

A SPATIAL PRESENCE OF THOUGHTFULNESS - ELECTROLUX EXPERIENCE

2007.05.15

Introduction

"It is not about the product. It is about the total experience."

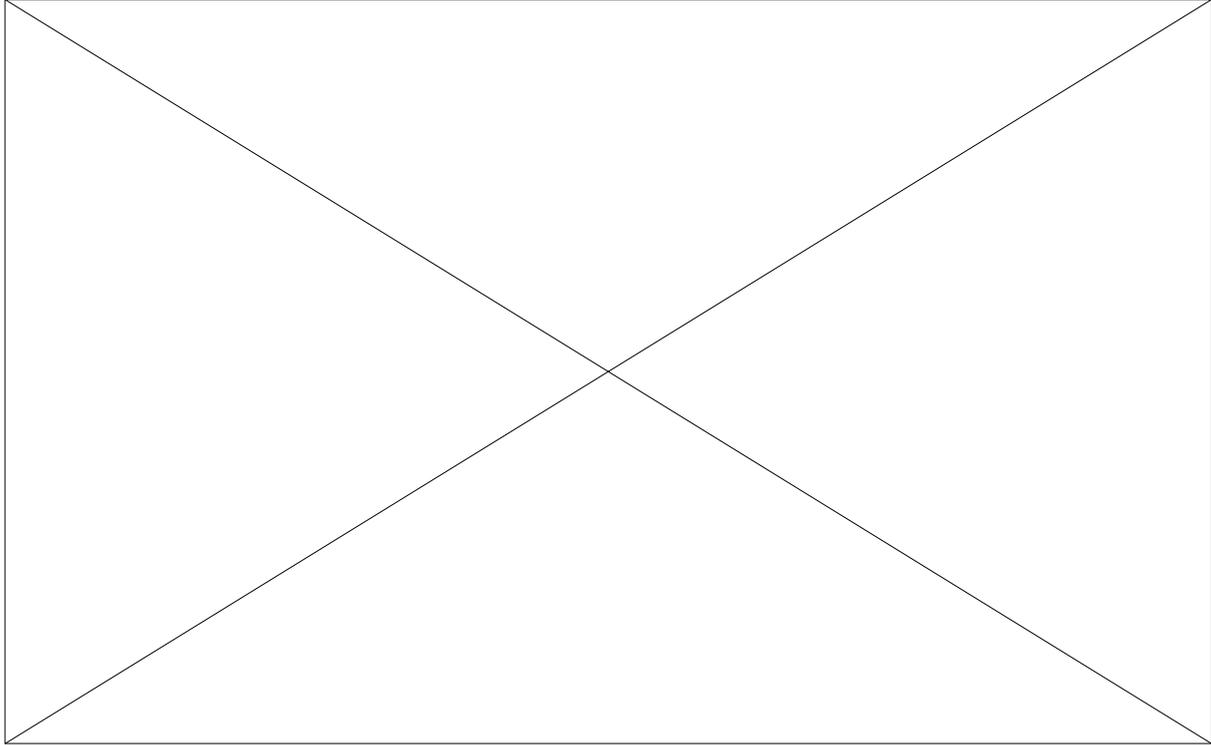
My aim with this project is to explore the interaction between technology, brand, space and the human being in designing an overall experience.

We are moving towards a reality where [intelligent technology](#) is getting embedded in our homes and our lives. How can we make technology not just intelligent, but also more empathic and sensual?

Can we create a relationship to a company, just as if it was a real person? Considering design as communication/conversation, I like to think of the product as a presence of a subject rather than an object, in this case as a spatial presence of a personality that we can reach through our senses. With a design method influenced by thoughts from interpersonal communication and rhetoric, I believe this experience can become more emotional and human.

By thinking of products as the most important messengers of brand communication, In this case, I believe the acting and behaviour of the products become crucial in terms of authenticity and trust to the brand message.

"A spatial presence of thoughtfulness" is my thesis project sponsored by [Electrolux](#). It is about using these ideas to bring the Electrolux brand philosophy "**thinking of you**" into life through an emotional experience of thoughtfulness in the home atmosphere. An ambience not only created by the presence of technology, but in dialog with the participatory presence of humans and their actions.



The Electrolux-tiles

Since thousands of years, tiles have been a fundamental part of architecture, and still are, when it comes to building rooms and spaces.

"By covering your walls with Electrolux-tiles you will bring the soul of Electrolux into your home atmosphere."

In an extended view, I think of this concept as a larger system with several sensitive, responsive, interconnected tiles that interact with the people, the room and with each other. A system aimed for small apartments in urban areas, where different tiles, working either alone or in group, thoughtfully serves you in different ways depending on your needs, while acting as triggers of a spatial experience.

The system consists of components that control the climate in your home. A system that easily can be composed and upgraded according to individual needs.

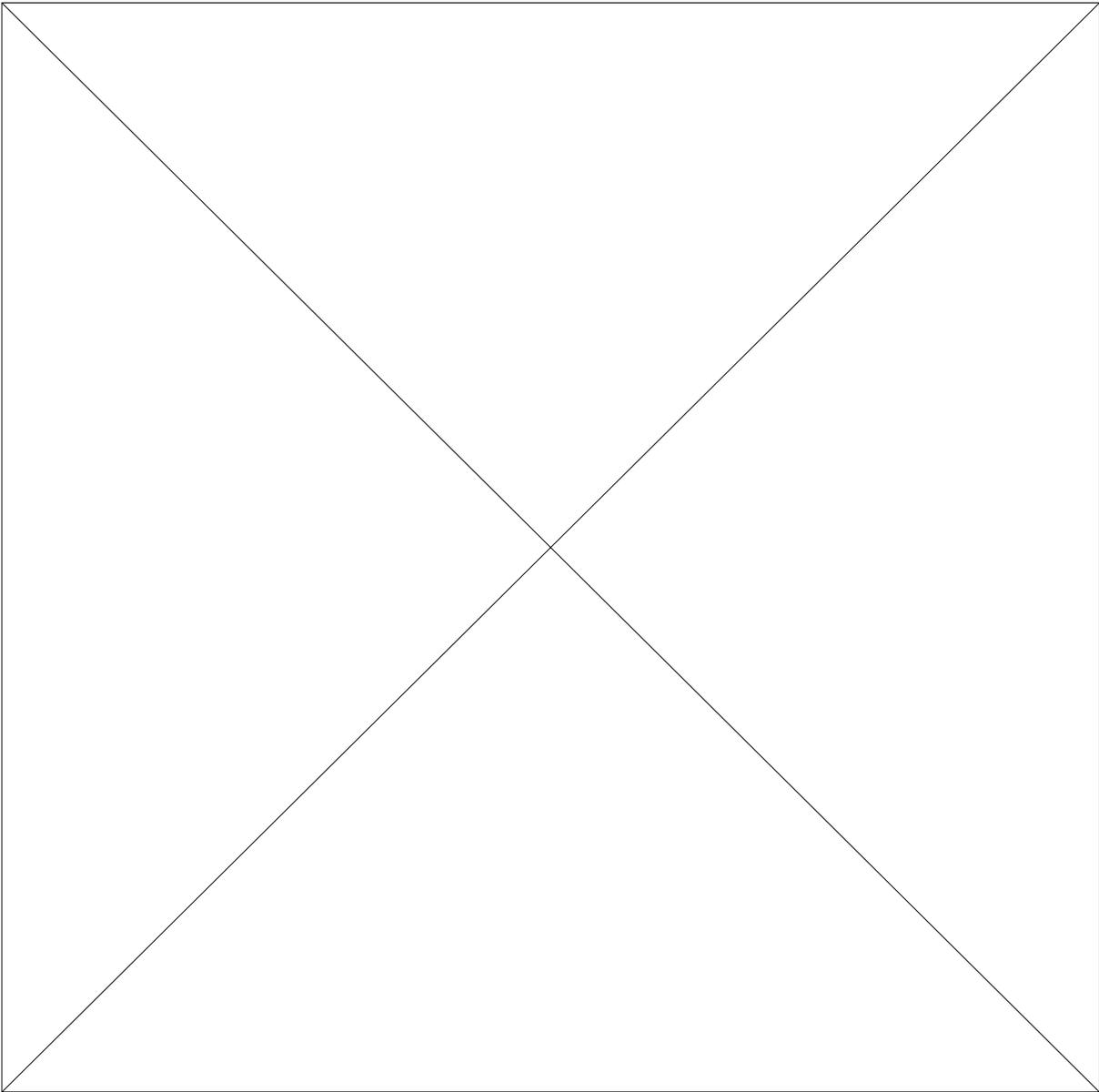
To start with, I would like to introduce you to the "Breathing Tile" and the "Listening tile" and how these tiles thoughtfully, with insight, meet one increasing future need in a thoughtful way.

Due to most scientists and allergy researchers, the amount of pollen in the air will radically increase in the coming years because of the global climate change. The pollen season is already getting extended and due to harder winds and temperature changes, an increasing amount of people is expected to be suffering from pollen allergy all year round, especially in the urban areas.

BREATHING TILES

The breathing tiles are responsive tiles that communicate wirelessly with each other. They interact with the air in the room, detecting particles and thoughtfully breathe fresh air into the room atmosphere, while collecting pollen and other harmful substances inside.

Image below: Breathing Tile (active)



"A sense of breathing"

The Breathing Tiles are thoughtfully acting silently. Only the sense of the breathing air-flow in the room and the breathing-like change of the front surface tell about their activity.

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LISTENING TILE

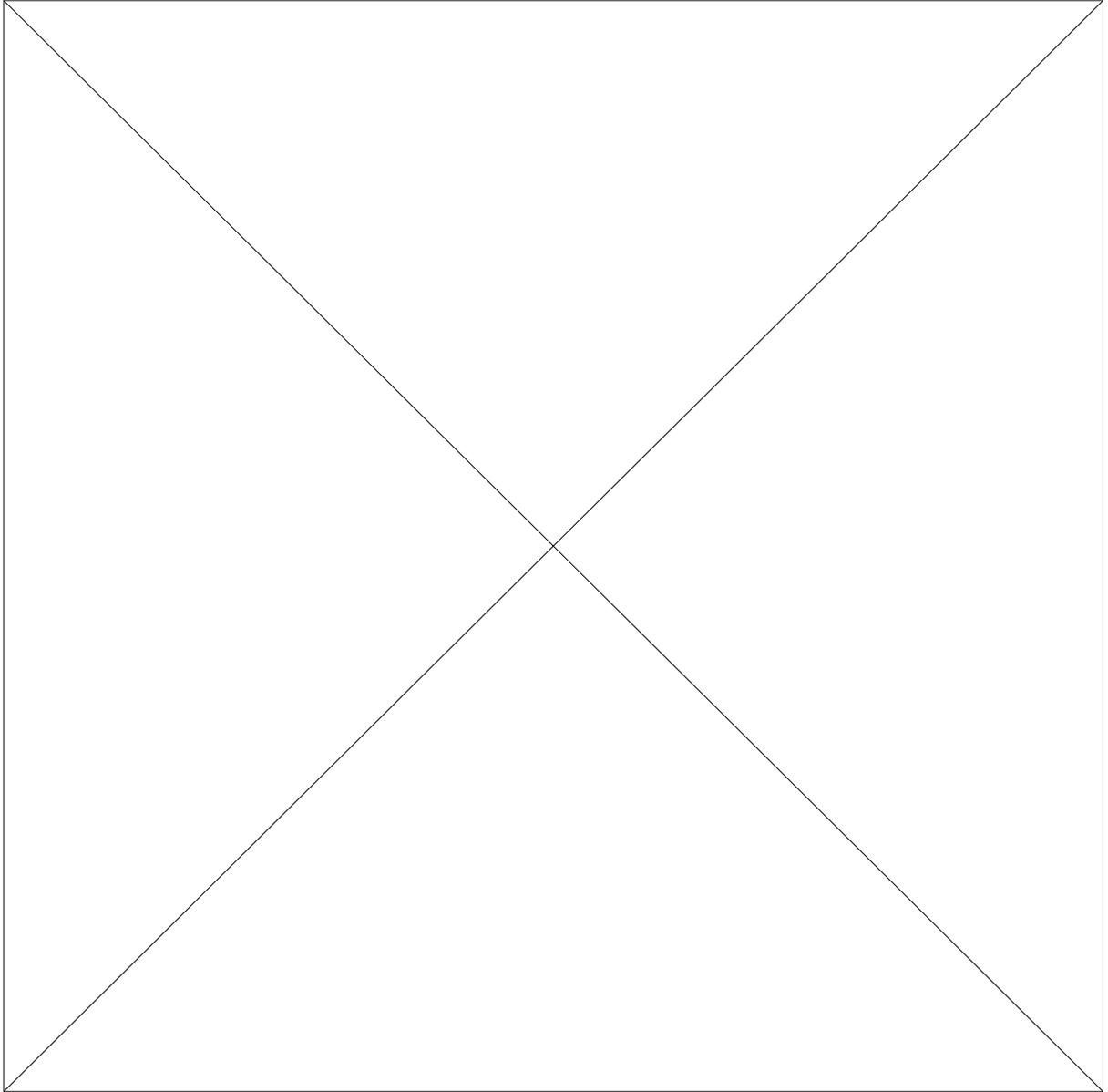
With a Listening Tile connected, the system becomes more intelligent and more responsive to the presence of the people in the room. As time goes by, a thoughtful relation between the humans and the system is being developed.

With insight and thoughtfulness, the Listening Tile, listens to and learns the behaviour of the people in the room. It communicates wirelessly with the other tiles and tells them how and when to act, contributing to the spatial experience of thoughtfulness.

Examples: After a while it starts to learn at what time you usually are coming home and tells the Breathing Tiles to thoughtfully keep the air in the apartment fresh and clean for you. It hears when you have visitors and tells the Breathing Tiles to bring more fresh air if needed. When you are not at home the Listening Tile tells the system to shut down to save energy, thoughtfully saving on natural resources and your electricity bill.

If the presence of thoughtfulness becomes too much, all tiles can be muted with a keen, sensitive touch button.

Image below: Listening Tile (muted)



Listening Tile (surface)



Close-Ups Listening Tile and Breathing Tile.





THOUGHTFUL PRODUCT BEHAVIOURS

We often rather believe in what we really see and experience than in what we are told. [Demosthenes](#), one of the greatest orators in ancient Athens, known for making efficient use of his body to accentuate his words, regarded "delivery" (gestures, voice etc.) as more important than style.

In the same way, from a rhetorical point of view, I believe that the "delivery", the acting and behaviour together with sound articulation ([actio](#), [pronuntiatio](#)) of the products becomes crucial, in terms of creating an experience of authenticity and trust ([pistis](#)) to the brand message.

To further bring the Electrolux brand philosophy "**thinking of you**" into life I carefully considered this "delivery" as an important part of the design.

Referring to the home as a "stage" and the products as "actors" on this stage, while thinking of Electrolux as a thoughtful person and how this person would act in the actual situation, several factors that influenced the design were generated. Here below I will present some examples.

A thoughtful position in space, a thoughtful gesture

Never standing in your way, still always there for you. The products can be seen just like square shaped offsets of the wall. Reaching towards the center of the room, to meet and to help the people, in an emphatic gesture of thoughtfulness.



A thoughtful visual expression

Always there for you but without disturbing. Thoughtfully blending with the architecture, the products themselves are given visual expressions that make them become unobtrusive additions to the domestic landscape.

Thoughtful sound articulation and air-flow

Contributing in the creation of empathy and an experience of a personal presence, silently without disturbing, the Breathing Tiles are acting with an organic and dynamic air flow, just like the breathing of a human being.

The fresh air is smoothly let out towards the wall, through the textile on the back surface.



Thoughtful and calm presence

A Breathing Tile is always thoughtfully acting calmly. It randomly takes breaths to taste the quality of the air. If fresh air is needed it starts a continuous breathing. If more fresh air is needed, nearby Breathing Tiles start up to help, making the thoughtful calm presence seamlessly float over a larger area.

Thoughtfulness, respect and integrity

By respecting personal integrity, the Listening Tile that reacts to the people's presence in the room, is made as an optional choice, that can be added to the system.



The level of thoughtful presence

Each of the tiles is given a sensitive Mute-Button that lets you adjust the level of thoughtfulness in the home atmosphere according to your own choice.

While muted a soft pulsating light appears from deep inside of the tile, changing in intensity and size, like the beating of a heart, showing that the thoughtfulness of Electrolux is still always there for you, whenever you want.



FURTHER THOUGHTS

I truly believe in a philosophy of transcendent product design. Every day I see products, designed as isolated entities, unconnected with the world around them. I rather believe in designing experiences where the product connects with a broader context, relating to the people and the surroundings. Product experiences that goes far beyond the object itself.

“A spatial presence of thoughtfulness” is a case study on how some of these thoughts can be implemented today, in a very common situation for the contemporary industrial designer - to meet human needs in a commercial context.

I felt that an important factor in this project was to keep it realistic all the way. All aspects of this design can easily be realized today with current technology.

When we are talking about authenticity, the functionality of the products also becomes crucial. In cooperation with the [Swedish Asthma and Allergy Association](#), the design was made to fulfill their recommendations regarding construction and air cleaning/purifying capacities.

With thoughtfulness and care of our natural environment in mind, these products are not only designed to be able to be produced with

environmental friendly materials. They are designed as a part of a system that allow the consumer to compose and upgrade according to individual needs, to foster more sustainable consumer behaviors and to provide overall longer product life spans.

Since energy consumption during usage is one of the biggest problems with home appliances, this system is designed using intelligent technology, to save energy by itself as much as possible.

This presentation should be seen as an introduction to the project focusing on the communicating/conversing aspects of the design and my thoughts of products as triggers of spatial experiences.

Thank you.

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