, including installing a new transformer, to ensure the system ran smoothly.

A DEFINING AQUARIUM FIRST IMPRESSION

The OdySea Aquarium Aqua Lobby opened to the public in late May 2025. The one-of-a-kind aquarium lobby welcomes visitors and invites them to explore six stunning underwater scenes. Jellyfish, sea turtles, bubbling water, and more drift across the walls, while ambient audio fills the space.

Previously just a passage to scan or buy tickets, guests now pause to take in the environment. Each scene builds excitement for the aquarium experience ahead.

“When you visit [the lobby], you just stand at the door and watch people,” Ponce said. “They step in, and they stop and look around.”

The close collaboration between AVI-SPL and OdySea Aquarium played a key role in making the 360-degree experience come alive.

“We had a very clear vision of the experience we wanted our guests to have,” she said. “Your team helped us from beginning to end make that vision a reality.”

CREATE EXPERIENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT MAKE EVERYONE FEEL PART OF THE STORY

AVI-SPL and its [Experience Technology Group](#) partner with organizations to plan, build, manage, and optimize immersive environments.

From concept through deployment, our creative technologists help turn bold ideas into real-world experiences that perform at scale. Together, we can transform how audiences engage with stories, utilizing space and technology to move people from watching to living out stories.

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