[w4] living w/ ur own ideas

What did you make and why did it matter?

I turned myself into a physical/virtual link by wearing a big unlabelled QR code on my shirt and standing in public areas (parks, sidewalks, metro stations). The QR code links to a google form with one question: "What do you need today?". I tried this exercise to gather data but in an unconventional and arbitrary fashion. The people who answered the question are people who saw me on the street and scanned me with their phones. The interesting part is that I was able to gather insight about people's lives without having to directly communicate with them, yet the inquiry required my physical body and my movements across the public areas of the city.

What happens when you involve yourself?

Being shy and anti-social by nature, this experiment put me in a weird situation as I had to experience weird eye contacts and indirectly invite people to open their phone cameras and point them at me. Given that the link is unlabelled, the only context that came with the link is my body and face, which made me think of some questions, such as, would more/less people scan my QR if I looked differently? And as many people were discreet about the way they were capturing the QR link, would it be different if I was covering my eyes with glasses, or had the link on my back? What does this say about people's directness and social behavior.

What happens when you use yourself as an instrument?

This experiment opened the door for many speculations that would require me to try it again with different parameters. As I had tried it for just one day, there is nothing else to compare to yet in order to gain clear insight. The QR code could have been posted on any wall in the city and the results would probably have been different, but having attached it to my body, I claimed to be a gatekeeper, a carrier of the key to an accessible virtual space in the physical world. The only way for the other people to access this unknown virtual space, is to use their mobile devices and point them at me, in plain sight, in public spaces. I felt insecure at times, linking this virtual link to my physical body and face, claiming I have something to say in public without saying a word, without using a word, just a code that can only be understood with the use of our phone devices.

Did anything changed about your way of working?

I found this very experience as an important tool to push me out of my comfort zone while doing 1st hand research, an easy alternative would not having to be there, just sending the link virtually to people on

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the internet and seeing what they answer. But the idea of imposing
the restriction that this link can be only be shared in the physical
realm gave it a different viewpoint, a more limited one, and hence,
more insight. With such a small and simple change in the way I share
the link, I was able to open many philosophical questions linked to
the ability (or lack thereof) of humans to communicate in public, the
future of augmented reality and restricted virtual access to a spe-
cific physical point, the feelings of alienation that people would get
from not understanding the code, and seeing other people around them
able to access the link, only cause they had the interest and courage
to point the camera at someone.

What does it mean for you future work?

As mentioned earlier, this experience definitely pushed me to see how
a small parameter or change in the way we usually do things, can
open up a world of speculation and insight. And as I am interested
in technology, physicality, communication and anthropology, I am now
willing to practice many experiments similar to this one in order to
build a more interesting and insightful research database.