

CASE STUDY

Kia takes over Times Square with Disguise pre-vis

Automaker Kia supercharged the launch of its all-electric EV6 crossover vehicle with a nighttime unveiling to attendees in New York City's famous Times Square. The EV6 marks the US debut of Kia's Plan S strategy to roll out 11 new electric models in the next five years.



At a glance

In this case study you will see how Chicago-based live experience company Centerstage Global, together with Event Producers Gail & Rice, used the Disguise Designer software to help Kia light up six city blocks in Manhattan with its “Charge the City” vision of an electrified future.

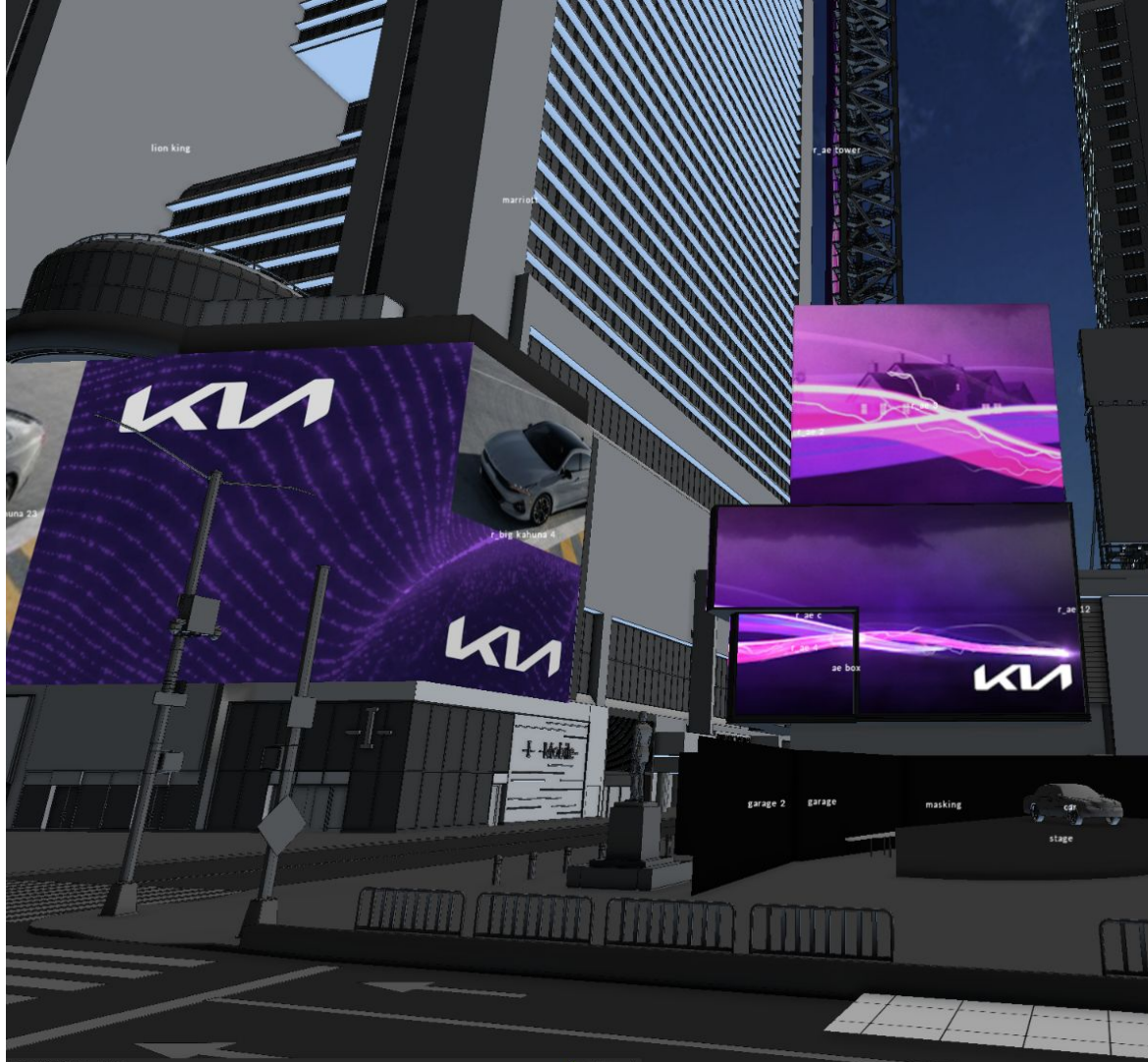
Plans for the EV6 launch first started during strict COVID-19 protocols, with the event originally designed and shot to be live streamed from Times Square to a remote audience at home.

Event producers Gail & Rice coordinated the event, with Centerstage Global spearheading technical production and Fivestone Studios carrying out the content production.

44 LEDs for the big reveal

“Times Square is an American landmark with a huge number of LED video screens and pixel capacity – it’s almost overwhelming in a way,” says Troy Fujimura, Head of Design and Technology at Centerstage, who acted as Screens Technical Producer for the Kia Times Square Takeover. Times Square was selected to host the EV6’s reveal stage while the LED displays on the surrounding buildings – 44 screens spanning six city blocks – served as the creative canvas for the launch.

“To have the chance to completely take over all those screens with our custom content was really a unique experience,” he recalls.



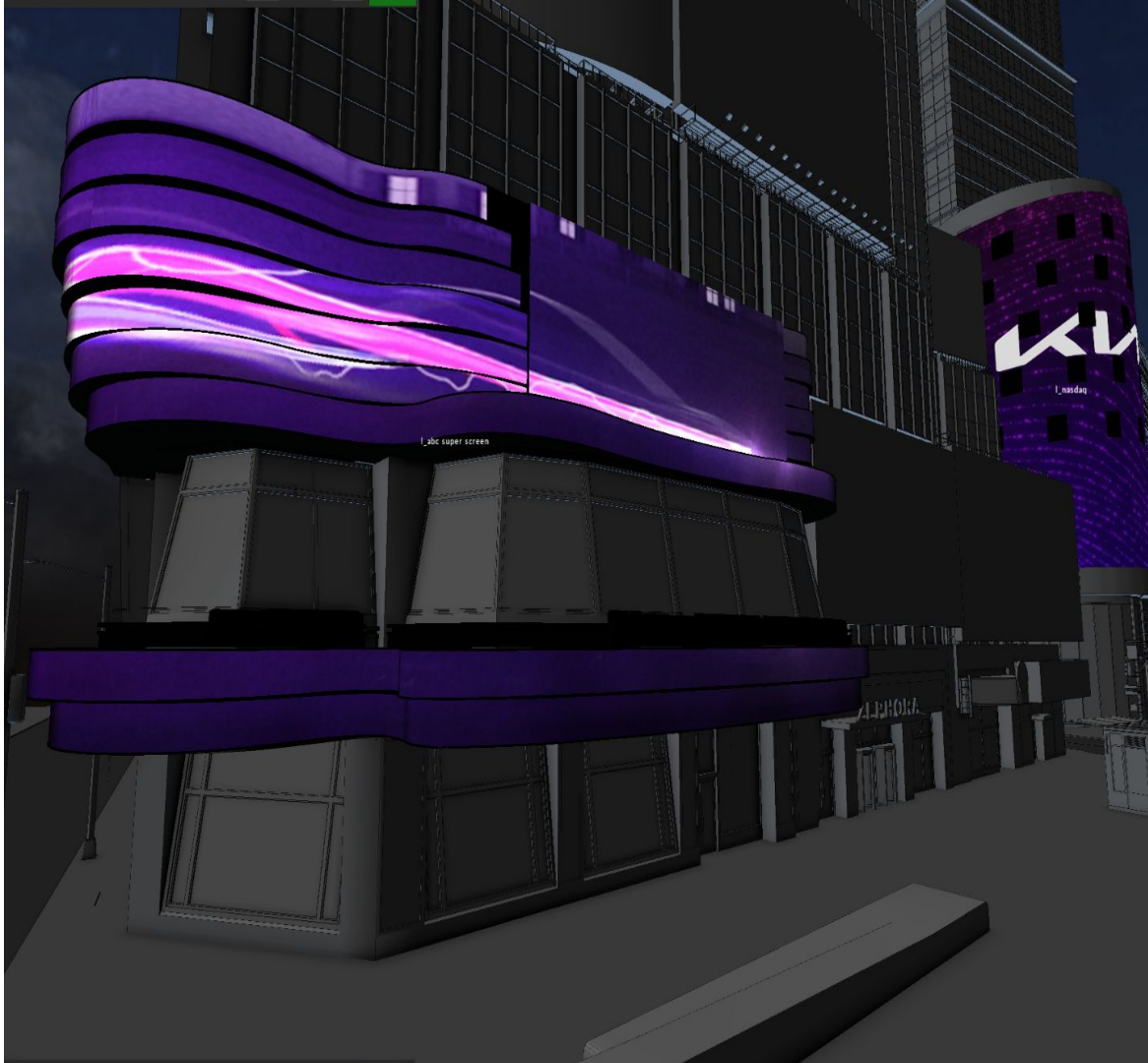
The challenge

Working with large canvases

“When you're in a large-format space like Times Square, with pre-existing surfaces, you need to understand how the screens are physically laid out,” Fujimura explains.

One of the main requirements was the need to create a flow of content between and over the various buildings' LED displays. Understanding that physical spacing in relationship to how the creative direction was going to be achieved was a big task for the team. And the only way to do that was in an actual 3D model in the Disguise Designer software.

“Pre-vis was the only way to see what we were going to do beforehand and then iterate and adjust quickly. It was key to the content approval process,” Fujimura emphasises. “It's impossible for the end client to look at a bunch of flat files, even if they're laid out, and have any idea what's going to happen. Accurate prototyping and modeling were the keys to discovery in pre-vis.”

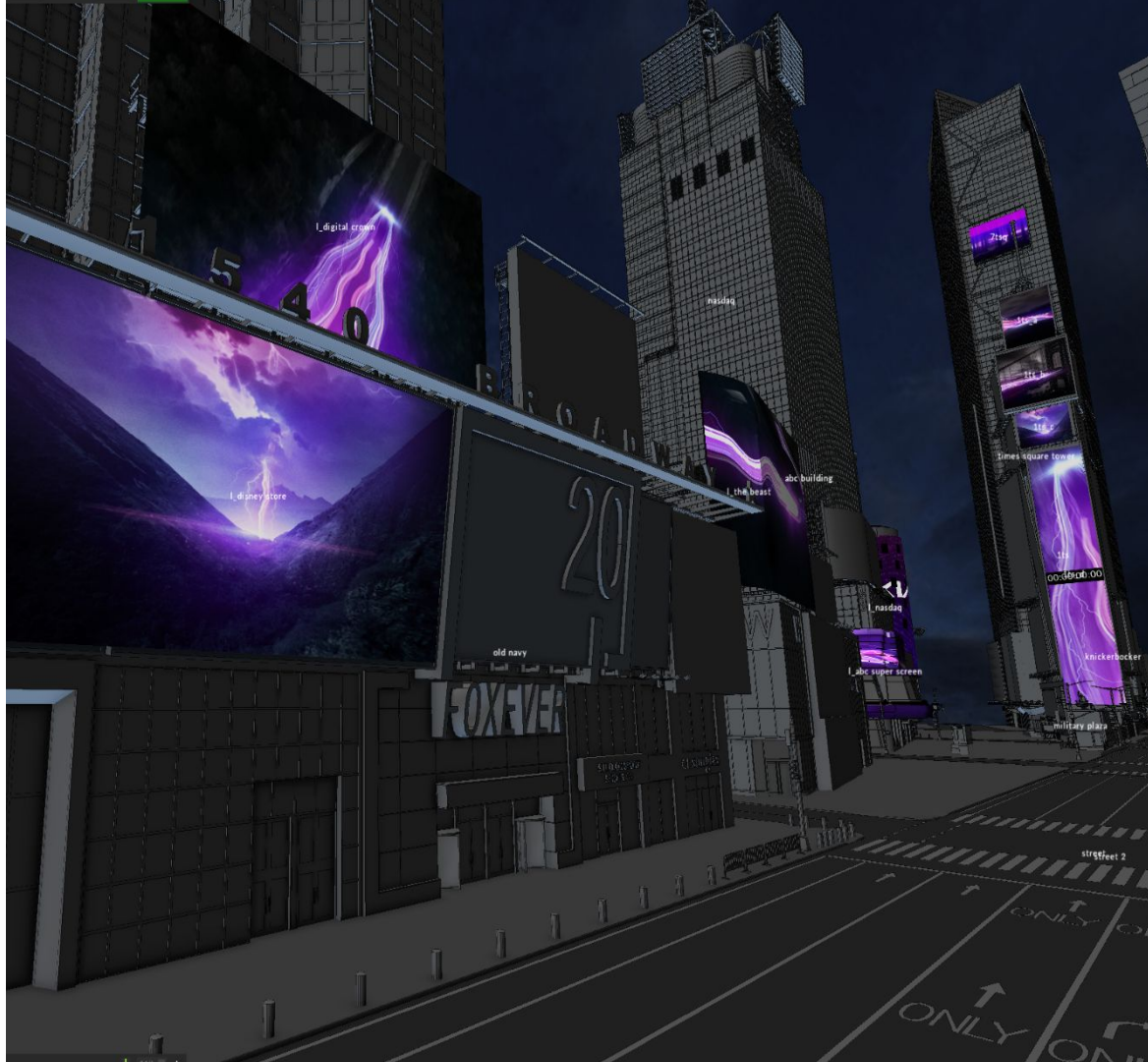


The challenge

Screen inconsistencies

In dealing with such a large number of screens of different size, age and make, the team noticed inconsistencies in colour and image quality. “We were able to identify these straight away in the content and test and modify the content to deal with it.”

The Times Square LED video displays are owned by many different advertising companies - each screen surface controlled by individual players that need various files sent to them. The content management team had to communicate with dozens of people to ensure that every piece of the puzzle ended up on someone’s timeline and referenced the exact time it needed to be played. Disguise enabled all parties to understand the big picture and the part each of them played in it.



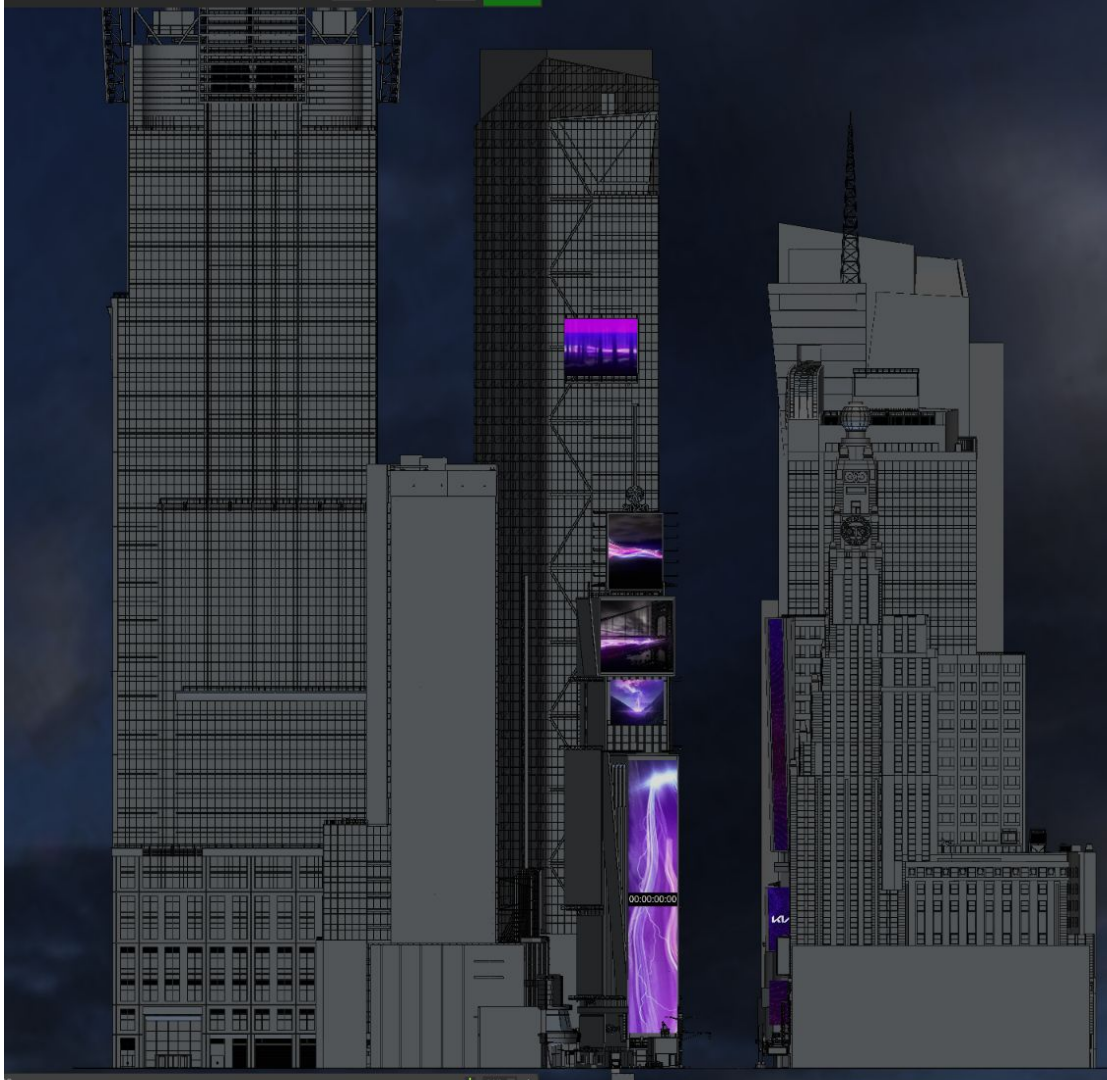
The solution

Once on site and viewing the size and scope of the various screen surfaces, Fujimura knew that creating a 3D model in Designer was the best solution. The producers at Gail & Rice agreed: “They said ‘the only way we can do this is to pre-vis, and the only way to pre-vis is in Disguise,’” he recalls.

The only way is pre-vis

Since the producers didn’t have vast experience using Designer, they relied on Centerstage to render out and place all of the 40 show files in the Disguise timeline. The team then created a 3D model of Times Square, modeled all the screens to be pixel accurate then UV-unwrapped the models to match the existing content templates.

“I’m familiar with the workflow so it was easy to teach it to the content creators. I gave them all of the file delivery specs and showed them the way we modeled them. So it was a very clear and straightforward path between content production and seeing content straight away on the model, unlike other workflows that can be somewhat confusing and time-consuming,” says Fujimura.



“What made Disguise such an essential part of this process was that it’s such a great tool to visually communicate with. It was really [our common language]. Kia’s senior management was in Southern California and in Korea, and with such a diverse and global group, working visually was the only way to convey our ideas.”

Troy Fujimura

Head of Design and Production

Results

Fujimura reports that, “As with so many of these projects, going from concept to pre-visualisation, seeing the Kia launch in reality and, most importantly, seeing it meet all expectations was really very special and very rewarding. All of the pre-planning paid off, and the show looked great!”



Success

“As COVID restrictions have eased, there have been more and more people in Times Square, so seeing them immediately pull out their phones during the launch and take photos of all the content surrounding them was fantastic. We loved just watching them being wowed by this overwhelming look,” Fujimura concludes.

[Watch the reveal here](#)

40

video files rendered

44

LED video screens in Times Square

6

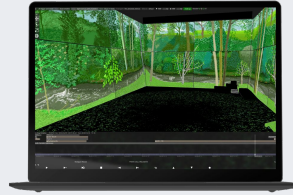
city blocks surface covered by LED content

6.8k

YouTube views



Disguise equipment used



DESIGNER

Designer is the ultimate software to visualise, design, and sequence projects at every stage, from concept all the way through to showtime.

Find out more [→](#)

In Partnership with

Producer: Gail & Rice

Executive Producer: Kathleen Doroan

Content Management: Jonathan Moore and Janae Ely

Content Creation: Fivestone Studios

Project Lead: Traylor Woodall

Technical Production: Centerstage Global

Screens Technical Production: Troy Fujimura

Technical Director: Bruce Holland

Lighting Design: John Miller



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Need support on your project?**

Our team will be happy to speak to you,
whatever your query.

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