

Blu Dot's 'Real Good' Marketing Experiment

Posted by: Helen Walters on November 03, 2009



Small companies without the vast budgets of large corporations have no choice but to think creatively about how to market their wares. On Wednesday November 4th, Minneapolis-based furniture design [Blu Dot](#) is launching an interesting-sounding experiment in New York City. Capitalizing on city denizens' apparent obsession with both leaving and taking pieces of furniture on the sidewalk, Blu Dot is leaving 25 of its iconic "Real Good" metal chairs (one shown) around the city.

Banking on the idea that they won't be left lying around for long, the designers hope that each one will be taken to a "real good" home. There's a 2.0 twist, too: the chair has its own [Twitter account](#), while most of the chairs have been embedded with a GPS chip so that they can be [tracked online in real time](#). "Who will take them? Where will they end up? How will they be used?" asks Blu Dot co-founder John Christakos. "We have visions you may find one under a bridge being used by a group of homeless people, another in a hipster's apartment. We don't know what's going to happen. It's fun."

Both Christakos and Michael Hart, co-founder and creative director of [Mono](#), the agency working with Blu Dot on the project, are aware that the project could backfire. After all, some New Yorkers might not respond well to a chair left lying in the street with a potentially ominous cell phone/GPS tracker/battery pack device attached. And some might not like the idea that they were stalked by the project organizers, who intend to approach the chairs' new owners to see if they'd take part in a documentary film about the project.

But Hart and Christakos are both open to seeing what happens. "This isn't about tricking people. It's more about curiosity and an invitation," says Hart. "If folks aren't happy to tell their story then we'll totally respect that. It's not about invading their privacy. And really, if nothing else then we will have given the city of New York 25 free chairs."

An aside, but here's a video I shot at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in May of this year. Maurice Blanks, one of the other founders of Blu Dot, features about half way through: