

FREEQUENT TRAVELLER: INTERACTION VERSUS CONTEMPLATION

LIVE INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION

BY SUSANNE SCHURICHT, DEVELOPED IN
COLLABORATION WITH TOBIAS SCHMIDT.

Susanne Schuricht
www.sushu.de
su@sushu.de

Michael Hohl,
PhD Candidate
Sheffield Hallam
University
Art & Design
Research Centre
Info@hohlwelt.com

Mirjam Struppek
www.interactionfield.de
www.urbanscreens.org
struppek@interaction
field.de

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References

- 1 Frequent Traveller was developed in collaboration with Tobias Schmidt as programmer t081.de
- 2 Guixé, Martí. HIBYE Nomadic Work in Workspaces exhibit at Museum of Modern Art, NY (2002) www.guixe.com
- 3 The Viridian Neologue Contest, (2000) www.viridianrepository.com/neologue/neologue.Htm
- 4 John Thackara, New Design in a complex world, interview from Susanne Schuricht (www.sushu.de) and Mirjam Struppek with John Thackara, an excerpt is published in the Italian magazine tema celeste, 2005
- 5 Further information about Frequent Traveller: www.sushu.de/tree

What do we really need?

What's the aim of travelling for you?

FREEQUENT TRAVELLER

How much technology do we need?

EXPANDING BOUNDARIES

Broaden one's mind by changing ones position and perception.

Thackara believes that the aim and responsibility of new Media Art is to search "for aesthetic, political and individual messages that touch people and help us to better understand the present. (...) To create critical interfaces that allow the spectator to keep a certain distance from all the hype that surrounds virtual spaces and suggestive computer worlds." (4)

Life is a frequent travel - travelling more consciously, being aware of the various options and perspectives supports to better navigate (through) the world.

Freequent Traveller(5) makes its users look at their surrounding from a fresh perspective. It is a catalyst for starting to re-think our way of life in today's times. To lie in the hammock and sway through the text helps set the mind into a moving state of flow.

In *Freequent Traveller* bodily motion and technology, the analogue and the digital coalesce.

It brings strangers playfully together – it's a tool, which creates a special relaxed and social atmosphere to make people feel comfortable talking about personal issues.

Being elevated and set into a symbolic state of dislocatedness people might feel confronted with themes such as constituting a transnational society, global information exchange, the loss of the notion of place, the breaking of boundaries. *Freequent Traveller* recognizes the problematic, sometimes uncomfortable atmosphere of the melting of personal and public situations and provides an adaptable sensitive tool for engagement with individuals in public space.

Supporting a rhythm based feeling of pleasure, the hammock offers a flexible, personally adaptable space in a situation of exposedness to the public while being in a receptively, emotional therefore also vulnerable state.

The exhibition context creates a situation, where the text messages are viewed by everybody. Closing the hammock however, visitors can create a cocoon like space, where they experience the text messages in a more intimate atmosphere.

As mobile research tool *Freequent Traveller* is on its way to different places and cultures collecting statements and experiences about different behavior, interaction and contemplation.

Freequent Traveller is a live interactive installation by the artist Susanne Schuricht, developed in collaboration with Tobias Schmidt. (1) The interface consists of a hammock, whose movement is tracked by a custom-made hardware interface. While relaxing in the hammock you drag text across a screen in front of you. The projected texts are short essays and excerpts about technology, mobility, home and identity.

The text consists of statements from artists, friends and visitors from all over the world about mobility, home and identity and it emphasizes a global awareness. The text is entered beforehand. The text-passages also contain contemplations by the artist and excerpts from collected interviews and conversations with the audience of this travelling installation. The content is frequently updated.

Freequent Traveller is explorative, sensuous and playful. Its use is intuitive. Interactions are continuous and not in discreet steps; it is unencumbered, poetic, involving, engaging, has cognitive (visual/textual) as well as sensuous (tactual) qualities.

Freequent Traveller puts the subject in a state of moving and being moved. It's a catalyst for interaction between people and for rethinking our needs and actual living situation. The inspirations for *Freequent Traveller*, were archaic immersive rituals, the HIBYE nomadic work of Martí Guixé(2), TheViridian Neologue Contest, developed by Bruce Sterling and Natalie Jeremijenko(3), and John Thackara.



What's home for you?

USER EXPERIENCES AND SELECTED PASSAGES

"While laying in the hammock I experienced a stadium between wakefulness and sleep and even if I didn't carefully read all the text, I remember many parts of it and my feelings toward it." [Alessandra]

"What technologies or tools - official - nomadic - domestic - objects - stories - to interact in person, face-to-face, stories instead of objects - meet somebody like you " [Yui]

Senior Project Manager: "After spending a week in the woods on a corporate Outward Bound trip, with almost nothing - My trip changed my whole way of thinking, as far as what „being connected“ means. I no longer need the "stuff" I thought kept me connected to home, and office. Today's technology keeps me as connected as I choose to be."

"Home for me is my wallet! I create businesses that require travel - I lived all over the world, travel is for me like breathing. I look for excuses to travel all the time. Often my luggage is lost, waiting somewhere at an airport. But I'm already used to it. First thing people ask me is where are you from? The most identifying category... The more you travel, the more you feel part of something bigger than what you come from. For the others I'm from New Zealand, but I don't feel not so much connected to a special group, but more just connected to myself. Travelling makes you also aware of global problems." [G. Harding]

"What we need ? Actually not much! A notepad, maybe a camera to take some photographs (but not so many that we lose contact with our environment) and a lot of sensibility and curiosity. go play da"

From Max - aged 8yrs: "Home means a nice warm bed. Travelling means new places and new food."

From Joe - aged 5 yrs: "I don't think that God is real. Home means all my toys and animals."

"Without technology I feel nice at first, nervous and detached second, nice thirdly. Home for me is nowhere right now and at this point tends to be wherever I am laying my head. For me the aim of travelling is to get away from home. " [Zachary Mc Donald]

"Senza tecnologia: Tranquillo. Casa: Silenzio. Viaggio: Movimenti " [Mauro]

