MURAT ÜLKER

LEADER SHIP

IN TRANSFORMATION

From Local to Global

In Rumi Dreams, Refik Anadol Studio reimagines the poetic legacy of the Masnavi through a multilingual, multidimensional mapping of meaning. Drawing on twenty-one distinct translations—ranging from Persian and Arabic to Swedish, Uyghur, and Urdu—the studio transforms centuries of spiritual verse into a shared visual and sonic experience. Rather than relying on word-level embeddings, the team deployed sentence-level representations generated by advanced multilingual language models. Each sentence was encoded as a 128-dimensional vector, enabling nuanced interpretations of context and poetic rhythm across diverse linguistic structures. Because the model was trained on multiple languages, it clusters semantically related sentences closely in vector space, regardless of their original language. In this way, Rumi Dreams highlights the underlying unity that transcends linguistic differences, tracing echoes of meaning across time, translation, and culture.

To make these high-dimensional structures perceptible, the studio used dimensionality reduction techniques—first Principal Component Analysis (PCA), then Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection (UMAP). This process compressed each 128-dimensional sentence embedding them into six dimensions. Of these, three were used for spatial positioning, guiding the layout of points in a virtual universe, while the remaining three were mapped to RGB color space, giving each sentence a distinct visual identity. As a result, the latent semantic patterns of Rumi's Masnavi emerged both as clusters of meaning and as vibrant data universes— fields of thought rendered as subtle gradients of color. Within these fields, viewers can explore how phrases from various cultures and languages converge into shared spiritual and emotional frequencies. Through this cartography of the ineffable, Rumi Dreams gestures toward a universal poetic intelligence—one that flows across boundaries and vocabularies, reassembling itself anew in the dreamlife of machines.

Visual design by Refik Anadol