

Romanesco

Do the florets flow up or down?



Look at the white “Romanesco” shape in the strobe light.

How are the florets moving?

What happens when you change the strobe rate by turning the knob?

Press the button to stop the spinning and take a closer look at the “Romanesco” shape.

The white body is based on the Romanesco vegetable: the individual florets are the same form. They are symmetrically positioned around the bigger cone and their size gradually increases from top to the bottom.

When the entire shape is spinning and only illuminated by the strobelight, you see brief glimpses of the shape rather than the blur of a spinning object. Florets of similar size appear in slightly different positions from one glimpse to the next. This gives the illusory impression that the florets are moving on the shape.

The direction in which the florets appear to be moving depends on the strobe rate and the rotation speed. If the shape rotates exactly once between each strobe flash, the florets would stand still. This effect would occur at a rotation speed of 600 rpm (600 rotations per minute) and at a strobe rate of 10 Hz (10 flashes strobe flashes per second, i.e. 600 strobe flashes per minute).

This exhibit has been inspired by the artist John Edmark.