

BROKEN PHONE

We'll meet in objects

A project by Benedita Menezes in collaboration with Pedro Gil Farias

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Touch is the basis of human engagement. In a time where touching has become dangerous and therefore something that we all should avoid, we are favouring platonic and digital interactions instead. But how can we rescue the physical connection between people without risking our lives?

In a poetic way, this project will try to bring people together through touching the same objects and thinking about them, without them ever meeting. The individual ideas and thoughts that come to the surface through interacting with these objects will, once gathered, take shape as a group conversation with the object as a mediator. We will know each other better, create meaning beyond perception and erase the recently imposed digital gap by materializing human interaction.

WHAT

A publication. The format of each publication will depend on each edition's object and texts put forward. This can be a booklet, audiotape, webpage, etc. The only guideline is that it must be a digital outcome. There will be no transversal format to all editions, making the relationship with the designer into a collaborative one, rather than a one-time commission.

HOW

1. **Object choice:** The curator will choose an object.
2. **Object delivery:** Each invited person will receive the object by post. Every person in each edition of Broken Phone will receive the same object.
3. **Object writing:** Each person will produce a piece of writing about that object. This can be a poem, philosophical essay, cooking recipe, short story, historical account, scientific text, etc. They are free to write anything they want, the only rule being that it must contain only words.

4. **Writing hand in:** After they are done writing, they will send the piece by email to the curator. This should be an editable word or pdf document.
5. **Collaborative outcome:** Having gathered all texts and with the objects in mind, a publication will be produced in collaboration with the designer.

WHO

Curator and editor: Benedita Menezes

Designer: Pedro Gil Farias

Invited writers: will vary from edition to edition.

VALUES AND PROMISES

The Broken Phone team is committed to, in all endeavours:

- Recognise the power of language and discourse.
- Collaborate: think together to create meaning beyond the individual.
- Contribute to an international dialogue.
- Celebrate knowledge gaps: eliminate the oppressive dichotomy of the one who knows and the one who is ignorant.
- Respect, honour, be honest and be inclusive of all people involved in the project, at all stages.
- Encourage risk-taking and stepping outside of our comfort zone.
- Practice flexibility, boldness and innovation.
- Foster an affective performance of knowledge creation.
- Fuel a learning process that isn't solely vision-based and is unbound by preconceptions of touch.
- Define the aesthetic and empirical experience as a situation extended in time.
- Generate the space for an un-commodified participatory experience.
- Celebrate the plurality of possible responses the project may bring out of each participant.
- Comply with accessibility guidelines.
- Question ourselves at all times.
- Stay humble.

Benedita Menezes (1996, Lisbon, Portugal) is a freelance independent curator and researcher based in London. She holds a Painting BA from the Fine-Arts School University of Lisbon (FBA-UL), Portugal, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Aesthetics, Art and Political Cultures from the Social and Human Sciences School Nova University of Lisbon (FCSH-UNL), Portugal. She studied at Karel de Grote University College, Antwerp, Belgium, and is currently finishing her MA Curating and Collections from Chelsea School of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, UK.

Benedita centers her curatorial thought on the relationship between people and objects and how this engagement is constrained by preconceptions of touch. She has worked at commercial galleries such as Madragoa Gallery and Note Architecture Gallery and at the Modern Art Center of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. She worked as assistant to Luiza Teixeira de Freitas, an independent curator and collector based in Lisbon, having participated in projects such as Four Flags Lisbon, Felix Gonzalez-Torres' Untitled (Fortune Cookie Corner), Lisbon edition, and in publishing collaborations with artist Julião Sarmento.

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Pedro Gil Farias (1996, Lisbon, Portugal) is a Rotterdam based design researcher with a focus on speculation and criticality through design. He holds a BA in Equipment Design from the Fine-Arts School University of Lisbon (FBA-UL), Portugal, and a Msc in Strategic Product Design from the Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft), the Netherlands.

Pedro's work explores design as a problem-setting practice, in contrast with the modern-solutionist view on design, and as a strategic medium for critical inquiry and research. Pedro has worked as a strategic designer intern with Rotterdam-based digital agency IN10 and collaborated with other organisations to develop future-oriented strategies and visions. Recently, his work in academic research exploring the convergence of participatory and speculative design has resulted in a published article. He is now working as a freelance and independent design researcher with several self-initiated projects such as '(de)conceptualise', 'Thing-centered City Making', and more recently, a collaboration with design researcher Hugo Pilate, that resulted in a participatory workshop with multiple participants with the goal of exploring an alternative narrative for 'Black Friday'.

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