

**Yasushi Matoba / Hiroshi Matoba**  
**Micro Friendship**



Small creatures surround us in our everyday life. In our large-scale world, we are sometimes not aware of their existence. Sometimes, these small creatures annoy or even anger us by their presence. Isn't it a pity that we have either no relationships with them or, if any, tend to have rather negative relationships with these small creatures? Couldn't we somehow have better, more intimate relationships with them?

With *Micro Friendship*, we can understand and communicate with these creatures. Its mechanism enables us to interact and create friendships with animals whom we might otherwise never notice.

This installation is composed of a table, a display monitor in the table, a rod set at the side of the table, a microscopic video camera, an XY-movable stage and small insects. The attached rod is connected to an insect-sized rod inside the display.

Movements of the large rod are mechanically converted into micro-sized movements of the small rod. With this rod, the participant can physically interact with the creature inside the system.

The display screen shows a magnified view of the insect-sized interior. The size is so scaled that the small rod in the display seems to be really connected with the large rod on the outside. Participants can thus seamlessly move this virtual rod to interact with the small creatures in the display.

Participants can also use a joystick to control the position of the stage that supports the creatures. The joystick is linked to motors that control the position of the stage. Participants can thus move around the insect world and find their insect-sized friends, and come into better contact with them.

By controlling the joystick and rod, participants can communicate and make friends with small creatures whose shapes and behaviors you might otherwise not have known. The participants may even take slight 'revenge' on the harmful creatures that give them trouble by teasing them a little. Such experience might actually help the participants to come to terms with them and even to forgive them.

A telematic version of the installation can also be constructed by using a remote connection to the display video to control the movements of the rod. A participant could thus make friends with distant and unknown creatures.

By using various sized rods and platforms, participants can interact with any kind of creature in the same manner. The scaling of the rod and of the display lets the participant enjoy the same interaction, whether the creature on the other end is small or large.

We hope that you can see the charm and character of these new worlds, and make friends whose presence you might not have been aware of.

