

Houston Skylight Lights Up the Super Bowl Sky with Claypaky Supersharpy Array

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USA – In the great Texas tradition of going big, Houston welcomed **Super Bowl LI** with a number of exciting attractions, including the **Houston Skylight** high atop the **George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB)**. Houston First Corporation, which maintains GRB, asked **Nimblist** to conceive and execute the **Houston Skylight**, a rooftop beacon that marks the center of the city's cultural activities.

Nimblist designer and creative consultant **Spike Brant** devised an array of 36 **Claypaky Supersharpy** fixtures, mounted on staging on the GRB roof overlooking Discovery Green park. The Supersharpy's swept the sky with powerful searchlight-style beams and created numerous lighting effects as well.

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“We have an ongoing conversation with Mike Waterman with Houston First about using light as a beacon to connect all of Houston,” says Spike Brant. “The Houston Skylight would symbolize energy as light and serve as a visual metaphor connecting the **Super Bowl** festivities. The installation was commissioned as a proof of concept for a broader effort [to?] illuminate Houston to the world and create a citywide attraction using multiple types of lighting installations.

Few fixtures are powerful enough to meet the demands of the Skylight’s searchlight-style application. Given time, budget and logistical constraints Brant couldn’t use lights that had to be mounted by cranes, were a big power draw or had high maintenance issues.

So Brant thought of Supersharpy’s, which he had never used before but believed might be the right choice. When used collaboratively the Supersharpy’s low-wattage beam light could challenge a traditional searchlight, reaching never seen before mid-air distances. It’s not only an incredibly powerful beam light, it also provides the utmost in terms of light quality and number of effects.

“The Supersharpy is three times brighter than Sharpy, and its power consumption is little more than Sharpy’s wattage draw,” Brant explains. “So we did a test a few weeks before the Super Bowl. We put them in a 3×3 grid and saw that there was sufficient brightness when used as one converged beam. We used MA 3D to build out the lighting array with a model of the city, and we determined 36 was the minimum quantity of fixtures that we could use and have enough impact to get notice during SB51. But where were we going to get 36 in a short period of time?”

A.C.T Lighting helped Brant arrange for Claypaky’s factory in Italy to immediately build and ship 20 Supersharpy’s, which Houston First purchased through local dealer LD Systems. “A.C.T got us the lights quickly. I can’t thank them enough for their efforts,” Brant says. Other vendors brought the Supersharpy inventory up to 36; the array was mounted in a 6×6 grid.

“The Supersharpy’s were lightweight and had an insignificant power draw compared to other sky trackers, the whole installation only required 50amps 3 phase,” Brant notes. He used the 36 fixtures collaboratively to form a single, white searchlight beam. Then he broke the array into four beams and into 36 single beams to create a waterfall cascade and flower effects.

The Houston Skylight debuted on January 27 and remained in operation through Super Bowl Sunday, February 5. Its beams pierced the sky from sundown until 11 pm. The Houston Skylight was well placed for FOX’s Super Bowl telecasts: It was right in the middle of wide shots showing

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the network's broadcast center.

A.C.T Lighting is the exclusive North American distributor for Claypaky.

Francesco Romagnoli, Claypaky Area Manager for North and Latin America, added, "Mr. Brant is a great designer and a dedicated Claypaky fixture user. It was great to see him working on this high profile event associated with the Super Bowl."