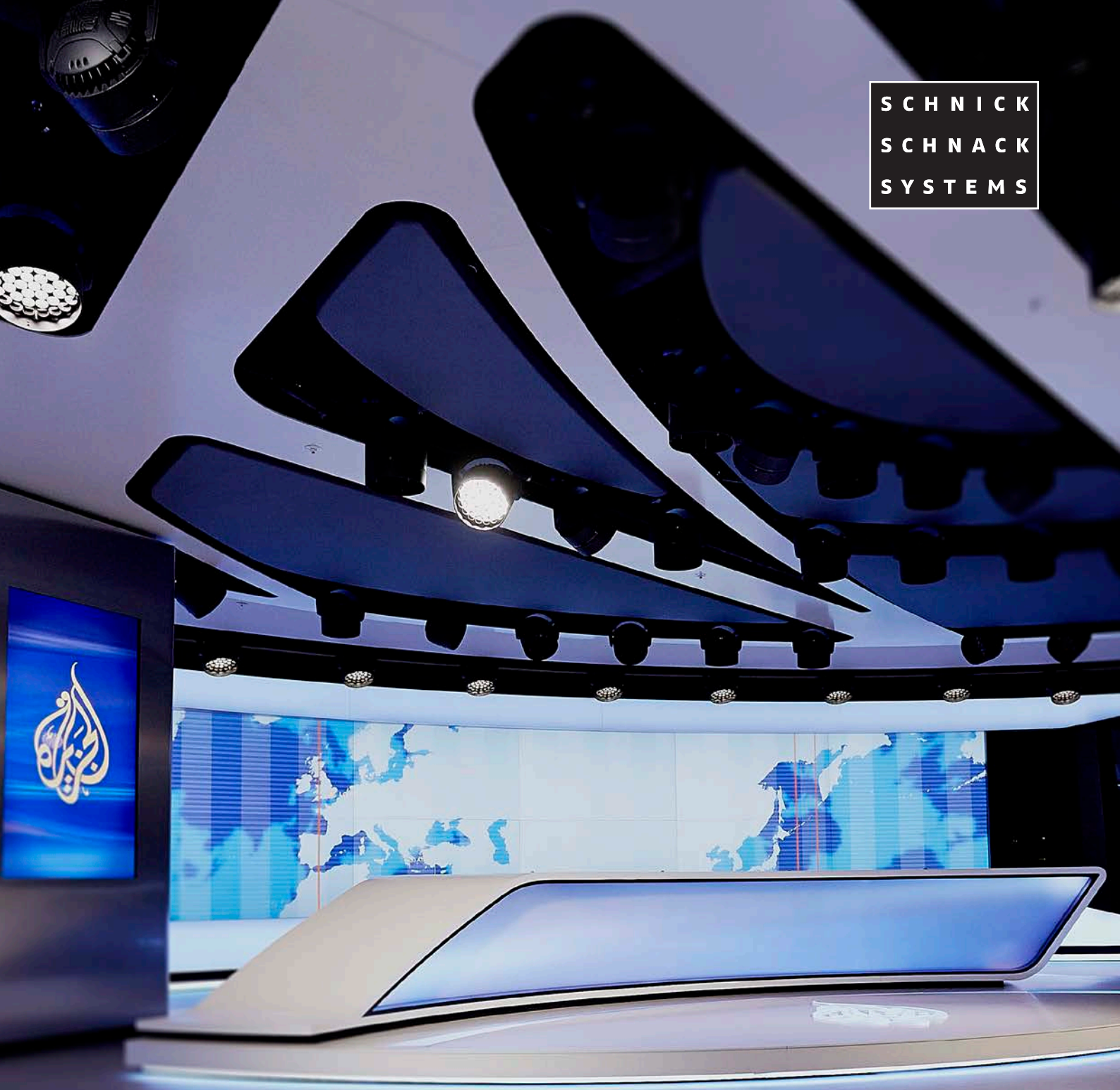
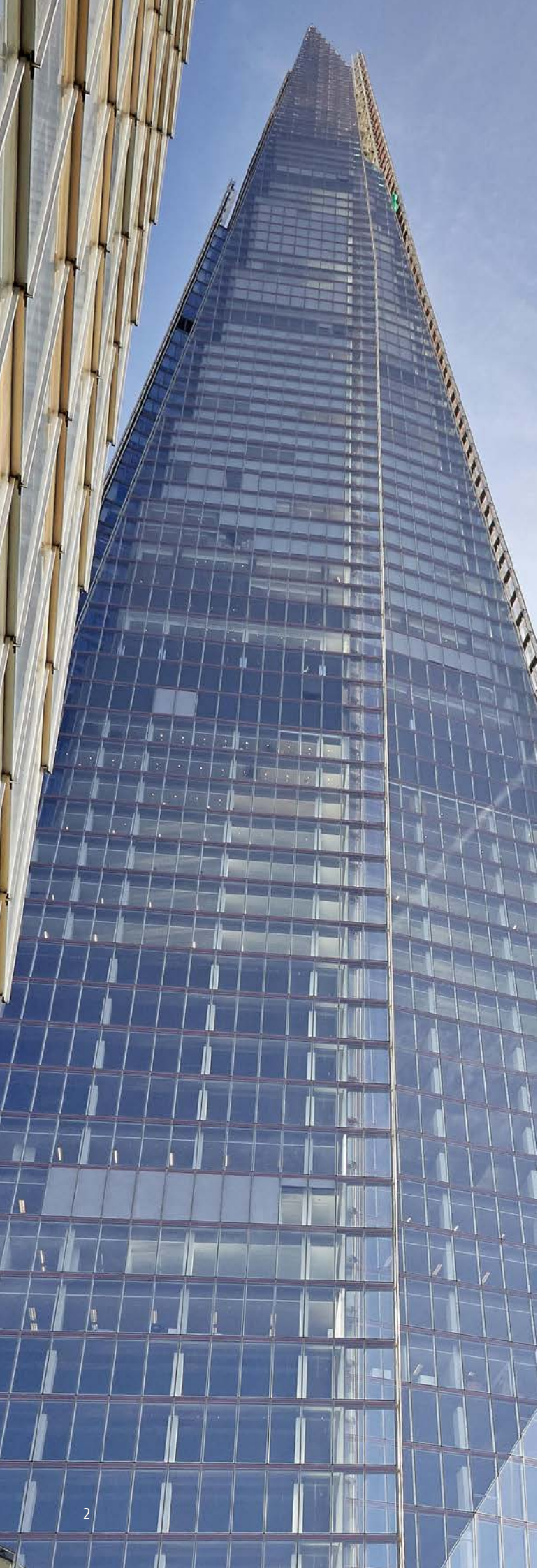


SCHNICK
SCHNACK
SYSTEMS

Case Study

Al Jazeera
Media Network London



Project

New construction of a TV studio: backlit wall in the studio,
contour lighting in the newsroom
and for announcer's console,
ceiling lights in the newsroom

Installed Technology

LED tiles C, LED strips C,
LED tiles B, LED strips B,
LED strips L12-500 in warm and cold white,
System Power Supply 4E, Long Distance Controller,
Pixel-Gate Light

In Operation

November 2014

Partners

Design TV-Studio and Newsroom
VEECH X VEECH, Stuart A. Veech
Rudolfsplatz 6/2,
1010 Vienna, Austria

Light Design
mo2 design GmbH, Manfred Olma
Am Coloneum 1
50829 Cologne, Germany

General Contractor, Set Construction and
Technical Planning
Studio Hamburg Atelierbetriebs GmbH
Jenfelder Allee 80
22039 Hamburg, Germany

Reference Customers

Al Jazeera Media Network London
Shard Tower London,
32 London Bridge Street,
London, UK

Photography

Al Jazeera
Newsroom: Hufton+Crow

The Project:
A Television Studio Like No Other.

The new European headquarters of Arab TV Broadcaster Al Jazeera stand for innovation. Since November 2014, Al Jazeera has been broadcasting from the highest building in the EU, from the skyscraper, "The Shard", whose visionary glass façade stretches 310 meters into the sky over London. The 16th floor is home to the Al Jazeera studio which shares 400 square meters with the newsroom as well as offices, green room and engineering.

The design of the studio breaks with most of what is common practice; architecturally speaking, the Shard is an office building and not a broadcast facility. This fact alone demanded radical new design solutions and for all involved presented an enormous challenge. General contractor Studio Hamburg GmbH, the design of the studio and newsroom entrusted to Vienna based design and architecture office Veech x Veech and the lighting designer of mo2 design GmbH in Cologne.

"Dramatic composition and staging were especially important", says Stuart A. Veech, " in the end, it was all about modulating the depth of the room with differentiated and precisely coordinated light sources. That includes direct and indirect lighting, light refracting edges, backlit surfaces, and information mediums such as video walls, screens, etc. The result has to be a perfectly balanced whole."

A news desk for up to four presenters was listed in the specifications as well as an area to stand in front of an 85" touchscreen and the integration of the newsroom where space for 45 desks was called for – this was to serve as the on air backdrop during live broadcasts.

The complex nature of the light conditions proved to be particularly challenging. While the glass façade offers an open view over the London skyline it also ensures shifting light conditions, to which the camera parameters and studio lights had to be adjusted to several times a day. An exceptionally flexible lighting installation was essential.

What's more, the rooms were just 2.8 meters high, about two meters less than the minimum measurements for a studio. Where trusses and lighting equipment are normally suspended over the moderators, in this case, it's already the floor above. The solution: a filmable ceiling. It is a part of the lighting concept and is incorporated into the studio design harmoniously.

The building of the studio was especially challenging. So challenging in fact that Studio Hamburg built a 1:1 model on their studio premises in Hamburg Tonndorf. The work in London began in July 2014 – the studio went on air in November.

Just a few months after the opening of the studio, Veech x Veech received wide spread recognition for the project "Al Jazeera News Studio and Newsroom":

- Silver award from the International Design Awards (IDA) 2014
- Nominated for the British Council for Offices Awards (BCO) 2015
- Nominated for the New London Awards (NLA) 2015
- Long listed for the World Interiors News Awards (WIN) 2015

Additional competitions, where final decisions are still pending (August 2015):

- Finalist for the National Design Prize 2015 from the Austrian Ministry of Science Research and Economy
- Finalist in the INSIDE World Festival of Interior Awards 2015

The Job Profile:
Complex lighting conditions. A flexible solution.

The innovative lighting design is the distinctive feature of the London Al Jazeera Studio. In the center of the oval studio room, an illuminated announcer's desk rests on a backlit platform. A video wall in the background is bordered by ambiance surfaces that take over the images on the video wall pulling them into newsroom when the studio is in operation. Illuminated edges can be seen in the floor giving the room structure.

A video-playable LED effect lighting system that meets the requirements for a TV studio and is easily integrated into the walls and announcers console was required for the ambiance surfaces and illuminated edges. The demands on this system were high – especially because of the changing light conditions during course of the day coupled with the requirements of bringing the whole visual arrangement into the limelight. Only a series of test runs before the project started could secure the exact definition of the unique specifications.

The lighting of the newsroom proved to be especially complex. Since it serves as a normal workplace but is also used for live broadcasts, the LED components had to fulfill both the requirements of lighting for a TV studio and lighting for desks. On top of this, they also needed to be adaptable to the shifting light conditions. Finally, they should not get too hot since the lighting elements were housed in suspended cases just two meters over the desks.

An overview of the demands on the studio backlighting technology:

- Control of all lighting elements from a central lighting control unit that can play video sequences.
- Implementation of lighting elements that allow extremely variable adjustment, color temperature and color intensity.
- High color fastness.
- Camera friendly and flicker-free dimmablity.
- Long service life of all lighting elements.

An overview of the demands on the newsroom lighting technology:

- Uncomplicated change between warm and cold white light.
- Identical brightness even by differing cable lengths.
- Low heat build-up.
- Uncomplicated integration in curved lighting cases.
- Long service life of all LEDs.

The head room challenge: with a room height of just 2.80 meters, it was necessary to critically examine and then to effectively lay all electrical wiring and cables in the ceiling.

The available space challenge: to deliver the desired number of workspaces in the newsroom without creating a closed-in feeling. Veech x Veech achieved this by using a monolithic desk where several colleagues can work at the same time. The curved shape creates additional space within the room and conveys a feeling of a spacious working environment.

The Solution: Typical Schnick-Schnack-Systems.

LED components, power supplies and control units from Schnick-Schnack-Systems fulfilled the diverse demands required for the complex lighting installation and convinced the project partners.

LED components from the C Series delivered the desired ambi-light effect in the newsroom and on the announcer's console. Four-hundred-and-sixty C100 LED Strips and 679 C50 LED tiles were used for the ambient wall. The news desk is fitted with 195 C25 LED tiles. The advantage of the C-Series: it is equipped with premium quality, efficient RGB LEDS of which each one is video controllable. Since each LED is individually color calibrated, white and pastel shades – actually critical areas for RGB systems- can be presented accurately. What's more, the LED components are camera-friendly dimmable.

Series B LED components were chosen to achieve the transition between the studio and newsroom and for contours. Studio Hamburg installed 596 B50 tiles in the dividing wall; contour lighting and the logo on the front of the announcer's console were achieved with 776 B25 Strips. As with the C Series, the B Series uses premium quality, efficient RGB LEDs. The LEDs in a strip are controllable as group. This makes them the ideal LED light source for illuminating surfaces and edges from a short distance in any desired color. The controlling of the entire studio LED technology is done with six Pixel-Gates Light.

And in the newsroom? Cold white strips with 6,500K and warm light strips with 3,500K were mounted next to each other five centimeters apart in the ceiling luminaries. The System Power Supply 4Es for the strips can be found above the lamps. Control can be taken over as required by the director via ArtNet, supported by four specified Presets. This makes it possible to switch from warm white to cold white during a report from the newsroom with the press of a button. Another significant detail: thanks to the small dimensions, the LED strips track nearly every curve of the light boxes.

Regarding power supply to the LEDs: 79 System Power Supply 4Es and 11 Long Distance Controllers are used for both the studio and newsroom.

Why Schnick Schnack Systems?

As installation times become increasingly shorter the complexity of systems simultaneously increases as do the requirements of customers.

We are a supplier who delivers high-quality reliable systems – under tight deadline constraints that are not only quick to install but also simple to operate and service.

Schnick-Schnack-Systems GmbH

Mathias-Brüggen-Straße 79
50829 Cologne (Germany)

Phone 0221/99 20 19-0
Fax 0221/16 85 09-73

info@schnickschnacksystems.com
www.schnickschnacksystems.com