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Yōkobo - an object of sensitive presence

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pilot project proposal sheet

title of the contribution:

Yōkobo, an object of sensitive presence

subtitle (if applicable):

project team

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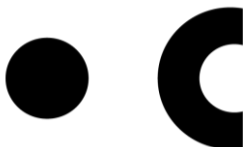
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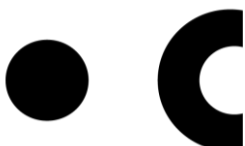
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project presentation

a short text presentation (around 2,000 characters) with a clear research focus, its multidisciplinary methodology and its visual approach to publishing:



As part of a multidisciplinary research and a PhD project to strengthen the attachment for retired couples living at home, we imagined and designed Yōkobo. It is a robot at the crossroads of a sensitive approach and a robotic trend that bridges the gap between humans (Human-Robot-Human Interactions field).

Yōkobo is a trinket bowl placed in the entrance of homes. It expresses home hospitality and celebrates small moments of everyday life by its discreet presence that welcomes visitors and inhabitants of the house. The name comes from the contraction of "yōkoso" (welcome in Japanese) and "robot" (with French pronunciation). As a theoretical contribution, Yōkobo is at the crossing of different concepts: behavioural objects, objects, weak robotics, and slow technology.

Yōkobo is resolutely innovative and disruptive. It uses the different discrepancies existing concerning the generally shared vision of robots:

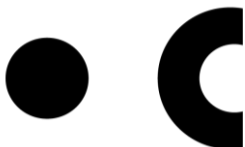
- it is an object intended to be unobtrusive, stemming from ambient computing while having an on-going subtle presence. It does not make sounds, unlike the voice assistants and voice modality trend. It expresses itself and its surroundings only through motion and light.
- to move away from home's companion robots and the biases they can generate by the presence of a face representation, Yōkobo is neither anthropomorphic nor can talk.
- Yōkobo is made of natural materials such as ceramic, wood, or wool to break with the idea of plastic, disposable, and toy robots and to improve its integration in everyday home life.
- as a slow technology product, understanding and integrating Yōkobo into one's life takes time and requires accepting not having a clear, repetitive, and instantaneous response to an action. It is the sum of different experiences with the product over time that creates the meaning and value of the object. Getting to know Yōkobo's expressive motions is continuous and progressive. The experience with Yōkobo is a sensible one and it poetically interacts with people in their homes. Its contribution is not measured in terms of efficiency and utility.

Yōkobo is a concept that puts people at the centre. It is an object that steps in order to cherish the relationship between people. It does not impose itself to propose an exclusive Human-Object relationship. It reveals the presence of the other by expressing the last impermanent trace of the other's passage. It is an object of sensitive presence.

a selection of keywords related to the subject of the publication:

robot design slow technology presence human-robot-human	data relationship speculative exploration
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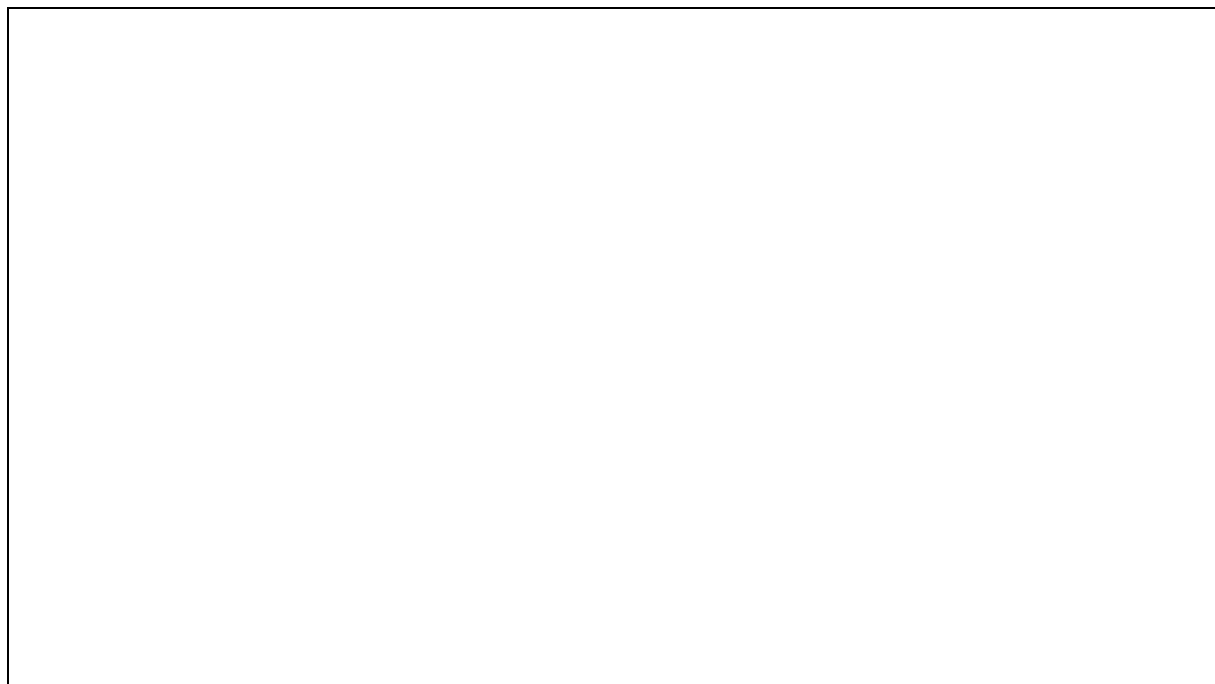
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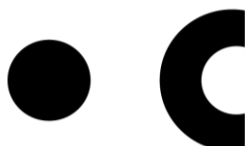
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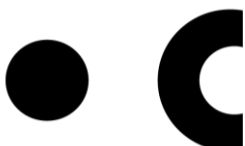


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