Remote Furniture

Computer-controlled chair objects—Interactive public art installation

In *Remote Furniture,* an interactive public art project, two computer-controlled rocking chairs are installed on the floor facing each other. When two people sit in the chairs and rock, the chairs create an experience of communication through direct, tactile touch.

Vision

Remote Furniture was designed to create unexpected encounters between passers-by in public spaces. This work has been modified several times since 1999. The concept has remained the same: how can we connect people in public spaces using interactive art and digital interfaces? Based on this concept, the work has evolved with the advance of technology.

This type of interactive, haptic interface is easy to discuss from an engineering point of view. However, how such technology can affect everyday life has not been properly investigated. *Remote Furniture* focuses attention on this area.

For the current version, modified rocking chairs were enhanced with a sensor and an embedded motor. The next step will be to connect two or three chairs through the internet, so that participants in different locations can Interact with each other over long distances.

Noriyuki Fujimura

Goals

It was interesting to see what happened when *Remote Furniture* was installed in some Japanese public spaces, such as an underground passage or an indoor shopping mall. Because the objects were chairs, passers-by became curious about them and eventually started sitting on them, rocking them, and playing with them. When people realized what was going on between the chairs, they began communicating with each other amusingly with tactile signals.
More conservative means of communication, such as talking and gesturing, became easier in public because the chairs allowed them to face each other as they do in familiar situations (for example, when they talk over a coffee table in a cafe or a kitchen table at home). Some people even tried to develop ways of playing through this means of communication. *Remote Furniture* seemed to help remove shyness in public spaces. It reveals the unseen potential of public spaces and provides people who have not experienced it before with experiences of communicating.
I think this is the potential of public art.

Innovations

The two chairs have a tilt sensor and a linear motor, and are connected to a PC running control software. When someone rocks one of the chairs, the tilt sensor detects the inclination and transmits the data to the other chair through the PC. The motor in the other chair then causes it to rock.
Usually, this kind of remote interaction is designed with a master-slave (one-way) method. But in *Remote Furniture,* full duplex (two-way) interaction is realized, because it feels more natural.

Concept and creation: Noriyuki Fujimura
"Remote Furniture" year 2000 version is a collection of Deutsche Bank Art

Noriyuki Fujimura

Remote Furniture

Computergesteuerte Stühle – Interaktive Installation im öffentlichen Raum

Bei *Remote Furniture,* einem interaktiven Kunstprojekt für den öffentlichen Raum, stehen zwei computergesteuerte Schaukelstühle einander gegenüber. Wenn zwei Personen auf den Stühlen sitzen und schaukeln, erzeugen die Stühle eine kommunikative Erfahrung, die unmittelbar fühlbar ist.

Vision

Remote Furniture wurde konzipiert, um unerwartete Begegnungen von Passanten im öffentlichen Raum herbeizuführen. Diese Arbeit wurde seit 1999 mehrmals modifiziert, wobei das Konzept aber dasselbe blieb: Wie können wir Menschen auf öffentlichen Plätzen mittels interaktiver Kunst und digitalen Interfaces Verbindung aufnehmen lassen? Auf diesem Konzept