

"Having a moment with you, having a moment with your phone", 2011

I was walking down the subway train platform one day in New York City last month and I saw a couple embracing. The hug was normal in that the man was happily and sincerely committing to the act; eyes closed and grinning face nestled in the woman's neck. The woman however, had both arms around the man and behind his head, held a cell phone. She was acting like she was hugging him but in fact was looking at her phone. I thought, this is our new social condition.

"Having a moment with you, having a moment with your phone" is a chair sculpture with potential for social interaction equipped with cell phone chargers to facilitate the drive to incite on-lookers to break the plain between viewer and performer. The viewer can step up on the stage, have a seat, and find their phone's specific charger in the phone charger bouquet placed exactly between the seats on the shared armrest. Now that the viewer is both comfortable yet tied to their phone, the performer is free to read the excerpts from the Tao Te Ching that are printed with bleach into the seat cushion opposite their own (on which they are sitting). The performer will notice that the left arm rest is higher and less comfortable than the one on the right, which encourages their body to lean over to the other person's space. Also, the back rest seems to dig softly into the kidneys, subtly reminding them to not lean back but lean forward toward the other person. A soft tension of spacial negotiation is created.