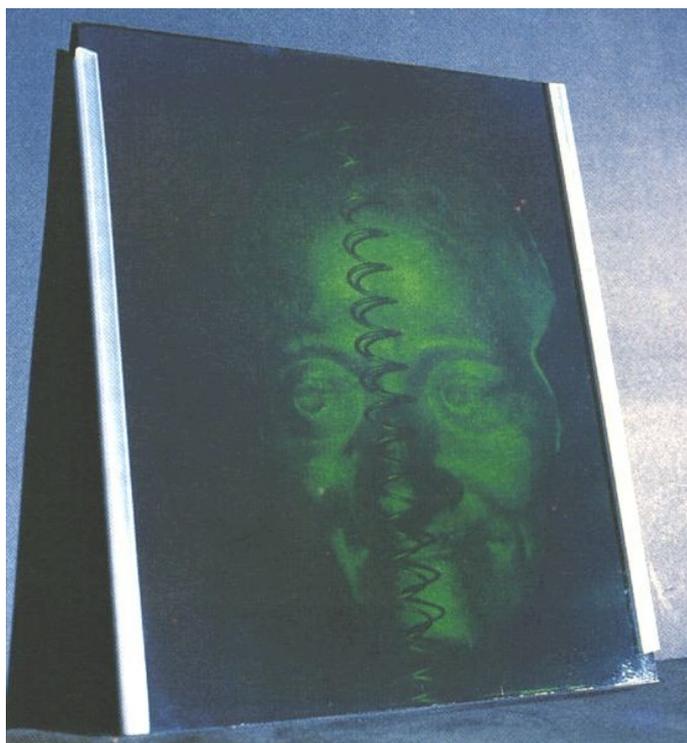


Attila Csáji: Spring for Voltaire I. - III.

Reflection Holograms, 1984

A series of three elements which reveal and question the taken-for-granted properties of spatial perception. The selection of objects was not fortuitous. The rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment, even if its lustre has somewhat faded away, is still embodied in Voltaire's brilliant mind. The spring is significant not so much by virtue of the associations it may evoke (the potentiality of flexible movement, etc.) but rather as an industrial object. It is a thin spatial form which lets the light penetrate behind it, but which casts a shadow at the same time. It is particularly suited for the precise definition of spatial relations.



The first object stands for our habitual rational perception of space. In front of Voltaire's mask there is a spring which partly covers it and casts its shadow on it. Thus it produces a more or less conventional space. The emerging field of associations is doubtlessly peculiar, but it is merely associations and not a space yet. It is not significant; for a time it can be bracketed, although not eliminated.

The second object shows the negative form of the mask with the spring in front of its hollow space. This produces some perceptible changes. The head of Voltaire is transformed: it looks as if it belonged to some fat cardinal. Although all details are reproduced faithfully, but in negative, the properties of a plastical body in space have changed. A measure of uncertainty has been introduced into the perception of space: the nose looks sometimes convex, although it is

concave, and something similar happens to the hollows of the eyes. But the relation of the spring to the head still conforms to our usual sense of space.

The third hologram was made of the same arrangement. It exploits a specific property of holograms: if the emulsion side of the plate is turned towards the viewer, the form appears in front of it in space, and concave shapes are made convex.

Thus the negative of Voltaire's head becomes positive again and appears in the space in front of the plate. During exposure, the spring was closer to the laser than the mask, it partly covered the head while casting its shadow on the negative mask. Because the emulsion side of the plate has been reversed, a curious metamorphosis takes place: the spring is now inside the head and it casts a shadow in front, on the forehead and the nose. But this spring which is farther away covers, at the same time, the nose which is nearer to the viewer or, if he/she moves slightly to the left or to the right, the mouth, the chin, etc. Contradicting all our expectations concerning spatial perception, it is the object behind that covers the object that stands in front of it. What is the result: a spatial impossibility or the anticipation of a new dimension? It is the holographer's job to offer its visual formulation, to reveal the visual logic of thinking, but certainly not to cut short its process.

„Spring for Voltaire I. - III.” was exhibited:

1. Licht Blicke, German Filmmuseum, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1984
2. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, Hungary, 1984
3. International Exhibition of Holography, Madrid, Spain, 1985
4. Individual Exhibition, Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, 1988
5. Exhibition of Technological Arts, MIT/CAVS, Lancaster, USA, 1988
6. Individual Exhibition, Palace of Art (Múcsarnok), Budapest, Hungary, 1989
7. I. International Light Symposium. Kepes Múzeum, Eger, Hungary, 1993
8. Szín és fény, Xantus János Múzeum, Győr, Hungary, 1993
9. Museum of Contemporary Art, Hajduszoboszló, Hungary, 1997 - 2000
10. Vichodoslovensky Galéria, Kosice (Kassa), Slovakia, 1997
11. „Sucha a object IV.”, Art lines Festival Bratislava (Pozsony), Slovakia, 1999
12. Hologramok, Mai Manó Ház, Budapest, Hungary, 2001