

Experience report, performance situation Room, Robin Jonsson.

I was invited by MDT to work on my project "The emotional Turing-Test".

Based on my earlier works with robots as performers, I wanted to explore how, if and under what circumstances an audience would be willing to inflict pain on a present, cute and social robot.

My previous work centered on audiences feeling sympathy for the robot, and the project was an extension of that idea.

Several audience-members were willing to hurt the robot, and some not. But what became very clear was my role as a facilitator and mediator.

This was the first part of a 3-part project. The different parts centers on three different emotions: pain, happiness and sorrow.

It was important to me in my process to meet an audience and try different ideas. The showings that I had was very rewarding and I was happy to have a presentation without the need to have an already finished project.

MDT was very helpful in supporting me and my presentations.

One of the participants is a researcher in Sweden who works on robots and AI. It is likely that we will collaborate on a future project, all thanks to the presentation at MDT.

Best,

Robin Jonsson

ROBIN JONSSON “THE EMOTIONAL TURING TEST”

Test showing on 26 September 2020 of “The emotional Turing test”* by Robin Jonsson

Test 1: Pain

”the more we regard a robot as a social presence,
the more we seem to extend our concepts
of right and wrong to our [behavior] toward them”

– Heather Knight, roboticist

I am testing the first part of the project “The emotional Turing test” for an audience. In the project, I focus on if, how, and why humans think that a robot feels feelings. In this first part, robots are to appear as if they are feeling pain and other similar feelings. The ethical aspects of causing robots pain are complicated and not well understood. This will be included in the presentation.

The viewing is a test where I need an external audience that can experience different scenes and then share their experiences and thoughts with me. Please book ahead since the number of seats is limited.

Warning: If you don’t want to see a robot being tortured then you should not attend this presentation.

About The emotional Turing test: The project will premiere in its entirety in the fall of 2021 at the festival “Rum för performance” at Norrlandsoperan in Umeå.

About Robin Jonsson: I am a choreographer, producer and sound-artist. I’ve been creating and touring danceproductions since 2006, in Europe and the world. I was based in Brussels from 2004 to 2015 where I studied at the well known dance school P.A.R.T.S, led by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, leader of the dance-company ROSAS. I am currently based in Stockholm.

My main focus is on how social robots can function as replacements of human performers in terms of presence, social capacities, reactivity, charisma and virtuosity.

In my earlier works like The most human and Other than human, I have utilized robots with human forms as social beings that replace human dancers, especially as social performers that can interact with people.

Concept: Robin Jonsson. With: Robin Jonsson, Alex the Robot and Kate Darling. Part of Life Long Burning – Towards a sustainable Eco-System for Contemporary Dance in Europe project (2018-2022) supported by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

