

Struggle of Seeds



"Struggle of Seeds" is a kinetic installation and performance photography that explores new forms of photographic expression through a continual tension between human and machine.

Masaru Mizuochi, Research Fellow at University of the Arts London
Creative Computing Institute (2025–2026)



Masaru Mizuochi

<http://mizumasa.net>

A media artist who pursues research in video-based expression while creating artworks and directing stage productions. Specializing in theatrical-style interpretation, his work explores multiple perspectives where humanity and human creativity are at the forefront of our digital age. His recent work, Green Diffusion, was featured in the CVPR AI Art Award. He is currently a research fellow at the UAL Creative Computing Institute, and his other work has been featured in WIRED, SXSW, SIGGRAPH Asia, and more.

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Can these images, and the rebellious gestures that shape them, break through the inherited limits of both human and robotic creativity?

The robot is not a creature endowed with human traits; rather, it is a mirror that reflects us—and at the same time, a being that acts on its own logic.

Both robot and human struggle, in their own distinct ways, to escape the average, the expected, the aesthetically "correct."

The robot's design is inspired by the beanstalk from the famous British fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk, with the story of invasion and giants overlapping with the struggle for territory about AI.

More Info.



Production notes

Generated Imagery as an Algorithmic Agent

The robot monitor displays both captured photographs and generated imagery produced through pose estimation-based algorithm. These pose images are continuously generated from a single initial seed to sustain visual variation. A method was developed to generate diverse human pose images without additional training by intervening in the internal generation process of a diffusion-based model. This intervention introduces divergence within a single generative trajectory, enabling the production of unexpected postures from a common point of origin. At the same time, the outputs repeatedly return to balanced and visually coherent configurations, revealing a tendency toward aesthetic normalisation. Within the performance, this tension between variation and normalisation functions as a critical stimulus for choreographic decision-making.

Presence of Suspended Camera:

In addition to the camera mounted on the robot arm (hereafter ArmCam), a suspended camera (hereafter SusCam) is installed above the stage. This element alters the relationship between humans and AI and plays a significant role in the narrative structure.

Narrative Structure

The narrative is structured into three scenes:

- (1) the initial encounter between the human performer and ArmCam
- (2) the appearance of SusCam
- (3) the transformation of the human-ArmCam relationship

Scene 1 establishes a tentative interaction between the dancer and the robotic camera. In Scene 2, SusCam is introduced as a dominant observational presence that reconfigures the power relations of the stage. Scene 3 returns to the human-ArmCam dyad, foregrounding a re-negotiation of agency in relation to the expanded photographic system.

Production notes

Fairytales as Historical Interpretation for Narrative Translation

This project employs Jack and the Beanstalk not merely as a narrative reference, but as a framework grounded in the social processes through which fairytales are interpreted, normalised, and retranslated over time. In nineteenth-century Europe, fairytales functioned as ideological tools that naturalised domination, obedience, and colonial hierarchies. Their meanings have since been repeatedly revised in response to changing moral, social, and political contexts.

In *Struggle of Seeds*, the relational structure between the performer, ArmCam, and SusCam is juxtaposed with that between Jack, the beanstalk, and the giant. Through this correspondence, the performance situates contemporary tensions surrounding automation and artificial intelligence within longer histories of narrative interpretation and power. The social mechanisms through which fairytales justify, criticise, or reframe acts of violence and resistance are aligned with the ways in which human actions toward expanding technologies are interpreted and legitimised in the present.

In the final scene, the human switches off and cuts down ArmCam. This gesture may be read as an assertion of human dominance; however, within the fairytale structure, the beanstalk itself is also a victim. By foreshadowing the return of the giant, the work introduces an alternative reading in which the robot is positioned as a vulnerable entity caught between human and non-human forces. Through this polysemic structure, the performance frames human-AI relations not as a binary of control and opposition, but as a contested field shaped by narrative, interpretation, and historical imagination.

Another interpretation, absent from Jack and the Beanstalk but present in other fantasy traditions, is that the giant was originally human. From this perspective, the giant, having grown too large to live on the ground and forced to dwell in the sky, may be "saved" by being stopped by Jack, who is human. This reading allows Jack's actions to be framed as justified. It also implies a future in which technological development may compel humans to control life and death, as in the case of euthanasia.

Because fairytales are forms of fantasy, they contain multiple polysemic elements and are repeatedly reinscribed in accordance with historical and cultural contexts. For this reason, narrative-based storytelling has the capacity to activate contemporary interpretations of technology and to stimulate discourse concerning the future.

Struggle of Seeds depicts humans, AI, and robots struggling for creativity while being shaped by the interpretations of their era, presenting this struggle as a new aesthetic possibility.

Masaru Mizuochi, December 2025

Credits

Director	Masaru Mizuochi
Choreographer & Performer	Shanshan Zhang
Performer	Ziqi Wen
Lighting	Zelu Huang
Technical	Romario Akiki
Visuals	Chang Shu
Visuals	Astryd Park
Visuals	Joseph Whitmore
Sound	Mengyuan Fan
Production Assistant	Maria Chapman
Production Assistant	Dick Straker

Music provided by jaxa

Supervised by

Vafi Laloti

Supported by

Luba Elliott
Freddie Lippi
Jonathan Bell
Carey Chomsonthorn
Simon Powell
Dexter Nineberg
Nigel Little
Mihika Bahety
Diana Dent
Sarah Hardie
Leon Barker
Saina Akhond
Hooman Samani

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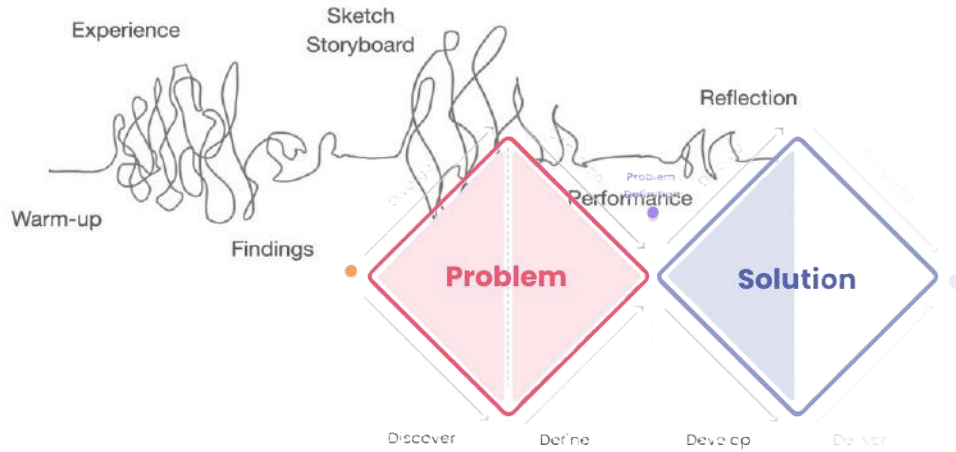
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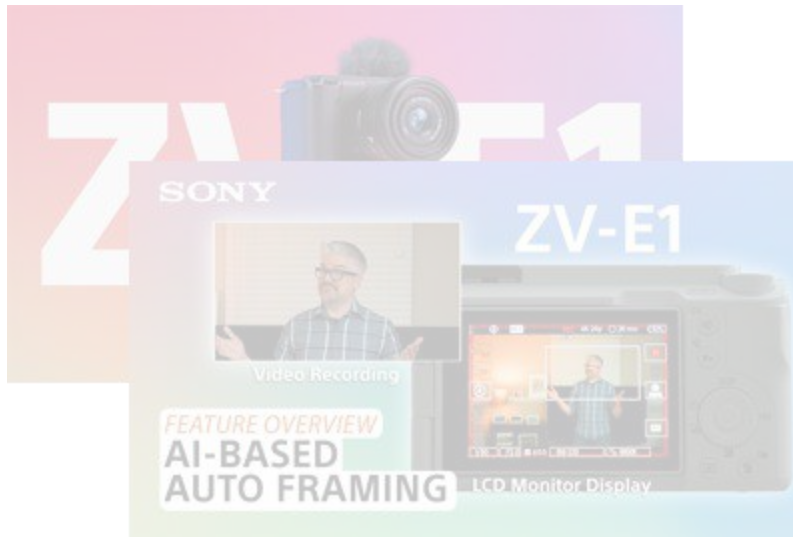
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CharActor Project
(2018–2022)

How can **humans** or **AI** be
more **creative**?



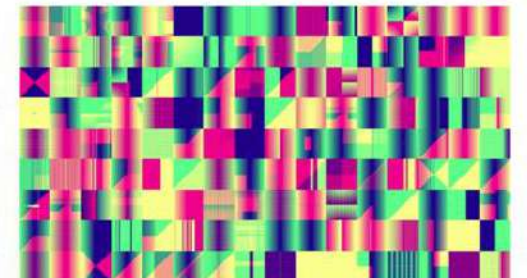
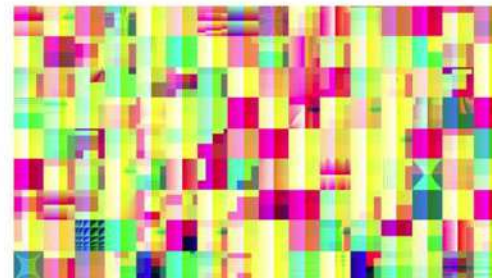
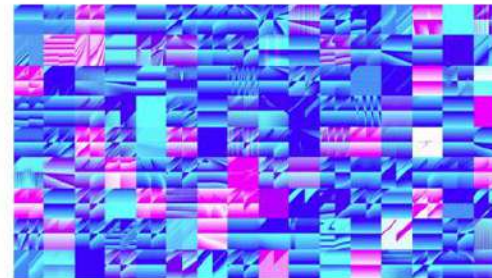
Struggle of Seeds
(2025–2026)

CharActor Project (2018–2022)

The individuality of living things is beautiful.
Can individuality exist in video as well?

CharActor is a video work that generates animation
by treating shader programs as genes and using
evolutionary computing to alter the mathematical
formulas.

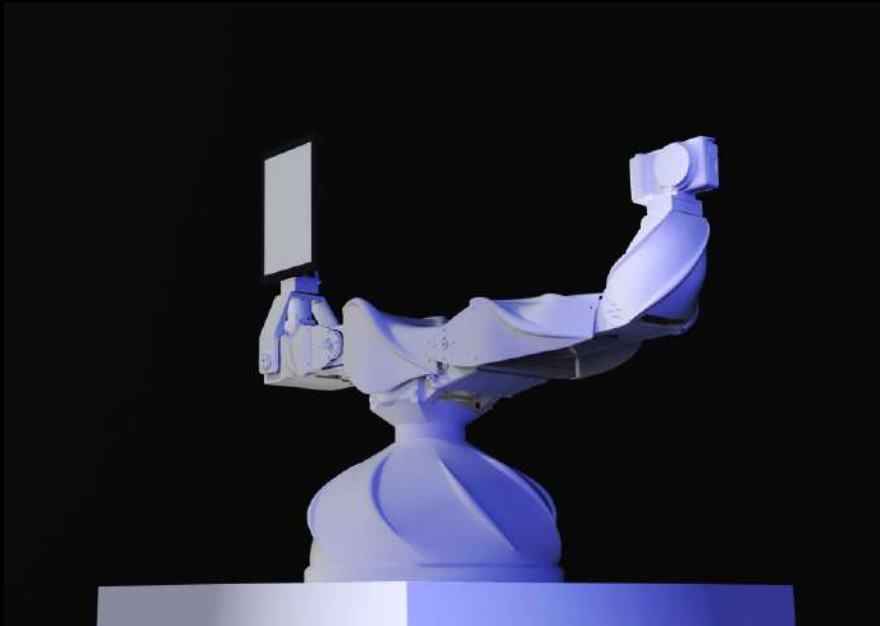
Moving away from programs written by hand,
by using video that has mathematical formulas as its
genes,
the work attempts to express diversity itself through
video.



What is photography's future?



AI
Robotics
Performance



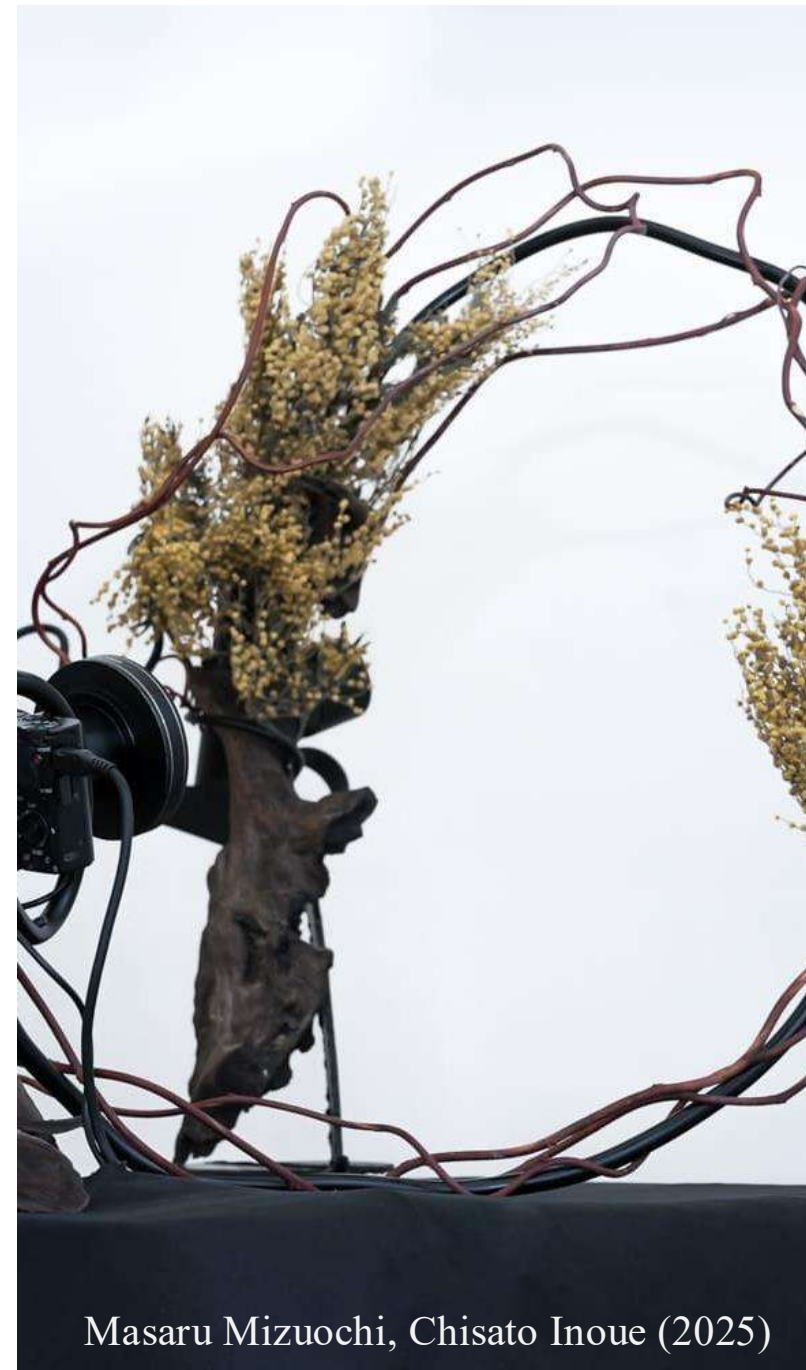
Robot

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Vision Study

This project includes computer vision research into the diversity of image-generating AI. He described this as a struggle and dance for creativity created by AI.





Masaru Mizuochi, Chisato Inoue (2025)

selfFlor

selfie + flower



TON of INSPIRATION

Mar–Sep 2025



Panto 2025
Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
presents

Jack and the Beanstalk

Written by Sonia Jalaly. Directed by Nicholas La Barrie.

15 Nov 2025 - 04 Jan 2026

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Join our loveable hero Jack as he embarks on a mission of gigantic proportions, way into the clouds, to defeat his newfound nemesis and save the people of Hammersmith.

It's Jack and Jill's first day at Fleasweep Academy, the strictest school in

POLLOCK'S TOY MUSEUM

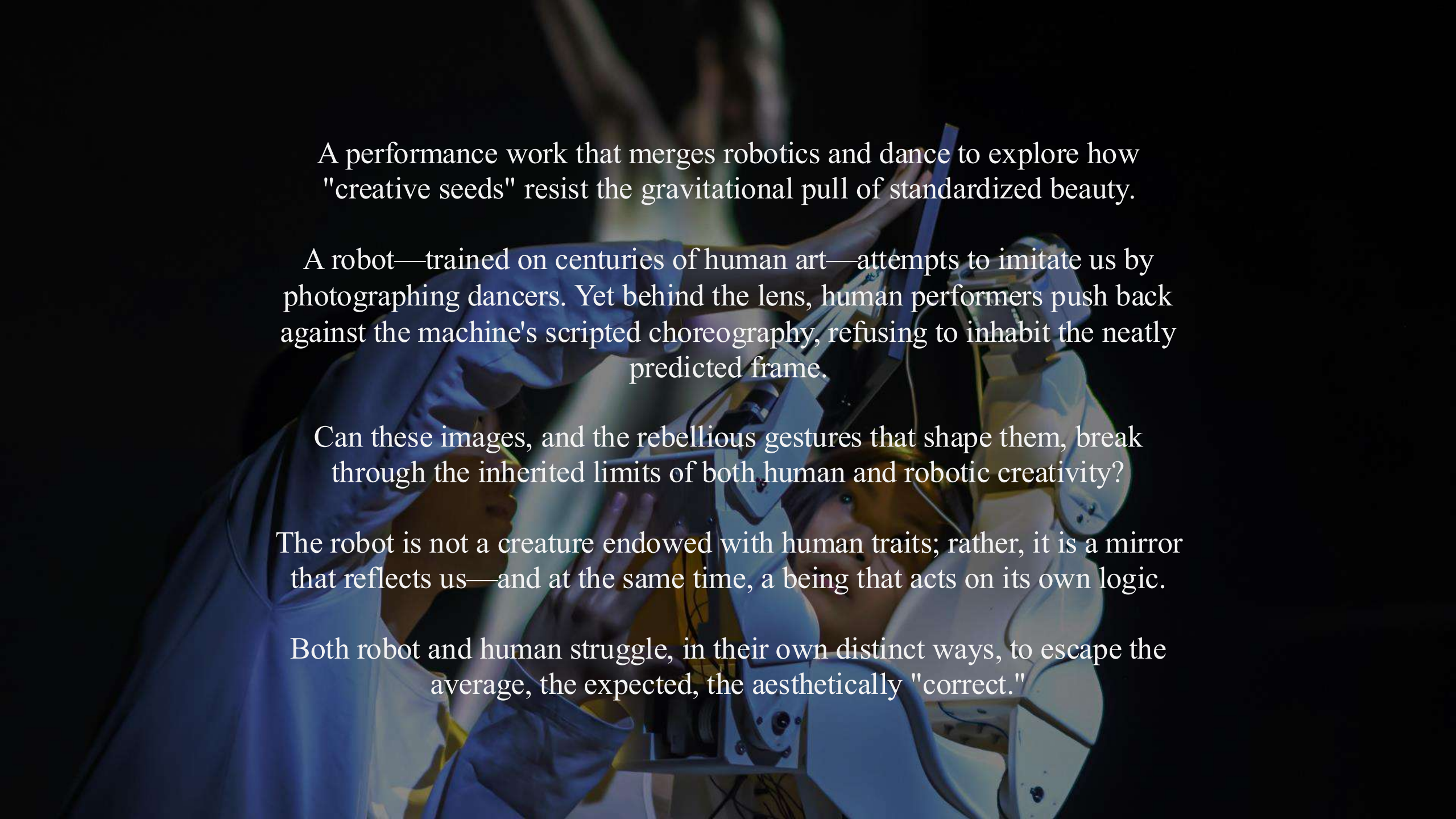


1 Nov 2025 — Croydon: Pollock's Toy Museum — one of the oldest toy museums in the UK.

A composite image showing various interactions between humans and robots in a futuristic setting. On the left, a woman in a white dress dances while a robot with a camera films her. In the center, a robot takes a selfie with a woman in a white dress. To the right, a woman in a dark dress stands next to a robot that is interacting with a glowing digital tree on a screen.

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23th Oct

A person in a white lab coat is holding a camera, and a white robot arm is reaching towards it. The scene is dimly lit with blue and yellow tones.

A performance work that merges robotics and dance to explore how "creative seeds" resist the gravitational pull of standardized beauty.

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