

David Cotterrell: OnSilent (v)

Collaborators: Ruwanthie de Chickera

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Materials:

iPhone 6, custom script and software, vibration speaker

On Silent is a real-time enactment of a short period of crisis. Destined to be as obsolete as the musical sound of the 56k modem, this small work reflects a moment in time when our awareness of technology has not yet been matched by our emotional resilience to it.

What happens to human relationships when constant availability is now a basic requirement? Distance is traversed effortlessly by signals, messages and alerts. What does that do to our sense of proximity? Our sense of reality.

Once words are spoken, even if only into an unanswered phone, does that mean that something has changed?

An old phone left by itself in an abandoned house pulses with a succession of unanswered calls, unread messages and silent assumptions that are relayed across its screen. The two protagonists the caller and the person who never sees the calls are unwittingly players in a situation of unshared experience but shared consequences.

Within the exhibition a custom application is running on an iPhone. The application simulates a series of calls, messages, alerts and other attempts to contact an absent character.

The calls, messages and alerts are from a lover. The phone has been dropped between the floor-boards and as it rings, the vibrations are felt across the beams. The glow of its screen indicates its presence through the gap in the floor, but it is inaccessible to the audience.

As the calls are heard, we may find ourselves disturbed by the ringing, feel the vibration or even read the messages being left. Initially casual, an air of increasing desperation is felt as the one-sided drama unfolds across the abandoned devices.

The drama loops intermittently throughout the duration of the exhibition.



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