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# THE OLFACTIVE PROJECT

Or, The Third Dimension Global Communication

*expérience 16*

MAY 17 TO SEPTEMBER 15 2013

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## THE OLFACTIVE PROJECT

The Olfactive Project, created by an international team of artists, scientists, and designers including the founder of Le Laboratoire David Edwards, the master perfumer Olivier Pescheux from Givaudan, the sensory and quality manager at Toby's Estate in Australia Ryan Spinoglio and the artist Carsten Nicolai, helps us realize the dream of a Virtual Coffee in this sensorial exploration of coffee. For its 16th experiment since opening to the public in 2007, Le Laboratoire invites us to perceive coffee through five unique and independent acts: we "listen" to, smell, taste, eat, and at last drink coffee. We then complete our delicious experiment by sending an electronic coffee odor around the world with the latest invention of Le Laboratoire, the OPHONE.

## THE OPHONE

Created by David Edwards with his students at Harvard University, Rachel Field and Amy Yin, the MIT\* electrical engineer Eyal Shahar, the designer Baptiste Viala recently graduated from ENSCI, and the team at Le Laboratoire, the OPHONE will permit us to send olfactory messages instantaneously and around the world. These messages, like the text and sound messages we share every day, can be transmitted in crisp olfactory letters -- A B C D -- precisely in space and in time.

With this latest Lab experiment, David Edwards proposes that, by empowering the rapid exchange and manipulation of olfactory information, the visual and auditory foundations of global communication today might tomorrow be intriguingly expanded by a third communication mode: olfactive.

## THE OLFACTIVE PROJECT & OPHONE

The hypothesis? If we manage to communicate by way of olfactory sentences, paragraphs, and essays, might we better communicate certain emotions and experiences, and share these across conventional barriers of language, culture, and even species?

The aim of the Olfactive Project is to initiate various experiments, the first of which is based on the OPHONE, to be presented, for the first time, at Le Laboratoire in Paris from 17 May to 15 September 2013. This will be followed in February 2014 by a second experience and exhibition involved by the artists, Carsten Nicolai and Ryoji Ikeda, and the Master perfumer, Olivier Pescheux, for the US opening of the new Laboratoire – The Lab Cambridge – between M.I.T. and Harvard Universities. Utopian idea or scientific breakthrough? Let our senses be the guide! Take a deep breath!

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\*Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## **ACT 1 (EXPERIMENT 16) : THE VIRTUAL COFFEE AND THE OPHONE.**

Coffee fascinates. But, love it or not, can we truly communicate our impressions by images and sounds alone?

With this question in mind, David Edwards invited Ryan Spinoglio, to collaborate on the creation of four exceptional coffee experiences: a cloud of coffee, which we sip through a straw (the Whaf); a magical capsule of coffee, in the form of The RE, David Edwards' new culinary design that allows us to breathe and eventually eat our coffee (the AeroChef); and two exceptional ways of enjoying coffee. Isabelle Mirikelam, a leading olfactory scientist based in Paris, worked with Marlène Staiger of Le Laboratoire to capture the four principal odors, as perceived by Ryan Spinoglio, and reduce them to four special "olfactory letters."

Using these four odor letters, and with the first prototypes of the OPHONE, Ryan Spinoglio aims to help us perceive coffee in this delicious new Laboratoire experiment where we will listen to, smell, taste, sip, and even bite into coffee as we never have before.

With the OPHONE visitors will also have the chance to experience a "virtual coffee" while listening to a song, before sending one of the world's first instant electronic coffee emails to Ryan Spinoglio at Toby's Estate in Australia.

### **INITIATORY JOURNEY**

The May exhibition at Le Laboratoire will be an initiatory journey broken into 4 stages. The first stage, which takes the form of an olfactive initiation into coffee, introduces the visitor to 4 component smells comprising the olfactory DNA of coffee. Visitors are invited to try and associate colours with the smells, as if composing a basic guide to sensorial language. Four isolated rooms are provided for the discovery of the 4 smells. The second stage takes the form of a unique tasting session, in which the visitor samples the coffee in 4 forms: Whaf, Aerochef, coffee freshly made using the siphon method and a classic espresso. The third stage is dedicated to the OPHONE Prologue. The visitor advances in a bar and listens to Ryan Spinoglio describe his olfaction experience of the 4 ways of enjoying coffee while the visitor smells the curated odors via the OPHONE. The fourth and final stage is devoted to the virtual coffee experience. The visitor can now enjoy a completely virtual coffee (olfactively) with the OPHONE and finish by sending an olfactive message to a friend at the other end of the world (providing he/she also possesses an OPHONE).

### **THE PARTNERS**

The Virtual Coffee Project is sponsored by Givaudan, via the participation of Olivier Pescheux, and by Orange, through its sponsorship of several related olfactory innovation projects in the context of the ArtScience Prize in Paris, with students from Telecom Paris Tech, Ecole Centrale, Strate College, and Parsons School of Design. The Wyss Institute of Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University is a third sponsor of this project, which began in a course taught by David Edwards at Harvard in the spring of 2012. AeroDesigns, which emerged from the 3rd experiment at Le Laboratoire in 2008, is a fourth sponsor of the project through its support of new experimental forms of airborne coffee.

Pioneering "aerocuisine", AeroDesigns products are now sold in more than 20,000 retail outlets.

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OPHONE © Baptiste Viala / Le Laboratoire

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## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

LE LABORATOIRE  
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info@lelaboratoire.org  
www.lelaboratoire.org

FREE EXHIBITION from May 17 to September 15 2013  
Opening days :  
Friday - Saturday - Sunday - Monday, from noon to 7 pm  
• Special opening for Designer's Days on June 4, from 1 pm to 10 pm  
and on June 5 to 8 from 10 am to 7 pm  
• Special closing on June 10, from June 21 to July 1, and from August 2 to 19

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## PRESS CONTACTS

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