

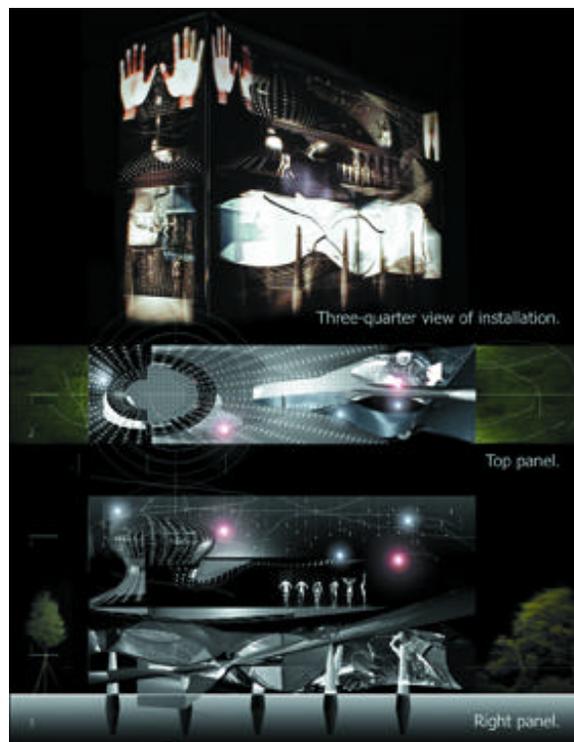
(art)ⁿ Laboratory, a collaborative art group and media lab that has been based in Chicago since its inception in 1983, is comprised of its director and founder, artist Ellen Sandor, and a dedicated core group of visual and computer artists. The laboratory possesses a vital and extensive portfolio thanks to the talent and sophistication of its members and the accomplished artists, scientists, and mathematicians with whom it has collaborated. These collaborations have spawned a body of artwork that is invaluable both for its pioneering aesthetic and the historical importance of the scientific concerns and discoveries first portrayed by (art)ⁿ and research teams working together.

The (art)ⁿ work presented at SIGGRAPH 2000 is entitled *Townhouse Revisited*, 1999. This PHSCologram and interactive audio sculpture addresses issues of the body, public space, and touch in the architecture of virtual reality. The work was created in response to such questions as: If hard matter and gravity offer no impediment in virtual reality, what then will meeting, working, and playing spaces look like there? How might form, substance, and light evolve as we navigate through virtual structures? Would the body's passage behind a monitor's glass raise any layered echoes of sound? How would sound behave in a virtual space with no true surfaces to bounce off of — only image planes? Would sound bouncing off image planes be affected spatially by the digital code that makes up the structure of the image?

The (art)ⁿ Laboratory is unusual among artist's groups in that it holds landmark patents in 20th century visual technology. In 1989, after six years of research and development, the group patented what is called the PHSCologram (pronounced skol-o-gram), the very first virtual photographic hard copy process. "PHSCologram" is a word coined by the group in 1983. It contains the acronym PHSC for photography, holography, sculpture, and computer imaging. In practice, it includes a process of digitally combining color images with computer-generated models and outputting these composites as 3D image hardcopies.

In inventing and patenting the first 3D digital output technology, the (art)ⁿ group has been able to push the conceptual and aesthetic boundaries of its own unique medium. The PHSCologram is arresting in its unconventionality. In an exhibition space, the back-lit and fully dimensional images extend from darkly framed image planes toward the viewer. The images are lush, detailed, and visceral in effect.

(art)ⁿ Laboratory also invented the Igram, which has become known as "the hard copy of virtual reality." The Igram is a snapshot or still (similar to a film still) taken in virtual reality environments. But more than that, it involves a sophisticated set of software and hardware developed by both (art)ⁿ Laboratory and the Electronic Visualization Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



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TOWNHOUSE REVISITED
Vintage PHSCologram sculpture
25 inches x 40 inches x 10 inches