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Neuroscientists at Texas Tech University (TTU) find surprising results during first-phase research into the effects of the Sky Factory sky image compositions.

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– Utilizing fMRI brain mapping technology, TTU researchers are discovering several unique neural brain activations in the cerebellum of subjects responding to virtual sky images in comparison to other positive images from nature.

“Brain activation of the cerebellum is often associated with aspects of spatial cognition, in particular the experience of extended space, as well as imagined, or real, motion through that space, explains TTU neuroscientist Dr. Michael O’Boyle. “. . . it may be that viewing Sky Factory compositions evoke a sense of expansion into or through this extended space.”



Luminous SkyCeiling™

This finding is significant for the company. Sky Factory Luminous SkyCeilings™ are installed in confined patient environments worldwide to promote relaxation and improve patient experience. Fostering an experience of expanded space may very well be the reason that MRI facilities with SkyCeilings report reduced instances of claustrophobia and increased patient throughput.

These initial results are part of a two-part, blinded, [research project](#) launched last spring and conducted by Texas Tech University, College of Human Sciences' researchers Drs. Debajyoti Pati, Michael O'Boyle and Cherif Amor. The second part of the study will compare health data collected from patients staying in hospital rooms with and without Sky Factory virtual skylights. This part of the study will conclude in late 2013.

"The best expectation out of a relaxation-inducing positive distraction feature" explains Dr. Debajyoti Pati "is diversion of one's attention from the immediate ailment and stressful environment. However, these results show significantly different and higher levels of positive physiological responses (to the virtual sky images) as compared to positive images in general."

Decades of evidence-based research underpin the use of nature imagery as [hospital art](#) to reduce stress, support healing and reduce the use of pain medications. Architects specify Sky Factory SkyCeilings™ in patient environments worldwide to promote relaxation, and improve the patient experience and satisfaction.



San Javier Hospital - Mexico

In response to the Texas Tech research, Sky Factory founder, Bill Witherspoon commented, "Of particular interest to us, is the fact that our sky compositions activate areas of the brain not activated by other positive images. Sky Factory artists are adept in introducing compositional principles and elements into our sky images insuring the necessary visual cues are present to trigger both a profound relaxation response and a sense of inner peace and stability.

"The results coming out of Texas Tech reflect their skill in designing virtual skylights that are not only visually stunning but evoke a unique physiological state that corresponds to expanded awareness. We expect that additional research is likely to further link this experience of SkyCeiling™ to the [biophilic](#) engagement that is reported by end-users."

The Sky Factory will be exhibiting at the [RSNA](#) 2012 Annual Meeting at McCormick Place in Chicago November 25-30.

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About Sky Factory

The Sky Factory, LC is a unique fine art and technology company based in Fairfield, Iowa. Founded in 2002 by artist and entrepreneur Bill Witherspoon, the company creates realistic Illusions of Nature™ - virtual skylights and windows – that transform interior

spaces and enliven our innate biophilia. Sky Factory products are designed and manufactured in Fairfield, Iowa, and distributed globally through a network of authorized International Partners. Applications include all healthcare environments, elder care facilities, schools, work, residential and hospitality environments. Sky Factory's new digital cinema systems feature exquisite UltraHD nature imagery and sound recordings presented as unique hours-long scenes. They offer an unprecedented level of quality and realism. For more information visit the [Sky Factory](#) website.

About Texas Tech University

Texas Tech is an emerging research University dedicated to developing new technologies for a better world. From the study of the smallest nanoparticles to comprehensive wind power systems, from research in autism and addiction to pioneering work in STEM education, researchers are finding ways to solve problems, improve lives, and find new solutions to the world's critical needs. Texas Tech is a public research university with a mandate to advance knowledge, promote economic development, and enhance cultural development. For more information visit the [TTU](#) website.