

# Martin Richardson

## Time, Space & Movement

An exhibition of 3-D artworks, holograms, lenticulars and film

Peterborough Digital Arts Gallery  
August 15th - 30th September 2005

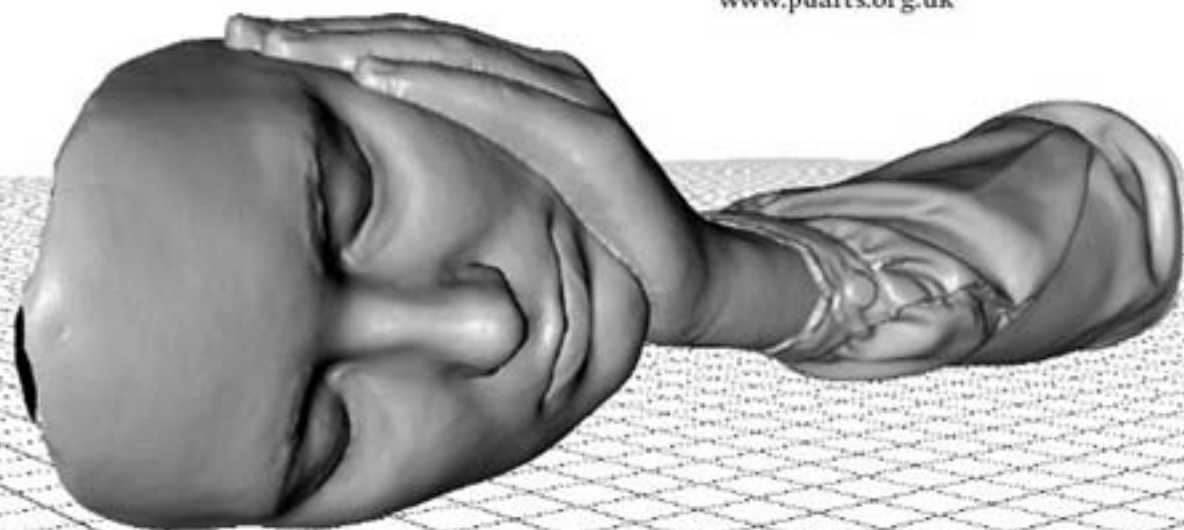
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[www.pdarts.org.uk](http://www.pdarts.org.uk)



## Strange Manifestations of 3-Dimensional Intelligence in the Digital Era

### Martin J Richardson

Digital holography is arguably the most advanced form of visual recording to date. But are holograms "mere" recordings of objective visual reality or creative artefacts capable of expression, interpretation and deception?

The same question was asked of photography in the early 19th century. Dismissed originally by artists as a mechanical recording medium, it became in the hands of pioneers such as Bresson and Brandt a subtle artistic tool capable of the most delicate expression and artful deception. Skilfully selective framing of the image, manipulation of objects and lighting in the scene can transform the banal into the dramatic or reduce the sinister to the mundane (Nazi rally image from RDN). Postproduction techniques can add to the deception, as illustrated by Victorian snapshots of fairies and spirits and the "un-existing" of political rivals by Stalin in the Soviet Union. People were added and deleted both from photographs and real existence as easily as pressing the delete button in Photoshop TM. Those early attempts at virtual reality seem clumsy to us in retrospect, compared with the power of modern digital imaging.

This exhibition is the culmination of my past two decades of work within '3D Holograms', '3Dimensional Lenticulars', 'Movie Making' and more recently '3D Digital Holograms'. I hope it demonstrates that, like photography, digital holography is certainly more than a recording medium. It is a tool that can substantiate fantasies that previously never existed or comment subtly on the real world, blurring our grasp of that reality to the point where objectivity is submerged in a sea of imaginings. The extreme reality of holograms challenges our understanding of what we mean by "real" yet their essential ambiguity is as unsettling as their verisimili-

tude is reassuring in a post McLuhan age of "virtual reality" experiences, "reality TV" spectacles and "celebrities".

Many of the images are '2D'slices rendered from '3D' digital scans of my ten year old daughter Florence, and my slender assistant Martina. These scans were mixed in 'Photoshop' and '3D Studio Max' under my direction by Stuart Wade to create an eerie, and to my mind a, strangely beautiful otherly world. There are other perspectives from which to view this progression in imaging, especially ones that emphasize the evolution of holographic application as the rest of the world progresses along its speedy march into the future, discovering new human needs and new potentials for old ideas. If you have read this far, you might by now share a sense that '3D imaging' is not just a technological speculation, it is 21st century inevitability!

Martin J Richardson 2005

## A Moving Experience

### Joathan Ross

When looking at new and unfamiliar (and potentially disturbing) art, it is often reassuring to be reminded of more familiar and comforting sights, to draw comparisons and to seek for sources. We want to place an artist's work in a historical context, to relate the current production to previous work of their own, to trace a course of development.

Faced with Martin Richardson's recent digital imagery for the first time I searched through my own mental image bank in pursuit of something on which to hang an interpretation of the extraordinary pictures I was looking at. As when people look at Rorschach ink blots or tell you what they see in abstract paintings, it is often more revealing about themselves than about the perpetrator of the image. In my case it seems to reveal a youthful predilection for science fiction and cult movies: HG Wells' 'The Island of Doctor Moreau', Visconti's 'The Damned', Ken Russell's 'Altered States', and Tod Browning's 'Freaks', to name but a few of the formative reading and viewing experiences I was reminded of. I don't suppose that Martin has been inspired by any of these (though I recommend them to him and to you) and it probably dates me quite accurately. A younger critic might prefer the Fantastic Four or the Chapman Brothers for purposes of comparison. But really it is irrelevant, Martin is his own man and you will take what you want from his work.

After my initial shock at the new pieces (these images freaked me out!) I began gradually to place them more clearly in Martin's oeuvre. Though their physical appearance is very different from the classic transmission and reflection holograms he was making in the 80s and 90s the digital pieces share a determined figuration which Martin has pursued throughout, and a will to use the latest techniques available

to realise his vision. Some of the images contain rainbow coloured contours and the suggestion of interference patterns that are reminiscent of holography. The surrealist compositions (his 'Digital Dreams' summoned up Man Ray for me) were also a familiar Richardson device and, on reflection, the darkness in some of the work (the Munch scream of a face about to meet oblivion and meld with the Cosmos) had not been absent in earlier holograms. It is just that the realisation now is that much more vivid.

The limitations of 1980s holography imposed a monochrome palette on Martin's work but he liberated himself with full colour stereograms and 3D lenticular images. Digital technology has allowed him to use post-production effects and inevitably animation. Where will the work go from here? At present these faces scream silently into the darkness; the soundtrack is yours to imagine. When you contemplate the disembodied choir of 'Chior' or the porcelain features of the 'Heroic Youth' be thankful you are not inside my head where they are lustily singing 'Tomorrow Belongs To Me'. Come to think of it, that would make a good anthem for Martin to sing to himself on the drive home at night.

Jonathan Ross  
July 2005

## Contents

### Essays

Strange Manifestations of Three Dimensional Intelligence in the Digital Era  
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### Experimental Films (DVD) by Martin Richardson

**Mirror Sculptures** Martin Richardson 1988. Super 8mm (running time 10 min.)  
This film documents a three-month period of activity when I was making sculptures from mirror. This work eventually led me to my first holographic recordings.

**David Bowie** Martin Richardson 1979. 35mm silent (running time 7 min.)  
This experimental film was shot using a special 35mm movie camera adapted to record holographic multiplex images. Some of this footage was used to create holograms of Bowie promoting his 1999 release of the *Hours* album.

**Monster 3-D Head** Martin Richardson 2005. Digital animation (running time 8 sec. looped)  
This experimental 3-D animation started life as a scan I made from Martina Mrongovius. The anaglyphic 3-D effect may be seen by wearing the red/blue 3-D glasses supplied.

### Artwork and Statement Cards

Images combined with text taken from the essay *Strange Manifestations of Three Dimensional Intelligence in the Digital Era*, originally presented at FUTUREGROUND: The Design Research Societies International Conference held in November 2004, Monash University, Australia.



Not since the Renaissance have the visual arts and engineering sciences worked so closely together in their pursuit of the ultimate facsimile of mankind. So what happens when our holographic portraits merge with other parallel technologies, such as artificial intelligence and robotics? Will the resultant avatars be illusions or reality? And how will it affect our own reality if these mimics of ourselves can have an existence that is independent of our own, i.e. When your reflection walks away into its own life?

Martin Richardson, 2005

**Choir** (68x49", digital print on acrylic)





Technology has simultaneously promoted the skills of forgery and  
of its detection

Martin Richardson, 2005

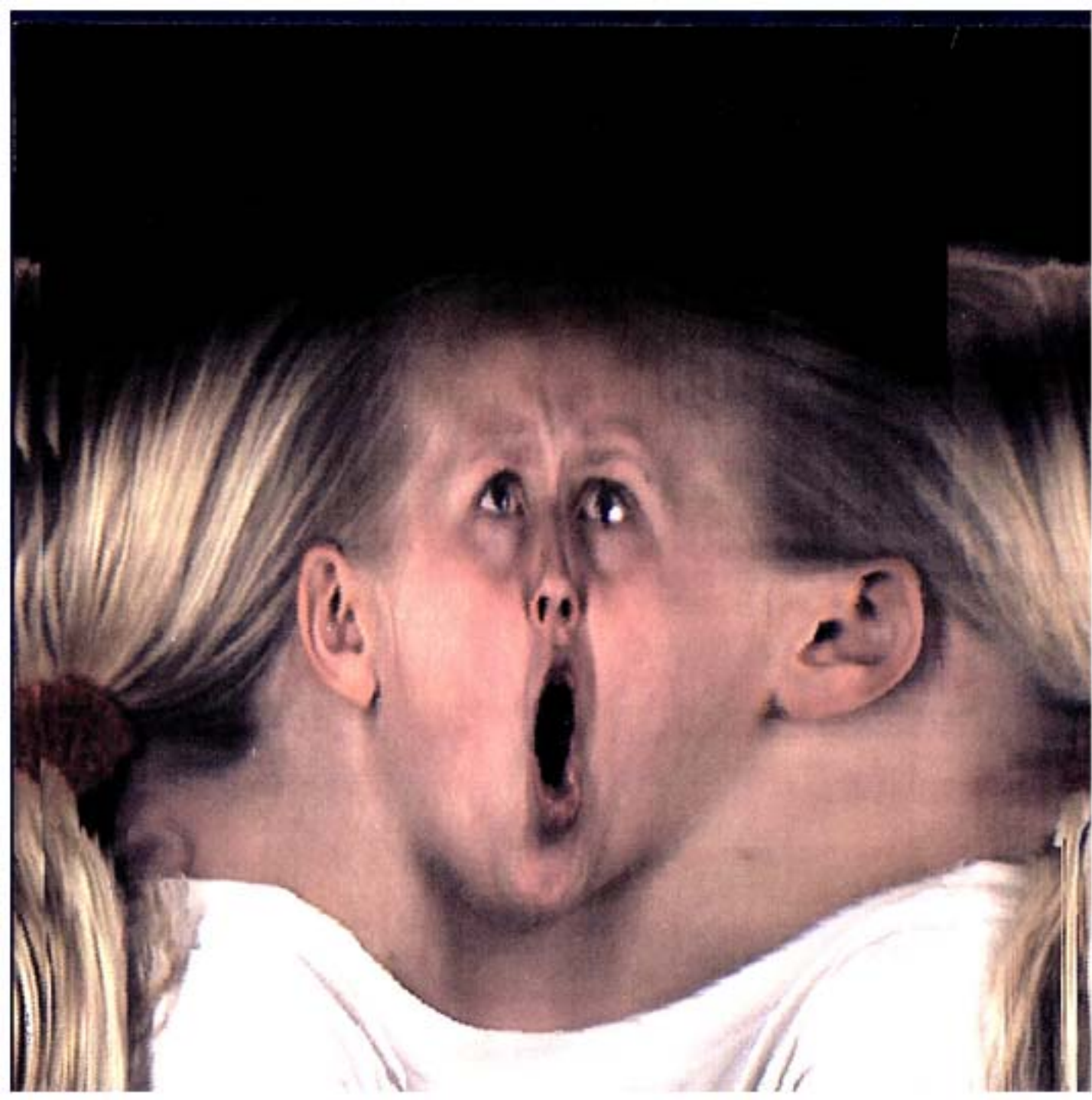
**Alien Head** (49x65", digital print on acrylic)



## Three-Dimensional Encounters of a Human Kind

Martin Richardson, 2005

**Martina Flat Face** (24 x 20", lambda print on acrylic)



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The extreme reality of holograms challenges our understanding of what we mean by "real" yet their essential ambiguity is as unsettling as their verisimilitude is reassuring in a post McLuhan age of "virtual reality", "reality TV" spectacles and "celebrities".

Martin Richardson, 2005

**Capt. America** (49x65", digital print on acrylic)





Can digital media access reality?



Martin Rich  
Anaglyph Head



The extreme reality of holograms challenges our understanding of what we mean by “real”

Martin Richardson, 2005

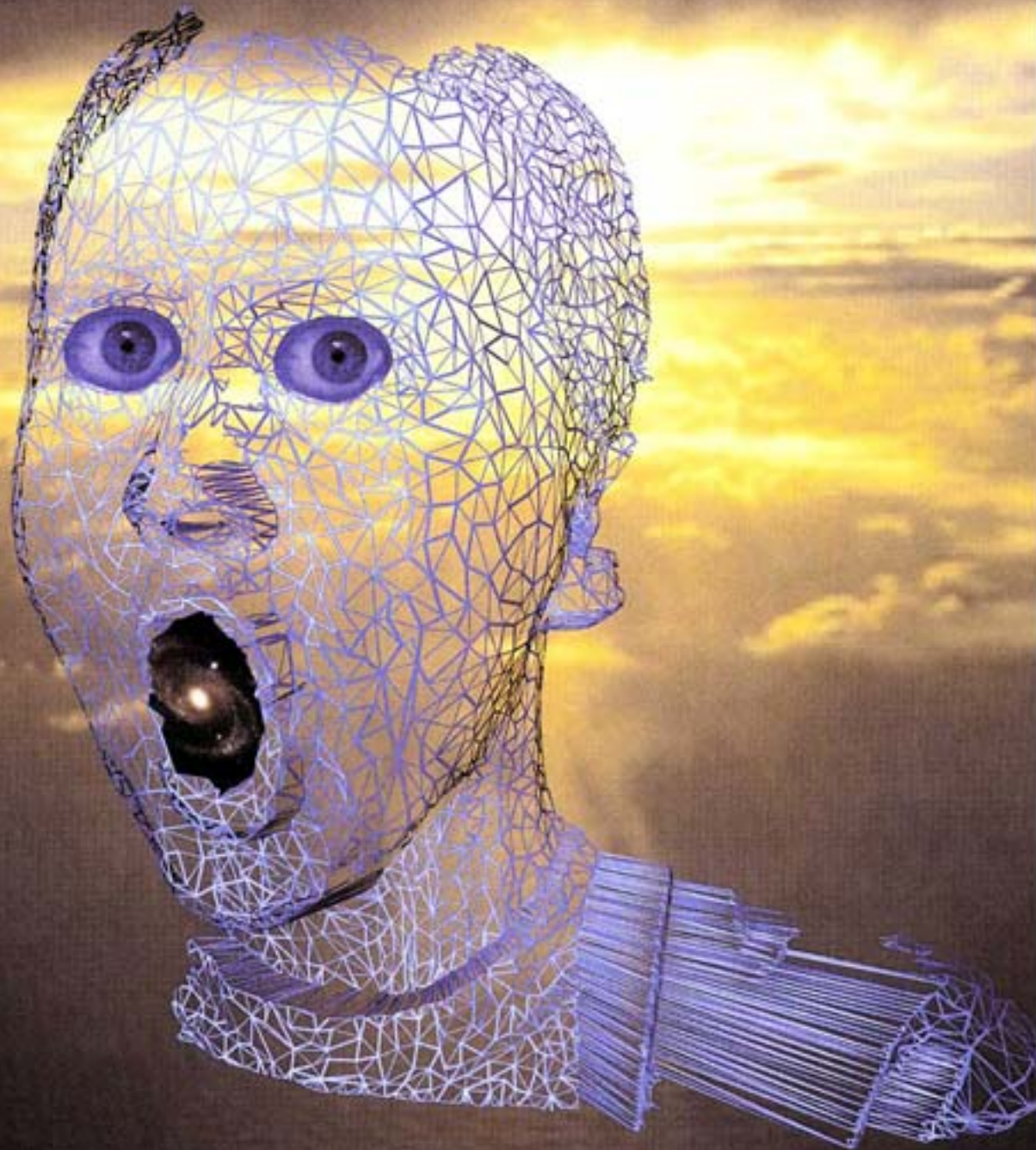
**Heroic Youth** (24x24", digital print on acrylic)



**The Ethereal Ghosts of Technology**

Martin Richardson, 2005

**Spin Head** (24x24", digital print on acrylic)



Celebrity portraiture is a field that has always been susceptible to flattery and artifice. Can we rely on a hologram of a contemporary celebrity to be any more objective than say a 16th century Holbein celebrity portrait in oils?

Martin Richardson, 2005

**Cosmos Head** (49x65", digital print on acrylic)