

# Resuscitating a young art

FIRST the bad news. Over the last ten years or so there have been countless exhibitions of ghostly green-lit three dimensional taps and plastic dragons. For less than £10 you can buy one to hang on your wall, but for many of us the novelty has worn off. Sadly, a seemingly endless variety of techniques has produced a stream of plain images.

But the good news is that Michael Wenyon and Susan Gamble's exhibition of holograms at Barnsley's Cooper Gallery is stunning. Even their more conventional holograms possess a wit absent in the museum or gift-shop counterparts.

## High-tech 1950's kitsch

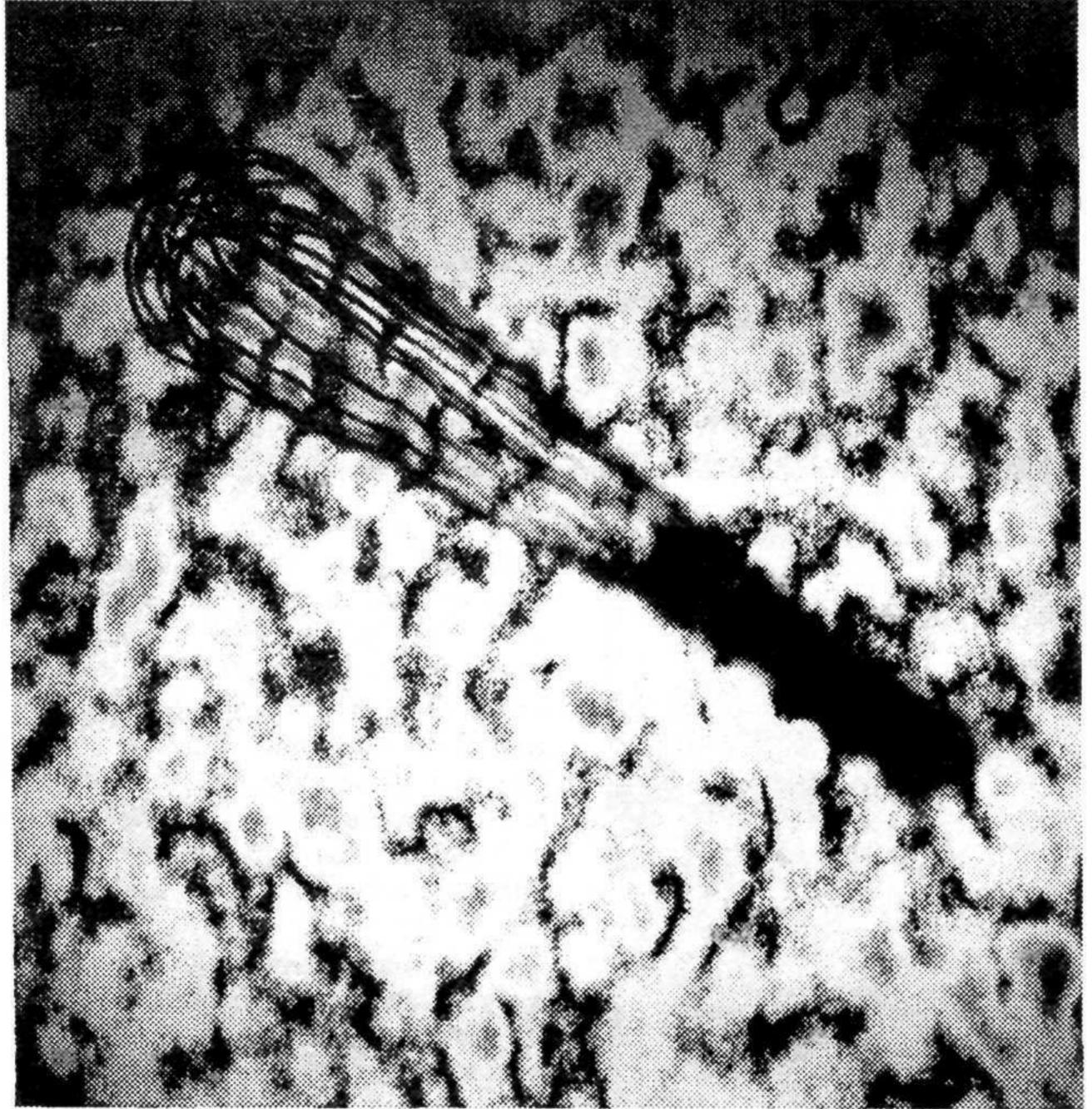
A commission from Royal Doulton has resulted in four holograms on the subject of magical tricks and Nursery Rhyme. "Our Beach" is a staged fantasy of pebbles, crushed coke tin, sunglasses and shadowy feet sporting flip-flops — all mounted in an engraved perspex frame. The effect is high-tech 1950's kitsch.

But what strikes you on entering the gallery are the vivid and hallucinatory electric colours and the way in which the images are displayed. Framed in opal perspex and suspended from the ceiling they hang away from the wall; in discreet black frames they sit on free standing, lanky, tripods. Because they don't apologise for not being photographs or paintings it is easier to see them with fresh eyes.

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## Mike Hughes looks at holograms at their best . . .

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*The Chemical Change: The Whisk — hologram by Wenyon and Gamble*

The colours break up into mottled or striated patterns; sometimes behind the plate, sometimes in front, sometimes simply creating a shimmering atmosphere. The objects that appear in these scenes are quite ordinary; pans, egg whisks, eggs, shoes, spectacles and more egg whisks. The colours, movement (or should I say choreography?) and quirky

sense of humour give them a dream-like quality.

The Cooper Gallery deserves a pat on the back for mounting the exhibition, despite the lack of the financial backing it sought for the show. Catch it if you can before 2 December, for by refusing to doff their cap to science Wenyon & Gamble are resuscitating a young art which is in danger of an early death.