



Stop Motion Lighting Solutions For SuperMansion

Imagine overseeing 21 stages, lit with more than 300 lights that are running nearly 24 hours per day, five days a week. That's a slice of the life for Dwight D. Campbell, gaffer on the recent season of Crackle's stop-motion animation series *SuperMansion*. When working on stop-motion animation – which is already a painfully slow process – time-efficiency is vital. In an effort to streamline the lighting process on season two of *SuperMansion*, Dwight incorporated two Rosco LED lighting solutions – its Cube Family of LED light fixtures and its CubeConnect System to control them.



Behind-the-scenes on the stop motion set of "SuperMansion"

Stoopid Buddy Stoodios in Burbank houses the stages where *SuperMansion* was filmed. For those unfamiliar with stop-motion animation production, the sets are built like normal movie sets, just on a much smaller scale. Traditionally, those sets are then lit with tungsten lighting that is controlled by large dimming boards. To move as quickly as possible, there are often two full sets of lights hung on the grid to allow for quick changes between "daylight" lights and "night" lights. This means maintaining several sets of lights, cables and bulbs.



Rosco Braq & Miro Cubes, wirelessly controlled via CubeConnect, complement the studio's existing lighting setup

For this season of *SuperMansion*, Dwight wanted to demonstrate the advanced capabilities of LED lighting to “the studio.” He installed Rosco’s Braq and Miro Cube LED fixtures to complement the existing lighting set-ups on four of the stages. What really put this test over the top for Dwight was the ability to wirelessly integrate the LED cubes with the stop motion software using Rosco’s CubeConnect – a two-part control system consisting of a transceiver and a dongle receiver that, when used together, enables simple, elegant wireless control of Rosco Miro and Braq Cubes.



CubeConnect transceiver and dongles (L) and CubeConnect dongle plugged into a Miro Cube (R)

The animation team used the Dragonframe Stop-Motion Animation Software, which offers a DMX I/O Controller to interface with DMX light fixtures on set. The stages Dwight was experimenting with had a limited amount of dimmers and DMX I/O control boxes. By connecting the control boxes to the CubeConnect Transceivers, he could control multiple Miro & Braq Cubes outfitted with CubeConnect Dongles without running any DMX cable. This meant less time setting up and more time shooting. “Having the dongles and the transceivers is the way to go,” said Dwight. “It is just fantastic to have the control without the DMX cables. It’s so easy to move the lights around a set and still have DMX control of the fixture.”



The color-mixing 4C Cubes create a spooky bluish-purple sky for the show's Halloween episode

Interfacing the CubeConnect system directly with the Dragonframe software offered cinematographer Aaron Wise easy control over the lighting on set. They lit the backdrops of the season's Halloween episode, for example, with Rosco's color-mixing Miro Cube 4C and Braq Cube 4C fixtures. Previously, they had to use gels to achieve a variation of color in the sky. By using the 4C Cubes, the team could quickly dial-in any lighting color they wanted and easily match all of the units on three separate stages – directly from the Dragonframe software.



“All the Cubes are excellent for lighting our sky backings and as bounced fill light,” said DP Aaron Wise. “The four-color cubes were particularly good for the skies. The wireless system was an excellent addition to our stages by letting us cut out the usual daisy chain from floor-mounted dimmers to our grid-mounted dimmers and fixtures.”

Dwight had great success creating daylight on set by bouncing the light from Rosco's Braq Cube WNC fixtures off a 4×8 bead board to create a beautiful soft light. Since the 5” cube fixtures were so small, they provided flexible solutions moving around the limiting sets and prevented issues with shadows. The light, wirelessly controlled by the Dragonframe software via CubeConnect, allowed Dwight and Aaron's teams to move faster and get the shots they creatively wanted. “I don't want to venture into another big animated series without some of these lights,” said Dwight. “After using the transceiver, we are sold on its abilities, and it's on my wish list of future purchases.”

Thanks to Dwight for sharing the behind-the-scenes lighting techniques that went into filming season 2 of *SuperMansion*, which is now available to stream on Crackle.com. Check out Rosco's website for more information on Rosco CubeConnect or Rosco's Cube Family.