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Balance from Within – 170-year-old robotic sofa balances on a single point



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Created by Jacob Tonski, artist-in-residence at the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, "Balance from Within" is an installation that includes a 170-year-old Victorian sofa which balances precariously on one leg, continuously teetering, responding internally to external forces. Inside the body of the sofa, a robotic assembly maintains balance dynamically. As the sofa begins to fall, the mechanism senses tilting and exerts a force appropriate to counter the falling, resulting in an endless wobbling back and forth.

Balance comes from within. It's a delicate act, and sometimes we fall down. 'Balance from Within' is a meditation on the nature of human relations, and the things we build to support them.

The sofa uses a reaction wheel, design commonly used by orient satellites in space where second axes added to the mechanism allows the sculpture to balance on a single point. If the sculpture falls, which can easily occur even if small amount of pressure is put on the sofa, separate pieces of the sofa are held together with strong magnets meaning it can quickly be put back together.

Support and research for Balance from Within began through a residency at the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry in summer 2010, made possible through support from the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts. The project was completed in 2013 with finishing support from the School of Creative Arts, Miami University, Ohio, and exhibited at the 2013 FILE festival in Brazil.

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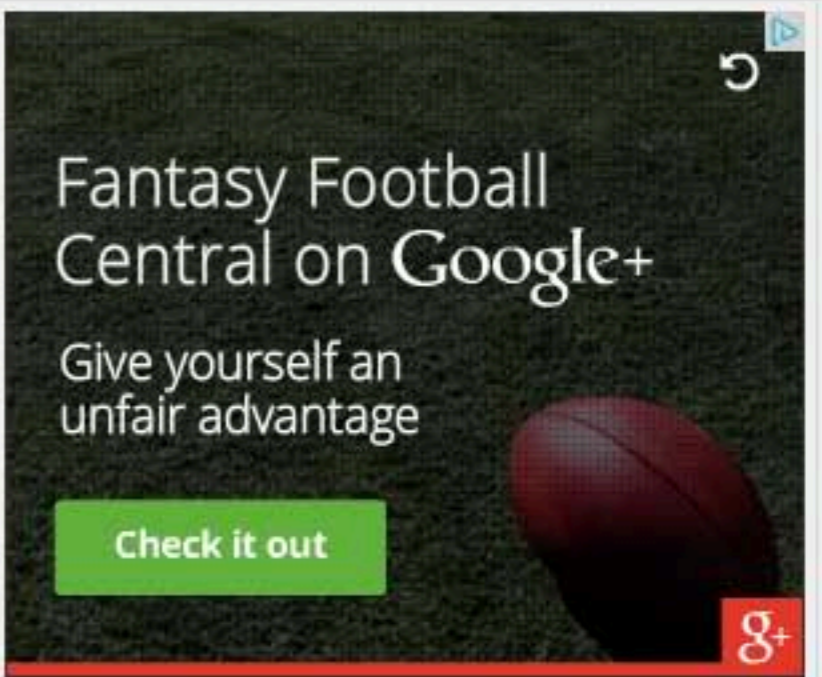
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