



: the art gallery in a shoebox

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*A supplement to the exhibition **Coming of Age**, by John Shapter*

'A Young Person'

Some time ago, I had a flash of understanding whilst visiting a Museum of Toys. The museum was established in a very old building, and the whole place looked, smelt and felt like "the old curiosity shop". However, in amongst the Victorian dolls and tin toys were things I remembered from my childhood in the 1950s and 1960s. At first, this felt very wrong; in that I considered museums to hold objects which belonged to people long dead!

After a while, though, it made sense. Our lives are part of a continuum of time, a second gone..... and that moment belongs to history.

To recreate this, hold a mirror at arms length, or stand half a metre from a wall mirror. What do you see? Yourself, a self-portrait or an historical image? You are, in fact, looking at the image of someone from your own history.

What you see, and understand to be yourself, is just your interpretation of light projected onto your retina. This light has been reflected from your face, travelled to the mirror and been bounced back to your eye – a total distance of about one metre. This is not instantaneous, light has a measurable speed, and what you see is the image of someone $1/299792458^{\text{th}}$ of a second younger!!

*John Shapter
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