

The Kobe Mysterious Consulate of Trick Art

The Kobe Mysterious Consulate of Trick Art is a fascinating and amusing permanent exhibition space that highlights the art of illusion. The two-story Western-style house it occupies was built in the early twentieth century as the residence of a Mr. Hilton and his family; after World War II, it was used as the Panamanian Consulate. The exterior features white plaster walls with dark-green wooden trim. Large fanlight windows on the ground floor and matching window details above, along with a generous entryway and open porch, lend the house an air of upscale dignity. The house has an attached Japanese-style wing with traditional balconies and windows, and a separate service building.

Inside, the immersive exhibition is spread over both floors and divided into six sequential sections: “Kobe Original Series,” “Adventure World,” “The Illusion World,” “Brain Training,” “Masterpieces,” and “The Maze.”

Several large trompe-l’oeil tableaux are designed to be physically entered

by visitors, who then appear to be crushed by a giant Kobe steak, riding a surfboard, attacked by a shark, or trapped inside an overturned wine glass by a giant vampire. Each display includes helpful advice for taking humorous trick photos. Visitors are also invited to interact with room-sized optical illusions that play with one's sense of scale, perspective, reflection, or gravity. A number of intriguing optical puzzles provide additional challenges. The Mysterious Consulate of Trick Art is superbly designed and curated by creators with a whimsical sense of humor. It is an entertaining experience for people of all ages, including families with children, couples, or groups of friends. The exhibition space is operated by the Uroko Group.