

*Uncanny Valley* is the exploration of a strange perceptual phenomenon in the fields of robotics and animation. Common sense suggests as a representation of a human being becomes more and more 'human-like', we have a more and more positive response to it. At a certain point, however, where the resemblance is especially close, our reactions in fact switch suddenly to discomfort, disquiet or even revulsion. There are many possible explanations for this, but the general idea is leading up to the 'uncanny valley', we see a very good estimation of a person, while in the valley itself, our perception is actually of a 'real' human being, but with something wrong or off. To me, this trajectory immediately suggested a variation form, where the theme is a bona fide, healthy person and the variations – an industrial robot, a humanoid robot, a stuffed animal, and a corpse, zombie and bunraku puppet combined – facsimiles of varying quality. Since the piece traces progress towards, descent into, and ascent out of the uncanny valley, the variations (atypically) precede the theme.