



## ROCA Meeting:

29 August 2013, 10:00-12:30 in room 16.3.07

In attendance: Rikke, Elizabeth, Hanne-Louise, Bojana, Miya (on skype), Jacob, Jonatan, Gunhild  
Four new faces around the table: Stina Marie Hasse Jørgensen, Krestina Skirl, Laura Beloff and Phillip Prager.

After a round of short presentations we summed up our recent activities before the summer vacation: workshop in May, field trip to Labitat and Illutron in June (video documentation coming soon), and Gunhild's visit to the first seminar of a series entitled "*Friends by Design*"—*Formal Models of Human-Robot Interaction*, organised by PENSOR at Aarhus University.

## Funding strategies:

Elizabeth, Bojana, and Miya all submitted excellent applications to the Marie Curie fellowship in mid August.

## Deadlines coming up:

*For individual projects:* FKK Individual Postdoc (1 Nov), Ph.D. scholarships from the Faculty of Humanities (mid Nov)

*For collective projects:* FKK Research Network (1 Nov), FKK Collective Research (1 Nov), Velux Fonden (pre-application mid Dec)

Apart from a number of individual applications, Gunhild has reported to Mette Sandbye, Head of IKK Department, that we would like to apply for FKK Collective Research and Velux Fonden. Mette will discuss this with the Research Committee at the Department, and get back to us in early September. The challenge is to establish a coherence between the individual approaches and the collective project in terms of goals, theories, methodologies etc.

We have the following themes and approaches (in alphabetic order by first name; no priority intended):

- **Bojana Romic:** quantitative and qualitative investigations of the cultural imaginary related to humanoid robots in a selection of fiction movies.
- **Elizabeth Jochum:** practice-based investigation of multimodal communication strategies between robot and human, including programming of robots to create graceful movements in marionettes.
- **Gunhild Borggreen:** investigation of visuality and scopic perceptions in manifestations of robots in contemporary art and popular culture, including robot culture from Japan.

- **Hanne-Louise Johannesen:** investigation of emotional and aesthetic dimension of touch and tangibility through materiality and issues of tactile quality, boundaries between skin, second skin, interactive textiles and other membranes.
- **Jacob Kreutzfeldt:** investigation of voice, function and movement sounds in radiophonic manifestations of the robotic (from spring 2014)
- **Jonatan Leer:** Gastrobots: anthropological and text analytical investigation of negotiations of technology and authenticity in food culture (from fall 2014).
- **Katrine Mosegaard:** practice-based investigation of D.I.Y. as political activism which challenges the notion of democratic processed, among this development and use of technologies such as robots.
- **Laura Beloff:** artistic practice related to robots in the combination of organic/bio and technology/IT.
- **Laura Luise Schultz:** investigation of presence and mediation in performance theory in relation to technology, including robots, which challenge conventions of the actor's physical co-presence (from fall 2014).
- **Miya Yoshida:** practice-based curatorial investigation of ontological and epistemological aspects of measurement in relations between human beings, and between humans and technology.
- **Phillip Prager:** investigation of the aesthetic experience of the sublime, which, being a combination of awe and wonder with terror and the uncanny, seems to describe the complex relationship we have with robots. Also: the link between play and creativity, and how social play facilitates bonding, trust, cooperation and empathy.
- **Rebekka Anker-Møller:** (project not yet formulated; no application this year).
- **Rikke Cortsen:** investigation of representation of robots in comics (contribution; not a full research project).
- **Stina Marie Hasse Jørgensen:** practice-based investigations of artistic robots' negotiation of a sonic performative presence, from 1850 onwards.

At the meeting we decided to organise a workshop on 23-24 September for individual applicants to present their ideas and get feedback. Also, reading and feedback may be arranged among group members. Gunhild will comment as needed along the way. The workshop will also include a discussion on the collective approach in order to keep the notion of coherence up front.

For the collective applications, Gunhild will be responsible for putting the application(s) together, in close collaboration with relevant individuals and institutions. No research fund will be able to cover the expenses of all our combined projects, so careful consideration and strategic thinking will be part of the process.

## Further activities:

### Application Workshop, 23-24 September:

- presentations and feedback on individual application plans
- presentation and feedback for collective project(s).
- discussion of the overall purpose of the ROCA project, as well as the future perspectives.

- discussion of the concept of the uncanny, for which we read three short texts: Ernst Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny" (1906), Sigmund Freud "The Uncanny" (1919), and Masahiro Mori, "The Uncanny Valley" (1970).
- Cathrine Hasse has invited the ROCA group to a social gathering including tapas dinner at DPU at Emdrup on the evening of 23 September.
- Bojana and Stina will suggest a robot film to watch together on 24 September.

More details of the workshop will be available soon.

#### **ROCA seminar:**

The seminar with David Hanson is not going to materialize as we had wished for. Instead, Elizabeth will invite Ken Goldberg to visit us in March for a public lecture (open for everyone) and a workshop discussion with our group.

#### **Robot Building Workshop:**

Plans for a robot building workshop with Illutron will be arranged as a separate event in late October.

#### **Reading group:**

A list of various literature is in the making and can serve as inspiration for reading group with the aim of reading and discussing texts on robots.

#### **Film screening:**

Bojana and Stina will put together a program of various films featuring robots, to be screened about once a month. This will be open for students and staff at IKK (and others).

#### **Website:**

Gunhild has requested a website at the Faculty of Humanities, located under IKK Research. A test version will be distributed soon for comments.

#### **IKK seminars:**

For future seminars we can think of inviting colleagues at IKK to present their insights. There are a number of researchers who are interested in robots or interface relations, for example Slavko Kacunko, Anders Michelsen, and Bjarki Valtysson, just to mention a few.

#### **External partner in application for Center of Excellence:**

Gunhild met with Cathrine Hasse, professor at Department of Education, AU. Cathrine is head of the project Technucation, which includes a group working on empirical and ethnographic studies of social robots. Cathrine will apply Danish National Research Foundation (Grundforskningsfonden) in November this year to create a Center of Excellence, and has invited ROCA to be an external partner in the application. The idea is to organise seminars and conferences together with common interest themes (such as the uncanny, the imaginary etc.), compile anthologies based on the seminars and conferences, launch a new journal on humanistic robotics, and/or other things we can think of.

Cathrine and her group collaborates with the PENSOR group in Aarhus, and if ROCA teams up, the three groups can be a very strong coalition in terms of setting a humanistic agenda in robot research.

**News in brief:**

Elizabeth will be giving a presentation in a panel on the topic of The Uncanny Valley at IROS 2013, International conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems. The conference will take place in Tokyo, 3-8 November 2013. Read more: <http://www.iros2013.org/index.html>

Gunhild will write a paper entitled "Robots in the Humanities" for presentation at the international conference *Negotiating the Humanities*, which will take place at Aarhus University, 14-15 November 2013. Read more: <http://www.mapping-humanities.dk/news/conference-2/index.html>

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