Ali Eslami – CV

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Ali Eslami is a Dutch-Iranian Artist based in Amsterdam. His work deals with long-term, practice-based research that builds and grows through speculative thinking and world-building.
His work engages and plays with temporal and spatial investigations of memory, computation, human cognition, and emotions—often informed by non-Western philosophical frameworks, such as Suhrawardi's Illuminationism.
This line of inquiry results in forms of poetic engineering that seek the potential lying between the real and the unreal.
His engineering background and passion for video games nurtured an obsession with cybernetics and computation and continue to build his curiosity towards the shifting roles of form and function that create virtual worlds.
He works across various mediums, including VR, Interactive Simulation, film, writing, installation, and performance lectures.
Eslami is an alumnus of the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (2021–23) and a visiting Tutor of Geo-Design in Design Academy Eindhoven. His work has received awards including the IDFA DocLab Award for Best Immersive Non-fiction (2016), the Golden Calf for Best Interactive (2020, with Mamali Shafahi), and the Cremer Prize from LWL-Museum Münster (2024) and Wendy-Gutman Prize (2025).

Education

2021-23	Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, NL
2020	Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Guest resident, Amsterdam, NL
2010-14	Bachelor of Civil Engineering, Zanjan National University, Zanjan, Iran

Selected Exhibitions, Screenings and Performances

2027

“ESHRAQ – The First Three Chapters”, Exhibition, Videonale, Bonn, Germany (Group)

2026

“ESHRAQ – The Game”, Interactive Simulation, IDFA Doclab, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Exhibition, TecArt Festival, Rotterdam, NL (Group)
“Live Coding Sessions: Narrative Spaces”, AudioVisual Performance, IDFA Het Documentaire Paviljoen, Amsterdam, NL

2025

“Emerging Exits”, Exhibition, Diogenes Bunker, Arnhem, NL (Group)
“Nerd_Funk: a 7-year odyssey”, Exhibition, MU hybrid artspace, Eindhoven, NL (Solo)
“Homā’s Phantom”, Exhibition, Van Gogh Museum “Vincent on Friday” event, Amsterdam, NL (Group)

2024

“Cremer Prize 2024”, Video Installation, LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster, Germany (Solo)
“Homā’s Phantom”, Interactive Installation, Next-Level Festival, Dortmund, Germany (Group)
“Fog of War”, VR Exhibition, IDFA Het Documentaire Paviljoen, Amsterdam,NL (Curator)
“Play of Marbles”, Film Program, IDFA Het Documentaire Paviljoen, Amsterdam,NL (Curator)
“A Stretch of Time”, Screening, Wuhan Photography Art Center, Wuhan, China (Group)
“Line of Sight”, Screening, International Film Festival Rotterdam , Rotterdam, NL

2023

“Homā’s Phantom”, Interactive Installation, REBOOT: Pioneering Digital Art, Het Nieuw Instituut, Rotterdam, NL (Group)
“Line of Sight”, Video Installation, Prints, Publication, Rijksakademie Open Studios, Amsterdam, NL (Solo)
“Line of Sight”, Screening, Sara’s Gallery, New York, USA (Group)
“False Mirror” , Screening, Art in the Age of Metaverse, De Balie, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”. VR Experience in 2 chapters, LEV Festival, Madrid, Spain (Group)
“A Stretch of Time”, Screening and VR Experience, Inter Arts Center, Malmo, Sweden (Group)

2022

“A Stretch of Time”, Video Installation and Sculpture, Rijksakademie Open Studios, Amsterdam, NL (Solo)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Installation, Rijksakademie Open Studios, Amsterdam, NL
“A Stretch of Time”, Screening, IDFA Festival paradocs section , Amsterdam, NL

“Nerd_Funk”, VR Experience in 2 chapters, Sonar Festival, Barcelona, Spain (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Experience in 2 chapters, CTM Festival, Berlin, Germany (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Experience in 2 chapters, Melkweg Expo, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, Screening, Sumac Space, Florence, Italy (Group)
“Recept”, Screening, Utrecht down under, Utrecht, NL (Group)

2021

“False Mirror – Eclipse”, VR Installation, Hybrid Online, TETEM, Enschede, NL (Solo)
“False Mirror – Eclipse”, Screening, Website, Hybrid Online, Dutch Design Awards Showcase, Eindhoven, NL (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Installation with 2 chapters, Patty Morgan Gallery, Amsterdam, NL (Solo)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Installation with 2 chapters, Nederlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, VR Installation with 2 chapters, Geneva International Film Festival, Geneva, Switzerland (Group)

2020

“False Mirror – Eclipse”, VR Performance, Website, IDFA Doclab, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, Online VR Performance, We Are Public, online
“False Mirror”, Video showcase, MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, US (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, Video Essay, Online, IMPAKT Festival, Utrecht, NL (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, Online VR Performance, Meta Marathon, Dusseldorf, Germany (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Installation with 2 chapters, Nederlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, Online Exhibition, Impossible-bodies Festival, Den Bosch, NL (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, Online Exhibition, CPH:Dox Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark (Group)
“Nerd_Funk”, VR Experience in 2 chapters, Ambulante Film Festival, CDMX, Mexico (Group)

2019

“Nerd_Funk”, VR Installation with 2 chapters, IDFA Doclab, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, VR Installation, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, NL (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, VR Installation, Museumnacht Amsterdam, VondelCS, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“Sacred Hill”, VR Installation, Nederlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Experience, The Overkill Festival, Enschede, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Performance, Unpackaging 3Packagedeal, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Performance, Mutek Montreal, Montreal, Canada (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Performance, Sensorium Festival, Bratislava, Slovakia (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Experience and Performance, Getxophoto Festival, Bilbao, Spain (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Experience and Performance, Amaze Festival, Berlin, Germany (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Experience, Ambulante Film Festival, CDMX, Mexico (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Experience, Galerie Cinema, Paris, France (Group)
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Nexus Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (Group)

2018

“False Mirror”, VR Experience, IDFA Doclab, Amsterdam, NL (Group)
“False Mirror”, VR Performance, Eindhoven Film Festival, Eindhoven, NL (Group)
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Ambulante Film Festival, CDMX, Mexico (Group)
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, War on Screen Festival, Paris, France (Group)
“Snow VR”, VR Experience, WoW Masquerade West, Amsterdam, NL (Group)

2017

“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Global Health Film Festival, London, UK
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Montreal, Canada
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Bergen Film Festival, Bergen, Norway
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Paris Virtual Film Festival, Paris, France
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Sheffield DocFest, Sheffield, UK
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Kaleidoscope VR Showcase Vol 2
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, SXSW Virtual Cinema, Austin, USA
“Snow VR”, VR Experience, IndieCade Showcase at E3 Expo, Los Angeles, USA

2016

“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, IDFA Festival, Amsterdam, NL
“DeathTolls Experience”, VR Experience, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, NL
“Snow VR”, VR Experience, Todaysart Festival, The Hague, NL (Group)
“Snow VR”, VR Experience, Mutek VR Salon, Montreal, Canada (Group)

Awards, Commissions, Residencies

2026	Residency – MAKE Eindhoven, supported by Mondriaan Fund
2025	Prize – Inaugural Wendy Gutman Award 2025 from SEC Foundation NL
2024	Prize - Cremer Prize 2024 – Acquisition and Presentation of work at LWL-Museum Münster as part of Cremer Collection
	Residency – Foreign Objekt, Deep objekt research study group w/ Reza Negarestani
2023	Commission – REBOOT exhibition by LI-MA and Het Nieuwe Instituut
2020	Award - Golden Calf best Interactive for “Nerd_Funk”
2019	Grant – Nederlands Film Fonds x IDFA doclab for “Nerd_Funk”
	Commission – “Big Air with go”, VR installation for Nike × Zalando, shown at Melt Festival
2018	Residency – CPH:Lab, Copenhagen, Denmark
	Grant - 3Package Deal, Amsterdam fonds voor de kunst
2016	Award - IDFA Doclab’s Best Immersive non-fiction for “DeathTolls Experience”
	Residency - Age of Wonderland, Baltan Laboratories, Eindhoven, NL

Activities

2025-26	Visiting Tutor, Design Academy Eindhoven, Masters Geodesign, Eindhoven, NL
	Selection Committee, Rijksakademie new director position, Amsterdam, NL
2024	Freelance Tutor, Sandberg Institute, Masters Design, Amsterdam, NL
2020-24	Program Advisor and Co-curator, STRP Festival, Eindhoven, NL
2019-22	Program Advisor, IDFA Doclab, Amsterdam, NL
2022	Jury Member, Netherlands Film Festival, Utrecht, NL
2019	Jury Member, goEast Film Festival VR Competition, Wiesbaden, Germany
2018	Jury Member, IDFA Doclab’s Competition for Immersive non-fiction, Amsterdam, NL
	Participant, IDFA’s Cross-Media Forum, Amsterdam, NL
2013	Audiovisual Performance, Temp-Illusion,TADAEX Festival, Tehran, Iran

Selected Talks, Conferences, Workshops, Writings

2026	“Divine Time #1”, Online Talk, Gnaration, Braga, PT
	“Understanding Microclimates by Will Scarlett”,New Centre for Research and Practice, Guest Instructor, Online
2025	Immersive Arts UK, Speaker, Bradford, UK
2024	Sandberg Institute, Artist Talk, Amsterdam, NL
	Münster Lectures, Artist Talk, Kunstakademie Münster, Germany
	Artist Talk, LWL Museum Münster, Germany
2023	“Agents in Play”, Artist Talk, Inter Arts Center, Lund University, Malmo, Sweden
	“Telepresence Conference”, Artist Talk, Kunstakademie Münster, Münster, Germany
	Mentor, FilmForward, Amsterdam, NL
	“Art in the Age of Metaverse”, Artist Talk and Panel Discussion, De Balie, Amsterdam, NL
2022	“New Tech – Manufacturing the Truth?”, Panel Discussion, IDFA Industry, Amsterdam, NL
	“Notes on a Festival”, Writing, IDFA Official Publication, Amsterdam, NL
	Artist Talk, St. Joost Academy of Art & Design, Breda, NL
2021	“Virtual World-Building”, MIT University Hacking XR, Boston, USA
	Artist Talk, Hogeschool van Amsterdam Multimedia Design, Amsterdam, NL
	Artist Talk, University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria
	Artist Talk, Netherlands Film Academy Master of Film, Amsterdam, NL
2020	“False Mirror VR”, Online VR Lecture, Johns Hopkins University, New York, USA
	“False Mirror VR”, Online VR Lecture, The University of Denver, Denver, USA
2019	“False Mirror VR”, VR Lecture, Salwa Foundation, Amsterdam, NL
	Artist Talk, The Hmm, Amsterdam, NL
	“Behind the Net”, Workshop, Artez University Interaction Design, Arnhem, NL

	Panel Discussion, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
2018	“VR Speculative Design”, Workshop, UVA, Master Digital Design, Amsterdam, NL
2017	“Intro to VR Development”, Workshop, Tumo center for creative technologies, Yerevan, Armenia
	“Why Virtual Reality?!”, Panel Discussion, Forum Des Images, Paris, France
	“VR Symposium“, Royal College of Arts, London, UK
	“Join The Resistance“, Panel Discussion, Sheffield DocFest, Sheffield, UK
	“VR Production Workflows”, Tehran ACM Siggraph, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran
2016	“VR Masterclass”, Workshop, Artez University, Arnhem, NL
	Artist Talk, IDFA Doclab Interactive Conference, Amsterdam, NL
	“VR Development and Design”, Artist Talk, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, NL
	“VR as a new Medium”, Workshop, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, NL
	“Introduction to VR”, Workshop, STRP Festival, Eindhoven, NL
	Workshop, VPRO Medialab’s Meet the Makers, The Hague, NL
2014	“Expanded Reality”, Artist Talk, Re-Shape Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Nominations

2021, Dutch Design Awards
2020, IFFR Director’s Forum Award
2020, Geneva International film festival
2019, IDFA Festival competition: Immersive nonfiction
2018, One World Media Award
2017, Sheffield DocFest
2017, SXSW Virtual Cinema
2017, Lumen Prize Shortlist
2016, Kantar’s Information is Beautiful Awards