REP(AIR): AN OLFACTORY INTERFACE FOR BIKE MAINTENANCE AND CARE


Abstract from the webpage for the paper:

In this paper we present Rep(AIR), a research-through-design olfactory interface for communicating moments of wear and tear on a bicycle. Rep(AIR) was designed as a probe in an autobiographical design inquiry to uncover qualities of the relationship between humans and objects as they relate to breakage and repair. Key used Rep(AIR), along with a personal probe notebook, on a 12 day international cycling trip to reflect on and document repairs and maintenance. We share findings from our analysis which extend the discourse on repair to include moments of wear, maintenance, and care as a part of the ongoing process of everyday use; recenter functionality to the human-object team, rather than the object alone; and highlight teamwork and collaboration as a way to challenge the hierarchical human-object narrative. We conclude by noting the role of Rep(AIR) as a tool which gave the bicycle a voice—revealing the often uncommunicated experience of wear and tear on an object.

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