

# Three Philosophers

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## ABSTRACT

‘Three Philosophers’ is an interactive installation consisting of three life-sized wooden sculptures that produce different audio-visual effects. Each sculpture has its own Arduino-based interface that enables it to respond to the user’s behaviors (cranking a handle, making proximate sound, touching the string). Diverse old and obsolete media and technologies, collected through the local reuse stores, such as vinyl records, computer fans, disco-ball and old books, are attached to the sculptures, and these attached components move and light up by interacting with the user’s behaviors. Our goal of presenting this installation to the NIME community is to explain and show how we can design creative computational artifacts through more improvisational, event-based, and frugal ways.

## Author Keywords

Techno-aesthetic Encounters, design approach, improvisation, ethnography

## CCS Concepts

• **Applied computing** → **Sound and music computing**; Performing arts; • **Information systems** → *Music retrieval*;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The project ‘three philosophers’ is an interactive art installation consisting of three mixed media wooden sculptures (figure 1). By using its individual interfaces (handle, microphone, wooden wand), users can produce square-wave analogue sounds and visual effects through their Arduino interfaces. Various old, broken, and obsolete media and technologies such as vinyl records, computer fans, disco-ball and old books, are attached to the sculptures, and these attached components move and light up by interacting with the user’s behaviors (figure 2). These components have been collected through one local reuse store, and functionally and aesthetically modified to work with their interfaces.

For making this installation, we actively employed our own theoretical and methodological framework called ‘techno-aesthetic encounters’, which highlights more improvisational and collaborative ways of designing computational artifacts to promote creativity. We have built this framework through a couple of art-based ethnographic projects [1–3] and have been offered to public through our paper in the ACM CHI 2022 [4]. Techno-aesthetic encounter is a theoretical and methodological framework designed for computing and design communities through which participants can explore event-based creativity in the mediation of engineering, art, and humanistic engagements. Specifically, we suggest trust-based experiments, error-engaged studios, and art-based ethnography as promising (but not exclusive) methodological approaches of this framework.

## 2. Audio-visual Documents

The audio-visual documentation of this installation can be found its own website (<https://leokang.com/threephilosophers/>). This work also has been used in one collaborative art event called ‘The Electronicists’ (<https://leokang.com/electronicists/>). More detailed story about this installation and the project can be found in our recent publication at the ACM CHI [4].



Figure 1. Three Philosophers, Kang&Jackson (2019)

## 3. SPACE/EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT

This work can be installed in any places by the dim light for the best user/audience experience. It requires 120V outlets as using several DC power-supplies. Minimum space requirement for this installation is 8 feet x 6 feet. This installation also uses an audio mixer and stereo/mono speakers or PA system. The level of the sound can be modified based on its site environment.



Figure 2. Old and obsolete items used in Three Philosophers

#### 4. REFERENCES

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