

The New York Times
October 4, 1996

Art in Review

By HOLLAND COTTER
Published: October 4, 1996

'Luminous Bodies'
The Rotunda Gallery
33 Clinton Street
Brooklyn
Through Nov. 2

This group show of contemporary work that uses light as a formal or metaphoric element sounds more interesting than it actually looks, but it is ambitious in concept and includes a number of stimulating artists.

Samm Kuncze's sweltering hothouse garden of red runner beans growing under a 1,000-watt bulb turns the idea of light into a physical experience. So does Fred Tomaselli's soundproof isolation booth, its walls speckled with hypnotic, wraparound patterns of constellations.

There are also more conceptual takes on the theme. Siobhan Lidell's two wall-facing strips of painted paper glow reflectively in a corner. Jessica Stockholder's upended plastic sink looks like a light-box-size stage. In Jason Reed's "Anonymous Portrait: Father," light is a sculptural element: using an overhead spot, a mirror and a tray of whisky, the artist floats a halolike amber lozenge onto the gallery wall.

Other works in the show, which has been organized by Dara Meyers-Kingsley, add less to the literature of light-based art. Light doesn't appear to be a crucial element in Ron Rocco's sculptures. Martha Rosler's photo-and-text installation seem out of place in this context. And Pamela Jennings's baffling CD-ROM piece left at least one viewer in the dark.

The show's catalogue is modest but nicely done, another indication of the careful thought this project represents. HOLLAND COTTER