HUMAN STUDY #1, 5RNP

Human Study#1, 5RNP is a performative installation where the human becomes an actor. In a scene reminiscent of a life drawing class, the human takes the sitter's role to be sketched by 5 robots. When the subject arrives by appointment, he is seated in an armchair. An assistant attaches sheets of paper on to the robots' desks and wakes each one up, twisting its arm or knocking three times.

The robots, stylised minimal artists, are only capable of drawing obsessively. Their bodies are old school desks on which the drawing paper is pinned. Their left arms, bolted on the table, holding black bic biros, are only able to draw.

The robots, named RNPs all look alike except for their eyes, either obsolete digital cameras, or lowres webcam. Their eyes focus on the subject or look at the drawing in progress.

The drawing sessions last 20 min, during which time the human cannot see the drawings in progress. The sitter only sees the robots alternating between observing and drawing, sometimes pausing. The sounds produced by each robot's motors create an improvised soundtrack. The sitter is in an ambivalent position, at the mercy of the robots' scrutiny, but also as an object of artistic attention. As the model in a life drawing class, the human is personality-less, an object of study. The human sitter is passive, the robots taking what is perceived as the artistic role. Although immobile, the model is active in keeping the pose, for the spectators the sitter is an integral part of the installation.

RNP was originally developed by Tresset to palliate a debilitating painter's block. It could be seen as a creative prosthetic or a behavioral self-portrait. Even if the way the robot draws is based on Tresset's technique, its style is not a pastiche but rather an interpretation influenced by the robot's characteristics.

Tresset constantly works on the computational system controlling the robot's drawing behaviour, and for each exhibition the systems are tuned again until they produce interesting drawings. Using autonomous robots to draw from observation enables Tresset to further his exploration of the drawing practice.

https://vimeo.com/144150449
https://vimeo.com/123601302
Drawings: https://goo.gl/Jq2qOm
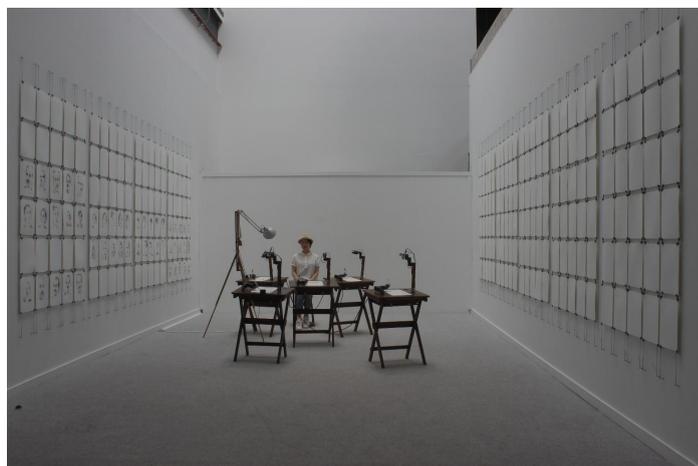
Human Study #1 5RNP was premiered at the Merge festival in association with Tate Modern in London in 2012, it has since been exhibited at a number of major institutions and events such as at the Mori Museum (Tokyo), Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arts (Seoul) at Ars Electronica 2014 (Linz), BOZAR (Brussels), Mois Multi (Quebec), Dixit Algorizmi (Berlin), Variation (Paris), BIAN (Montreal), Japan Media Festival (Kyoto), Update_5 (Ghent) where it was awarded the Prix du Public and 3rd Prix du Jury, it was also awarded the Bronze Lumen Prize, part of the jury selection at the Japan media festival. The smaller version 3RNP has been extensively exhibited around the world.

Patrick Tresset
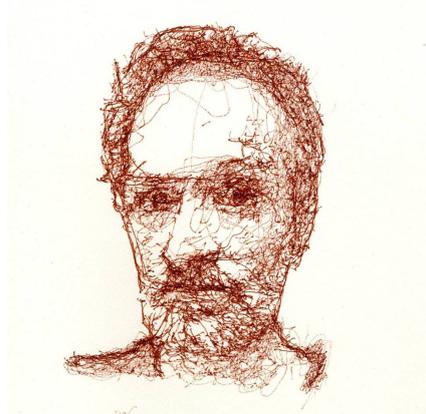
Patrick Tresset is a Brussels-based artist who, in his work, explores human traits and the aspects of human experience. His work reflects recurrent ideas such as embodiment, passing time/time passing, childhood, conformism, obsessiveness, nervousness, the need for storytelling, and mark-making. He is best known for his performative installations using robotic agents as stylized actors that make marks and for his exploration of the drawing practice using computational systems and robots.

Tresset's work has been internationally exhibited in association with major museums such as The Grand palais (Paris), The Pompidou Center (Paris), Prada foundation (Milan), Tate Modern (London), Museum of Israel (Jerusalem), Victoria & Albert Museum (London), MMCA (Seoul), BOZAR (Brussels) and at events such as Ars Electronica, Update_5, London Art Fair, Kinetica and Istanbul biennial.

Originally a painter, Tresset is part of a generation of artists coming out of Goldsmiths' computing department. In 2004 Tresset joined Goldsmiths for an MSc degree in Arts Computing where from 2009 until 2012 he co-directed the AIkon-II project, he holds an mPhil in Arts and technology. and is a currently a visiting research fellow. He also developed and taught a creative robotics module at Goldsmiths. In 2013 Patrick was a Senior Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz working with Prof. Deussen. In 2017 he was nominated a cultural leader of the WEF at Davos. Since 2018 he is an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Canberra in Australia.

Tresset's work has been featured in major international media outlets such as Le Monde, BBC, Wired, Arte, New York Times etc.. Tresset has published research papers in the fields of computational aesthetics, social robotics, drawing research and AI.