

CASE STUDY

BLINK Cincinnati teams up with Disguise to offer an eye-opening art festival



Summary

BLINK Cincinnati is the largest lighted art festival in the United States to specialize in large scale murals, light-based installations and dazzling projection-mapped displays. Spread out across thirty city blocks in three different cities, the 2024 edition of the festival was a bold experiment in delivering large-scale art to the masses. Along with specially commissioned murals and impressive nightly drone shows, the festival championed the breathtaking ways art and tech can work together through projection mapping in public spaces.

In this case study, you will see how BLINK utilized a wide range of Disguise technology to share a range of innovative artworks with over two million festival goers. From five-story projections that interacted with existing artwork to complex architectural projections that brought buildings to life, we'll explore the festival's groundbreaking approach to public art.



The challenge

Spanning three cities at the intersection of the Ohio and Licking rivers, BLINK Cincinnati is a sprawling art festival that brings together artists and collaborators from across state lines. In addition to large-scale murals and light-based installations, this year's BLINK featured over twenty-eight projection mapping sites, each displaying unique artwork created specifically for its unique environment. These sites represented an irresistible opportunity to Justin Brookhart, the festival's Executive Director, but also a significant challenge.

"It's rare for a projection mapping festival to have so many sites across such a wide footprint," says Brookhart. "The amount of technology, gear, and staffing required really makes the project stand out."

The scale and precision necessary to execute so many projection installations in Cincinnati's busy downtown areas and neighboring Newport and Covington meant that Brookhart needed to have full confidence in the technology that would fuel the festival's most ambitious artworks.



“The main objective of BLINK is to hold a free public art event of a high level of quality and scale. Disguise’s technology allowed our technical teams to execute the event with the time and staffing resources available to us and ensured accuracy and presentation quality across each of the sites.”

Adam Young
Founder, FRAY Studio

The solution

Recognising the importance of precision in the festival's planning, Brookhart brought video and lighting specialists 4Wall Entertainment onboard, along with the company's tech partner Disguise.

"Ultimately," says Brookhart, "each building had to be approached differently. Using all of Disguise's projection mapping tools, 4Wall was able to select the right ones to make the process as efficient as possible."

BLINK Cincinnati used 4Wall's extensive range of Disguise hardware and a selection of tech that Disguise donated to the festival for the duration of the project. This enabled the team to pick the perfect tool for each installation across the event's thirty-block area. Walls across the city were lit up, and the projections were shaped in advance to perfectly fit the contours of the architectural canvas.

"Being able to pre-visualize each artwork within Disguise's software helped us ensure visions were aligned," says Brookhart. "The projection mapping tools are well dialed in to users' needs, so our programmers could move quickly and take on responsibility for multiple sites."



Results

Over two million people enjoyed the ambitious and unexpected artworks of BLINK Cincinnati over the course of the festival's four days. The simplicity of Disguise's tools meant that Brookhart's team were able to deliver ambitious projects across the city. STARGATE, a sculpture near the Andrew J Brady Music Center, was illuminated with an inky marbling that was projection mapped to cover every inch and every tight corner with light. The beloved Cincinnati Toy Heritage mural, which displays the iconic creations of local toy company Kenner Toys, came to life. Visitors could watch as Mr. Potato Head, a Care Bear, and a wealth of Star Wars figurines broke free from their familiar painted stances.

For Brookhart, the project's success was down to the intuitive nature of the Disguise pipeline. "From PreVisualization to tried and true projection and sequencing tools, the team was empowered to work on a short timeline to provide the best quality representation of the work possible. The artists who spent so many months creating their artworks could see it presented as they envisioned it, and we had an overwhelmingly positive response from audiences in person, as well as across social media."



Disguise equipment used



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VX 4+ is the new industry-standard media server powering the world's biggest and most demanding virtual productions.

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In Partnership with

4Wall Disguise Programming Team: Alex Bright, Chet Miller, William Milligan, Matt Young, Ted Charles Brown

4Wall Project Management: Will Jennings, Corey Hatch

4Wall Account Management: Matthew Leland, Ben Danielowski, Art Lavis

BLINK Management Team: Ben Nicolson, David Marmanillo, Justin Brookhart



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