

# 3D images that fool the eye in dazzling, delightful, dramatic way

Thursday, February 8, 2007

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Imagine a 3D image that floats and moves in the air.

No special glasses needed, either.

That's what HolograFX's technology delivers to advertisers hoping to lure eyeballs.

The Saddle Brook company uses advanced techniques to create holograms that everyone from Pepsi to Pontiac have used to promote their brands.

And believe me, these images are arresting.

"Consumers walk into our store and simply say 'wow,' " said Roger Dreyer, CEO of Fantasma Magic, a Manhattan magic shop that has a HolograFX hologram on display in the store entrance.

HolograFX had two of its marvels on display at last month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and even in that image-packed circus the holograms stood out.

One showed tennis balls shooting into the air; the other was a funny little man's head that zipped back into a box when I tried to touch the floating image.

They can also pump music and sound to accompany the 3D picture.

Fantasma's hologram, for example, has a montage of magic effects with things exploding and music, said Dreyer.

HolograFX CEO Eric Brown got his start doing special effects during the disco era, working in nightclubs, discos, hotels and restaurants in the New York City area in the 1970s and '80s. He continued through the mid-1990s, doing interior design and other custom work.

Four years ago, he started HolograFX and began to market the technology to major advertisers.

These days, his company (which is owned by publicly held Entertainment Arts -- ticker symbol ETAR on the pink sheets) has six employees, offices in four states, and a number of projects with major companies, which Brown declined to identify. Prior clients who purchased holograms include Adidas, Kellogg and NASA, which contracted with HolograFX to create a pair of floating astronauts for the space agency's informational tour.

HolograFX's images are not traditional holograms, which use lasers to display an image. They are computer-generated images projected to create a kind of simulated hologram. The methods Brown uses are patented.

A true hologram allows a 360-degree viewing angle, meaning you can see the floating image when you walk around it. The HolograFX images, in comparison, have a 60-degree viewing angle, which means you have to stand more in front of the image to see it totally.

But, at least for me, that didn't diminish the wow factor.

The projection equipment, which is generally hidden inside a box or behind a curtain, uses an LCD monitor and something called fresnel lenses, a type of lens first used in lighthouses.

Brown can get fairly technical -- "We're using two imaging fresnels within a specified focal length of a source image," he said -- but he also explains it simply: "We take a 3D computer-generated graphic and push it out into space."



FILE PHOTO

▲ HolograFX inserted this "hologram" into the photograph because a camera's single lens can't capture the 3D images -- only people can see them due to the eye's optical properties.

In fact, he continued, the left and right eye work together in a way that lets you see the image as floating. If you covered one eye, the image would "go back into the box again."

As for what goes into making the hologram, much of it involves using computers to create the 3D image, a process that can take anywhere from three to four days to as long as six weeks, Brown said.

For Brown, the use of technology in the world of special effects was all about the fun of surprising people -- and the same, he said, goes for HolograFX.

His company is not just focused on the whiz-bang electronics inside the box.

"What we're really selling is stopping power," Brown says.

There are a couple of other companies out there that make custom holograms, including Holophile Inc., of Killingworth, Conn. But the marketplace appears to be wide open for Brown's company.

"These are pioneer days," he said, referring to the various ways advertisers are experimenting with digital technologies to display their ads.

For Fantasma Magic's Dreyer, HolograFX's floating magic effects have exceeded his expectations and he's planning to put in an even larger display (you can check out the HolograFX hologram at Fantasma's store at Seventh Avenue and 33rd Street in Manhattan).

"HolograFX," he said, "is what real magic is all about."

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### **Making the hologram, renting it out**

HolograFX creates images and rents equipment on a monthly basis. Rental price depends on length of contract and ranges from \$500 to \$2,000 per month for the smallest image, up to \$700 to \$3,500 per month for the largest. The price to create an image is extra and varies depending on the complexity.

<b>Image size</b>	<b>Distance floating from projector</b>	<b>Projector size</b>
8 to 9 inches	14 inches	20x18x22 inches
14 to 16 inches	33 inches	36x27x27 inches
24 to 26 inches	60 inches	3x4x5 feet

Source: HolograFX, Inc.