

Tuesday 5th of June: Visit of the exhibition



From the publication you can take at the exhibition:

Remote Contact is a new exhibition that invites you to explore the ideas of how creative uses of technology might enhance feelings of connection and tackle isolation. Co-designed with individuals and their families living with dementia, *Remote Contact* presents a series of interactive artworks exploring how sensory and generative¹ technologies can enhance connections between families and their relatives in care.

https://issuu.com/invisibleflock/docs/rc_booklet_issue

introduction opening evening by Ben Eaton / technical director

How do you interact with people with dementia. Try to understand what touch means for the people around them. Select six people and spend some time with them. Installations are responses to that.

Three families in care house. All had a photo album. Memories are what binds them. Much stronger responses while you can blow up parts of the photos.

Motion print- play with putty. Makes abstract shapes, *create an aesthetic layer underneath the physical interaction.*

Gloves, title is based on "I wanna hold your hand – beatles song". Favorite song of one of the couple.

To put a Digital layer of friction in between normal behaviour – so people start to talk /think about it.
Glove in between holding hands, digital photos/videos in between looking in photo album.

Rain/monitor: we were *interested to create litte experiences that augment the natural interactions we have.*

Optic sense: you hit the puck and then interact with the tv/screen through a tangible object. Research touch/physicality to interact with virtual stuff.

Water synthesizer: for children. Get your hands wet.

¹ What does this mean? Online the only translation that might fit is: "In my mind, a "generative" platform translates to something like this: *a platform that is constantly being re-invented in surprising new ways by a diverse group of creators, where individuals, hobbyists, small startups, and amateurs compete on a level playing field with large incumbents.*"
<https://stevenberlinjohnson.com/what-does-generative-mean-anyway-794ddb5231c8>

The next day I walked through the exhibition with Carey. Underneath a transcript of the audio recording of our conversation.

1. Monitor with Kinect



C: We are touching just with our hands. We then look like one person.

M: I am not inclined to *feel* the touching while I am watching the screen and play with the installation and put my focus there. It's not about exploring touch, just one touch is relevant.

C: it could be, there could be different kind of touches if it was programmed as such. It is just recognizing your hands.

C: it's funny that when you hold hands, you feel protected but you get wet. So it's inversed protection. You hear the rain when you hold hands. Almost the opposite of what you expect. Now it becomes romantic, being together in the rain.

M: very nostalgic image

C: it's like a bad song, Barry Manilow, I like Pina Cola.

SO: A lot of semiotic histories, if you like.

M: it does not give me space to have a lot of fantasy.

C: you are kind of in that space

M: looking at the screen

C: you are in a film.

You could not look at the screen. That is quite different. Feels much more physical in a way.

M: yes then our focus is here, on ourselves.

M: I would expect that the technology is a bit more sensitive. Getting me out of the illusion, very clear cut. Makes it rough.

C: that is kind of nice in a way.

M: its got a delay

C: what other questions would you ask here?

M: let me think

C: image is quite enchanting – like wearing a long gown

M: giacometti, very thin, statue quality, carved in stone

C: very blocky

M: a statue for a romantic encounter, for our intimacy

M: what would make me explore a bit more?

The tekst is very demanding: find a partner, put on headphones

C: it's not an invitation. I could be annoyed, being told like this what to do.

M: it's limiting, why did they chose hands?

C: holding hands is socially accepted in museum

M: also related tot the photos, the couple story behind us

M: what I like is that the camera is not making a still, not a selfie.

It's ongoing, moving. Never stand still.

C: It does make you want to move. It does make you touch.

M: But framed by technology

C: no, it could have been the full body, so it is framed by the choices of the artist

M: the quality of the image makes you stand still, makes you breath

M: what about the aesthetics of the installation.

You see the cables. Wood. How about the size of the monitor/screen.

C: I like the size of it, it makes you want to stand together to fit in.

M: I can stand quite far from you.

You can see us a bit in the distance because the image is a bit smaller then the real size of our bodies.

It looks like snow. But you hear rain.

C: its saying: Here is the technology and you can work out yourself how it works.

You do have to learn how to touch to make the sound.

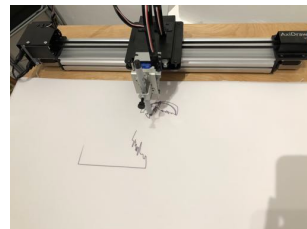
M: its not doing something with *how* we hold hands

C: no that's the other one, this is just general holding hands, the other installation with the gloves is measuring strength, heartrate etc.

C: everything has wood, continuity for the whole exhibtion. Some kind opposition of the technology, I suppose.

M: I see that a lot, technique combined with 'real/raw' material, the actuality, the here-and-now, get it out of the bits and bytes.

2. I Wanna Hold Your Hand / Data GLOVES



C: how does it work?

M: you put it on

Text on information shield:

place glove on hand

Press reset to clear the screen

M: seems like xyz axis are recorded, and it has pressure sensors

C: if you hold it like that, does that change?

M: not really changing

C: the visualisation makes you touch – you want to work out what is happening

M: you can't walk around because of the wire

C: it's not quite clear what the pressure sensors are

M: this one is the prototype, it will have printed sensors but it's not finished

C: I was reading the figures as my data, but it's pre recorded data of the other couple

M: the nice thing about having something on your hand, you immediately start being more sensitive of your hand, you start to move around with it more, and i like the fact that there is this hole, you can still see my skin.

C: I thought it was a kind of heat sensor, while your hands are very warm. As if it was a kind of heat pattern.

M: its just me, i am a little heater ☺

M: for me its a bit tight so i try to make it more comfortable, start moving.

M: it's kind of soloist experience

C: is that because you need to think about Phil and Judy?

M: they listened to Phil and Judy when they were walking and recorded them. You are now watching the data they ensembled. At first they were holding hands in a very loving way, but as time progresses, the touching changed. More and more to support each other, less loving. I am not sure this is really 'true' or the artists imagined that. ***Can we visualize this change of intention, can you somehow capture that.***

M: it feels like the circle is some kind of timeline.

GSR is about heat.

C: they are mapping what...

M: is this a pressure sensor?

C: it feels like this movement is stretching the lines

Can you make it faster?

M: how does it make you feel? Somehow confusing the historical data next to actual data.

C: it is now visualising movement rather than touch in a way

It's a way of transcribing what touch is – movement, pressure

Transcript of touch. Transcript of the walk.

M: is the glove touching you? Are you very aware of your hand?

C: very aware of the glove in relation to the material.

M: more about materiality, then about touching or communicating.

C: I feel I am communicating with the screen.

Artist collaborator: "You should put on the other glove as well, then its more about holding hands."

M: its got something to do with the words on the sign – it says put it on one hand.

That's why we put it on one hand

Artist collaborator: "Better to put them on in pairs"

C: that's a very different experience.

Wires coming out.

M: communication with the glove.

Touching yourself.

Opposed to holding the other.

C: if you turn your back on the screen, that's interesting.

If you would do that, and then print the visualisation there would be not immediate translation.

You would have to think about what it would be, the drawn figure.

More of a surprise.

M: it's just a beautiful drawing

C: you wouldn't connect it to the drawing or what i have done, but you would have to think about what it was / how you made it.

Again one doesn't want a visualisation because we are staring at it.

You want to focus on what you are doing.

M: ohterwise you lose the focus on what you are doing

3. TEXTS on monitor

Responses collected during the research done by the artists.

Quotes from the interviews with the three couples.



I think we always have held hands.

It's mainly hand holding. I try to brush her hair.

Always holding hands and he will always say I love you.

He touches my shoulder.

When we are in the kitchen or anywhere else.

You just put a hand on my shoulder if I am doing something.

It is just comforting to me.

We are always hugging and kissing.

Very tactile, we always have been.

very tactile, I love him to bits.

Now when we walk we hold hands.

But it's more for the practical reasons.

But we always walked and held hands.

She walks up to me and holds my fingers and pulls my finger.

She makes it very clear, you are coming with me, but it's lovely.

I love it, it shows faith doesn't it?

Holding hands.

On a garden bench in the flower garden in Southampton

In 1976.

Any of the staff in here will tell you

The only time he really lights up is when i come in

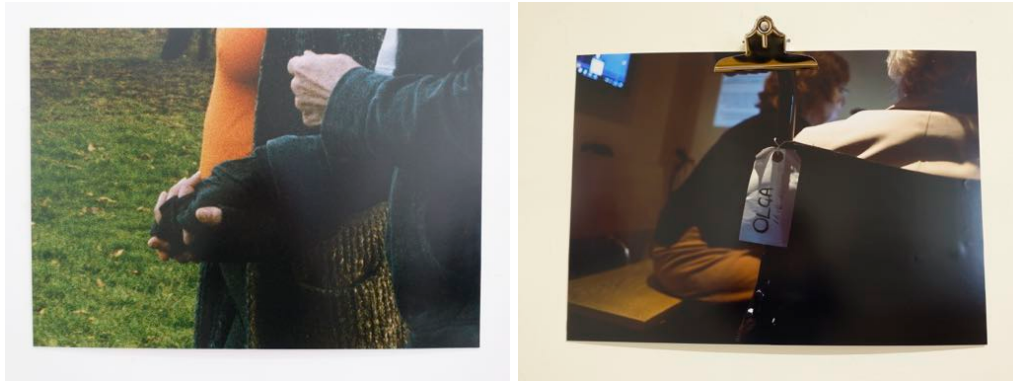
Hugs all the time and kisses.

M: it would have been interesting to read the quotes at the entrance. The texts are a lot about hands etc. My sensitivity to grab your hand would have been totally different.

M: But, maybe it would have taken me out of MY experience of holding hands.

C: its not so much about the experience itself.

4. PHOTOS



The images / photos around are taken at the carehome.

M: Common reference about touching –

C: or the opposite to that ..

They make me think about touch in a family context

My mum, she doesn't really ever touch you, so I had to train her to touch me.

She is a very unphysical person. I would be the one that likes to hug her. Now she hugs me back. She feels very uncomfortable. She grew into that with me, not in general. Not tactile. She loves me very much but not at all tactile.

M: now when I think a bit more about these pictures, I realize that the images are very coloured, these pictures / texts, they are very much about this physical communication that starts to come back when you are much older. If you have dementia, it's as if you see the child coming back, asking for another kind of communication. These pictures are all very loving, caring.

However I also see documentaries where people are hurting each other, or dislike to be touched, they get very scared or aggressive, waking up trauma's. But on these images, its very much about the couples. The love in between people.

C: *Touch as a possitive memory of being together.*

M: Quite idealistic. I would love to have these memories. Is it really that beautiful?

C: yes, but you would have to really probe people to share their negative memories about touch. Thats how memories work. There is a sense that touch is a positive thing – that is very dominant.

M: But a bit unreal in that sense...

I am not immediately triggered to think a bit more ...

C: It does make us think about these other types of touch as well.

Although it is overwhelmingly positive.

M: yes, but it took a while

C: the idea that touch in a family context is always good

M: and in a caring home its also lovely, nurses that want to touch, memories coming back, also positive.

But in this time and age --- its not really true

C: it is a very particular image of touch

M: which started with us in the rain

C: yes

MEMORY ALBUM



Artist collaborator: "If it goes blank, that is because not all of the rfid items have 16 photos"

C: It is very funny to turn a physical page of a digital image. Strange but nice. Because the image moves, you can make the image move. A little delay. It feels strange to touch somebody's else's photos. Feels very intrusive.

M: Not to look at them, but to touch them, choose how long you look at it, change them.

C: Really unusual to see the family photos of somebody you don't know. I haven't got photos from my childhood. We didn't have a camera. I have a couple, very few.

M: very interesting that you can mould them, fragment them, distort them, make them bigger, weird while you do that with somebody else's photos. My attention is directed to the interactivity; me playing with the images more than contentwise, what is actually on the images. The inclination is there because of the playfulness of the interaction. Not directly to touching the paper, but more playing, then watching the content.

Artist collaborator: "technically it sees you are folding the pages, but it doesn't count the pages.

You can add photos, or take a smaller fragment of a photo and blow it up, for it to become more communicative again."

C: It's different then seeing them on a Ipad. This takes more time.

M: There is a contradiction between paper and digital.

M: I like the set up – altar, lecturer, as in museum

C: I also like the light box

M: Sometimes it goes on, or goes off, without a clear reason

Artist collaborator: "It should read the handmovements, the light would go on if the hand is moving."

M: It gives a bit of magical twist.

C: It is working but very subtle

M: That is nice

M: Magical in combination with the physical objects, the here-and-now

C: This looks like a video

M: it is a video

C: The video is very affecting, i prefer the moving images.

M: I like the simpleness of the whole thing, it has magic and stays plain / sober

C: Especially with this multi exposed image

If it is your own family and they are sending these photos, uploading them in your album, that is about touch.

M: My children would ask me why don't you send it to my mobile.

C: That's another target group

M: To play with them is nice, I can look at them very closely, and then they can change on the spot.

While looking somebody sends me something.

6. MOTION PRINTS; Monitor table with clay



C: it's really tough

M: muscle training

C: it's so relaxing, it's what i need to do

M: It makes a little fluctuation when I am doing that...

C: It only measures your muscle tension

M: whohaa

C: phaofwha

C: how is the image relating to what I am doing?

Artist collaborator: "It is not a direct translation of what you are doing. It is more mapping the way you interact. It creates an image response on how your muscle relates to touch. Intense or more tense movements. Very much about changes. If you do one thing too long, it calms down."

M: a bit more sensitive then yesterday.

M: you can really 'break' the clay.

What I find nice is that you also have the physical feedback also, the trembling of the armband.

C: I try to make my visualisation go to your side

So exciting

M: what about communication

C: I don't really want to talk to you – I don't want to chat. It's really absorbing. But it does feel like doing something together as well. But it feels very meditative, relaxing. As if I am making something but I am not really.

M: what i like, it is very much what it is. It doesn't give you many other associations.

C: you start copying each other though.

M: you mirror the other

C: mimicking each other movements, learning how to play with this thing.

M: it is a very specific touch, very much related to strength.

It is very much involving because it really asks you to put in power, concentration.

C: does it remind you of anything?

Reminds me of wringing out cloths.

Being on the beach, wringing out your swimming suit.

M: also bakery, making bread

C: I do make bread. But I do it in a different way, you have a bowl and then basically you pull it and then you fold it. You turn the bread every hour.

M: and when you think about the visualisation?

C: it feels like a planet, very sci fi

It is surprising as well

M: it is breaking as if I cut it

C: I can't control the visualisation which I quite like, because it makes it surprising

M: for me the elements stay different, separate

I either focus on the clay, or on the visualisation. I do try to combine them, I understand how it works, but they don't become one thing

It is nice though that the visualisation gives me an excuse to move in a particular way; it gets you out of your comfort zone in a very easy manner. In that way it is quite communicative.

But it stays at another level. It doesn't become a whole.

C: it is exhausting

M: I do feel like talking to you

C: maybe I do now

M: like all these women doing repetitive work, handicrafts

C: yes now I know how it works, I am happy to talk to you

You get into a rhythm through touch.

M: your body is busy and your mind can wander off – you don't really have to focus on what you are doing. The goal is just what I am doing.

C: I can sit here all day

M: yes, cooking, laundry like

C: repetitive physical things.

M: mindless, takes physical tension away.

The reflection of the clay in the glass, it makes the visualisation really coming out of the glass.

Gives it a three dimensional quality. Makes it more into a whole.

What is helping that we know each other, makes it easier to get into the same rhythm.

C: how do we want to leave it for the next person?

It is a kind of trace as well. I am trying to put it back to "normal".

M: Helping that we are sitting opposite each other. Table in between us, right distance. We have this working position. And we are inclined to communicate, sitting opposite each other.

7. Water Synthesiser



M: I don't know how a synthesizer exactly works...Oh now a spin off...

(Idea of synthesizer: you can modulate and compose the sounds)

C: they are all the same

M: a similar sound, bit higher

C: we need a towel

Visitor displays a strong almost frightened reaction to the sound triggered by her hand touching the water.

M: as if there is electricity in the water

C: I didn't have that experience, because I know too much about it.

8. Optic Sense: tangible interface



Visitor interview

Exit interviews / set up Carey:

- Why did you come along to this exhibition today? (how did you find out about it)

This exhibition explores how digital technology and touch can create feelings of connection between people. What thoughts and feelings about touch communication does the exhibition bring up for you? Probe: ideas and feelings of connection

- What touch experiences do the exhibits enable you to have? What did you 'feel'/touch via the different exhibits?
- Did touching and interacting with the exhibits feel familiar/ unfamiliar or new? What did the different exhibits remind you of other touch experiences?
- Did you have to *learn* how to touch and interact with some of the exhibits? How? Could you tell me a bit more about that?
- Were there rules to how you could/should interact with each other with some of the exhibits?
- How did the individual artefacts feel to you?
 - Probe about comfort, skills needed, things that felt right or wrong, and why, did they have to learn how to touch/improvise, in which way? –
- Has the exhibition affected how you think about touch technologies? In which ways?
- Who might you want to use these kinds of devices with, and why?
- What are you taking away about the meanings or possibilities of communicating through touch?
- What do you think it would be helpful for us to know about you to understand your experience of the exhibition (and/or your interaction with the technology)?

Interview with visitor, done by Katrin

About clay installation

V: Stiff material, kinda urge to pull. Good to get your frustrations out. People with dementia do have these kind of emotions as well, they just can't express them, so they can with this. Not being able to get the words out.

K: how do you feel it relates to the visuals

V: I feel like it relates. When i pull it, it becomes wider, if I seperate, it separates.

K: do you feel anything ?

V: no, it's fibrating sightly, when I am using the arms. It's about coordination I guess.

V: I am an actress

My favorite was the water. While you engage with three things: the sound, the touch and visuals.

Music is always rewarding.

Really liked the photo album as well, as an object in somebody's home or in a care home.

They can make an individual book themselves, in care home.

With the putty, it's possible to engage with people with dementia.

Bringing these kind of things in their environment, its fun and engaging, easier to get in contact with them then through words. Instand gratification.

All of this is therapeutic.

Bonding through memories, history. Building connection through life, doing stuff.

With water is building connection without becoming sentimental.

Each installation does create connection.

K: What kind of different touch experiences?

V: We take it for granted. Touch. My mum is overly touching. My father not at all. You can connect a wider audience through technology. What works for one person doesn't work for the other. To get anger out.

Touch, stand still, take that time, doesn't happen in daily life, they just go on, do this, do that . It brings emotion back in touching. *Touch becomes easily very practical.*

V: I did try the glove. With the graph and having it printed. We forget that old people with dementia tend not to move their hands anymore. We move constantly but they just sit in their chairs. With a glove we could measure how much they move and maybe take more care that they move enough. Monitor how often they move or not.

It could stimulate them as well to wear such a device.

Research to find out what kind of music do they react to?

K: did you have to learn anything to engage with the installations?

V: Not really, somebody briefly showed me. Kinda simple. Selfexplicatory. It was not about right or wrong. It was my journey, my discovery. You take your time. There is no rush. There is no pressure. Free flowing.

K: did you think differently now about touch technology?

V: Music thing was my favorite. How could i make a full body suit? To use something in a performative manner?

K: what would change the communication?

V: visitors still very much in your seat, in theatre, not touching. You can engage the audience more.