



VENEER

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10th June – 27th June, 2009

James Harney

A Message from the Decorative Plastic Veneer Association:

Greetings. Now is as good a time as ever to enter into a realm of... Veneer!

The Decorative Plastic Veneer Association proudly stands firm on an important foundational value – that *superficiality* equals beauty. We believe that the tired old cliché of 'truth is beauty' was long destined for meaninglessness in the face of inevitable changes in our world that have gradually paved the way for this fresh and welcomed reality we experience today. We acknowledge, advocate and celebrate the beauty of decorative plastic veneer, and the small yet magical role it has and can help play in shaping the course of history.

Although *veneering* is an ancient art, the birth of decorative plastic veneer arose from a tendency in the culture of our past century to recognize that a decent representation is as good as, if not better than the original. The blossoming of materialistic sentiment that occurred during the 1950s can perhaps be pinpointed as a prime moment in which the urge to 'cover up' was encouraged on a wider scale than had ever been witnessed before. By the 1980s a nearly endless variety of veneers were made available to the consumer, each emblazoning its own authentic, all natural-looking wooden facade: bamboo, blackbean, butternut, cedar, cherished wood, chestnut, ebony, eucalyptus, lacewood, mahogany, maple, natural zebrand, palisander, pearwood, pine, premium flake, silver ash, sublime teak, sycamore, walnut, waxed oak, wild birch. We look back on those days with great warmth and delight in our sense of accomplishment.

While superficiality has continued to manifest and remain in vogue in various other aspects of day-to-day life, we wish to raise awareness that levels of common recognition of the worth of a strong decorative plastic veneer have experienced a decline in recent years. 'Rustic' has become a derogatory term, while it seems metal or monochrome plastic are your only options if you wish to participate in today's 'gadget' world. Last year, our comprehensive research discovered that, on average, a maximum of only three unimaginative styles of decorative plastic veneer were scarcely available for sale in most hardware franchises, and these were often carelessly deposited out of sight in back aisles.

What can be made of this regression is that the very *precession of simulacra*<sup>1</sup> currently lies at stake. With great conviction we maintain the belief that the actions of our Association can help make a unique and significant contribution to the mission of fabricating a world in which simulation *is* reality. Our aim is to be recognized as the leading authority on decorative plastic veneer and decorative plastic veneer panel products in Australia. We strive to be actively involved in the promotion and expansion of decorative veneer panel manufacture, to develop industry standards, to provide education for newly anointed veneer enthusiasts, and to establish a forum for networking our society's members.<sup>2</sup>

Please, support our mission. Begin today by plastering every object you own with a blindingly beautiful thin outer layer. It can only be agreed that battered old chairs, television sets, chests and dressers appear so much more enticing when they are sealed with sumptuous sheen of veneer. Yet why stop in the home, when outside dog houses, boats, fences, car hub caps, emotions, telephone boxes, street signs, identities, trees, airplanes and opinions await their moment to be shrouded by a false oak film?

Help us erase that unnecessary, obtrusive rhetorical question - 'what lies beneath the surface?' – because the truth is: there is no such thing as beneath. Surface is all that matters.

Tim Maybury

<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulation and Simulacra*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Appropriated from Decorative Wood Veneers Association website: <http://www.woodveneer.asn.au/>

THANKYOU: The Firstdraft Directors, particularly Will French for his shop know-how and Di Smith for her support, Susie Feldbusch, Neil at DR WHAT! and Tim Maybury for his creative response to *Veneer*.

firstdraft

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Fig.1

Select veneer VHS from the library.

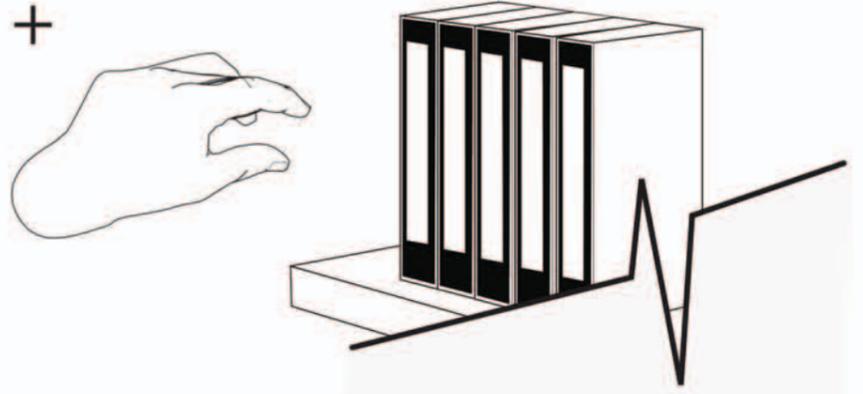


Fig.2

Remove for sleeve and insert into the VCR player.

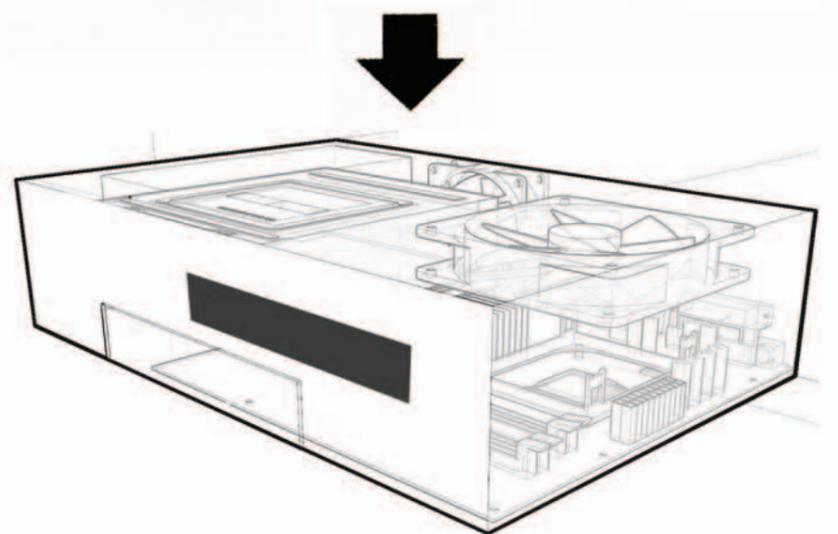
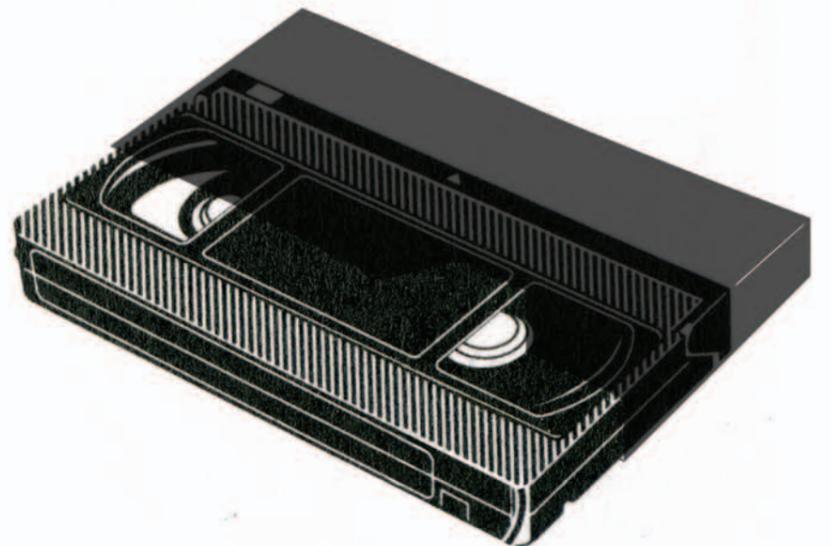


Fig.3

Play, Stop and Eject. Repeat actions as above.

