



AI Art: What's not to love?

By: Grace Lewton

Recent advances in the world of AI, especially when it comes to art generation, have been incredibly divisive. Enthusiasts claim that this is a revolution; a change in the accessibility of art. Per contra, opponents of the AI movement, many of which are artists, have gone so far as to claim that we are witnessing the end of art and human expression in real-time.

Although AI programs and their ability to create art is nothing new, advancements in their abilities and accessibility have pushed these programs back onto the front page. According to a CNN interview with a comic artist who exclusively uses AI to generate their works, "AI will ultimately liberate artists from the grueling process" of creating art. The use of generated images can greatly cut down production time for creations like comic books, animated movies, and more. However, the elimination of this time requirement comes at the expense of so much more.

Human artists dislike AI art for a multitude of reasons. First, AI creates art through a long process of being fed images of art and the world, using pattern recognition, and then combining those images and their elements into something new. AI art bots, additionally, are often fed thousands of images of real art that has been shared on the internet. This means that many artists have had their art, which they spent a great deal of time and effort on, stolen and misused, sometimes by their very competition. Most publicly available AI art generators function by allowing the user to input a series of keywords or prompts, and then spit a generated art piece that matches the directions based on previous machine learning and data input. When AI learns to

“create” art by scraping images from the internet, it can learn to recreate an artist's style. Take the style of famous digital artist Greg Rutkowski, known for his work with Dungeons and Dragons, Magic the Gathering, and more, for instance. Rutkowski's name, according to the MIT Technology Review website, is one of the most commonly used prompts when generating AI art. The use of his name will help the user to obtain art with a similar art style and feel to Rutkowski's work, all without crediting or commissioning him.

AI takes away from the ability of many artists to make a living off of their work. There have been multiple instances of this loss of business, such as when Animalist Fabula, a nonprofit film festival, chose to use AI art to generate their film posters, rather than commissioning an artist. This choice created a great deal of drama in the art community, as it was seen as a sign of more great profit losses to come. Understandably, many who have spent years crafting their style, image, and skill would feel threatened and upset by a machine that claims to perfectly replicate or outmatch their abilities, especially when said machine can stop them from making a living,

The quality of AI art, at least in its current form, is still incapable of fully replacing artists. AI is famously incompetent when it comes to “drawing” hands; this flaw is known to be one of the best ways to tell if an image has been made by a human or a machine. The people it creates are often same-faced and unrealistically proportioned. The creation of consistent character is difficult, or even impossible to achieve, as each time a set of prompts is entered, a new image is created, without regard to what has been made before. These many issues disqualify AI art from becoming the dominant option for those looking for art, but as AI continues to advance, what does the future entail? Eventually, especially if the buzz around AI continues on its current trajectory, these issues will be resolved. A computer will eventually be fed enough images of hands that it will be able to create one that is convincingly normal. The specificity of prompts will increase, and the disparity between man and machine will only shrink. It does not matter how well AI can learn to copy or imitate real artists, however, as its work will only ever be a copy. AI cannot truly make art that matters; its generated images are a hollow shell. No matter how long it spends scraping the internet, humanity cannot be fitted into a pattern recognition algorithm.

It is my personal belief that the creation of art is one of the most defining human characteristics imaginable. Since the beginning of the anthropocene, some of the most compelling evidence of human life that we have gathered is art. Cave paintings, sculptures, miniatures dolls, and decorated pottery serve as the only marks of humanity before the invention of written language. The desire to create and celebrate the world around us is one of our most basic functions. Artists put their hearts and souls into their creations. Art is about expression and life and the very experience of living. Look at the way that Picasso's self-portraits changed over the years; a machine could never replicate that same human feeling of a self-image that slips away. Learn about Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A). What computer could create art which holds such weight? Watch Loving Vincent, the world's first movie oil painted by hand, entirely by artists who wished to honor Vincent van Gogh's legacy. What joy or grief has a set of ones and zeros ever felt? AI art is fast, it is easy, and it is cheap. It is everything that art is not. Art is messy, it has flaws, and it is made to say everything we cannot put into words. Art is beautiful because it is human.