

Positions

Associate Research Scientist, Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute, Columbia University June 2023 –

I work at the intersection of neuroscience and AI (Neuro-AI). We build encoding models using modern machine learning and deep neural networks that predict neural activity to better understand computations in the brain. These models can also serve as “digital twins” on which we perform in silico experiments to reveal the selectivity of different units. We also are building state of the art decoding models to reconstruct perceived stimuli from brain activity. In other work, I study how the visual system combines top-down and attention modulations with bottom-up and lateral connectivity to efficiently group visual input into objects and reveal mechanisms of face perception.

Part-time Faculty, The New School for Social Research Aug 2022-
I teach Cognitive Neuroscience to the graduate students in the psychology department. I am also contributing to create a new **Neuro-AI design lab at Parsons Schools of design**.

Senior Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Stony Brook University Sep 2020 – May 2023

I pursued two lines of research. First on leveraging recent developments in deep auto-encoder models to build brain-inspired object-based attention models for multi-object recognition, detection, and visual reasoning. Second on modeling visual-motor principles in superior colliculus (a midbrain area for planning eye-movements) to predict fixation behavior and neural activity during different tasks such as scene viewing and reading and to verify these predictions through collaboration with a neurophysiology lab.

Data Scientist, Refinitiv Innovation Lab, Refinitiv, New York, NY Jan 2018 – Aug 2020
(formerly Thomson Reuters Financial and Risk business)

At Refinitiv labs I was part of the team building prototypes to test and validate business hypotheses with customers and to identify product/growth opportunities enabled by AI and machine learning. Also planned and served as the technical contributor for hackathons and other outreach efforts to showcase our new prototypes to customers.

Education

Ph.D. in Cognitive Science, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 2017
Advanced Graduate Certificate in Cognitive Neuroscience
Thesis title: *Deep Learning in Attention Networks*

Designing experiments and building deep neural network models of visual attention to predict eye-movements and study the neuro-cognitive mechanisms underlying the perception and behavior and for incorporating such features to build better ML and deep learning models.

M.A. in Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 2014
Thesis title: *Explaining the Global Effect: A population model of saccade programming in the Superior Colliculus*

M.S. in Computer Science, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 2012

Graduate Coursework in Electrical Engineering, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 2010

B.S. in Electrical Engineering (Control and System), Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran 2009

Selected Publications ([Google Scholar Link](#))

Adeli, H., Minni, S., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2025). Transformer brain encoders explain human high-level visual responses. In *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Spotlight (top %3)*

Hwang, E., Adeli, H., Guo, W., Luo, A., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2025). In Silico Mapping of Visual Categorical Selectivity Across the Whole Brain. In *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*

- Yu, M., Nan, M., **Adeli, H.**, Prince, J. S., Pyles, J. A., Wehbe, L., ... & Luo, A. F. (2025). Meta-Learning an In-Context Transformer Model of Human Higher Visual Cortex. In *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*
- Feng, P., **Adeli, H.**, Guo, W., Cheng, F., Hwang, E., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2025). Towards Interpretable Visual Decoding with Attention to Brain Representations. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2509.23566*.
- Ahn, S., **Adeli, H.**, & Zelinsky, G. J. (2024). The attentive reconstruction of objects facilitates robust object recognition. *PLOS Computational Biology*, 20(6), e1012159.
- Adeli, H.**, Minni, S., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2023). Predicting brain activity using Transformers. *bioRxiv*, 2023-08.
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., & Zelinsky, G. J. (2023). A brain-inspired object-based attention network for multiobject recognition and visual reasoning. *Journal of Vision*, 23(5), 16-16.
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., Kriegeskorte, N., & Zelinsky, G. (2023). Affinity-based Attention in Self-supervised Transformers Predicts Dynamics of Object Grouping in Humans. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2306.00294*.
- Zelinsky, G. J., Chen, Y., Ahn, S., & **Adeli, H.** (2020). Changing perspectives on goal-directed attention control: The past, present, and future of modeling fixations during visual search. In *Psychology of learning and motivation* (Vol. 73, pp. 231-286). Academic Press.
- Adeli, H.**, Vitu, F., Zelinsky, G. J. (2017). A model of the superior colliculus predicts fixation locations during scene viewing and visual search. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 37(6), 1453-1467.
- Wei*, Z., **Adeli*, H.**, Zelinsky, G., Samaras, D., Hoai, M. (2016). Learned region sparsity and diversity also predicts visual attention. In *Neural Information Processing Systems (NIPS)* (pp. 1894-1902).
*Equal Contribution
- Adeli, H.**, & Zelinsky, G. (2018). Learning to attend in a brain-inspired deep neural network. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1811.09699*.
- Adeli, H.**, & Zelinsky, G. (2018). Deep-BCN: Deep Networks Meet Biased Competition to Create a Brain-Inspired Model of Attention Control. In *Proceedings of the IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Workshops* (pp. 1932-1942).

Selected Oral Presentations and Invited Talks

- Adeli, H.**, Flexible relational neural encoder architecture explains human high-level visual responses, at **Department of Systems and Computational Biology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine**. April 2025
- Adeli, H.**, Recurrent models optimized for face recognition exhibit representational dynamics resembling the primate brain. **SciFest at Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute**. September 2024.
- Adeli, H.**, Predicting brain activity using Transformers, at **Center for Theoretical Neuroscience, Columbia University**. August 2024.
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., Zelinsky, G., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2024). Object-based association fields for grouping and attention. **Vision Science Society Meeting (VSS)**, USA
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., Zelinsky, G., & Kriegeskorte, N. (2024). Three theories of object-based attention implemented in deep neural network models. at **Using deep networks to re-imagine object-based attention and perception symposium, Vision Science Society Meeting (VSS)**, USA
- Adeli, H.**, Minni, S., & Kriegeskorte, N. Predicting brain activity using Transformers, **Cognitive Computational Neuroscience Conference (CCN)**, 2023, Oxford, UK
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., Zelinsky, G., A brain-inspired object-based attention network for multi-object recognition and visual reasoning. **Vision Science Society Meeting (VSS) 2022**, USA
- Adeli, H.**, Ahn, S., Zelinsky, G., A brain-inspired object-based attention network for multi-object recognition and visual reasoning. **From Neuroscience to Artificially Intelligent Systems (NAISys) 2022**, CSHL, NY
- Adeli, H.**, Zelinsky, G., A Computational Biased Competition Model of Visual Attention using Deep Neural Networks, **Vision Sciences Society Meeting (VSS) 2016**, USA

Adeli, H., Zelinsky, G., Vitu, F., A model of saccade programming during scene viewing based on population averaging in the superior colliculus. Vision Sciences Society Meeting (VSS) 2015, USA

Selected Conference Proceedings and Poster Presentations

Adeli, H., Guo, W., Feng, P., Hwang, E., Cheng, F., & Kriegeskorte, N. NeuroAdapter: Visual Reconstruction with Masked Brain Representation. **Cognitive Computational Neuroscience Conference (CCN) 2025**, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Community & Educational Initiatives

Developed a Tutorial on **Computation as transformation of representational geometries** for the **Neuromatch NeuroAI** course with students from across the globe. 2024

Co-organized the **Using Deep Networks to Re-imagine Object-based Attention and Perception** symposium at VSS (2024) to better understand how the visual system forms meaningful, coherent object percepts. 2024

Mentored a group of students in the graduate data science program at Columbia University to develop **Generative Decoders of Visual Cortical Representations**. 2025

Teaching Experience

Cognitive Neuroscience (Graduate course), The New School for Social Research 2022-

General Psychology, (Undergraduate course), Pratt University 2024-

Research Methods and Writing in Psychology (Undergraduate course), Stony Brook University 2013
2017

Sensation and Perception (Undergraduate course), Stony Brook University 2016

Numerical Computations using MATLAB (Undergraduate Lab), Washington State University 2010

Linear Control Systems (Undergraduate Lab), Washington State University 2009

Awards

Second place in [Algonauts 2023 competition](#) on “How the Human Brain Makes Sense of Natural Scenes”. We built a state of the art model to predict neural activity in response to scenes. 2023

Outstanding Graduate Student Award, East Carolina University, NC 2012

Gold Medalist in 13th National Chemistry Olympiad, Tehran, Iran 2009

Skills

Neuro-AI: Encoding and decoding models of the brain, Object recognition, Attention mechanisms, Recurrent neural networks, Capsule networks, Encoder-decoder models, Generative models, Vision transformers

Programming: Python, MATLAB

Libraries: Pytorch, Torchvision, Transformer, Keras, Pandas, NumPy, Scikit-learn, Matplotlib, PIL

Cognitive Science: Designing and performing experiments to study human behavior (attention behavior, eye-tracking and visual cognition), Computational modeling and statistical analyses of behavior

Other: Public speaking, Scientific writing and communication