



Altar Show Getting Started Guide

Questions? Comments? Feedback? Crazy ideas? We'd love to talk! Drop us a line at contact@altarvirtual.com.

Tutorials and Help

We've uploaded a series of Tutorial videos to YouTube! The entire playlist is ~14 minutes long, and it's definitely worth checking out before trying out Show. You can access it here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpom9Tw45-czO5sT8S-jqyih4jV9bnr-6>.

Additionally, there are Tutorials in-app. To access them, simply press the menu button on your secondary controller (the little button above the Thumbpad on your Secondary Controller). Or, pull the Tutorials icon off of the Palette (see the **Controls > Using the Configuration Palette** section below). You will see a platform with the Altar logo, as well as icons for each Tutorial. To begin a Tutorial, touch a Tutorial icon with your Primary Controller. Pull the Trigger on your Primary Controller to begin the Tutorial.

We also offer an in-app cheat sheet, which can be accessed by dragging and releasing the Info icon on the Palette (see https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=sXoaa-ls2gY, a quick 30 second video that features the Palette; the Info icon was added after the video was filmed, so you won't see the icon at the center of the Palette in the video).

What does it mean to Think in 3D?

We built Altar Show with the goal of externalizing your thoughts. Or, in other words, *Thinking in 3D*. The easiest intuition is to think about a mindmap, or perhaps a great white-boarding session. Show provides unique tools that really leverage 3D so you can build physical representations of your thoughts. As an example of one way to use *spatial thinking*, we've created a primer on AR/VR using Show: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=j2LXAa3qjxE>.

Is there a feature you want? Tell us. We're flexible!

One of the great parts about being in our closed Early Access program is that your feedback is extremely valuable to us! If you want a feature, have an idea, need a bug fixed, want to see an aesthetic change...just let us know!

I. Launching the application

Make sure your HTC Vive is configured. If you're using a Roomscale set-up, make sure you've cleared any obstacles from your space!

Then, just launch the application!

The controller with the Icon should go in your dominant hand. We'll call this the "Primary Controller". The controller without the Icon should go in your non-dominant hand; this is the "Secondary Controller".

II. Controls

Teleporting

To move around in Altar Show, you can use the Teleporter. To Teleport, just press and hold the Grip on your Secondary Controller. When the Teleporter is pointed at a valid location, you will see a green arc. The end of this arc will contain a small, flat circle; this is here you will Teleport to once you release the Grip.

Selecting your Tool

Altar Show gives you a number of Tools which let you create and interact with your thoughts in a number of ways. There are three tools: the Move Tool, the Draw Tool, and the Tag Tool.

To select your Tool, press the Application Button on your Primary Controller (small circular button above the Primary Thumbpad). Press the Application Button once for the Move Tool, twice for the Draw Tool, and three times for the Tag Tool. Note that each Tool has its own Icon, which is always visible on your Primary Controller.

Moving objects

Moving objects in Altar Show is something you'll be doing very frequently! So, it has its own section.

To Move objects, you first must be using the Move Tool. You will know you're using the Move tool when you see an Icon with crossed arrows on your Primary Controller. (See the section on *Selecting your Tool*).

Once you have the Move Tool selected, when there is a virtual object in front of you (such as a Bubble), touch the object with your Primary Controller. It should start vibrating and highlight green. Once your Primary Controller is vibrating, pull and hold the Trigger on your Primary Controller; the object will now follow your Controller until you let go of the Trigger.

Gesturing

Altar Show features a unique shortcut to create various items: Gestures. Gestures are just what they sound like: gestures that you make with your hand!

To start a Gesture, simply press and hold the Thumbpad on your Primary Controller. Release the Thumbpad when you're done creating the Gesture. See the section below on *Gesturing* for more details about the types of Gestures currently supported in Altar Show.

Using the Configuration Palette

Sometimes, you'll want to change the configuration of content that you've created. To do that, there is a Configuration Palette.

The Configuration Palette is located on your Secondary Controller. To activate it, turn your Secondary palm towards your face so that the Secondary Trigger is pointing directly at the VR headset.

You will see five labeled icons: Delete, Configure, Import, Screenshot, and Minimap. We'll skip Minimap for now since this feature is coming soon!

Delete and Configure

To use either the Delete or Configure options, touch the desired icon with your Primary Controller. Once your Primary Controller is vibrating and the desired icon has a green highlight, press and hold the Primary Trigger. Drag the icon to the object you wish to Configure, while still holding the Trigger. A series of new icons should appear. Drag the original icon into whichever Configuration Options you'd like, and release to Select.

Import

To use the in-app imports, simply drag the Import icon off of the Palette and release. A circular "bucket" containing objects in your Imports folder will now appear. To bring an item into your Show, just drag it off of the bucket and release!

Screenshot

To take a screenshot, drag the icon off the Palette but *keep your Primary Trigger pressed!* If you release your Primary Trigger while the Palette is still open, the Screenshotter will close without capturing a screenshot. If you release your Primary Trigger after closing the Palette, a screenshot will be captured and saved to the / Exports folder.

Information icon

Towards the center of the Palette is an Information icon. Drag this icon off the Palette and release; a cheat-sheet will now appear! To remove the cheat-sheet from the environment, just use the Delete icon from the Palette.

Tutorial icon

Towards the center of the Palette is a Tutorial icon. Drag this icon off the Palette and release; a set of Tutorials will now appear! To close the Tutorials, either press the menu button on your Secondary Controller, or tap and Trigger the Tutorial which says "Close the Tutorials".

How do you Gesture?

Gesturing is very simple. To start making a Gesture, just press and hold the Thumbpad on your Primary Controller. You'll know you're Gesturing when green ink trails behind your Controller as you move it.

What can you Gesture?

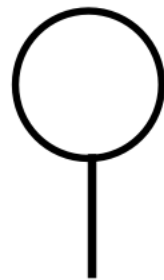
Right now, Altar Show supports three Gestures. They are shown below:

Mediaboard



a square makes a
Mediaboard

Bubble



a lollipop makes
a Bubble

Relation



How do you cancel a Gesture?

To cancel a Gesture while you're in the middle of making it, just press the Secondary Trigger. The green ink will disappear.

Link to a video:

III. 3D Sketching

What is a 3D Sketch?

A 3D Sketch is exactly what it sounds like...a Sketch in 3D space! It's an extremely easy and quick way to start taking notes, brainstorming, sketching an idea, mocking up a room, etc.

How do you 3D sketch?

First, switch to the Draw Tool (see the section on *Selecting a Tool*). To start 3D Sketching, just press and hold the Primary Trigger. As you move your hand, ink will follow. To finish Sketching, just release the Trigger.

How can you change the color of the Draw Tool?

Although this will change soon, right now, the Mediaboards and the 3D Sketching both use the same Draw Tool. To change its color, you'll want to first create a Mediaboard. Then, you'll drag the Configuration Icon to the Mediaboard (as described in Controls > Using the Configuration Palette), and a color/width wheel will appear. Release the Configuration Icon in the desired color/width to select it. The next time you 3D Sketch, its color/width should reflect your selection.

Can I move a 3D Sketch?

At the moment, you can't. That's going to change very soon :)

A note on undo/redo

You can undo your most recent 3D Sketch by squeezing the Primary Grip. We currently don't support redos.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mbb9lhoErs&list=PLpom9Tw45-czO5sT8S-jqyih4jV9bnr-6&index=3>

IV. Mediaboards

What are Mediaboards?

Mediaboards are like virtual whiteboards, and they can also handle images (support for movies is planned). You can make as many of them as you'd like.

How do you make a Mediaboard?

To make a Mediaboard, use the Mediaboard Gesture. See the *Gesturing* section for more detail.

How do you draw on a Mediaboard?

To draw on a Mediaboard, first switch to the Draw Tool (see *Selecting a Tool*). Once you have the Draw Tool, simply touch a Mediaboard to start drawing. Note that you can draw on both sides of a Mediaboard.

Unlike real whiteboards on real walls, there's no wall to push back on your hand while you draw on a virtual whiteboard, so it takes a little bit of practice to calibrate yourself to drawing on a Mediaboard. We promise that it's easy to get the hang of!

How do you change the color/width you're drawing with?

To change the color that you're drawing with, you use the Configuration Icon from the Configuration Palette (see Controls > Using the Configuration Palette). You'll drag the Configuration Icon to the Mediaboard, and a color/width wheel will appear. Release the Configuration Icon in the desired color/width to select it. The next time you draw on a Mediaboard, color/width should reflect your selection.

How do you erase a Mediaboard?

One of the color options for the Mediaboard is the same color as the board itself. This is currently how you erase a drawing.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slDii4TpuXE>

V. Bubbles

What are Bubbles?

Bubbles are at the core of spatial thinking with Altar Show. A Bubble is a nestable container, which you can dive inside of.

How do you make a Bubble?

To make a Bubble, use the Bubble Gesture. See the section on *Gesturing* for more detail.

How do you enter a Bubble?

To enter a Bubble, place your Secondary Controller inside of the Bubble until the text “Enter Bubble” appears on the Secondary Thumbpad. Press the Secondary Thumbpad to enter.

How do you exit a Bubble?

You also use the Secondary Thumbpad to exit a Bubble. When the Secondary Thumbpad contains text which says “Exit Bubble”, pressing the Secondary Thumbpad will exit the Bubble!

How do you change the color or shape of a Bubble?

To change the color or shape of a Bubble, you use the Configuration Icon from the Configuration Palette (see Controls > Using the Configuration Palette). You'll drag the Configuration Icon to the Bubble, and a small color wheel and three small shapes will appear. Drag the Configuration Icon into the desired sub-menu, then drag the Configuration Icon to the option you want, and release to select it. Depending on what you selected, the color or shape of the Bubble will change.

How do you nest Bubbles?

To nest a Bubble within another Bubble, simply enter the first Bubble then create a new Bubble once you're inside.

Note that, right now, we've capped the number of nesting layers to 2. You can make a Bubble within a Bubble, but not a Bubble within a Bubble within a Bubble.

How can I move things in and out of Bubbles?

To move an object into a Bubble, you'll just want to be Moving the object while you enter/exit the Bubble. For example, to bring a Mediaboard into a Bubble, you first switch to the Move tool and grab the Mediaboard. Then, you enter the Bubble. Now, the Mediaboard has been moved inside of the Bubble. Currently, we don't support moving Bubbles into/out of other Bubbles dynamically.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQlepBOZlHY>

VI. Relations

What is a Relation?

A Relation is a way to express Relationships between thoughts, ideas, topics, etc. Right now, Relations are visualized as simple arrows...but, rest assured, we have lots of fun stuff planned for these, since Relationships are such an enormous part of how people think!

How do you make a Relation?

To make a Relation, use the Relation Gesture. See the section on *Gesturing* for more detail.

How do you add a Relation to a Bubble?

Once you've made a Relation, you can now add it to a Bubble. First, switch to the Move Tool. Then, grab the desired node of the Relation, and drag it on top of the desired Bubble. When you release the node, the small empty node will disappear and be replaced by the Bubble. If you now Move the Bubble, you'll notice that the Relation follows.

How do you change the color or directionality of a Relation?

To change the color or directionality of a Relation, you use the Configuration Icon from the Configuration Palette (see Controls > Using the Configuration Palette). You'll drag the Configuration Icon to the Relation, and a small color wheel and three small shapes will appear. Drag the Configuration Icon into the desired sub-menu, then drag the Configuration Icon to the option you want, and release to select it. Depending on what you selected, the color or directionality of the Bubble will change.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrIO5-ar9mM>

VII. Tag

What are tags?

Tags are metadata about content in Altar Show. They're extremely useful for naming items, describing their contents, or expressing anything else. Right now, Tags are text-based, and may be applied to Bubbles and Relations. However, we're significantly expanding the functionality of the Tags soon.

How do you make a Tag?

To make a Tag, first switch to the Tag Tool. See the section on *Selecting a Tool*.

Once you have the Tag Tool selected, touch the desired Bubble or Relation, and press the Primary Trigger. Surrounding objects will move

away from you, a keyboard will appear, and the soon-to-be-tagged object will sit above the keyboard.

To type on the keyboard, pull the Trigger on the Controller which is highlighting the desired key. NOTE: you must be clicked into the application window in order for the keyboard to work!

How do you edit a Tag?

Editing a Tag is the same as creating a new Tag, except this time you'll touch and Trigger an object which already has a Tag.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv2K2luEGkE>

VIII. Saving/Loading

How do you save a Show?

The interface for Saving/Loading a Show is currently Desktop-based. To Save a Show, navigate to the window of the Altar Show application on your computer. Simply click "Save".

How do you load a Show?

To load a Show, type the full name (including extension) of the Show into the text field at the top of the Altar Show application window. Click "Load". The application will pause for a short time while the Show loads in.

Where are saved Shows located?

To access a saved Show, go to the File Explorer. In the Location Bar, enter "%USERPROFILE%\AppData\LocalLow\Altar\Show\Saved" and press return.

Note that Shows are automatically named to reflect the date at which they were created. You can, and probably want to, change the name of the Show once you've saved it.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pwJwBeIkGU>

IX. Importing

What can you import?

Right now, we support importing the following file-types: .PNG, .JPG, .PDF, and .OBJ (.OBJ support is experimental, and will improve over time). Support for many more types of content is planned.

How do you import things?

First, navigate to the Imports folder, which is located at /Users/[THIS-USER]/AppData/LocalLow/Altar/Show/Imports/. Drag the desired file into this folder. Note that if you want to import a .OBJ, drag the .OBJ file itself as well as any .MTL or texture files into the Import folder, and make sure to give them all the proper names as specified in the .OBJ and .MTL files.

How do you manipulate imported objects?

Images

Images will be displayed onto Mediaboards, so interactions with them will be the same as for any Mediaboard.

PDFs

PDFs are displayed on Mediaboards, but drawing on those Mediaboards is disabled. Instead, touching an imported PDF Mediaboard with the Draw Tool will scroll the PDF. Advanced PDF functionality such as thumbnail manipulation and annotation isn't supported yet, but if you want to see it in the application, definitely let us know!

OBJs

Interactions for OBJs are the same as interactions for Mediaboards.

Link to a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pwJwBeIkGU>



Altar Show