

## TEA CONNECT BLOG

21 MAY 2021

# TEA Digital Presents - The Hunger Games: The Exhibition A Behind The Scenes Look

## TEA WESTERN DIVISION'S VIRTUAL VISIT TO THE HUNGER GAMES - THE EXHIBITION WITH Q&A

By **Stefan Lawrence**

On April 28, 2021, the TEA Western Division's Education Committee presented a behind-the-scenes look at *The Hunger Games: The Exhibition*, which is currently open at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Michael Genova, the Director of the Entertainment, Engineering, and Design program at UNLV moderated the discussion, which featured several members of the creative and production team at Victory Hill Exhibitions, who executed this latest incarnation of the exhibit. These included Kate McConnell (Executive Creative Director), Nicole Abram (Director of Production), and Michael Mattox (Chief Operations Officer). The session consisted of a walk-through of the exhibit with the Victory Hill Exhibitions team, followed by a short Q&A.



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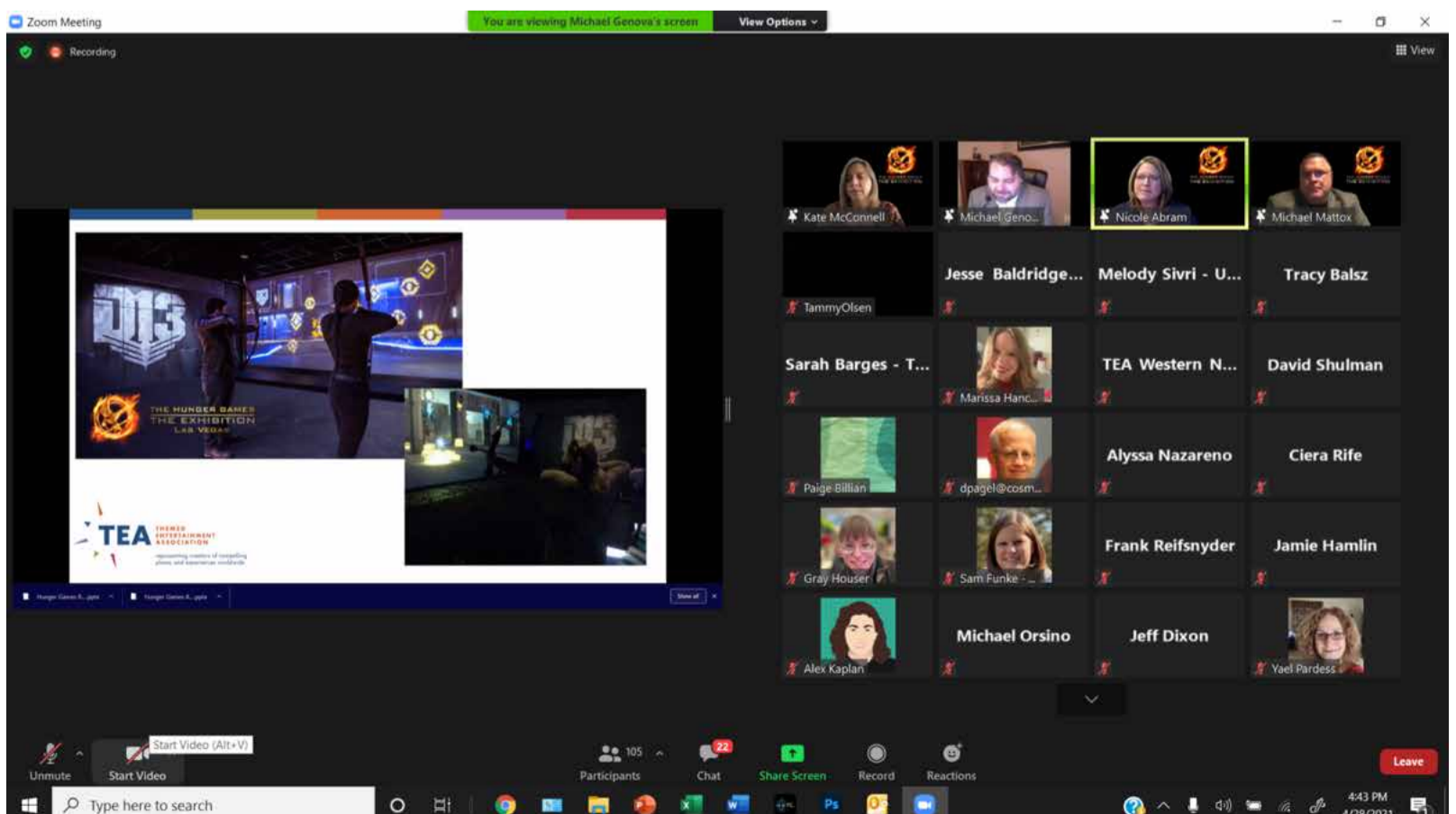




*The Hunger Games: The Exhibition* began its life as a touring exhibition, premiering at the Discovery Times Square in 2015. It was originally designed by the Thinkwell Group, in concert with Lions Gate, the film studio behind the hit film franchise. The touring exhibition was aimed at museums, which meant including a lot of supplemental educational content, in addition to behind-the-scenes information about the movies. With the release of the prequel novel *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins and the upcoming release of a movie based on the book, Lions Gate wanted to revisit the exhibit as a way of keeping the property fresh with audiences. Victory Hill Exhibitions was tasked with utilizing the existing assets and adding new elements that would appeal to a Las Vegas audience. When the original exhibit was designed, the last two movies in the series had not yet been released, so there were ample sources of inspiration when it came to the refresh, especially from the District 13 portions of the film.



Key among these new elements is the new *Beetee's Archery Training* attraction, which features the world's largest interactive touchscreen – so big that it's actually certified by the Guinness Book of World Records. The screen is 56.24 meters long, and is illuminated by four 4K projectors. The screen uses IR sensors to let guests fire actual projectiles toward the screen in an action-packed simulation of what training was like in District 13, home of the rebellion against the Capitol. Michael Mattox described the extensive R&D process Victory Hill employees took to figure out exact materials, animation, and sensitivities needed to create a satisfying experience for guests. Another new element for the MGM Grand installation is *Capitol TV Trivia*, an interactive media exhibit where guests answer Caesar's yes or no to trivia questions by standing on designated areas on the floor. The game then figures out what percentage of people chose to each answer to determine if the group (up to 14 people at a time) chose correctly.





A major element of the exhibit is that original costumes from the films are on display and available for viewing up close – which is especially important given the amount of detailed work and craftsmanship that have gone into each piece. Created by designers Kurt & Bart, many of the costumes feature exquisite embroidery and ornate finishes. One of the pieces that had to be created from scratch for the exhibit was the wings on Katniss's Mockingjay outfit – in the film, they were computer generated! However, since it's such an iconic image, the wings were recreated out real feathers in order to look as much like the visual effects in the film as possible.



One of Michael Genova's favorite parts of the exhibit was visiting President Snow's office in his mansion – a truly impressive set. However, this office in the film was portrayed by a real French chateau, and Lions Gate did not have the rights to recreate the architecture of the the chateau itself! The exhibit designers had to design an entirely new set that retained the feel of the original without *being* the original. In addition, they 3D printed President Snow's eagle sculpture because the original prop had been sold at auction and was not available.



Victory Hill Exhibitions also detailed the numerous safety measures that have had to be implemented because of COVID-19, including acrylic dividers, hand sanitizer stations, mandatory mask requirements, and lowered capacity. Beyond the on-site safety requirements, there were additional challenges when it came to managing remote design and installation processes. Victory Hill showed off some of their technological solutions to remote production, including a virtual control room from which they could interact directly with on-site staff. This solution was utilized during the production process for The Hunger Games: The Exhibition and has proven useful for other productions as well.



Finally, Michael Genova opened up the conversation to the audience, who were very curious about what was *not* included in the exhibit. The Victory Hill team had a number of items on their wish list for the current incarnation that did not make it, including life-size “Peacekeeper” vehicles, and other larger props from the films – the space at the MGM Grand was quite limited. They also said that they would be interested in incorporating new storylines and environments from the upcoming prequel film, as more materials become available.

After an information-packed hour, Michael Genova wrapped up this fascinating behind-the-scenes look at *Hunger Games: The Exhibition* and thanked all of the incredibly forthcoming Victory Hill Exhibitions team members for their time and insight into this truly immersive attraction.

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**Posted by Sarah Barges**

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