Astera Titan Tubes for Spectacular Outside Lands Festival Light Sculpture

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New York and LA based lighting and visual designer Rob Ross of technical production specialist, Studio RRD used his vast imagination and 160 Astera Titan Tubes to create a stunning light sculpture centrepiece for the SOMA Tent at the 2022 Outside Lands Festival staged in San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Park.

The vibrant, fun-filled event celebrates the unique spirit and energy of the city and the Bay Area with a diversity of music, dance, art, poetry, debates plus a myriad of other performances, interactions, and dialogues.

Rob has been involved with the festival in several different roles for over 10 years and was initially

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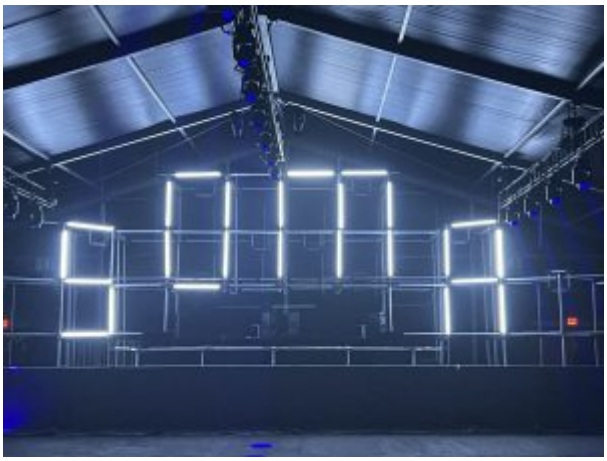
approached last year to light the brand-new SOMA venue – named after the city's lively SoMa – South of Market' district – a haven for electronic dance music enthusiasts that debuted in 2021, which he did, working with some pre-existing décor elements.

This year, after multiple discussions and brainstorming, the festival's artistic director Will Irons from Iron Bloom gave Rob an open brief to create a production design for the entire space and curate the atmospherics exactly as he wanted!

Rob wanted to start with a completely black space. Something dark and moody, a bit like an abandoned warehouse and with no fancy décor or prerequisites … but with an aura.

Into this crisp, clean, and raw environment he envisioned lighting that would appear to be floating in the air, offering an element of surprise and playfulness for guests.



Rob immediately thought of a structure and the Tubes, combined with smart programming to produce positive energy, great vibes with beautiful kinetic flowing pixels, using synaesthesia and other mind-related visual stimuli to offer an immersive and mind-blowing experience with which everyone could engage!

A multifaceted speed-rail framework was built around the DJ booth with Titan tubes attached everywhere transforming it from a utilitarian metal framework into a highly dynamic three-dimensional artwork combining a sense of adventure with structural elegance.

Titan Tubes are one of Rob's favourite fixtures and there was never a question as to what light sources he

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would be using! “They are bright, have a fantastic quality of light, great colours and are easily controllable as well as super lightweight,” he noted.

Light weight fixtures were a key to all lighting in the tent. The Titan Tubes were secured to the speed-rail positioned on two levels around the structure – everywhere there was a railing, there was a Titan Tube!

Due to the long operational hours, they were all run in wired mode.

They were mapped and run via a Madrix controller which enabled video content to be played up / down, in / out and through the tubes for extremely fluid and crazy effects. They could also spell out the venue name S-O-M-A on the Tubes, an effect much appreciated by the organisers and audiences alike.

One night of intensive programming on site was followed by three days and nights of shows with a fantastic US and international DJ line up including TOKiMONSTA from LA, ANNA from Brazil, Berlin-based Dixon, European activist and music producer Absolute, Detroit’s DJ Minx and many more who thrilled fans with some superlative music, matched by Rob and his team with visual eloquence.

In the roof of the tent, 120 Dartz beam effects were rigged, which contrasted well with the Titan Tubes.

It was the only Festival space that enjoyed complete darkness all the time it was running, so Rob’s mission was to “let the light inhabit the space for everyone’s enjoyment,” a goal definitely achieved judging by positive feedback and chatter from artists, guests, and observers. “This project was very special and brought me a lot of joy,” stated Rob.

He also explained that his involvement and passion for Outside Lands wasn’t simply a question of designing

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lighting for one of the spaces, it was about being a part of the entire event's success having seen it evolve and grow over the last decade.

Collaborating with him were associate designer Aidan Marshall, production Manager Roger Picone, master electrician Justin Souza, grandMA programmer / systems tech Brandon Young and Madrix programmer Fabian Gordon.

The Titan Tubes were supplied by Rob's own company which owns several hundred – "I just can't buy enough of them!" he concluded.

Rob also recently used 500 Titan Tubes to highlight the architectural and industrial areas at Tesla's new Gigafactory in Austin, Texas for the automotive giant's 'Cyber Rodeo' facilities launch party.

Photos – by JORG Photo

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