

# COLLECTING AND E HOLOGRAM

Jonathan Ro



Later in 1978 I was involved in opening The Hologram Place, the first holography gallery in Europe, and SEE 3, a production company for the origination and promotion of all types of display holograms.



And during the 1980s I was involved in developing commercial holographic products with my colleagues Nigel Abraham and David Pizzanelli.



We originated embossed hologram masters for several years, supplying clients throughout Europe, and eventually sold the company in 1990. I wanted to stay involved in holography in some way and since I had always been more interested in the art world than anything else, I determined to make a collection of holograms which I could use for exhibitions.



My role model was the German collector, Matthias Lauk, who founded the Museum für Holographie und Neue Visuelle Medien outside Köln. Matthias explained to me that if you want to make exhibitions, you should begin by making a collection so you can work with that, rather than having to borrow work from artists all the time.



It obviously takes a while to build a collection so the first few exhibitions I curated were group shows where artists lent their work but by 1994 I was in a position to make the first small exhibition from my own holdings.

3x8+1 was composed of 3 works by eight artists and 1 work by another. Margaret Benyon, Patrick Boyd, Liz Coates, Susan Cowles, Jon Mitton, David Pizzanelli, Caroline Palmer, Martin Richardson and Jeffrey Robb. All of them were based in the UK and most had been involved with the Royal College of Art Holography Unit, which ran between 1985 – 1995. It was a great moment to start collecting holography as the College attracted a lot of talented artists and I was able to acquire their work at an early moment in most of their careers.



I particularly like to show works in groups of three and the 3x8+1 show was my first attempt at this. These artists are at the core of my collection and I have included most of them in every group show I have curated.

If you are able to, it is important to collect an artist in depth, so your holdings reflect the development of their work. By the time I started collecting, Margaret Benyon had been producing holograms for over twenty years so there was a bit of catching up to do, but over the years I have managed to acquire pieces from each significant series she created.



In 1996 I found a house in central London which had a large basement, suitable for holding exhibitions, and in 1998 I opened Gallery 286 with an exhibition of 18 holograms from my collection and since then I have held at least one exhibition of holograms every year, including one-person shows by Margaret Benyon, Jon Mitton, Matthew Schreiber, John Kaufman, Andrew Pepper, Patrick Boyd, Amy Rush, Martin Richardson, Isabel Azevedo, Philippe Boissonet and Pearl John. Having my own gallery space is a bit like having a lab is for holographers – somewhere to experiment with ideas. I have curated themed exhibitions from my collection exploring different aspects of holography such as Abstraction, Still Life, Portraiture, the Nude and Holographic Movies, as well as numerous exhibitions of New Acquisitions.



Gallery 286 is not entirely devoted to showing holography and I have a busy programme containing all kinds of Contemporary Art.

I have always felt that it was important that people do not see holography as some weird thing out on its own so I integrate it into my programme alongside painting, sculpture and photography. People in the art world are generally unfamiliar with holography and do not know how to judge it, so I try to exhibit as much as possible and to explain the differences between holograms and lenticular photography, which is now much more prevalent.

Another important influence in my holography career was Eve Ritscher. Eve was the first person I met who knew a lot of holographic artists. She curated a number of important exhibitions during the 1980s, notably Light Dimensions which brought International Holography to the UK for the first time. Eve was friends with many holographers and made a good collection of her own. I acquired some great pieces from her, including two important works by Steve Benton.



Eve Ritscher



View of the central display of creative holograms in the Octagon gallery, June 1983. The central exhibit of floating holograms is by Teruko Ishii. Overall image is by Graham Sully-Hart/BPS.

and an installation view of the Light Dimensions exhibition at The Royal Photographic Society in Bath



I was also hugely influenced by the activities of Ramon Benito, a Spanish artist based in Madrid, who became excited by holography in the early 1990s and alongside making an excellent small collection, set himself the target of curating ten exhibitions in a year as well as publishing catalogues for each one and bringing out a pocket sized magazine which he distributed internationally. He not only managed to achieve all this but also took holography to art fairs in Madrid, attended an ISDH in Lake Forest and travelled all over Europe. I think he drank a lot of coffee!



In addition to the shows I put on in my own gallery, I have been invited to exhibit in museums and galleries around the UK, in Europe and the USA



When you start to get serious about collecting it becomes important to document things, so I was excited when, around the time I opened Gallery 286, Andy Pepper suggested that we collaborate on a website to catalogue my collection and record all the exhibitions I was involved with. This is the original version, which some of you may have visited.

## Jonathan Ross Hologram Collection

### THE COLLECTION

This collection contains work by artists using holography alongside the products of companies working in the commercial sector. They are listed here under three headings:

**ART, DISPLAY and COMMERCIAL**












These classifications are based on the specific works in the collection. Some individual works in more than one aspect of holography for example both Art and Display holography, but they will have both aspects represented in the collection.

Most of the artists and holographic companies represented in the collection are listed here and entries are added frequently.

Choose a name from the drop up menus below (for each classification), browse the thumbnail representational artworks below or use the alphabetical list at the top.

ART DISPLAY COMMERCIAL

A BCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

 Alexander	 Advanced Holographics	 A.D. 2000 INC
 Andrew, Stafford	 Akon, Anwarul	 American Booknote Holographics
	 AKS Holographics	 Aurified Holographics
	 AP Holographics	 CFC, Aurified Holographics
	 Aurified Holographics	

Last year it got a whole new look with lots of extra content and it is fully searchable. I would really like people to interact with the site more and send me background information about works in the collection.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Jonathan Ross website. The header features the name 'JONATHAN ROSS' in a dark red bar, a search bar, and a navigation menu with links for HOME, BACKGROUND, COLLECTION, EXHIBITIONS, RESOURCES, NEWS, and CONTACT. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'HIGHLIGHTS' featuring a large image of a Patrick Boyd exhibition with a sidebar menu; 'THE COLLECTION' with a gallery image and descriptive text; and 'LATEST NEWS' featuring a news item about Dora Tass and August Muth at Gallery 286. A 'POPULAR WORKS' section is partially visible at the bottom.

JONATHAN ROSS

SEARCH THE WEBSITE

HOME BACKGROUND COLLECTION EXHIBITIONS RESOURCES NEWS CONTACT

HIGHLIGHTS

Patrick Boyd - Exhibition

THE COLLECTION

LATEST NEWS

Dora Tass and August Muth to exhibit at Gallery 286

POPULAR WORKS

New Lenticular

Because the first ten years of my holographic life were spent largely in the commercial sector, I have always had an interest in and respect for the type of holography that is produced for a mass market. Clearly it can be just as creative and technically demanding as Fine Art holography – often more so. Over the years I accumulated a lot of samples from companies making embossed holograms because that was the field I was working in but when eBay happened, I set out to acquire examples of as many well-designed holographic products as I could. Consequently the website now has sections dedicated to, amongst other things,

#### HOLOGRAMS IN PRINT

##### Magazines

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 1984 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 1985



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 1988 PRINTING INDUSTRIES



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL



SPORTS ILLUSTRATED



##### FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

Hardcover Books (1)

Paperback Books (1)

Magazines (1)

CDs (1)

DVDs (0)

The collection holds a wide variety of publications which include holograms. These will be displayed and grouped into the above sections.

[View a full list here.](#)



And the treasure chest that is my Cabinet of Holographic Curiosities.  
 When I tour my collection to museums in the UK I always have some display cases full of the commercial applications of holography and these prove very popular with visitors who can easily relate to the objects they find there and are often surprised to discover that they are all holograms in one way or another.



children's toys.

For nearly my entire adult life, from all the treasures of my childhood, the fossils my grandfather collected, the holiday souvenirs, the memorabilia of past relationships. Putting things in a glass case seems to sanitize them, to give them a gravity, to make them worthy a second glance.

Here's the Cabinet of Holographic Curiosities. A big bathroom cabinet full of Late 20th/ Early 21st Century optical treasures. Or a book of plastic rabbits, if you prefer.

My first decade in holography being primarily concerned with the commercial aspects of the medium, I have an interest in the way holograms can be incorporated into products and a great respect for those holographers who have been their skills and ingenuity in developing a business from such incredibly challenging and problematic material. I don't admire them all, of course. Some have produced nothing but low grade scientific material that belongs in a scientific lab, but others have made little bits of magic from film and enhanced polymer and they deserve their place in the holographic museum of the future. In my opinion the best commercial holograms will survive the test of time in the same way that Victorian top hats, Zeissiges and microscopes have, or later designs like photographic filmboxes - in which certain holograms last more than a century or so.



### Introduction

I have always had a fascination with Cabinets of Curiosities. These prototype museums created by gentlemen and scholars from the Age of Enlightenment onwards in which all things weird and wonderful are collected together and displayed, in an attempt to organize disparate forms of knowledge into some coherent whole.

### CABINET CONTENTS CATEGORIES

Introduction

Top Shelf

Second Shelf

Third Shelf

Fourth Shelf

Fifth Shelf

Recent Acquisitions



Of course delegates to this conference are in the perfect place to acquire holograms for their collection as we are surrounded by artists and holographers who work in the commercial sector, all of whom have things they might like to sell. And, if disposable income is short, a good suggestion is to write to companies that manufacture holograms and ask for samples. If you say that you are a consultant and you need things to show clients, or that you are a student doing research, you may well find that you receive interesting things in the post for free

And what, you might ask, is the main purpose of making collections like mine?

Principally to show people what can be done with holography and to act as a reference source for future generations. I am frequently visited by students who are interested in holography for a variety of reasons and are unable to see physical examples of the holograms they have seen illustrated in books or online, anywhere else. The lack of permanent holography exhibits around the world is a significant factor in the widespread ignorance surrounding the medium.

I began to research how many museums and galleries there might be where you can go and see holograms but did not get much feedback from the community, apart from a German colleague who listed 8 locations in his country, only half of which offered much variety. I would be interested to learn from delegates to this conference of any additions I can make to my list.

Without the ability to see examples of holograms made in the past, practitioners are very likely to make uninspired work and critics and potential collectors may find it hard to judge the quality of what they are seeing. One artworld connoisseur who visited my gallery admitted that he "had to get his eye in" when it came to looking at holograms and another well-known curator who attended a recent exhibition, clearly did not have the vocabulary to express his reaction to the work. After a while, the best he could come up with was to say "Well, it's not stupid", which I took as high praise from someone who, at the start of his visit had told me that he found early holograms "extremely boring". If it had not been for exhibitions like "Light Dimensions", I might well have agreed with him.

I often ask holographers if they can remember the first hologram they ever saw, and they usually can. Those are the sort of moments which can determine a person's future career or turn them into a collector later in life, so I believe that seeing holograms displayed in museums and art galleries is extremely important.