

Light Iron Interactive Sculpture

NEW YORK, NY

CASE STUDY | CULTURAL

➔ Challenge

Draw attention to Manhattan's Flatiron District during the holiday season by highlighting the beauty and excitement of the city.

➔ Solution

Create a post-modern sculpture combining a steel structure, mirror panels and unique, tubular LED fixtures powered by Crestron lighting control.



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— Erin Dreyfous

Tillotson Design Associates

A Holiday Gift for New York City

INABA's "New York Light" wins Flatiron Plaza Design Competition – with the help of Crestron lighting control

It's an exciting gift for the City of New York.

A beautiful new piece of post-modern sculpture will grace Manhattan's Flatiron Plaza this holiday season, reflecting the sights of the city while, at the same time, framing views of the Empire State Building® and Flatiron Building.

The temporary work, which will be on display only from November 24 through January 4, follows the minimalist tradition. It directs viewers' eyes not so much to the work itself, but on the environment in which it's mounted—in this case a particularly beautiful part of Manhattan, at the intersection of 23rd Street and Broadway, across from Madison Square Park. “It's a unique spot in the heart of the city where the sky and skyline can be seen from street level,” says Jeffrey Inaba, Principal of INABA Architecture, which created the concept and overall design for the sculpture.

“The piece is gorgeous, something we hope everyone in the city can come out and see for themselves,” says Andrew Gross, Crestron Market Development Manager, which provided a lighting automation system for the sculpture. “It's also a chance to see how much today's lighting technology can reflect and beautify the city, maybe in ways most people haven't thought of.”



An interactive sculpture

The unique installation, informally dubbed the “Light Iron Project,” consists of a 25-foot long by 17-foot wide by 9-foot tall steel framework holding rectangular mirrors and LED lights in long, horizontally-mounted tubular fixtures. “During the day it will reflect the buildings, the park, the streets and the people viewing it,” says Erin Dreyfous, Lighting Designer for Tillotson Design Associates, who created the lighting system for the sculpture. “After dark, the traffic and city streetlights will come into play, as will a series of light shows that take place at different times throughout the night.”

Light Iron is the winner of a holiday design competition sponsored by the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership and the Van Alen Institute, which invited seven local architects and design firms to enter. The design team, fabricators, and equipment vendors all worked on a pro bono basis, donating their time and the materials with the idea of showcasing the Flatiron neighborhood to the tens of thousands of people who pass through it each day.

“We created 200 light tubes for the structure, each with a custom-made C-shaped lens mounted below an LED fixture,” Dreyfous explains. “We needed an

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Crestron Electronics

element that would transform the sculpture at night, adding interest and excitement yet not interfering with its transparency.” Light Iron is installed along Broadway between Fifth Avenue and the park, situated so that, if you stand at its north end and look through it, the Flatiron Building is framed by its structure.



Stand at its south end, and it frames the Empire State Building. It's intended as an interactive sculpture and is a great place to take photos or selfies, with the sculpture, the neighborhood, and the city lights all combining to create a unique image.

When a light show begins, the piece transforms again, with the lights moving and pulsating to the beat of the city. Now viewers generally stand back and just watch, yet again, as the sculpture draws as much attention to the neighborhood as it does to itself. "It's really exciting to see Light Iron in action," says Gross, whose staff at Crestron did the programming for the shows.

Those light shows are made possible by a Crestron 3-Series Control System®, the same one that's used to control and automate centralized lighting systems in many offices, schools, and conference centers. It communicates with four dimming modules installed in a Crestron DIN Rail panel that provide 16 zones of controllable electric power to the fixtures. Reacting to commands from the control system, the dimming modules power the fixtures up and down and change their brightness in milliseconds. That makes it possible to create almost any kind of shape, movement, or special effect using the LED lights.

"As lighting designers, we're excited to have the flexibility that Crestron provides," says Dreyfous.

"We've used their products on several projects recently, and we've only had good experiences. It was very natural to reach out to them, and we're glad we did."

She adds that "Most lighting designers are very familiar with Crestron. We think of their products as a lighting system on steroids, because they do so much more than traditional dimmers. It's important to us to be able to manipulate and transform the lighting we design, not only in this work of art, but anywhere we need to create a mood or attract attention."

The public, too, has been excited to see Light Iron in action. If you're in New York during the holidays, it's worth a trip to the Flatiron district.

If you'd like to implement a system like this in one of your own designs, please email Andrew Gross at agross@crestron.com or call him at 201-744-9534.

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