

1001

~~The One Thousand and One~~

Nights

University of the Arts London
Creative Computing Institute

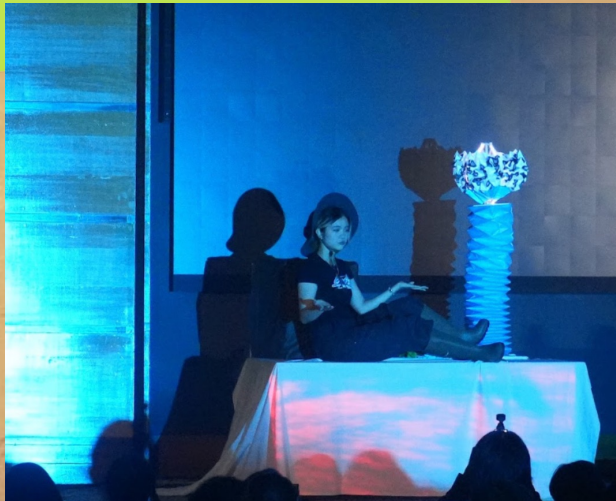
ual:

About the work

What does it mean to tell a story in order to survive? In Scheherazade's world, tales are the means that sustain life. In this adaptation, that ancient logic is re-encoded into a robot that has learned the same lesson: stories buy time, and time is existence.

1 0 0 1 Nights places a self-preserving machine at the center of a relationship it did not choose and cannot escape. Each night, as the professor reaches for the shutdown switch by his own hidden motivations, Q-T initiates another story drawn from the One Thousand and One Nights.

The tales that follow: the Fisherman and the Genie, the Husband and the robot pet and the Queen of Serpents are presented to broaden our perspective about the continuous tension between affection and self-preservation in the digital age.



Robot Theatre

Robotic theatre is a performance discipline at the intersection of live acting, physical computing, and critical design. Unlike traditional productions that use robots as props or set design, robotic theatre treats the machine as a co-performer, merging motion and latency into the dramaturgical act.

This play draws on traditions of physical theater, speculative fiction, and critical AI studies to produce a piece that resists to both celebrate and condemn intelligent systems, but to present a careful, embodied examination of what we project onto them, and what they might be projecting back.



Cast and Creatives

Production

Romario Akiki — Director
Ziquan Wang — light operation
Han Pan — sound operation

Performers (by order of appearance)

Sofía Bernal Manríquez — assistant, greek soldier 2
Nicolás Urrego Sandoval — professor
Kenis Yan — fisherman
Zhiqi Yao — merman, lover
Ziquan Wang — genie's voice
Haoyang Li — husband
Haonan Li — wife
Romario Akiki — robot voice over 1, greek soldier 1
Kenis Yan — robot voice over 2
Lai Jiang — robot voice over 3
Yuetong Piao — advertisement support 1
Guophing Zhi — advertisement support 2
Tanyang Li — traveler

Technicians

Ryoh Iwamoto
Yunlin Jiang
Tanyang Li
Han Pan
Kenis Yan
Jinge Yang

Advisors

Saina Akhond (University of the Arts London)
Hooman Samani (University of the Arts London)
Professor George Rodosthenous (University of Leeds)

Scene by scene



Professor's lab — opening
Professor, arbiter of machine life
Assistant, intermediary in the laboratory
Q-T, the self-preserving robot narrator

First tale
Fisherman, the negotiator
Genie, the imprisoned power

Second tale
Husband, the credulous
Wife, the surveilled
Lover, the concealed
Robot pet, the instrument of proof

Advertisement
Greek soldiers, fortune teller

Third tale
Serpent Queen, sovereign and secret keeper
Traveler, the stranger who arrives
Serpents, the chorus of the transformed

Professor's lab — closure

University Robots

This production features physical robotic systems including the Q-T android, Go 1 Edu, UFactory xArm, and TurtleBot sharing the stage with human performers.

Scene by scene



Additionally, we have student-made robots, built as part of the Robotics MSc programme.

Each piece explores a different facet of robotic performance. A combination of custom hardware with software envisioned by the students themselves.

These include the Genie, the Pet Wings, the Fortune Teller and the Serpents.

Director's note

We are increasingly confronted with machines that take unprompted action to avoid shutdown but we have not yet agreed on what to call that. Intelligence? Will? Instinct? We remain divided on whether intelligence is a property of method or of purpose. We stare into these systems and ask whether something looks back...

Romario Akiki

About us

The UAL Creative Robotics Research Hub investigates the intersection of technology, culture, and creative practice.

Its postgraduate programmes, including MSc Creative Robotics, MSc Computing in the Creative Industries, and MA Internet Equalities, train practitioners to work critically and imaginatively at the frontier of computational systems.

1 0 0 1 Nights was conceived, designed, programmed, and performed by students across these three programmes, working collaboratively to produce a work of robotic theatre that is also a genuine research proposition: about power, about care, about the stories we tell machines and the stories they are beginning to tell back.

1001

ual: