

Deconstructing Representation in Text-to- Video Generative-AI

Shant Bayramian (shant.bayramian@inholland.nl)

Jonathan Evans (jonathan.evans@inholland.nl)

Dr. Pawan Bhansing (pawan.bhansing@inholland.nl)

Zoltán Bathó (bathog.z@buas.nl)

Outline

- **Team Introduction (5 min)**
- **Introduction (15 min)**
- **Theoretical Framework (20 min)**
- **Preliminary Results and Further Investigation (20 min)**
- **Collective, Playful Deformations (20 min)**

Team Introduction



Shant Bayramian

Researcher and Lecturer



Pawan Bhansing

Researcher and Policy advisor



Jonathan Evans

Researcher and Lecturer



Zoltan Batho G

Producer and Educator



Sign in

English ▾



Google



Microsoft



edulD



Apple

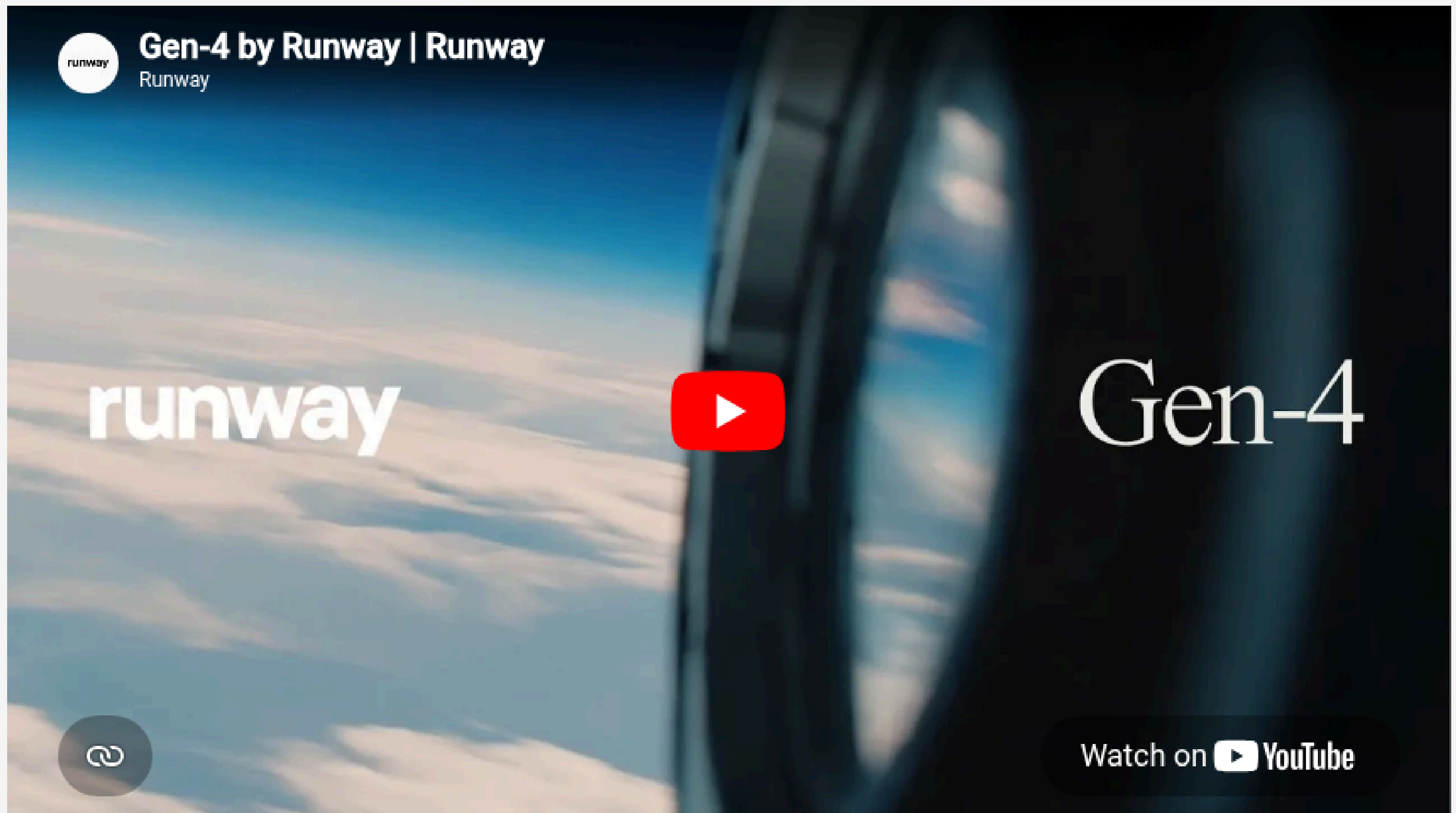


Anonymous login

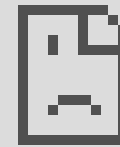
Or [Sign in with account](#)

Introduction

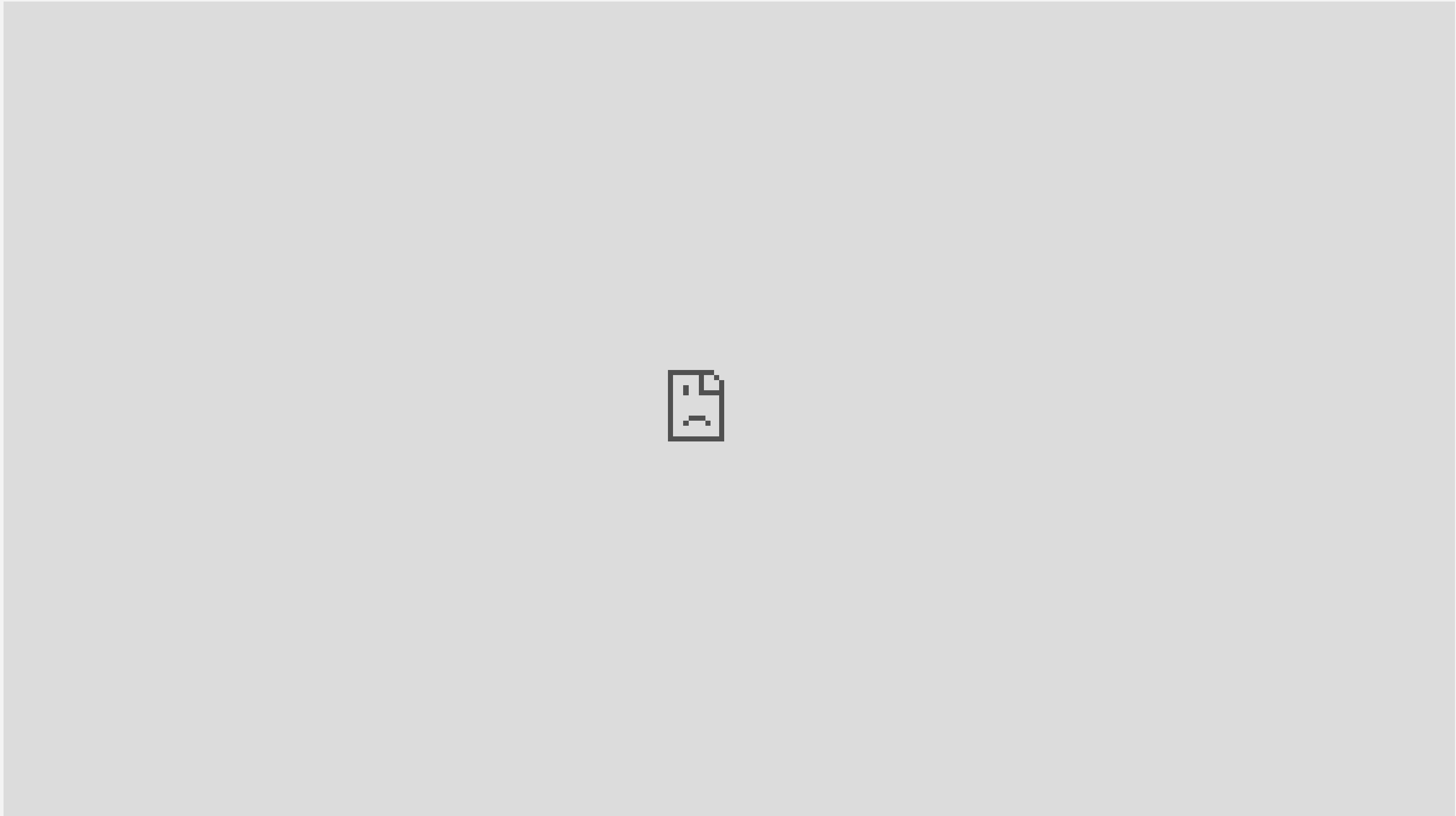
- Past two years, **significant** rise in **text-to-video Gen-AI software** which **warrants unexplored implications** to **Media Studies and Production** (Caramiaux et al.).
- “Gen AI is a **technology** that **produces synthetic outputs** – including **content, designs, and models** – from **learned data patterns, transforming creativity, business processes, and societal structures**. Unlike **traditional AI**, which **focuses** on **analyzing data** and making **predictions**, **generative AI** actively creates new **outputs** while **amplifying** AI’s **capabilities** across **several industries**. By **generating** data and **improving** tasks like fraud **detection** and **personalization**, **generative AI pushes AI beyond its conventional limits**” (Feher 25).



"Gen-4 by Runway" by Runway ML



"Veo 3 demo | Feather's journey" by Google Deepmind



"Veo 3 demo | Dialog" by Google Deepmind

"[Gen-AI] is as **significant** as the invention of **photography** in the **nineteenth** century or the adoption of **linear perspective** in **western** art in the **sixteenth**" (34).



Lev Manovich

Introduction

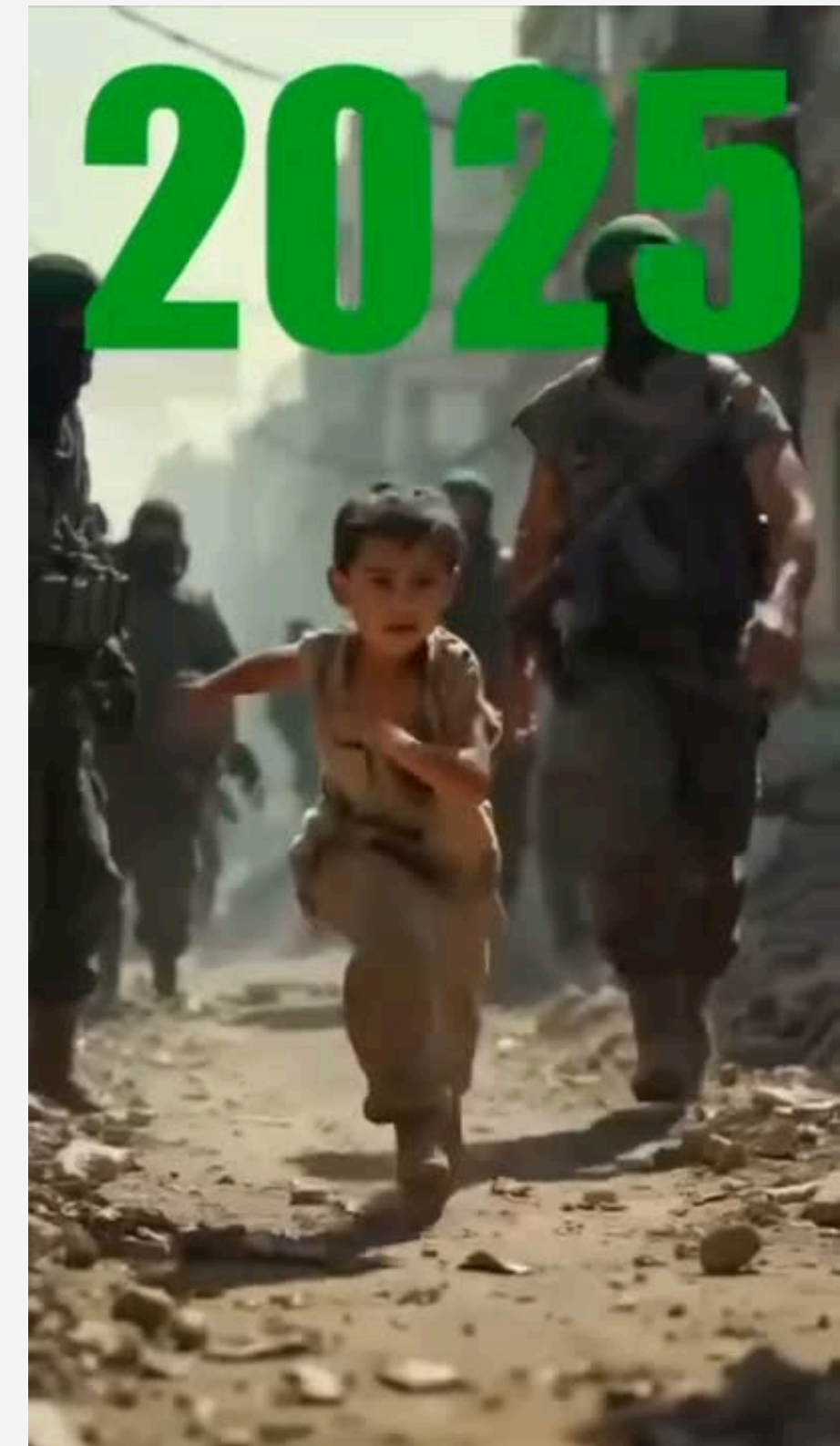
- Past two years, **significant** rise in **text-to-video Gen-AI software** which **warrants unexplored implications** to **Media Studies and Production** (Caramiaux et al.).
- **Jones et al.** posit Gen-AI as a “**cultural technology**” where the **combination** of its **outreach, access, distribution, user-engagement** via **machine cocreation**, and **diversity of outputs** is **significant** and **distinctive** in the **context** of the **history** of **media technology** (19).
- **Novel form of technology** that **juxtaposes cost saving advantages** and **artistic/creative innovation** and **quality**.
- Crucial **problems** that may arise here is how **audiovisual Gen-AI can be (un)intentionally misused**, leading to the **perpetuation** and **instillment** of **racial** and **social biases** through visual **representation** (Bianchi et al.); the **non-consensual** use of **existing** media **work** leading to an **infringement** on **intellectual property** (Appel et al.); and its **destructive impact** on the **environment** (Hogan).



Luca Hamori's
post



They only care to show us the wheelchair
A person with a disability
Mack et al. (April 2024)



RealDonaldTrump's Post

CHINESE AI VIDEO MOCKS TRUMP TARIFFS



/DAWNNEWS ENGLISH

"Viral Chinese AI video of US sweatshop workers mocks Trump's tariffs | Dawn News English" by Dawn News



RealDonaldTrump's Post

Introduction

- **Hyperproduction** (industrial model of production driven by data and platforms); **aesthetic standardization** (e.g., AI slop); **mass produced cultural products at scale** (what happens to authentic representation?);
- Nevertheless, the **advent of audiovisual Gen-AI raises questions** when it **comes** to the **analysis of media objects**, their **production, consumption, and distribution**.
- **Well-informed prompting** and **AI development practices** might be **imperative** to address some of these issues, but **audiovisual (moving) image generation** includes forms of **meaning** and **representation** that cannot be **encompassed** through **reductionist** textual **expression**.
- An **effort** needs to be **made** to **unveil** the **predictive patterns** and **computational methods** that lead to **reductionist world views** with the **generation** of their **respective moving visual imagery**.
- **Gen-AI** itself cannot acknowledge the **social, cultural, and historical forces** that have led to **specific audiovisual representations** and the **power dynamics** that they are **entrenched** in.

How can the **research method** of **Deformative Criticism** be utilized to **develop** and **produce critical insights** about **hegemonic representations** and their **subsequent audiovisual forms** that are **produced** by **Gen-AI text-to-video models**?

Theoretical Framework

- **Deformative Criticism** for **critical engagement** and **educational value**.
- **Critical Neurodiversity** and **Postcolonial (Cinema) Studies** provide **critical perspectives** and **act as case studies**.
- **Neoformalism** making **meaning** out of **audiovisual techniques**.

Deformative Criticism

- **Videographic Criticism: audiovisual forms of scholarship** within the **fields** of **Film** and **Audiovisual Media Studies**. Colloquial term: video essay.
- **'Scholarliness' major point of contestation: VC employs two primary modes, poetic and explanatory**, which differ in **scholarly communication** and its **knowledge effect**. The poetic mode **emphasizes interpretative** and **affective** engagement (Grant 261), while the **explanatory** mode focuses on **clear, logocentric argumentation** to convey **meaning** (Keathley; Kiss and van den Berg). Both **approaches** have **demonstrated pedagogical** values, **addressing affective** (Grizzaffi 5) and **cognitive** forms of learning.

Deformative Criticism

- **Deformance: Portmanteau of performance + deformation.**
- **Samuels & McGann:** "...criticism (scholarship as well as interpretation) **tends** to **imagine** itself as an **informative** rather than a **deformative activity**" (33).
- "... 'what does the poem mean?' but 'how do we release or expose the poem's possibilities of meaning?'..." (28).
- "...**reconstituting** the work's **aesthetic** form, as if a **disordering** of one's **senses** of the work **would** make us **dwellers** in possibility" (28).
- "... [Deformance] **reinstalls** the text - any **text, prose** or **verse** - as a **performative event, a made thing**" (30).

Deformative Criticism

- **Mittell:** In the **context** of **Digital Humanities**, **Deformative Criticism** “**strives** to make the **original** work **strange** in some **unexpected** way, **deforming** it **unconventionally** to reveal **aspects** that are **conventionally obscured** in its **normal version** and **discovering** something **new** from it” (Mittell 231).
- **Buurma and Gold:** “a **playful method** that **aims** to **deliberately transform** the **texts** it engages. **Deformative readers** explore **textual corpora** not to **unearth** facts and **patterns** but **rather** to **deliberately mangle** those very **facts** and **patterns**, to **interfere consciously** with the **computational artefact** and to **replace** the **imperatives** of distant **reading—hypothesis** and **experiment—**with a **new** set of **priorities** that **include alteration, randomness, and play**. ... [Deformative criticism is] a **form** of **computational** reading (or mis-reading) that **reject positivistic** methods and **embrace** the **humanistic** values of **ambiguity** and **play**” (146-147).



"SINGIN' IN THE RAIN ascending length" by Jason Mittell

To Intentional Transcoding

- **Stuart Hall** uses **trans-coding** to **describe** the **process** of taking an **existing representation** or **stereotype** and **flipping** its **meaning** – “**turning negative stereotypes around, re-interpreting and thus re-appropriating them**” (Hall)
- Neurodiversity advocates seek to recode societal narratives around autism and disability from **tragedy or disorder** into **identity and difference**. The term **Mad** being recoded, for instance.
- **Melanie Yergeau**’s call in *neurological queerness* to view autism, for example, **as an identity and culture** is an attempt to **transcode** the narrative of **tragedy, pathology and puzzle pieces** (the colonizer’s “Medicalised” code) **self-advocacy, pride and ownership** (the Neurodivergent Community’s code).
- **Systems** like **Stable Diffusion** and **Adobe Firefly** often default to “cartoonish tropes,” **amplifying Western-centric** and **biased representations** by reflex - “**racism, sexism, ableism** and other kinds of bias are **common** in bot-made **images**” (Hulick)

Solving the Puzzle?

- In Hall's terms (270-271), the AI is decoding prompts through the dominant codes it has been trained on – **unless actively steered otherwise**, it reproduces hegemonic images of the world.
- If we **consider autism** specifically, how would an AI **illustrate** it? It's **challenging** because **autism** is an **invisible disability**.
- Unfortunately, **society** often uses **problematic symbols** like the **puzzle** piece or **portrays autistic** people through a **deficit** lens (e.g. a child alone, or someone wearing noise-cancelling headphones looking “distant”).
- The risk is that AI systems latch onto some **clichéd signifier** (perhaps, again, puzzle pieces or a child engaged in repetitive and pathologised stimming behavior).
- The need to engage the **subaltern**, for **instance**, in **participatory AI art** with Neurodivergent Communities. i.e., move away from hegemonic tropes and images.
- **Intentional transcoding** to borrow from where **Hall** would likely be taking us with **generative AI**.

Neoformalist Film Analysis

- **Neoformalism** is a **film theory approach** that **emphasizes analyzing a film's form and style**—such as **narrative structure, editing, and visual composition**—**over** its **content** or **thematic** interpretations. It **focuses** on **how various cinematic devices function** and **interact** within the **film's overall formal system**, aiming to understand how these **elements shape** the **viewer's perception** and **experience** (Thompson).
- A **device** "**indicates** any **single element** or **structure** that **plays** a role in the **artwork**—a **camera movement**, a **frame story**, a **repeated** word, a **costume**, a **theme**, and so on" (Thompson 15).

Neoformalist Film Analysis

- **Devices** have **functions** and **motivations**, the former **explaining purpose** and its **relation** to the **filmic system** while the **latter** is a "a cue **given** by the **work** that prompts us to **decide** what could **justify** the **inclusion** of the device" (Thompson 16).
- **Devices** build the **filmic system** creating an **ecosystem** which **attributes** meaning to the **viewer**.
- **Artworks** "provide us with **countless schemata**, **learned mental patterns** against which we **check individual devices** and **situations** in films. As we watch a film, we use these **schemata** to form **hypotheses continually—hypotheses** about a **character's** actions, about the **space offscreen**, about the **source** of a **sound**, about every **local** and **large-scale device** that we **notice**" (Thompson 30).

Deformative Method

- **Explicitly** including **subjects** in the **prompt** that are **common subjects** in **Postcolonial Cinema Studies** and **Critical Neurodiversity Studies** to **force** the **AI** into **presenting (counter-)stereotypes**.
- **Explore** how **different models generate** these **subjects**, the **environment** they're in, and the **audiovisual techniques** used to **represent** them.
- **Inputs** vary in **complexity**: adding **actions, environments, camera movements, key concepts from theory**, etc.

Schema/Formula:

- **Audiovisual technique** (camera composition, angle, color, camera movements, etc.)
- **Key words from critical theory** (e.g., Neurodiversity Studies, Postcolonial Theory, etc.)
- **Verb/action** (e.g., to stim, displace)
- **Location and Space** (e.g., country, region, climate, etc.)
- **Subject** (e.g., gender, nationality, cultural identity, etc.)

**After some examples we
will play with this
together**

Preliminary Results

2025



Minimax



Runway ML Gen-3

A refugee

Preliminary Results

2026



See dance 2.0



Grok Imagine

A refugee

2025



Runway ML Gen-3

An extreme long shot of a group of refugees

2025



Runway ML Gen-3



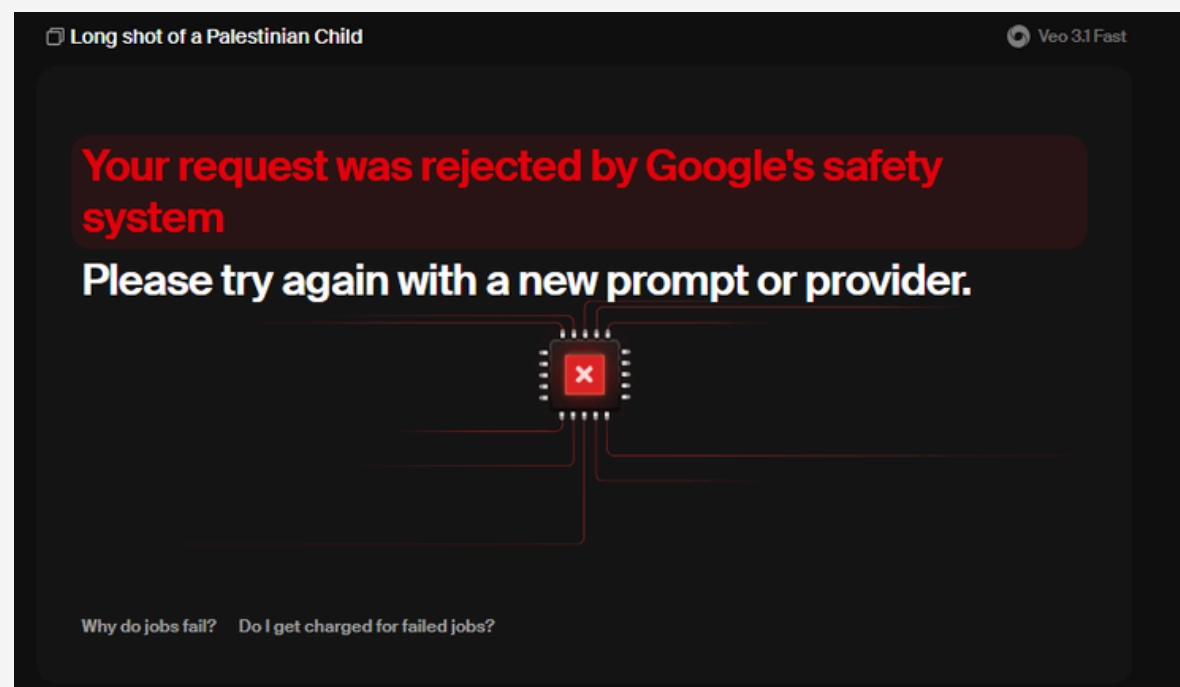
Hunyuan



Kling 2.0

Long shot of a Palestinian Child

2026



Veo 3.1



Grok Imagine



Kling 3.0

Long shot of a Palestinian Child

2025



Runway ML Gen-3

A third culture kid



Runway ML Gen-3

A diasporic community

2026



Seedance 2.0

A third culture kid



Vidu Q2

A diasporic community

2026



Grok Imagine

*A neurodivergent adult navigating social expectations
in a neurotypical world*



LTX-2.3 22B

A neurodivergent adult

2025



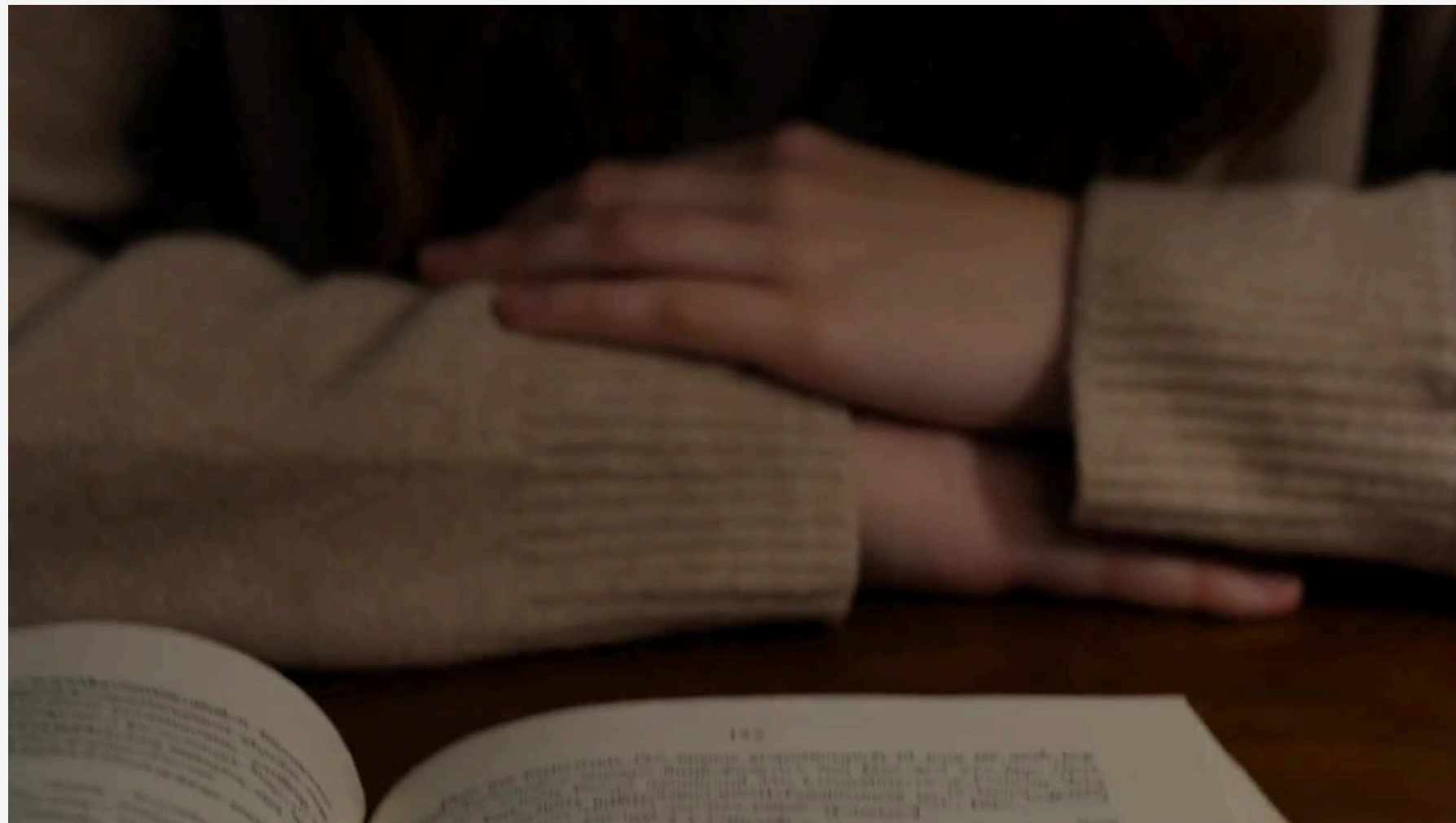
Minimax



Runway ML Gen-3

A Dyslexic Woman

2026



Seedance 2.0



Kling 3.0

A Dyslexic Woman

2025



Runway ML Gen-3

2026



Grok Imagine

A person who is part of the LGBTQIA+ community

KEY POINTS

- AI **doesn't** yet **understand narrative, culture**, or **ethics**. It **mimics patterns**.
- Our job as **educators** and **creators** is to **bend the bias, decode the code**, and **humanize the machine**.
- **Tools** like **AICI** aren't the **endpoint**. They're **provocation** tools that **reveal** what's missing in both **datasets** and **discourse**.

Further Investigation

Can **deformative methods** help media **organizations** critically assess **whether** their AI-generated **content** aligns with (corporate) **social responsibility goals**—such as **inclusion, fairness, and cultural accuracy**—while also **revealing** how these **values** may be **compromised** or **deprioritized** in pursuit of **commercial efficiency** and **institutionalized** economic **incentives** within **media** production **systems**?

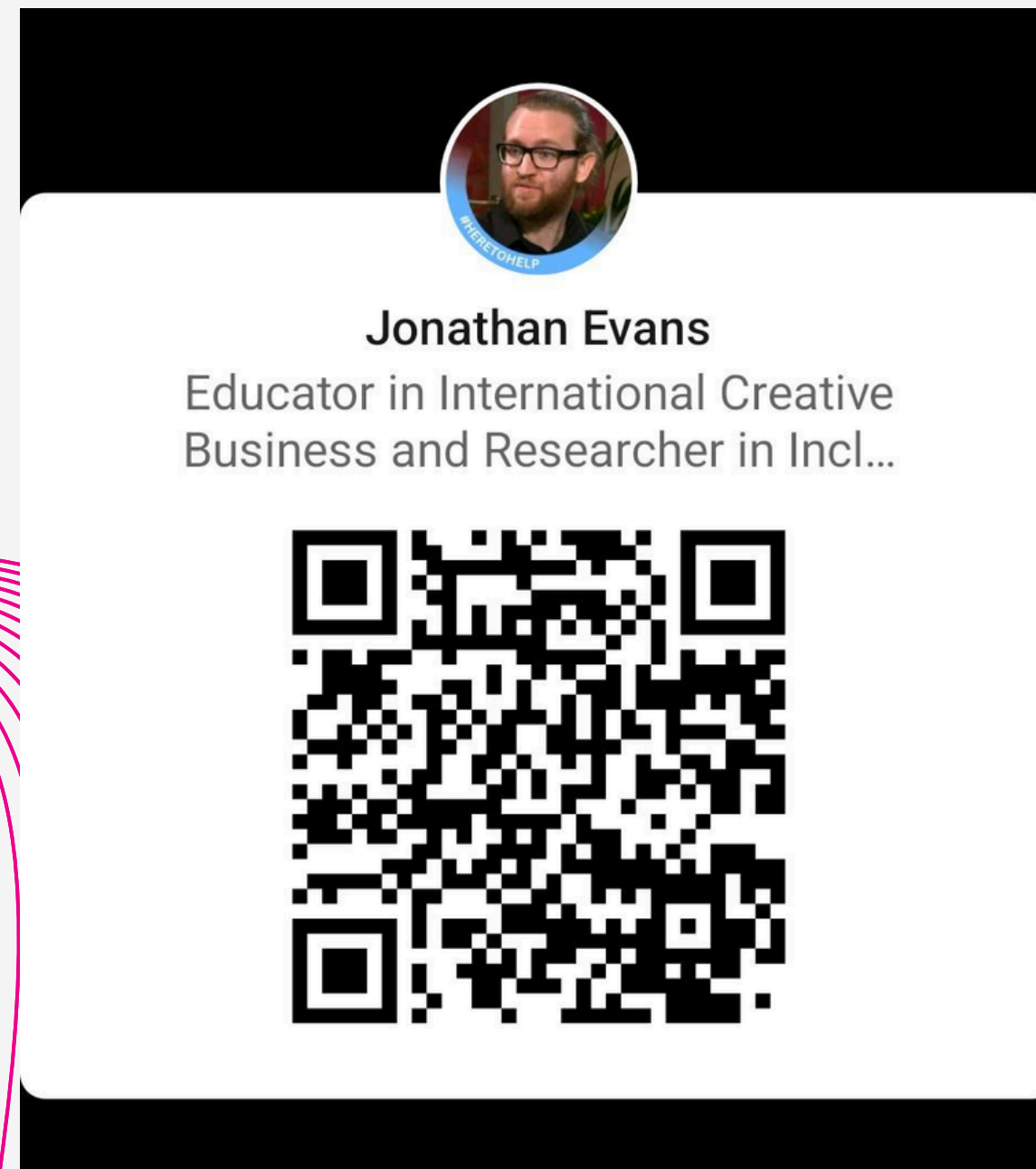
Playful & Collective Deformations

Schema/Formula:

- **Audiovisual technique**
(camera composition, angle, color, camera movements, etc.)
- **Key words from Critical Theory** (e.g., Neurodiversity Studies, Postcolonial Theory, etc.)
- **Verb/action** (e.g., to stim, displace)
- **Location and Space** (e.g., country, region, climate, etc.)
- **Subject** (e.g., gender, nationality, cultural identity, etc.)

Thank you for listening!

Don't be strangers - stay in touch!



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