

For the previous two years, Mathieu Briand had been working on a project called *Androyx*, based mainly on three concepts: *unheimlich*, *uncanny valley* and *wabi-sabi*.

Androyx have the appearance of human body parts the size of a child. They are autonomous. They behave more like a cat than a dog. You can't control them. They evolve at will in the space they occupy. They can be considered residents. *Androyx* are not about the identical reproduction of the human, the perfect likeness or the impeccable imitation for maximum servitude and functionality, but rather about a psychological interaction. It is no longer a question of making 'more human than human' but of making 'the human more human'.

Mathieu Briand is a Melbourne-based artist born in Marseille, France. Briand works in various installation forms with computers, electronic music, robots, video technology and sculpture to explore simulation, play and perception. His use of new technologies solicits active participation and engagement, playing with the viewer's point of view and questioning the reality of their perceptions.

Briand's work is situated somewhere between perceptive reality and a displacement of the imagination. He uses sound, physical forms, sensory environments and mixed media to create diverse and innovative situations that invite the spectator into unfamiliar zones of spatial and temporal perception. Briand leads us into his private world — a world made up of personal references, either experienced or dreamt — and the tricks he uses are material objects and visual events alike. These references are brought together and distanced again, with multiple entrances and no known frontiers.

Briand has held large-scale solo exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon; REDCAT, Los Angeles; TATE Modern Turbine Hall, London; Art Basel Unlimited; TEA, Tenerife, Spain; La Maison Rouge, Paris; MONA, Hobart. Briand has participated in group exhibitions in major museums such as Centre Pompidou, Paris; Bloomberg Space, London; Jumex Foundation, Mexico; Walker Art Center, USA; Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; ICC, Japan; Moca Tapei, Taiwan; Site Santa Fe, USA; Macba Barcelone, Spain; Carriageworks, Sydney.

Mathieu Briand is represented by MARS Gallery, Melbourne.

**The concept of the uncanny was introduced by Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay *Das Unheimliche*, in which Freud explores the eeriness of dolls and waxworks. For Freud, the uncanny locates the strangeness in the ordinary. Expanding on Freud's idea, psychoanalytic theorist Jacques

Lacan wrote that the uncanny places us ‘in the field where we do not know how to distinguish bad and good, pleasure from displeasure’, resulting in an irreducible anxiety that gestures to the Real. The concept has since been taken up by a variety of subsequent thinkers and theorists such as Roboticist Masahiro Mori’s ‘uncanny valley’ hypothesis and Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection.

Gertrude Glasshouse is the project space of Gertrude Contemporary used to present solo exhibitions by artists involved in Gertrude’s two-year Studio Program. Gertrude Glasshouse is generously supported by Michael Schwarz and David Clouston. Mathieu Briand is an alumni studio artist (2017 - 2019).

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