

Museum Of Oriental Art Valladolid



Museum Of Oriental Art IP Video Surveillance For 500 Years Of History

When the history of a continent and the contents of a museum are as extraordinary as the value of this collection, it is difficult to explain what the essential focus should be. Everything is interesting, and everything has a story to tell. This is the case of the Museum of Oriental Art in Valladolid. More than twenty MOBOTIX cameras have been installed to protect this collection ‘without sticking out.’

The Royal College of the Augustinian Friars of Valladolid is located in a majestic building dating back to 1759, designed by Ventura Rodríguez. For almost 500 years, this institution has collected various ethnographic artifacts from China, the Philippines, and Japan with respect and concern (unusual for that time period). These treasures draw nearly 14,000 visitors each year.

During the 16th century, at the height of the missionary work, 3,000 Spanish priests traveled to the lands that Marco Polo spoke of to evangelize the Far East. Two thousand of them came from this monastery. Many of them perished on their journey to convert new believers, and the few

who returned home alive brought with them bags full of cultural artifacts. The purpose was to explain to young people the lives and beliefs of those that they were going to evangelize.

Thus, a magnificent collection was amassed over the centuries, which was turned into a museum in 1874. Lacquered pieces, silks, ceramics and porcelain, bronze and ivory pieces... and everyday utensils of every sort: a collection representing Chinese, Filipino and Japanese art and culture – with some of the objects being difficult to find now in their respective countries of origin. At the museum, these objects become true works of art that must be protected.

Safeguarding Works Of Art

Friar Blas Sierra is the museum’s director. According to him, security has been a sensitive issue since the museum opened to the public. That priest, who arranged the previous video surveillance back in 1979 (“the best one on the market then,” he adds), was delighted with what he had, a system that “worked without

incident for 26 years, so we took advantage of the upcoming remodeling of the museum to change the technology and called the same company that installed the previous system in the 1970s,” recalls Friar Blas Sierra.

Back then, that company was Investigación y Consulting (Invescon), which specialized in integrated solutions and project management. In 2006, the company returned to install the video surveillance system for the museum.

The museum was faced with the necessity of installing a complete system that would integrate images and infrared technology, motion sensors, lighting, sound.

Basically, it required an all-in-one solution, so the fathers trusted the company that had served them well for almost three decades and took its advice... MOBOTIX.

“Initially, before starting the project and before carrying out the remodeling work, they recommended different types of cameras and systems



The 14,000 visitors to the Museum of Oriental Art in Valladolid enjoy the best collection of Chinese, Filipino and Japanese art in Spain, with a maximum level of security and discretion.

and said that, given the specific requirements of the museum, the best ones were the MOBOTIX cameras, both in terms of the actual installation and in terms of the museum's needs. We needed a simple recording system, and we chose infrared equipment and the option of an acoustic signal to indicate if someone approaches the display cases," explains Pedro Crespo, project manager at Invescon.

"The pieces on display are the centerpiece of any museum; nothing else needs to be visible, which is why the security system has to be extremely discreet. As a result, we always thought of a project using digital technology, with small cameras connected to a computer," says Friar Blas Sierra.

Easy To Use

The staff of the Museum of Oriental Art in Valladolid consists entirely of members of the monastery. Consequently, the technology would have to

be easy to use, easy to maintain, low-cost, intuitive, easy to scale... "Apart from being easy to use and ensuring that every one of us could manage the system without problems, we also realized that we could save time and money, because we can see at all times what visitors do, even though we don't have to be in the rooms all the time. Just one of us can monitor all 18 rooms without any problems," says Friar Blas Sierra.

The project was launched in September 2006 and was carried out while the museum was being remodeled. As the work on the building was being completed, all the security infrastructure was fully deployed after a few months of testing.

In November, the cameras installed were already working in all the exhibition halls and at all entry points of the museum. Subsequently, five more cameras were installed in the monastery to monitor access and provide more security

for visitors. Specifically, 19 D10 dome cameras were installed in the exhibition halls and five M12 cameras in the monastery. The D10 cameras with their 22-mm lens capture the museum rooms with just a few devices, while the M12 cameras with their 43-mm lens monitor people walking around the monastery.

"In the largest hall, we have three dome cameras, as that room is about 20 meters by 7 meters in size. And it is rectangular, so we installed one at each end of the hall to monitor the doorways and another one in the middle of the room to keep an eye on the middle of the hall. The MOBOTIX systems have made it possible for us to integrate all the necessary elements and to add cameras easily, all with a single system," explains Pedro Crespo of Invescon.

More Than Just Security

Other added advantages of the MOBOTIX systems include the fact that these cameras can also



be used for other purposes in a museum. For example, the loudspeakers can be used for public announcements: “It works especially well as a deterrent for unruly school groups. This way, we can talk to them from a central point or office if they don’t behave, and they know they’re not alone and that someone is watching them,” says Friar Blas Sierra, adding that visitors to the museum are generally on their best behavior.

It is also interesting in terms of providing visitor services. One can study the visitors’ behavior and thus determine the areas of interest for different visitor profiles. Since there is no one in the room watching every move, visitors feel more at ease looking at the pieces without the pressure that comes from being observed.

The MOBOTIX cameras installed by Investigación y Consulting have moved the Museum of Oriental Art in Valladolid a great step forward. They

are practically invisible to visitors, a complete technology integrated into a single device and easy to use, thus freeing up more time for the Augustinian Friars, the custodians of the collection. Surely, this will allow them to continue their research on the art and culture of the Far East and publish books to bring us closer to the subject matter through these objects (as they did with their brethren of the San Agustín congregation in the 16th century) – a culture that is so rich and interesting.

Retailer information: