



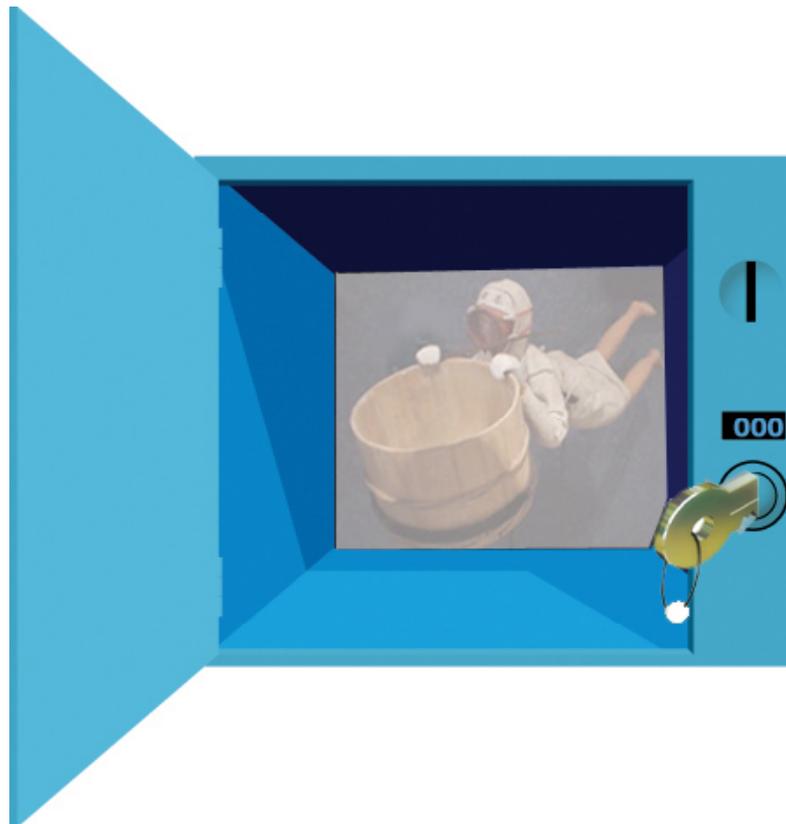
LOCKER BABY PROJECT – Shu Lea Cheang

BABY PLAY (2001)
 BABY LOVE (2005)
 BABY WORK (2012)

The **Locker Baby project** conceived in 2001 reflects a time when science is accused of out of control and scifi fantasia fortells a future that is now. The quest for rechargeable robot labor continues, intelligent pets open up new markets and transgenic clones are among us. Versions updated, bodies unwired, behaviours dictated, what remain to be programmed are "memory" and "emotions".

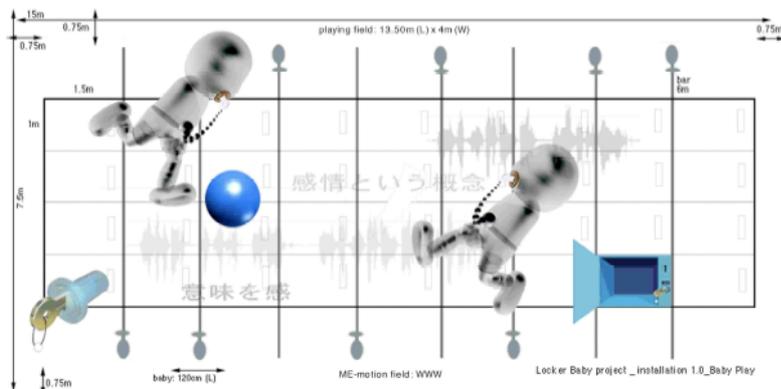
The **Locker Baby project** recalls Ryu Murakami's noted novel *Coin Locker Babies* (1980) in which twin boys were abandoned at birth in one square foot coin locker metal box at Tokyo's subway station. The boys grew up haunted with the sound of human heart beats, those of their birth mother's. Coin lockers are Japan's train station landmark and much utilized by shoppers and travelers. In post-war Japan, unwanted babies (often interracial) by unwed mothers were dropped off in coin-lockers. Fear of terrorists' explosive deposit, coin lockers have ceased to exist at public space in most metropolitan cities. In 1995, when Tokyo Doomsday was called for by cult Aum Shinrikyo, the coin lockers were sealed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Force for a day. The historical association and references derived from coin lockers inspire the Locker Baby project.

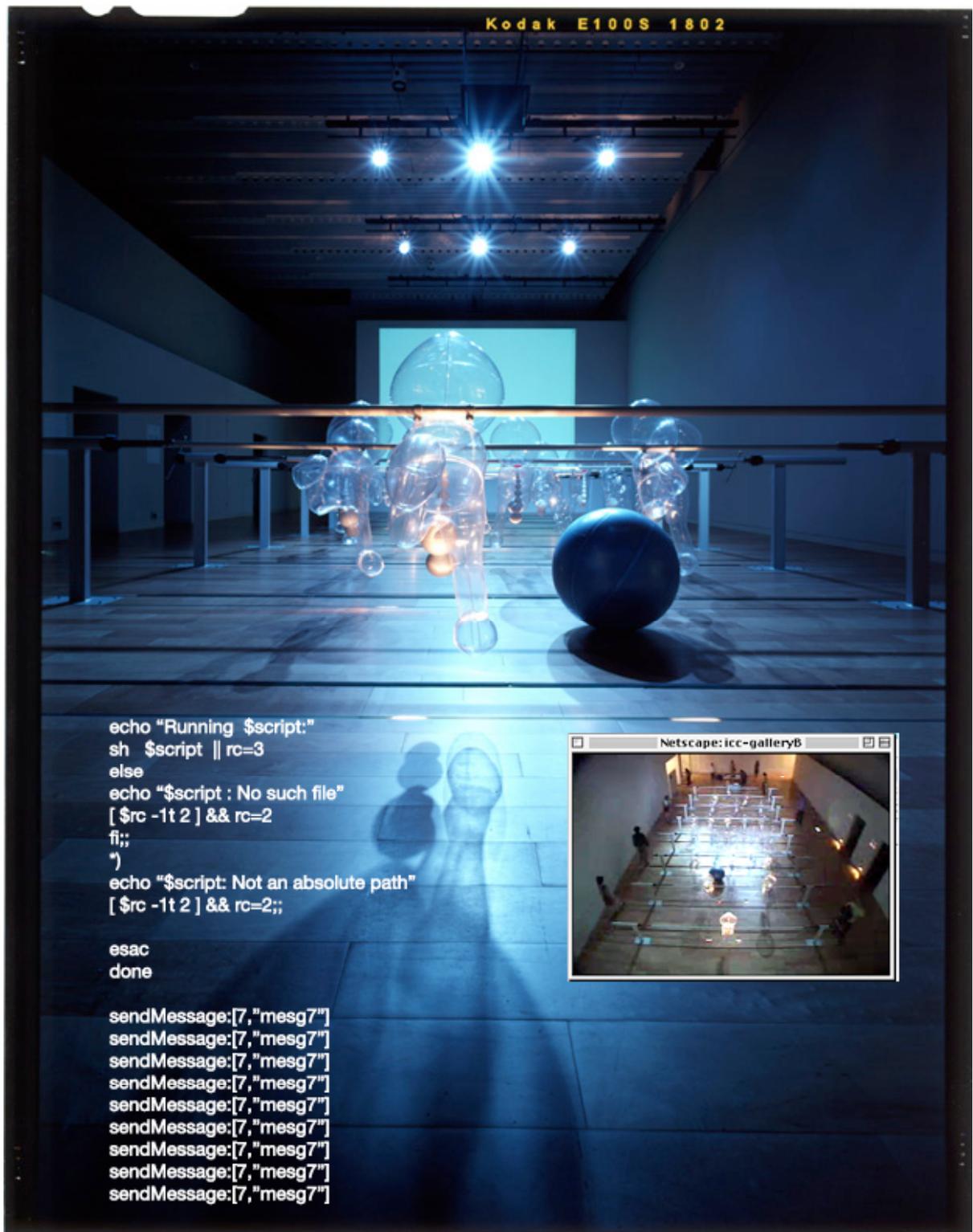
The **Locker Baby project** proposes a fictional scenario set in year 2030. The transnational DPT (DollyPolly Transgency) advances clone babies as an industry. Genes extracted from deep sea pearls harvested off Okinawa Island are identified as best breed. Coin lockers situated in busy Tokyo train stations are located for underworld test tube fertilization. Ticking seconds to oblivion in darkness, the lockers announce the birth of the Clone Generation. Serving themselves in the intelligent industry, the locker babies are entrusted to negotiate human "memory" and "emotions". The Locker Baby holds the key to unlock the networked inter-sphere of **ME**-motion (Memory+Emotion), a playfield of sonic imagery triggered only by human interaction.



BABY PLAY, the first installment of the Locker Baby project, was commissioned by and realized at NTT[ICC] (Intercommunication Center, Tokyo) in 2001. Baby Play employs a large scale table football field (15m x 7.5m) to link Locker Baby with networked inter-sphere. Table football (termed baby foot in French), a pastime game of the last century, serves as an interface for net interactivity. Opposing rows of ball players (22 in total) are replaced by human sized cloned locker babies (140cm in height). The movement of the ball bounced by the players is tracked by 36 touch sensors that are 'mined' below the floor surface. On the web, 36 lockers, each a depository of texts and sound, correspond to 36 sensor fields. The sensor data of ball movement is transmitted to the web. Accordingly the tracking of ball movement retrieves ME-data (texts and sound) deposited in the respective lockers.

http://www.ntticc.or.jp/Archive/2001/BABY_PLAY/index.html



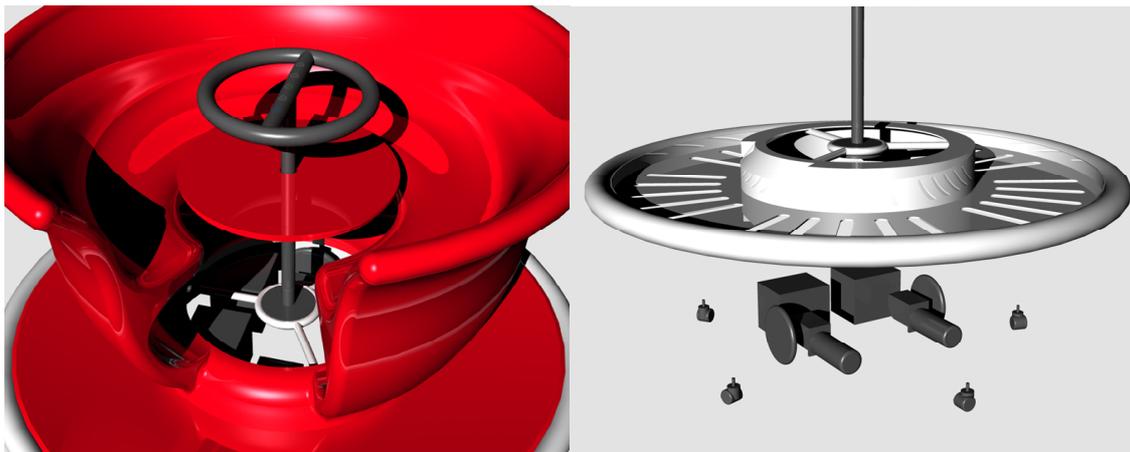


BABY PLAY Installation photo NTT[ICC], Tokyo, 2001



BABY LOVE, a Wifi Mobile installation, the second installment of the Locker Baby project, was commissioned by the National Taiwan museum of Fine Arts and first exhibited (curated by Jerome Sans) at Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2005. Baby Love consists of 6 large size (170 diameter) teacups and 6 clone babies (70 cm tall). Each teacup is an auto-driving mobile unit. Each baby installed with a mac-mini is wifi linked to the net depository of popular love songs. Baby Love situates human and its baby clones in a perpetual spin of fairground teacup ride. The teacup ride, its spinning wheel allows direction manoeuver and speed variation, shuffles and remixes the love songs in the baby engine. A gentle ride can turn into fast spin, the data jams and jammed, we are left to sort out the ME with the babies in the swirling teacups. The crash would eventually happen.

<http://babylove.biz>



3D design: Hideo Takashima
Industrial design: PoHsien Yang



BABY LOVE PALAIS DE TOKYO photo by FLORIAN KLEINEFENN

BABY LOVE – exhibition 2005 to 2008

Palais de Tokyo, 2005
 National Taiwan Museum of Art, 2006
 ZeroOne Festival, San Jose, 2006
 Chelsea Art Museum New York, 2006
 Experimental playground Australia, 2007
 Rogaland Kunstmuseum, Norway, 2008



01 festival-San Jose-City Hall - photos by Everett Taasevigen



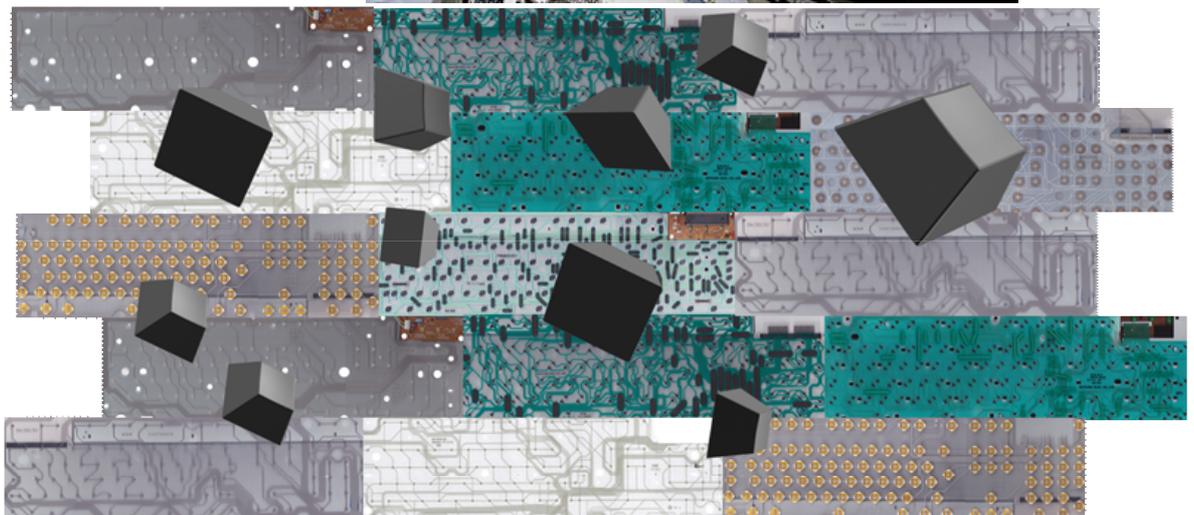


BABY WORK is the third installment of the Locker Baby project.

BABY WORK as a performative installation situates the public as BABY who works to align the lost ME data. Set in a post-keyboard E-trashscape, BABY WORK collapses keys and rewires junked keyboards to put the baby/public at work. A toy claw crane machine is erected, risen from mountain of broken keys. The keys are thrown about while the public adorned in worker's white cotton gloves collect the shattered keys. Picking up keys, the public arrange randomly the keys on the intelligent wall made up by the rewired matrix and metal plates of the used keyboards. Each key placing triggers a sound note. With many BABIES (the public) at work, keys with sound notes are patched, (a)synchronized into a sonic expression of lost memory and emotions.

YOU ARE THE BABY. WORK.

<http://babywork.biz>



Baby Work installation 2012

APO33, Nantes, France

Seeking Silicon Valley, ZERO I Biennale, San Jose, USA

Remediating the Social , Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCIP) , Edinburg, UK



Baby Work – installation view at 01 San Jose, 2012

Photo by Patrick M. Lydon