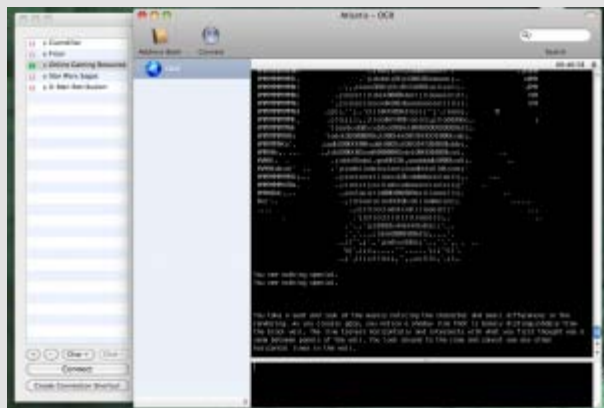


Look Art

02 Aug 2011 • by [Danielle Siembieda](#)

Look Art Screen Shot 1



(1 2 3)

by [Dorothy Santos](#)

We live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning.

~ Jean Baudrillard

In the era of Atari and Apple monochrome computers, the layperson was limited to simple data processing and a nice game of Pong. For the more engaged end user, technology possessed a winsome quality. Virtual environments were once considered new media and presented innovative approaches at understanding and connecting with the world. Within these environments, language was a key component in establishing such venues for social networking. The worlds of Massively Multiplayer Online [Game] (MMO), Multi-User Shared Hack (MUSH), and Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)s explored methods of intersecting game play, creativity, and technology that offered an enriched virtual experience.

Contemporaneously, the image reigns and the sense of sight is predominant in mainstream applications. Ironically, in today's art world, many of the physical artworks one's sees and experiences are derived from concept and involve far less retinal sensation. With mainstream technology aimed more towards convenience, individuals continue to hold onto deep seeded beliefs of what art ought to be, which entails an adherence to art's physical reality (i.e., visiting a museum or a gallery). For the hybrid artist/technologists, the Ars Virtua exhibition, **look art**, returns to language as a means of exploring how art, technology, and philosophy interface to create highly conceptual and thought provoking work.

Archives

[August 2011](#)
[July 2011](#)
[June 2011](#)
[May 2011](#)
[April 2011](#)
[March 2011](#)
[February 2011](#)
[January 2011](#)
[December 2010](#)
[November 2010](#)
[October 2010](#)
[September 2010](#)
[August 2010](#)
[July 2010](#)
[June 2010](#)
[May 2010](#)
[April 2010](#)
[March 2010](#)
[February 2010](#)
[January 2010](#)
[December 2009](#)
[November 2009](#)
[October 2009](#)
[September 2009](#)
[August 2009](#)
[July 2009](#)
[June 2009](#)
[May 2009](#)
[April 2009](#)
[September 2008](#)
[August 2008](#)
[July 2008](#)
[June 2008](#)
[May 2008](#)
[April 2008](#)
[March 2008](#)
[February 2008](#)

Artists Thomas Asmuth, Alejandro Duque, and Christopher Poff re-purposed programming language and older computational methods to provide a nostalgic look at previously used platforms. Gaming and simulated environments are constantly evolving and highly sophisticated. Yet, the foundational language remains the same. Looking at Sol Lewitt's work as a source of inspiration, [Asmuth](#) created portraits using American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) language along with [photo processing](#). Language plays an integral role with the end user's experience and immersion within a simulated environment. Similarly, Duque's work reflects how one builds within a [Multi-Shared Hallucination or Hack \(MUSH\)](#). His virtual environment allows users to create stories based on their command choice. Christopher Poff's work, Art.Meaning (AM), necessitates a participatory discourse on the philosophy of art with a similar multi-user interface. The game requires commands be entered into the game environment to run subsequent text. Sample text from the Art.Meaning (AM) manifesto appears as follows:

Prior to this moment, the Art didn't exist. Certainly, there was the work produced by the Artist, either physical or virtual (or even performative, conceivably), but that, in and of itself, wasn't the Art.

The Art only achieves existence once the Audience (in the context of this particular Gallery space, you) observes the work put forth by the Artist. Only in this act, does Art exist. Think of it as the butterfly that emerges from the cocoon that the Artist has spun.



His use of language is curated well into the **look art** showcase along with Asmuth and Duque. All three artists/technologists use the MMO/MUSH/MUD environments to represent the various forms of concept and image creation (from representational to imagined). The exhibition is a reminder that the rich colors and dynamic graphics of contemporary design and media are visual products of language. **look art** challenges and elicits this much needed discourse. As Ars Virtua Director, James Morgan, states, "Asmuth creates "objects," Poff creates an experience, and Duque creates an environment or space." The artist trifecta gives the viewer new ways to look at how old technologies and explore art in an unorthodox and engaging way.

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January 2008
December 2007
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September 2007

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