

PRINT ACTION!

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The 50 most
influential
people and
one clown

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Yves Gentet Optical Engineer

The decline of film has changed many lives in the graphic arts. For Yves Gentet that change came a decade ago, when Agfa decided to stop producing a holographic film, just months after he had finished developing a portable holographic portrait camera. Suddenly he had to develop a holographic film as well.

Gentet picked up a book on film chemistry and spent the next few years experimenting with – among other things – animal gelatin, lasers and silver bromide. These ingredients, and light, formed the base of what was to become an emulsion called Ultimate. Together with a wildly complex technique, Gentet's emulsion eventually gave birth to The Clown.

This summer, Gentet will finish moving his entire operation from France to downtown Toronto. Part of reason for the move to Toronto is to look for more investors. He has found a partner in the United States able to copy Ultimate onto a polymer made by Dupont, so that it can be produced on a large scale. Of course, Gentet's goal is to get Ultimate itself



PHOTOS: Stephan Schecher

produced at a commercial pace. Not an easy task given the lack of support for film in today's graphic arts marketplace.

The Clown and other holograms, however, may be enough to persuade investors on the potential influence of his development. In very simple terms, Ultimate is unlike most emulsions because of its incredibly fine silver bromide grains (around 10 nanometres and up to $\frac{1}{100}$ the size of the grains in ordinary films). Shooting light onto the grains turns them into silver halide, which then act as mirrors for further reflection and extremely fine details. The grains in Ultimate also allow for the simultaneous recording of red,



green and blue in a single emulsion layer.

Gentet's work stands head and shoulders above (below, and from both sides) over any hologram work done in the past. After winning the Best of the Year award at the International Hologram Manufacturers Association exhibition, Gentet and his ceramic-looking clown stunned fellow holographers. Many of these holographers dream of creating full-colour reality in a flat format. While many of his peers at the show commented on how close Gentet is to realizing that dream, just as many were busy passing their hands behind The Clown to see if there was anything there. Well, Gentet and his lab will be here in a matter of weeks.