

TOMMY HARTUNG

R.U.R. Act One: The Viewer, 2017

Hartung's works analyze the creation and dissemination of cultural narratives by fragmenting and deconstructing his source material. Through the montages of stop motion animation and found footage, Hartung uses the themes of modernism as his subject matter. His sculptures, the subjects of his videos, are assembled through scavenged material to form hybrids of classical characters and nuanced allegory. His work addresses colonial expansion, exploration, evolution, conquest, and innovation.

R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots) is series of video installations based on Karel Kapek's 1920 science fiction play where the term robot was first used. The play is about the uncertainties brought up by the speed of technological progress and the dehumanization that occurs with the robotization of human interactions. For this adaptation the original play is re-written through photographs, costumes and videos that pose the question why do all these men want robots that look human? The Photographs will consist of character studies and pictures inspired by the constructivist art originally designed for the playbills. *The Viewer* is a video installation that is based on a dialogue from the play between a prototype robot Sulla and a human Helena, who has a difficult time believing the other is an artificial creation. As a stop motion animation plays on a screen it is intercut with live hidden camera feeds. The animated character Sulla appears talking directly towards the viewer. The live video feeds will capture images of the viewer and will be edited in real-time with custom software into the video. This will give a unique experience to each viewer allowing their own likeness to be reflected back implicating them into the video and narration. The viewer is described with not adjectives but with pronouns the interplay of I and you. Sulla talks of watching death come over the viewer slowly, doing nothing and being overwhelmed with regret. Often questioning the reality of the deceased viewers existence the verses go on now rhythmically cut between with prose, live feed and the animated character. The narration describes witnessing death yet, indirectly and in hindsight ruminating on a sense of inexplicable in-action.

The voice of the Robot is an excerpt from Olympic Medalist Aly Raiseman's testimony in court against her abuser, Larry Nassar.