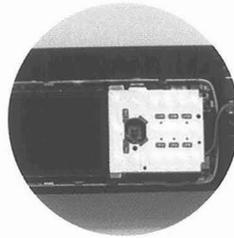


Buttons: A Blind Camera

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Taking a photo means making a memory. Choosing a moment in time and framing a situation. Archiving it or making it public. Either way, we create a visual item that we have an emotional attachment to through our memory. Photos help us to remember moments in our past. Often they even become a memory in their own right. For many, making their moments public through services like Flickr is already part the process of photography itself, creating archives which contain a vast collection of visual fragments of individual lives.

Buttons takes on this notion of the camera as a networked object. It is a camera that will capture a *moment* at the press of a button. However, unlike a conventional analog or digital camera, this one doesn't have any optical parts. It allows you to capture your moment but in doing so, it effectively separates it from the subject. Instead, as you will memorize the moment, the camera memorizes only the time and starts to continuously search on the net for other photos that have been taken in the very same moment.

Essentially, it is a camera that—using a mobile communication device—takes *others'* photos. Photos that were created by someone who pressed a button somewhere at the same time as its own button was pressed. Even more so, it reduces the cameras to their networked *buttons* in order to create a link between two individuals.

After a few minutes or hours, depending on how soon someone else shares their photo on the web, an image will appear on the screen. In a way, it belongs *half* to the person who had pressed the button and still remembers that moment. Because of that connection, the photos are never dismissed as random, no matter how enigmatic they may be.

To create a networked button and retrieve other individuals' photos, *Buttons* consequentially employs the technology which some cameras are presently merging with—the mobile phone. The object itself is made of laser-cut acrylic. The button was deliberately chosen and taken from an Agfomatic 901 and is combined with an electronic button underneath. This in turn is connected to a Sony Ericsson K750i which is running a custom software written in Mobile Processing. For retrieving others' photos, the device connects to the internet and contacts the same server as *Blinks*. This server's custom PHP-script will continuously search Flickr for the indicated moment while *Buttons* regularly asks for results. As soon as a photo of the moment has been shared on the web, it is transmitted and displayed on the device's screen.

www.blinksandbuttons.net/buttons_en.html