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Robe installation wins Lighting Award for Best Exterior Lighting

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The project features 6 Robe ColorSpot 1200ATs that were specified by lighting designer Greg McLenahan and the Blackpool Illuminations team, for a project illuminating the largest mirror ball in the world - stationed on Blackpool Promenade. It was one of the new lighting features for the world famous Blackpool Illuminations' "Festival of Light" concept, switched on for the 2005 season. The fixtures were supplied by Blackburn based HSL.

The LD Awards judges simply commented, "*You couldn't light it better*" and were impressed that it "invited a high level of interaction with the public". The 2006 Lighting Design Awards - which recognizes the most innovative and creative use of lighting in all types of environments - took place at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel, and was attended by over 700 lighting industry professionals and key practitioners. The Awards are sponsored by leading UK architectural lighting magazine "Lighting" Councillor Eddie Collett, Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Tourism, stated: "*We are absolutely thrilled and delighted that our stunning mirror ball has won such an influential award and is recognised on both national and international level*"

The 20 ft diameter rotating mirror ball, is named "*They Shoot Horses Don't They*" and has been in residence since 2002. It was created by Manchester-based artist Michael Trainor and is synonymous with the culture of ballroom dancing, for which the town is also historically renowned.

A new Icon for the Blackpool Illuminations

McLennahan, in conjunction with the Illuminations team, were commissioned to transform the glitter ball into a "new icon for the Illuminations". Apart from that brief, received from the then Festival Director Philip Oakley, he was given a free hand as to how he achieved the goal.

Their aim was to make it - during a 15 minute repeated lightshow - contemporary, cool and fun as well as a memorable visual sight bringing a distinct touch of luminescent glamour and sophistication to the sea front.

The ColorSpot 1200E AT's are mounded on customised 5 metre high posts, covered by special domes for weather protection - being directly exposed to the Irish sea, it can be an extremely hostile

environment. The posts were designed and supplied by Blackpool Council's Illuminations engineering department. They are force air cooled to extract the heat of the fixtures form the small space.

Robe - Dressed to Impress

McLenahan had not used Robe fixtures before, and he was considering his moving light options when Robe UK's Bill Jones turned up and demonstrated the powerful ColorSpot 1200 fixture in situ.

As soon as he'd seen the units in action, he knew it was the right luminaire for the project,"ColorSpot 1200 is a fantastic piece of kit" he declares,"*The optics and effects are amazing, the brightness and smoothness are awesome and they gave me all the scope to do everything I wanted with the installation. Apart from all that functionality, they are also incredible value for money!*".

Living Light Sculpture

In addition to the lights being pointed directly onto the ball and changing colours, effects and gobos on its mesmeric, shimmering surface, the lights have been programmed by McLenahan to wander out into a small arena immediately around the Ball, making patterns in the floor and engaging in 3D animations and projections. All of this draws people in to enjoy the work as a living light sculpture. As well as being recognized by the LD Awards, local and visitor reaction to the new look mirror ball has been wholly positive.

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