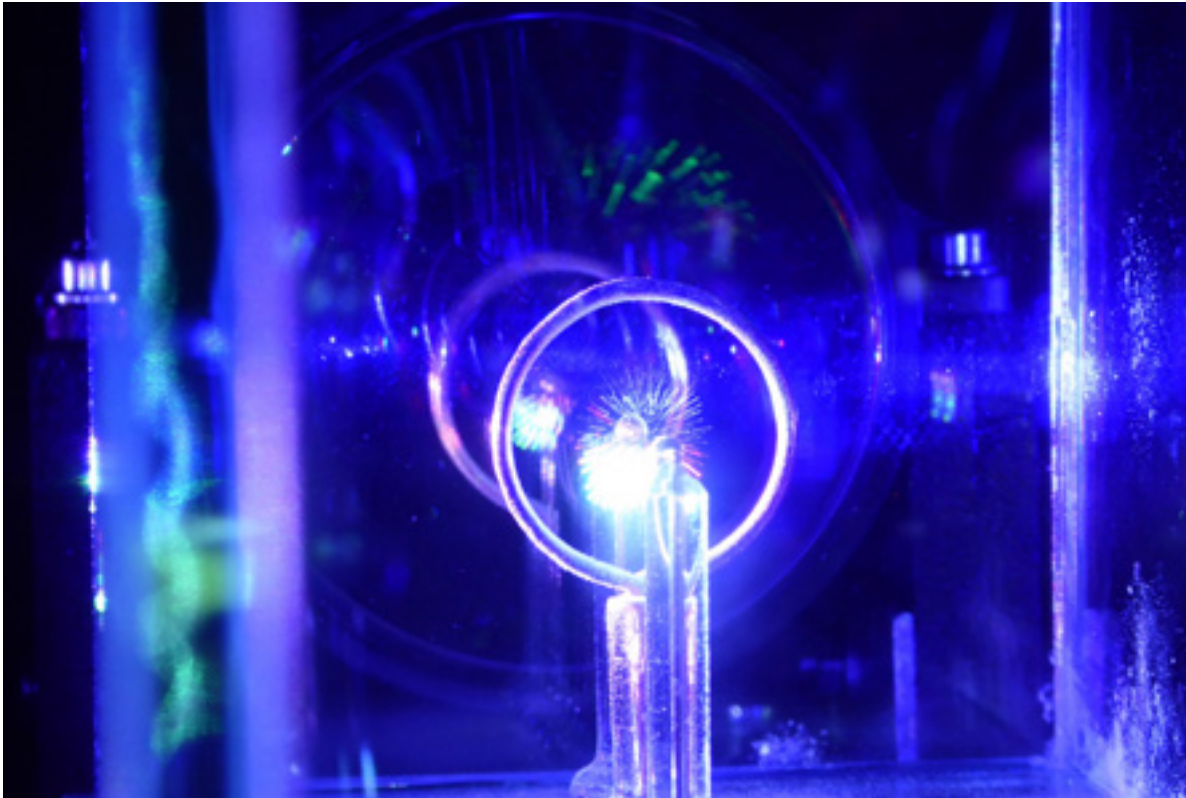


ION HOLE,
EVELINA DOMNITCH & DMITRY GELFAND

ION HOLE, MATTER BETWEEN WONDER AND SEDUCTION

by Annick Bureaud



Ion Hole, Evelina Domnitch & Dmitry Gelfand, 2016. Image Annick Bureau

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In a dark room, suspended in mid-air, as if floating in weightlessness, is a circle of pulsating, colourful light particles that look like the grande finale of a firework or the burst of a star from a distant galaxy (but isn't it the same?).

The projection is coming from a nearby box which hosts an even more fabulous and mesmerizing dispositif: a device, that we learn later is a Paul trap, looking like a jewel designed for an unknown alien creature, is maintaining in its ring tiny particules that are sparkling and vibrating like rare precious stonepowder in an explosion of joy and vitality

In between magic, fairy tale, cosmic dimension and fundamental physics, it is seeing the infinitely small, the universe contained in nothingness.

Ion Hole is a highly seductive light installation which is not based on understanding but on wonder. In this respect, it relates to an art-science approach and philosophy defined and promoted by The Exploratorium in San Francisco: attracting people to science through direct experiment and wonder. The hence triggered curiosity will lead then to research, to a quest for understanding; the artworks being «experiments among experiments».

How to make quantum physics «approachable» when the minute you pronounce the term the flag «too-difficult-for-me» raises? How to make «concrete» something which is considered intensely «abstract»?

With *Ion Hole*, the answer of Evelina Domnitch and Dmitry Gelfand is by building upon the paradox. When quantum physics deals with matter but at an (almost) unperceptible level, the artwork shows totally observable phenomena but in a work that is (almost) objectless. *Ion Hole*, like many of the other artworks created by the duo, plays with this dialectic between tangibility

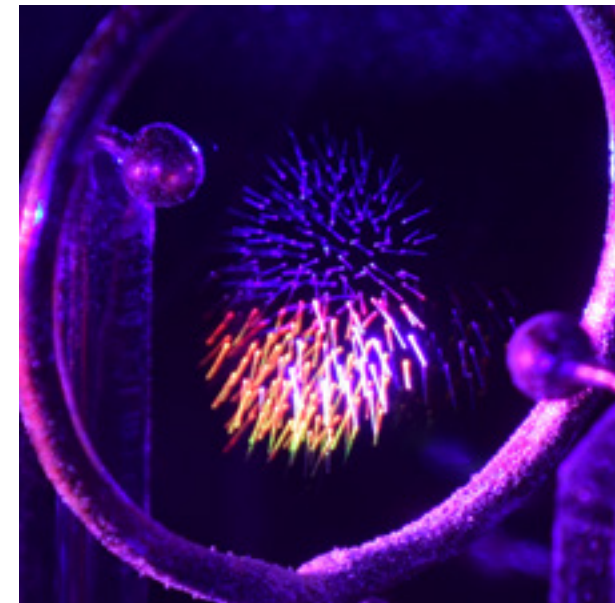
and objectless, between cognition and emotion.

Nowadays, art being «scientific illustration» is dismissed. Although we praise it when it comes from the past, it has almost become an insult for contemporary creation in favour of a «critical approach» to science. Beyond the fact that this puts aside the whole blossoming field of visualisation and sonification and consider «science» as an undistinct global whole, I argue that this is a misunderstanding of what «illustration» really means. «Illustration» does not equal slick «image» or «drawing» or «charts». It is the action to put in relation something with something in a sensitive order that is then presented as a realisation in another form, it is the realisation in the sensitive order of something*. In other words, it is bringing something to the perception, to the senses. And this is exactly what *Ion Hole* does.

Ion Hole is an artwork as scientific illustration at its best. It is a scientific experiment that has ceased to be one by the very act of having been

brought out of the lab. By having no other goal but proposing itself to a direct observation/perception as opposed to (digital) measures and processes *Ion Hole* is a scientific experiment that has become an art experience.

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Ion Hole, Evelina Domnitch & Dmitry Gelfand, 2016.
Image Lucas Evers

CREDITS

«Ion Hole» has been created by Evelina Domnitch and Dmitry Gelfand
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