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There's a Beatles Revolution under way in Las Vegas, where The Mirage recently inaugurated a lounge created by a team of Montreal designers under the direction of Jean-François Bouchard, Cirque's Director of Creation. It's a space bursting with innovations in multimedia graphics and technology.

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To form his team, Jean-François Bouchard called on the architect Stéphanie Cardinal of Humà Design, Nol Van Genuchten for lighting, the Moment Factory for the design of the "animated walls," Vertigo's Bill Keays for the design of the interactive tables and DJ Alain Vinet for the music. Together, they began to lay down the key concepts that would form the basis for the project. Taking their cue from the 1960s, they decided to emphasize elements such as the transition from black and white to colour, supreme love, the psychedelic graphics and the return to handmade objects, among other things.

From Abbey Road to REVOLUTION: To get to the REVOLUTION Lounge, you have to go through the Abbey Road Bar. Open 24 hours a day, the bar is both a reference point and a gathering spot. Between the two, giant letters three metres (10') high spell out "REVOLUTION." Patrons can even sit in the curve of some of the letters, four of which are inverted to spell "LOVE" backwards. On the wall, the Moment Factory has revived graffiti from the actual Abbey Road. The result: keywords and lyrics from Beatles songs are displayed on a screening panel, their colours fading in and out to create an effect of movement. In reference to the street and asphalt, concrete and slate dominate the surroundings.

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Design Revolution: The REVOLUTION Lounge itself measures 715 square metres (7,700 sq. ft.) and is divided into several smaller lounges. At the centre, the architect Stéphanie Cardinal used the three support pillars to create a central point of attraction. Inspired by the song Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, she surrounded the pillars with triangular panels, some of which are made of gleaming steel, while others are white screens. With this covering, she has transformed each pillar into the point of a diamond frozen as it shatters, dragging the ceiling with it in its fall. Inside these structures, lighting designer Nol Van Genuchten has installed a string of spots. To add to the club's psychedelic climate, he has surrounded the columns with a sparkling cascade of more than 35,000 dichroic crystals suspended on metallic chains attached to tracks.

Under the pillars, straight-lined and pink Sacco (1969 design) banquettes alternate with white, interactive tables (2005 design). The contrast between straight lines and curves calls to mind resistance to authority and diktats. The surrounding lounges offer numerous pleasures: long, winding banquettes line the walls and also come with interactive tables. The overall look of the furniture borrows from the pop style of the 60s and 70s.

An Evolution and Revolution in Sound: Created by DJ Alain Vinet, the musical atmosphere is based on the number four (a symbolic number: four Beatles, four periods in their careers, four letters in the word LOVE, etc.). The first stage features the songs of The Beatles themselves, followed by their sources of inspiration at the time, then the covers they've inspired, and, finally, contemporary techno music. Each of four stages features a distinctive lighting display, gradually moving from black and white to hot pink.

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Customized Animation: In charge of wall animation, the Moment Factory inherited three “windows”: the entrance wall, an 18-metre (62”) long section of wall behind the bar. On the bar wall (the most important), the artists created a frieze with circular patterns and mouldings onto which shadows can be projected. In an innovative development, the images were cut on site around the frieze, lending clarity and precision to the sequences. To add to the mystery, the Moment Factory created four portholes (symbolizing the Yellow Submarine) equipped with LED systems that project images using a double-mirror system. Finally, the lack of depth imposed the installation of an overhead projection system, using a mirror attached to a drop ceiling above the bar. These different multimedia platforms support 12 different graphic animations in a style inspired by the 60s and The Beatles.

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Interactive Tables: The REVOLUTION Lounge is equipped with seven low, interactive tables that allow patrons to create their own graffiti. The tables were designed and made by Bill Keays of Studio Virtango, in Switzerland, in with David Small of the Small Design Firm, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The surface of each table is separated into two touch-sensitive screens, one on which patrons can draw with their fingers (the G-zone), while the other reacts to glasses and objects placed on it (the O-zone). The drawings produced automatically and randomly take on the colours of pre-established patterns (flowers, streaks, waves, etc.). Throughout the evening, staff members called “Consuls” wander among the patrons carrying rings that allow them to upload certain creations onto the “screens” on the central pillars. Offering an interactive experience was one of the main objectives of the entire team, the idea being to allow patrons to experience the kind of close-knit community spirit of the 60s that led to the birth of the hippie movement.

A Positive Assessment: It will have taken two years to complete this large-scale project. By entrusting Cirque du Soleil with the design of the lounge, INK (Toronto-based project management firm) ensured strong links with the show LOVE. This project is further proof of the quantity and quality of the talent coming out of Montreal.

The REVOLUTION Lounge team:

Location: *The Mirage, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA*
Architect: *Humà Design – Stéphanie Cardinal*
Director of Creation, Cirque du Soleil Expérience: Jean-François Bouchard
Lighting Design and Glass Ceiling Sculpture Design: *Nol Van Genuchten*
Multi media design (museum wall and entrance wall)*: Moment Factory*
Interactive table design: *Virtango and Associates*
Musical Director: *Alain Vinet*
Operator: *INK*

Words of love
Octopus's
Yesterday garden
All together now
Here comes
Day tripper
Let it be
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Yellow submarine
Come together

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