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Illusive Treasure-Trove At Holography Gallery

Leonard Gordon recently spotted an artistic rendering of Dizzie Gillespie that transfixed him. It looked like a photograph, but it had certain uncanny, eye-catching qualities that photography cannot produce. Remarkably, it existed in three dimensions, with Mr. Gillespie's bloated cheeks and upturned trumpet hovering in midair. And even more surprising, when Mr. Gordon side-stepped to view the image from another angle, it changed. The trumpeter now held his instrument away from his mouth, his cheeks were deflated, and a wide smile swept his face.

"Astonishing," Mr. Gordon blurted. "I don't understand the technology, but the final product is amazing."

The mysterious work had been produced by holography, an image-making process that enables three-dimensional images to emanate from the surface of special photographic film. And the breathtaking vision of Mr. Gillespie is one of the featured items at the Museum of Holography-Fifth Avenue, a new gallery and gift-shop of holographic goods at 745 Fifth Avenue, near 58th Street.

"After being surrounded by all the usual Christmas glitz and chintz on Fifth Avenue, this place is a really refreshing idea," said Kathleen Brown, who was delighted by the store's window displays, which intermingled some of the characters Alice met in Wonderland with various holographic images.

Inside the shop, which occupies the former home of the F.A.O. Schwarz toy store — which moved across the street — there exists a trove of entertaining, often elusive, holographic riches, covering such diverse subjects as Peruvian lilies, ballet slippers and Marilyn Monroe.

Touch-and-Sniff

Some of the images seem so real that people tend to examine the holograms with their hands as much as their eyes, and some people even try to sniff them.

"Hey, Mom, watch this!" shouted eight-year-old Alan Rottner, as he swiped at a brown-feathered Royal Falcon. "See, I got it!" he said, while proudly revealing to his mother a handful of air.

Among the highlights are a hologram of a microscope, in which one can actually peer through the perceived eye-piece and see a magnified integrated circuit, and one of the Cheshire-Cat, which viewed from one angle reveals the cat grinning, but from another prospective shows only his grin

"I had a Viewmaster as a kid and this stuff provides the same kind of fun," said Robert Brown, a professional illustrator, who had on a holographic belt buckle of a large eye. "Nothing else plays like 3-D."

Though holograms may seem to behave as enigmatically as some of Lewis Carroll's characters, their actions are very scientific. In simple

terms, a holgram is made by the reflection of laser light off an object and onto a piece of film or glass coated with a special emulsion. Then, when light is shined on the hologram (and most are lit by ordinary light bulbs), a three-dimensional image of the object appears.

Superimposed Images

Holograms that offer more than one image can be produced by superimposing the images of two or more holograms, though there are other, more complex, procedures.

A few people who viewed the holograms were less concerned with how they were made than with some of the implications of their existence. Phyllis Andrews said: "It's there, but you don't really see it. It makes you wonder what other things are around us that we don't see. Ghosts? Spirits? Who knows?"

And Paul Martin began to question the things he could see. "There's a scary part to all this," he said. "It can be used as magic, but it also can be used to deceive."

The majority of visitors, however, to the Museum of Holography-Fifth Avenue, which is scheduled to be at the present location for several months, seem to perceive holograms as objects of amazement and amusement.

The only person who left the store displeased was a young man who cried, "I thought this was supposed to be a toy store." Most of his peers, though, seem very amused by the holograms.

"I think this is a great place for kids, and for adults who don't want to grow up," said Marilyn Baracks, who hoped that her three-year-old daughter would soon be able to watch Big Bird on holographic television. "It's a mystifying, magical intrigue."