

THE ANIMORPHIC ORNAMENT

or

A JOURNEY INTO THE ORGANIC NATURE OF COMPUTER GRAPHICS

Charles Summers & Graham Ovenden



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After an adult lifetime of being engaged with and as an enthusiast for the great Victorian masters of ornamental design, this volume hopes to make some play on their examples and achievements.

The obvious source of departure and influence must include such works as A. W. N. Pugin's *Floriated Ornament of 1849*, Owen Jones's seminal *Grammar Of Ornament 1856*, the Audsley brothers *Polychromatic Decoration as applied to buildings in the Mediaeval Style 1882* and the masterly works by Christopher Dresser, the most seminal being *Studies In Design 1874-76*. Other long held non specific volumes of "designs" would have to include Oliver Byrne's *The Elements Of Euclid of 1847*.

Of the two names who have journeyed together on this project, this "computed" set of images, the first must always be that of Charles Summers the artist and botanist whose exceptional painted and cut collages are the starting point of this evolution (the majority of his constructions are shown within the context of each double page spread and also as an index). The artist Graham Ovenden's contribution is (in the broadest possible sense) that of technical manipulator.

The title given to this work spells the direction in which the two artists have evolved their imagery, both believing that the computer, when given the freedom to direct a specific path of investigation shows results of a unique and richly inventive form. It is not mere whimsy that we should regard the human "computer of the mind" as working in series with that of a non sentient but formidably encompassing mechanism.

We can perceive within the "fashionable geometries" of the last decades of the twentieth century a desire to validate what might be called the apparent arbitrary evolution of circumstance within the greater nature. An example might be the energetic beating of butterfly wings, evolving as a stimulus to the creation of a great storm, half a planet away from its origination.

Perhaps more relevant is the "organic geometry" to be found in the creation of a great work of art. The interleaving of glazes, the overlaying of a medium on a prepared ground: base matter if you will, which by the alchemy of the artist creates a greater plane of existence. Geometry, whether Euclidean or otherwise, is not a discipline created exclusively for the use of the mathematician.

The images within this volume were conceived firstly as painted collages whose theme is organic dissolution and its fecund revival through the seasons - the growing anonymous detritus of a yearly cycle, evolving into the myriad formal complexities of new birth and growth to maturity. The computer graphic when allowed to speak in its own vocabulary has an affinity with this aspect of nature and equally, its multi layering of design and colouring, holds many manifestations not dissimilar to the great Dr. Dresser's creation *Old Bogey*. Is this the demon within - who like the Green Man, seems to be amongst the true denizens of this complex evolution?

Dresser and his like minded colleagues conceived their designs within the context of flat geometric pattern making. The computer is able to hold a multitude of fragmented textures virtually beyond the abilities of man's hand to recreate, thus enabling many of the following works to offer their own particular vocabulary to the observer.



Old Bogey Dr Christopher Dresser 1867





















