



Professor Rodney Brooks has had one enduring ambition his entire life: to build machines that can truly think. He's been doing so since he was eight years of age, tinkering obsessively in the backyard garage. It's a dream which attracts constant criticism; people tell him that machines will never really think. Former head of one of the world's great architectural and research icons, the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Brooks has been challenging the skeptics. At the forefront of a stunning period in robotic history, today Professor Brooks and his dedicated team of scientists are certain they're about to make a technological breakthrough as they race to customize the world's first truly socially interactive humanoid robot.



So convinced is he, that Brooks has only recently stood down from his internationally respected role as MIT laboratory leader, responsible for securing 200 million dollars in funding a year and looking after 900 staff, and is returning to the "factory" floor. It could be a massive midlife crisis, but he knows the stakes are high. This could end in scientific and professional suicide if he does not succeed.