

# CONTRACOSTA TIMES

## See your image at the Exploratorium's new exhibit 'Reflections'

By Laura Casey

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Mirrors are more than just objects that translate your features in the Exploratorium's new exhibition "Reflections." They are also works of art that can make you pause, feel unexpected sorrow and spark curiosity.

"Reflections," at the back of the cavernous warehouse near the Palace of Fine Arts, features 15 Exploratorium-created exhibits and eight works by New York University professor and artist Daniel Rozin. The pieces are separated into two distinct sections, with Rozin's work in what looks and feels like an upscale gallery space.

Mirrors have fascinated people for centuries, though early mirrors created in the 16th century in Venice, Italy, were considered luxury items. Over the years, they became astronomical tools, industrial machines and a new way humans could see themselves. It is this last point that is investigated in the "Reflections" show.



*"Mirrors Mirror" by Daniel Rozin consists of 768 motor controlled mirrors that follow the viewer into the piece and reflect a grainy image, much like old fuzzy television images. Rozin is the featured artist at the Exploratorium's new exhibit "Reflections" on now through Sept. 20.*

"In a lot of these pieces you are seeing yourself and your friends which I thought was a compelling subject," says Erik Thorgersen, project director for the Exploratorium.

### Upside-down world

When you approach "Reflections," you are first met by a massive parabolic concave mirror that makes your image larger and flips it upside down. Don't worry, your eyes don't need to be examined. The disorienting mirror, which was used in flight simulation by NASA, makes your image look three-dimensional and even sharpens the details of objects in the distance.

A pneumatically controlled fun house mirror stretches and bends your image while the "Topascope" makes a topographical map of your face. Stick your head in the edge of the piece, and you'll see a kaleidoscope of your eyes, mouth and nose.

One of the most compelling pieces is the "Tearful Reflection." In it, you look at your face while a drop of water appears to weep from your right eye. Just the sight of the tear elicits a strong emotional response, Thorgersen says.

### Mirror as metaphor

From the Exploratorium's pieces you come to Rozin's gallery. Officials at the Exploratorium approached Rozin to bring pieces to the educational center because his body of work relies heavily on mirrors and reflection. An accomplished new media artist, he has had various shows in Korea, Israel, New York and Japan.

"I've always found the mirror as a metaphor," he says. "There is no content. The content is you."

Take Rozin's two astonishing pieces "Self-Centered Mirror" and "Self-Exclusive Mirror" in one corner of the gallery space.

"Self-Centered Mirror" is actually 34 vertical panes of mirrors pieced together. When a visitor stands in front of it, he sees multiple images of himself. If someone else stands near him, he still only sees his own image. No matter how many people are in the room, the viewer's image is the only one reflected in the piece.

"For me, it's the last step toward total narcissism," Rozin says.

The opposite is true in "Self-Exclusive Mirror." When you stand in front of this new piece, you cannot see yourself. If others join you in the room, you can see them but you are all but invisible.

Rozin says mirrors are magical objects, ones that are hard to replicate with technology. Though some of his pieces are simply mirrors redesigned, others like "Snow Mirror" use computer programs to reflect an image that gets sharper the longer you stand still.

His piece "Mirrors Mirror" also uses technology to astound. "Mirrors Mirror" is made of 768 motor-controlled mirrors that move with the movement of its viewer. The effect is startling — "Mirrors Mirror" reflects an image that looks like an old, out-of-whack color television image.

"The mirror is a very simple piece of technology that is very profound," Rozin says. "It allows us to see ourselves as we see others."