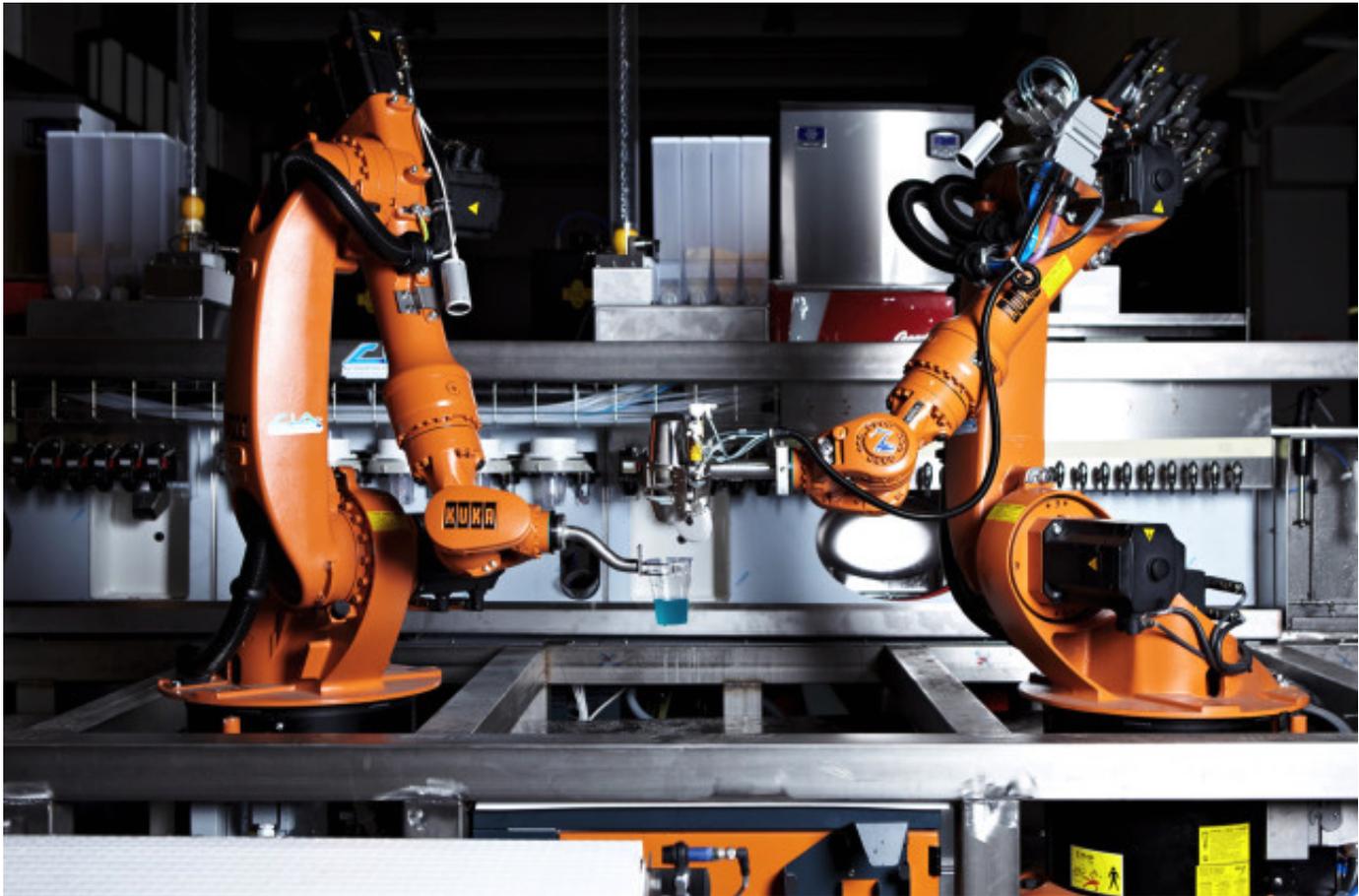
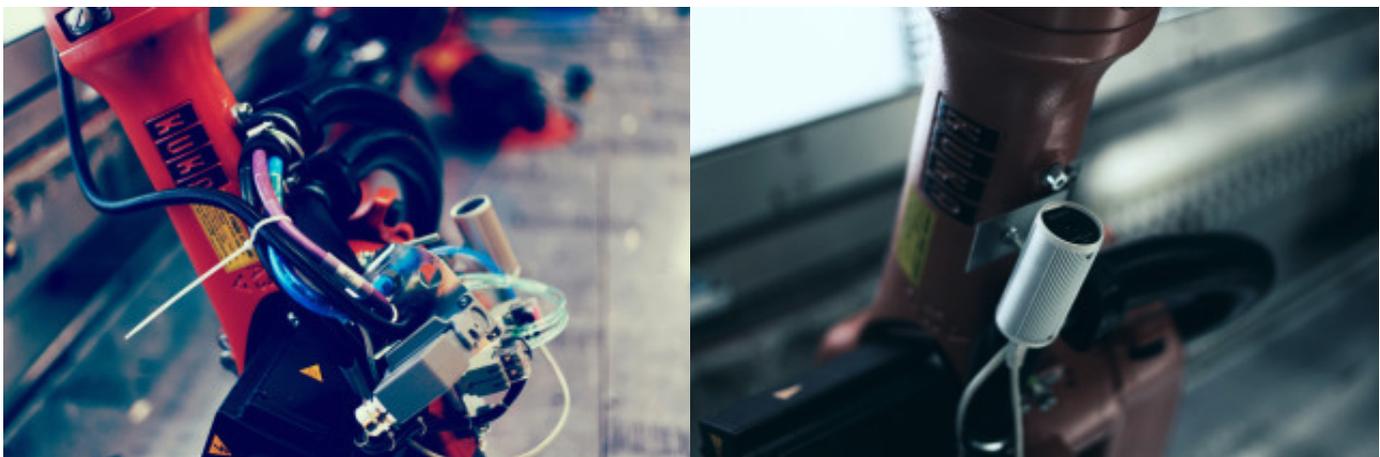


Makr Shagr – Robotic 'barmen' and crowd-sourced drinks



Created as a collaboration between MIT Sensible Lab, Pentagram and SuperUber, *Makr Shagr* is a robotic bar, capable of preparing approximately one googol (equal to 10^{100}) crowd-sourced drink combinations. The project was developed with the endorsement of “World Expo Milano 2015 – Energy for Life. Feeding the Planet”, and is currently tested during Milan Design Week (April 9-14th, 2013) before being unveiled in its final form at Google I/O in San Francisco (on May 15th, 2013).

Users download an app on their handheld devices and mix ingredients as virtual barmen. They can gain inspiration by viewing other users’ recipes and comments before sending in their drink of choice. The cocktail is then crafted by three robotic arms, whose movements reproduce every action of a barman – from the shaking of a Martini to the muddling of a Mojito, and even the thin slicing of a lemon garnish. Roberto Bolle, étoile dancer at La Scala in Milan and Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, and choreographer Marco Pelle, inspired the gestures of the robots. Roberto Bolle’s movements were filmed and used as input for the programming of Makr Shagr.



The MIT Sensible Lab was responsible for the concept, Pentagram was responsible for the design and Shahar Zaks, from SuperUber, was responsible for developing the data visualization and interfacing between design, code and hardware. At the beginning there were a lot of limitations regarding resolution, interaction and movement that made the design look the way it

did. SuperUber's job was focused on motion design and making the graphical assets come to life. The main inspiration is based on machine design and trying to integrate the animal-like behavior of robots into the viz' language.



In the end i think that the most interesting part of this project is not the robots or the artificial intelligence. This is a crazy social experiment that defies the laws and traditions that have been established in bars and parties. It brings this environment into a total state of order and organized behavior. No more crazy lines or people fighting over who was there first, no more great looking girls that get to drink for free or get the bartender's attention first, no more priority. I'm not saying that this is positive or negative, but it will definitely be interesting to see what type of new social norms and dynamics are created out of this experiment. How will people behave and adapt when robots serve us?

Lucas Werthein (Superuber) also tells CAN that the main challenge in this project was the communication between so many elements and with so many people spread out throughout the world. There were people in New York, Rio, Boston, Milan, and Turino. They had Pentagram making the web app and feeding them the design elements; CIA was working with the robots and they needed to create a fluid way to send information to the robots; the drinks needed to be made in synch with the visualization, which was displayed behind the robots.



Lucas also adds that he is not sure if the drinks made by the robots actually taste better, but they are standardized. You will always get the same exact amount, combination, and end mix. This may be better for some people, but for other it may be worse because it takes away the surprise element.

Imagine if every time you went to a bar your margarita always tasted the same. No surprise element created by the bartender? At the same time, since this machine, which can create infinite combinations, is preparing your drink, really interesting things could happen with crowd sourcing and social collaboration. Actual people could be responsible for this surprise element from now on. In a sense, everyone becomes a bartender and the best drinks become the most popular and can be shared through social media and other instances.

Makr Shkr will be in action everyday until April 14th, from 1pm until 11pm / Galleria del Corso, Milan.

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