ANAMORPHOSIS: AN UNCONVENTIONAL WAY OF SEEING

> ***Anamorphosis***: *A distorted or monstrous projection or representation of an image on a plane or curved surface, which, when viewed from a certain point, or as reflected from a curved mirror or through a polyhedron, appears regular and in proportion.* (*Webster's Dictionary*)
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> *Anamorphosis* is pronounced like "metamorphosis", the plural form is *anamorphoses* (pronounce "…oh-sees"), and the adjective *anamorphi*c. Literally, the word is based on the Greek for "to form again".

350 years ago, the French scholar Jean Du Breuil created wonderful images of rooms ("cabinets") filled with anamorphoses attached to the walls, floors and ceilings.

This exhibition is a modest recreation of that idea. You can see here different kinds of anamorphic designs, some of which rely on being looked at from a particular position, whilst others use mirrors of unusual shapes.

By moving around, try to work out for yourself the right viewing position for each anamorphosis; it will help if you keep one eye closed whilst you do this.

You will find a computer program, called *Anamorph Me!*, which allows you to make your own anamorphoses.

You will find information about the art, science and history of anamorphosis in these wall panels, the books and the video tapes.

The exhibition has a companion web site — www.anamorphosis.com — where you will find all of the information presented here, and more, and where you can download your own free copy of the *Anamorph Me!* computer program.

Anamorphoses may seem "magical" but a much better word for them is *unconventional*. They are based on precise mathematical and physical rules — the same rules that apply to the construction of all two-dimensional representations of the three-dimensional world — but the rules are applied in ways that are a deliberate break from the usual and conventional.

To understand something about these rules, and how anamorphosis works, we will begin with the Italian Renaissance, 600 years ago.