

# STILL LIGHT

HOLOGRAMS OF OBJECTS





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from the  
JONATHAN ROSS HOLOGRAM COLLECTION

An Exhibition at Gallery 286  
March – May 2026

286 EARL'S COURT ROAD LONDON SW5 9AS  
[www.gallery286.com](http://www.gallery286.com)

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# STILL LIGHT

## Holograms of objects

Since opening Gallery 286 in 1998, I have usually held at least one exhibition of holograms a year. This has comprised solo shows, two-handers and group shows (20 so far), and exhibitions drawn from my personal collection of which the latest show is the 18th. This year I am focussing on holograms of objects.

The Polaroid/MIT scientist Stephen Benton famously described the subject matter of many early holograms as "small dead things".

To make holograms of living subjects, humans, animals, plants etc. that are moving in a subtle way even when they appear to be still, you either need access to an expensive pulse laser that emits brief intense bursts of light which will effectively freeze a subject, or to record a holographic stereogram – a hybrid of photography and holography - whereby a photographic sequence is converted into a synthetic hologram, often incorporating animation. Pulse lasers are few and far between and stereograms require an elaborate system, so many holographers use low power continuous wave lasers which require relatively long exposure times to make their recordings. Consequently they choose subjects which are not going to move, and set up their optics on vibration isolation tables, which can weigh several tons.

All these factors determine the choice of objects which, as holographers usually want as bright an image as possible, tend to be ones that will reflect the light well, such as metal, glass, ceramics

*continued*





etc. Also, if it is a monochrome recording, ones where the final image being green, red or golden orange, does not detract unduly. Achromatic holograms, where the image most resembles a black and white photograph, can be effective, but are less widely made. A broadband recording in dichromate gelatin achieves a similar result.

Skilled holographers like John Kaufman, Inaki Beguiristain and Mike Medora have used emulsion swelling techniques whereby a multicolour image can be achieved in reflection holography with a single coloured laser, using the chemical triethanolamine to alter the thickness of the emulsion between exposures. This technique is sometimes referred to as 'pseudocolour'. In rainbow holography a similar effect can be obtained by the juxtaposition of exposures made using different reference angles, but in that case the colours are not stable, shifting through the spectrum as you change your viewing position.

As total fidelity of recording is the goal for many holographers, especially those from the scientific community, a full colour or "true colour" hologram is the ultimate aim and, to achieve this, red, green and blue lasers need to combine on a panchromatic emulsion.

The Swedish scientist Hans Bjelkhagen and the French scientist Yves Gentet have both recorded impressive true colour holograms and the British holographer Mike Medora's company Colour Holographic has produced totally convincing holographic facsimiles.

Medora and Gentet have both manufactured their own emulsions to that end.

One of their intentions was to make reproductions of museum objects that could be displayed by museums while the original was out on loan and all the above mentioned holographers' work was certainly adequate for that purpose but, to my knowledge, only the Hellenic Institute of Holography, another leader in true colour holography, has persuaded a museum to accept their 'Optoclones'™.

In Russia there was a long established tradition of using holography to "take art to the people" and as early as the 1970s holographic reproductions of art objects, using techniques developed by

the scientist Yuri Denisyuk, went on tour around the country in specially equipped trains.

Some artists have been drawn to holography initially as a means of recording their work in other mediums. The Venezuelan glass artist Ruben Nunez was one such, who eventually came to regard holography as his primary medium. The light artist James Turrell, primarily known for large scale installations, has used holography extensively to create smaller, editioned works, which can be sold to collectors to fund his other projects.

When I first encountered art holography, holograms that simply recorded an artefact seemed less creative than more multilayered or abstract imagery, but I have come to appreciate the advantages of playing to the medium's strength in recording texture and volume and with presenting the viewer with the perfect illusion of an object being right there behind the glass when your mind is telling you that it cannot really be.

For this exhibition I have selected holograms from my collection that present their subject matter in a fairly straightforward way, but are made interesting by the combination of technical excellence with a choice of objects which are either works of art in themselves or visually intriguing one way or another.

For a first time viewer the very fact that something is a hologram can be exciting enough, hence the preponderance of chess pieces and model trains in early scientific holograms where the holographer has chosen to record whatever came easily to hand, but for a hologram to have an enduring appeal, or to become a work of art, requires it to have sufficient beauty or sophistication of concept to outlive the 'wow' factor.

I have been looking at some of these holograms for over 40 years and still find them captivating. I hope you will enjoy the experience too.

*Jonathan Ross  
February 2026*



Inaki Beguiristain

Inaki Beguiristain is a British holographer with his own art practice, who also consults widely in all aspects of modern display holography.

“Whilst visiting a glass studio in Stourbridge I met an artist called Iestyn Davies, who specialises in hand blown glass pieces. The moment I saw the glass bowl I thought what a fantastic hologram it would make due to the colours and the many cut out sections. Each polished cut goes through three layers of glass to form a negative lens, and each lens captures the whole of the inside of the bowl from a different perspective.

Glass is one of my favourite materials to shoot, as the hologram really enhances the refractive effects of the glass, accentuates the colours, and gives the piece a whole new lease of life.

This hologram is comprised of two laser transmission masters, one of the outside of the bowl, and the other of the inside. Both masters were then transferred into one reflection hologram copy, using the pseudo-colour technique. I used a 25mW Red HeNe laser for shooting both the masters and the image plane reflection transfer.”

The photo shows Inaki at Gallery 286 in 2015 in front of a piece of light art by Andrew Ryder



*Glass Bowl. 2004  
8"x10" 2-colour reflection hologram  
by Inaki Beguiristain*



Stephen Benton

"Rind II" by Stephen Benton, was one of the very first holograms I acquired, back in 1978, and it still delights me every time I put it on display.

Benton references a work from the 1950s by the graphic artist M.C. Escher, which was apparently inspired by the bandages worn by the eponymous hero of the H.G. Wells story "The Invisible Man".

It is an early example of the "Rainbow" hologram technique developed by Benton at Polaroid, while working on holographic TV, in which vertical parallax in the hologram is sacrificed in favour of white light viewability, with the result that the image shifts through the spectrum depending on your viewing position. These "white light transmission holograms", which proved popular with artists, are the basis for all the embossed holograms we are familiar with from security printing and packaging, as they have a relief profile which enables them to be electroformed and stamped into foil.

The portrait of Benton is a photograph of a holographic stereogram, originated and embossed by Toppan Printing Co. Ltd., from parallax images originated by Zebra Imaging in 2003.



*Rind II. 1978  
12"x12" white light transmission hologram  
by Stephen Benton*



The hologram was made in Australia in 1979 along with four others in a series using two different Australian Aboriginal totems with surrounding motifs on paper which are still visible when the hologram is not lit, so that the holographic image becomes a secret. I wanted a piece from this period of her career for my collection, and in 2000 Margaret agreed to make artwork similar to the rest of the series for this hologram which she had not completed at the time she made the others.

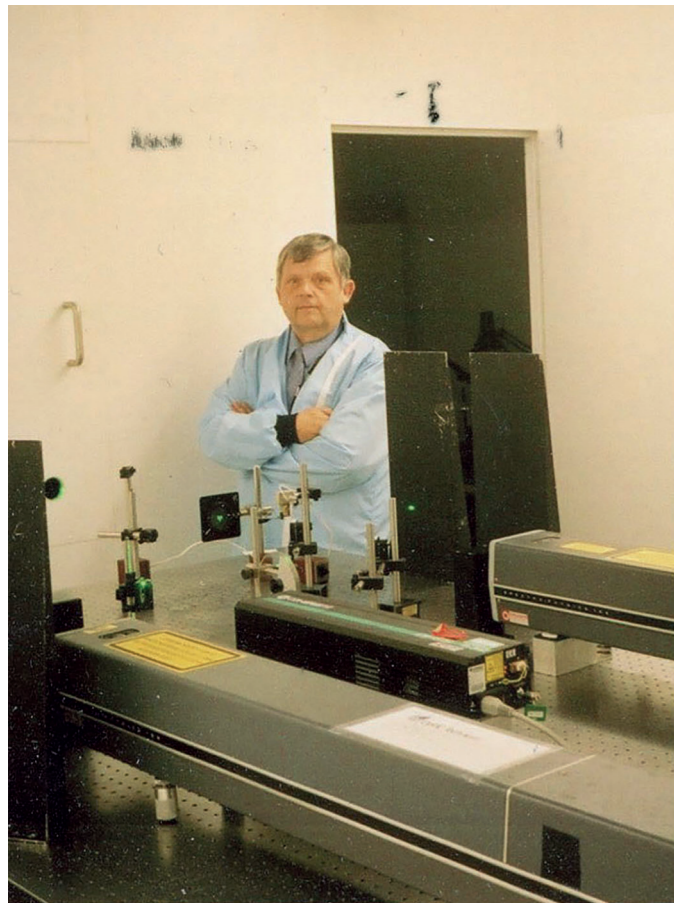
Margaret Benyon was the first artist to make her own holograms, during the 1960s, initially working in British university facilities. In the 1970s she moved to Australia, returning to the UK at the end of the decade and establishing her own studio in Dorset. We became good friends and I gave her a one person show at Gallery 286 in 2001, as well as including her work in numerous group shows.

The photograph shows Margaret Benyon at Smiths Gallery in Covent Garden in 1992, during the 4 British Holographers exhibition.

Margaret Benyon

*Secret/Sacred III. 1979/2000*  
10"x8" reflection hologram with mixed media  
by Margaret Benyon





Hans Bjelkhagen

Hans Bjelkhagen is a Swedish scientist and widely published author, working internationally.

His many publications range from “Silver halide recording materials for holography and their processing” to “Holography and Philately”. In addition to his scientific research, his commissions include a portrait of President Ronald Reagan and collaborations with artists.

“The Russian Egg, which was recorded at Lake Forest College in the USA, is not an important artefact but a tourist souvenir which I bought to record a hologram of, as a demonstration of what is possible with colour holography.

After I saw the early Russian Denisyuk holograms of artefacts I wanted to add colour to make them even more attractive for museums to use when it is not possible to display the real artefact. I hoped that one day in the future we could record a hologram of a Fabergé Egg which I thought would be a very good example of an artefact suitable for colour holography, and demonstrate something superior to the best colour photography. The Hellenic Holography team eventually achieved this.”

The photograph shows Hans Bjelkhagen in 2005 in his lab at Optic Technium, St Asaph, Wales.



*Russian Egg. 1994  
5"x4" true colour reflection hologram  
by Hans Bjelkhagen*



Colour Holographic was founded by Mike Medora and Nigel Robiette with the goal of perfecting true colour holography. That they succeeded remarkably well can be seen from the Strawberry Jug hologram, made from an object in my collection. As an early investor in the company I would occasionally receive samples of their work in lieu of dividends, and lent them the jug for an experiment they were conducting.

When you look closely at this hologram, the fidelity with which the chipboard surround is reproduced is almost as impressive as the accurate colour rendition.

Unfortunately the museums and high end stores that were potential customers for CH did not share their vision for holographic displays, so the company changed direction and rebranded itself as Trulife Optics, which now successfully supplies holographic optical elements for Augmented Reality and other technical applications.

The photograph shows Nigel and Mike in 2001 in an early incarnation of the Colour Holographic labs.

Colour Holographic

*Strawberry Jug. 2010  
40x30cm true colour reflection hologram  
by Colour Holographic*



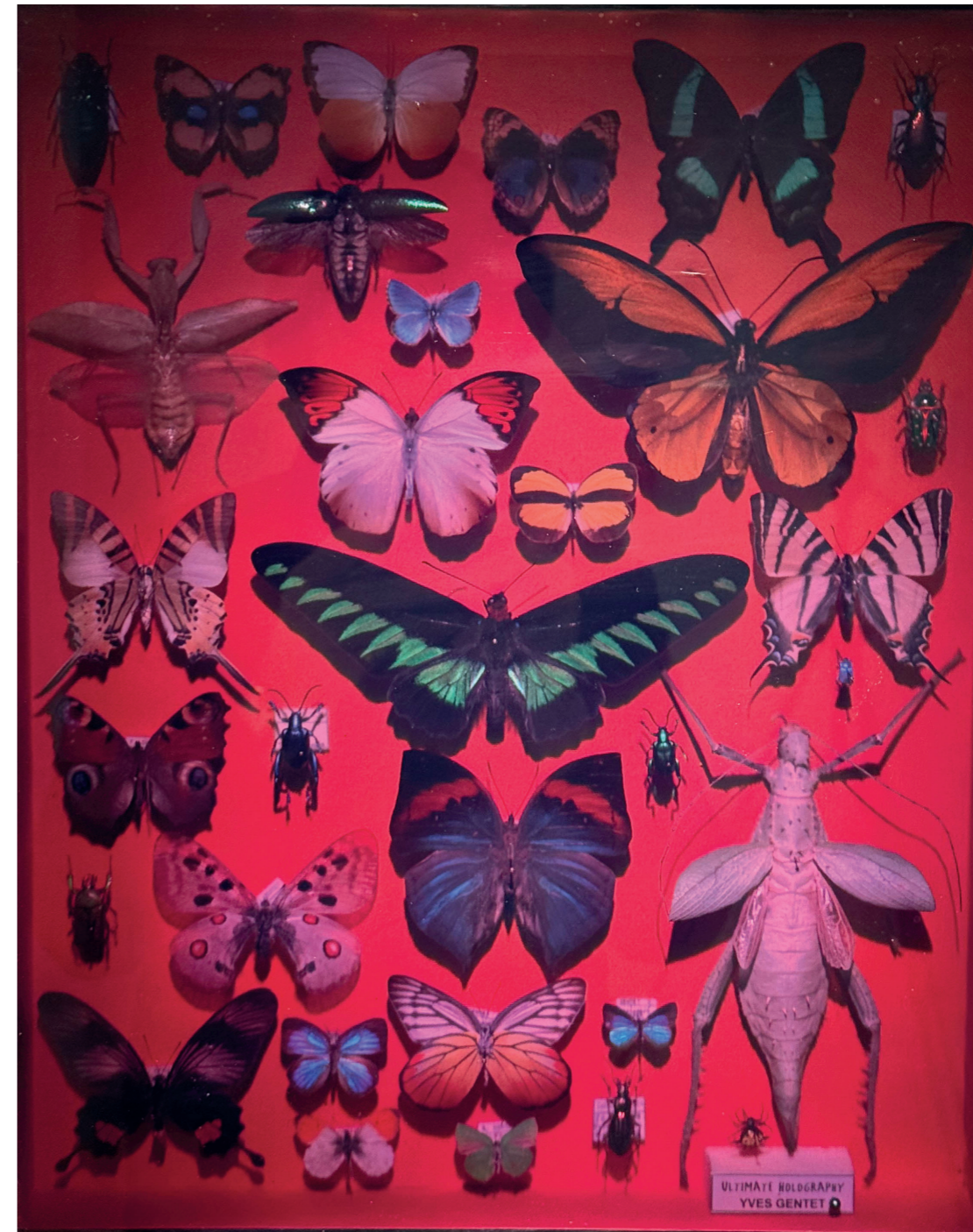


Yves Gentet is a French engineer and artist, who from 1995 developed "Ultimate™", an extremely fine grain holographic emulsion, which enabled him to record high quality full colour analogue holograms. The "Butterflies" image is a good example of his work c.2008 but since that time they have become even brighter.

In 2018 he invented a digital holoprinter called "Chimera" which is capable of producing comparable results in synthetic holograms.

The photograph was taken in 2015 at an International Symposium for Display Holography in St. Petersburg.

Yves Gentet



*Butterflies. 2008*  
43x 32cm true colour reflection hologram  
by Yves Gentet



Mary Harman

Mary Harman is an American artist/holographer, resident in Canada. A classically trained painter, her holography is poetic and personal, usually using hand-sculpted androgynous figures as the starting point.

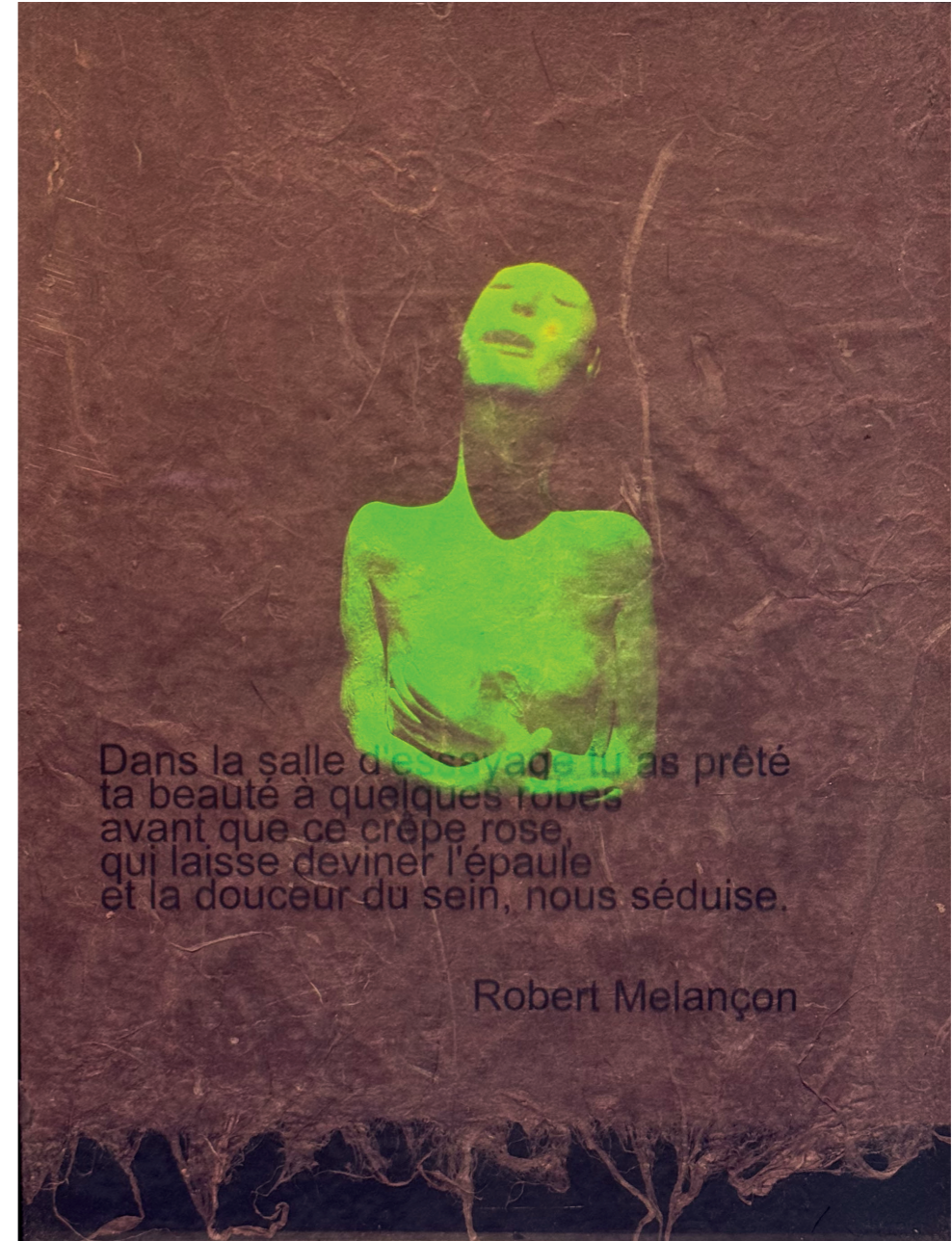
We have met at various international conferences and following one of these, I acquired her "Poem, Invocation to the Muse", which juxtaposes one of her hologram figures with a poem by Robert Melançon.

"In early experiments with holography in the 1990s, I made box constructions that contained both physical and holographic elements that challenged the viewer to separate reality from illusion. The work "Poem" contains a holographic image of a torso moulded from clay. The pane of glass holding the emulsion became the window to the box, and behind lay other transparent layers of text and soft rice paper.

Other possibilities of interpretation arise. Certain qualities of the original clay figure - the way the arms embraced and comforted itself, that sense of fragility and longing in the piece - were enhanced by the object's transformation into a hologram - the virtual figure now seemed to embody both the physical reality of the original and its altered, transcendent state. In effect, the holographic image represented both the body and the soul."

Quebec poet Robert Melançon wrote this poem to his wife, capturing with poetry this moment in time:

*In the fitting room you lent your beauty to several dresses  
before this rose silk,  
yielding the hint of your shoulder  
and the gentle line of your breast, seduced us.*



Poem. 2009  
8"x6" reflection hologram, digital transparency, rice paper.



Ken Harris

Ken Harris was an American artist and designer who settled in the UK during the 1970s and set up his own studio for holography. The Henry Moore 'Mother & Child' hologram was an experimental piece using Russian chemistry to produce interesting colour results. He thought he might run into copyright issues if he tried to market the image, so he donated this copy to my collection. After a few years of making his own artworks, Ken moved into commercial holography and achieved considerable success in the field of embossed holograms.

The photograph, first published in *Amateur Photographer* in 1983, shows him with a hologram he made for that magazine, described as the "First 3D Hologram Cover".



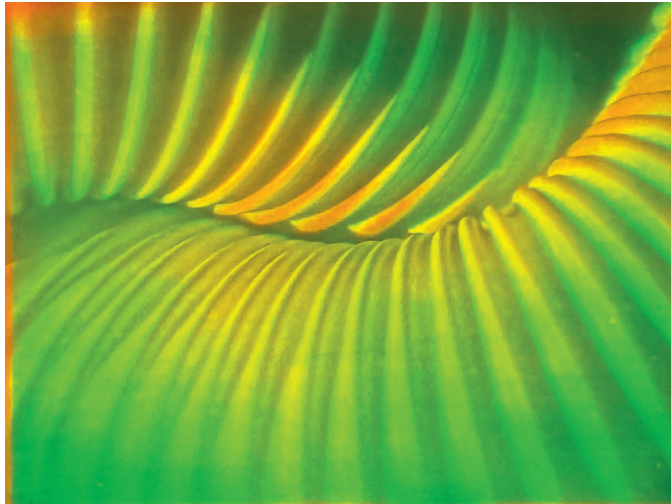
*Henry Moore – Mother & Child. 1982  
8"x10" reflection hologram  
by Ken Harris*



## John Kaufman

John Kaufman is an American artist and holography pioneer, best known for his multi colour reflection holograms and use of found objects.

“The first hologram that I saw was of a wine glass suspended in space. It was a laser illuminated hologram by Lloyd Cross at the Exploratorium in 1971. It gave the impression of materiality but was just the opposite. That experience stayed with me as I continued into holography.



Holography has qualities that record objects with amazing accuracy and also transform the object. Most of my work has been an investigation of this transformative process. In the form of a document, or abstracted and filled with color, these images explore our connection to the material world and how it is mediated by holography.

The commonplace and the ordinary are the subjects of most of my work. From tools, and toys to rocks and branches, I look for objects that are firmly in our being and yet are formed anew as holographic images.

“Vacuum Hose” is an image plane reflection hologram and part of the series that involved work. An original hologram is played back with the image projecting to a place in space. The copy plate is placed in the projection and recorded with laser light from both sides. Here, the vacuum hose emerges through the plate, glowing in color; simultaneously ethereal and seemingly tactile.

“Tool Works” is a pseudo-color reflection shadowgram. Each shadowgram is a unique piece. In its simplest form, a reflection hologram is made with the subject being an illuminated diffuser. Objects are placed between the diffuser and the recording plate at various depths and the recording is made. The processed image can be viewed behind the plate, or, if the plate is flipped over, in front of the plate (virtual and real images). The diffuser has color that glows and fills the eyes.

In “Tool Works” the process is taken further. Two exposures are made with the plate flipped between them (the final image will thus be seen on both sides of the plate). Also, before the second exposure, the plate emulsion is treated to swell it slightly. The result is that two different colors reflect back and mix with each other.”

John Kaufman appears on the left in the photograph, with Gary Zellerbach and Fred Unterseher, at Gary’s Holos Gallery in San Francisco, 1980.

*Vacuum Hose. 1980  
4"x 5" reflection hologram  
by John Kaufman*



*Toolworks. 1992  
30cm x 40cm reflection hologram  
by John Kaufman*



Mike Medora

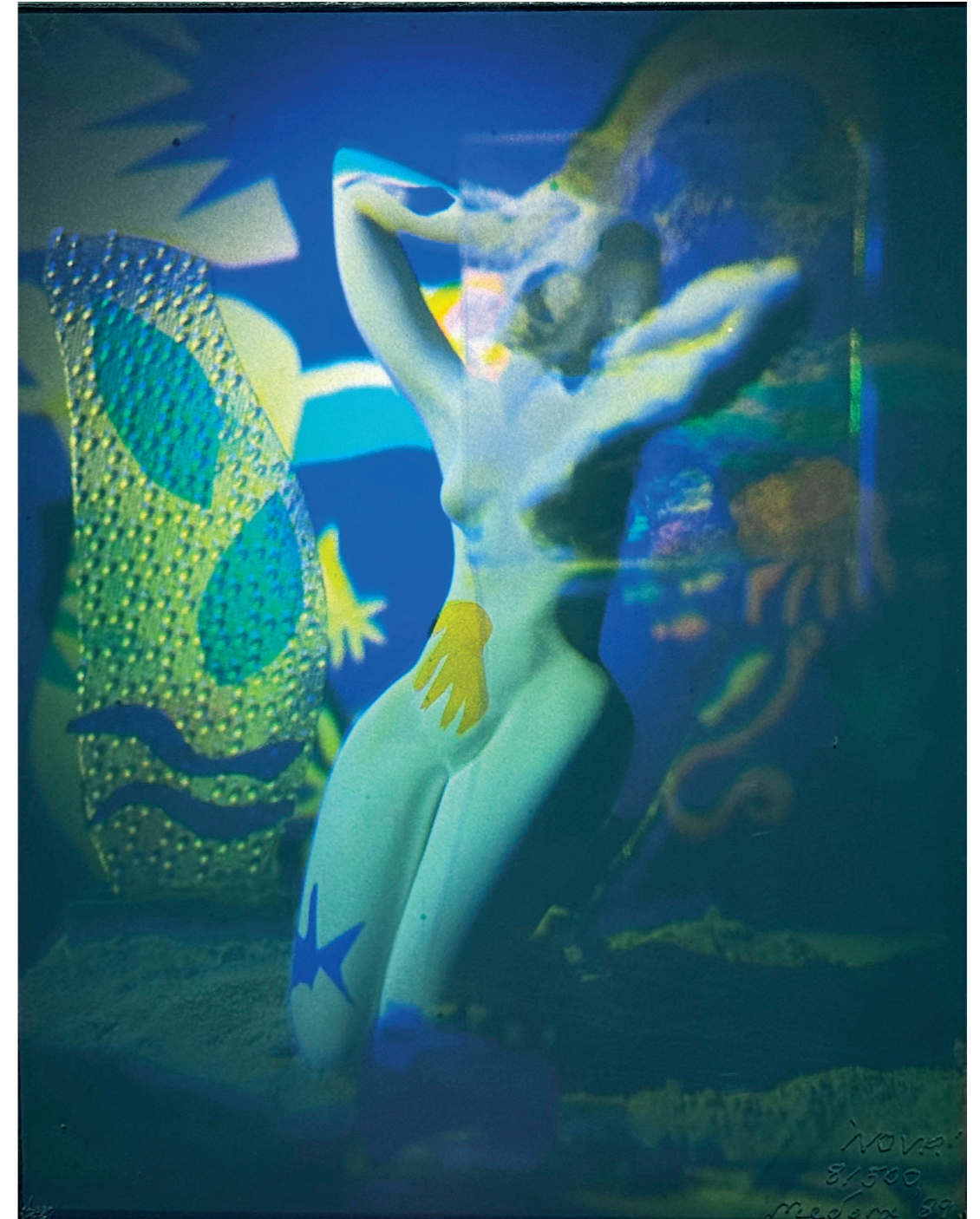
"The hologram was based around a figure sculpted by a model maker regularly used by Raven Holographics. It is technically complicated, achieving a full colour result using pseudo colour in 3 stages for RGB. The only way to colour separate the image was to do it physically and this meant I needed to black out certain areas. Consequently, the model had to receive all three exposures making it white, while colour changes could be made using black laminates during one or two of the 3 exposures on either of the glass screens, or on the surface of the nude model, giving it decorative primary colour areas. I used Matisse type motifs for most of the colour separation changes.

I personally think it is my best hologram and was definitely one of my most ambitious at the time. Later I was able to work with 3 colour lasers and do real full colour, but the pseudo colour method was certainly more challenging, and it forced creativity in the practitioner.

It was intended to be a large edition but unfortunately the Agfa emulsions did not produce consistently bright results, so I switched to working with DCG (dichromate gelatin) for the next decade."

The photograph shows Mike Medora at the Raven Holographics lab in 1991, where he was producing full colour DCG holograms.

*Nova. 1989  
10"x8" pseudocolour reflection hologram  
by Mike Medora*





August Muth

August Muth is an American artist who began his career as a jewellery maker.

He learned holography and during the 1990s produced wonderfully original holographic jewellery, using dichromate gelatin. Whenever I had any in the gallery it always sold out.

Towards the end of the century he scaled up his studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico and began making large format holographic artworks and inviting artists from around the world to collaborate there, in what has become an international centre of holographic excellence. In the background of the photograph, taken at Gallery 286 in 2017, are some holograms produced for British artist Patrick Boyd.

I found the Ganesh hologram on eBay and assume that it comes from a period between Augie's jewellery phase and his later, more abstract artworks.

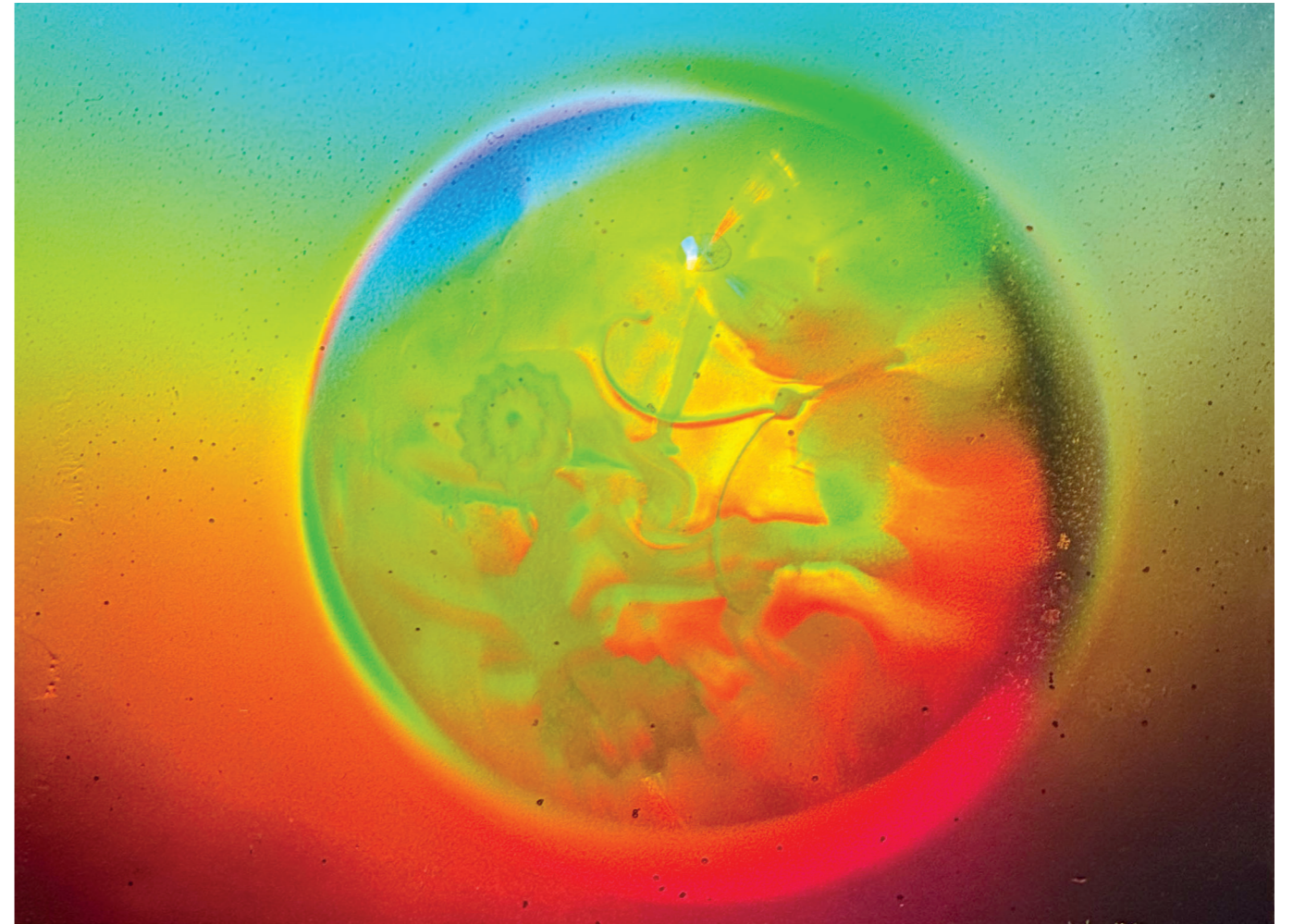
*Ganesh. 1990s  
12"x7.5" dichromate gelatin reflection hologram  
by August Muth*





Ruben Nunez

Homage to Louis Comfort Tiffany, made in 1978 at the New York Art Alliance, with the technical assistance of Jody Burns, references the American artist and entrepreneur best known for his work with stained glass, especially windows and lamps. Ruben Nunez, who might have been waiting for holography to be invented, was an established artist working with glass and kinetics when he encountered the medium which suited him and his alchemical inclinations so well. I bought the piece from him when he visited London in 1979 and later visited him in New York, where I took the photo of him at his desk. Ruben likened the idea of holography studios around the world to runways on which he could land during his travels, but sadly he never got to visit the lab we had in the 80s.



*Homage to Louis Comfort Tiffany. 1978  
8"x10" white light transmission hologram  
by Ruben Nunez*



Caroline Palmer

In the mid 1980s Caroline Palmer established the 3DI studio and produced her Ancient Art Series of holograms of historical artefacts, demonstrating the potential application of holography to the museum world. Most of the images were produced as limited editions on glass, while some of the smaller holograms were produced in volume on film for the giftshop market

“This Nepalese figure shows a pious Buddhist lay woman seated in an attitude of worship. These sculptures are known as donor figures because they represent people who donated groups of sacred images to their local temples in order to gain religious merit. The donor figures were then placed alongside the other images in the shrine. Whereas most Nepalese sculptures depict gods and demons, realistic works are fairly rare and this is one of the earliest examples of portraiture in Nepalese art.

The impressive display of jewellery suggests the donor was a relatively wealthy woman. Her necklaces and earrings would have been made of silver, while the oval pendant on her chest probably contained a charm of Sanskrit scriptures to protect her from harm. She is shown wearing her best temple going clothes - a pleated cotton skirt, coat and shawl - with her hair plaited in a pigtail at the back.

Cast from a brassy copper alloy, the figure was originally fire gilded and some traces of the gilding still survive. Parts of the image were subsequently plastered and painted and patches of gesso can still be seen around the necklaces and earrings.”

From 1987-89, Caroline continued her studies at the Royal College of Art and produced another body of holographic art exploring the optical and kinetic properties of the medium.

The photograph shows her with two of her holograms from the 3x8+1 exhibition at St Paul's School, London, in 1994.



*Nepalese Reflection. 1986*  
2 9"x8" reflection holograms (back to back)  
by Caroline Palmer



Martin Richardson

Martin Richardson was the first in a wave of artists to study holography at the Royal College of Art in the 1980s. After completing his PhD, he established his own studio and produced a body of personal holographic work alongside commercial and portrait commissions, including Martin Scorsese and Sir Peter Blake. He also produced lenticular images and worked on a project with David Bowie. Martin moved into academia and was Professor of Modern Holography at De Montfort University. In 2024 he donated his collection of several thousand hologram masters to the Science Museum in London.

'Oak Cubed' is a development based upon a previous hologram entitled 'English Oak'.

"The 'English Oak' project was conceived as a multimedia work, drawing inspiration from the renowned Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy's approach to land art significantly influenced the direction and conceptual framework of the project, encouraging an exploration of natural materials and forms.

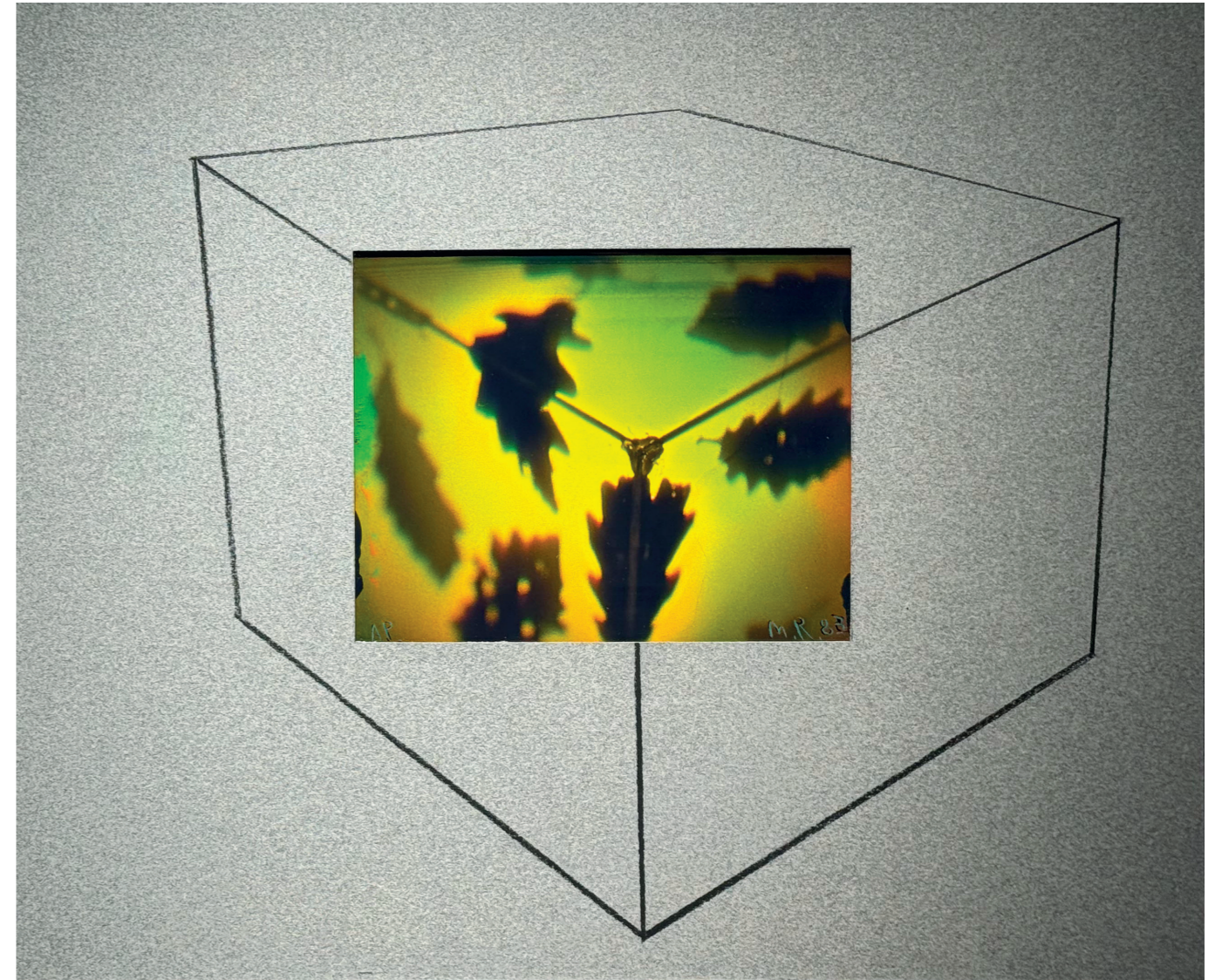
In constructing the work, I integrated the bark from a fallen oak tree with a reflection hologram. This hologram was produced during my time at Goldsmith University, where I had the privilege of collaborating with Susan Gamble and Michael Wenyon. Their expertise and creative input were invaluable to the process, helping to realise the technical and artistic aspects of the hologram.

The resulting installation featured oak leaves suspended within the space inside a glass cube, evoking the sensation of leaves falling from a once-vigorous tree.

'Oak Cubed' is an endeavour to capture this fleeting moment, employing the disciplined methods of holography. Through visual metaphor, the piece examines the intersection between geometry and land art, where the rigidity of geometric forms contrasts with the organic nature of the landscape."

Provenance: Donated to the collection by John Brown, formerly CEO of Light Impressions Europe.

The photograph shows Martin's 1989 self-portrait hologram "Inner Vision".



*Oak Cubed. 1983  
4"x5" reflection hologram with mixed media  
by Martin Richardson*



Russian Holographic Studio/  
Harriet Casdin-Silver

This hologram, a later copy from a master made in the 1980s, was purchased in 2004 from Russian Holographic Studio, who were unaware of its origin, having acquired a batch of masters along with their studio.

I subsequently found an article, published in *Holosphere* Vol.17 nos 2-3, 1990, by Ronald R. Erickson, entitled *Harriet Casdin-Silver: New Works*, which sheds light on the authorship of this work.

The article is illustrated by photographs, several of which show the Russian Icon hologram, captioned as "IKONY" 1990.

It describes Harriet Casdin-Silver's visit to Dr Vladimir Markov's laboratory at Kiev Institute of Physics, where she produced a number of works in collaboration with Russian holographers. The Russian Icon hologram was one of these. It might therefore be appropriate to attribute it to Harriet Casdin-Silver/Kiev Institute of Physics Holography Laboratory, with technical assistance from Vladimir Shiskov, Sergei Timoshenko, Evgeny Griegori and Andre Timoshenko.

*Icon of Jesus Christ the Saviour 1980s/2004  
40x28cm reflection hologram  
by Russian Holographic Studio/Harriet Casdin-Silver  
(From an earlier master - late 1980s – author  
previously unknown)*





Dominic Welby

Dominic was a partner in Laser Lightworks, a holography company active in the 1980s, along with Peter Miller and Paul Newman, and combined his own art practice with a more commercial line in display holograms.

“Ebb and Flow”, which he described as “an experiment to analyse and compare the lensing effects of glass and Perspex”, resulted in a mesmerising optical work.

The top half of the object came from Caithness Glass and the bottom had belonged to another holographer, the late Adrian Lines, whose studio the background material for the hologram also came from.

The photograph shows Dominic, on the left, at Gallery 286 in January 1999, with fellow holographer Patrick Boyd, standing in front of Patrick’s “Beano” hologram.

*Ebb and Flow. 1980s  
10"x8" reflection hologram  
by Dominic Welby*





The Jonathan Ross Hologram Collection contains a wide range of display holography by artists, scientists and designers.

It is documented on the [jrholocollection.com](http://jrholocollection.com) website, created by Andrew Pepper.

Regular exhibitions take place at Gallery 286 and the archive can be visited by appointment at other times.

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#### PHOTO CREDITS

All photographs in the catalogue are by Jonathan Ross apart from the portrait of Mary Harman which was provided by the artist and the photo of Ken Harris which appeared in Amateur Photographer Magazine in June 1983.

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