

Bob Bicknell-Knight

Towards A Consensual Hallucination, 2023

SARUYA Artist Residency. At 3-28-8 Shimoyoshida, Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi, JP, 3rd July - 30th August 2023.



Towards A Consensual Hallucination is the name of a series of drawings that I produced at SARUYA, an artist residency in the city of Fujiyoshida at the bottom of Mt. Fuji in Japan, from the 3rd July – 30th August 2023.

For the end of residency presentation I transformed two of the bedrooms of the residency into a gallery space to present 90 drawings, out of a total 300, that I produced over the two month period.

Towards A Consensual Hallucination is an ongoing series of drawings, partially created using artificially intelligent (AI) tools, exploring patents, techno-capitalism and virtual reality (VR) devices, depicting unknown figures seemingly trapped in a future metaverse.

A patent is an exclusive right granted for an invention, which is a product or a process that provides, in general, a new way of doing something, or offers a new technical solution to a problem. Patent applications usually contain a series of simple line drawings illustrating the invention and how it's used. I'm particularly interested in patents for new technologies, how they are a way of observing and predicting the future whilst simultaneously holding back the human race.

The series of drawings have been partially created using DALL-E 2, a commercially available generative AI technology that enables users to create new images with text to graphics prompts. To create the work I have fed the AI with images of patent drawings for VR devices, with the outcomes being, in effect, my own abstracted patents of future technologies, created in part by an all-seeing AI predicting the potential futures of this technology.

The title references the 1982 short story *Burning Chrome* by William Gibson, where he refers to cyberspace as a "mass consensual hallucination". With the creation of the internet, the cost-of-living crisis and house prices skyrocketing, corporations have, for several years, been developing VR devices as a way of digitally expanding homes and workspaces, hoping that we will spend increasing amounts of time connected and hooked into the metaverse. Why take the long commute to an office when you can simply put on a pair of VR goggles, digitally transforming your environment into whatever your heart desires?

Towards A Consensual Hallucination is an exploration of commercially available AI tools, the future of the metaverse and the power of patents.

Below are installation views of the presentation, as well as several photos of the different drawings.



Towards A Consensual Hallucination, 2023
Installation view



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Towards A Consensual Hallucination I, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination II, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination III, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination IV, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination V, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination VI, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



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Installation view



Towards A Consensual Hallucination VII, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination VIII, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination IX, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination X, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination XI, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm



Towards A Consensual Hallucination XII, 2023
Black gel ink on 380gsm Hahnemuhle photo rag
29.7 x 21 cm