

DIGITAL engAGEMENT Conference — Paper Presentation Submission

Title: Clinton and Sanders Looking at the World and Naming Things for the First Time

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Abstract

This artist talk focuses on a short video which I produced and directed in the past year. In the video, I re-edited a CNN debate which took place in 2016 between the democratic presidential candidates. The candidates' speeches are cut apart into words and paired with alternative, self-shot footage. The words, carved out of the tightly crafted speeches, are used to describe natural phenomena, plants and animals. Taken out of their original context, the candidates' voices sound robotic and machine-like. The debate turns into a Rorschach test, onto which viewers can project their own thoughts and associations.

How does the Rorschach test work? The first part of the talk will answer this question, while discussing DeepDream, a machine learning technology developed to recognize and classify visual patterns. I will discuss how an unintentional glitch in the software changed the way it perceives patterns, and how this influenced ideas in my video, for example, political perception as a glitch.

The second part of the talk will then analyze one of the frames of the video. The mise en scène in the frame raises the question: Are there moments in which we perceive reality from the outside of ourselves, as external to our senses? Through this question, I will revisit Plato's *Theory of the Forms*, which is a second influence on the film.

Talk duration:

24 minutes (Flexible). Including: 12 minutes talk+ 12 minutes video screening

Link to Full Video:

<https://vimeo.com/orrmenirom/lookingattheworld>
Password: holyland2

Image list

Fig. 01



Fig.02



Fig. 03



Fig. 04

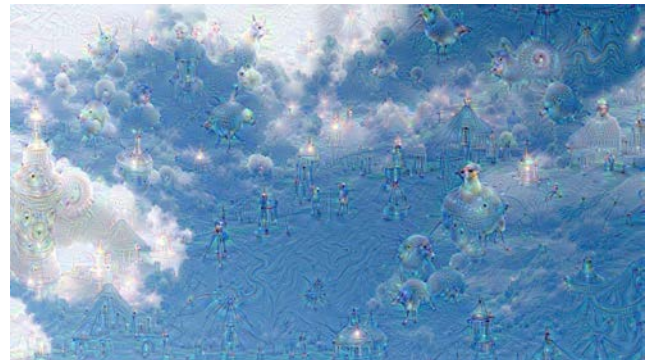


Fig. 05



Fig. 06



Fig. 07



Image Credits

Fig. 01: Shutterstock

Fig. 02: Shutterstock

Fig. 03: Source: Google Images

Fig. 04: Source: Google Deep Dream Generator

Fig. 05: Source: Google Deep Dream Generator. Image credit: Thorne Brandt – <https://twitter.com/thornebrandt/status/61717361823832928?lang=en>

Fig. 06: Source: Deep Dream Generator. Image credit: Eric Cheng – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_lej5HespyRb-AQbasz92A

Fig. 07: *Clinton and Sanders Looking at the World and Naming Things From the First Time* (2017). Image credit: Orr Menirom

Author Biography

Orr Menirom is a Brooklyn based media artist. She is a recipient of a Research Fellowship from Jan Van Eyck Academy (2017) and a former artist in residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2016). She holds an MFA from the Film, Video, New Media and Animation Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (IL) and a BFA from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (Jerusalem, Israel). Her work has shown internationally at venues such as the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, International Film Festival Rotterdam, RIXC Center for New Media Culture and Expo Chicago.