



## The Rainbow Gallery

The human eye is limited in what colors it can see. These colors make up what we call the visible spectrum. There are colors beyond the visible spectrum. The lamps used in this room are producing invisible (to the human eye) light, beyond violet called ultraviolet light.

When light shines on minerals, most minerals either reflect all or some of the light back, and they absorb the rest of the light. Some minerals can absorb ultraviolet light and give back the energy as visible colored light. These minerals are fluorescent.

In some cases, the visible light released from the mineral persists for short periods of time after the ultraviolet light is turned off. This is called phosphorescence.

Look at all the different colors produced by the ultraviolet light.

Which minerals glow (phosphoresce) longest after the lights are turned out?

Which is your favorite specimen?