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Phactory Lights Up Atlanta's Subway for DASANI

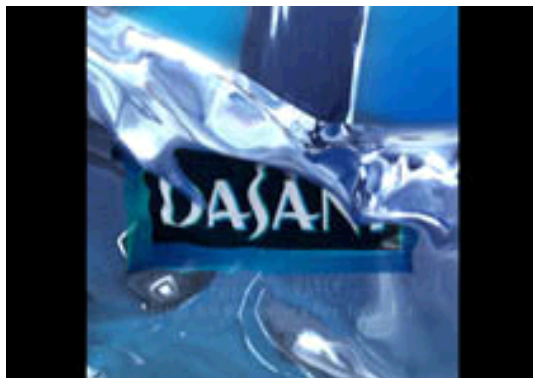
By [Katie Makal](#)

October 11, 2001 12:23 PM PDT

On September 27, within the darkened tunnels of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority's (MARTA) subway system, between the Dunwoody and Sandy Springs stations on the North Line, riders were treated to 20 seconds of in-tunnel advertising featuring the cool images of The Coca-Cola Company's **DASANI** brand water in a moving message of replenishment and wellness. Designed and produced by New York's **Phactory Productions**, this revolutionary ad



campaign is the first to utilize subway display technology developed by **Submedia** of New York. Submedia's presentation technology is mounted on subway tunnel walls and incorporates a 1,000-foot-long display of light boxes featuring a series of images -- although the images are stationary, they appear to move at 200-300 frames per second as a subway car shoots by, generating an effect similar to that of a flipbook. The ad is scheduled for a minimum three-month run in Atlanta.



Acting as both advertising agency and production house, animation and 3D design company Phactory Productions had to decide how to proceed knowing that the in-tunnel ad would feature no audio. They let the product speak for itself by utilizing water simulation and typography in a palette of blues to connote the cool, refreshing properties of DASANI. The ad features saturated color images of cascading water splashing within an invisible glass. As time slows down and

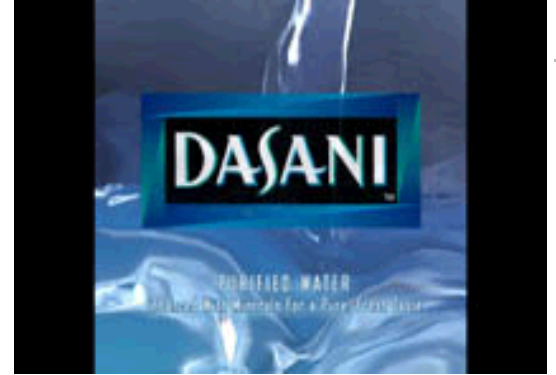
speeds up throughout the sequence, the tagline, "Treat yourself well. Everyday." is revealed. The in-tunnel DASANI ad heralds a new medium for a new millennium by bringing transit advertising off the platform and into the tunnels between stations, where commuters are a captive audience.

Having worked with Submedia on test projects involving their display technology, Phactory was in the unique position of knowing the medium's strengths as well as the intricacies involved in producing a commercial spot for the proprietary device. The creative crew paid a visit to the company's Hoboken, New Jersey, warehouse, which is approximately three football fields long and equipped with golf carts to allow viewings of the entire installation. Phactory experimented with graphics to

determine what movements would and wouldn't work in the in-tunnel ad.

According to Damijan Saccio, co-founder of Phactory Productions, "Because the images are printed at 400 dpi, the size of the computer-generated visuals is monumental: 600 pixels wide by 12,600 pixels high. We didn't just make 20 images for 20 seconds of animation; we actually had to make 4,800 frames. It was an incredible obstacle to overcome in terms of rendering because we were working at much higher than film resolution."

The Phactory team utilized **SOFTIMAGE|3D** for pre-visualization, final camera, final environment and all 3D text work. In order to produce the superior photorealistic water effects, they turned to tools created by **Areté Entertainment**, whose **image software** has been used to create effects in films such as "**Titanic**" and "Castaway."



Areté allowed Phactory to use their **Advanced Fluid Simulator**, which is still in development. "At that point, their software was still pure proprietary code, which meant that there was no interface. This project marks the first time that the software has been used commercially in the United States; the only stipulation they required was that we could use the software only in their California offices. Their programmers worked with us, writing more code to get the software to do what we needed it to do," explained Phactory Productions co-founder Scott Sindorf. The software company provided Phactory with four different compositing passes: transparency, reflection, matte and environment. Before the project was completed, however, Phactory created their own environment pass and composited the piece in **After Effects** in their New York studio.

Submedia's technology is based on a 19th century device called the **Zoetrope**, which works because of a biological phenomenon called **persistence of vision**. (*William George Horner invented what he called the Daedaleum in 1834; Daedaleum is from the Greek for "wheel of the devil." His invention was renamed Zoetrope in 1867 by William Lincoln -- Zoetrope from the Greek for "wheel of life." The name change was probably good for marketing purposes.*) The Zoetrope is a cylinder with slits cut into the top edge and images placed on the inside. The device is spun around on its axis; as a viewer looks through the moving slits, the still images placed inside the Zoetrope appear to move, as if animated.

For the 3D design and compositing, the Phactory Productions team was led by co-founders Damijan Saccio and Scott Sindorf and included designers Hae-Yeon Lee and Dave Reynolds. They utilized Boxx Technologies NT machines, Macintosh G4s, Avid Softimage 3D, Adobe After Effects and Photoshop, Foundry's After Effects plug-ins and Arété Entertainment's Advanced Fluid Simulator. The copy line, which appears in DASANI's television and print ads, was given to Damijan Saccio and Scott Sindorf, who served as art directors of the in-tunnel ad, by Coca-Cola advertising manager Jennifer Jacobs and DASANI brand manager Kellum Graitcer.