

ROBOT!

2013 CREATION

FOR 8 DANCERS AND 8 ROBOTS

a show by Blanca Li
with Maywa Denki

choreography
and art direction ::

Blanca Li

musical robots:

Maywa Denki

scenography:

Pierre Attrait

lights:

Jacques Chatelet

videos:

Charles Carcopino

robots programmer:

Thomas Pachoud

in partnership
with Aldebaran
for NAO robots



BLANCA LI

ROBOT!

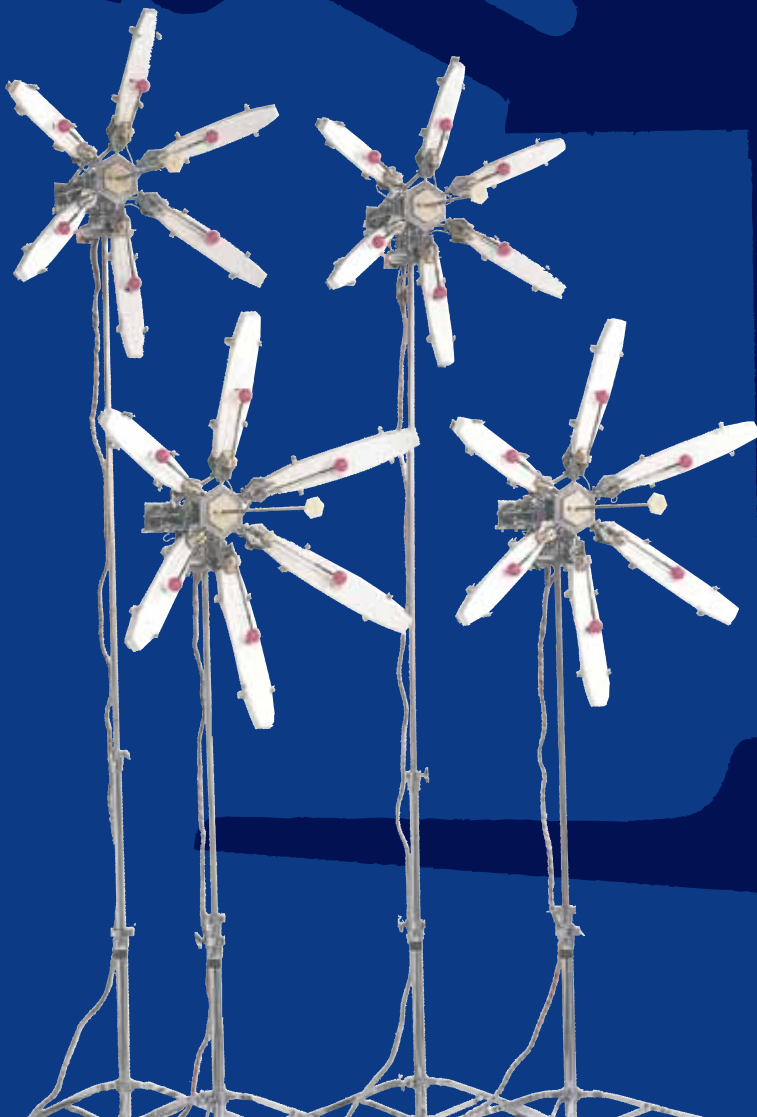
Day and night, inside our homes and in the outside world, on earth and in the sky, we live with and among machines of all kind, our memory is becoming artificial, our footprints tend to be only electronic, our identity is partly digital. Robots, machines, computers in the shape of cars or cell phones, touch-sensitive (what else?!) screens that children use naturally, interactive terminals and automatic vending-machines, RFID tags, bar codes, monitoring devices, flash codes, Geo-tracking of people and things, online avatars... Every day we interact with numerous machines, some of them automatic, most of them electronic, a few of them would be thinking-machines. All of them reflecting our choices, our actions and our tastes.

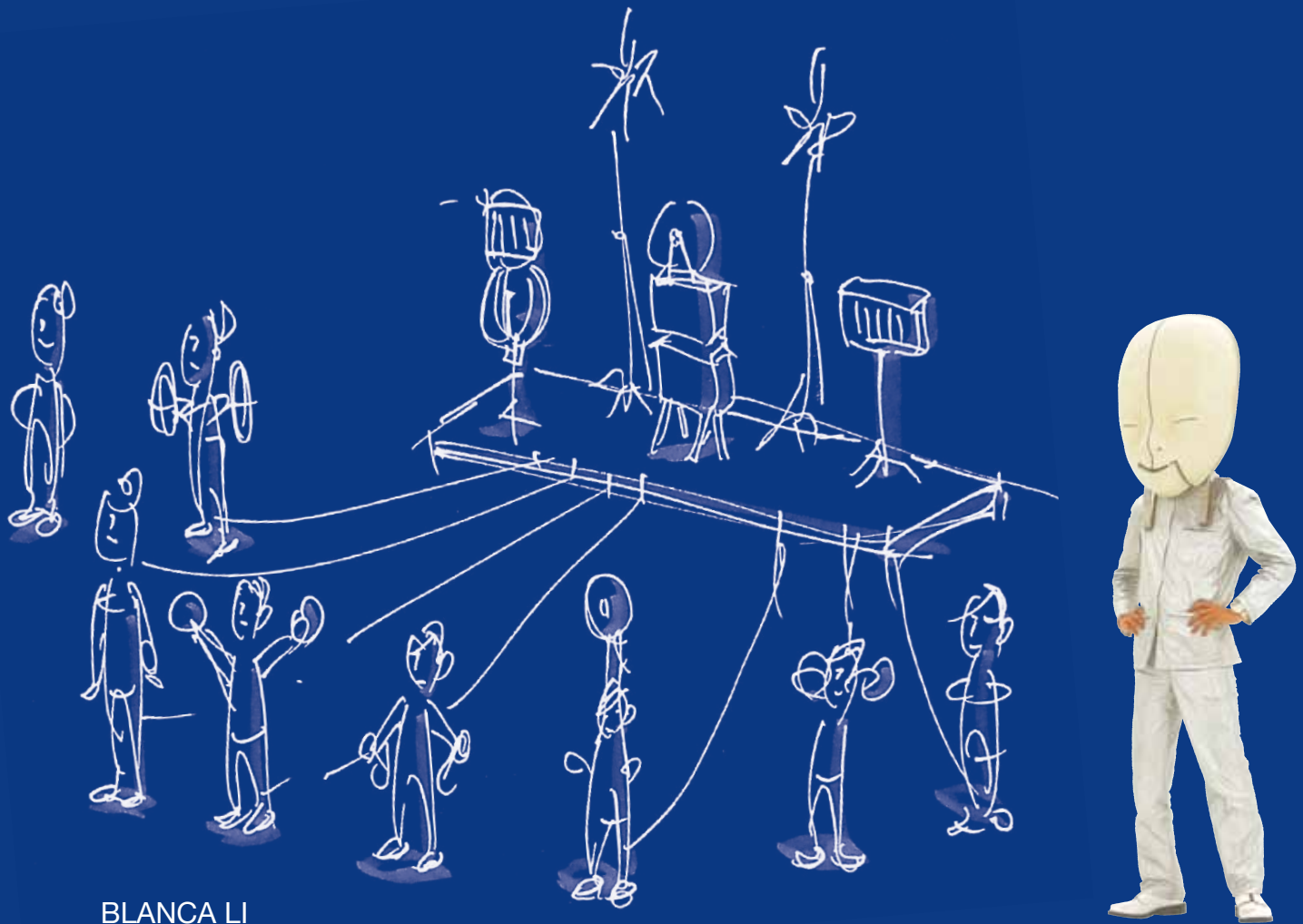
In January 2011, I met MAYWA DENKI, and it all began. These contemporary Japanese artists playfully evolve in a wonderful world of living objects: low-tech, nonsense and refinement are keywords. Then I met NAO, the humanoid robot, and everything took shape. I suddenly

felt like staging the relationships between human bodies and artificial ones. Where are the borders between 'us' and 'them'? Can the most sophisticated machines stand in for the Man-Nature relationship? Will the robots be capable of integrating the idea of creation one day? As we teach them to become more and more complex, how will they complement our life? What kind of society will arise from it? The machines are impacting our daily routines more and more. What will happen when thinking machines understand data, concepts, and behaviour too complex for humans to grasp? If the robots get humanised by shape and communication skills, shall we humans become robotised hybrids or androids?

I will tackle these questions in a choreography for 8 dancers whose movements will trigger the Maywa Denki nonsense musical devices. The appearance of a few NAO will be far from a trivial detail: it will carry the inter-changeability of men and machines to extremes.

Man-machines, electromechanical automatons, electronic robots: 3 kinds of relationship to the world, 3 evolutionary stages? The show will present 3 ways of exploring the interactions between them, in an absurd and poetic way.





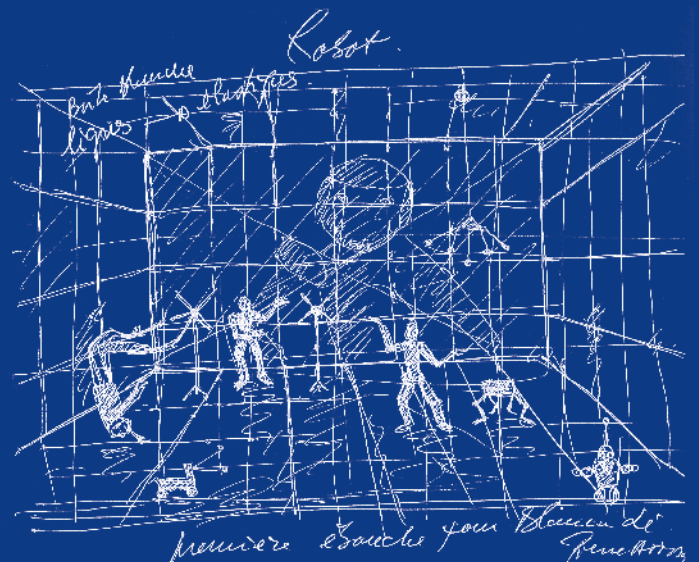
BLANCA LI

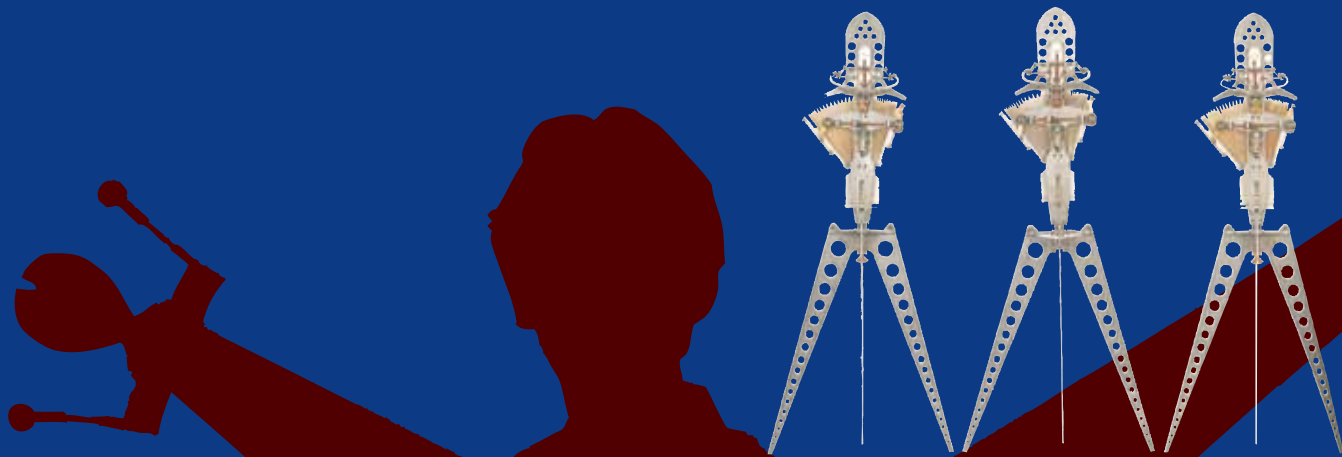
Blanca Li is a choreographer, dancer, filmmaker and director of interactive exhibitions, a polyphonic European artist. Born in Granada (Spain), Blanca studied 5 years in New York with Martha Graham before founding her own contemporary dance company in Paris. *ROBOT!* is the 14th choreographic creation of the Company who celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2013. Blanca has also been invited as a choreographer by the Paris Opera (*Les Indes Galantes* and *Shéhérazade*) and by the New York Metropolitan Opera (*Don Giovanni*). She was director and choreographer of the Berlin Ballet at the Komische Oper from 2001 to 2002, director of the Centro Andaluz de Danza (Sevilla, Spain) from 2006 to 2010 and Fellow Artist at the Centre Chorégraphique National de Créteil in 2010.

Blanca Li has always been widely acclaimed by all kind of audience around the world, as shown by the success of the current international tours of *Macadam Macadam* (hip-hop, new 2011 version), *Le Jardin des Délices* (2009), about the Hieronymus Bosch painting, and *Elektro Kif*

(2011), with young electro dancers. Blanca Li also directed two feature films, "The Challenge" (*Le Défi*), a musical with 150 hip hop dancers, and *Pas à Pas* (2010), a documentary about the creative process of *Corazón Loco*.

Since 2007, Blanca creates interactive and multimedia installations around the idea of "Come and dance with me" (*Ven a bailar conmigo*) (MUSAC of Léon, Noche en Blanco in Madrid, Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Monaco Dance forum). The last and most brilliant manifestation of this Dance Celebration was a big popular event in Paris in September 2011 called "La Fête de la Danse de Blanca Li au Grand Palais", to be staged again in September 2013. www.blancali.com





MAYWA DENKI

TOSA Nobumichi, President of the performers and contemporary art group known as Maywa Denki, is always dressed like the workers of his late father factory that he inherited to produce nonsense objects. These blue coveralls say something about the depersonalisation of automated work, and emphasise also the hyper-personalisation of the contemporary artist who thinks of himself as a role, a leading part in the staging of his world filled with nonsense objects, strange creatures and stupid robots. These coveralls also say something about the manual labour and craftsmanship necessary for producing these “back-to-the-future” objects and works of art: a beautiful object is a well-made object.

Influenced by kinetic art and techno-pop, Maywa Denki creates low-tech prototypes made of resin and aluminium, elements in a behind-the-mirror world filled with humour, in which men and machines interact in a naturally way.

The musical devices of the Tsukuba series (organised like their traditional counterparts: violin, guitar, drums, voice and so on) are complex electrical devices which play actual music when activated by humans (via electromagnets or motors). No electronics here. The functional beauty of this machinery is made explicit at musical performances. These concerts challenge our contemporary world in which music became information, data flow, zeros and ones, as everything else. Maywa Denki musical instruments bring us back to substantial music and help us experience the sound in another way. Instead of smart-phone speakers bits, the real beat of live music generated on stage. Instead of playlist choices, the living art of improvisation. Instead of the digital sound produced by synthesizer or sampling, the crude sound of material objects. Unique and special objects, perfect robots shaped and conceived to help humans to be fun and witty!

www.maywadenki.com



Partnerships

ALDEBARAN Robotics

NAO talks, sees, walks, feels, dances, bends his knees, sways his shoulders, stands up again after falling; he can grasp objects and can communicate with his NAO fellows, with humans, with the Internet...

Developed by ALDEBARAN Robotics, NAO is a fully programmable humanoid robot, autonomous, and highly interactive. These features make him the most widely used humanoid robot for academic purposes worldwide (computer sciences, engineering, psychology...). NAO hopes to be available soon to the general public as a personal assistant. He is already the favourite playmate of Blanca!

58-cm tall, NAO has 2 arms, 2 legs, 2 eyes and a mouth, just like everybody else! Highly skilled in vocal and visual recognition, NAO can communicate in 8 languages, using a vocal synthesiser, LED lights, 2 HD cameras, 4 microphones and 2 high-fidelity speakers. Fluid movement, sensory perception and obstacle

avoidance (thanks to capture and pressure sensors as well as 25 joints) are some key-features which may make NAO the artificial companion of humans in need (like children with autism or the elderly) as well as the perfect play pal, in the near future.

As a matter of fact, among all the robots Blanca has already met, NAO is by far the best dancer!

www.aldebaran-robotics.com



Artistic team

The dream team of Blanca Li's most applauded shows (Corazon Loco, Poeta en Nueva York, Le Jardin des Délices) is back on track!

Lights: Jacques Chatelet, lighting designer and artist for numerous world-renowned theatre and choreographic shows.

Scenography: Pierre Attrait, movie set director, artistic director for luxury-brands events, international theater and opera shows set designer.

Video: Charles Carcopino, video artist, exhibition curator (Festival EXIT, etc.), head of the Studio of the Maison des Arts et de la Culture (MAC) de Créteil since 2000.

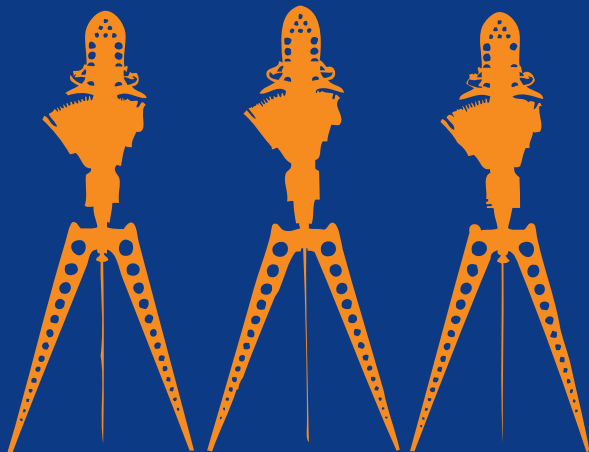
Co-producers

Maison de la Culture de Nevers

Automne en Normandie

Festival Montpellier Danse 2013 to confirm





Production

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