

"ARTEFACT"

A PROPOSAL FOR AN INSTALLATION OF VIRTUAL 'DREAM' ARTEFACTS AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON.
 APRIL 2002.

"ARTEFACT":

The "ARTEFACT" Project would locate "dream" artefacts (similar to the 'dream architectures' constructed for the Panopticon project, <http://caiiia-star.net/panopticon/>) from the V&A collection. These objects/spaces/architectures would have never actually existed beyond the sketch or proposal stage. The objects might also have only existed through a misinterpretation of their original use or social/cultural significance. The project would then reconstruct these objects within an On-Line multi-user VR environment that would be viewed within the museum as a 3D projection through the portal of a glass cabinet.

Deprived of being able to touch and handle these virtual/impossible objects in the real world/museum individuals would be able to virtually 'touch' and manipulate the object within the On-Line multi-user environment on the Internet. Through this process of manipulation the objects would evolve and take on further significance as they are reformed and re-classified through user input. This user input might be collaborative through individuals working together simultaneously manipulating and redefining, or sequential allowing a new form to emerge over a longer period of time. New narratives will evolve around the virtual objects, new functions will be decided, objects may be grouped and linked through a consensual process of interpretation. The ambition is to enable a generative process to evolve through the re-interpretation of the objects, where meaning attributed to an object allows new objects to be formed through associative links.

The virtual collection of the V&A would slowly evolve and multiply, becoming more alive than the 'real' collection of 'dead' objects located within the existing gallery cabinets. The additional cabinets containing the projected images of the virtual objects would enhance the materialisation of the immaterial by denying actual physical contact to the museums visitors. Questions would be raised about the nature of all of the objects located in the museums cabinets, which are real and which are virtual (see figure 1).

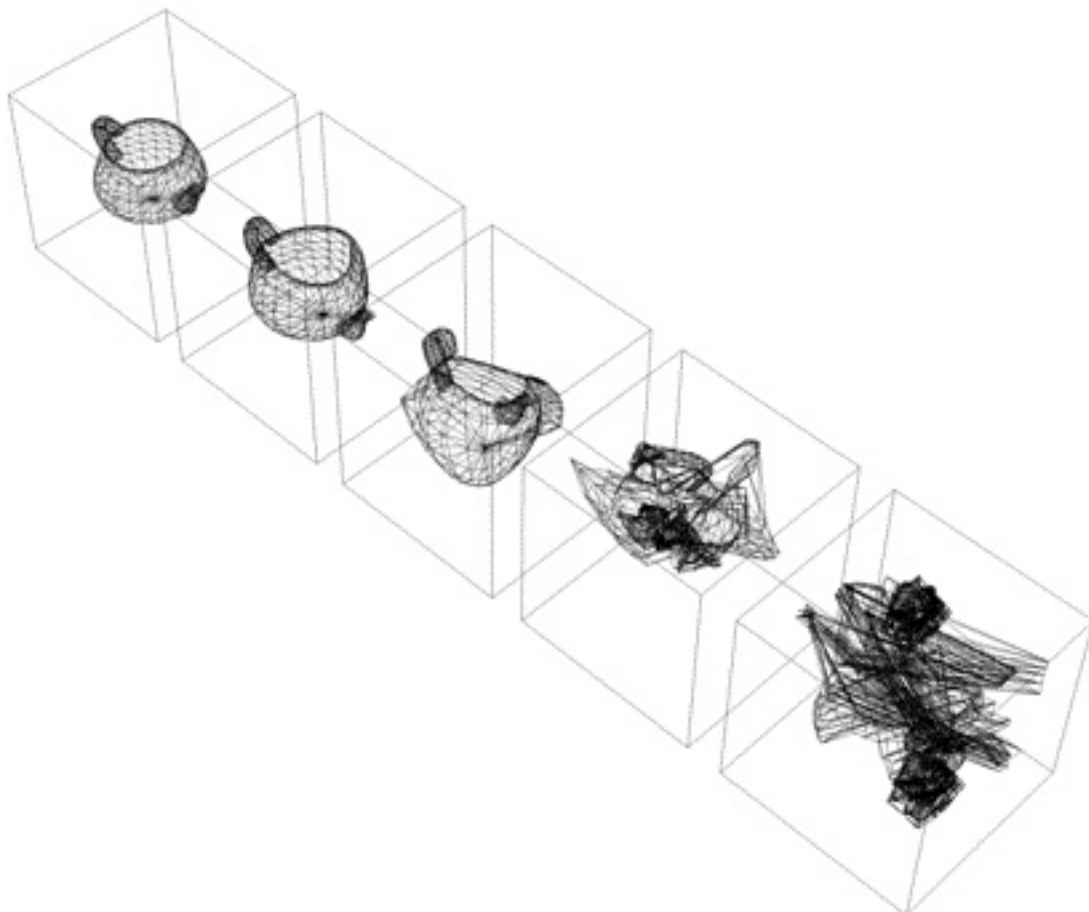


figure 1: Interpret-Transform