

Orbs: It's all over but the crying or...

Why we (the Ontario and Toronto GHRS) are not accepting orb and mist photos anymore unless they meet very strict criteria...

Before I get started here, for those not in the know, "Orb Photos" and "Mist Photos" are relatively recent things being proclaimed as "ghostly phenomena" caught on film and video. These images, in some cases, make up ENTIRE ghost websites and books as being "Ghostly Evidence". Below is what seems to be our final look at these two types of phenomena.*

Update: *April 20th, 2003* We have added an addendum to this article with more "questions answered". Please see the link at the bottom of this article when finished reading.

Update: *December 4th, 2004* We have added another possible criteria (or at least, suggestion) to those that still view orb photos as a viable form of evidence of the paranormal. Please see the link at the bottom of this page below the last update from April of 2003.

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It all started (for me) with a rant. Recently, a group of "ghost hunters" in the UK proudly proclaimed that "orbs" were the ONLY way one could photograph a ghost. Needless to say, I was not only not amused but almost in a high state of dudgeon.

"Oh sure!" I said aloud, "Let's toss all the images of full and partial apparitions in the dust bin! The Brown Lady of Raynham Hall, garbage! The Tulip Staircase, nonsense! Even those two images (one from our Nevada group and one here in Ontario), cr@p! What is WRONG with these people!?"

Luckily(?) for me, in the room while I did this was Sue St Clair, and my housemate who is a photographer of some note with OCA (Ontario College of Arts) experience.

The poor fellow... I turned on him as the resident (and close at hand) expert...

"Other than that ridiculous hoax with the Polaroid orbs that actually spelled out words, why do we only see this nonsense cropping up in the mid to late 90's??? Where are the orbs from the 70's??? What's changed???" I imparted rather... um... passionately.

I started my list...

"Is it the film?"

"Not really." he said.

I came back with "Yes, that's correct... why else would orbs happen on digital as well as film. So much for the film idea."

"Is it the lenses?"

"Not really," he said, "except possibly that they are made a little cheaper now."

"Would that cause orbs?" I asked.

"No, I don't think so." he informed me.

"What about the flash?" I asked...

"Yes." he said.

Sue and I were stunned.

"Of course," he told us, "flashes are now built in much closer to the lens than before."

"That would illuminate any very small particle directly in front of the lens!" As I said this, I admit... I felt a heady rush of finally fingering the problem!

These particles COULD be (and usually are)...

- Dust
- Pollen
- Rain or dew
- Snow
- Insects
- Hair
- Ash
- Other semi-microscopic particles

Then I started going through possible "torpedos" to this great set of concepts...

"Good" 35mm cameras with flash guns... Nope, don't pass the test! New cameras (built after the mid 1990's have the gun mounted on top or JUST to the side facing towards the lens and down to avoid "red eye".

Polaroid Cameras... Still no good. The original cameras used a "flash gun" or "Flash Bar" that was mounted behind and on top of the camera BUT the 600 model and late 1990 models have the flash on top and again, slightly aimed down and towards the lens again.

"infra-red no-light" Video Cams... Nope. The infra-red bounces the rays of the light off ANY object making very small things appear "white" and bright... This would include dust, pollen and insects making them "glow" white even though they are extremely tiny.

Before this time, "flash cubes", "flash bulbs", "Flash Bars" and even the older 35mm "Flash Guns" were mounted back and away from the lens. Honest! Check it out! Grab your old unit out of the closet or keep reading and hit the sites by Dr. Bruce Maccabee and Fuji below.

Oh yeah, if anyone is saying anything about "Digital/Analog(Film)" and preferences or whatnot, please [click here](#) and read the bit about Digital vs. Analog part of our EVP information... it is pertinent.

Okay, now let's address those rare "old" orb photos. On one site, I found one taken with an old Kodak 120 Instamatic camera and looked... It was highly overexposed and then I looked into it...

IF the illumination was right (say with a "sun gun" or other mass light source or with the sun directly behind the photographer and very bright) it too would be enough to cause the "orbs" to appear.

Science to the rescue!

NOW, as I was getting ready to visit [Henry's Cameras](#) here in Toronto (a well known and accepted expert group in photography) as well as penning(?) e-mails to Kodak, Nikon, Polaroid and Fuji, I saw an article by Dr. Bruce Maccabee which can be seen by [clicking here](#).

Dr. Maccabee is primarily a researcher in UFOlogy but one should remember... Before that awful TV show in the early 1990's with the "orbs", when paranormalists said "orb", it usually meant round balls of light in the sky... a UFO... so Dr. Maccabee, amongst others in UFOlogy, started wondering what all the hubbub was with the ghostly folk stealing their lingo.

Well, the images peaked his interest and recently, Dr. Maccabee had the same thought... Lens position with flash + particles = orbs.

Look at his site... He covers it with scientific data and re-producible experiments.

[*Quick Note*] Overheard on a radio interview last year, a very large U.S. 'ghost

group' said that they had "coined the word orb". I thought this rather funny as people interested in geometry and those who called round "things" orbs (such as spider webs and whatnot) for as long as Latin has been around might be amused by this claim. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the etymology of the word "orb" is "Middle English *orbe*, orbit, from Old French, from Latin *orbis*, circle, disk, orbit".

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Fuji just says no to orbs...

Next, FujiFilm (Fuji) has now put up a webpage about orbs. They, too, have the same findings as Dr. Maccabee and our own hypothesis.

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Let's kill some of the other "mythos" about orb photos while we're here though...

Orbs of different shapes, opacity and colours prove they are not all dust.

Not at all. Snow looks different than 'dust from sand' then 'dust from human skin' than 'pet dander' than pollen... you get the idea. They also will show markedly different looks/compositions depending on the particle's (whatever causes the orb's) rate of speed just like any other photo of more 'normal' things in motion. Also, Dr. Maccabee found differences between the appearance of orbs (in shape) with the shape of the lens and the shape and position of the flash.

But my photos were taken in a _____ free environment! (Dust, Pollen, Snow, etc.)

Speaking with some authority of my own here as a computer technician who was around in the late 1980's... There is no such thing as a completely 'dust free' environment except outside of the earth's atmosphere... and even then, there are random particles to find. You can come pretty close to getting rid of all the dust and whatnot from a particular spot but you'll never completely do it. Remember those whacky pictures of us techs wearing lab coats, plastic bags on our shoes, masks. etc? I did this for one year and you know what, the only thing we proved in that lab was there is no such thing as a completely dust or particle free environment. You can "seal" an environment completely (like those high-toxic disease labs) but that means in order to impress us, you'd need to be wearing a fourth level "HazMat" suit and have a 'ghostly' environment sealed as well as a high-emergency toxins lab. Even then, sorry to say, it won't be 100% perfect. Ask NASA and the CDC.

Also, certain particles can stir up and blow around a space with no more movement than a simple breath of one of the photographic team (or the

photographer themselves).

But these were taken in a haunted location!

That may be true but if a pet cat wanders into a photo taken at a haunted location, is the cat a ghost? No... neither is the dust, pollen, snow, rain, ash, etc...

But I have an orb photo that I didn't use a flash on!

What light source did you use? Was there a BRIGHT source behind the camera? Sun? Flash-gun? Sun gun? Infra-red gun? Fire?

If it truly wasn't "lit" by conventional means, what are the possibilities of reflective particles in the air? In order to have a "viewable" image, some sort of light MUST be at hand. (There is no image, electronic/film/eyesight viewable in absolute darkness... either infra-red (or similar 'rays') or 'regular' light must be present.) Certain leaves, insects, dust, pollen, ash, etc. are HIGHLY reflective and could even use moonlight to cause some sort of "orb" in a photo. Again, you would have to eliminate all particles in the air which is, honestly, a virtual impossibility.

But there are faces and shapes in my photo within the orbs...

Are you 100% sure they are clear, distinguishable faces or forms or is it a case of trying to spot something within a smudge? Sort of like seeing shapes in a cloud. I'm not saying this is the case but make sure, before you claim this, that when you look at it, can you say "No, I'm not working hard to see something that might not be there. Like seeing a face or shapes in the clouds."

Again, do not take this as me belittling your beliefs or views, just saying that there seem to be many cases where people have to CAREFULLY point out the features of a face or form to us (and many others) that they see that we missed(?). When seeing images like those mentioned at the top of this article (the Brown Lady of Raynham, for example,) it seems that indeed, sometimes, it doesn't take that much "sight work" sometimes to see something ghostly or paranormal in origin. Can 'ghosts' be stealthy? I don't see why not but I do find many people trying very hard to place the "three dots" to create a face or see the outline of 'something' where, often, there isn't one to be seen... especially when looking into the imperfect surface of a particle causing an orb.

Related Word to Define The Above: **pareidolia** (*payr. eye. DOH. lee. uh*) n. The erroneous or fanciful perception of a pattern or meaning in something that is actually ambiguous or random. (*adj.* - pareidolic) See: [Open Dictionary](#)

Also, have a look at [this page \(click here\)](#) to see another image... I would as would almost all the photographers and paranormal researchers that I've shown this image to, say this image shows some strategically placed branches and leaves of a tree that have managed to form a "face" by accident, not design, in

the reflection on a window. Is there a paranormal factor in this face, most of us say "No, not likely" although, as accepted, some think otherwise and indeed, the 'face' is... something. Let the folks at [ParaResearchers](#) know if you see something in this photo.

So, are all 'orbs' useless then?

I would certainly say NOT! But, in fact, visible orbs (or one's seen doing their thing) are a semi-common reported phenomena and that, for most of us, is very interesting. There are POSSIBILITIES (even with these) that natural phenomena can be mistaken but it's not always a given. Please, if you have SEEN an orb, send the report to your local ghost, UFO or paranormal group! Only those traditional "orb" photos that are in question here.

What about 'ecto' mists? You mentioned them at the top of this?

Yup. Again, these are a case of where some "normal" things are being taken as "paranormal".

Anyone who's spent time north of Simcoe will tell you that on semi-warm nights, weird natural 'fogs' and 'mists' do develop on lakes and streams. They can drift inland. You have to eliminate these first.

Next, people submitting pictures like these in urban exterior conditions have to do the following... Eliminate 'normal' fogs and mists, take the image in temperatures above fifteen degrees Celsius. If it is above fifteen degrees and you have eliminated hazy conditions (a quick look at the weather report can do that), you have to eliminate all smoke or pollutants. Next, you have to eliminate all chances of 'human' process... such as cigarette smoke and breath vapour. In talking with photographers, I have come to realise that hearing things like "I held my breath" or "I turned my head before taking the image" would not be satisfactory for them.

Lastly, in an internal environment, you'd have to eliminate smoke and vapour from cooking, Next, cigarette, pipe, cigar and incense smoke would have to be eliminated as possibilities. Lastly, mist and 'fog' from running hot water or showers as well as vapour from hot food and candles.

Basically, again, these conditions are next to impossible to get.

For example, on a hot summer night, a "mist" or "fog" photo taken at Sunnyside Beach... Well, you would be about 100 yards from Lakeshore Boulevard and 120 yards from the Gardiner Expressway (two major road arteries) and you're right beside Lake Ontario. There are too many naturally occurring 'possible' mists, smokes and fogs to say it's bona fide.

Next, a family picture at Christmas with no smokers and no fireplace. Hot food? Hot water? Candles?

Lastly on this, calling them "ecto" or "ectoplasm" is a HUGE misnomer. Please [click here](#) for "Ecto" info.

Quickie Update:

To address another thing that has come up here. One person suggested that chewing on ice would help prevent breath vapour. Again, with some experience from the RLSSC (Royal Life Saving Society of Canada) I can state that this, at best, is a 'stop-gap' measure solution. In order to completely rule out breath vapour, you would need to reduce the temperature of your lungs to very close to freezing. The problem is, once your lungs reach a mean temperature of less than seventy-six degrees Fahrenheit, your chances of survival aren't that great and hypothermia would set in. The "chew on ice" method would only cool the mouth and possibly eliminate some breath vapour but most certainly not all. Also, in this vein, most hockey players (and environmental scientists) will tell you that "ice" can "smoke" (give off a fog) when its temperature is greater or less than the surrounding atmosphere.

Basically, this type of phenomena (mist/fog) is a minor case of advection fog.

So, you (the Toronto and Ontario) GHRs are no longer interested in 'orb' and 'mist' pictures?

Yes and no. Not unless they meet a pretty strict set of environmental controls or physical descriptions. We are still looking for a particular type of 'orb' photo and so far, no luck. You can read the note on this by [clicking here](#) and scrolling down to the "Half Obscured Orb" part.

As for mists, it is witness testimony but we will not be posting them nor can we "authenticate" them for you unless we were there and intimately involved with the photographic process from loading film to development. Sorry.

Also, PLEASE do not send us your "orb" shots to show us how WRONG we are unless you have met all the criteria above and again, we cannot "authenticate" with the same problems as above.

Then why do so many people proclaim these things 'ghostly' in nature?

As Bertrand Russell said, "The fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence whatever that it is not utterly absurd." In other words, just because many people say something is so does not make it true. As proven by a film

company, several photographers and a scientist above, it looks like orbs are indeed, not that spectacular.

As for the people that will and do "fight-Fight-FIGHT!" for the "truth" that orbs are ghosts, I ask them to debunk the information above BEFORE going on the attack. Also, please attack the data, not the people. I'm sure that Fuji Film is NOT out to steal your thunder.

To quote Karl Pflock now... I do have to change his first words with Orb Photo studies are "beset by True Believers ('They must be, therefore they are!') and True Unbelievers ('They can't be, therefore they aren't!') Rare are those who pursue evidence wherever it may lead, no matter how the results may square with their cherished hopes and dreams. Ironically, both the TBists and the TUists see themselves as champions of objective analysis and critical thinking, when in fact they are defenders of their respective faiths and, not incidentally, their egos."

The only thing to note with the above quote is that as of now, the 'facts' are behind those of us who have questioned the phenomena and not those that promote the belief that orb photos are 'ghostly' in origin.

Why should I listen to a sceptic like you?!?

First off, I'm not a "sceptic" in the MODERN sense of the word. I'd consider myself a mild "Moderate Truzzian" (see [this page](#) for information on Truzzi).

In other words, I do believe in ghostly phenomena. I've experienced things I don't have a good answer for so I am NOT a "sceptdebunker" (combination of "Sceptic" and "Debunker"... otherwise known as an "auto-debunker" or "remote-debunker".) I believe, but when, in 1997, I saw the "rise" in orb photos being claimed as "ghosts", I started saying "Hey! Wait a second! That's not a real good claim of 'ghost photography!'"

Basically, and I do understand this, people WANT to believe and they WANT to believe that THEY have captured something really interesting, cool and affirming and therefore, for these people, they didn't need "scientific proof" or "rational evidence". The blob on their picture was good enough and they'll fight to the (almost) death to proclaim that their images are genuine... despite the alternative evidence.

People that believe in the paranormal often use Galileo Galilei as a reference by stating questions like 'who remembers his (Galileo's) name versus the name of the cardinals that refused to look through his telescope?'. In this case, it's those of us of the 'We Believe In Ghostly Phenomena' group that looked through the telescope despite all the ghostly 'experts' and said "But the evidence is so!" and were told, very often, that we were wrong. Now, it seems that science and the camera companies are backing us up. Granted, we still will have people that will

argue but then again, we've gotten used to it.

Are these people who believe in the "photo-orb" phenomena stupid? Not at all. Are they being "fooled"? No... not really, because many 'authorities' seemed to back up their claim. It's just that in the face of the evidence, it seems that indeed, "orb photos" are not as ghostly as they might have hoped they are.

What about the "Flashlight In The Sky" Test? Y'know, put a beam of a flashlight into the air and look for particles and if none appear, it's all good!

Apparently, according to three of our photographic folks here at the GHRs, you would need two to four million candle power to produce the intensity of most of the common flashes used by cameras and then you'd still have to allow for dust, pollen, moisture and insects that might after the tests come into the frame.

Also, after speaking to an optometrist, we discovered other flaws with this. The main one would be not allowing your eyes to adjust to a bright light of such a flashlight. The average person would need to expose their eyes to the light for about three to five minutes which, according to our expert, would damage the cornea and iris of an eye badly. Basically, the doctor we spoke to did not recommend this.

Also, you may not see particles that tiny even with a flashlight that the lens will see as the lens could be literally millimeters from the particles that produce orbs and anything that small as close to your eyes would be "focused out" by the optic nerve.

IN CONCLUSION

So, it seems that according to Fuji Film and Dr. Maccabee (using repeatable experiments) as well as some discussion with photographers, "orb photos" are not 'ghostly in nature' (unless it's ghostly dust or pollen) and "mists" (we really shouldn't call it "ecto") photos are very difficult to "authenticate".

Are they both complete write-offs? No... but one should be very careful about proclamations of "proof" and should eliminate all possibilities of the 'natural' before jumping to the 'supernatural'.

Should we STOP taking photos? NO! Look at the Brown Lady, the Tulip Staircase and our own photos in Ontario and Nevada... It does seem that photographing a ghostly figure MIGHT be possible.

Keep taking photos but unless it's a SOLID, half-obscured behind an EASILY spotted item orb or your mist comes with a complete list of environmental

controls, sorry, please don't send it to our group.

I know this will probably upset some people but in all honesty for me, it seemed a matter of time before the orb photo phenomena was to a lesser degree completely debunked.

Remember, this is ONLY one type of phenomena! Ghosts and hauntings, in my opinion, are out there but this one type has had it's day and it's time to say "Okay, let's move on."

Matthew Didier (February 6th, 2003)

* - For the record, the Mackenzie House Orb which is linked at the top of this page was taken with a flash AND the window to the direct right in the image had the sun streaming in quite brightly. The mist photo was taken outdoors in swampy conditions where the photographer had to wear hip-waders and admitted to "possibly" smoking during the taking of the photo. Both remain "possibilities" but extremely unlikely as paranormal "proof"... By the way, they were BOTH snapped by GHRs staff members in 1998 and 1997 respectively so no hard feelings and not intentional "frauds".

Comments? Critique? Kudos? Send comments to admin@ontarioghosts.org and please mention that this is about the February 6th orb article. Also, PLEASE do not send orb or mist photos unless they meet the above mentioned criteria.

"I Have That Half Obscured Orb You Wanted!"

In addendum to the Final Orb Article...

After one of our articles (and the final article) about "orb" phenomena went up, we said that "visual orbs" or, one's actually seen and seemingly without natural explanation were definitely something that most paranormal researchers were interested in hearing about. It was just that "photo orbs" seem to have a definitive answer now in the "natural" world.

Now, the most common arguments we've heard so far are as follows...

What about orbs in motion? What about streaking orbs?

Any still photograph that is taken and has an item or thing in the frame that is

moving at a decent rate of speed will produce a "tracer" effect. This can happen on a small scale as well as a large scale (Dr. Maccabee did touch on this in his experimentation) and it is possible for a particle of dust, dander, snow or whatever to be moving very rapidly with seemingly no wind or other element to push it and be caught by the flash. As for the 'dancing orbs' caught usually by infra-red or "no light" cameras and cam corder's, as stated in the original article, these cameras work by projecting out an infra-red beam that, when this beam connects with anything small and close to the lens (or even not too close) will make it appear white and brilliant and if it's a particle caught in a weird draft or an insect flying about, it will appear to be a 'dancing' white ball of light because the infra-red is incapable of showing the detail to the lens and tape in the machine.

If we are to accept that dust particles are everywhere and that this is a common thing, how come *all* our photos don't have orbs?

Like most natural phenomenon, you have to have a series of protocols (naturally occurring) to produce the effect. Although it is absolutely and indisputably true that there is almost no such thing as a completely dust and particle free environment, it's not true that there are large particles of reflective matter flying about at the moment you take your photo or image. We all know that two large storm clouds flying about overhead cause lightning but you can have the right clouds and atmosphere and no lightning will occur. Well, you can be in an extremely dusty, snowy, rainy, etc. condition and manage to snap a photo without an orb. Conversely, you can be in a seemingly unaffected area and because that one particle floats or whatever in front of the lens that you don't see and capture and orb. As the experiments and notes in the original article are and have been repeated, I don't think this is deniable. If the atmosphere was truly full of particles, much like a joke a friend and I have told about the City of London, England, the air would not only be visible but almost have 'texture'. Most of us have been in areas that have been extremely dusty or filled with particles and it's difficult to see and sometimes breath. Thankfully, the majority of our planets atmosphere has only "x" number of large particles in the air per million. Still, in the grand scheme of things, this is a very large number to be discounted and therefore it is impossible to ignore the probability of a particle being photographed as an orb or some such thing.

As an excellent case in point, we were invited to take snap-shots of a haunted location undergoing extreme renovations. This was a large building with five stories. We would go up the stairs to each floor, take a photo of the hallway, go to each office and snap a picture of the doorway into the room and then enter one-pace only (for safety and security reasons as asked by our guide*) and take one or two interior images. In all the photos, only the interior room images had orbs which is understandable as by stepping in to the room, we stirred the air (even that slightly) and the dust, dormant when we snapped our external image, flew into the air. This was not "mounds" or "clouds" of dust but invisible-to-the-

naked-eye amounts but, it's a given that indeed, these were dust flash orbs. (We did repeat the experiment with success.)

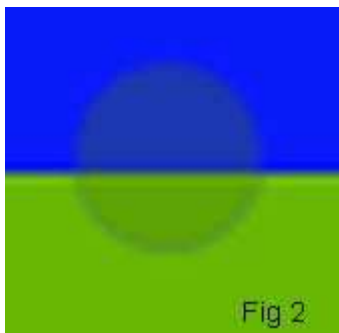
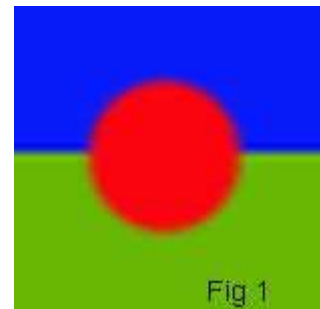
So, initially, no orbs but lots of dormant dust followed by a small stirring and all of a sudden, orbs.

* - *Nota Bella for other Researchers:* We were very fortunate to be allowed to do this photo shoot and one thing that would escape most is I was the only person allowed to go past the stairs at all except for our guide. The reason, my hiking boots are safety boots with a steel toe and shank. Something to consider if being allowed to enter a construction or renovation situation to look around. Proper footwear allowed me greater access.

I have seen MANY half obscured orbs!

Possibly. We too, have had many submitted but, not all of them stand up to scrutiny and I'd like to address this right now...

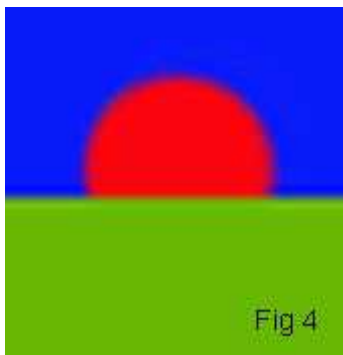
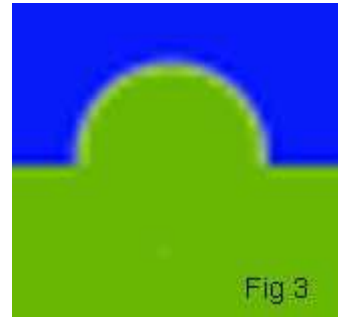
Most orbs, as seen on the right in figure 1 (Fig 1) are in the forefront of the image. not obscured at all but, are usually not so easy to detect as this one we've built for this demonstration but still, very evident and very simple to pick out of the average photo. These types of orbs, whatever their origin may be cannot be accepted as "proof" or valid evidence based on the work seen in the original article in terms of Fuji Film/Cameras and Dr. Bruce Maccabee.



On the left (Fig 2) is more common and note, the background colours bleed through the orb itself. This, in certain situations, can be misleading as if the orbs opacity ("solidness") is very thin, it will appear to be obscured because the background image or colour has bled through to such a degree to make it extremely difficult to tell. Pulling an image like this into a photo editor and viewing an extreme magnification of it *might* lead to seeing it's outline within the item that is reportedly obscuring it but, if the resolution of the image is too low or, again, the orb is does not have enough opacity then it cannot be accepted as truly being *proven* to be obscured. Don't see this as a 'debunking', I would liken this to taking a very fuzzy image of what might be a Sasquatch way off in the distance of a woodland area by mistake (y'know, "I was taking a picture of my kid camping and when I saw the photo after it was developed, I saw this Bigfoot in the background!" even though it's really just a very faint, blurry image of what could be almost anything) and

submitting it to a cryptozoologist as "proof" of the creature on it's own. Needless to say, it really probably won't be accepted as "proof" but a poor researcher would completely deny it without thorough investigation... who knows, right? The problem for ghost researchers everywhere is that people submit photos with blurry orbs that may or may not be obscured and want us to say "By Jingo! You've got yourself a genuine paranormal photo! No doubt!" and needless to say, most of us trying to do good work with evidence cannot say this... and now I hope you can understand why.

The next type we see is the type seen here on the right as figure 3 (Fig 3) which shows an orb of the same (or extremely close) colour to part of it's respective background. Again, the two-dimensional problem comes into play. This orb, although solid and seemingly bisected in an obvious fashion, it is not. In fact, as the "creator" of this image, I can state that indeed, this orb was "pasted" over the two background colours. Again, it is blending and therefore, in a two dimensional world, seems to be obscured even though it is not. This is **very** common in white orbs (most common colour thanks to the flash and/or natural and manmade light sources) and white backgrounds or near-white backgrounds such as light greys or light browns. Again, it's a case of where the image is expected to be accepted because of this possibility and cannot be. For those that have these, we do apologise.



Now, the ideal obscured orb (Fig 4 on the left) is a solid colour and is very easily seen as obscured. This is not as "impossible" as it may seem. Most people's homes and environments are not "pure white" and yet most orbs are white. So, imagine a white orb, bright and clear obscured by a brown chair against a blue wall (or some variation of this). It should be relatively easy and common to do this if we are to believe that the orb is away from the lens and flash and is an entity unto itself in a more 'paranormal' sense.

Like all the articles here, I do wish to point out TWO very important things...

First of all, **we** (the GHRS) are not fully debunking and would accept and appreciate valid evidence. We also are not saying all your images of orbs are dust and other airborne particles but if you wish to have validation, not only to the image being paranormal in origin but as "proof" of ghosts, you must be willing to meet certain criteria. We cannot and will not be able to say "That's a ghost!" in an image unless we were intimately involved with the image being taken and the developing process so we cannot "validate" your photo and would not insult you by trying. Your belief is your belief and what we are asking is that in order to make **us** fully believe or take better stock, please remember that we need

better and more valid evidence... even if someone does supply one of the aforementioned obscured orbs, in our guesstimation, we would need to see this becoming more and more "normal" to see them as opposed to probable lens-orb/flash-orb images.

But in tests, orb phenomena and electro-magnetic fields seem to be linked!

Not to sound rude or nasty but what tests? We would honestly like anyone who has information proving a correlation between "orb photo phenomenon" and increased/decreased/erratic EM field findings *provided* they are done with controlled readings first and with appropriate protocols in place while the readings and photos were taken. (Mean Readings w/no phenomena matched(?) with varied readings w/phenomena.) If you do know of any, please send us a place to find these documents to study. research@ontarioghosts.org

For those interested in the electro-magnetic part of paranormal research and our findings to date, please [click here](#) and read our online article on EMF detectors and EMF studies.

AHA! I have an image of an orb in which I used no flash and no infra-red light source and still have this orb!

To quote parts of the original article...

IF the illumination was right (say with a "sun gun" or other mass light source or with the sun directly behind the photographer and very bright) it too would be enough to cause the "orbs" to appear.

If it truly wasn't "lit" by conventional means, what are the possibilities of reflective particles in the air? **In order to have a "viewable" image, some sort of light MUST be at hand. (There is no image, electronic/film/eyesight viewable in absolute darkness... either infra-red (or similar 'rays') or 'regular' light must be present.)** Certain leaves, insects, dust, pollen, ash, etc. are HIGHLY reflective and could even use moonlight to cause some sort of "orb" in a photo. Again, you would have to eliminate all particles in the air which is, honestly, a virtual impossibility.

But my orb is emitting light, not reflecting it!

Again, to date and with simple knowledge of how photographic equipment works, it is impossible to completely discount reflection as the images themselves are that... reflections. Again, we're not doubting you but, from a "validation of the photo" point of view, it is impossible to look at any image and completely write off reflection as a possible light source.

Next, we can't point out enough that "orb photos/images" are only *one* part of the realm of ghostly phenomenon and just because we're saying that this particular evidence is more than a little bit questionable, it certainly does not answer all the questions and further study and research not only should but must go on.

Again, as said in the original article, "...this is ONLY one type of phenomena! Ghosts and hauntings, in my opinion, are out there but this one type has had it's day and it's time to say 'Okay, let's move on.'"

Update: June 17th, 2003 Apparently, orb photos are now being claimed to be signs of true UFO activity caught on film and called "Tesla Globes". Information is available from [UFO Updates](#) by [clicking this link](#). It seems, photos of "spirit orbs" are not just ghosts anymore... but, now have a home in UFOlogy too.

Every so often, I think everyone sees an idea or thought and says to themselves, "D'oh! Why didn't I think of that!?!?!!"

Well, I am certainly not immune as proven time and time again... and although I can't give out too much, a joint project between ourselves and [ParaResearchers](#) is in the works... and it's about our least favourite issue, orbs.

Now, **our original article on "orbs" stands as it is**, but for those MANY that still feel there's something more than close-up particles of dust, dander... whatever near the lens and caught in the flash, along comes an idea from Dr. Charles Lietzau who is/was also looking into orbs...

Dr. Lietzau is also of a mind of our theories (in fact, in his latest paper that contained this new concept, he does reference our article as a source for his work,) that the phenomenon is not much more than a natural occurrence being blown out of proportion by those who, for whatever reason, need to believe without much real evidence, but still did a large experimentation and took a huge

amount of test photos using a piece of equipment that should have not only occurred to me, but to the elusive housemate who initially triggered our own "Eureka!" about flashes, lens distance and airborne particles... why the old housemate? Well, he actually has played (for fun and artistic reasons) with the equipment that might help people discover more about photographic orbs...

The equipment? A stereo camera.

Stereo cameras are "normal" film cameras with two lenses and (usually) a single flash. The lenses and ergo: The exposures, are slightly offset so that when viewed through certain special "viewers", make the image seem three-dimensional.



Now, that's pretty cool, but the 3-D effect is not what makes this piece of equipment so valuable to "ghost enthusiasts", especially orb-hounds.

You see, with TWO lenses and TWO exposures taken at only slightly different angles but at precisely the same time would negate some (most) airborne particles reflecting a flash.

The concept is, if one frame shows an orb and it's only an illuminated particle, the other lens either should not see the particle at all, or show it with a relatively distinct change in it's brightness.

Now, this tool would not be infallible. In fact, if a large particle was... say... three two five centimeters from the lenses, dead center, and was capture by the flash, then it MIGHT appear as a "real orb" of equal appearance in the photo. The chances, however, in this happening are somewhere between slender and

none... Not impossible, but highly improbable.

Now, we have seen situations where investigators were already on this right track, but not to the same degree of preciseness. Many have mounted multiple cameras on a tripod or other contraption and attempted (sometimes successfully) to take images at the exact same moment using all the cameras. Now, this is okay, but a stereo camera, used properly, would eliminate possible time-changes during the exposures and also, if there was/is a film defect or processing problem, it would negate this too as the two images would show the problems a little better to even the untrained eye.

Now, the REALLY nice bit about this is that stereo cameras run about \$120 Canadian if you shop around so this is not a heavy-duty expensive toy.

So, in my guesstimation, if you have a stereo camera (film please... need those negatives and to be able to back-track the chemical processing) that snaps an orb on BOTH frames that appear identical and that orb IS obviously obstructed by another object (not another orb, but a chair or something like that...), then you either have a photo of a genuine anomaly or an impressive hoax.

There's MUCH more to come on this... but it will take some time... We're still slugging away with Dr. Lietzau's paper and getting ready to discuss this with our own resident experts... but it's coming!

Either way, if you're a believer in orb photos, or even a big-time ghost enthusiast, a stereo camera may not be a bad purchase for the here and now.