

## **THE GOLDEN CALF**

**Linz 1995**

The history of art exemplifies a complex set of negotiations between body and space - negotiations between the actual domain of the real body of the viewer and the real space he inhabits and the virtual domain of the represented body and represented spaces. The narrative extension is the temporal body in space. The ritual extension is the liturgical body in sacred space. The interactive extension is the body affecting space. And nowadays there is the virtual extension of mediated bodies and hyper spaces.

In **THE GOLDEN CALF** the viewer holds a colour monitor screen in his hands, and by moving it around an bare pedestal sees a virtual Golden Calf standing on this pedestal. The monitor is a large flat LCD screen with a spatial tracking system attached to it so that the graphics computer system is able to present the appropriate view of the Golden Calf depending on the whatever position the viewer is holding the screen in relation to the pedestal. This Golden Calf has a very shiny mirror-like skin, and the viewer can see that the actual room of the installation is being reflected there (this is achieved by taking photographs of the room beforehand and then digitizing these images into the computer to create a scene of the room that can then be 'reflection mapped' in real time onto the calf in relation to the position of the screen). The immateriality of this Golden Calf is further emphasised by the fact that only its outer surfaces have been modelled in the computer - so that when the viewer moves the screen inside the calf's body, there are no interior surfaces to be seen (only in the world of digital representation can one constitute a three dimensional surface that only has one side!).

In this work the body is no longer a corporal idolotrous object, but has become an intangible subject of fascination. Moving the screen up, down and around the pedestal to view the Golden Calf, the viewer's inadvertantly perform a ritual dance around the technological pilaster which construes this almost tangible phantasm.

Representation is, and always was, the domain of both our embodied and disembodied yearnings, and it is in the friction of this conjunction that we experience the euphoric dislocation of our present condition.