

The Three Dimensional Art

By J. W. Henson

It was during a recent winter that I first saw an example of three-dimensional artwork. My wife and I were visiting with friends that owned an art shop in the local shopping mall. We talked of the old times when Bob and I had worked together in the printing business. As we were preparing to leave, he asked if we were acquainted with three-dimensional art. We were not. He took us over to his cache of framed samples. They were about 2 x 3 feet rectangles of mod looking art that really told me nothing. He said that one must unfocused his eyes and look with a certain gazed stare at the psychedelic images before us. It is a process not unlike self-hypnosis, we were told.

I had often practiced projecting my gaze with eyes unfocused. I used it as a part of my total relaxation program. I positioned myself before the print and began to stare toward the surface of the picture. It was fuzzy looking, when all of a sudden I was in a fairy land. The picture had taken on dimension. Slowly images began to appear. The first I saw was mountains in the background, and then a horse with wings in the lower foreground. A large image of Saturn with its rings dominated the top third of the art. My eyes shifted and the fantasy was gone, as if by magic. Again and again I moved in and out of the scene. It was so colorful and strange. There was an element of magic there before me.

MY WIFE WAS SPEAKING TO ME. SHE SAID, "WE MUST BE..."

I noticed an area in the base of one of the mountains that was shinning and glowing more than other elements within the picture's landscape. Letting my eye move from there I followed a narrow, winding trail leading back to the edge of the picture that was nearest to me. I stepped across the frame, into the picture and began to walk down that stony path. It was neither smooth nor rough. It was neither narrow nor wide. As I neared the location of the bright spot that I had seen when outside the picture, it became clear that there was a tunnel into the mountain. I moved forward, and could hear strange music such as I have never before heard. It was neither pleasant nor was it discordant.

The tunnel led into the rocky mountain. It was neither cold nor hot. It was neither dark nor brightly lighted. There was softness about everything. I progressed along the tunnel seeing little and fearing nothing. I walked for the better part of a day, and at last came to a long wooden hallway that was covered with glass windows on my left. A soft light shone through the windows, but I could observe nothing on the outside. The right side of the hall was lined with tables, chest of drawers, and other items of lavish furniture. A fog of spider webs, and years of accumulated dust covered everything. Further along a horse was running a wood turning lathe. Large chips of wood littered the floor, and filled the air. He was giving instructions in a loud voice to some people who were moving the crated pieces of furniture.

I walked along this unusual corridor for a long time, watching in amazement all of the strange sights and sounds that were assailing me. It may have been a day, or it could just as easily have been an hour or a year. I was neither hungry, nor tired. At last I exited on to a green pasture with a crystal clear brook flowing before me. In the distance I could hear a woodchopper at work. I made my way across the lea and after a long journey, came to the source of the sound. A man in a black leather vest and a head topped with a pointed hat was busy cutting wood. He studied me carefully as one does another whom he feels he has seen before and is trying to recollect. While I was thinking what to ask him, he pointed with a crooked finger through the wood to a place over the nearest horizon. Looking in that direction I could see thin wisps of smoke arising, and I made my way hence.

Dusk was just coming on as I reached the outskirts of the loveliest little village that I had ever seen. The houses were brightly painted, and the flower gardens superbly kept along the verge of the cobblestone street. Walking into the center of the hamlet by what I was to later learn was the main street; I was arrested before a cottage by a handsome woman calling to me.

“Its suppertime”, she said. “Do come on in and wash-up. You are later than usual tonight. You mustn’t keep the cook waiting longer!” The language was one that I had never heard, but could fully understand. It had a sweet, musical vocabulary. Upon entering the house, two children came running to greet me. “Have you brought us anything?” they asked. I tried to answer but the words would not come; yet they continued to talk and ask me questions. It was apparent that they understood the thoughts that I was unable to speak.

After an adequate meal that was neither fancy nor poor, I moved into the setting room of the clean little cottage and had a peaceful evening with the others. I said nothing, nor was it necessary to do so, for my every thought was anticipated and acknowledged as though it had been spoken.

The next morning I arose at first light, had a meager breakfast, and proceeded to work across a distant lake; a sea that was azure blue, and ever so calm. I am uncertain how I spent the hours of the day. I may have been tending some beautiful gardens that I saw. Suffice it to say, there was peace and pleasantness in the endeavor in which I was engaged. As the shadows lengthened, I returned to town only to be met on the doorstep with a similar greeting as the day before. After supper we went to a meeting in the schoolhouse. It was a wooden gingerbread structure, very neat, open and well lighted. The children had provided a most lovely program that one could imagine. It was not of the boring caliber as the ones to which I was normally subjected. I noticed that there were two types of people in attendance at the schoolhouse. There were the women who could speak, and the men, like the woodcutter and myself, who could say nothing. Those, like me, who could not talk, I could understand their thoughts and they mine. All that I learned of this strange place was by suggestion, listening, and watching.

Days came and went in rapid succession. The pages of the calendar flipped by very quickly. At last I noticed a change in the season. Though the days were no colder or warmer, or less pleasant, they were growing shorter. Then came the day when no one went to work. Tables were set along Main Street. There was dancing and music. All were there. Again the seasons changed bringing flowers and leaves to the trees, crops, and long days, and then short days again. The cycles must have continued for six or seven times.

One morning as I started across the placid lake to work, the boat sprang a most dreadful leak. I was soon sinking in the water. It was a black murky fluid that engulfed me; a fierce wind sprang up from the north threatening to upset my little craft. I was busy bailing water. For the first time in years I was gripped by fear. The gale continued blowing, and I had lost all sense of direction and control of the little boat. There was darkness all about me when at last I heard a familiar voice saying,

... GOING. I HAVE A LOT OF THINGS TO DO BEFORE BEDTIME.”