

# Introduction

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The work exhibited in *TouchPoint: Haptic Exchange Between Digits* investigates the polysensory nature of human experience in a technologically enhanced environment. The exhibition explores the permeable membrane of the techno-human interface, where we engage an array of tools to materialize and visualize artifacts of creative expression. Integral to the work is human haptic interaction, involving the "viewer" and/or the artist through a unique physical interface.

Through physical interaction, internal processing and external experiences reinforce a shared identity with the work. Our neural networks extend throughout the body, connecting consciousness to the sensory environment. The lightest touch of a fingertip blends the seeming separation between self and other. The memory of such experience is tacit, and stored somewhere between the point of contact and consciousness.

Our sensory systems, like the aesthetic experiences they ascertain, operate simultaneously on several channels. Touch, for example, is not a binary system, but a complex structure of multiple sensory mechanisms, synthesizing such information as pressure, temperature, hardness, vibration, and weight. This sensory amalgamation is exploratory in nature, developing haptic awareness through the active combination of kinesthetic and tactual evidence. An object brought to the hand cannot be described like the one explored by the fingers.

By integrating touch and other polysensory experiences in the creation/expression/experience of the artwork, a more thorough connection develops – a physical memory of tacit experience – between the maker and the made, between the user and the artifact, between self and other. The exhibition becomes an interactive environment where the user/viewer/participant is essential not only to the apprehension, but to the manifestation of the work.

While the initial focus of the exhibition was on the sense of touch, the jury felt it was relevant to extend the breadth of sense experience. Therefore, the selected works include a range of sensory involvement, including scent and audio interactions. Some works are more solely focused on bodily presence, while others address the virtual hand in the machine. Overall, the multi-layered polysensory experience of the artwork has become the dynamic focus, forcing vision to share the pedestal of privilege with other sense modalities.

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