

The enchanted garden

Description

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Iâ??m revisiting my post #176 Morphic fields 28 December 2013. In that I continued the theme of *enchantment*. One of the possibilities or byproducts of enchantment is that inert, inanimate objects bear the possibility that they are alive, similar to how human beings and animals are alive: statues come to life, trees salute you, a babbling brook speaks.

In an enchanted world, objects can shift category from the inert to the mobile. This transformation may take place in everyday experience, recollection, prospect, fantasy or imagination. So enchantment invokes possibilities as well as actualities.

Some enchanted places display â??matter out of place.â?• In her famous book *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas showed that nothing is alien, strange or objectionable in itself. Itâ??s when we find it in the â??wrongâ?• place, e.g. a caterpillar in the salad, that we evince alarm or disgust.

Something similar pertains when we identify objects as *monstrous*. A monster crosses categories. Features and attributes are in the wrong place: a frog appears the size of a house, stones fly, a doll grows fangs. As attested by countless fantasy stories and films, the enchanted easily transitions to horror.

As well as delighting the sense, enchanted things and places are in the company of monsters, the uncanny, the absurd and the surreal. Here are a few attempts to invoke dubious â??enchantmentsâ?• with AI video processing using Runway.

A garden most fowl

This is our garden. The previous owner rescued this terracotta plant pot from a builderâ??s skip. This robust effigy of a hen-grouse-pheasant now guards a garden path from its perch on a stone wall adjacent to a burn.

The setting needs no further â??enchantening,â?• but the stone sentinel provides a good subject for exploring AI digital animation.



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I prompted Runway: â??create a video where the camera pulls back from the terracotta chicken plant pot, revealing more of the garden as the chicken spreads its wings, flutters, and takes flight.â?•

After this first draft I added the prompt: â??Please create another version of the video that retains the terracotta appearance of the chicken, as if a stop-frame animation in the style of Ray Harryhausen.â?•

Unhappy with this Aardman-style rendering I invoked something more sinister: â??Please revise so that the bird looks menacing and threatening in its form and movement. The camera pulls back as the bird takes flight to reveal a flowerless post-apocalyptic garden setting.â?• Here are two versions of the platformâ??s creation.

With this exercise I am succumbing (in-expertly) to the cinematic trope of literalising enchantment, as if you need to see and believe in such transformations for a place to be truly enchanting.

Reference

- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.

Category

1. Artificial Intelligence
2. Nature

Tags

1. animation

2. bird
3. garden
4. video

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