

ONE'S WALK

Natacha Roussel

Experientiae Electricae

Quartier de l'hospital

64390 Osserain France

contact@experientiae-electricae.org

ABSTRACT

"Feel as you watch, think as you walk" Fernando Pessoa

One's walk rhythm suit captures the rhythm of its user's path and transforms it into a rhythmic sound diffused in the same collar of the suit.

As interactivity enters every scene of our life Experientiae Electricae concentrates relating directly to the interface, we design for the human body, and against it, taking it as a data source for the production of poetic content.

While the needs for intelligent clothing are usually defined in areas related to intensive use of the body, mainly sports, health and military. Our concern is to use technology in meeting other uses and needs that I would call inmost and not functional.

One's walk puts a rhythmic emphasis on the act of walking in a urban environment in order to highlight the consciousness of our body movements in a meditative way.

Author Keywords

Wearables haptic Soft interaction Sculptural interfaces multiuser playful interaction

INTRODUCTION

One's Walk is an environmental garment; modifying our relationship to our urban environment. It lets us create a personal sonic cocoon that displays our own rhythm. The wearer uses this sonic surrounding to dissociate himself from the outside urban world.

It integrates seamless technology; the suit is washable and still fully sensitive.

Our artistic interest in creating technically enhanced garments is to explore new sensitive links using clothing, our second skin. By this mean we address poetically the user and refer him meditatively back to himself. This goal differs from researches aiming to technically enhance the body with a variety of controls, sensors or medication.

One's walk our first prototype rehabilitates walking as a

source of inspiration and introspection in a urban context. It transforms the sound of our legs passing one another in an electronic rhythm.

By replacing the sounds of the city by our own corporal rhythm one's walk erases the distractions of the urban environment while keeping its context; it is a support for the Urban Flaneur that can be activated upon request.

DESCRIPTION

One's walk has been conceived in 2003 by Natacha roussel as a research during a certificate at Concordia University under the direction of Joanna Berzowska. Since then she has been developing it as an art piece with the collective Experientiae Electricae and it is currently showed in art centers and festivals[1].

Experientiae electricae is a group of artist and designer and programmer working on various physical, interactive supports. We integrate technology based on rudimentary electrical principles and leading to multimedia works. Our realisations tend to maximise the potential of the interactive relationship between the user and the piece or between a group of users by focusing on specific link between the interface and the content, often using a minimalist multimedia feedback. This concern led us to manipulate sculptural haptic installation low resolution modulable displays and the closest to our body: clothing.

Clothes are an excellent source for daily interaction directly connected to our body as a second skin. It has been modifying our posture and gesture often through history from high hills to corsets or Padaung women [2].

Miniaturisation of technologies leads to there implementation in every aspects of our life. After the proliferation of portability, the migration of interaction towards the body seems possible. This form of interactivity would modify our relation to our body, the physical qualities of those elements transform our movements, our rhythm and the perception of our immediate environment what could be an augmented physicality? An augmented sensing of our body? When integrated to our physicality the interface can become a source of content in itself this is for Experientiae Electricae a source of inspiration for the production of interactive art pieces. One's Walk deals with this idea of an interactive body producing its own content.

In PDC-06 Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference, Vol II, Trento, Italy, August 1-5, 2006, under a Creative Commons License. CPSR, P.O. Box 717, Palo Alto, CA 94302. <http://www.cpsr.org> ISBN 0-9667818-4-8

One's Walk prototype is fully made of fabric and conductive yarns, all conductive materials is blended with fibbers some of it taken from traditional materials such as silver organza made for centuries in India. The choice of those materials follows principles developed by Joanna Berzowska [3] that she calls soft technologies.

Soft technologies allow the integration to the fabric of versatile captation zones while response occurs through sound light or color. The sensitive parts are made out from those same fibbers, weaved and sawn in ways that lets them become sensing parts. For One's Walk, the only solid part, the electronic control is embedded in the collar and can be taken out for washing.

We chose not to emphasise technology as a visual identity of this project. This choice was made, in order to preserve the intimacy of the wearer. The outfit is neither an expression of identity nor an adhesion to any techno style; everything happens discretely inside. Following the same idea, preference has gone to natural materials such as wool, for its feeling and intimate contact. The aesthetics focuses more on comfort for everyday use while conforming to city style and the possibility of being worn in a variety of contexts from going to the office to walking to a private appointment in a coffee place or at a regular event.

The user in this was defined as an outsider utopian urban human of any age surrounded by the urban noise with a rich interior life.

User needs are defined as isolation meditation and daydream as well as a need for noise an urban stimulation.

One's walk has been conceived as an art piece but it refers directly to reality as a dreamed extension of our world. We talk about walking on 2 feet this rhythm that rocks us since before we were born this human characteristic fulfilling our daily life.

Several artists have conceived body extensions for the walk. In the series of his prototypes for functioning objects Fabrice Hybert has conceived 2 tools for the pedestrian, one being a crutch with a mirror at the bottom that lets you see what you shouldn't but also centers you on the floor you are stepping on

Walking has always been addressed as a source of inspiration concentration and meditation; Aristotle professed and conversed walking, while in the 18th century Rousseau talks about strolling as his source of inspiration, and Kierkegaard describes walking as a therapy as well as essential philosophic tool; Nietzsche conceived Zarathoustra while walking.

But as the 19th century artists promoted the walk as a wander, contemporary artists on the contrary would it be Beckett or Richard long prefer to deal with a more structured walk. Richard Long *Walking a line in Peru* Bruce Nauman *Angle Walk* Samuel Beckett *Arena Quad I+II*

And finally many contemporary performers propose to discover step by step a urban path that the pedestrian appropriates while he invents it and which function is to produce a travel like sensation at the heart of the city

One's walk is at the crossroad of those two concerns while it intervenes on our relation to the city it also uses the rhythmic structure of the walk as a support for content.

CONCLUSION

One's walk is at the plays of a variety of disciplines as most of *Experientiae Electricae's* projects, it integrate concerns from art interactivity and design. We chose to develop this project within the art scene where the next question is how to show it as an art piece. The current development of One's walk is guided by the implications that come out when developing an interaction with the public in exhibition contexts. What happens when you ask people to try out a garment does it become a costume? On another point of view it could be seen as a uniform. Does the user become part of a group? And in this case the path's rhythm has other connotation, does it becomes an anti-march where each user develops his own path along his parcours. The pieces in use at the same time can be amplified and diffused at distance within an exhibition; then each user becomes a part of a collective sound piece, that can be archived as a sonic parcours.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One's Walk was made under the generous direction of Joanna Berzowska.

REFERENCES

1. Harold Koda "Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed" Metropolitan museum of art , New york, 2003
2. Orth, Margaret/ Post, E. Rehmi. " Smart Fabric, or Washable Computing. " IEEE International Symposium on Wearable Computers. 1997. Philips Design. " Creating Value by Design/ Facts. " V+K Publishing. Netherlands. 1998.
3. Didier Anzieu *Le Moi-peau* Dunod Paris 1995 première édition Bordas 1985