

Dance, disability and robots: interdisciplinary possibilities for reframing 'healthy bodies' in performance

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Introduction

What does health mean in the context of dancing with robots?

When the dancers have a lived experience of disability, how does that relate to understanding of 'failure' and 'good health'?

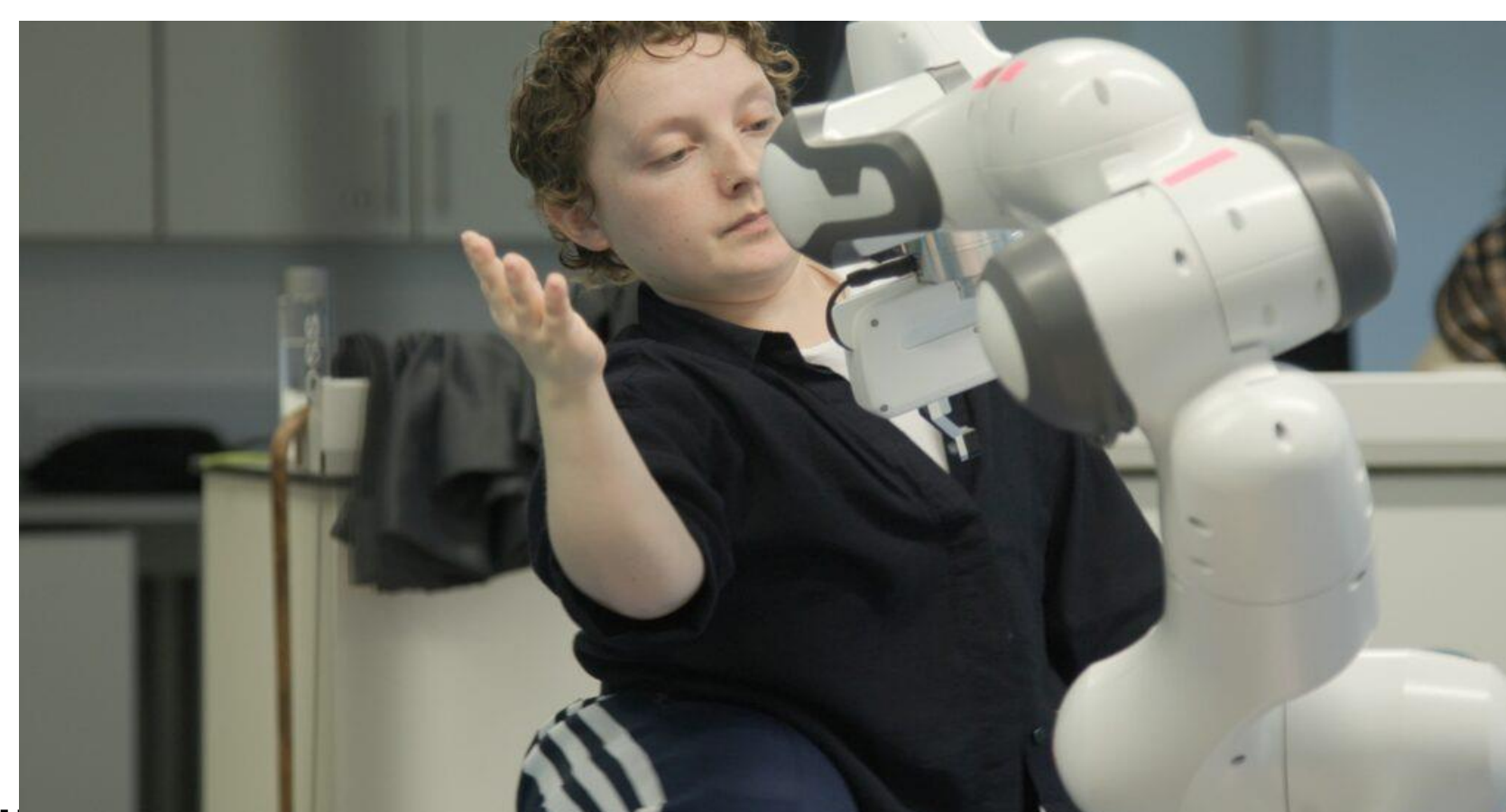
Materials and methods

Experiments with Franka arm robots and professional disabled dancers.



Discoveries

Failure is a complex idea that may have both generative and counterproductive properties. When the health of the robots is brought into view there are questions about investing the robots with human attributes and sensations. But to equate the successful operation or failure of the robot with good or bad health seems illogical unless the programming, operating and maintenance of the robot may align with the holistic human aspects of health (such as diet, exercise, sleep, stress management, etc).



Our aim is to find ways to ensure that developments in tracking and measuring the ways that bodies move avoids smoothing over bodily difference. A primary focus is on emphasising 'healthy touch' between humans and robots, both healthy for the dancers and healthy for the robots.

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Conclusions

The work has 'health' in mind all the time to ensure the wellbeing of all those involved and particularly the disabled dance artists who may have individual access or support needs and may need to have time and space organised to ensure they are able to work safely and healthily.

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Dancers: Welly O'Brien, Annie Edwards