

Lost in Social Space, or why This Lady Over There can Handle her Emotional Baggage

According to Edward Hall, an anthropologist from Illinois Institute of Technology, there are four distance zones in the US that people use to define the space around themselves: Intimate distance: 0 - 18 inches. Personal distance: 18 inches - 4 feet. Social distance: 4 - 10 feet. Public distance: beyond 10 feet. A Threat Threshold is an imaginary line that forms the boundary of the intimate distance.

Psychological Prosthetics™ aspires to do impossible things

Psychological Prosthetics™ guarantees impossible things

No, we don't. We want to explore this uncomfortable space. We want to explore the fine line between public and private, hidden and exposed, what is personal and what belongs in the public domain.

So we dress up in lab coats. It is a front, a uniform where one can lose one's identity, become a member of the Post-Industrial Capitalist Society, a mass-produced persona, working for a corporation, if you will.

Ironically, not only are we not a corporation, we are not even looking to sell our products. How ironic it is that we can hardly even afford this project. If this company existed in the market, we couldn't even afford to employ ourselves. What we really want is to have a conversation. But then, these conversations can be very uncomfortable. The lab coats help us on the outside to create contact zones, but we are left with no shield, buffer, cushion or support. We are not seen as individuals, and at the same time we are the ones who get exposed.

Is this the Economy of the Conversational? Are we the economy?

The exchange rate rises and falls every time we offer ourselves.

We have been conducting these street surveys and interactions for about two years. We depend on the kindness of strangers. We're not trying to trick or fool the audience. I am not the Lady Over There who can Handle her Emotional Baggage.

Video shoot, May 11, 2007. Location: Chicago, Millennium Park. Outside, daylight.

Dee approaches three women (Public distance): "Would you like to see our 30 Second Rant Recorder to activate your outrage?" They laugh, "No." Curious, they move closer, (Social distance): "Would you like, then, to try the PP Band Aid to bandage your shame and repair your apathy?" They laugh harder, but still say "No." Two of the women walk away. The third one moves closer (Personal distance): "Would you like to mail your Emotional Baggage to a political figure?" She laughs, (Intimate distance) and points outside the frame to one of the other two: "You see that lady over there? She can handle my emotional baggage, I trust her."

Nomi Talisman, June 2007

