Super-Resolution Appearance Transfer for 4D Human Performances

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Abstract

A common problem in the 4D reconstruction of people from multi-view video is the quality of the captured dynamic texture appearance which depends on both the camera resolution and capture volume. Typically the requirement to frame cameras to capture the volume of a dynamic performance ($>50\text{m}^3$) results in the person occupying only a small proportion ($<10\%$) of the field of view. Even with ultra high-definition 4k video acquisition this results in sampling the person at less-than standard definition 0.5k video resolution resulting in low-quality rendering. In this paper we propose a solution to this problem through super-resolution appearance transfer from a static high-resolution appearance capture rig using digital stills cameras ($>8k$) to capture the person in a small volume ($<8\text{m}^3$). A pipeline is proposed for super-resolution appearance transfer from high-resolution static capture to dynamic video performance capture to produce super-resolution dynamic textures. This addresses two key problems: colour mapping between different camera systems; and dynamic texture map super-resolution using a learnt model. Comparative evaluation demonstrates a significant qualitative and quantitative improvement in rendering the 4D performance capture with super-resolution dynamic texture appearance. The proposed approach reproduces the high-resolution detail of the static capture whilst maintaining the appearance dynamics of the captured video.

1. Introduction

The increasing popularity of VR/AR technologies has driven a rise in the demand for 4D modelling techniques that accurately reconstruct human performances. Video-based capture systems have been developed recently to replace marker-based motion capture enabling the reconstruction of the detailed surface dynamics for complex non-rigid shapes such as people. These systems consist of a set of cameras that capture a scene from multiple viewpoints [12,14,47]. A 4D reconstruction of the performance of the captured scene can then be retrieved by applying stereo matching and feature tracking approaches. This reconstruction is a sequence of 3D geometric objects of the performer, each with its own pose and texture appearance. Unless the acquisition system has a large number of cameras [12,20,28,40,49] or the overall volume to capture is limited, the surface texture resolution resolution is limited [24]. In general, the resolution of the captured models decreases proportionally to the increasing of the capture volume size. Moreover, the colours of the appearance are significantly influenced by the lighting of the capture space, which can deteriorate the appearance if the illumination is not thoroughly controlled.

Whilst 4D reconstruction systems still face a number of limitations, there are alternative methods that accurately provide a static 3D shape reconstruction from multiple high-resolution DSLR camera images in a limited capture volume giving higher detail reconstruction of surface shape and appearance [7, 8, 30, 53]. The resolution of shape detail reconstruction is dependent on the image resolution and the 3D reconstruction systems use high-resolution (HR) cameras that can acquire higher resolution images of the subject. The quality of the reconstruction is highly influenced by the capture volume, which is usually much smaller for 3D reconstruction since the scene to capture is static. The colour response of the acquisition cameras depends on the capture environment, which is designed considering the objective of the capture. The system settings of the two reconstructions differ due to their dissimilar objectives, producing different colour responses that cause brighter colours in the static reconstruction. These factors lead to higher quality appearance of the reconstructed model in a static capture.

In this paper we introduce Super-Resolution Appearance Transfer (SRAT) from a human subject acquired with DSLR cameras in a small capture volume to dynamic video perfor-
mance capture of the same subject acquired with a sparse set of cameras in a larger capture volume. The objective of SRAT is to enhance the appearance of the 4D reconstruction of a human performance captured in a large volume by exploiting HR images of the same subject acquired with the DSLR cameras. More specifically, the approach improves the colour contrast of the appearance of the 4D reconstruction with a novel colour mapping approach and enhances its fine details by increasing the resolution of the texture maps through a Single-Image Super-Resolution (SISR) network. Figure 1 shows how, from the input low-resolution (LR) capture video (Figure 1a), the final appearance of the 3D model (Figure 1c) is obtained with appearance detail similar to the HR capture (Figure 1b). The contributions presented in this paper are:

- A novel pipeline for super-resolution appearance transfer to enhance the appearance of LR dynamic performances of people from HR images of the same subjects acquired with static DSLR cameras in a small volume.
- A new automatic approach for colour mapping between images acquired with different systems: after the selection of optimal image couples, the colours of the video frames are corrected with an extension of the colour transfer algorithm [19] to multi-view images.

2. Related Works

**Colour transfer:** colour transfer aims to modify the colours of a target image taking as reference the colours of another image. For some frameworks, there must be pixel correspondences between target and reference images. Examples of these are classic computer vision methods [17, 25, 39, 41] and deep learning approaches such as image-to-image translation networks [26, 51]. Due to the necessity of pixel correspondences, these methods cannot be applied in our case. Early techniques that do not require pixel correspondences define a parametric affine transfer function through statistical moments of colour distributions. These can model only certain types of distributions [42, 45]. Methodologies that use Optimal Transport (OT) framework were then studied but they either introduce grainy artefacts in the gradient of the corrected image [16, 18, 44] or do not modify the image’s luminance channel [9, 43]. Recent techniques model the colour distribution as Gaussian Mixture models to define correspondences between Gaussian components of the target and reference distributions [19, 27, 52]. The colour transfer function is learned from a single target-reference image pair, failing in learning a complete map for all the colours of a 3D surface. Unsupervised cycle-in-cycle neural networks are used to enhance the colours of images as well [10, 22, 64]. The lack of a consistent amount of training data deteriorates their performances. This paper proposes a colour transfer algorithm that exploits the whole surface of a human model to learn the transfer function from multiple target and reference images without the need of pixel correspondences between them.

**Single-image super-resolution:** image super-resolution (SR) is an image processing techniques that aims to estimate a perceptually plausible HR image from a LR input image [54]. Recently, deep neural networks have shown their superior performance on the SISR task. Dong et al. [15] introduced the use of a convolutional neural network (CNN) to super-resolve an image for the first time. Two main topologies of network architecture were then applied for SR: residual networks [4, 13, 21, 36, 37, 38, 60] and generative adversarial networks [11, 32, 33, 48, 50]. While the former achieve higher values of peak signal-to-noise ratio (PSNR) and structural similarity index (SSIM) with blurrier outputs, the second have lower figures of the mentioned metrics and unrealistic details in the SR images. Reference-based super-resolution (RefSR) is an alternative method that transfers HR textures from a given reference image to super-resolve the LR input [34]. CrossNet [62] uses optical flow to align input and reference. To be efficient, the reference and the LR images must have similar content and similar viewpoint. Other approaches [61], [55] apply a “patch-match” mechanism to swap the most similar features of the reference and the LR image. Even though they perform better when the similarity between reference and input image is low, they still introduce unpleasant artefacts. The patch-match mechanism consumes significant amount of GPU memory, making the usage of HR reference images impracticable.

To the best of our knowledge, there are only two deep learning works that aim to super-resolve 3D texture maps of objects. Li et al. [35] modified the architecture of EDSR [37] to exploit the information of both texture maps and normal maps of objects. Richard et al. [46] combined a redundancy-based part with a prior-based part in a network to create new texture maps. The first method requires the creation of normal maps, a process that introduces heavy computational cost for a high number of frames. The second approach is mainly oriented in the creation of texture maps. Following these two methods, we use a residual neural network in SRAT that, differently from 2D SISR networks, is trained with datasets of texture maps of people.

3. Methodology

SRAT aims to improve the appearance of LR capture video of human performance acquired with a sparse multi-camera system by leveraging a collection of HR images of the same subject. The sparse multi-camera system allows dynamic capture of human performance that covers a large volume at the cost of reduced resolution on the subject. In contrast, the static HR images are captured using an array of DSLR cameras resulting in increased resolution on the subject including fine details in the hair, skin and clothing.
Figure 2: SRAT pipeline: LR capture frames and HR images are the input. After background removal, couple between the most similar frames and HR images are created. The colours of the frames are corrected. Their texture maps are retrieved and finally super-resolved.

Texture map SR: the details of the texture maps are enhanced by super resolving them with an RCAN-style network [60] trained with human texture maps. We make 3 important assumptions that affect the design of the pipeline and its evaluation: (i) geometric properties of the HR static model are not exploited to avoid estimation of geometric surface correspondence between the LR and HR reconstructions; (ii) the color response of the cameras within each capture system is the same; (iii) in the selection of a subset of $n < N_{LR}$ cameras for evaluation we assume evenly spaced cameras to maximise coverage of the subject.

3.2. Colour mapping of frame images

The camera responses of the two capture systems differ due to their environment settings that are defined based on the specific purposes of the captures. The contrast range of the DSLR cameras allows to acquire HR images with brighter colours and higher resolution. To obtain the same contrast in the LR capture video, the colours of the HR images are mapped to its frames with a novel approach that comprises 2 steps: pairs between the most similar images of the two systems are created according to surface visibility and viewing angle pairs (couples identification); colours of the LR capture frames are corrected with a colour transfer function estimated from multi-view images (colour transfer).

Couples identification: the algorithm that learns the colour transfer function to correct the colours of the frame images, requires a pair of target and reference images as input. In our case, the target images are the LR capture frames while the reference images are the HR images. Since a colour palette is defined from the reference images, the algorithm performs better if the content of $I_{LR}$ is similar to the content of $I_{HR}$. If for instance, a reference image that shows the back of the person has been paired with a target frame representing the front part of the subject, the algo-
algorithm may fail to transfer the colour of the face because it is not learned from the visible colour palette (Section 4.2).

In the two systems, the camera settings are different, resulting in different representations of the same model. Creating the pairs by directly comparing the original images is ineffective and thus, we operate in the texture map domain. We propose a new automatic method to identify the couples between images of different systems. Since no geometric information of the HR model is available, we reconstruct partial texture maps of the frames \( \{T(I_{HR}^i)\}_{i=1}^{N_F} \) and of the HR images \( \{T(I_{HR}^j)\}_{j=1}^{N_{HR}} \) by applying Densepose [6] and unwrapping the resulting UV maps. These partial texture maps are invariant to the camera orientation and position allowing a comparison between the two systems in a common domain. We evaluate the similarity between all the \( T(I_{HR}^i) \) and \( T(I_{HR}^j) \) with the SSIM metric [63]. Each \( I_{LR} \) is coupled with one \( I_{HR} \) whose partial texture map is the most similar defined by the SSIM metric as shown in Equation 1:

\[
I_{LR}^i \leftrightarrow I_{HR}^j \text{ where } \text{argmax}\{ \text{SSIM}(T(I_{LR}^i), T(I_{HR}^j)) \} \quad (1)
\]

where \( I_{LR}^i \) is the \( i^{th} \) frame of the \( i^{th} \) camera and \( I_{HR}^j \) is the HR image of the \( j^{th} \) camera.

**Colour transfer:** the idea of the colour transfer algorithm applied is based on [19]. In their work, the parameters of the colour transfer function are learned from a single pair of target and reference images. In our case, the function must learn a map from all the colours of the static acquisition to the colours of \( I_{LR} \): all the view-angles of the human model must be seen during the learning stage. We therefore extend the cited work [19] to more than two images as inputs. We model the colour transfer function \( \phi_{\theta}(x) \) as a Thin Plate Splines function that depends on a set of parameters \( \theta \). This set is computed by minimising the following novel energy function with gradient descent algorithm:

\[
\theta = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \text{argmin}\{ ||p_f||^2 - 2 < p_f | p_t > \} \quad (2)
\]

where \( N \) is the number of input couples, \( p_f \) is the distribution of \( I_{LR} \) with parameterised mean \( \phi_{\theta}(\mu_f) \) and \( p_t \) is the distribution of \( I_{HR} \). Equation 2 is further explained in the supplementary material. For each selected input couple, a set of parameters is computed by minimising the energy function. The parameters of \( \phi_{\theta}(x) \) are obtained averaging these sets and used to correct the colours of all the frames.

### 3.3. Texture map super-resolution

After having retrieved the texture maps from the corrected frames, we treat them as 2D RGB images and we give them as input to the RCAN-style network [60]. The residual-in-residual RCAN network super-resolves the obtained texture maps through a channel attention mechanism that adaptively rescale each channel-wise feature by modelling the interdependencies across feature channels. In its original work, RCAN was trained augmenting 800 RGB images from DIV2K dataset [3]. Since we aim to super-resolve texture maps of a specific model, we first pre-train RCAN with a set of patches of human texture maps [2]. We then fine-tune it with the \( N_F \) original texture maps of the input model. Further details of its training are presented in the supplementary material. We finally assign the SR texture maps to the correspondent reconstructed meshes to obtain the enhanced 4D reconstruction of the performance.

### 4. Results evaluation

We capture two subjects, one male (SingleM) and one female (SingleF), using both LR capture video acquired with \( N_{LR} = 16 \) cameras for \( N_F = 440 \), 470 frames respectively and a subset of \( N_{HR} = 64 \) DSLR cameras. We evaluate the proposed approach on the 4D performances of the models reconstructed with the method proposed by Starck and Hilton [47], applied in the pre-processing step to retrieve the input data. Additional visual results and evaluations are presented in the supplementary material.

#### 4.1. Couples identification

The first study was conducted on the first part of the colour mapping stage. We evaluate the effect of using different similarity metrics to pair the partial texture maps of the two acquisition systems. We compute the similarity with the following metrics: SSIM [63], PSNR, feature based similarity index (FSIM [58]), spectral angle mapper (SAM [57]), signal to reconstruction error ratio (SRE [31]), root mean square error (RMSE). Figure 3 shows the partial texture maps of the HR images associated with the partial texture map of the LR capture frames and the correspondent original images for each of the studied metrics. In the case of SingleF, most of the metrics create a pair with two images where the pose of the subject is significantly different. SSIM associates the most similar HR image to the input frame. The orientation of SingleM in the HR images paired with other metrics do not match the one in the input frame. In these HR images, the nose of the subject is hardly visible oppositely from the HR image paired with SSIM.

#### 4.2. Colour transfer input couples selection

We analyse the effect of using different numbers of input couples in the colour transfer step. We expect the algorithm to perform better if a complete coverage of the surface is exploited in the learning of the colour transfer function. The effect of having 1, 2, 4, 8, 12 and 16 couples as input is evaluated. The \( N_{LR} \) cameras are equally distributed in a studio, with 4 cameras on each side of a square surrounding the acquisition space. In the case of 12 couples, 3 cameras from each side are selected; in the case of 8, 2 cameras each side; in the case of 4, just 1 camera each side. With
Figure 3: The first column shows the partial texture map and the LR capture frame for SingleF (first two rows) and SingleM (last two rows). The images and partial texture maps of the other columns are acquired with the DLSR system and paired with different similarity metrics.

Figure 4: Colour transfer with different numbers of input couples. In the top row SingleF model, in the bottom SingleM.

| Input couples | SingleF |    | SingleM |    |
|---------------|---------|----|---------|----|
|               | JS ↓ | χ^2 ↓ | JS ↓ | χ^2 ↓ |
| 1             | 0.5452 | 18.8659 | 0.4759 | 21.5098 |
| 2             | 0.5439 | 14.7575 | 0.4691 | 18.3891 |
| 4             | 0.5435 | 14.9826 | 0.4649 | 22.1790 |
| 8             | 0.5423 | 13.5905 | 0.4609 | 18.0991 |
| 12            | **0.5321** | **12.9507** | **0.4542** | **15.5898** |
| 16            | 0.5443 | 14.0894 | 0.4624 | 21.3688 |

Table 1: JS and χ^2 values for different numbers of input couples. ↓ indicates lower value is better.

less input couples (1 and 2), there is a lower surface coverage and the model is not completely captured. As quantitative evaluation, the dissimilarity between a specific corrected frame and its paired HR image is computed considering their colour histograms since the pixel-based metrics are not effective due to the different nature of the frame and the HR image. We compute the Jensen-Shannon (JS) divergence and the Chi-Squared (χ^2) distance between the normalized colour histograms of all the corrected frames and of the correspondent HR images. Even though these two metrics have been revealed to be the most efficient [59], they present some drawbacks. JS focuses only on the statistical distribution of the images while χ^2 only accounts for the difference between the corresponding bins and is hence sensitive to distortions and quantization [56]. The average of the distances for every corrected couple is presented in Table 1. Generally, the JS divergence decreases when the number of couples increases for both the datasets (except for the case with 16 couples). The χ^2 distance follows the same pattern except for the 4 couple case because of possible distortions of the corrected frames. As expected, the worst results are given by the 1 couple case. As shown in Figure 4, if 1 couple is the input, the face of the models have unnatural colours. The algorithm did not learn how to transfer the face colour as it was not seen in the input images during learning. For the same reason, the outputs of the 2 couple case seem blurry. Even though the lowest figures are given by having 12 couples as input, the results produced with 8 couples are quantitatively and qualitatively satisfactory and we use them throughout the presented results balancing visual quality with computational complexity of SRAT.
Figure 5 shows a detail of SingleM model with the corrected SR texture map. Compared to the original model, the button looks sharper and less blurry, showing the efficiency of SR application to enhance fine details of the appearance.

### 4.4. Configuration of pipeline

Another evaluation is performed by changing the order of the stages in SRAT. The first stage and the first step of the second stage are not modified. The configurations are:

1. (i) Texture map retrieval; (ii) Texture map colour transfer; (iii) Texture map SR.
2. (i) Texture map retrieval; (ii) Texture map SR; (iii) Texture map colour transfer.
3. (i) Input frames colour transfer; (ii) Corrected frames SR; (iii) Texture map retrieval.
4. (i) Input frames SR; (ii) Input frames colour transfer; (iii) Texture map retrieval.
5. (i) Input frames SR; (ii) Texture map retrieval; (iii) Texture map colour transfer.

We apply the output texture maps to the 3D models and only a qualitative evaluation is performed due to the lack of a ground-truth. Figure 6 shows SingleF and SingleM models for each configuration. Compared to the original model, the appearance is improved, with brighter colours and more visible details. If the colour transfer is done after the texture map retrieval (configurations 1 and 2), the dress presents artefacts (3rd and 6th rows). If the SR stage is applied before the texture map retrieval (configurations 3, 4 and 5), noise is introduced as seen on the face (2nd and 5th rows).

**Performance evaluation:** the SR stage requires more time (~128s/197s per texture map/frame) than the colour transfer for LR images (~8s/14s) and for SR images (~35s/56s). The 1st configuration is the fastest and least computationally expensive: the colour transfer and the SR stages are applied to the texture maps, which are less in number than the frames. The slowest and the most computationally expensive configuration is the 4th one because the two stages are applied to the input frame (16 images of the video cameras for every frame).

### 4.5. Comparison with related works

We compare the colour transfer algorithm and the SR network used in SRAT with related works.

**Colour transfer approaches:** the JS and $\chi^2$ values of 5 colour transfer frameworks are shown in Table 3. Finlayson [17] and Vander [29] require pixel correspondences. Pitie [42] introduces a parametric colour transfer function and CycleGAN [64] is an unsupervised deep learning technique trained with our frames and HR images. The last method is the framework TPS [19] without any modifications. As shown in Figure 7, Vander, Finlayson and CycleGAN cannot transfer the colours from the HR image to
Figure 6: Visual results of different configurations of SRAT for SingleF (top) and SingleM (bottom) models.

Figure 7: Outputs of different colour transfer approaches. In the top row SingleF model, in the bottom SingleM.

Table 3: JS and $\chi^2$ values for different colour transfer algorithms.

| Methods   | SingleF | SingleM |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Vander [29] | 0.8323  | 0.8142  |
| Finlayson [17] | 0.7949  | 0.7445  |
| Pitie [42] | 0.7868  | 0.7445  |
| CycleGan [64] | 0.5776  | 0.6158  |
| TPS [19] | 0.5029  | 0.5029  |
| SRAT(ours) | 0.5435  | 0.4609  |

Table 3: JS and $\chi^2$ values for different colour transfer algorithms.

the frames while Pitie outputs are too bright. If TPS is applied, a different function for every frame of each camera is learned. Therefore, the corrected frames of the same scene and the ones of two consecutive frames have different colours. W.r.t. the quantitative analysis, the JS divergence is the lowest when TPS is applied. TPS learns the colour transfer function by modelling the statistical distributions of the input images. The JS divergence focuses on the difference between statistical distributions and it is lower if these distributions are learned for every frame and not only for 8 selected couples as in our case. The $\chi^2$ of TPS is the second highest. Its lowest figure is obtained when Vander is applied for SingleF and ours for SingleM. Vander colour transfer produces wrong outputs and the low $\chi^2$ value is influenced by its sensitiveness to image distortion.

SR approaches: the top part of Table 4 shows quantitative comparisons for 2× SR with a classic computer vision approach (Bicubic) and 7 deep learning methods: DBPN [21], SRFBN [36], CSNLN [38], NLR and
4.6. More complex scenarios

Interaction scenario: we apply SRAT to an interaction scene where SingleF and SingleM perform at the same time. A colour transfer function is learned for each model using the same couples of SRAT as input. The colours of the frames are then corrected by applying the two functions to their correspondent models selected with a mask. For each model, its texture maps are retrieved for each frame and super-resolved with the two fine-tuned SR networks.

Unseen Poses: the proposed pipeline aims to enhance the appearance of a human performance. Therefore, it has to handle multiple poses of the performers. SRAT is effective also when it is applied to frames that were not used to learn either the colour transfer function or the SR model. Figure 9 shows the results of these complex scenarios.

5. Conclusion

This paper proposes a novel pipeline to enhance the dynamic appearance of low-resolution capture video of human performance using a collection of static high-resolution images of the same subject. The pipeline enables multi-view performance capture systems to increase the capture volume without sacrificing the output reconstruction quality. A novel automatic colour mapping improves the global appearance by correcting the colours of LR capture frames while fine-scale surface details are transferred by an RCAN-style network from the high-resolution images to the super-resolved texture maps. A limitation of the proposed pipeline is that it does not enforce any temporal coherence between the super-resolved texture maps of consecutive frames. This as well as geometric detail transfer between the models of the two systems will be investigated as future works.
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