

WHAT TO DO: Look at the flies on the wall. Notice the 4 dots above the flies. Cross your eyes slightly, until you see 5 dots. Let your attention drift back down to the flies. They'll be floating!

Next, put the page right up to your nose. Focus your eyes as though you were looking across the room. Slowly take the page away from your face. If you start focusing on the page, start over again. Eventually, you'll see the flies float again. Only this time the little flies will be closest to you and the big ones will be farthest away. The distances will be reversed.

Dear Robert,

We recognize things like form, color and distance. In the 1960s a psychologist named Bella Julesz made 3-D pictures with random dots – visual noise – to see if people could perceive distance without any clues from form or color. His 3-D dot pictures work because humans get used to patterns: repetitive, regular, predictable, repetitive. The pictures give us a regular pattern that is upset slightly.

Our minds move the upset pattern forward or backward to make it seem like it fits into the pattern again. That's what reveals the hidden images. It also feels very trippy and spacey.

WHAT IS GOING ON:

Beakman or Jax.

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Beakman Place Both methods work because each of your eyes sees its own separate part of the fly pattern. Each part of the fly pattern is different, so your brain works to put them together by adding the sense of depth. The second method is called averted view and is how most of the 3-D posters work. If you cross your eyes at the posters, you'll reverse the distances and lose the hidden image. You'll see holes where you should be seeing things like whales or dolphins. Practice averted view on this simple version before your next trip to the mall. And give yourself time!



P.S. from Jax: Sometimes when we get spaced out (meditative), we can seem to see depth in things like carpeting, tree bark, sidewalk sparkles, acoustical celling tile or certain wallpapers. It's the same effect without a trip to the mall.