



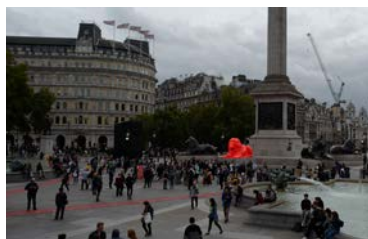
PLEASE FEED THE LIONS



Replicating Detail: Both lion and plinth looked convincingly at home next to Landseer's famous bronze sculptures.



We worked with designer Es Devlin to deliver this dramatic, digitally interactive sculpture, one of six Landmark Projects for 2018's London Design Festival. The fluorescent-red lion and the '5th Plinth' on which it lay had to look convincingly at home between Landseer's famous bronze lions that guard Nelson's Column in the heart of Trafalgar Square. The particular challenges of this project lay in the faithful replication of the lion's carved Dartmoor granite base and in the need for a discrete, overnight installation.





The Plinth

The installation requirements required an ingenious approach to the plinth manufacture. Both lion and plinth were to be installed without the use of plant into a busy, central London location, with high footfall. From a creative perspective, it was also important that the sculpture created an element of surprise, as if appearing suddenly, overnight.



To facilitate a swift installation, we created a 6.6m trucking sub-frame from steel. This was clad in 18mm ply and scenically finished, accurately replicating the rough granite textured panels and grooved radial carvings of the adjacent Landseer plinths. An interior plywood deck concealed the special effects hardware while themed, perforated panels to the sides ensured the audio output could be heard across the square, drawing in onlookers to interact with the sculpture. All cable management was similarly concealed and a neat shadow gap created to the base.





The Lion

Reclining on top of the plinth, the carved lion was created from twelve blocks of high-density foam, each shaped by our large volume 5-axis CNC machine. This was then hand-finished to achieve fine detailing and the texture of bronze, before being hardcoated and scenically finished.



The precise gape of the lion's jaws was an important consideration. The sculpture was interactive, a monitor mounted in the lion's mouth displaying a single word as typed into the lectern-mounted touch screen by each member of the public. A poetry-generating algorithm then expanded the word into a completely original two-line poem which appeared in the lion's mouth. At night, the words and the poetry were projected up the full height of Nelson's Column and across the body of the lion.

In total, the installation reached an imposing 4.5 metres tall. The luminous, fluorescent-red paint finish of the lion sang out against the grey stone of Trafalgar Square, encouraging visitors to approach, interact and 'feed' it with words.

