

PATRICK TRESSET



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Patrick Tresset is an artist who develops and presents theatrical installations with robotic agents as actors. Tresset's installations use computational systems that introduce artistic, expressive and obsessive aspects to robots' behaviour. These systems are influenced by research into human behaviour, more specifically how artists make marks that depict and how humans relate to robots. Tresset develops robots and autonomous computational systems to produce series of drawings, paintings and animations.

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 Alkon-II project, a project which aimed to model and understand the sketching process. He also developed and taught the creative robotics module at Goldsmiths. In 2013 Patrick was a Senior Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz working with Prof. Deussen. Tresset has published research papers in the fields of computational aesthetics, social robotics, drawing research and AI.

Tresset's work has been internationally exhibited in association with major museums such as Prada Foundation, The Pompidou Center, Tate Modern, Museum of Israel, Victoria & Albert Museum (London), MMCA (Seoul), BOZAR (Brussels) and at events such as BIAN, Ars Electronica, Update_5, London Art Fair, Kinetica and Istanbul biennial (ISEA2011).



Human Study # 1, Paul-II sketching Amy, 2012, photo by Steph Horak

HUMAN STUDIES

The robots I develop are influenced by research into human behaviour, more specifically how human beings depict other humans, how humans perceive artworks and how humans relate to robots. The artifacts produced by these computational systems can also be considered as studies of the human.

The investigative side of my work feeds on research into perception, cognition, psychology and related fields, with the main investigation being focused on understanding how people draw from life. To further this, I study the manner in which artists, influenced by their experience, transmute what they observe into movements which are then transformed into traces on a surface.

As I exhibit robots or groups of robots, a non-negligible aspect of my practice is concerned with the installation's theatricality. Since first exhibiting a drawing robot in public, I have become fascinated with the audience's response and reaction to it. This has opened up a space for me to explore.

The original aim driving my work was to create autonomous systems capable of producing images which have a similar emotional and aesthetic impact on a spectator as human-made artworks. It is important here to stress that the aim is not to invent systems that are capable of drawing precisely like a human, but for the drawing to have a certain aesthetic effect on the observer. I embarked upon this particular quest following the loss of my passion for making art and in a certain manner, have attempted to create an artistic prosthetic to palliate this loss. The autonomous systems I develop aim to replace part of myself, or more precisely systems that can act in the manner that I ideally want to act; systems that can draw how I want to draw.

HUMAN TRAITS

Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk



Human Traits, exhibition view, 2014, photo by Patrick Tresset

The exhibition's title Human Traits plays with the homonymy in French and English of the word "trait" one meaning in French being the line, trace, mark, and the other (being similar to the word in English) meaning characteristics, the particularities that would individualise something. In the case of a person, this would characterise a behavioural or psychological specificity, rather than a physical one. The use of the word human in the title is to put forth what my work is inspired by ideas of "humanness". My practice is primarily about mark-making and humans.

Human Traits, Laznia Centre of Contemporary Art, Gdansk, Poland

May 31- Jul 5, 2015

Curated by Ryszard W. Kluszczyński



PATRICK TRESSET

Human Study #2, La Vanité, photo by P. Tresset

LA VANITE

Albert Kümmel-Schnur

An old school desk with a sheet of paper pinned onto it. An arm holding a black Bic pen. A camera eye attached to a short wooden pole looks at a small table on which objects are placed to form a still life: a human skull, an empty can of beer, a large shining shell and dried poppy pods.

“La Vanité” is a theatrical installation. A nervous sketching robot stripped down to its bare essentials endlessly draws an updated vanitas. The party is over – the beer is drunk, opium enters the blood vessels and manipulates our neurotransmitters, the voluptuous shell is empty, life is gone. The remnants of ecstasy and trance are traces of former intensity. Life is short. Maybe too short. Maybe the party has been nothing but an attempt to forget, to assimilate life and death. So it is either Roy Beatty's “I want more life, father” or Shakespeare's “Life's but a walking shadow”.

The robot here is a little story machine, it is constructed to build stories about humanness. It is not self-contained, but dependent on our gaze. Having a soulless robot meditating on our mortality raises numerous candid, existential and meaningless questions. It is an allegory of what has been called our posthuman condition: man's face finally washed out by the ocean, not recognizable anymore as an important figure of knowledge or merely one of its tropes.

As a posthuman entity, the robot, named Paul-IX, is not just a secondary agent, a mediating medium helping humans to meditate. It acts as if it is an artist in its own right, producing images that are not preprogrammed. Although the way the robot draws is based on Tresset's own technique, its style is not a pastiche but rather an autonomous interpretation influenced by the robot's qualities and faults. Ironically, that is of course a quite human way to reach eternal life: leaving traces for posterity to see.



Vanitas, Paul IX, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2014



Human Study #3, Peter II, photo by P. Tresset

PETER II

The robot here is similar to the others with the difference that it has two arms: one holding a marker the other holding a traditional duster (soft yellow fabric recognisable in most of Europe), the paper being replaced by a sheet of translucent white plexiglass. The robot traces tally marks, one vertical line segment, one vertical line segment, one vertical line segment, one vertical line segment, a diagonal line segment., then it erases with the other arm, pauses and starts again.

The size and speed at which it draws varies, the variation is modulated by sensory input from the camera which influences a naive simulation of mood variation, loosely based on bipolar rhythms. Eventually when it gets over excited or depressed, it draws a very dense scribble, pauses and then erases it, then starts to count again. Another behaviour is implemented, and this one potentially could happen once in a 1000 years, or in the next minute, but chances are high that it would never occur.

I have never witnessed this behaviour, and so far it has never been triggered. Occasionally the two arms fight, the erasing arm pushing the drawing arm whilst it is attempting to trace a line. This behaviour was initially accidental and appeared during the development process due to a bug in the synchronisation. It was left as it is really perceived as a fight between the two arms adding to the psychological mood depiction.



Human Study #3, Peter II, photo by P. Tresset



Exhibition view, photo by P. Tresset



Human Study #1, 3RNP drawing a woman, photo by P. Tresset

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Human Study #1, 3RNP, photo by P. Tresset



Stephanie by Paul IX, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2014

INLOVE

Pompidou Centre, Paris



LOVE, INLOVE installation, photo by Steph Horak

INLOVE

LOVE, Studio 13/16, Oct. 19 - Nov. 3, 2013, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.
Exhibition curated by Boris Tissot.



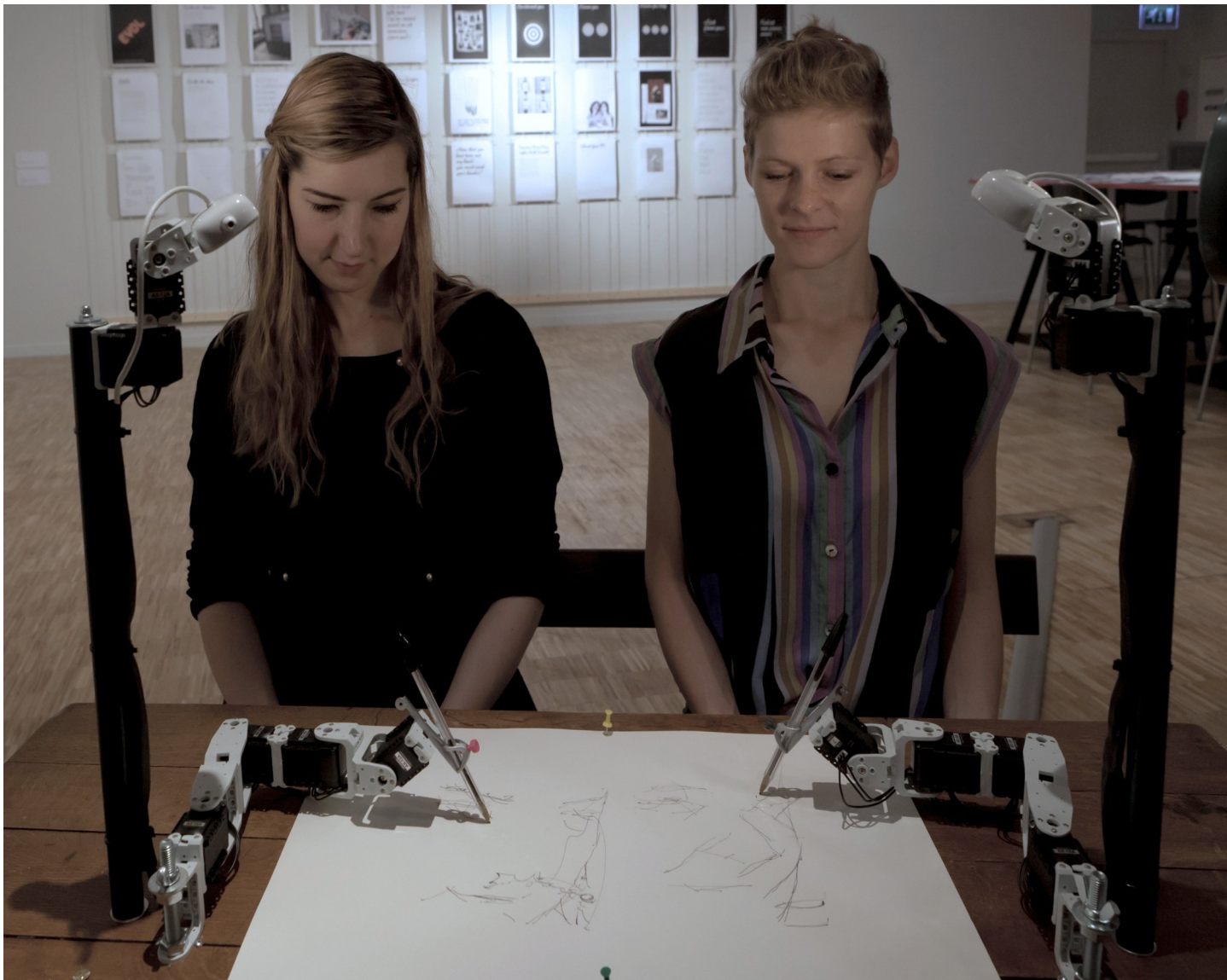
Paul-IV.a, photo by Steph Horak



Polo-Paulette-I.a, photo by Steph Horak



Exhibition view, photo ©Hervé Véronèse Centre Pompidou



Amy and Steph drawn by Polo and Paulette, photo ©Hervé Véronèse Centre Pompidou



Exhibition view, photo by Steph Horak



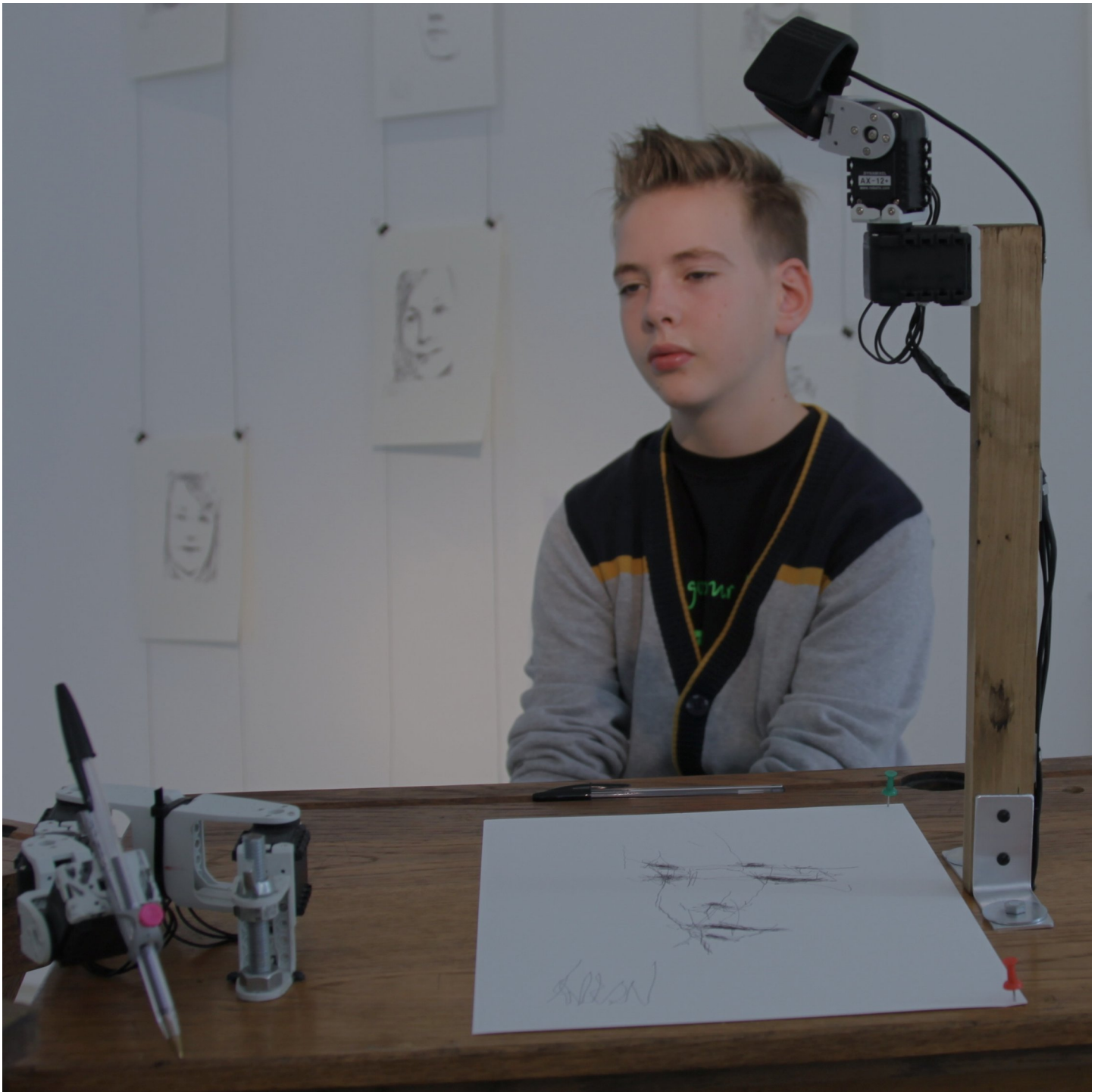
Exhibition view, photo by Steph Horak

HUMAN STUDY

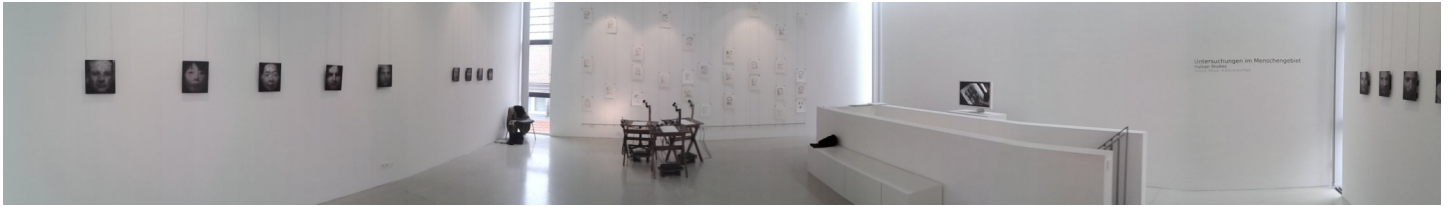
Bildungsturm Gallery, Konstanz



Human Study #1, 3RNP, Paul-III.a.b and c sketching a young man, photo by P. Tresset



Human Study #1, 3RNP, Paul-III.a.b and c sketching a young man, photo by P. Tresset



Exhibition view, photo by P. Tresset

Human Studies

Zufallszwänge.

Roboterbilder zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst

Sep. 28-Oct.20, 2013

BildungsTURM, Konstanz, Germany

An exhibition curated by Albert Kümmel-Schnur.

Supported by the "Exzellenzcluster" and the "Zukunftsinitiative" of the University of Konstanz,
and by "Amt für Schulen, Bildung und Wissenschaft" of the city of Konstanz.

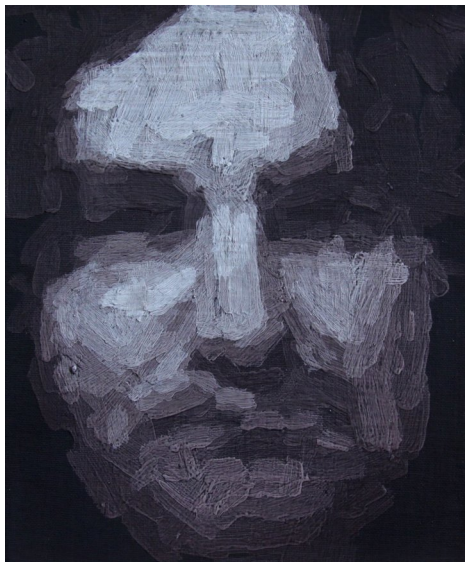
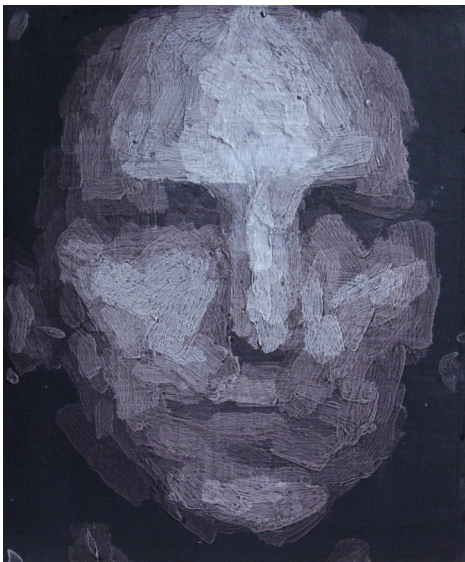
Catalogue of the exhibition:

Zufallszwänge - Roboterbilder zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst

A. Kümmel-Schnur, O. Deussen, P. Tresset (ed)



Exhibition view, photo by P. Tresset



Paintings from the Paul's memories series 2, 25 x 30 cm, acrylic on canvas, 2013



Paintings from the Paul's memories series 1, 20 x 25 cm, acrylic on canvas, 2013

6RNP

Merge Festival, London



6 Robots Named Paul, exhibition view, photo by Tommo



Human Study #1, 5RNP (Paul-III.a,b,c,d,e) drawing Sonja, photo by Tommo



5RNP drawing Patrick, (Paul-III.a,b,c,d,e) photo by Tommo

Human Study #1, 5RNP is an 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 Paul-III.(a,b,c,d,e), 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 up to 40 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.

The 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 Paul draws is based on Tresset's technique, its style is not a pastiche of Tresset's, but rather an interpretation influenced by the robot's characteristics. The drawings progressively cover the gallery's walls, day after day.

5RNP was premiered at the Merge festival in association with Tate Modern in London in 2012, it has since been exhibited at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arts (Seoul) at Ars Electronica 2014 (Linz), BOZAR (Brussels), Variation (Paris), BIAN (Montreal), 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.



Exhibition view, photo by Tommo



Exhibition view, photo by Tommo

NEW WORK

Tenderpixel Gallery, London



New work, exhibition view, photo by P. Tresset

17 June to 9 July 2011

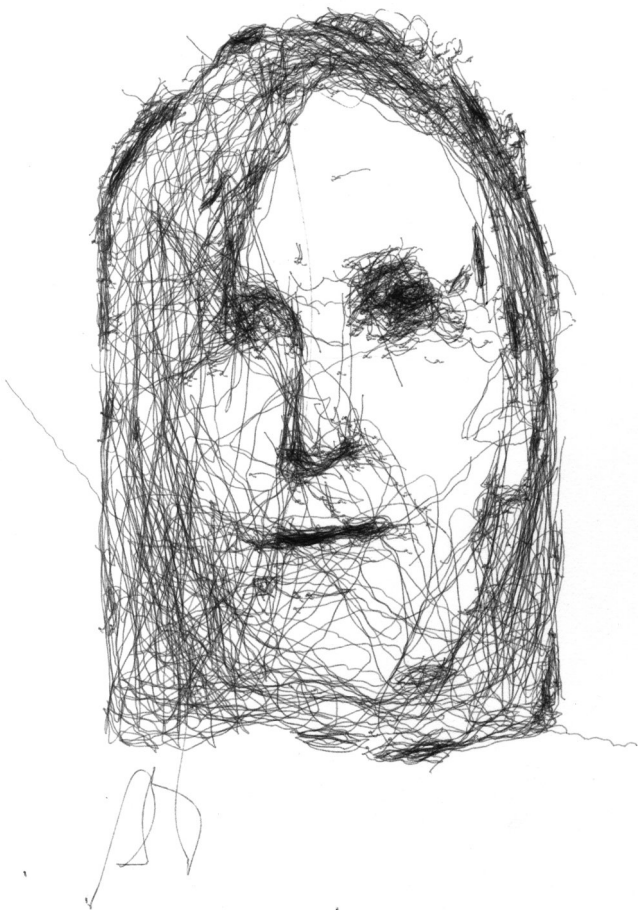
'Well, that helped to pass the time,' says Vladimir.
'It would have passed anyway,' Estragon replies.

– Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.

Tresset uses what he calls "clumsy robotics" to create autonomous cybernetic entities that are playful projections of the artist. For his exhibition, Tresset will present three robotic installations that each embody the draughtsman as a single minded entity that draws to let time flow.



PATRICK TRESSET



INSTALLATIONS



Robot Essay, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2015, photo by P. Tresset





VIA EXIT, 2016, photo by Sabina Tupan



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VIA EXIT, 2016, photo by S. Tupan



Juliette by Paul IV.b, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2016



Biennale Internationale d'Art Numerique, Montreal, 2016, photo by Sabina Tupan



PATRICK TRESSET 5RNP drawing a woman, photo by Sabina Tupan

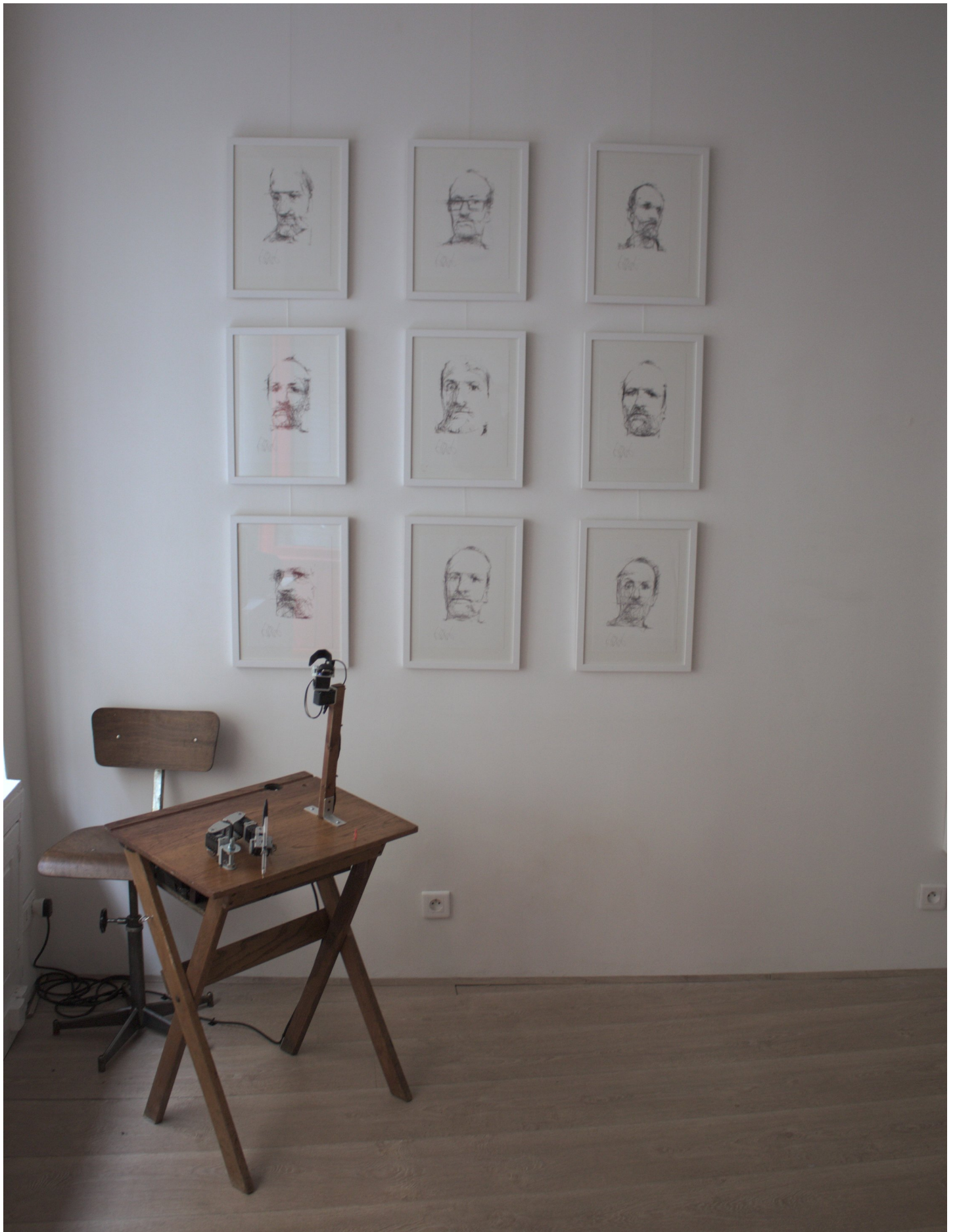


Installation view, photo by Sabina Tupan



Installation view, photo by Sabina Tupan

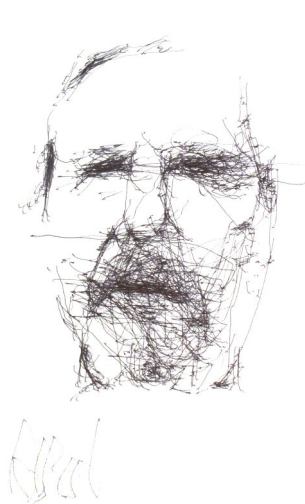




Prompt #2, Paris, 2014, photo by P. Tresset



Vittenfabrikken, exhibition view, Sandnes, 2014, photo by P. Tresset



Drawings by Paul III, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2014



Ars Electronica, Linz, 2014, photo by P. Tresset



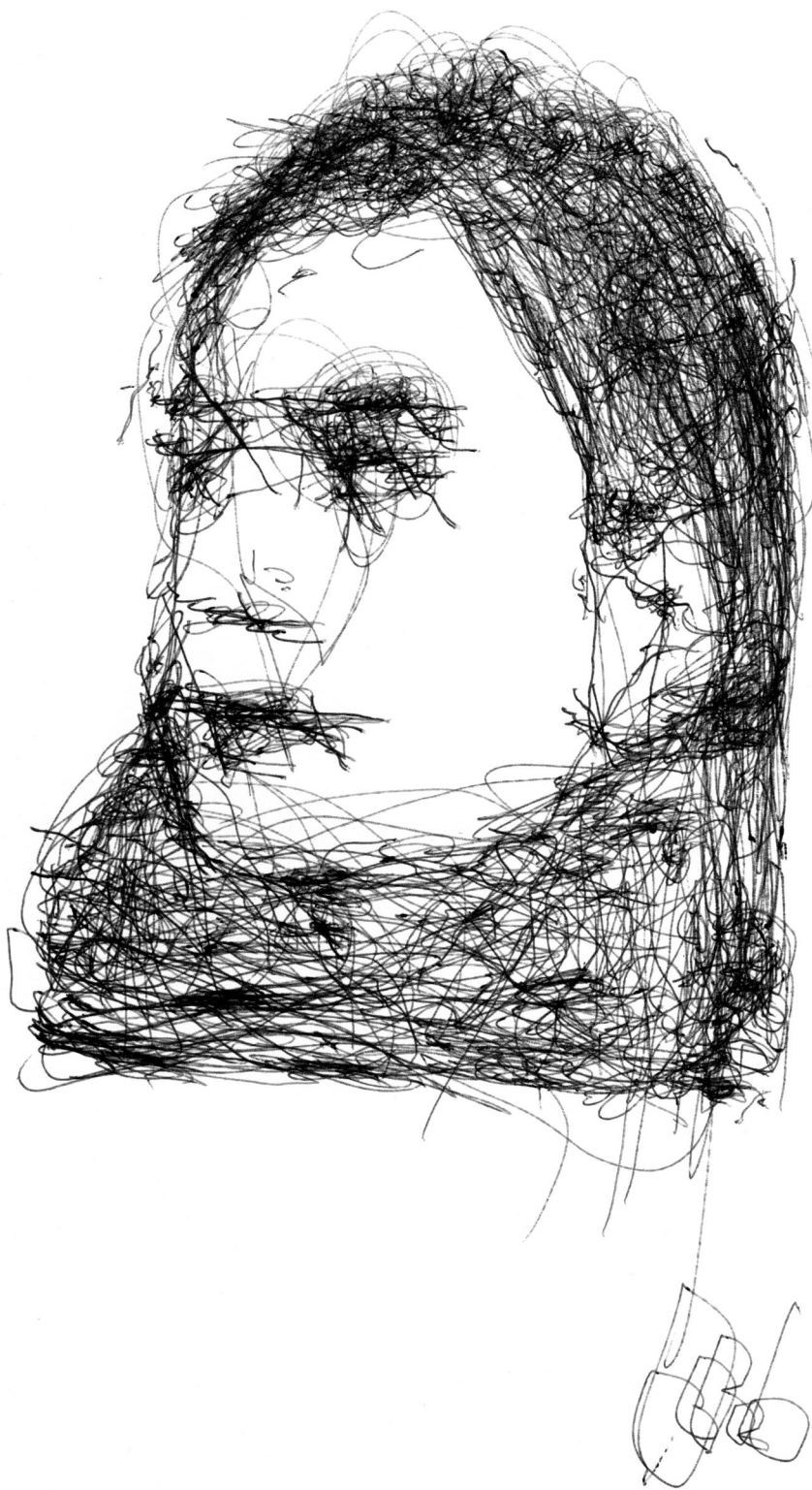
Exhibition view , photo by P. Tresset



Contact Point, Museum of Israel, Jerusalem, 2014, photo by Steph Horak



Installation view, photo by Steph Horak



Juliette by Paul IV.b, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2016



Anatomie de l'automate, La Panacée, Montpellier, 2015, photo by P. Tresset



Intallation view, photo by Sabina Tupan



Sabina being drawn by Paul II, photo by P. Tresset



BOZAR, Brussels, 2015, photo by Steph Horak

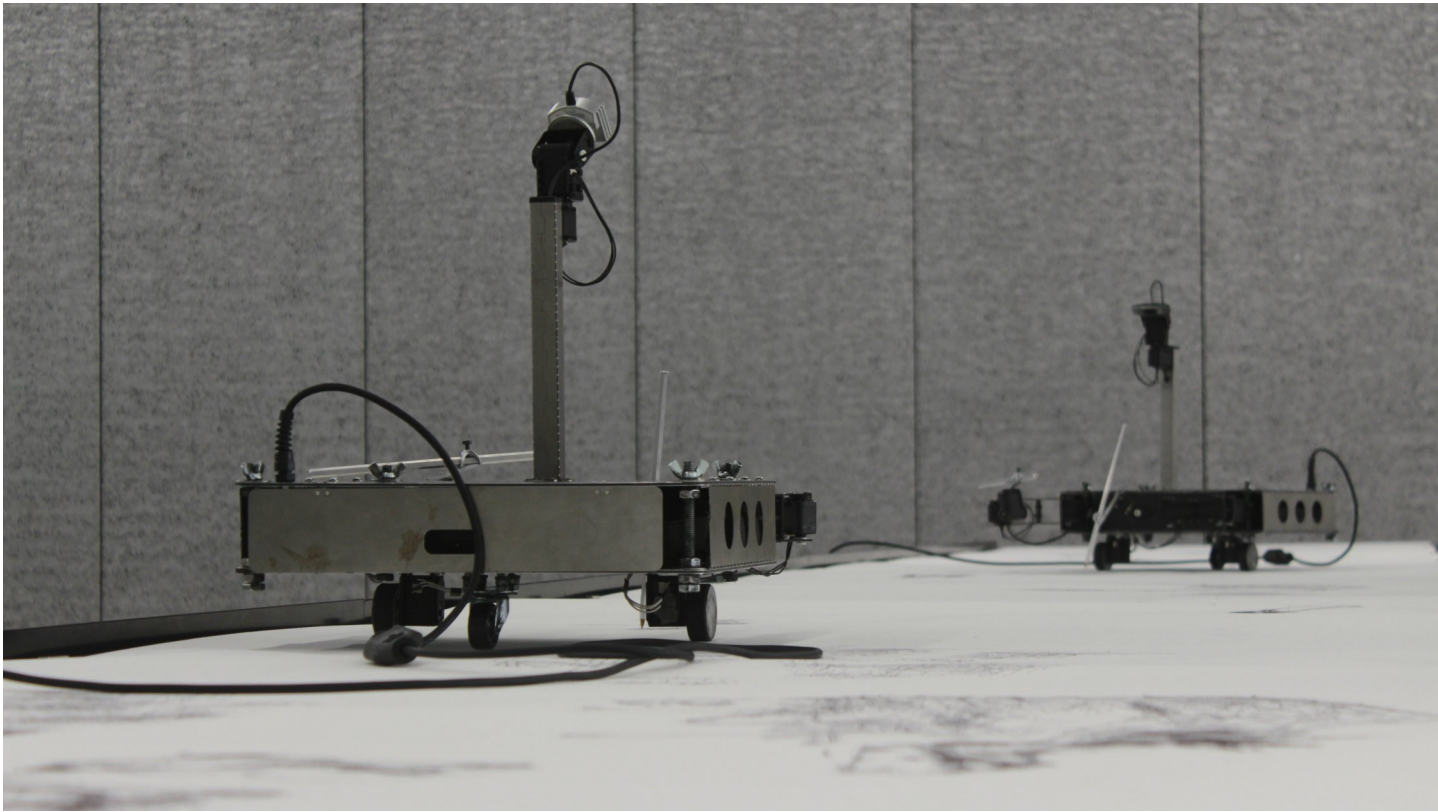


Exhibition view, photo by Steph Horak

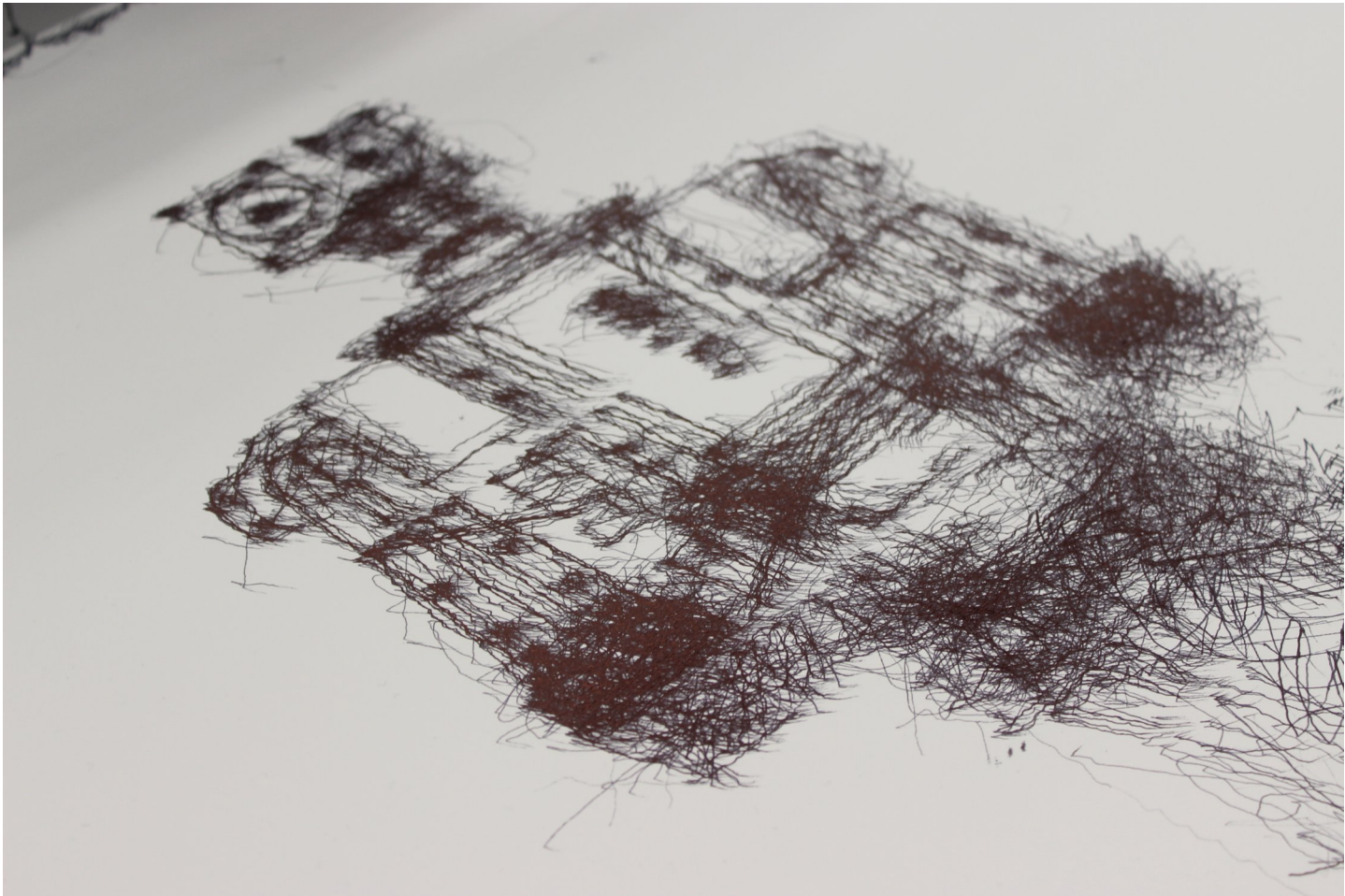


Giada by Paul III.e, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2015

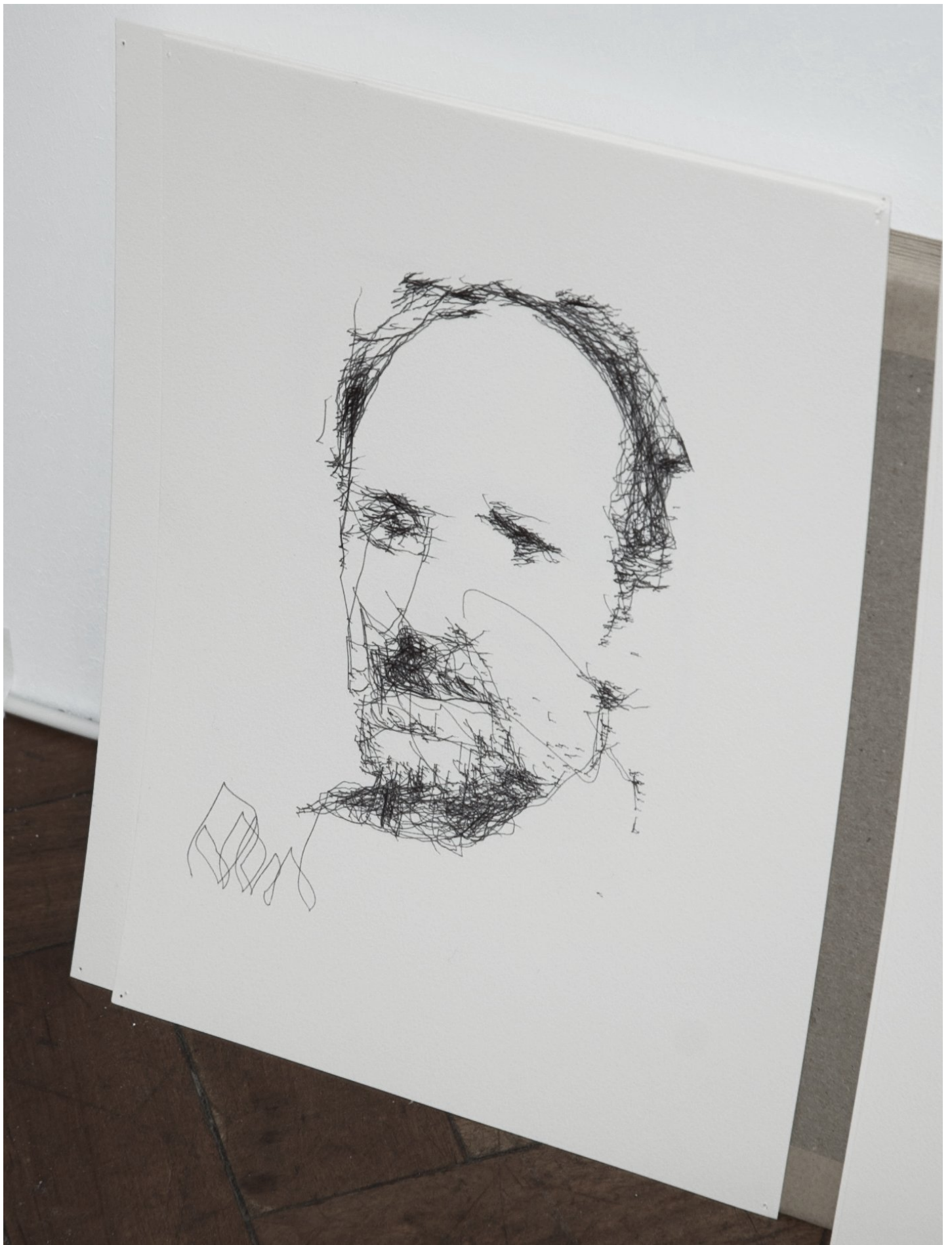




Prada Foundation, Milan, Before the Beginning and After the End, Patrick Tresset and Goshka Macuga, Paul-A, 2016



Prada Foundation, Milan, Before the Beginning and After the End, drawing by Paul-A, 2016



Patrick by Paul II, 24 x 32 cm, ink on paper, 2013

Exhibitions

Solo Shows

Human Traits, Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk, Poland, May 31-Jul 5, 2015
Human Studies, Bildungsturm, Konstanz, Germany, Sep 27-Oct 15, 2013
6 Robots Named Paul, NEO Bankside, Supported by Tate Modern, London, U.K., Oct 3-21, 2012
New Work, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, U.K., Jun 19-Jul 9, 2011

Selected Group Shows

2016

The Son of Man who Ate the the Scroll, Goshka Macuga, Fondazione Prada, Monumental collaborative installation, "Before the Beginning and After the End", Feb 4-Jun 19
Festival VIA, Maubeuge, France, Mar 10-20
Festival EXIT, Maison des arts de Creteil, France, Apr 7-17
Mens En Machine, de Warande, Turnhout, Belgium, Mar 19-May 22
Biennale Internationale d'Art Numerique, Arsenal, Montreal, Canada, Jun 3-Jul 3
SEEING, Science Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, Jun 24-Sept 18

2015

Anatomie de l'automate, La Panacée, Montpellier, France, Nov 21- Feb 28 2016
Variation Art Fair, Paris, France, Oct 19 – 25
Exposición de Inteligencia artificial, Centre Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Jul 25-30
Portraits Robots, Maison d'Ailleurs, Yverdon, Switzerland, Jun 21-Jan 3, MyArtBlooms
WRO 2015, Wroclaw, Poland, May 13-Jun 30
BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium, Apr 30-May 3
Robot Essay, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul, Korea, Apr 28-Jul 19

2014

Codes, Audi City, Beijing, China, Dec 5-20
Update 5, NTAA, Ghent, Belgium, Nov 7-24
Ars Electronica Festival, Linz, Austria, Sep 4-8
Contact Point, Museum of Israel, Jerusalem, Israel, Jul 10, MyArtBlooms
Art Rock Festival, Saint Briec, France, Jun 3-9
Vittenfabrikken, Sandnes, Norway, Mar 17-Apr 10

2013

INLOVE, installation, studio 13-16, Pompidou Centre, Paris, France, Oct 13-Nov 3
Living Machines, Science Museum, London, U.K., Aug 1
Parizone@Dream, La Gaite Lyrique, Paris, France, Jun 12

2012

Victoria & Albert Museum, Intuition and Ingenuity, London, U.K., Sep 21-22
The Lighthouse, Intuition and Ingenuity, Brighton, U.K., Feb 17-26
Kinetica Art Fair, Intuition and Ingenuity, London, U.K., Feb 9-12
The London Art Fair, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, U.K., Jan 18-22

2011

The Macy Gallery, Columbia University, New York, U.S.A., Oct 28-29
Uncontainable: Untitled, ISEA2011, 12th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey, Sep 14-21
Victoria & Albert Museum, London, U.K., Aug 26-27

2010

Unleashed Devices, Watermans Centre, London, U.K., Sep 10-Oct 22
Science Museum, London, U.K., Jun 25
Kinetica Art fair, London, U.K., Feb 4-7

Other Group Exhibitions

Miroir, mon beau Miroir, IMEC, Abbaye d'Ardenne, Normandie, France, Jun 23-25 2016--The Big Draw 2015, Bodleian Libraries in Oxford, United Kingdom, Sep 19--Le ChâteauVille de Saint-Priest, France, May 6-7 2015--Creative Machines, London, UK, Nov 7-16 2014--Future Play, Lane Crawford, Shanghai, China, Oct 14-20 2014--Convergence, Delegation du Grand Lyon, Paris, France, Oct 1-30 2014--Prompt # 2, Section Pigalle, Paris, France, May 22-Jun 8 2014--RoboShow, Moscow, Russia, May 15-Jul 15 2014--FASTE, La Faiencerie, Creil, France, Mar 10-29 2014--Wanted, Koleksiyon, ArtKapsule, London, U.K., Feb 6-Apr 25 2014--Galerie H+Lyon, France, Sep 6-30 2012--Bloomsbury Art Fair, London, U.K., Jul 4-8 2012--Lovebytes, Intuition and Ingenuity, Sheffield, U.K., Mar 22-24 2012--NABA, "Magic Objects", Milan, Italy, Dec 12 2011--TQGGlyndwr University, Wrexham, U.K., Dec 6-7 2011--Bond House Open2011, London, U.K., Nov 18-28--PopTech, The Opera House, Camden, U.S.A., Oct 19-22 2011--Maker Faire, Dome theater, Brighton, U.K., Sep 3 2011.

