

PSYCHIC



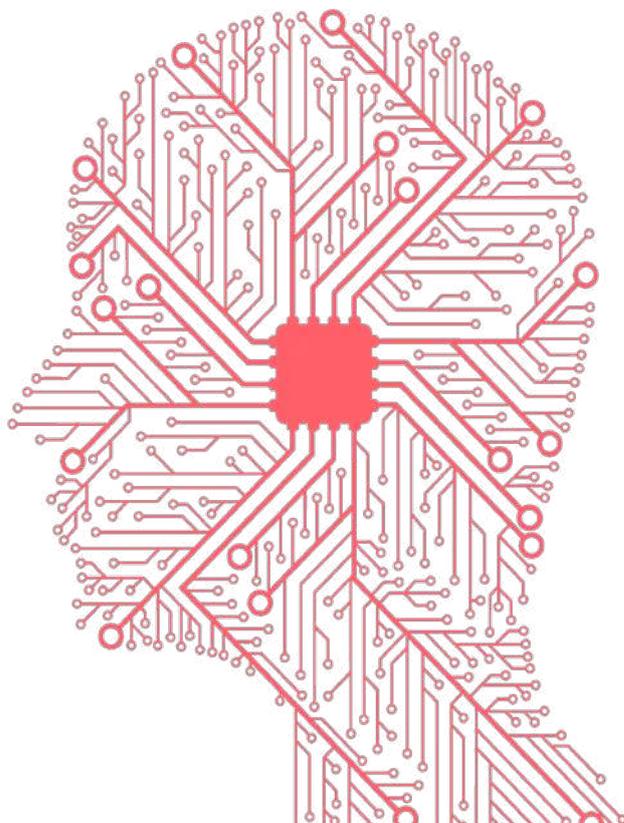
PREFACE

When it comes to the puppet, it is through the movements and expressions of the puppeteer that it seems to **come to life**. In the same way, modern technology allows the creation of inanimate artifacts that give the impression of acting autonomously and intelligently. Robots, artificial intelligences, and virtual assistants are examples of this: they seem to possess a form of «life» through their interactions with humans.

These parallels raise profound questions, both philosophical and social, about the very nature of life and consciousness. When we breathe life into a puppet or when we develop technologies capable of autonomy, are we not recreating a form of **artificial existence**?

Can we truly attribute consciousness or emotions to these entities, or are they merely sophisticated imitations of life? What, then, is our responsibility? Are we, like divine creators, giving life to modern puppets, or are we merely designing tools that push the boundaries of our understanding of existence and consciousness?

Ultimately, this analogy between animating a puppet and current technological advancements invites us to reflect more deeply on the very **nature of humanity**, life, and consciousness, as well as on the ethical implications of these advances. Through these innovations, we are questioning our own definition of life.



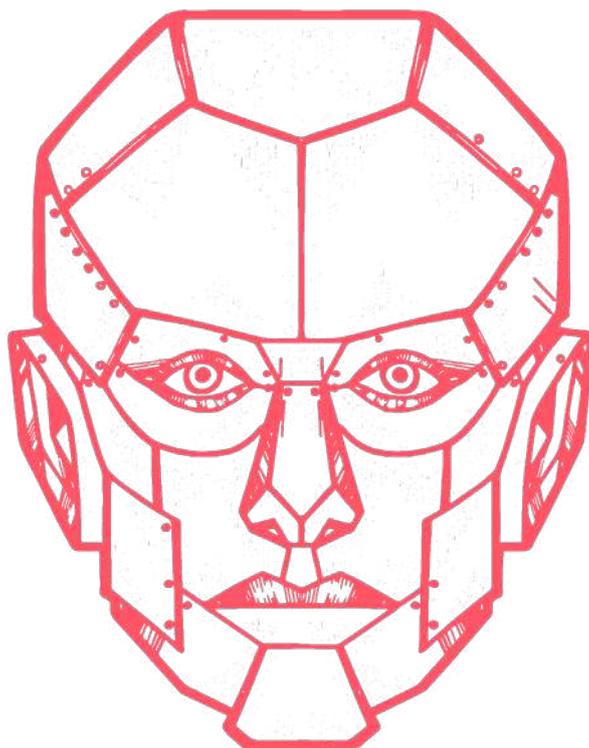
IN SEARCH OF THE “GHOST”

The presence of robots in science fiction, cinema, comics, and manga raise questions about the human condition, often through **dystopias** caused by the uncontrollable advancement of technology.

However, in **A Cyborg Manifesto**, Donna Haraway presents a different vision. She explores the idea of cyborgs as hybrids of machines and living organisms, which blur the boundaries between nature and culture, human and non-human, while challenging gender and social dualisms. In this way, she envisions a **society liberated** from rigid beliefs.

The question of form and body is central to both visions. Robots and puppets reinvent a world not centered on humans, prompting us to rethink our relationship with objects and technology. **Posthumanism**, for its part, questions the traditional boundaries of humanity, envisioning a fusion between humans and machines that could profoundly transform our condition.

Puppets, as **extensions of the human body**, illustrate this complex relationship between humans and technology. They invite us to reflect on the limits of our humanity and the possibility of transcending our physical bodies. By intertwining reflections on puppets and posthumanism, we explore the ethical and existential dilemmas posed by modern technological advancements. These perspectives are **redefining our place in a world** where the boundaries between human, non-human, and machine are becoming increasingly blurred.



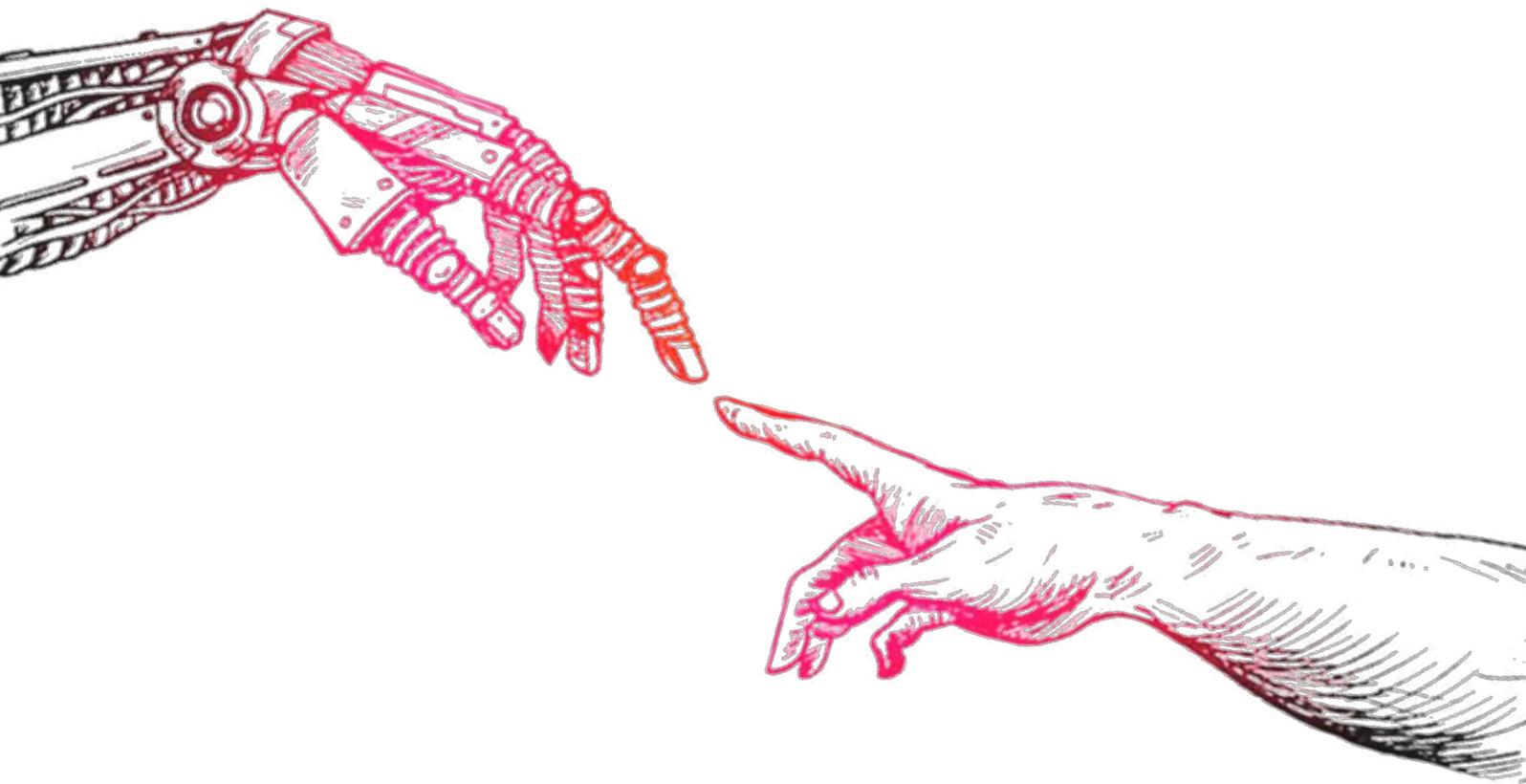
THE HYBRID BODY

How can our perspective on non-human or chimeric creatures broaden our understanding of the world? Here, we adopt Donna Haraway's feminist, social, and revolutionary view of the cyborg.

A cyborg is a hybrid entity, part machine and part living being, functioning as both a myth and a fantasy, allowing the creation of new narratives that are not human centered. This fantasy holds interpretative power, serving feminist politics that encourages the abandonment of dualisms between science and nature, human and machine, body and mind, men and women.

The cyborg **overturns these dualisms**—often vectors of domination—and blurs the boundaries between creator and creation, body and mind. This questioning lays the foundation for a new ontology, populated by hybrids, where the distinctions between nature and artificiality dissolve. Concepts such as Nature, Man, and Machine lose their rigidity.

Haraway urges us to transcend these fixed categories and **explore new syntheses**. For her, the cyborg is not only a hybrid entity but also a metaphorical body, which the puppet, the object, or the material can poetically embody—beyond gender and politics.



THE FORM

This project focuses on the exploration and experimentation around the creation of hybrid bodies. These bodies, conceived as symbolic representations, pave the way for a second phase dedicated to staging, inspired by Donna Haraway's vision. The approach taken is non-anthropocentric, free, and egalitarian, breaking away from traditional conventions. The main goal is to visually **experiment with breaking away from existing dualisms**.

To illustrate the contrast between current commercial and military technology and Haraway's poetic and political vision, several elements will be emphasized. The aim is to highlight how technology, often used for control or domination, can also be reinterpreted as **a means of emancipation** and the reinvention of relationships between humans, machines, and nature.

At the same time, many discussions and experiments will be conducted around the link between puppets and posthumanism. These exchanges will help deepen the reflection on hybrid bodies and rethink how these artificial entities can **challenge the boundaries of our humanity**.

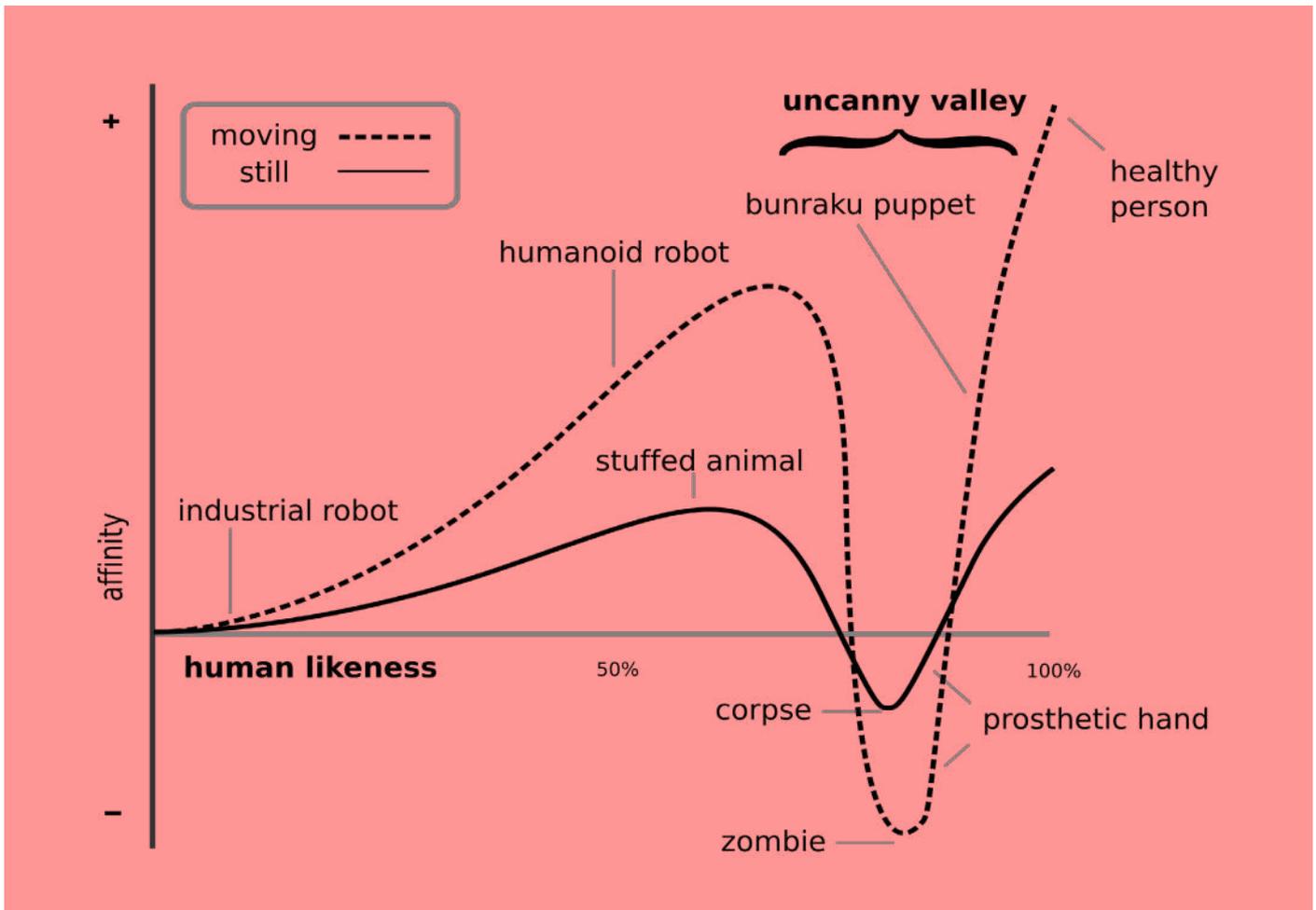


ROBOTICS AND BUNRAKU

The encounter between the art of bunraku and robotics began in Japan in the 1970s. It was in 1970 that Mori Masahiro, a professor of engineering at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, wrote a groundbreaking essay on the aesthetics of the human form. In it, he demonstrates how an artistic representation like **bunraku**, where puppets appear remarkably human, can evoke emotion and attachment from the audience.

This essay inspired various experiments, notably those of Hiroshi Ishiguro, who continues to explore the interactions between bunraku and robotics today. At a time when ignorance of the possibilities of the body went hand in hand with ignorance of the mind, science, technology, and art were seen as means to transcend the dualism between these two aspects. Today, in an increasingly technological world, everything seems guided by the idea of control. **The boundary between the natural and the artificial is blurring**, creating a continuity between humans and their creations.

The bunraku puppet, like the mask in *nō* theater, becomes a powerful metaphor for this idea. For Mori, bunraku puppets perfectly illustrate what he called the «Uncanny Valley»: the closer a robot resembles a human, the more we find it appealing, but if it looks too human, this familiarity becomes unsettling, causing a sudden drop in sympathy.



In April 1991, bunraku master Kanuro Kiritake was invited by Hiroshi Ishiguro and playwright Oriza Hirata to Osaka University. His role was to provide guidance on the staging of a humanoid actress, Geminoid, which had an extremely realistic appearance. This major advancement in the construction of humanoid robots, controlled through telerobotics, now serves as a research platform to explore tasks that support individuals. Kanuro Kiritake suggested movements and postures to give this humanoid more grace in performing the female role in the play **Sayonara**.



Geminoid in «Sayônara» by Kôji Fukada

Presented on September 30, 2010, at the Aichi Triennale, **Sayonara** is a 25-minute dialogue between a humanoid and an actress. At the dawn of a new era in robotics, these **ningyo** (puppets), capable of dancing, loving, and crying, remind the audience that they still have the freedom to **believe in this illusion—or not.**

Ultimately, whether in bunraku or robotics, the same question is posed: everything depends on the quality of the performance, whether it come from a puppet or a machine, and how we perceive it.

Like a musician with their instrument, the manipulation of **ningyo** plays with illusion, simultaneously creating and revealing it. But above all, manipulation seeks to **exert control and to stage that very process.**

NOTES AND IDEAS INFLUENCING “PSYCHE”

I *Donna Haraway's « Cyborg Manifesto »*

In her *Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway proposes that cyborgs, as hybrids of the organic and the mechanical, blur traditional boundaries: nature and culture, human and non-human, subject and object, while also challenging social and gender dichotomies. This central idea is reflected in *Psyche*, where the intersection between humans and machines (robots, cyborgs, puppets) mirrors Haraway's vision, which defies distinctions between the organic and the technological.

Haraway argues that the cyborg is both a symbol of imagination and a material reality that redefines humanity. This idea of transformation is evident in the exploration of robots and puppets, which challenge the limits of body and mind, as well as in the dualisms of science/nature and human/machine discussed in the text. Haraway also views the cyborg as a political tool, opposing patriarchal systems and offering a new form of identity that transcends traditional gender roles.

I « *The Social Life of Things* » by Arjun Appadurai

Appadurai explores how objects, like commodities, acquire a social life through their interactions with humans. His work aligns with *Psyche*, where puppets and robots are seen not just as performative objects, but as active agents capable of blurring the boundaries between life and non-life. Like Appadurai's commodities, the puppets and robots become carriers of social and emotional meanings.

In *Sayonara*, for instance, the performance between humans and robots illustrates the idea that these objects are not passive but actively participate in shaping human and social relationships. Appadurai's concept that material objects are dynamic and socially integrated reinforces the idea that technology, represented by these puppets and robots, is constantly evolving in its relationship with humans.

I *Synthesis of Ideas*

The works of Haraway and Appadurai resonate with the analysis of the human/non-human relationship in *Psyche*. Haraway blurs the boundaries between humans and machines, while Appadurai demonstrates that non-human objects are social agents.

Together, these ideas help us understand how puppets, cyborgs, and robots, far from being mere artifacts, actively contribute to the construction of social meaning and challenge the very nature of autonomy and life.

COLLABORATIONS

Yiorgos Karakantzas continues this project in collaboration with Panayiotis Evangelidis, a screenwriter and author, for research and writing in Japan in 2025. A collaboration with the Deletere collective in Marseille, which specializes in programming and experimenting with animated and hybrid forms, is also being considered.

2025-2026

I Research Residencies

«Bunraku and Robotics» in Japan

I Research Residency

At the International Institute of Puppetry in Charleville-Mézières, in connection with research on contemporary puppetry, particularly with Raphaële Fleury, a PhD from the University of Paris-Sorbonne in French literature and civilization, and also a puppetry historian.

I Research Residencies

«Robotics and Puppetry» with the Deletere collective at La Friche la Belle de Mai (Marseille)

I Research Laboratories

«Hybrid Bodies» with students from the University of Michigan

I Creation Residencies

Locations to be determined

I Creation season 2026-2027

« PSYCHE » A Creation by Anima Théâtre

Based in Marseille, **Anima Théâtre** carves its path through the art of puppetry. Beyond creating performances, the company strives to promote the art of puppetry through awareness activities, such as workshops, training sessions, events, and gatherings. Since 2013, Anima Théâtre has also ventured into programming by organizing **Le Marché Noir des Petites Utopies**, a biennial event dedicated to small-scale puppet and object theater performances. In the coming years, Anima Théâtre aims to further develop its activities around four main areas:

I. Creation and Dissemination

- Developing and touring its productions regionally, nationally, and internationally, building on a loyal network of partners while seeking new collaborations.

II. International Outreach

- Anima Théâtre plans to expand internationally by promoting visual forms within international networks and taking concrete actions, such as enrolling in the Erasmus program for young entrepreneurs, to help professionalize young foreign artists within the company.

III. Audience Awareness

- Engaging in public education through rigorous puppetry pedagogy aimed at school groups, underserved communities, amateur adults, and more.

IV. Programming

- Strengthening Le Marché Noir des Petites Utopies by collaborating with new partners to gradually expand the festival across multiple cities in the region (e.g., Cavillon), while broadening its audience base.



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