

# STIMMING

by Andrea Crespo

**Stimming** is a repetitive body movement that self-stimulates one or more senses in a regulated manner. Stimming is known in psychiatry as a "stereotypy", a continuous, purposeless movement.

Stimming is one of the symptoms listed by the [DSM IV](#) for [autism](#), although it is observed in about 10 percent of young children without autism. Many autistic children have no stims. Common forms of stimming among autistic people include hand flapping, body spinning or rocking, lining up or spinning toys or other objects, [echolalia](#), [perseveration](#), and repeating rote phrases.

There are many theories about the function of stimming, and the reasons for its increased incidence in autistic people. For [hyposensitive](#) people, it may provide needed nervous system arousal, releasing beta-endorphins. For [hypersensitive](#) people, it may provide a "norming" effect, allowing the person to control a specific sense, and is thus a soothing behavior.



**\*Disclaimer\***

Stims will be used as an extrapolation of certain subjectively experienced phenomena in a capitalist landscape (partially based on my personal exposure to stimming). This discussion is not intended for the purposes of defining or demeaning individuals on the autism spectrum. For those interested, this [blog](#) provides examples, anecdotes, and information produced by neurodiverse individuals rather than a medical discourse (which tends to flatten and pathologize the experiences of individuals living with ASD).

Stims are for everyone. A quick search of “stimming” on ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) discussion site [wrongplanet.net](http://wrongplanet.net) will yield anecdotal rather than medical discussions on stimming. One thread of interest described stimming as something that all people (neurotypicals) do, and not just those on the spectrum. Of course the participants agreed that the intensity of stimming and the ability for self-control is variable among different individuals. Another interesting point made on the forums is that of self-stimulation being displaced to objects rather than the body (for example, rubbing one’s cellphone case rather than one’s hands). Some stims are purely visual rather than tactile. One thread, for example, became a hub for sharing stimmy GIFs. Stims can be experienced through multiple pathways of perception, at times synaesthetically.

Stims are trance states without the visionary experience. Like a Hollywood remake of Paul Sharit’s repetitively droning [T.O.U.C.H.I.N.G.](#) Think S.T.I.M.M.I.N.G. Stims produce a “locked in” effect. In a YouTube [video](#), one man describes it as there being a “totality to it”, a sort of meditative absorption, tuning out all other extraneous perceptual or cognitive input. Affective states that emerge from stimming could easily be described as a state of “flow” or “being in the zone” except that they would likely be far more repetitive than the latter states allow for. That’s it, that’s it.

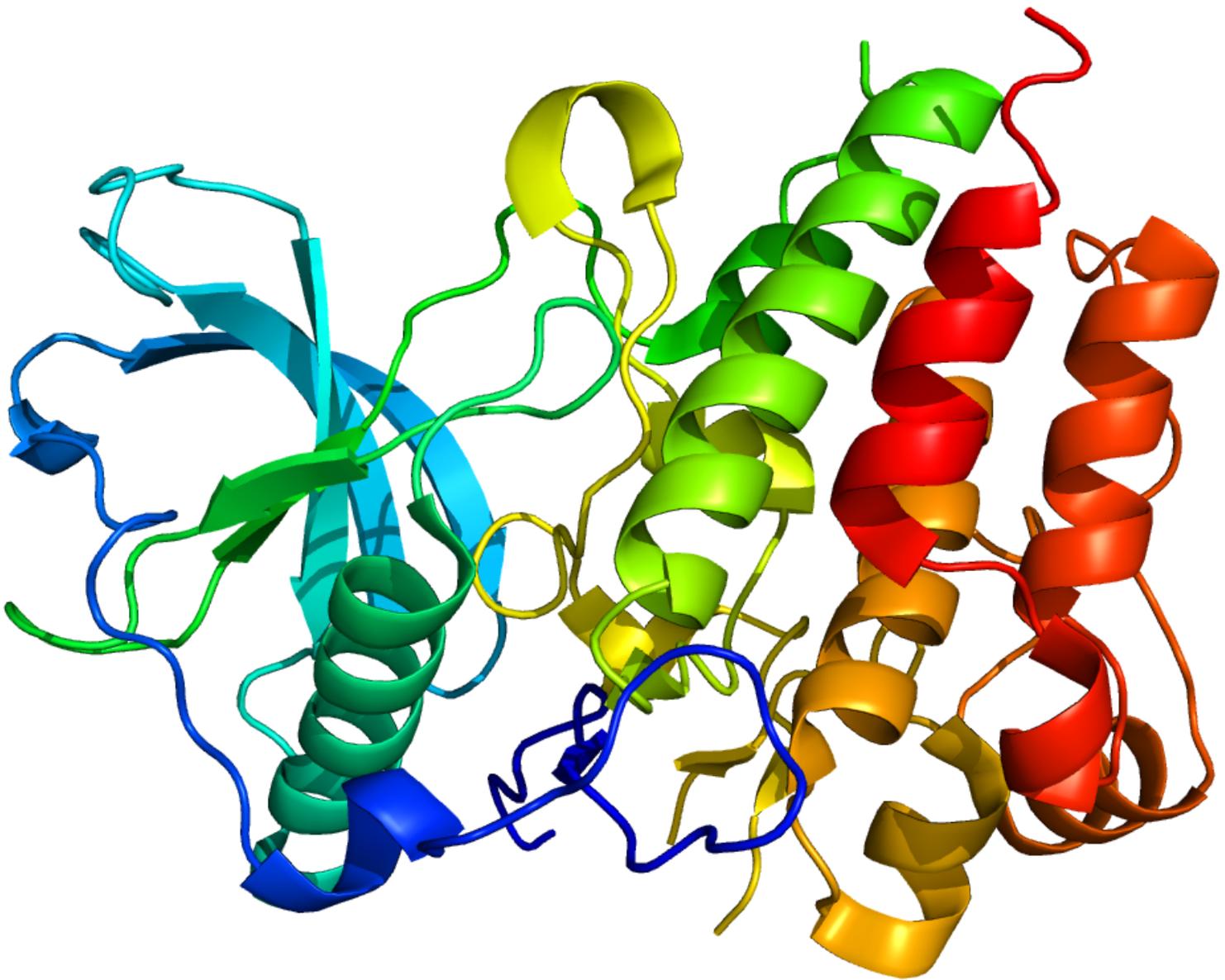
Stims are [basins of attraction](#). Timur Si-Qin writes “Not a balanced and harmonious nature, but rather whirlpools of temporary stability within a chaotic and disinterested maelstrom of fluids, informations, and genes.” in regard to the morphologies of corporate images. The subjective experience of stimming is like a microcosm of temporary stability, caught on loop. Replay, reboot, rehash... all while tantalizing our “instinctual and habitual affects”.

Stims are stimmy, and a good commodity is a stimmy commodity. Sure, an aestheticized commodity is a given in this day and age, but aesthetic experiences that can endlessly reiterate themselves are even better. Like nicotine-free e-cigarettes, objects with stimmy qualities do not need biochemical aids in order incite repetitive behaviors and their ensuing cascades of neuro-bliss.





Stims are regulatory  
They placate the senses  
Calm the mind: Zen



Stims circumscribe affects  
Lock them into droning  
Predictability and  
Excitability.



## **Stims are excitatory.**

What's more exciting than a motion graphics infused experience? That brief moment of affective orchestration when the logo does that cool thing. That commercial jingle that incites hyperactivity.



Stims are produced by immaterial **labor** as much as material **labor**.

Not all stims are object-induced.

Service with a smile, performative one-liners.

What spells giddy upwellings as much as affective **labor**?



Stims  
lubricate the  
experience  
economy.  
Some  
experiences  
are hard to  
replicate, so  
you just  
replicate the  
ones that  
aren't...

**Ad**  
**Nauseum**



Stims propagate attention economies too!

Buzzfeed listicles

Stimmy GIFs

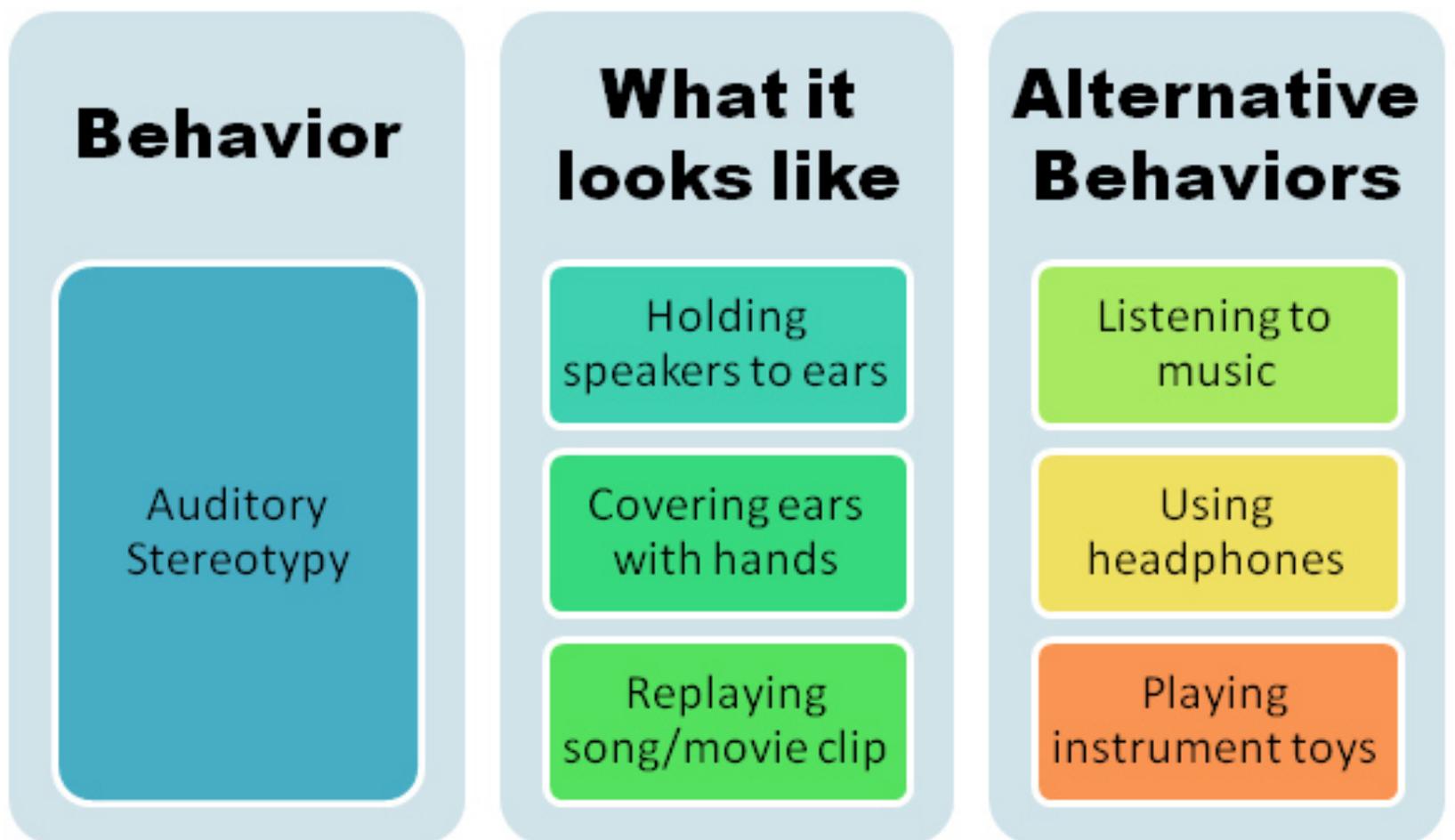
Modulate eyeball traffic

(GIFs might just be the hallmark stim of our era)

Good enough for me, good

Stims divert attention like black holes

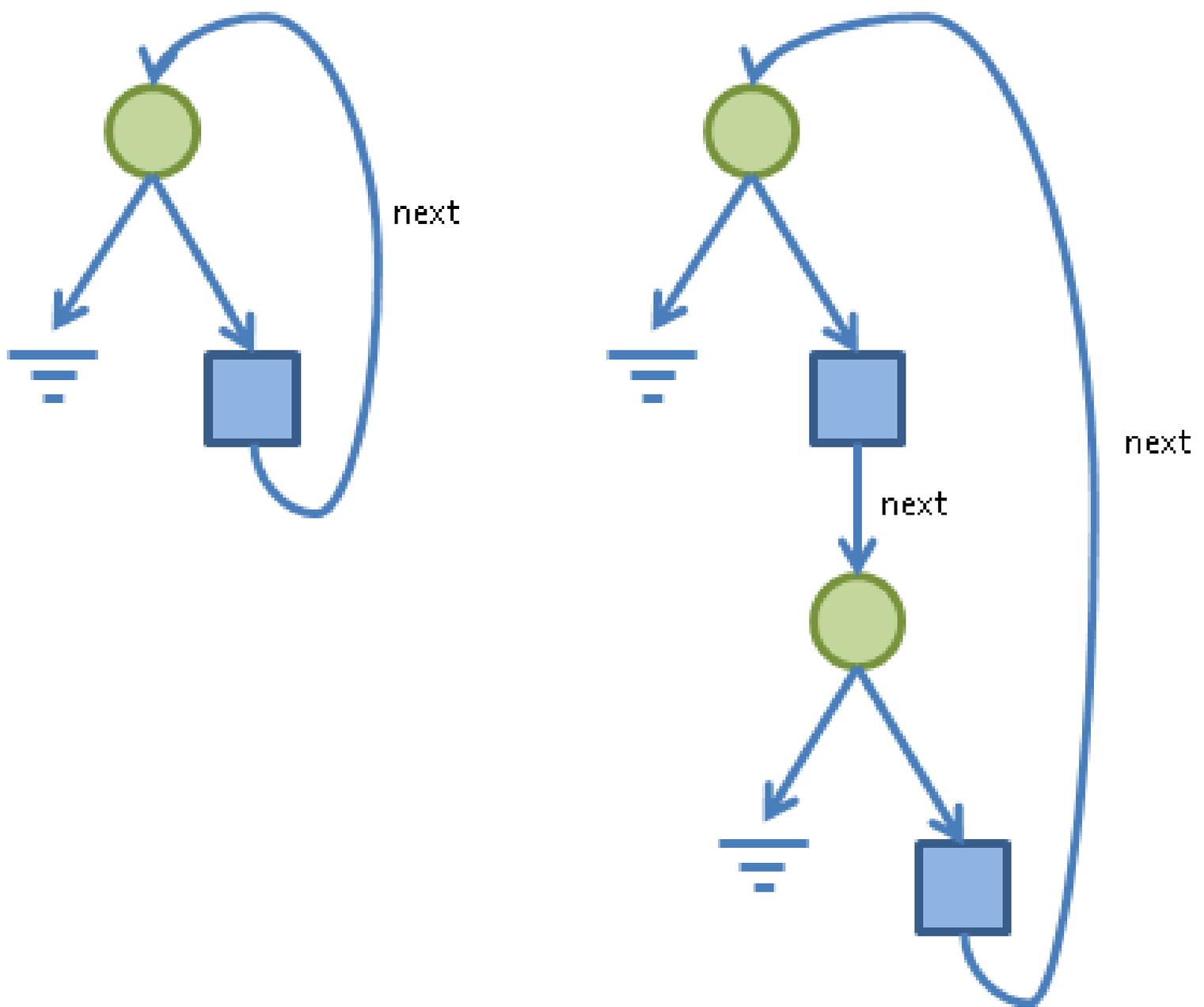
Attractors.....



Stims can be aural and musical. User-interface feedback, click click: the tune that follows the progress bar...



Stims have haptic moments too. Slide to **unlock**, **pinch** and **zoom**. That sweater you can't stop rubbing. That cellphone case you can't stop **fondling**. So **gratifying**.



## Stims are like:

Vacuous moments, like reality television in slow motion with an aural accompaniment, reaffirming the moment. Oh no she didn't.

Yes she did, watch it again.

DVRs should be called stim-catchers.

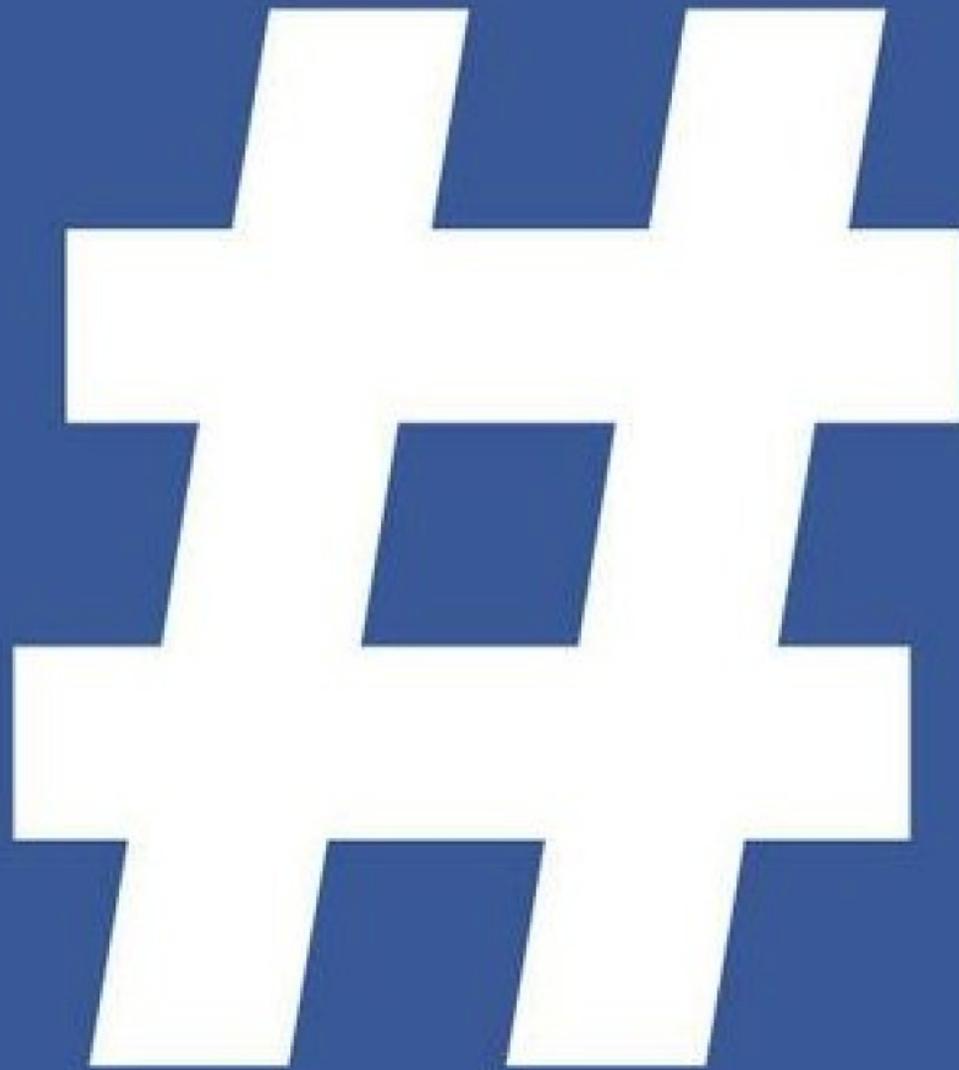
Tautological sensory experiences.

Stims are instantiations of fullness  
Oneness of being  
All your faculties arrested  
**A privatized sublime**

**STIMMING**



**THE GREATEST ONE MAN  
MOSH PIT**



Stims are recursive swag. Cool like Riff Raff [witticisms](#) or a repetitious Chief Keef ([rumored](#) to be on the spectrum himself) [music video](#).  
Stims are recursive swag. Cool like Riff Raff [witticisms](#) or a repetitious Chief Keef ([rumored](#) to be on the spectrum himself) [music video](#).



Stims are memetic. They replicate and disperse through any medium at hand. Whether it is transmission through echolalia or dispersion through broadcast each stim finds its way!



Stims anchor experience, situate the body. Sometimes they do the opposite and you lose your body. Sometimes they secure or placate an otherwise chaotic maelstrom, like the repetitive yet creepily ecstatic Agent-Cooper-sniffing-his-coffee moments. Stabilization pitted against the turbulent...



Stims can be like movie soundtracks composed by John Williams. His [theme songs](#) are accompaniments that take on a **life of their own.....**



# Stims are **animistic**

Input and output with agency.

Productive flows on over-drive.

Fetishes crystallizing Synthetic  
intelligences.



---

Stims are cyborg affects with a cinematic touch.  
Technical automatism for the desiring body.



## **Stims are hot...**

Like pharmaco-pornographic deviations, synthetic titillations. Like a multi-tendriled abomination straight from a neuromarketing agency, it violates your sensibilities, and you like it!

```
display 60.00406Hz
composition rate 60.000Hz
fullscreen windowed mode
clock deviation 0.00767%
h264 8 bit, 4:2:0 > NV12, 8 bit, 4:2:0
movie 30.000 fps (says source filter)
1 frame drop every 55.66 minutes
movie resolution 1920, 1080
target rectangle 0, 0, 1920, 1080
vsync interval 16.67ms
movie frame interval 33.33ms
matrix BT.709 (best guess)
primaries BT.709 (best guess)
limited range (best guess)
deinterlacing off (says bitstream)
decoder queue 31-32 / 32
upload queue 23-24 / 24
render queue 23-24 / 24
backbuffer queue 7-8 / 8
dropped frames 0
delayed frames 0
average stats
  rendering 6.23ms
  present 0.10ms
max stats [5s]
  rendering 10.69ms
  present 0.13ms
```



STIMMING  
STIMMING  
STIMMING  
STIMMING  
STIMMING  
STIMMING  
STIMMING