

Birds

Artists: David Johnson (Blind artist), Florian Grond (Sighted artist),
3D Printing Machine (UK / CA)
Project: Birds
Medium: Still images + 3D Prints
Year : 10 / 2016 - Work in progress

My collaborator, Florian Grond, lives and works in Canada and I live and work in the UK. We decided to produce a collaborative 3D artwork while remaining thousands of miles apart. We decided to employ the services and collaborative potential of 3D print technology. Florian suggested that we start with a very simple sculptural form: an origami Crane.

We started with a single idea of passing a created art object (either digitally or physically) to and from me in the UK and Florian in Montreal. At each stage of this process, we would each alter or manipulate the object with as little consultation as possible.

Each step of the process was a turning point since the other collaborator had little control or none or knowledge of what was happening to their work. The 'creative process' was periodically removed from each collaborator and then handed back in an altered form.

During the creative process, each collaborator had to give up ownership and control over the outcome and it was interesting to include the machine in this process. The machine had no urges, impulses, desires or reservations and likewise we had to change our normal practice and learn to forgo these emotions when handing over the piece at each stage of the process.

The project sought equality of contribution (including the machine!) and required each artist to give up control and artistic volition. We created an 'economy of artistic trust' or 'uncertainty'- each collaborator had to 'give up' or yield up their ownership of the work at each stage. A denial or downplaying of the artistic ego occurred, being essential to any manifestation of equality. The process of making this piece powerfully foregrounded the interdependence that all artists are subject to.

