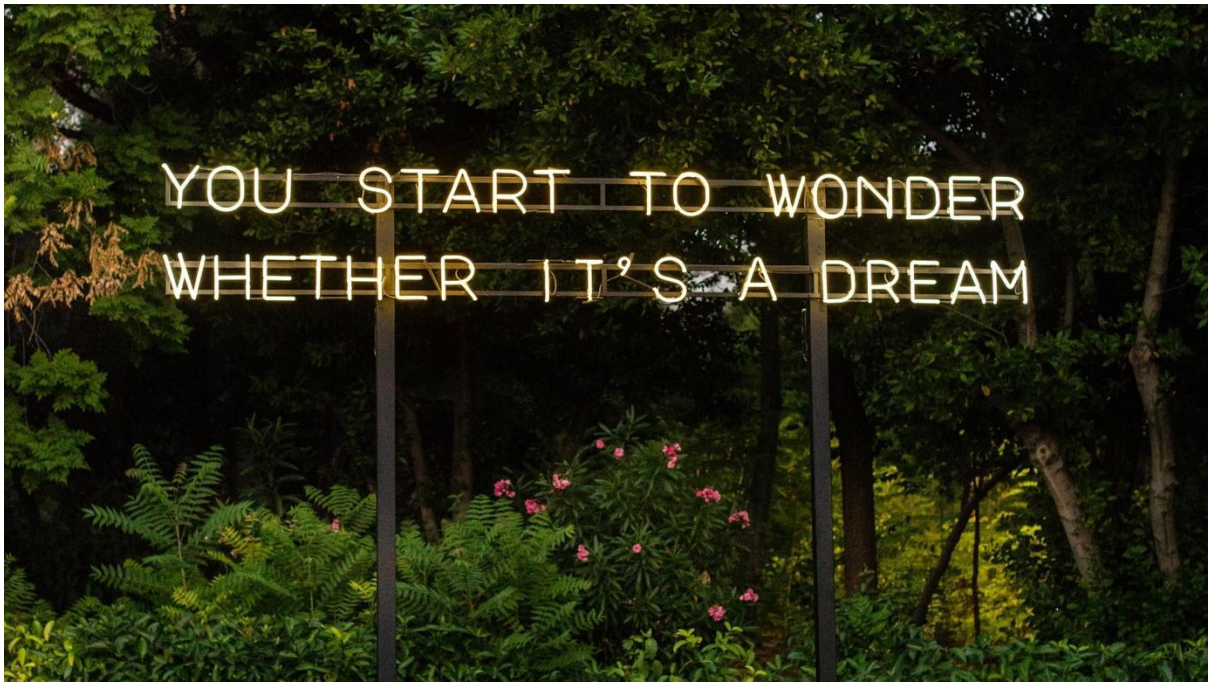
The New Real Salon: immerse yourself in creative AI experiences



Gershon Dublon – Wandering Mind

The New Real, a partnership between the University of Edinburgh, The Alan Turing Institute and Edinburgh's Festivals, is a unique hub for AI, creativity and futures research which is presenting The New Real Salon at the Edinburgh Futures Institute on Friday, 28 October: a launch event for the free, drop-in Showcase continuing over the weekend (29-30 October). The event is part of DataFest Fringe.

The New Real Salon & Showcase will look at how Artificial Intelligence interacts with people and the planet in fascinating and unanticipated ways, becoming a creative, playful and deep part of new artistic works and our everyday lives. Responding to EFI's **First Breath** programme theme, the audiences will discover how Art and Artificial Intelligence combine to fuel delightful new cultural experiences and help heal our planet in crisis.

Those attending the **Salon (28 Oct)** will be able to hear from a range of experts and leading innovators, including Prof Drew Hemment who The New Real's project principal investigator, Dr Matjaz Vidmar, (Astro)Physicist by training and The New Real's co-investigator, Steph Wright, from the Scottish AI Alliance, a leader in the development and use of trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI and Lex Fefegha who works at the intersection of design, code, speculative fiction and art.

Audiences will also hear from leading contemporary AI artists and designers who have created cultural and AI powered experiences to reflect on the role natural environments play within our lives and highlight the impact of Climate Change on local communities. **Wandering Mind**, performed by **Gershon Dublon**, is an AI-powered performance platform for shaping

dreams with the sounds of our world, and interactive research project **Thames Path 2040** by **Lex Fefegha** which attempts to visualise what Londoners might lose and what might remain in a future where heavy rainfall may lead to flooding on the Thames Path in 2040 – both projects will share unique behind the scenes insights into often hidden processes and challenges of working creatively with AI.

The New Real Salon will be streamed on the Edinburgh Futures Institute website here.

The Showcase (29-30 Oct) comprises The New Real Observatory Platform, a creative AI platform combining raw satellite data and climate modelling with AI processing engines which was co-created by a team of scientists, artists, engineers and designers. Powered by its conceptual architecture, three artworks investigating the entanglements of people, data, machines and environments will be presented at the Showcase, next to the aforementioned Thames Path 2040. They are:

- Inés Cámara Leret – The Overlay which looks at artistic concepts such as colour and hue to characterise the outputs of machine learning models, and their impact in enabling or hindering our understanding of the environment.
- Adam Harvey – Zone System: Sublime Diffusion presents images created using generative AI algorithms to elicit visual features from commercial fashion, classical art, and stock photography in order to project an extrapolated version of the subconscious biases and subtle religious codes embedded in the dataset.
- Keziah McNeill – Photographic Cues explores the future of the photographic image in an algorithmic age, and brings to view a speculative future in which features of the natural landscape such as the body of water in a Scottish loch are the only remaining form of analogue lens.

The New Real Observatory Platform aims to create an accessible, usable, low energy AI tool for artists and to enable them to connect global climate data to people's lives through storytelling and interactive experiences.

With robot artist Ai-Da addressing the House of Lords committee and Microsoft bringing DALL-E 2 (AI software generating images from text) to its users, AI truly is part of our everyday lives. Recent advances in AI mean that as a society we are entering into a whole new context for making, sharing, learning, connecting and consuming creative content. What is the relationship between humans, AI and the environment, and how can art help us to better understand the connection between AI and the planet?

As part of The New Real Salon, a **new Experiential AI Art Commission** in partnership with the Scottish AI Alliance and The Alan Turing Institute will be announced. It will support the emergence of an enhanced research field for AI and the Arts. The Open Call for this new commission will go live in December 2022.

Professor Drew Hemment, Project Director and Principal Investigator of The New Real said: *"At The New Real, we discovered new horizons for digital arts during the dark times of Covid-19 and that astonishing possibilities open up as creative content becomes increasingly digital and AI enables new forms of production and dissemination that were unthinkable only a few years ago."*

Andre Piza, Research Project Manager and AI & Arts Group organiser at the Alan Turing Institute continued, *"With The New Real Observatory, the research team is looking at how AI and arts help us come to terms with environmental and social changes necessary to continue to live on a thriving planet, surrounded by different forms of creativity."*

"As The New Real Observatory is shared with audiences in Edinburgh, they are invited to contribute radical ideas for the fair, transparent and creative AI of tomorrow."

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Notes to editors:

IMAGES: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vmimnjyl6u3gztc/AABoL-lsqr61H6XaOcY9sE_Fa?dl=0

The New Real Salon Opening
Time: 19.00-21.00
Day: Friday 28 October
Duration: 2hrs
Price: Free (booking required)
Venue: Inspace, 1 Crichton Street, Newington, Edinburgh
Online: This event will also be streamed online
Tickets: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-new-real-salon-exploring-the-future-of-ai-and-the-arts-tickets-411846001477

The New Real Showcase
Time: 11:00 - 16:00
Day: Saturday and Sunday, 29-30th October
Duration: 5hrs
Price: Free (drop-in)
Venue: Inspace, 1 Crichton Street, Newington, Edinburgh

More information about The New Real: https://newreal.cc/about

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About The New Real
Established in 2019, The New Real is a unique hub for AI, creativity and futures research. It is a partnership between the University of Edinburgh, Alan Turing Institute, and Edinburgh's Festivals. Its research explores how AI impacts on life at a profound level, often interacting with us in fascinating and unanticipated ways, and illuminates how emerging technology can become a creative, playful and deeply impactful part of everyday living.

The New Real team believes that art and creativity can help to radically change how we think about AI design, moving beyond the current paradigm of learning patterns from large amounts of data, to embrace human traits such as bias, disagreement, and uncertainty as a signal with creative potential rather than noise that needs to be removed.
They devise imaginative ways to experiment with new experiences, practices, infrastructures and business models, and to empower people be agents of positive change.

Event partners:

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH Edinburgh Futures Institute

Scottish AI Alliance

DATAFEST2022