



*Algonauts Workshop — July 19, 2019 — MIT*

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# Deep generative networks as models of the visual system

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brain



world



```
t = 0
```

```
while dead==False:
```

```
    thought[t] = f(thought[:t],  
                    world[:t],  
                    plans[:t])
```

```
    if thought[t] is fatal:  
        dead = True
```

```
    else:
```

```
        t += 1
```

behavior



**infer the human algorithm**

What should the human (visual) algorithm do?

Arbitrary queries over representations

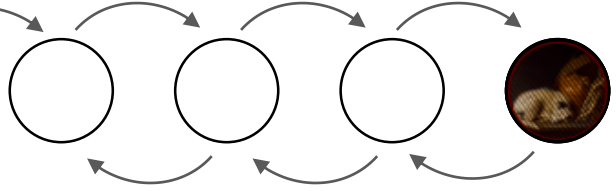
Does the dog have floppy ears?  
What is the point?



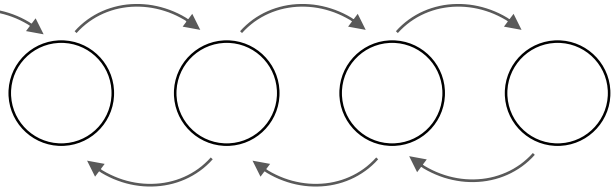
A dog is there.

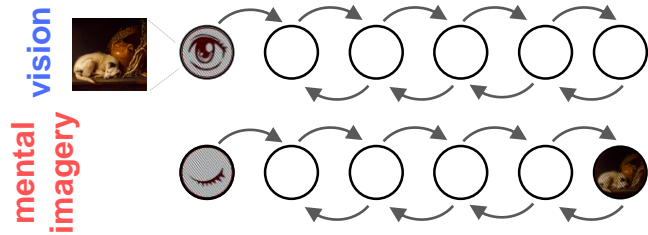
*"clamped"*

mental  
imagery



vision





Breedlove, St-Yves, Naselaris et al., *in rev.*

HOW TO TEST NETWORK AGAINST HUMAN BRAINS?

# An experiment:

Cue

Picture

“ababie”



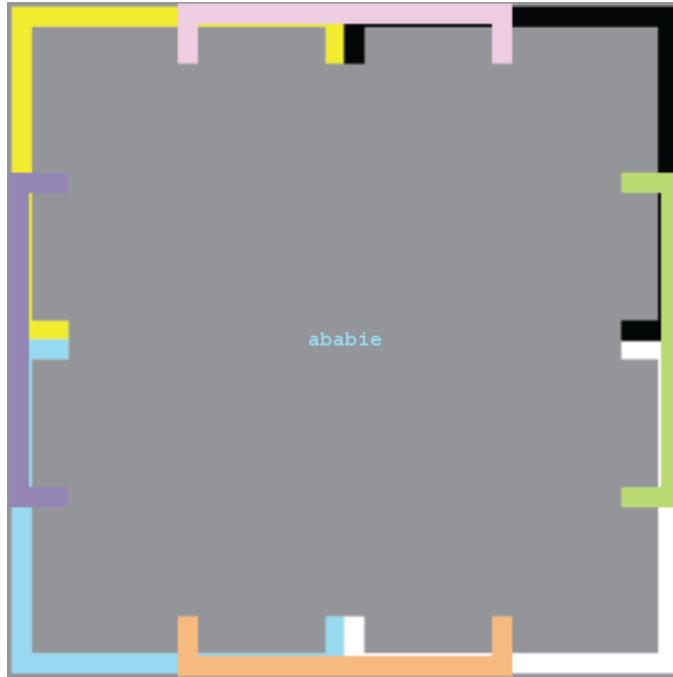








**Imagine  
objects**

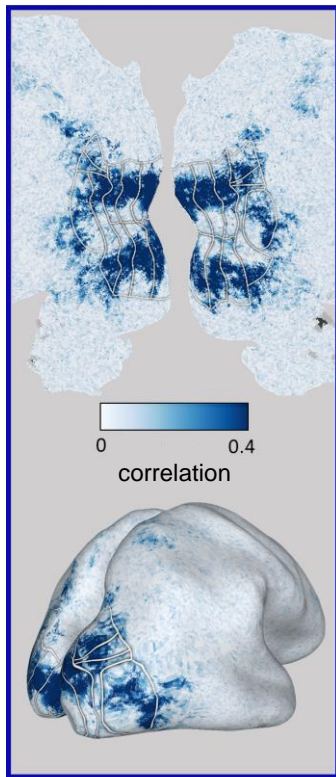






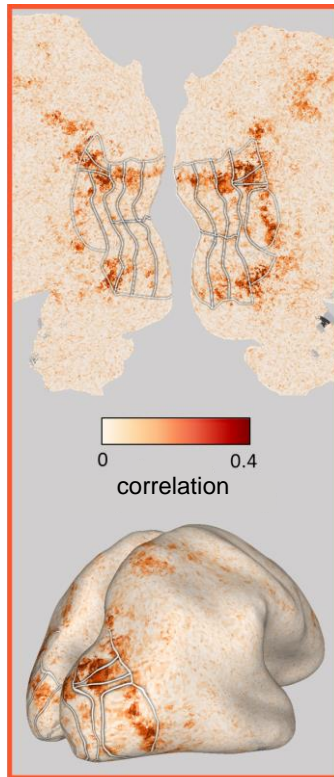
# Prediction accuracy maps for visual and imagery encoding models

**Visual** encoding model  
(vEM) predicting voxel-  
wise brain activity during  
**visual** task



vEM

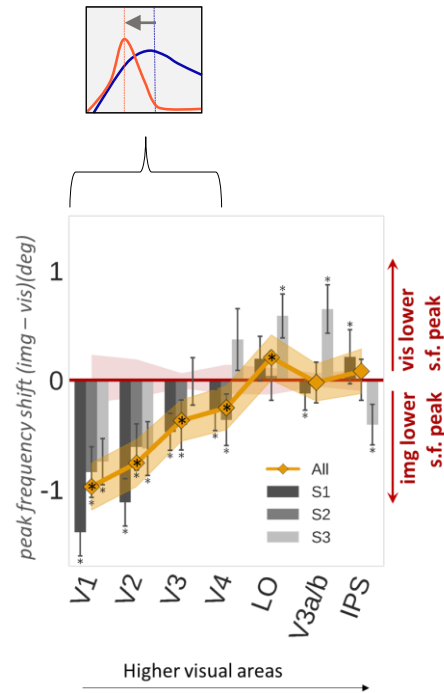
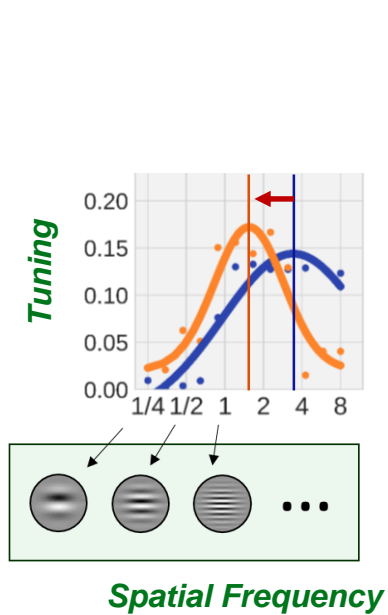
**Imagery** encoding model  
(iEM) predicting voxel-  
wise brain activity during  
**imagery** task



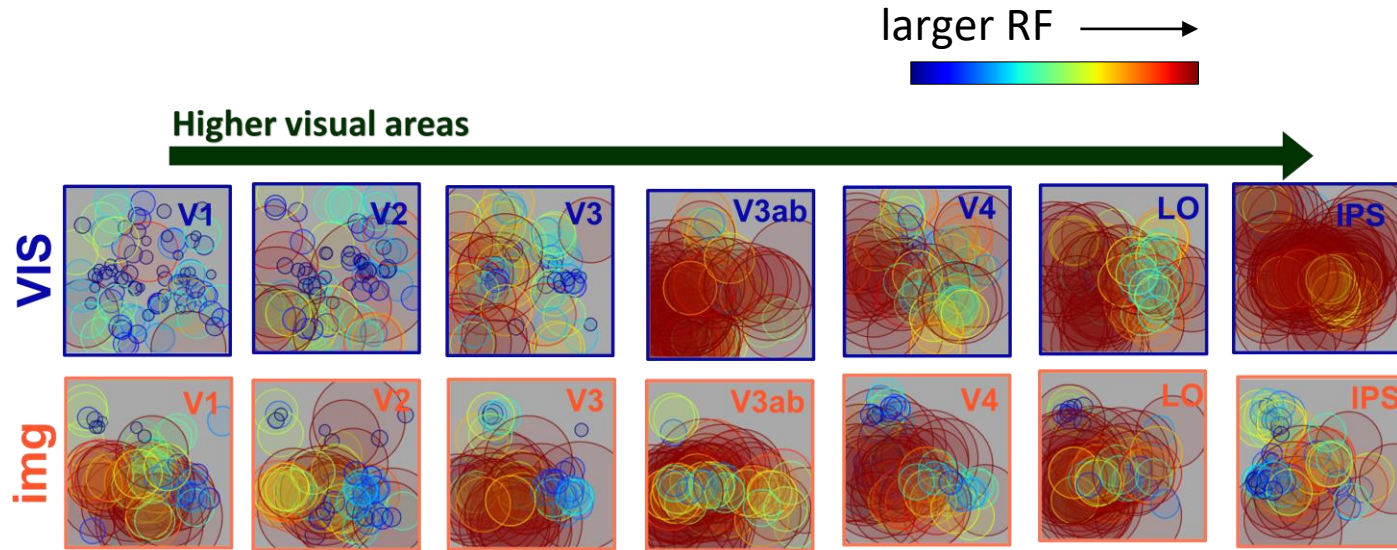
iEM



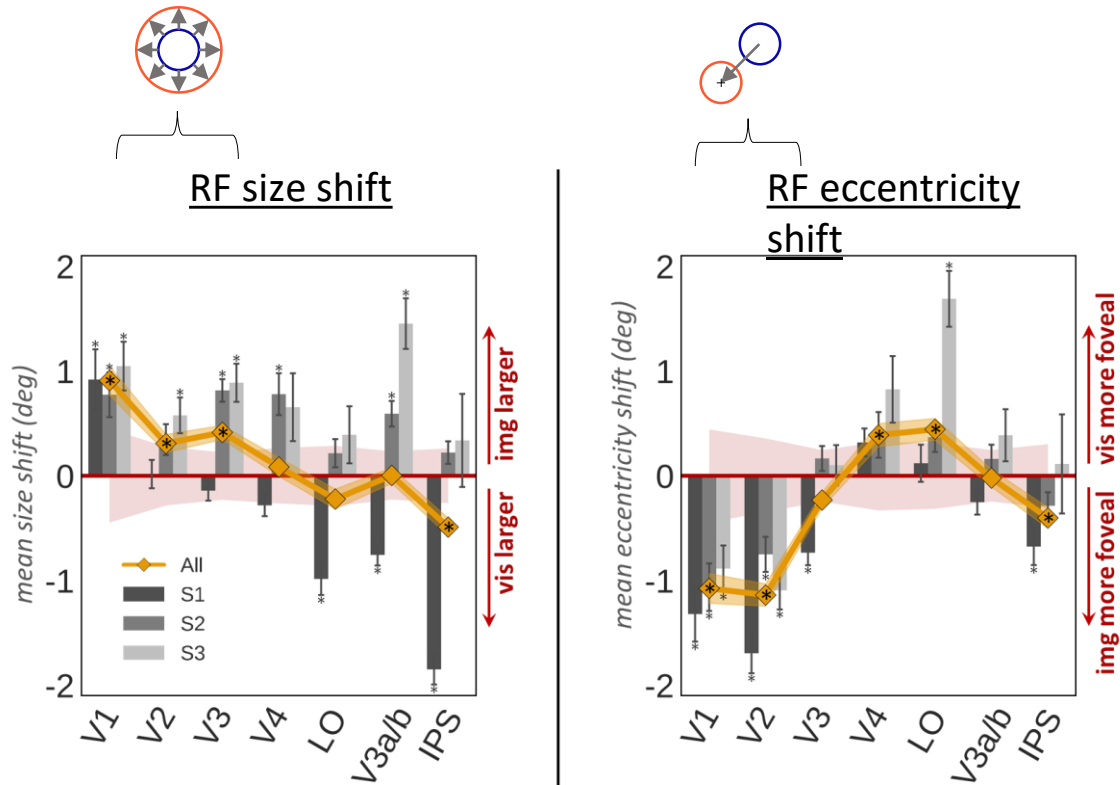
# Tuning to **seen** and **imagined** spatial frequencies



# Receptive fields for **seen** and **imagined** stimuli

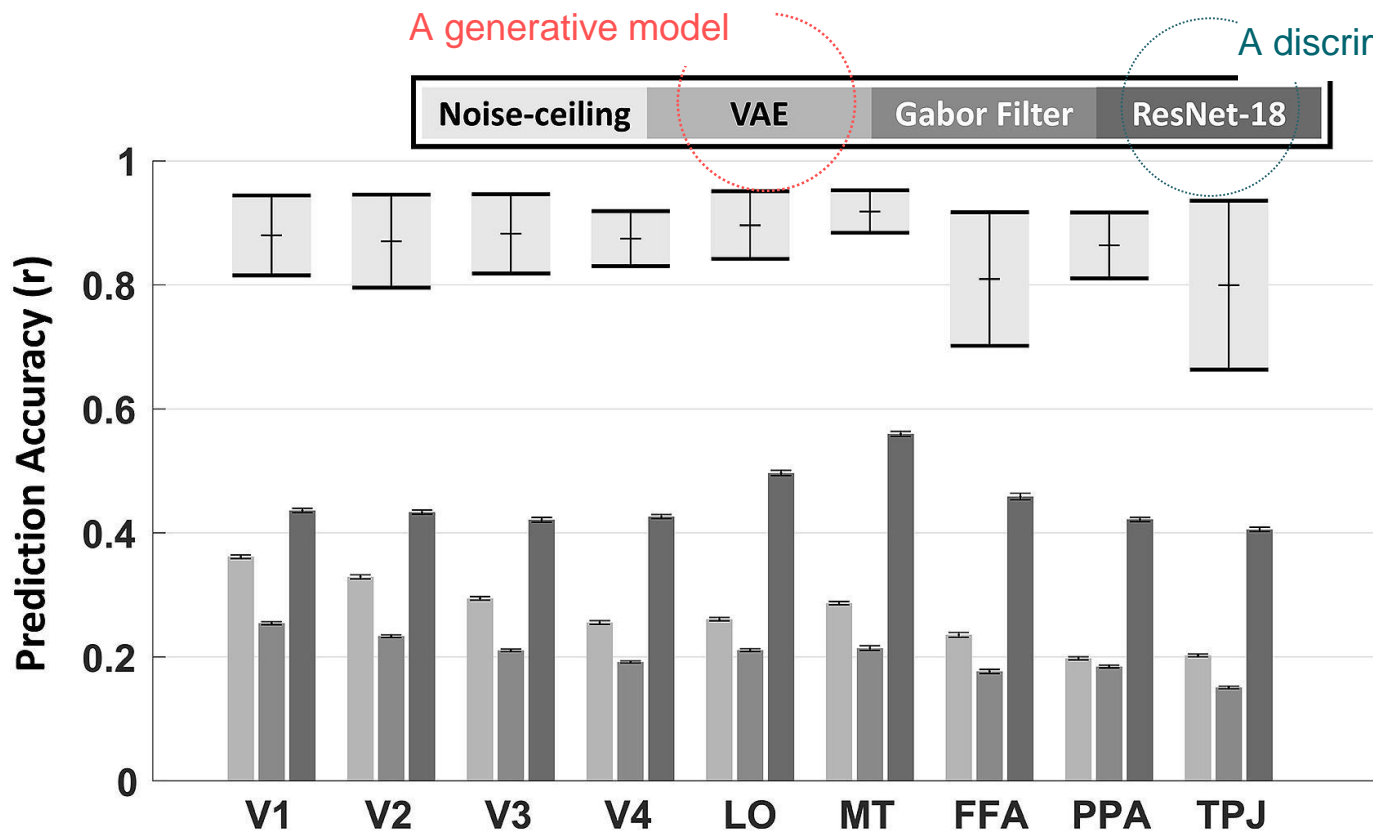


# Receptive fields for **seen** and **imagined** stimuli



A DEEP GENERATIVE MODEL CAN  
PREDICT DIFFERENCES IN  
ENCODING OF SEEN AND MENTAL  
IMAGES

BUT IS THERE A DEEP GENERATIVE  
MODEL THAT CAN ACCURATELY  
PREDICT ACTIVITY DURING VISION OF  
NATURAL SCENES?



A DCNN-based encoding model yields more accurate predictions of brain activity in all visual areas than an encoding model based on a state-of-the-art deep generative network.

SO IS THAT A “NO” ON THE GENERATIVE MODEL  
IDEA?

PERHAPS THE “RIGHT” GENERATIVE MODEL IS HARD  
TO LEARN FROM IMAGE DATA ALONE.

MIGHT WE INFER IT DIRECTLY FROM BRAIN  
RESPONSES?

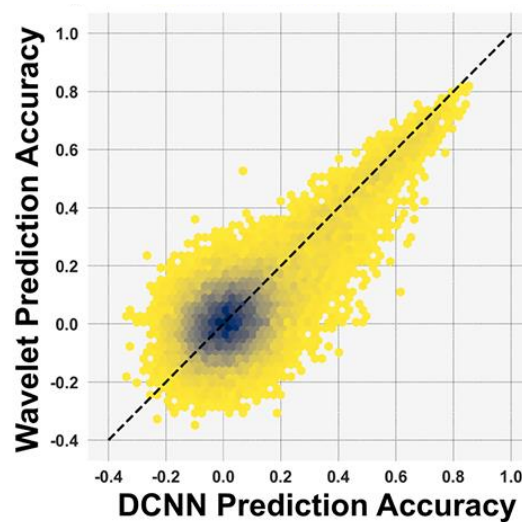


Natural Scenes Dataset

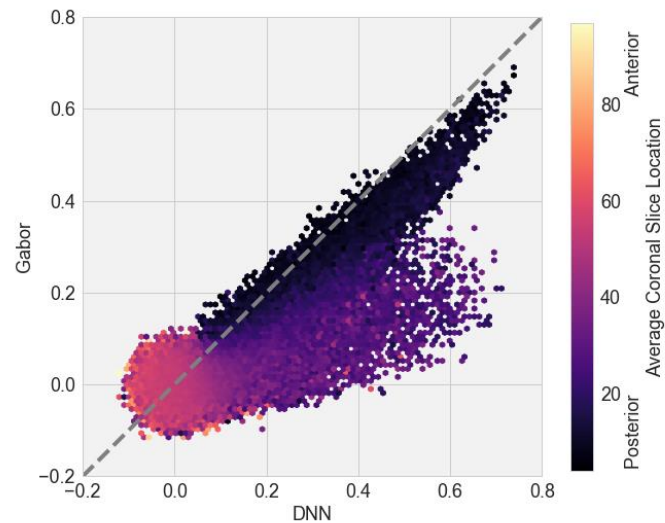


IT'S NOT YET CLEAR IF THIS WILL WORK.  
BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT MORE DATA REALLY HELPS

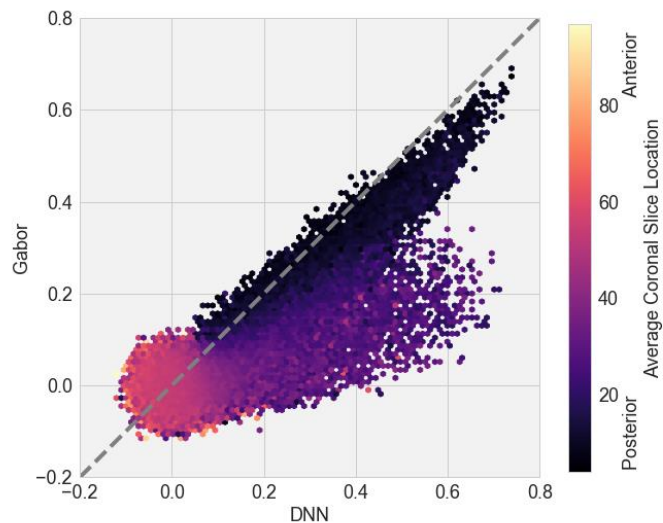
DCNN- vs. Gabor-  
based encoding models,  
~1.5K data samples  
from vim-1



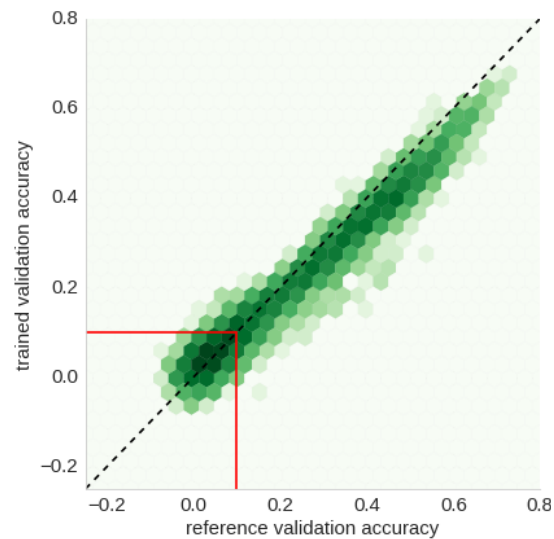
DCNN- vs. Gabor-based  
encoding models, ~5K data  
samples from the (incomplete)  
NSD



DCNN- vs. Gabor-based  
encoding models, ~5K data  
samples from the (incomplete)  
NSD



Data-driven vs. DCNN-based  
encoding models, ~5K data  
samples from the (incomplete)  
NSD



# TAKE-HOME

THE VISUAL SYSTEM CAN POSE  
AND ANSWER MANY DIFFERENT  
QUERIES. SO SHOULD OUR  
MODELS.

A DEEP GENERATIVE MODEL CAN  
PREDICT DIFFERENCES IN  
ENCODING OF SEEN AND MENTAL  
IMAGES...

# TAKE-HOME

...BUT CANNOT PREDICT RESPONSES TO  
NATURAL SCENES AS ACCURATELY AS  
MODELS BASED ON A DISCRIMINATIVE  
NETWORK.

WE NEED BETTER THEORY. AND MORE  
DATA.

MORE DATA IS ON THE WAY.

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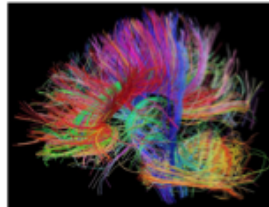
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# NSD Collaborators

- **Kendrick Kay**, Assistant Professor, CMRR
- **Thomas Naselaris**, Assistant Professor, Medical University of South Carolina
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- **Yihan Wu**, Graduate Student of Wilma Koutstaal, CCS
- **Ben Hutchinson**, Assistant Professor, University of Oregon
- **Ariel Rokem**, Senior Data Scientist, University of Washington







**CCN**

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C O M P U T A T I O N A L  
N E U R O S C I E N C E

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