



...The telephone is an irresistible intruder in time and place...

McLuhan - *Understanding Media*, 1964



**Mass Distraction** is a series of three jackets intended to provoke thought and discussion about the idea of presence: physical presence no longer guarantees a person's availability and attentiveness. Nowadays the user of a mobile communication device often splits his attention between the people in his surroundings and the person to whom he's linked remotely. Often, in order to remain connected the people both near and far, the mobile phone user multitasks between the two communication channels. Whether disguised or not, this practice degrades the quality of the interaction with the people in his immediate presence.

Each jacket replaces a normal mobile phone in a prototypical situation of mobile communication, causing the user to answer an incoming call in a very peculiar way. Through these garments, the effort of the user in dividing his attention among different communication channels is highlighted and commented on ironically.

None of the garments in the **Mass Distraction** series is meant to be a market product. The value of the series resides in the provocative and ironic oppositions it constructs between the nature of everyday objects and the unusual behaviours they provoke. These contrasts constitute a commentary on the potential of the mobile phone for disrupting and disturbing social interactions.

*Mass Distraction* has been conceived and developed at the Interaction Design Institute Ivrea, since Spring 2004, by: Agnelli Davide (ITA) and Tal Drori (IL). <http://www.mass-distraction.org>