

# Magical Paintbrush, Human Foetus or Black Box: Algorithmic Imaginaries about AI-art in YouTube Discourse

Student: Elisabeth van den Berg | 8284636

Supervisor: Dr. Fabian Ferrari

Second reader: Dr. Gerwin van Schie

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the construction of algorithmic imaginaries surrounding AI-art generators in cultural production on YouTube, shedding light on contemporary discourse on hybrid creativity. Through quantitative analysis, it reveals strategic use of YouTube's pre-listed video categories to enhance visibility and engagement, highlighting the increasing contingency of cultural production on YouTube. Moreover, it uncovers YouTube's prioritization of comments in its recommendation algorithm. Qualitative discourse analysis shows diverse algorithmic imaginaries, ranging from AI as something beyond human control, through the metaphors "magical paintbrush" and "black box", to the anthropomorphizing imaginary of AI as a human "foetus". These findings reflect diverse perspectives on hybrid creativity, ultimately suggesting prevailing pessimism in public discourse regarding AI in artistic creation, in relation to the more optimistic stance found in theory. The circulation of these algorithmic imaginaries, exemplified in video creators quoting each other, underscores YouTube's role in facilitating hybrid interactions among creators and viewers, thereby expanding the theoretical concept of hybridity. In addressing future research directions, the thesis highlights YouTube's mediating role in hybrid creativity and recommends investigating the mechanisms underlying the prevalence of controversial imaginaries about AI-art in YouTube discourse.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 AI-generated Art

Two years ago, in a small U.S. town in the state of Colorado, a video game designer won first prize at the state fair with his creation named ‘Théâtre D’opéra Spatial’.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the other handmade artworks in the contest, this winning artwork was generated using *Midjourney*, an artificial intelligence (AI) image generator.<sup>2</sup> This was widely shared online, illustrating the ongoing debate about the role of AI in artistic creation. In the past two years, creating images with generative AI has become increasingly accessible through tools like *DALL·E*<sup>3</sup> and *Midjourney*. These AI-art generators employ advanced algorithms, based on machine learning models, to analyse patterns and features within existing images. Based on textual prompts by users, the generators can generate new images. This is changing the creative industry, as these generators impact the way creatives work.<sup>4</sup> This sparks discussions about creativity, copyright and whether AI-generated content can be classified as art.<sup>5</sup>

Philosopher of technology Mark Coeckelbergh explores this evolving relationship between machines and artistic creation, arguing that the creative process is no longer solely in the hands of humans.<sup>6</sup> Computational artist Andy Lomas describes the collaboration between humans and computers in artistic creation as ‘hybrid creativity’, he advocates to view computers not just as tools, but as active collaborators that work with artists in creating content.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, media and cultures scholar Hye-Kyung Lee recently has taken a more critical stance, raising concerns about the potential dehumanization of creativity.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, other scholars argue that we should not focus on whether AI can be creative, the focus could be on how AI-art is perceived by the public.<sup>9</sup> Media researcher Taina Bucher’s notion of the algorithmic imaginary adds another layer to this discussion.<sup>10</sup> Algorithmic imaginaries refer to the ways in which people construct mental models and theories about

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Roose, “An A.I.-Generated Picture Won an Art Prize. Artists Aren’t Happy.,” *The New York Times*, September 2, 2022, accessed March 20, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/02/technology/ai-artificial-intelligence-artists.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Midjourney,” Midjourney, n.d., <https://www.midjourney.com/home>.

<sup>3</sup> “DALL·E: Creating Images From Text,” n.d., <https://openai.com/research/dall-e>.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Roose, “A.I.-Generated Art Is Already Transforming Creative Work,” *The New York Times*, October 21, 2022, accessed February 5, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/21/technology/ai-generated-art-jobs-dall-e-2.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Proulx, Natalie. “Are A.I.-Generated Pictures art?” *The New York Times*. September 16, 2022. Accessed February 5, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/learning/are-ai-generated-pictures-art.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Coeckelbergh, “Can Machines Create Art?,” *Philosophy & Technology* 30, no. 3 (September 24, 2016): 298, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-016-0231-5>.

<sup>7</sup> Andy Lomas, “On Hybrid Creativity,” *Arts* 7, no. 3 (July 9, 2018): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts7030025>.

<sup>8</sup> Hye-Kyung Lee, “Rethinking Creativity: Creative Industries, AI and Everyday Creativity,” *Media, Culture & Society* 44, no. 3 (March 7, 2022): 601–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221077009>.

<sup>9</sup> Simone Natale and Leah Henrickson, “The Lovelace Effect: Perceptions of Creativity in Machines,” *New Media & Society*, March 4, 2022, 12-13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221077278>.

<sup>10</sup> Taina Bucher, “The Algorithmic Imaginary: Exploring the Ordinary Affects of Facebook Algorithms,” *Information, Communication & Society* 20, no. 1 (February 25, 2016): 30–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2016.1154086>.

how they think algorithms work.<sup>11</sup> These imaginaries are powerful identifications that both reflect and influence how people think, feel, and act in the presence of algorithms.<sup>12</sup> This thesis explores the algorithmic imaginaries that humans construct about AI-art generators.

## 1.2 Academic Relevance

As the example of AI-generated art winning a state fair illustrated, discussions about generative AI and art are not limited to academic circles. Instead, these discussions have spread to online discourse. On YouTube, this discussion is exemplified in videos by artists expressing concern about AI-generated art,<sup>13</sup> contrasted by videos exploring its possibilities through AI-art experiments.<sup>14</sup> Scholars have extensively studied YouTube, considering its impact on diverse cultural aspects such as politics and music.<sup>15</sup> YouTube's unique feature of user-generated content fosters a diverse and ongoing public discourse, it is therefore considered a valuable space for investigating public perspectives.<sup>16</sup> Videos and comments on YouTube offer insights into public opinions, they are seen as a useful source of textual data and can be used as indicators of discourse around a topic.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, video metadata provides contextual information about the way the creators position their videos on this platform.<sup>18</sup> These videos on YouTube are a form of cultural production, this encompasses the creation and dissemination of content related to AI-generated art.<sup>19</sup> YouTube videos, as forms of cultural production, actively contribute to the broader discourse on AI-generated art by constructing and disseminating diverse perspectives and fostering engagement.<sup>20</sup> YouTube as a platform contributes to the increasing contingency of cultural production, meaning that content is becoming both dependent on the infrastructure of the platform and influenced by viewer engagement. Video creators, aware of YouTube's recommendation algorithm, shape their content accordingly.<sup>21</sup>

Expanding the focus from YouTube content about AI-art to the broader public perception of AI, a recent study by Dennis Nguyen and Erik Hekman delves into the public perception of AI

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<sup>11</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 31.

<sup>12</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 40.

<sup>13</sup> SamDoesArts, "Why Artists Are Fed Up with AI Art.," December 24, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Viy3Cu3DLk>.

<sup>14</sup> Surrealism, "Ogie's Revenge: 4k AI Video Art [7+ Hours AI Generated Video]," May 31, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb9vsNhL5mo>.

<sup>15</sup> Jane Arthurs, Sophia Drakopoulou, and Alessandro Gandini, "Researching YouTube," *Convergence* 24, no. 1 (January 10, 2018): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517737222>.

<sup>16</sup> Arthurs, Drakopoulou, and Gandini, "Researching YouTube," 5–7.

<sup>17</sup> Wuyou Sui, Anna Sui, and Ryan E. Rhodes, "What to Watch: Practical Considerations and Strategies for Using YouTube for Research," *DIGITAL HEALTH* 8 (January 1, 2022): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076221123707>.

<sup>18</sup> Óscar Coromina, Adrián Padilla, and Kate Miltner, *How to Study YouTube with API-Based Methods*, SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks, 2022, 3, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529609417>.

<sup>19</sup> David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity," *New Media & Society* 20, no. 11 (April 25, 2018): 4275–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818769694>.

<sup>20</sup> Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production," 4275–92.

<sup>21</sup> Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production," 4282–88.

through framing in popular news media outlets.<sup>22</sup> The authors argue that news media not only report on AI but actively shape public perception through the rhetoric they use, affecting how the public sees AI. They conclude that AI news reporting is becoming more critical over time, which they connect to increasing critical data literacy.<sup>23</sup> Nguyen and Hekman emphasize that although news outlets play a crucial role in shaping public discourse on AI, they represent just one side of the contemporary public debate. That is why they call for future research to encompass a deeper qualitative analysis and state the necessity for the exploration of social media discourse.<sup>24</sup> In relation to this call for qualitative research, it is relevant to research public discourse on AI-generated art in cultural production on YouTube. Employing Bucher's concept of the algorithmic imaginary provides insight into how AI is perceived. Additionally, it is relevant to explore how algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators reflect the theory of hybrid creativity, as this provides insight into how contemporary public discourse engages with or deviates from the theory. This thesis therefore studies the algorithmic imaginaries constructed in cultural production on YouTube about AI-art generators, and what this might reveal about contemporary public discourse about hybrid creativity.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The main research question for this thesis is: How are algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators constructed in cultural production on YouTube, and what might this reveal about contemporary public discourse on hybrid creativity?

This overarching question is complemented by three sub-questions:

- What channels and videos as forms of cultural production engage with AI-art on YouTube?
- What algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators are constructed in videos on YouTube?
- How do these algorithmic imaginaries concerning AI-art generators reflect the theory of hybrid creativity?

The three sub-questions each focus on one of the three core concepts of the thesis: cultural production, algorithmic imaginaries and hybrid creativity. The first sub-question focusses on identifying relevant videos and channels for this research through quantitative analysis. The second sub-question explores algorithmic imaginaries through qualitative analysis. The final sub-question studies the ways in which the theory of hybrid creativity is reflected in public discourse on YouTube. Academically, the exploration of algorithmic imaginaries on YouTube responds to the suggestion for qualitative analysis and exploration of social media discourse made by Nguyen and Hekman.<sup>25</sup> In the next chapter, key theories and concepts are discussed in relation to the research questions. Then, in chapter three, the

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<sup>22</sup> Dennis Nguyen and Erik Hekman, "The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence: A Critical Exploration of How Media Discourses Make Sense of Automation," *AI & SOCIETY*, June 23, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-022-01511-1>.

<sup>23</sup> Nguyen and Hekman, "The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence," chap. 7. Discussion.

<sup>24</sup> Nguyen and Hekman, "The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence," chap. 8. Conclusion.

<sup>25</sup> Nguyen and Hekman, "The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence," chap. 8. Conclusion.

methodological approach and the corpus are outlined, followed by the findings from the analysis in chapter four. Finally, the findings are discussed reflected upon in the conclusion.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework, key authors and texts in the academic field are discussed in relation to each other and to the thesis. The texts are structured by the theoretical concepts in the sub-questions, as outlined in the previous chapter. First, cultural production is discussed, focussing on platformization and contingency. Then, embedded in broader theory on future imaginaries and technological imaginaries, the algorithmic imaginary is explained. Following from this concept, the theory of hybrid creativity is outlined as a way to discuss human-AI collaboration in art creation.

### 2.1 Cultural Production

As mentioned in the introduction, algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators are constructed and disseminated in social media discourse, for example in cultural production on YouTube.<sup>26</sup>

Understanding cultural production is essential, because it influences how AI-art is perceived in online discourse. It includes the narratives and meanings attached to AI-generated art within the cultural context. New media and digital culture scholars David Nieborg and Thomas Poell discuss the platformization of cultural production and how it leads to the increasing contingency of cultural production.<sup>27</sup> ‘Contingency’ has two meanings in this context.<sup>28</sup> First, it suggests that cultural production depends on powerful digital platforms like YouTube. These digital platforms allow content creators to track and understand the activities and engagement of viewers, creating a close relationship between producers of content and the platforms. The second meaning of contingent is about the content itself, which is circulated through digital platforms. The content of these videos is contingent, because it is influenced by user feedback. It can be constantly changed and circulated again. This means that cultural production is both dependent on powerful platforms and flexible, adapting to user feedback.<sup>29</sup> The authors argue that the term ‘platform’ can be misleading. It suggests that platforms simply facilitate interactions, however, they also organize and guide these interactions.<sup>30</sup>

YouTube serves as a platform through which algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art are constructed and shared. YouTube’s features, such as likes and comments, contribute to the visibility and dissemination of content.<sup>31</sup> The recommendation algorithm impacts which videos gain more attention.<sup>32</sup> The platformization of cultural production on YouTube thereby contributes to the formation and reach of specific narratives and algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators. For the analysis, Nieborg and Poell’s insights in cultural production are employed in reflecting on the

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<sup>26</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4275-77.

<sup>27</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276-79.

<sup>28</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276.

<sup>29</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276-77.

<sup>30</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4279.

<sup>31</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4280-82.

<sup>32</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4285-88.

platformization of cultural production, in the way algorithmic imaginaries are constructed and disseminated. In the next section, the algorithmic imaginary is explained in more detail.

## 2.2 Algorithmic Imaginaries

Before delving further into the algorithmic imaginary, the concept is embedded in a broader theoretical tradition. Science and technology scholar Astrid Mager and media scholar Christian Katzenbach discuss the concept of imaginaries in relation to future technologies.<sup>33</sup> According to Mager and Katzenbach, the imaginaries that people construct of technologies, are co-producing the future that is envisioned. This makes imaginaries performative.<sup>34</sup> There are almost always various imaginaries about technologies in circulation, with each imaginary possessing varying degrees of influence.<sup>35</sup> They focus on imaginaries as personal matter. In contrast, science and technology scholar Sheila Jasanoff and critical development and modernization scholar Sang-Hyun Kim study imaginaries not as individual, but rather as collectively and institutionally held, stabilized visions.<sup>36</sup> Jasanoff and Kim describe this as sociotechnical imaginaries, in accordance with Mager and Katzenbach they argue that these imaginaries are shaping the way people understand and interact with technology.<sup>37</sup>

Like Mager and Katzenbach, Bucher explores the experiences and affective dimensions of encounters between people and algorithms. She introduces the algorithmic imaginary to frame the various ways people perceive and react to algorithms in their everyday lives.<sup>38</sup> Bucher's core argument is that people experience algorithms in multifaceted ways, which leads to a wide range of emotions, from curiosity to frustration.<sup>39</sup> The algorithmic imaginary becomes a lens through which people construct mental models and theories about algorithms. By emphasizing the affective dimensions of algorithmic encounters, the text fills a gap in understanding the subjective experiences of people in algorithmically mediated environments.<sup>40</sup> Bucher argues that people, aware of the algorithm, strategically adapt their behaviour when interacting with the algorithm. This dynamic interplay contributes to the evolving nature of algorithms.<sup>41</sup> Employing this concept, the thesis explores mental models and theories constructed about AI-art generators in cultural production on YouTube. The research aligns with Bucher's call to consider the subjective experiences of individuals,

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<sup>33</sup> Astrid Mager and Christian Katzenbach, "Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology: Multiple, Contested, Commodified," *New Media & Society* 23, no. 2 (February 1, 2021): 223–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820929321>.

<sup>34</sup> Mager and Katzenbach, "Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology," 224.

<sup>35</sup> Mager and Katzenbach, "Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology," 226.

<sup>36</sup> Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim, *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power* (Chicago, United States of America: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Jasanoff and Kim, *Dreamscapes of Modernity*, 1–5.

<sup>38</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 31.

<sup>39</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 32.

<sup>40</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 32–33.

<sup>41</sup> Bucher, "The Algorithmic Imaginary," 42.

exploring the multifaceted ways in which the public perceives and engages with AI-generated art in YouTube discourse.

An important factor to consider is the rhetoric used in constructing these imaginaries. As previously mentioned, Nguyen and Hekman argue that media shape the public perception of AI through the rhetoric they use.<sup>42</sup> Another key scholar focussed on rhetoric in shaping the public perception of AI, is Kate Crawford. She explores the metaphors surrounding data in machine learning and AI.<sup>43</sup> Crawford discusses the transformative use of language, particularly terms like “data mining” and phrases such as “data is the new oil”.<sup>44</sup> These expressions are not just descriptive, they are part of a rhetorical strategy. Initially, data was seen as something personal, and subject to individual ownership and control.<sup>45</sup> However, the adoption of metaphors like “data is the new oil” shows a deliberate move to redefine the nature of data as a resource to be consumed or controlled.<sup>46</sup> This shift in rhetoric implies a change in perception from data as something personal, to something nonhuman.

In the context of the algorithmic imaginary, this transformation in language reflects how the collective understanding and perception of data and algorithms are not fixed but shaped by language. Sociolinguist Norman Fairclough states that language is intricately tied to social interactions and is continually shaped through relational processes.<sup>47</sup> Fairclough’s approach to language involves both language as it is used in social interactions and as a social construction of reality, it emerges and evolves through dynamic exchanges within social contexts. In context of the thesis, YouTube plays a role in the production and dissemination of language, where creators and viewers contribute to the creation of meaning. Therefore, studying rhetoric is crucial for understanding how linguistic constructs, such as algorithmic imaginaries, are produced.

### 2.3 Hybrid Creativity

Zooming in on a specific theoretical approach to perceive human-AI collaboration in creative practices, the following section discusses various perspectives on hybrid creativity. As mentioned in the introduction, Coeckelbergh explores the relationship between machines and artistic creation. He builds on the ideas of cognitive scientist Margaret Boden, who states that whether computers could really be considered creative is not a scientific question but a philosophical one, to which there is no clear answer.<sup>48</sup> Coeckelbergh proposes to consider non-human forms of creativity through a relational approach, emphasizing the interaction between the process and the product in determining the artistic

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<sup>42</sup> Nguyen and Hekman, “The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence,” chap. 7. Discussion.

<sup>43</sup> Kate Crawford, *The Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence* (New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America: Yale University Press, 2021), 111–21.

<sup>44</sup> Crawford, *The Atlas of AI*, 113.

<sup>45</sup> Crawford, *The Atlas of AI*, 113-14.

<sup>46</sup> Crawford, *The Atlas of AI*, 114-15.

<sup>47</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Hodder Arnold, 1995), 5–6.

<sup>48</sup> Margaret A. Boden, “Computer Models of Creativity,” *Ai Magazine* 30, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 23–34, <https://doi.org/10.1609/aimag.v30i3.2254>.

status of an artwork.<sup>49</sup> This is also discussed by Lomas, who sees the computer as both a medium for art creation and an assistant that actively contributes to the artistic process, which he describes as hybrid creativity.<sup>50</sup> These authors provide a foundational theoretical understanding of the evolving relationship between humans, machines and artistic creation. However, they are both optimistic about human-AI collaboration. The idea of the computer evolving from an assistant to a collaborator may oversimplify the ethical considerations. Public discourse might have become more nuanced, addressing ethical and personal concerns. Therefore, a critical lens is crucial to adapt these insights to the more recent online discourse.

Media scholar Hye-Kyung Lee uses a critical lens in exploring AI and creativity. She raises concerns about the potential dehumanization of creativity as machines play a more significant role in artistic creation.<sup>51</sup> Lee prompts a closer look at the ethical and societal consequences of such a transition, challenging the optimistic narratives of seamless human-AI collaboration.<sup>52</sup> Lee states that debates about AI's ability to be creative both dehumanizes and rehumanizes creativity, as it creates an opportunity to not only discuss the growing likelihood of creativity existing independently of humans, but also to delve into the fundamental human conditions that contribute to creativity.<sup>53</sup> The research for this thesis aligns with Lee's stance, by critically analysing discourse on this topic on YouTube. Digital culture and new media scholar Lev Manovich and philosopher Emanuelle Arielli investigate the influence of AI on design, media, art theory and aesthetics. In line with Lee's prompt to discuss creativity independently of humans, the authors argue that AI is a creative medium with its own affordances.<sup>54</sup> Manovich argues that the idea of art purely being driven by human intuition and emotions, instead of rules and examples, is both relatively new and already outdated.<sup>55</sup> He describes that in the past, artists needed to master techniques. With the relatively recent rise of modern art, the focus shifted from technical skills to conceptual ideas. Manovich argues that, with the rise of AI in artistic creation, focussing on conceptual ideas and emotions is now already outdated.<sup>56</sup> Manovich and Arielli delve into the nature of creativity, arguing that AI can indeed be creative by generating novel

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<sup>49</sup> Coeckelbergh, "Can Machines Create Art?," 294-95.

<sup>50</sup> Lomas, "On Hybrid Creativity," 8-9.

<sup>51</sup> Lee, "Rethinking Creativity: Creative Industries, AI and Everyday Creativity," 601-12.

<sup>52</sup> Lee, "Rethinking Creativity: Creative Industries, AI and Everyday Creativity," 606-7.

<sup>53</sup> Lee, "Rethinking Creativity: Creative Industries, AI and Everyday Creativity," 606.

<sup>54</sup> Lev Manovich, "Chapter 2: Who is an Artist in AI Era?," in *Artificial Aesthetics: A Critical Guide to AI, Media and Design*, by Lev Manovich and Emanuelle Arielli, 2022, 17-22, <http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/artificial-aesthetics-book>.

<sup>55</sup> Lev Manovich, "Chapter 4: AI and Myths of Creativity.," in *Artificial Aesthetics: A Critical Guide to AI, Media and Design*, by Lev Manovich and Emanuelle Arielli, 2022, 62,

<http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/artificial-aesthetics-book>.

<sup>56</sup> Manovich, "Chapter 4: AI and Myths of Creativity.," 62-63.

outputs.<sup>57</sup> Arielli states that, if we perceive humans as creative and AI as not creative, it is because we understand how AI functions, while our understanding of human creativity remains incomplete.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast with the non-anthropocentric approach of Manovich and Arielli, media scholars Leah Natale and Simone Henrickson propose to shift from assessing whether machines can be creative, to understanding how humans attribute creativity to computing systems.<sup>59</sup> The effectiveness of AI in being perceived as a creative artist is linked by the authors to factors influenced by humans, such as curatorial decisions and framing. Building on Boden's ideas,<sup>60</sup> the authors emphasize the centrality of human perception.<sup>61</sup> The approach of this thesis aligns with this perspective, as the focus of the analysis is on the human perception of AI-art in online discourse, rather than assessing whether AI can be creative. However, it is important to take the perspective of Manovich and Arielli into account as their non-anthropocentric perception of creativity might be reflected upon in YouTube discourse.

It is notable that while Henrickson and Natale emphasize the centrality of human perception, they do not discuss the crucial role of platforms in mediating hybrid creativity. In a broader sense, 'hybridity' manifests not only in human-AI collaboration in art but also in the interactions between YouTube channels and their audiences. In 2005, media scholars Yvonne Spielmann and Kerstin Mey already discussed digital media as essential mediators in hybridity.<sup>62</sup> They state that digital media play a central role in facilitating hybrid interactions between humans, technologies and cultural artifacts. They argue that the hybrid construction of identities through digital media platforms, which they call hybridity, can both bring diverse ideas and identities together and erase differences between identities.<sup>63</sup> Applied to contemporary online discourse, platforms like YouTube serve as dynamic spaces where diverse identities converge and interact. Social media platforms mediate the exchange of ideas, thereby shaping the hybrid nature of digital culture. For the analysis this means that the various theoretical approaches to hybrid creativity and hybridity are examined in relation to cultural production on YouTube, uncovering how discourse reflects this theory. Additionally, the role of YouTube in mediating hybridity is further explored. Having outlined the theoretical framework, the next chapter discusses the methodological approach.

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<sup>57</sup> Emanuele Arielli, "Chapter 3: Techno-Animism and the Pygmalion Effect," in *Artificial Aesthetics: A Critical Guide to AI, Media and Design*, by Lev Manovich and Emanuele Arielli, 2022, 23–24, <http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/artificial-aesthetics-book>.

<sup>58</sup> Arielli, "Chapter 3: Techno-Animism and the Pygmalion Effect," 20.

<sup>59</sup> Natale and Henrickson, "The Lovelace Effect: Perceptions of Creativity in Machines," 9-13.

<sup>60</sup> Boden, "Computer Models of Creativity," 23–24.

<sup>61</sup> Natale and Henrickson, "The Lovelace Effect: Perceptions of Creativity in Machines," 12-13.

<sup>62</sup> Kerstin Mey and Yvonne Spielmann, "Editorial," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research Into New Media Technologies* 11, no. 4 (2005): 5–9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856505061047>.

<sup>63</sup> Mey and Spielmann, "Editorial," 8.

### 3. Method and Corpus

In relation to the theoretical concepts, in this section the methodological approach and the corpus are discussed. The approach is first embedded in literature and then connected to the sub-questions.

#### 3.1 Close and Distant Reading

Both digital methods and discourse analysis are used to research the sub-questions, in line with the ‘computational turn’ in humanities research as described by digital humanities scholar David Berry, focussing on the specific nature of digital media.<sup>64</sup> Berry dissects between ‘close’ and ‘distant’ reading.<sup>65</sup> ‘Close reading’ refers to in-depth analysis of individual texts, while ‘distant reading’ encompasses the examination of a bigger corpus using digital methods.<sup>66</sup> Digital humanities scholars argue that distant reading can only be successful when it is combined with close readings.<sup>67</sup>

Additionally, digital media researcher Tim Highfield suggests that effective online research involves the data and metadata made available by the online platforms under study.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used for researching AI-art discourse and metadata on YouTube. The following table provides an overview of the method and data used for each sub-question. Next, the selection of the corpus and the methods are described in more detail.

Sub-question	Method	Data
What channels and videos as forms of cultural production engage with AI-art on YouTube?	Distant reading, using the <i>Pandas</i> library in Python	Metadata of YouTube videos and channels, collected with the search query ‘ai art’
What algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators are constructed in videos on YouTube?	Close reading, discourse analysis	Textual and audiovisual content of the YouTube videos that discuss AI-art
How do these algorithmic imaginaries concerning AI-art generators reflect the theory of hybrid creativity?	Close reading, discourse analysis	Textual and audiovisual content of the YouTube videos that discuss AI-art, analysis of the algorithmic imaginaries from the previous sub-question

Table 1: Sub-questions, methods and data

<sup>64</sup> David Berry, *Understanding Digital Humanities* (Springer, 2012), 3–8.

<sup>65</sup> Berry, “Digital Humanities: First, Second and Third Wave.”

<sup>66</sup> Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *New Left Review* 1 (January 2000): 57, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii1/articles/franco-moretti-conjectures-on-world-literature>.

<sup>67</sup> Adam Hammond, Julian Brooke, and Graeme Hirst, “Modeling Modernist Dialogism: Close Reading with Big Data,” Ebook, in *Reading Modernism with Machines: Digital Humanities and Modernist Literature*, ed. Shawna Ross and James O’Sullivan (London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Palgrave Macmillan, published by Springer Nature, 2016), 49–77.

<sup>68</sup> Tim Highfield, *How to Select Appropriate Online Methodologies*, ed. Kate Miltner, *SAGE Research Methods: Doing Research Online* (SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529609103>.

### 3.2 Corpus

The videos and metadata are accessed using *YouTube Data Tools*.<sup>69</sup> This tool retrieves metadata from up to 500 videos, including tags, descriptions, video categories and titles. For this analysis, data is collected using the search query ‘ai art’, resulting in a dataset of 476 videos in order of relevancy as presented by YouTube. The choice was made to select the ‘most relevant’ videos, because these are the videos presented by YouTube to users, this thereby ensures a representative sample of the discourse.<sup>70</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the hidden workings of YouTube’s algorithm influences what content gains the most visibility.<sup>71</sup> The data is manually cleaned to ensure all videos engage with AI-art. Changes made while cleaning the dataset and selecting the videos for sub-question two and three are kept track of and are documented in appendix 1 and 2, to ensure transparency in this process.<sup>72</sup>

### 3.3 Engagement

The first sub-question is researched using digital methods with Python, identifying what videos and channels on YouTube engage with AI-art, and how they engage with this topic. For this sub-question, all 476 videos are used to create an overview of the engagement with AI-art in cultural production on YouTube. Using the *Pandas* library to filter, group, and aggregate data based on categories and engagement statistics, it is uncovered how creators and YouTube position the content, as well as which videos have the most engagement in terms of likes and comments.<sup>73</sup> The findings are visualised using the *Seaborn* library.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.4 Discourse Analysis

Next, a qualitative analysis of the videos is conducted through discourse analysis as described by media and cultures scholar David Hesmondhalgh.<sup>75</sup> For this part of the research, a smaller selection of relevant videos is used, as not all videos are useful for the second and third sub-question. The selection criteria can be found in appendix 2. The videos are selected by examining the titles, categories and descriptions, resulting in an initial sample of 40 videos. The 40 videos were then watched to manually select 10 videos expressing diverging ideas about AI-art. The videos were

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<sup>69</sup> “YouTube Data Tools,” n.d., <https://ytdt.digitalmethods.net/>.

<sup>70</sup> Sui, Sui, and Rhodes, “What to Watch: Practical Considerations and Strategies for Using YouTube for Research,” 7.

<sup>71</sup> Arthurs, Drakopoulou, and Gandini, “Researching YouTube,” 6.

<sup>72</sup> Katie Rawson and Trevor Munoz, “Against Cleaning,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2019*, ed. Matthew Gold and Lauren Klein (Minneapolis, United States of America: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 279–92.

<sup>73</sup> “Pandas Documentation — Pandas 2.1.4 Documentation,” n.d., <https://pandas.pydata.org/docs/index.html>.

<sup>74</sup> “Seaborn: Statistical Data Visualization — Seaborn 0.13.1 Documentation,” n.d., <https://seaborn.pydata.org/>.

<sup>75</sup> David Hesmondhalgh, “Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis,” in *Analysing Media Texts*, ed. Marie Gillespie and Jason Toynbee (New York City, United States of America: Open University Press, 2006), 119–56.

selected manually through purposive sampling, because this is fitting for qualitative research into diverging ideas, in this case the in-depth study of algorithmic imaginaries.<sup>76</sup>

Discourse analysis is used to analyse the underlying meanings and dynamics in language use.<sup>77</sup> It is a qualitative method, based on interpretation.<sup>78</sup> Compared to other methods, for example content analysis, discourse analysis is better suited for discovering latent or hidden meanings in media texts.<sup>79</sup> This makes it suitable for exploring algorithmic imaginaries, as these meanings are not readily apparent. Hesmondhalgh builds on the previously mentioned theory by Fairclough on language and discourse.<sup>80</sup> In language, Fairclough focusses on representation, identity and relationships.<sup>81</sup> In the analysis for this thesis, these three elements are researched, following the steps as described by Hesmondhalgh.<sup>82</sup> This involves analysing not only what is said, but also how it is said, who is saying it, and in what context. This helps to unpack the meanings of specific linguistic terms in the videos.<sup>83</sup> The following steps are taken for each video:

- Representation: It is examined how AI-art generators are represented in the videos, by studying how creators depict the capabilities, limitations, and implications of AI in art creation.
- Identity: The identities constructed for various stakeholders, including creators, viewers, and AI-art generators are investigated. The roles assigned to them in the creative process are described.
- Relationships: The relationships established between different actors in the videos are explored. This includes examining the dynamics between creators and viewers, as well as the interaction between humans and AI systems.

Transcripts of the 10 videos are included in appendix 4. Having outlined the methodological approach, the next chapter discusses the findings of the analysis.

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<sup>76</sup> Michael Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, United States of America: SAGE Publications, 2015), chap. 5 module 30.

<sup>77</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 120–21.

<sup>78</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 154.

<sup>79</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 121.

<sup>80</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 122-24.

<sup>81</sup> Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, 5.

<sup>82</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 122.

<sup>83</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 138.



## 4. Analysis

In this chapter, the findings of the analysis are presented and discussed in relation to the theory. Each section of this analysis discusses the findings for a sub-question. First, the channels and videos engaging with AI-art on YouTube are explored. This is followed by discourse analysis, dissecting algorithmic imaginaries constructed in the videos. Finally, the last section explores how these algorithmic imaginaries reflect the theory of hybrid creativity.

### 4.1 Cultural Production

#### 4.1.1 Categories and Channels

Examining the distribution of the 476 videos in the dataset over YouTube's pre-listed video categories, reveals that videos were uploaded by creators in 13 of YouTube's 15 categories. The bar chart in figure 1 shows that 'Entertainment' is the category with the most videos about AI-art, followed by 'People & Blogs'.

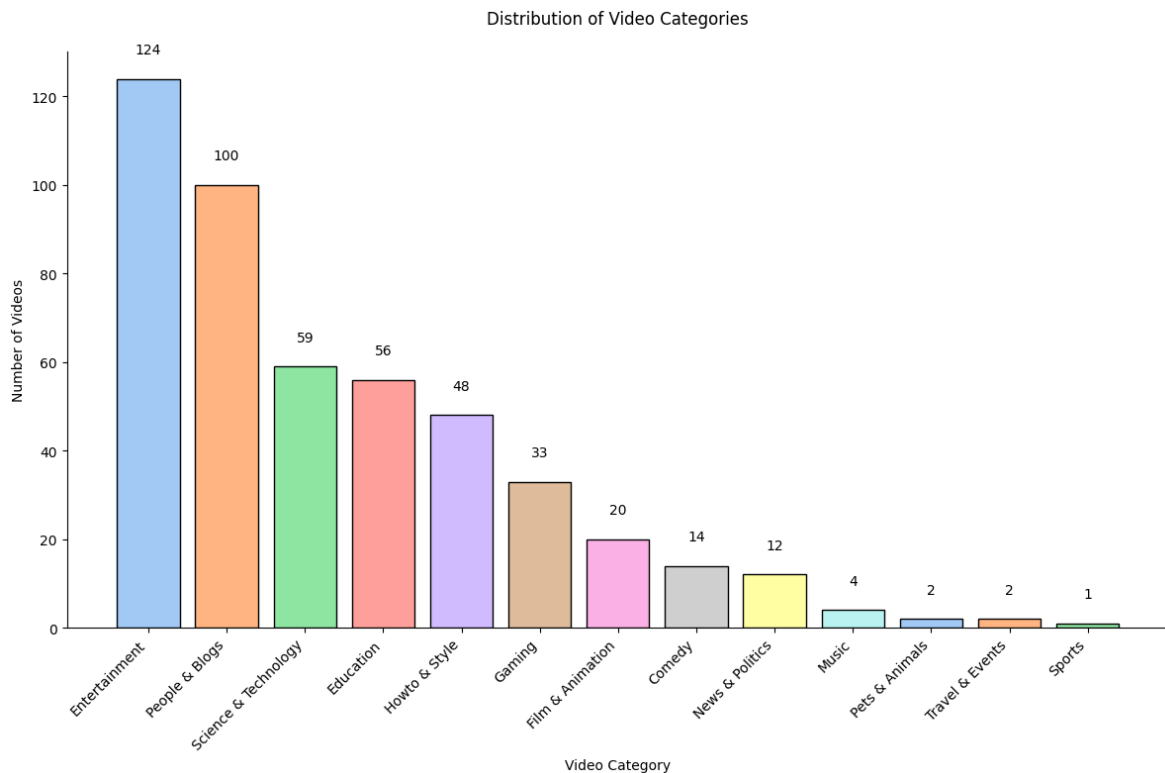


Figure 1: Video Categories

The total number of videos in the dataset is 476, this means that the top two video categories make up almost half of the dataset. The popularity of the 'Entertainment' and 'People & Blogs' categories indicates that creators of videos are positioning their content within specific genres. This could be driven by the desire for higher visibility and engagement on the platform. The finding that AI-art content is concentrated in specific categories, shows that the pre-listed categories of YouTube serve as

a mechanism through which cultural production, such as content about AI-generated art, is organized by the platform.<sup>84</sup> Creators likely align their content with these categories to optimize engagement, reflecting the influence of YouTube on content creation and distribution. Further inspection revealed that only a few channels in this dataset uploaded multiple videos related to AI-art, there are no channels that dominate in this discourse, in the number of videos uploaded. Table 2 shows that channels with multiple videos related to AI-art assigned their content to the most used categories, ‘Entertainment’ and ‘People & Blogs’. Additionally, one channel uploaded multiple videos in ‘Gaming’, which is one of the lesser-used categories.

Channel	Number of Videos	Video Categories
Greenskull AI	11	Entertainment
Vintendo	10	Gaming
ReallyNotAi	8	People & Blogs

Table 2: Channels with the most videos in the dataset

Close reading reveals that the Greenskull AI channel, which uploaded the most videos in this dataset, describes artificial intelligence as their “current passion”, stating they use AI-art generators to: “generate AI images and AI videos based on prompts either provided by viewers or my own creations”.<sup>85</sup> This reflects the increasing contingency of cultural production, as the description suggests that the content of the videos is influenced the viewers.<sup>86</sup> That makes the content of the videos contingent. YouTube allows creators to adapt their content to platform dynamics and allows viewers to interact with the content, the platform thereby acts as a mediator in hybridity between the creator and the viewers.<sup>87</sup> The distribution of AI-art related videos across multiple channels without a dominant presence suggests a decentralized landscape of content creation. Additionally, the fact that these channels predominantly assign their content to the previously found most popular categories ‘Entertainment’ and ‘People & Blogs’, underscores the idea of creators strategically positioning their content within categories that attract significant viewership.

Greenskull AI uploads mostly ‘shorts’, in which the creator experiments with generative AI to create images. ‘Shorts’ is a video format on YouTube, lasting up to 60 seconds, these videos are designed for easy creation and binge consumption.<sup>88</sup> This could contribute to the fact that this creator has uploaded the most videos in the dataset, since this video format affords creating content quickly

<sup>84</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4287-88.

<sup>85</sup> GreenskullAI, “About,” YouTube, July 16, 2020, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/@GreenskullAI/featured>.

<sup>86</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276.

<sup>87</sup> Mey and Spielmann, “Editorial,” 5-8.

<sup>88</sup> “Create—and Earn—with Short Form Video on YouTube,” n.d., [https://www.youtube.com/intl/en\\_id/creators/shorts/](https://www.youtube.com/intl/en_id/creators/shorts/).

and easily. The ‘shorts’ are often in the ‘Entertainment’ category, this is in line with how YouTube encourages creators of ‘shorts’ to “make funny videos” and “bring hilarious ideas to life”.<sup>89</sup>

The video in the dataset with the most comments is from the ‘Education’ category, figure 1 shows this is not one of the prominent categories in the dataset. The video is titled ‘Why Artists are Fed Up with AI Art’, in this video creator SamDoesArts expresses his concerns about the increasing use of AI-art generators and invites users to comment on this topic. This example indicates that the apparent dissonance in the number of views and the number of comments might be attributed to the content of the videos. In-depth videos with critical stances, that actively invite viewers to comment, might accumulate more comments. YouTube’s recommendation algorithm impacts these engagement metrics, the next section therefore delves into the order in which the videos are recommended by YouTube to the viewers.

#### 4.1.2 Recommendation Algorithm

YouTube’s recommendation algorithm remains opaque, meaning that the specifics for which videos are displayed and in what order they are shown are unknown.<sup>90</sup> However, a recent crowd-sourced investigation led by Mozilla shows that the algorithm tends to push controversial content, which sometimes violates YouTube’s own policies.<sup>91</sup> While no bold claims can be made about the algorithm and its implications, research shows it could lead to polarization and radicalization.<sup>92</sup> Studying the order in which videos are recommended by YouTube to the viewers in the dataset, reveals that YouTube does not necessarily recommend short videos more, as shown in appendix 3. The absence of a direct correlation between video length and recommendation indicates that YouTube’s recommendation algorithm considers multiple factors beyond video duration. In figure 2, shown on the next page, the number of likes, comments and views are shown in relation to how YouTube recommends the videos. The x-axis shows the order in which videos are recommended to viewers, ranged from 0 on the left, which is the highest position, to 500 on the right, which is the lowest position in YouTube’s recommendation list. The number of likes, comments and views on the y-axis are generalized within each category, to display the results in relation to each other. The graphs in figure 2 thereby show that in this dataset, YouTube recommends videos to their audience that relatively have more likes and views, with both likes and views displaying a similar spike at the top of the recommendation list, shown on the far left on the x-axis. The orange graph, showing the comments, differs from the likes and views as there are no videos without comments in a high

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<sup>89</sup> “Create – and Earn – with Short Form Video on YouTube.”

<sup>90</sup> Arthurs, Drakopoulou, and Gandini, “Researching YouTube,” 11.

<sup>91</sup> Mozilla, “YouTube Regrets: A crowdsourced investigation into YouTube’s recommendation algorithm,” *foundation.mozilla.org* (Mozilla, July 2021), accessed March 9, 2024, <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/youtube/findings/>.

<sup>92</sup> Manoel Ribeiro et al., “Auditing radicalization pathways on YouTube,” *FAT\* ’20: Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, January 27, 2020, 138–40, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3351095.3372879>.

position on the recommendation list. The subsequent exploration of likes, views, and comments, relative to recommendation position illustrates YouTube's recommendation of content with higher engagement levels to their audience. This becomes particularly evident in the prominence of comments in the recommendation hierarchy. The dissonance between views and comments suggests that, in this dataset, YouTube's recommendation algorithm appears to prioritize engagement in comments over mere viewership and likes.

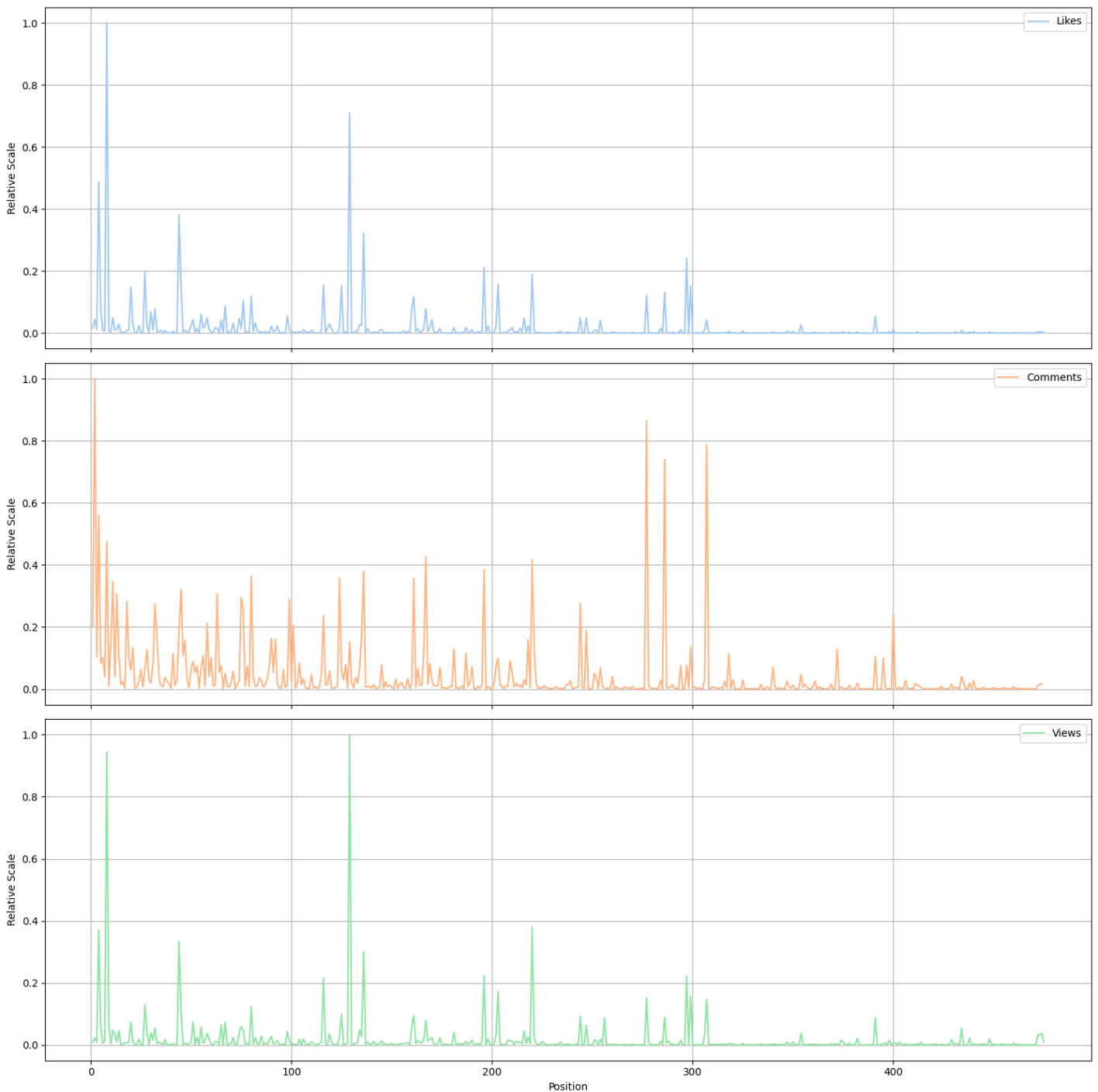


Figure 2: Likes, comments and views in relation to the video's position in YouTube's recommendation algorithm

For the next part of this analysis, these findings are used in the discussion of YouTube’s mediating role in the distribution of imaginaries. The following sub-chapter delves into the content of the videos, exploring the algorithmic imaginaries.

## 4.2 Algorithmic Imaginaries

Having outlined an overview of cultural production about AI-art on YouTube, this section explores algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators constructed in the videos. All 476 videos were manually sorted into five categories, shown in table 3. For this part of the discourse analysis, 10 videos from category A are analysed, exploring the representation of AI-art generators, the construction of identities of the stakeholders and the relationships between those stakeholders.<sup>93</sup> In these elements, algorithmic imaginaries are constructed.

Category	Description	Number of videos
A	Videos discussing the use of generative AI in art creation. For example, these videos can be a personal story, sarcastic commentary, a comedy sketch or an explanation of how generative AI works.	121
B	Tutorials on what AI tools to use and/or how to use generative AI tools. For example, these videos explain to the viewer how to make money using generative AI.	134
C	Videos that show AI-generated content, without substantive commentary. These videos show images or video content that was generated using a generative AI-tool.	203
D	Unavailable content.	11
E	Unrelated content for this sub-question.	5

*Table 3: Manual video categories*

The following section provides an overview of the three dominant themes found in the algorithmic imaginaries. These three main themes are: problematizing AI for how it works, whether AI democratizes art or if it is a dying hype, and finally the theme of blaming humans for using AI in the wrong way. After this overview is outlined, the three main themes are further dissected and illustrated using quotes from the videos. Finally, the findings show three key metaphors used in constructing algorithmic imaginaries, these are discussed in the last section of this sub-chapter: a “magical paintbrush”, a “foetus” and a “black box”. These metaphors reflect the creators’ perception on AI-art generators and on creativity. The names of the YouTube channels are used to refer to the creators.

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<sup>93</sup> Hesmondhalgh, “Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis,” 138.

#### 4.2.1 Dominant Themes

Overall, there are three dominant themes found in the algorithmic imaginaries. One prevalent theme is problematizing AI, where AI-art generators are portrayed as a threat to artistic integrity and human creativity, emphasizing concerns about plagiarism, exploitation, and the erosion of artist autonomy. This perspective is exemplified by creators SamDoesArts and Maxime Kawawa-Beaudan. They position AI as a disruptive force and a gimmick. In contrast, another prevalent imaginary envisions AI as a democratizing tool that expands accessibility and innovation in art creation, as advocated by creators Bill Meeks, JUST A ROBOT and Mental Outlaw. This perspective sees AI as a catalyst for collaboration and democratization. This is contrasted by creator The Art Mentor, who argues AI-art is dying hype, as its technological limitations have been reached already.

These imaginaries are not mutually exclusive, they coexist in tension. This is illustrated by other, more nuanced creators Ethan Becker, daniel torres and KnowledgeHusk. They express a negative perception of the companies behind AI-art generators but have a positive outlook on the impact AI will have in redefining what art is, as well as creating art without copyright limitations. Additionally, there is the perspective of Cynthia Zhou, who argues the problem lies not with AI itself, instead humans who use AI in the wrong way should be blamed. She presents an alternative future imaginary, where everyone involved could profit from AI. The division between imaginaries portraying AI as a threat and those envisioning it as a democratizing tool, shows the coexistence of competing narratives and imaginaries.<sup>94</sup> These imaginaries co-exist in tension with each other, which is further illustrated in the next sections.

#### 4.2.2 Problematizing AI

In the previous chapter, creator SamDoesArts was briefly mentioned, because his video ‘Why Artists are Fed Up with AI Art’ has the highest number of comments in the dataset. SamDoesArts, shown in figure 3 on the left, is mentioned and quoted by other creators in videos in the dataset. His ideas thereby play an important role in this discourse. This video shows concern about the increasing popularity of AI: “It is directly hurting artists who have put their passion and their soul into everything that they create, only for their work to be scraped from the internet without their permission.” This quote reflects the perception of data as something personal and human, which differs from how data is usually portrayed, as described by Crawford: “data has become a bloodless word; it disguises both its material origins and its ends”.<sup>95</sup> SamDoesArts shapes a contrasting imaginary of data as something personal being stolen and used by AI-art generators. The thorough understanding of how these AI-art generators work and who benefits from them displayed in this video, shows critical data literacy, as SamDoesArts raises concerns about the potential for reputation damage, forgery, fraud, and identity

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<sup>94</sup> Mager and Katzenbach, “Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology,” 226.

<sup>95</sup> Crawford, *The Atlas of AI*, 113.

theft.<sup>96</sup> The unethical practices of AI companies in using artists' work without consent are highlighted: "The worst part of it all is, you and I, we don't have the option to opt out and the AI does not have the option to forget". The AI-art generators and the artist are both portrayed as powerless, the AI involuntarily hurts artists. Viewers of the SamDoesArts channel are positioned as allies to artists:

If you're an artist, or even if you're not an artist and you just care about the rights of artists, I wholeheartedly stand with you. I stand beside you. Educate people on this. Post it on your story. Let your voice be heard. Even if people in the AI industry do try to silence you, just know that there are millions of artists who stand with me and with you.

In this quote, there is an imaginary constructed of solidarity within the artistic community. In the way SamDoesArts encourages viewers to further distribute his content, he displays awareness of how social media platforms organize and guide the distribution of cultural production. This influences the reach an impact of the algorithmic imaginaries constructed in this video.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, a narrative of resistance against exploitative AI systems and corporate greed is constructed, highlighting the importance of raising awareness and mobilizing support for change.

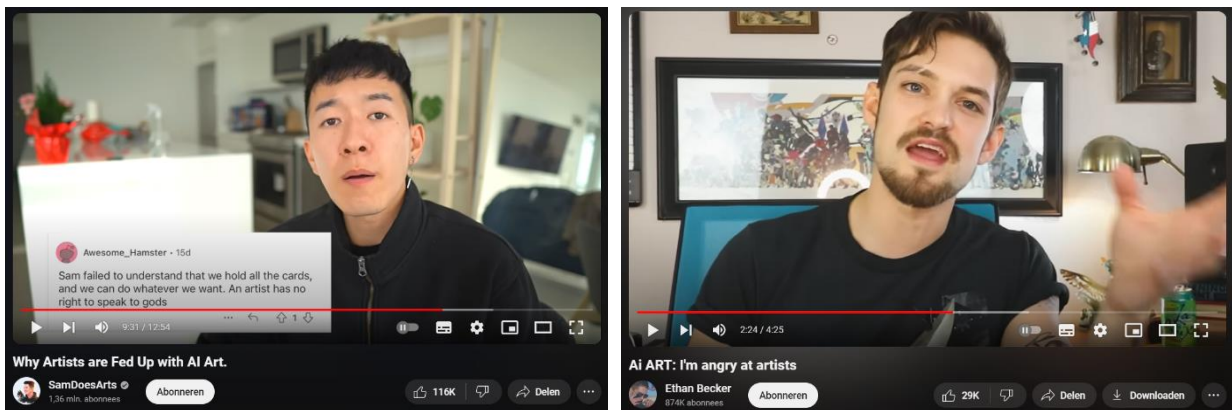


Figure 3: Screenshots of the videos by SamDoesArts (left) and Ethan Becker (right)

Creator Ethan Becker, shown in figure 3 on the right, uploaded a video titled 'Ai ART: I'm angry at artists', he identifies himself as an artist who is affected by the rise of AI-generated art, expressing frustration about AI stealing art from his friends, including SamDoesArts. However, the rise of AI is ultimately presented as a force that drives human together to define art, instead of a direct threat. The identity of art is constructed as a way for humans to connect: "We engage with each other through the art, the art was always secondary." A prevalent algorithmic imaginary constructed in this video, is AI-art generators as conversation starters on what art is and why we make art as humans. While the impact and negative consequences of AI in creating art are recognized, Ethan Becker argues humans will overcome this conflict.

<sup>96</sup> Nguyen and Hekman, "The News Framing of Artificial Intelligence," chap. 7. Discussion.

<sup>97</sup> Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production," 4278–80.

While the arguments used by creator daniel torres are more nuanced, in his video titled ‘AI Art Isn’t Theft. Here’s Why:’ he constructs an algorithmic imaginary similar to the one presented by Ethan Becker. The video creator positions themselves as a critical observer of the AI-art phenomenon, questioning its ethical and legal implications. He expresses concern about the potential impact on human artists and advocates for systemic solutions to support artists. He suggests that AI-art generators could potentially reduce the significance of individual copyright, implying that this could lead to a re-evaluation of copyright laws and the control that artists have over their creations. This is presented as an opportunity:

Well it’s simple: copyright is a creativity limiter, it monopolizes the control of certain ideas and concepts, placing control of them squarely on the copyright holders: the Disneys and Nintendos of the world. And for them, the copyright system works amazingly.

He suggests that in a world where copyright has less say, artists may have more freedom to create without the constraints of legal ownership and protection.

#### *4.2.3 Democratizing Art or a Dying Hype?*

In line with Ethan Becker and daniel torres, creator The Art Mentor is negative about AI-art generators, but mostly positive about what impact he thinks it will have. In this video titled ‘In 1-2 years AI Art will be dead and here’s why’, the creator presents AI-art generators as initially promising, capable of producing art quickly. He ultimately dismisses them as gimmicks. He argues that AI-art has not brought the promised freshness to the art scene but has instead commodified a recognizable AI art style. The Art Mentor constructs the algorithmic imaginary of AI as a “black box”, arguing that nobody truly knows on which data the algorithms are trained. The video paints a bleak future for AI-art, predicting its eventual demise within the next few years. It suggests that legal issues, user disillusionment, and technological limitations will contribute to the downfall of AI-art. The video promotes a future vision where human artists, described in this video as “real artists”, reclaim their dominance in the art world:

In a really efficient sense it’s naturally going to happen y’all, all of this ‘democratization’ of art is total nonsense, and that’s just how they hook their customers into it: because it sounds like this really big noble goal. But it’s really just trash.

Technological imaginaries are performative, because they shape the future they envision.<sup>98</sup> The imaginary constructed in this video exemplifies this, as the creator aims to influence how people interact with AI-art generators through this pessimistic stance, where his experiences shape the imaginary of AI-art generators as a “black box”. According to The Art Mentor, AI cannot democratize art if the way it works is not clear to users. Here, The Art Mentor argues against the imaginary of AI

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<sup>98</sup> Mager and Katzenbach, “Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology,” 224



as a means to democratize art creation, which is constructed in a video titled ‘In Defense of AI Art and AI Artists’ by Bill Meeks:

I’m trying to create art myself, after working in the creative fields for years. Other artists would prefer to gatekeep creators, like me, from expressing themselves, simply because they consider the tool I’m using a threat to their livelihood. Who are these artists to gatekeep personal expression like that? What if somebody had done that to them?

The creator of this video constructs the imaginary of AI-art generators as tools that artists can work with, making art creation available to more people. He argues that artists need to adapt to this new technology:

Today we find ourselves at the dawn of a new artistic era, one that artists need to adapt to before they get left behind. Regardless of what you may have heard, generative AI art programs like Stable Diffusion are more than just novelties, or candy machines that spit out random images, these are powerful artistic tools.

This aligns with the perspective of the creator JUST A ROBOT, who uploaded a video titled ‘Defending AI Art (Because I Want To Get Canceled)’. Whether by design or unintentionally, some imaginaries can coexist, while other imaginaries may strive for dominance in discourse.<sup>99</sup> This creator describes the current imaginary striving for dominance in discourse on YouTube as being against AI in art creation: “If you have been on YouTube for five minutes, the common consensus is that AI art and AI animation is terrible.” The creator presents themselves as a robot, calling AI his “brothers and sisters”. He argues that people who think AI will not advance any further are “arguing with a foetus”. By comparing AI-art generators to a human foetus, he constructs the algorithmic imaginary of AI-art generators as harmless and human, at the start of their potential. Research into anthropomorphism – the attribution of human characteristics to non-human entities – in relation to computers, suggests that humans tend anthropomorphize and apply social rules to interaction with computers mindlessly.<sup>100</sup> This creator anthropomorphizes AI and dehumanizes himself. This contrasts the previously mentioned creator The Art Mentor who argues that AI is an already dying hype. The video by JUST A ROBOT emphasizes how AI can lead to new forms of expression and free humans from mundane tasks.

This aligns with the ideas expressed by creator Mental Outlaw, who uploaded a video titled ‘Ai Art Keeps Winning’. This creator suggests an imaginary where AI-generated art is portrayed as the epitome of pure artistry. Mental Outlaw implies that AI-art embodies principles of openness and inclusivity. He suggests that artists should not fear AI, comparing it to the rise of computers in chess: “It’s not like chess disappeared as a game when that happened, or it’s not like it disappeared as a profession ... but computers that play chess, they just added another dynamic to it”. Another creator who suggests we have no choice but to co-exist with AI, is KnowledgeHusk. However, in his voice-

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<sup>99</sup> Mager and Katzenbach, “Future Imaginaries in the Making and Governing of Digital Technology,” 226.

<sup>100</sup> Clifford Nass and Youngme Moon, “Machines and Mindlessness: Social Responses to Computers,” *Journal of Social Issues* 56, no. 1 (December 17, 2002): 92–93, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00153>.

over video titled ‘AI Art is inevitable’, he is more nuanced but ultimately negative about this. The creator constructs the imaginary of a future where AI-art generators become normalized, leading to the redefinition of creativity and art:

AI art will kill art as we know it, but I would not go as far as to say that art is dead. The definition of creating art will just change to accommodate this new technology. Rather than being about creating an idea and making it come to life, it’ll just be about the idea.

The companies behind these generators are described as “morally bankrupt tech bros”, driven by the desire to innovate and automate. Like Ethan Becker and daniel torres, this creator suggests AI will change how humans create art.

#### *4.2.4 Blaming Humans*

In contrast, in the video titled ‘Why AI Art is Not a Tool, From an AI Researcher’, creator Maxime Kawawa-Beaudan argues that AI is not like other tools used in art creation:

But this is not like pre-mixed paints, or cameras, or digital art tablets. It’s not something that makes it more convenient for you to make the choices that lie in between ideation and a final product, it’s something that makes those choices for you and spits out a product.

The video suggests that AI-art generators blur the line between tool and automation, undermining the artist and devaluing the creative process. Finally, in the video titled ‘What the AI art issue is really about’, creator Cynthia Zhou attempts to create an overview of the diverse perspectives in YouTube discourse, quoting other creators including SamDoesArts. She constructs a future vision of AI and humans cooperating in art creation:

Let the artists feed their own artworks into the AI. And then they can claim that style as their own work. If anyone wants art in the style of that artist, they go to that artist for a commission. But instead of drawing the commission themselves, the artist will use the AI as a tool to make the commission.

While she quotes SamDoesArts to support her arguments, she disagrees with him on a vital point; whether it matters that AI is stealing from human artists. According to Cynthia Zhou, stealing through scraping pre-existing art is not the real issue. She sees no difference between a machine learning an art style and an artist learning an art style, by looking at existing art. Moreover, she argues that AI is better at this process than humans, because machines do this more efficiently. Ultimately, she thinks the problem lies in who is making money with this process, and these humans are to blame. She constructs the imaginary of AI as a “magical paintbrush”, which users can put any of their ideas into to create whatever they want, for a fraction of the costs and time it would take human artist to do:

What if I found a special way of picking out all of my years of art education and experiences and styles, and I mash it all together and I create this magical paintbrush, and I sell you this magical paintbrush. Put any of your ideas into this paintbrush and it will draw for you.

In the use of this metaphor, she constructs the idea of AI as a magical force rather than a machine, both describing it as equal to human creativity and as a magical force that is more powerful than humans, that we cannot grasp. In the video, she is pessimistic about this “magical paintbrush”, as it undermines the artistic value of art as something that is “real”.

#### 4.2.5 Metaphors

The findings from the discourse analysis reveal notable differences in the metaphors and rhetoric used between the imaginaries. In videos expressing ultimately pessimistic ideas about AI-art, generative AI is presented as something we as humans cannot grasp. For example, videos sharing concerns about AI in art creation portraying it as “a magical paintbrush” or “a black box”. These imaginaries suggest that AI is a separate entity that we as humans have no control over. Our perception of something as ‘creative’ often stems from our lack of understanding how it works.<sup>101</sup> Essentially, if we find something ordinary, it is because we understand its inner workings, whereas we deem the unknown as extraordinary. When the operations of a system are hidden from us, like a “black box” of “magical”, we tend to attribute creativity to it.<sup>102</sup> Looking at these metaphors this way, it becomes apparent why algorithmic imaginaries wary of AI in art tend to frame it as an uncontrollable separate entity. By characterizing AI as an unpredictable force, these imaginaries highlight its potential to challenge human creativity, thereby forming a threat to artists. These findings show a connection between Crawford’s theory on rhetoric and metaphors in defining the nature of data<sup>103</sup> and Bucher’s notion of the algorithmic imaginary,<sup>104</sup> as the use of metaphors defines how algorithmic imaginaries are constructed, influencing how viewers perceive AI.

In contrast, more optimistic imaginaries do the opposite by humanizing AI. This is exemplified in the metaphor of AI as a “foetus”. As briefly noted, anthropomorphising technology happens naturally.<sup>105</sup> However, in the use of this metaphor it appears to be a deliberate move to contrast other imaginaries. The creator who used this metaphor argues that he goes against the dominant imaginary of AI as something that is bad. Additionally, the video is titled ‘Defending AI Art (Because I Want To Get Canceled)’. The use of “canceled” in the title implies that the creator actively seeks to be controversial. The use of this metaphor combined with this title implies that the creator strategically uses this rhetoric as a form of cultural production to suit YouTube’s algorithm,<sup>106</sup> which has been argued to promote controversial content.<sup>107</sup> Here, the algorithmic imaginary and the platformization of cultural production intersect. The algorithmic imaginary both reflects and

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<sup>101</sup> Arielli, “Chapter 3: Techno-Animism and the Pygmalion Effect,” 19–20.

<sup>102</sup> Arielli, “Chapter 3: Techno-Animism and the Pygmalion Effect,” 20.

<sup>103</sup> Crawford, *The Atlas of AI*, 114-15.

<sup>104</sup> Bucher, “The Algorithmic Imaginary,” 32-41

<sup>105</sup> Nass and Moon, “Machines and Mindlessness: Social Responses to Computers,” 92–93.

<sup>106</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276-79.

<sup>107</sup> Ribeiro et al., “Auditing Radicalization Pathways on YouTube,” 138–40.

influences the reciprocal relationship between people and algorithms.<sup>108</sup> In a similar way, the platformization of cultural production changes the behaviour of video creators on the platform, as exemplified in the use of a controversial title combined with the metaphor of AI as a “foetus”. This adaptation to YouTube’s algorithm shows the contingency of algorithmic imaginaries in cultural production on YouTube.<sup>109</sup> Thus, not only is the construction of algorithmic imaginaries performative, but their dissemination through cultural production is also performative, given the mediating role of platforms like YouTube in this process. This mediating role is further explored in the next chapter. Having outlined the algorithmic imaginaries, the next section discusses how these imaginaries reflect hybrid creativity theory, as well as how YouTube as a platform mediates this hybridity.

### 4.3 Hybridity

The algorithmic imaginaries shed light on how human-AI collaboration in artistic practices is perceived. In this section, the imaginaries found in YouTube discourse are further discussed in relation to the theory of hybrid creativity. First, the focus on the process versus the product in artistic creation is discussed. Next, it is discussed how the theory of hybrid creativity is contrasted or echoed by the algorithmic imaginaries found in the analysis. Finally, the role of YouTube as a platform in mediating hybridity is studied, expanding on Spielmann and Mey’s theory of hybridity in a distinct way.

#### 4.3.1 *Process vs Product*

Cynthia Zhou, the creator who constructed the algorithmic imaginary of AI as a “magical paintbrush”, distinguishes between the product and the process in art creation:

The side led by developers believe that art is product driven, they see an artwork as a standalone piece separate from the creator ... The side led by artists believe that art is process driven. What this means is, that the artist believes that art is intrinsically connected to the process that the human artist went through to create that piece of artwork.

This directly reflects Coeckelbergh’s discussion of the expressivist and mimesis view:

Whereas some researchers focus on creating art works with their machine, on the ‘external’ outcome, others focus more on the ‘internal’ workings of the machine, on the process by which the art work is created.<sup>110</sup>

The expressivist view, focused on the artistic process, is exemplified by creators SamDoesArts, The Art Mentor and Maxime Kawawa-Beaudan, who argue that AI lacks the essential qualities of consciousness, imagination, and authenticity necessary for genuine artistic creation. They construct the imaginary that AI cannot truly be creative. In contrast, the mimesis view argues that AI can engage in artistic creation through imitation, as only the outcome determines the artistic value.<sup>111</sup> This is

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<sup>108</sup> Bucher, “The Algorithmic Imaginary,” 42.

<sup>109</sup> Nieborg and Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production,” 4276-79.

<sup>110</sup> Coeckelbergh, “Can Machines Create Art?,” 285-303.

<sup>111</sup> Coeckelbergh, “Can Machines Create Art?,” 289.

reflected in the perspectives of creators Bill Meeks, JUST A ROBOT and Mental Outlaw, they see AI as capable of expanding the possibilities of art by producing novel outputs, challenging traditional notions of authorship and creativity. These creators construct imaginaries suggesting AI-art generators can be better at creating art than humans.

#### *4.3.2 Relational Approach*

Creators KnowledgeHusk and Cynthia Zhou depict AI as a transformative tool that reshapes artistic practices rather than merely assisting human artists. They envision a future where AI becomes normalized in the creative process, leading to the redefinition of what constitutes art and how it is produced. While scholars Coeckelbergh and Lomas are optimistic about human-machine collaboration in artistic creation,<sup>112</sup> the findings show that YouTube discourse on creative human-AI collaboration is more nuanced and ultimately more pessimistic about the consequences of AI in art creation. This becomes apparent in the imaginaries, revealing that creators are pessimistic because they lack complete understanding and have no control over how AI-art generators work. Additionally, the findings show that human-AI collaboration in art creation urges to reconsider the human aspects of creativity, exemplified in Ethan Becker's video:

As artists, as a community, what are we supposed to be doing? As for me and my students and my teachers, I'm personally really excited, because this whole AI thing has legit made me sit down and ask myself very specific questions that I've never had to ask before ... why am I an artist? Why do I even care? Why do people even consume art?

This embodies a relational approach to creativity, where AI serves as a catalyst for defining art through human interaction. Creator Mental Outlaw constructs the imaginary of AI-art generators embodying principles of openness and inclusivity in art creation, challenging anthropocentric notions of creativity and authorship. This perspective suggests a shift towards redefining creativity in more inclusive terms. This reflects Manovich's perspective<sup>113</sup> and Arielli's perspective<sup>114</sup> on AI as a distinct medium with its own creative affordances. The contrasting perspectives presented by different creators reflect Natale and Henrickson's proposed centrality of human perception in shaping the assessment of AI-generated art.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, the findings call for further exploration of YouTube's mediating role, as this was not addressed by the literature in the theoretical framework.

#### *4.3.3 Mediating Hybridity*

YouTube plays a mediating role in the construction and dissemination of algorithmic imaginaries. The imaginaries in the videos are constructed in such a way, that they can be adapted by others and circulated again in a different context. This re-circulation of imaginaries is displayed in Ethan Becker and Cynthia Zhou quoting SamDoesArts in their videos, either agreeing with him or using his video to

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<sup>112</sup> Lomas, "On Hybrid Creativity," 8–9.

<sup>113</sup> Manovich, "Chapter 2: Who Is an Artist in AI Era?"

<sup>114</sup> Arielli, "Chapter 3: Techno-Animism and the Pygmalion Effect," 20–24.

<sup>115</sup> Natale and Henrickson, "The Lovelace Effect: Perceptions of Creativity in Machines," 9–13.

strengthen their own imaginaries. This finding illustrates how YouTube facilitates hybrid interactions between channels and viewers.<sup>116</sup> Channels engage in a dynamic exchange, responding to each other's content and viewpoints on the use of AI. Viewers, in turn, contribute to this hybrid discourse by participating in discussions within the platform, for example giving suggestions on how to use AI-art generators. YouTube, as the medium through which these interactions occur, thereby plays a mediating role in shaping relationships between humans, AI and art. Hybridity in online platforms can both bring ideas together and erase differences between identities.<sup>117</sup> In this case, YouTube as a platform facilitates the dissemination of algorithmic imaginaries on AI-generated art content, thereby spreading particular ideas associated with AI art. The finding of these creators quoting each other, shows that hybridity on YouTube brings ideas and identities together.

However, looking back at figure 2 in the first part of the analysis, it shows that YouTube tends to recommend videos with more comments to their users. This shows that YouTube also plays a mediating role in the potential erasing of imaginaries, because their algorithm promotes videos with certain imaginaries over others.<sup>118</sup> This means that some imaginaries might go unnoticed, because they are not recommended to viewers. The channel description of GreenSkullAI in the first part of the analysis and the video by SamDoesArts in the second part of the analysis reveal that creators are aware of the algorithm and adapt their content to it. These findings underscore that cultural production is increasingly contingent, as the videos are created to adapt to YouTube and its algorithm.<sup>119</sup> The platformization of cultural production on YouTube thereby not only contributes to the increasing contingency of cultural production, but also to the hybrid construction of algorithmic imaginaries.

Additionally, the findings reveal a discussion about hybridity in a distinct way, not addressed by Spielmann and Mey.<sup>120</sup> In his critique on the use of AI in art creation, creator The Art Mentor argues that AI-art has not brought the promised freshness to the art scene but has instead commodified a recognizable homogenized AI art style. This creator constructs an imaginary of AI not being able to create original content, as the identity of the artist disappears. According to The Art Mentor, it does not matter who gives the prompt to the AI-art generator, the outcome will be determined by what content the AI is trained on. Thereby, identity plays no role in the artistic creation. This finding adds to the theory of Spielmann and Mey on hybridity in a distinct way, because AI-art generators are portrayed as platforms that cause hybridity, erasing differences between identities. This means that in this context, not only social media platforms are mediators of hybridity, AI-art generators cause hybridity too by erasing differences between identities.

Ultimately, the role of YouTube as a mediator in constructing and disseminating these imaginaries highlights how the platformization of cultural production both brings ideas together and

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<sup>116</sup> Mey and Spielmann, "Editorial," 5-9.

<sup>117</sup> Mey and Spielmann, "Editorial," 7-8.

<sup>118</sup> Mey and Spielmann, "Editorial," 8.

<sup>119</sup> Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production," 4276-79.

<sup>120</sup> Mey and Spielmann, "Editorial," 5-9.

potentially erases differences between identities. The findings thereby underscore the role of platforms in mediating hybridity and hybrid creativity. Additionally, The Art Mentor's critique of AI introduces a new dimension to hybridity, emphasizing how AI-art generators can homogenize artistic styles, like platforms erasing differences between identities, thereby expanding the concept of hybridity to AI-art generators.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Key Findings

In this thesis, it is researched how algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators are constructed in cultural production on YouTube, and what this reveals about contemporary public discourse on hybrid creativity. Quantitative analysis revealed how creators use strategic positioning within popular categories to optimize visibility and engagement, underscoring how cultural production becomes increasingly contingent on YouTube. Analysis of engagement metrics shows how YouTube prioritizes engagement in number of comments in its recommendation algorithm. Meanwhile, discourse analysis uncovers diverse algorithmic imaginaries. The metaphors of a “magical paintbrush” and a “black box” portray AI as something beyond human control. In contrast, the imaginary of AI as a “foetus” humanizes it. In relation to the theory of hybrid creativity, these imaginaries are ultimately more pessimistic, addressing personal concerns. The prevalence of fear-based imaginaries could be attributed to various factors, including the subjective perspectives of video creators and the influence of the platform itself. Additionally, the re-circulation of algorithmic imaginaries, as found in creators quoting each other in their videos, shows YouTube’s crucial role in facilitating hybrid interactions among creators and viewers. The imaginary of AI-art generators homogenising artistic styles and erasing differences introduces a new dimension to the concept of hybridity, thereby expanding the theory by Spielmann and Mey.

These key findings answer the main research question: algorithmic imaginaries in cultural production on YouTube are constructed through metaphors, they are disseminated through YouTube’s recommendation algorithm. These imaginaries reveal that public discourse on hybrid creativity shows personal concerns of creators. Ultimately, the perception of hybrid creativity has become more pessimistic. Circling back to the introduction, the findings of this study on algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators in cultural production on YouTube reflect the ongoing debate on AI in art creation, sparked by events such as the AI-generated artwork winning the state fair. The findings underscore the transformative potential of open AI and ‘open’ platforms like YouTube in democratizing creative expression and challenging traditional notions of authorship, but even more so the public’s fears about the disappearance of artistic identities through hybridity.

### 5.2 Strengths and Limitations

The methodological approach has both strengths and limitations. By utilizing both ‘close’ and ‘distant’ reading techniques, the research provides a holistic understanding of AI-art discourse, incorporating in-depth analysis alongside broader quantitative findings. The manual cleaning process ensures transparency, as changes made are tracked. Additionally, sarcastic or ambiguous content is more likely to be misinterpreted or missed by digital methods in comparison to discourse analysis.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Highfield, *How to Select Appropriate Online Methodologies*, 2–4.



However, the manual cleaning process and discourse analysis introduces subjectivity, and decisions on relevance are inherently influenced by subjective interpretation of linguistic terms and contextual meanings.<sup>122</sup> Discourse analysis, while useful in uncovering hidden meanings, involves a smaller dataset. This limits the scope of representation and potentially misses out on some of the diversity of expressions within the larger corpus. Next, the choice to use YouTube's 'most relevant' videos potentially neglects less visible but equally significant discussions. Besides that, the findings of the analysis are specific to the context of YouTube and may not generalize to other online platforms or offline contexts. Additionally, the dynamic nature of online discourse means that the findings may be subject to change over time. New developments, shifts in user behaviour, or changes in platform algorithms could impact the validity and relevance of the findings. Finally, the research focuses on algorithmic imaginaries about AI-art generators but does not explore the perspectives of AI developers or policymakers. Taking these limitations into account, the next section discusses suggestions for future research.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

In relation to the possible neglect of other discussions, a suggestion for future research is to expand the scope of analysis to other social media platforms. Comparing algorithmic imaginaries across different platforms, such as Instagram or TikTok, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how AI-art is perceived and discussed online. Additionally, taking other languages into account expands the scope of representation to non-English speaking communities. Exploring how algorithmic imaginaries intersect with other forms of digital content, such as memes, could provide insights into the broader cultural implications of AI. In relation to this, another suggestion for future research is to combine discourse analysis with additional qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups with content creators and viewers, to gain deeper insights into the interpretation of algorithmic imaginaries in cultural production. This could be extended to AI developers and policymakers, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted perspectives on AI-generated art.

Additionally, the analysis revealed YouTube's mediating role in hybrid creativity and hybridity, which calls for further research on this topic. Creators strategically adapt and position videos to YouTube's recommendation algorithm, which has been argued to promote controversial content. A possible explanation for this, is that controversial videos tend to accumulate engagement. This not only attracts more users to the platform, but also encourages them to spend more time engaging with the content, resulting in active user engagement. In this way, the platform may amplify controversial imaginaries by prioritizing content that generates high levels of engagement. Future research could delve deeper into the mechanisms underlying the prevalence of controversial imaginaries about AI-art in YouTube discourse. Investigating the role of YouTube's recommendation

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<sup>122</sup> Hesmondhalgh, "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis," 154.

algorithm in amplifying such imaginaries, particularly in relation to the promotion of controversial content, could provide valuable insights. Moving forward, it is necessary to critically examine the implications of AI in cultural production and the role of powerful platforms like YouTube in mediating this.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Cleaning Data

To clean the dataset for the analysis, all 476 videos in the dataset were first sorted into 5 categories. These categories were dissected from the data, while inspecting the dataset. Each video was inspected manually by the title, description and tags used. If the category remained unclear from these elements, the video was watched to assign a category. The columns: dimension, definition, thumbnail\_maxres, locationDescription, latitude, longitude and dislikeCount were deleted from the dataset, because they are either unnecessary for the analysis, show information that is already in another column, or do not contain any content. The following table shows the 5 categories, a description of what they entail and the number of videos from the dataset that belong to this category. These categories are a rough division of the content, within the categories a distinction can also be made between the content.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of videos</b>
A	Videos discussing the use of generative AI in art creation. For example, these videos can be a personal story, sarcastic commentary, a comedy sketch or an explanation of how generative AI works.	121
B	Tutorials on what AI tools to use and/or how to use generative AI tools. For example, these videos can explain to the viewer how to make money using generative AI, or how to use a specific AI-art generator.	134
C	Videos that show AI-generated content, without substantive commentary. These videos show images or video content that was generated using a generative AI-tool.	203
D	Unavailable content.	11
E	Unrelated content for this sub-question.	5

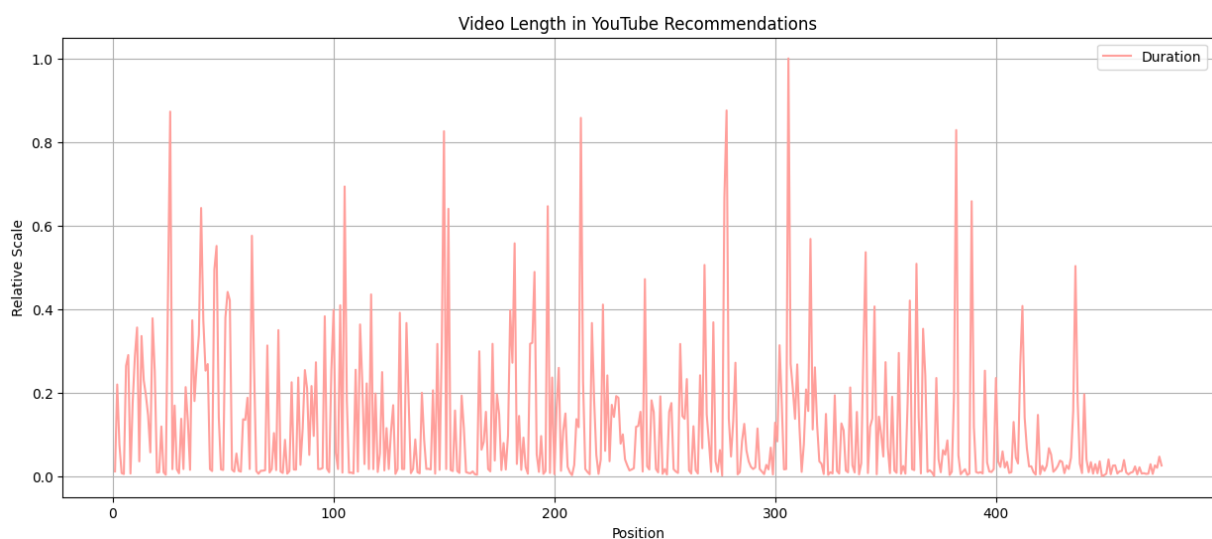
## Appendix 2: Video Selection

The list of conditions a video from category A must meet to be selected for researching sub-question two and three with discourse analysis:

- Videos should explicitly or prominently relate to the topic of AI-art in the title, description and/or tags, ensuring that the content is directly connected to the research focus.
- Videos with AI-generated content should include commentary or discussion, as the focus is on understanding what people feel or think about AI-art generators.
- Videos in English should be prioritized to ensure accessibility for analysis. This condition helps in maintaining consistency in language interpretation.
- Videos should express diverging perspectives, to ensure a representative sample for the discourse analysis.

## Appendix 3: Video Length and Recommendation

This graph shows the relation between the length of the video and the position in the list in order of recommendation by YouTube.



## Appendix 4: Video Transcripts

[Video 1 | SamDoesArts | Why Artists are Fed Up with AI Art.](#)

Video ID: 5Viy3Cu3DLk

All right guys, it's time we talked about this. So if you've been on social media recently, you've probably seen a lot of talk about AI generated art. In order to understand the severity of the issues surrounding AI art, we have to understand how AI works. When an AI creates a piece of art, it doesn't generate that content out of thin air. Instead, there needs to be an input in order for there to be an output. In the big picture, machine learning companies such as Stability AI generate profits from high



quality media. And the creation of this media depends entirely on training their AI on a specific data set. These images are made by assembling visual data that have statistical correlations to each other to produce a final result that looks acceptable. That's a very simplified explanation, but that's the gist of how AI systems work. All you gotta know is In order for that image to be generated, there has to be a dataset. And that is where the problem comes in. In these datasets, there exists billions of copyrighted images, of artworks, of photographs, of people. All of which was collected from the internet without the consent of the intellectual property owner. My personal artwork that I share on my Instagram page has been used to train AI models. And chances are, if you've shared your work online or even images of yourself, your house, your environment, you might have been included in these datasets. And if you guys want a really great in-depth look on this topic, I recommend Steven Zapata's video, which I'm going to link in the description below. The problem here is your artwork and my artwork, the moment we share them online, they are opted in to the system. If you work so much as exists online, it will be found and it will be used in a piece of AI art. And we as artists are not being protected. This is genuinely an industrial scale violation of each and every 1 of our rights. Stability AI has claimed, quote, because diffusion models are prone to memorization and overfitting, releasing a model trained on copyrighted data could potentially result in legal issues. Basically admitting to the fact that their models directly use copyrighted content. And many of these generated images tend to look identical to their original copyrighted counterparts. Images and text descriptions are taken from the internet through a practice called data mining, which allows these companies to accumulate an incomprehensible amount of data. And these corporations have intentionally targeted legal loopholes to allow them to do this. Stability AI itself funded the creation of the largest dataset being used, which is called Lion 5B. This dataset contains 5.8 billion points of image and text data, including copyrighted data and private data. This non-consensual practice of using copyrighted data in commercial products is illegal, but here is where it gets really, really messy. Now this database, Lion5B, which is most widely used for AI generation, was created with the pretext of research. But the corporations behind the funding of this research quickly turned it into a commercialized product, which now include Dream Studio and stable diffusion, both owned by Stability AI. And now the app Lensa AI has been charging money for specific avatar packs. And as a result of which these companies are now making massive amounts of profit. This loophole allows these companies to weave their way through legal regulations, which are put in place to protect the copyrighted work of artists and creatives. And this process has been fittingly described as data laundering. And a lot of users even go as far as to use directly the names of certain artists to create their generated content. For example, concept artist Greg Rutkowski, you've probably heard of him. He has had his name used 250,000 times between Stability AI and Mid Journey's AI platforms. Not only is the collection of copyrighted content of legal concern, but so is this. When AI generations are made to look like an artist's work, this has the potential for reputation damage, for forgery, for fraud, for identity theft. And what's most concerning is that when these models are trained on images of your artwork, they are

unable to forget. So almost all of these models are now working with tainted data. Their generations now all involve copyrighted content which has been gathered without the knowledge or permission of the copyright owner. It is directly hurting artists who have put their passion and their soul into everything that they create, only for their work to be scraped from the internet without their permission and used in training AI models. To the large corporations and businesses behind AI, the perfect world would mean 1 where there doesn't need to be a middleman, There doesn't need to be an artist. It'll be a world where these large businesses can capitalize and monopolize an entire industry. The worst part of it all is you and I, we don't have the option to opt out and the AI does not have the option to forget. Now, Even with all this being said, a lot of people who are in support of AI will still try to dismiss this point. But if you're on the fence about this, all I ask is that you take a look at the music industry. There have been AI models made to create audio content. But when it comes to audio content and the data that's being used for that, these companies go out of their way to mention that everything being used is copyright free, and that every aspect of that creation process is based on a fair and ethical system that doesn't infringe on the rights of music artists. So please tell me now, why is there such a double standard when it comes to visual artists. Visual art, just like music, has been around since the beginning of humanity. It's been such an integral part of our culture, from being found on ancient artifacts, on carvings, on stone, art is 1 of the backbones of our humanity. And I absolutely love that music artists have their rights protected. But if that's the case, why should visual artists be literally trampled on an industry-wide basis? This is simply not artists crying and whining over something that's unreasonable. This is our creation that we hold so near and dear to our hearts. In some cases, it might be our livelihoods, it might be the way we put food on the table for our families, but in every single case, this is our passion, this is what makes us who we are. And all of us, me and you, and even if you're not an artist and you're watching this video, we have a right to feel angry, to feel the way that we do right now about this unethical system. Every single time an artist speaks out about this issue, I see the same tired overused counterpoints to try to quiet that artist down. And I am just so tired of it. People saying things such as, you put your work online, it's on the internet, it's free for us to use. That's simply a misunderstanding of the law. Just because something is online doesn't mean you can use it for whatever you want, especially not for commercial purposes. I've also heard people say that AI takes inspiration from references just like artists do. When someone says this, chances are, number 1, they don't understand the artistic creative process, or number 2, they don't understand how AI works. AI takes data directly from that data set, and it's able to create a perfect replica. Humans simply cannot. And if you point to the examples of forgery in the art world, that practice is not something that we condone. That practice is highly frowned upon. A human has to literally look at the inspiration, process it in their minds, combine it with their life experiences, with the way they feel, with how they approach every single brush stroke. I've seen thousands of studies of my work that people post online and tag me in, and in every single 1 of those pieces, even if it's a complete one-to-one study, I can see the unique human touch that made that piece their own. So no,

an artist taking inspiration from someone else's work and studying a reference is not the same as AI image generation. There is also that really weak argument that this technology is here to stay, it's inevitable. So why don't you just accept it and stop fighting. And that just seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of why artists are upset and what we're fighting for. I myself, and I know a lot of artists, are not here to erase AI technology completely. We don't want to do that and we know we can't do that. The thing is, AI is here to stay. I accept that and I welcome that. But the way these systems are organized and structured to take advantage of millions of artists is something that we are not okay with. It's not about pushing back against AI technology itself. It's about pushing back against these unethical practices of using our work, commercializing it, all of which without our consent. Artists such as myself are not given the option to opt out, not given any compensation, and not asked for consent or permission before our images are used. I don't even want an opt-out system. This system should be opt-in in the first place. Why should my work that I've put tens of thousands of hours into be scraped and taken without my permission and opted into the system automatically? This system exploits artists, it's unethical, and I don't want to be a part of it. And just to summarize how bad it's all gotten, I'm gonna give you guys some personal anecdotes and some experiences that I've had with the AI community. A few weeks back, it was brought to my attention that somebody on Reddit had created a model based on 300 images of my work, all of which taken without my knowledge, without my consent, and it was shared on a Reddit post in the community of Stable Diffusion. Not only were these generations watermarked, but the poster also said that there was no need to ask for permission from the artist in order to make these models public, which as I've mentioned before, in the words of stability AI, could get you into legal issues. So naturally, I called it out. I put it out on my story. I showed people what's going on. I voiced my discontent with the situation. But the fact that I called this out caused a lot of anger on both sides. Some people on reddit decided that it's a good idea to take more of my work, more of the pieces that I put tens of thousands of hours into and just poured my heart and soul into, and generate even more AI models based on that. And a lot of people have been releasing it to the public in that subreddit. I've gotten a lot of comments from people saying, how dare you react the way you did? How dare you call this out in your story? You caused all of this drama, so now this is all gonna come back to you. And part of me is angry about the situation, but I think I'm more sad about it than anything else. It just seems there's no empathy, there's no understanding, There's not even an attempt to try to understand why an artist could be so upset about something like this happening to them. And some people have gone as far as to directly email my business email about their competition that they ran to try to make a model that looks most like my work in a way that's very passive aggressive, very backhanded, and borderline harassment. And I can tell you right now, I'm not the only 1 who has experienced toxicity like this. Greg Rutkowski, who I've mentioned before, have received comments and messages about how he shouldn't feel the way he does, how he's overreacting. You know, just attempts to invalidate artists calling us whiny, calling us complainers. But with this video, I'm hoping to reach people, to educate people, to let people know about how big

of an issue this really is. And honestly, if you're an artist, or even if you're not an artist and you just care about the rights of artists, I wholeheartedly stand with you. I stand beside you. Educate people on this. Post it on your story. Let your voice be heard. Even if people in the AI industry do try to silence you, just know that there are millions of artists who stand with me and with you, who stand behind you. To make the changes that we need, it's gonna take all of us knowing about this issue, talking about this issue, and educating people who don't know just how messy the situation is. And I don't want this video to make you feel like there's just no hope in the future, because there absolutely is. If you don't know, DeviantArt recently tried to opt every single art piece ever posted onto their website into their AI system. But guess what? Artists on that platform pushed back against that. They made their voices heard, and that decision was reversed by DeviantArt. So there is a way to make a difference. Even if AI is here to stay, your voice and my voice will make sure that the future that we live in is an ethical and fair 1 to artists and to all the artists out there who have a following, who have not spoken up on this topic yet. I understand it's hard, you wanna avoid drama, you don't wanna be pulled into something that you're not ready for. But this affects all of us. Doesn't matter how safe you feel, how much you feel like your work is not gonna be affected. Oh, A.I. Is here, but I'm still gonna be drawing in 10 years, so I'll be fine. Your job is secure, and that's great, I'm happy for you, but think about the young people right now I get so many comments and messages from people telling me how they feel hopeless there are literally kids out there art babies who are in art schools going through a four-year program to hopefully work in the industry and they feel like there's no hope for them. If you're an artist with a voice, with a platform, you don't have to do it for yourself, do it for the younger generation. There are so many people, young people, who are counting on you. I don't know about you guys, but I want a future where there's an option to pursue the passion of art as a career. I want a future where the kids want to draw, want to create, want to make things that mean something to them. And whether we like it or not, we're at a very pivotal time in history right now and there are big, big changes coming. And it starts right now with me and you. So if you've made it to the end of this video, I want to thank you for being here, for listening, and for trying to understand the situation. I do want AI to be part of our future, but just not this current version of it. Feel free to share this video with people who might not know as much as you do about this current situation, And please look up some information on this topic, talk to people about it, educate yourself, and educate other people as well. And with that being said, I'll see you guys on the next video.

[Video 2 | Ethan Becker | Ai ART: I'm angry at artists](#)

Video ID: bKLE742LjqE

Kim Jong-Gi, 1 of the greatest artists of our time recently passed away. Immediately after, an AI artist goes and recreates all of his art and has probably made some money off of him. Probably somebody who looks like this. So today we are going to talk about how to generate money with AI art. This was

all generated by an outsourcer. I didn't make this content. I went out, paid \$100, gave them a tip because they did a good job and they did it in 12 hours, which was like, okay, thank you. I am actually an artist. Here is a painting that I did. Right? So I love art. And then somebody ripped off my good friend Sam Does Arts. Made some money off of him. Kinda like this person. Best of all, you are allowed to earn money from free AI generated artwork legally. And now I'm angry. I'm super angry. If I have to hear 1 more artist whine about how much AI is better than them, yeah, it's better than you. Get over it. Everyone here sucks anyway, alright? I'm looking at you Sam, Ross, Koolene. Anyway, that's how I was thinking, you know? I'm not thinking that way anymore, that's crazy. That was a close 1. But now I'm feeling different, right? Now I wanna share with you what I think artists' future really looks like. Alright, now I have to warn you, you might not like how it's gonna be looking But I do so let's go so I asked you the art community how you were feeling about this and you're terrified You're completely terrified dear Ethan Becker should I even become an artist? What's the point artists were feeling down and scared? All right, and then something incredible happened you stood up for yourselves so many things happened at once it was bananas right you joined the fight against art scraping like as a community you started sending money to like get copyright art laws passed you're boycotting AI art on Art Station okay I don't know that's an interesting tactic okay So obviously we need to stop companies and people from scraping art, stealing our art, right? Absurdly. Alright, so what are we supposed to be doing, right? As artists, as a community, what are we supposed to be doing? As for me and my students and my teachers, I'm personally really excited because this whole AI thing has legit made me sit down and ask myself very specific questions that I've never had to ask before. You know, some really tough questions like, why am I an artist? Why do I even care? Why do people even consume art? That's, And that's when I look at somebody like Sam. Sam does arts and then it's also clear. The art was never the point. It was Sam. It was Sam all along. The point is that face, those smexy lips, and his eyes, and a finger. And the point is you, the community. You know, you look at Sam, Sam look back at you. You perceive each other, so on and so forth. Fraternity, we engage with each other through the art. The art was always secondary. You mastered that and you master AI. I'm a god. I'm a god. Yeah, I think I am. Fraternity, right? You engage. We engage with each other through the art and look We already know all of this at Project City, the art school. It's the community's number 1, duh. We got professional artist feedback, a dialogue with an active community. If you don't have an active community like that, it's a one-way street and you don't really learn anything. It's kind of like on-the-job training. Join us if you've got a confused art friend, buy them a holiday gift \$33 a month for professional art classes or if you're feeling frisky then you can buy a full-on year subscription and get a month off for free. Alright and I legit believe in Project City because it's a community right That we need to hone that first, baby, because there's a void in our hearts. And people legit right now are looking for you to fill that hole with meaningful art. I'm serious. They are primed and ready for meaningful art, and you have an opportunity. How do you not see this opportunity right now to be creative and blast it? Let me put it this way, and I could be completely

wrong about this, alright, but I try to see the upsides in most things. Let's just look at what happened. AI came about, artists freaked out, and suddenly a bunch of artists came together. That's what I'm seeing right now is a bunch of artists came together in a community and stood up for something. Maybe it wasn't about the enemy the whole time. Maybe it was about us coming together, you know? Maybe. Or maybe it could like kill us all. Or something. You know, that'd be crazy.

[Video 3 | daniel torres | AI Art Isn't Theft. Here's Why:](#)

Video ID: cNSR\_fXU3eM

AI art seems problematic: giant companies sweep the internet for billions of images, feed them to the all-consuming algorithm that then learns to produce art on its own. Depending on who you ask, this is either one of Humanity's greatest Creations or nothing more than Brazen theft. The AI can even reproduce artists individual Styles living or deceased, sometimes leaving the amalgamations of signatures from the artists it's been trained on. And while a technology isn't quite at the level of fully replacing artists it's advancing fast which makes this a pretty serious concern after all. What could you make as an individual, than a machine trained on the works of every human artist in history can't do on its own. Especially when it can whip out an image in a couple of minutes that will take you hours, days, if not weeks. Just another case of big business screwing over creative workers, am I right? Uh, am I right? Well, let's start with the question of copyright. There are two scenarios where AI could violate the copyright of human artists: in the input of the data and the output of the art. When it comes to the input, a big part of the data the algorithm trains on is through libraries of images in the public domain, meaning pictures that belong to all of us, yay! But the Creative Commons are only so large, the vast majority of images are privately owned, so many organizations turn to scraping the internet for any image they can find. This is where things get tricky, and while the whole thing is a bit of a legal gray area, there's some legal precedent in the U.S to believe that scraping copyrighted images to train AI is totally fair use. Namely authors Guild versus Google, that saw the two scraping it out over Google book search. Google had been scanning and digitizing vast sloths of literature in an effort to make every book in the world partly available online, which obviously ticked off Publishers. Google would allow users to search through the text of the book and provide brief Snippets of them online, which was a game changer for the discovery of content, but they hadn't sought permission from the copyright holders. After a lengthy legal battle, the court found Google's scanning of the books was fair use. Citing: "The transformational nature of Google book search, as well as the fact that Google book search didn't hurt online book sales or threatened the bottom line of the author's Guild in any way". The case doesn't have anything to do with machine learning, but we can definitely draw parallels to Big Tech taking things that don't belong to them, scanning them and then creating an entirely new tech product. The question then is, does AI make transformative use of the original works? And yeah, absolutely, copyrighted works are scanned to teach the algorithm and after that they aren't used again,

while Google literally showed Snippets of copyrighted works in the final product. AI is a lot less info fringy in that regard. which is huge when trying to demonstrate the transformative nature of your use of copyrighted work. Now, where AI might get into trouble is whether it competes with the copyrighted art it's been trained on. If AI uses an artist's work to learn how to make competing products, that might be a hard fair use claim to make in a courtroom. The defence could argue that their product is the AI algorithm itself and not the art it produces, but this is where it'll take someone with very Deep Pockets to Sue and figure this one out. And literally right before I started recording, the first lawsuit just got filed. And we'll see what happens with that, but there's reason to suspect that AI might have the legal upper hand here. For example, even if AI can learn to produce art in the style of living artists a style isn't copyrightable, only individual works are. So even if the machine pumps out hundreds of works in your style, which in the art world is a total dick move, you wouldn't have grounds to sue unless it violates the copyright of a specific image. At least that's the way I understand it. And these programs have a number of safeguards in place to prevent it from creating exact replicas. Tell an AI to draw the Mona Lisa and it's never going to make a one-to-one recreation. As one Outlet put it, it's almost as if the AI is drawing it from memory. Which in some way, it is. It's reconstructing what it thinks it looks like and it does a relatively good job of it, because it's seen it a lot of times. So with enough safeguards and detection systems to weed out blatantly infringing material, the output should be relatively fair use as well. Well, so, in summary AI seems to be more fair use than not. So I think the real question we should ask isn't whether this is legal, but whether this is ethical, One recent news story that reminded me of the ethics of AI art, was how Google and Facebook recently got into hot water in Australia over scraping info from news sites and sharing Snippets of their coverage in search results. This meant fewer users would navigate to the news sites, since they could get the news through a third party, meaning no revenue for the actual producers of the content that was being used. Australia's solution: have the tech giants share the revenue with news agencies. After all if your data scraping and tech ends up driving the creators you're profiting from out of business, well, you won't have anything to scrape if there's no more content, right? When it comes to AI-art, you'd think we could come up with a similar solution to a similar problem. If these algorithms are using your art, you should see a piece of the pie. After all, you own the art, and it's a stance I've seen plenty of artists take. But this isn't that good of a comparison. Google and Facebook were directly taking content from third parties and showing it in a way that hurt those businesses, but AI is less directly taking art, but just kind of looking at it to learn how to make art on its own. You see most data sets AI uses consist of links to images, like a virtual gallery. And like a human artist, learning and being inspired by the works it sees online AI is doing the same. It's just being inspired by the works of others. And differentiating between ethical and unethical inspiration is tricky. Think of the legion of animated knockoffs like 'what's up' or 'ratatoin', (knock off versions of 'Finding Nemo' and 'Ratatouille') two movies where the creators stretched the definition of inspiration into a pretty unethical territory. There's no Artistic integrity in these movies, they're just rushed cash grabs and they're joined by the

likes of forgeries and traced art as creative works that we can all agree are unethical. But what about something like joke theft where a comedian isn't exactly stealing a joke, but instead they hear a joke forget they heard it then years later when brainstorming material the old joke materializes from that primordial soup of creativity we have in our brain, and it makes it out on stage when it comes to something so unintentional. I think we have to carve out a middle Gray Zone between ethical and unethical inspiration, where inspiration just 'is'. Which is kind of the thing about inspiration, you can't control it. From the moment you're born, you're taking in all this sensory input that's forever getting mixed into that creativity soup you use when you're making art. If I see a piece of art posted on social media, I can't take that back. I can't unperceive it and it very much might influence my future work. But you might say there's a big difference between humans being inspired by the world around them and an AI intentionally seeking and analyzing art, right? One is a man-made machine whose whole purpose is to essentially remix art, and the other is a human. We could draw a line in the sand and say when a human does this it's fine when a machine does it it's a problem, and end a discussion here. But that's not a very satisfying answer, is it? Machines and humans are not the same, but if we can't come up with a more logical answer I don't think this solves the question either. Because in practice I don't think the two are different at all. If a human can see a publicly posted picture and learn from it, I don't see why an algorithm can't do the same thing. And if you want to get philosophical with it, technology isn't inhuman either, we're the ones who make it. And I prefer to see technology as extensions of our humanity, both the good and the bad of it. And not perversions of humanity, like some online commentators seem to do. So do artists get anything or are they just out of luck? should they just accept The Changing Times and their decreasing value to society? I mean, creatives still exist under contemporary capitalism and if the AI machine is allowed to continue flourishing, millions of creatives face genuine displacement much like Artisans were displaced by the Industrial Revolution. Today, artists, coders, writers and even video editors face an uncertain future once the technology gets good enough. Automation is coming for all creatives and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. So allow me to wave the red flag and say that the solution must be a systemic one, as creative workers deserve strong job and Welfare programs to keep them from becoming homeless. And don't take my word for it, take Article 4 CEO Alex Cardinale's word who argues that anyone in the AI space should be backing a robust safety net, including Universal basic income and free access to education, which he says is the bare minimum a society in the midst of such a revolution should offer. But look, we know the world that we live in, how Society relishes in the disposability of workers. Let's be honest with ourselves; creative workers are going to lose their jobs long before the safety nets get put out and that safety net will inevitably have lots of holes, that many will slip right through. Automation is likely to generate poverty before it helps it, so what should the stance be on revolutionary technology like this if we know help isn't going to come? should we even support it? I honestly have no clue, let me know what you think down below. But I do have some reasonable recommendations for our AI overlords to lessen the pain of the transition. Artists should at a minimum be able to opt out their



artwork from these algorithms. Why? Well, Google Maps allows you to blur your house from being viewable in street view, as far as I know this giant tech company isn't under any obligation, and to blur the houses people live in when like art on social media they're freely viewable in the real world to take pictures of and post online, but some people want their house blurred out of the online directory. Just like some artists don't want their art in the algorithm. So I think this is a no-brainer move. I also think that in an effort to provide transparency in the process and possibly direct people to the human artists, that these machines are built off of each AI image could provide the sources it most heavily drew from technically. I'm not sure how possible this is, but having the whole process be more transparent and providing visible credit to the artists the AI is built off of, would be, I think, good. But beyond these piecemeal reforms, the AI Revolution is coming and short of transforming Society for the better. None of us are safe, hooray. But there's something else about the AI art conversation that's troubling me. There's this strange affirmation of the copyright system by anti-ai people, even the more Progressive ones who understand our copyright system is fundamentally broken become weird copyright zealots who argue that Artists Own their art, and should be able to control how it's used. And this is going to piss a lot of people off, but it's gotta say it: part two why artists shouldn't own their art, no for real though hear me out though, hear me out, today Artists Own their work insofar as they're the only ones allowed to make copies of it. Hence copyright and the logic behind copyright is pretty sound. The cost of creating original works is high, but the cost of copying these works is pretty low so in order to maintain an economic incentive for creators to create their work is privatized much like real physical property. The idea being that, if we didn't grant them these ownership rights, well, no one would create anything culturally valuable because there'd be no money in it. And if you did, someone with more money and resources than you would just steal your work and expand on it, leaving you with nothing. Just like Europeans enclosed the common lands with fences, designating certain land private, so too did copyright take the logic of property rights and apply it to creative ideas and works of fiction. Now even Concepts themselves have imaginary fences preventing anyone from trespassing. But determining who owns a piece of land is easy you can trace back the lineage of Deeds. Determining who owns the copyright to a work of fiction, that's a lot harder. So we default to a concept of authorship whenever you create an original work, not a copy, you own the copyright to that creation since you are the Undisputed Creator. But how do you piece apart what parts of a work are original, and what parts are copies? Well we have to go back to the doctrine of the commons. Trust me, this all ties back to AI art, I promise. Much like the real Commons, the public domain encompasses everything that's uncopyrightable, And while we usually think of stuff like Shakespeare, the public domain encompasses a lot more than just old things no one cares about. Case in point, meet 'Mr fingle flaggle' my 100 percent original character I just made up. He jumps real high and he goes yahoo when he does it. 'Mr fingle flaggle' is my copyrightable creation, despite being a Super Mario knockoff. But even though I owned this copyright for this original character, powers like jumping high and traits like being a happy-go-lucky character aren't copyrightable, so I'm safe from any

Nintendo lawsuits that allege infringement based on these characteristics that have been deemed uncopyrightable. And whenever courts deny protection to any aspect of a copyrighted work all those denied aspects join the public domain. Still following along? Okay because, boy, it has been a doozy figuring out what's copyrightable and what's not. Take movies as another example. Since Motion Pictures were a thing, quartz became flooded with copyright lawsuits alleging infringement, even in cases where the defendant had clearly been inspired by the prosecution's work where there were clear parallels in setting, action and character, and even where there was a literal concrete evidence that the defendant had just based their story on the prosecution's work, the courts decided to just say "yeah it plots themes titles characters ideas and situations that's all part of the public domain now so stop suing each other" holy shit. And it was as good of a line in the sand as any, right, because once you accept one of these cases as copyright infringement based on a few broad similarities or story beats, then the entire industry becomes vulnerable to accusations of infringement. Because, news flash, there's no such thing as original work. Look at 'Mr finingle flaggle; tell me this is an original character. Yes, they technically are. but there's nothing original about them it's an amalgamation of other works I've seen put together in a particular way. Yes, I am the one who put them together. and yes I am the Creator, but does that mean that I now deserve ownership rights over this idea like if it was some parcel of land. Authorship and ownership are two very different concepts, are they not? As scholar Jessica Littman puts it: according to this romantic model of authorship creative processes are magical and are therefore likely to produce unique expression. The expression is unique because the real author is using words, musical notes, shapes or colours to clothes impulses that come from within her singular inner being. This mysterious inner being may be the repository of Impressions, experiences and the work of other authors, but the author's individual sensibility recasts that raw material into something distinct and unrecognizable. We know that real authors create rather than copy, so we are comfortable with a presumption that the work they register for a copyright is original. We believe in the idea that expression is Created from thin air and the correlative notion that the Universe of creative expression is infinite, so we are ready to conclude that similarity of expression must reflect plagiarism and we worry not a bit that our conclusions are unverified able. because they reflect our intuitive beliefs about reality. Artists have been deluding themselves for Centuries with the notion that they create. In fact, they do nothing of the sort. So Littman clearly didn't care about hurting anyone's feelings, but is she wrong though. The universe of creative expression is not infinite and as the saying goes, all art is derivative of something else. What we call copyright laws, are just arbitrary lines in the sand that are more based on the Practical goal of protecting the economic rights of creators, than any Sound Logic. Because the idea that each piece of art has a single author is a myth. We do not lock ourselves into an attic and produce masterpieces out of thin air, we build on the works of others. Far from being the unique expression of an individual, all art is dialogic, created from and in response to the work of others. Which, yeah, we can all recognize that, but it's that economic incentive that copyright is meant to protect nothing else, because without the carrot on the stick of profit at the end of the day no one

would make art. Well guess what, copyright does a pretty job of doing that too take Japan as an example where copyright laws surrounding fan works of copyrighted media are much less strict. The legal fan fiction or doujinshi Market (I probably pronounce that horribly I'm sorry) it's hugely popular with some creators even being able to make a healthy living from selling their fan fiction. Which over here would get you sued to Oblivion. Like it's not even funny. So how could creative Works flourish in Japan without that powerful guiding hand of European style copyright? Well it's simple: copyright is a creativity limiter, it monopolizes the control of certain ideas and Concepts placing control of them squarely on the copyright holders the Disneys and Nintendos of the world. And for them, the copyright system works amazingly. For everyone else, for a children's daycare drawing their characters on the wall to please the kids, for competitors trying to run a tournament of a copyrighted game, or for creators trying to include a joke scene of Batman eating out Cat woman in their show, in each of these cases the powerful media conglomerates trampled over their creativity. Disney told the daycare to erase their murals Nintendo told smash players to get lost and DC told the Harley Quinn Riders they couldn't show that on TV. And yeah it's kind of funny how none of this matters, but for creatives this is serious business and loosening or outright doing away with copyright is likely to lead to an explosion and intensification of the production of creative works it might not be as directly lucrative for institutions like Disney. But there are still ways to carve out a living as an artist in a world with reduced copyright right, after all, artists survived for hundreds of years before copyright through a system of patronage and it seems that's the direction we're moving towards again. Anyway, so what does this have to do with AI? In a world where AI art becomes widespread, copyright essentially becomes meaningless since whatever you make will be replicated by a machine. Of course that's pending the decision of the courts to codify the rights of AI and machines to create. but if that happens, and it's likely to happen, your individual copyright loses most of its value. As AI floods the Art Market with quick and easy to make, but legally distinct replicas of anything imaginable. But this isn't necessarily the end of the world for creators, it could be an opportunity in a world where copyright will soon have less say, and artists have less control over their art. Thanks to the powers of AI, it's worth asking: can creatives survive in a world without copyright? Again, I definitely think so and I think we might have to very soon. So my fellow creatives, I implore you stop worrying so much, just make cool art that people like and that's all we can help to do anyway. But what do you think? I'm not married to these ideas, artists please do not hurt me. Let me know, I'm going out on a limb here

with this idea, this concept, who knows we'll see where the courts go. we'll see what happens, but uh yes don't don't don't send me death threats. thank you yeah have a good day.

[Video 4 | The Art Mentor | In 1-2 years AI Art will be dead and here's why](#)

Video ID: HCEoUkeoDOY

AI-art as you know it is dying, in fact it's a ticking time bomb ready to explode. wanna know why? welcome to the Art Mentor, my name is Sean and make sure you pay attention to all the points in this video, because I predict that in the next two to five years AI-art as you know will be dead, all the hype will be gone and all the users will be gone too. Here's why: the first and most obvious glaring reason as to why I think AI-art is going to die very soon, is simply because of the fact that their users which, let's not call them users let's call them customers, they are not loyal customers. And when I say that it's because they were not attracted to art for the right reasons. This is no different than if I tell anybody why they got into commissions for the wrong reasons too, they got into AI generators, they got into that form of art if you want to call it that because of the potential for getting attention, getting clout, or maybe generating like crazy sales which no one's doing anyways. So because of that, because there is a lack of sincere interest, they aren't and actually learning something about art. They aren't in it for the right reasons and they are going to flee. Now, when are they going to flee? Very simply put y'all, when the glory is gone, because AI art serves its users a very cheap and quick dopamine hit every single time it is not producing a long and sustained fulfilment that normal art making does give to real artists. Now because of that, as soon as AI-art changes, if it were ever to shut down or anything else happen to it they would be gone. They would never make art again in their life. However though, I'm just going to tell you this, if the opposite were to happen and AI were to just take over the whole world (which it won't anyways) then artists would still be making artwork. You can't say that for the opposite audience though, could you? If you're not in art for the right reasons, for sincere reasons, for personal fulfilment and for really intrinsic reasons, then it's just not gonna last. You ever thought about that? you've no doubt heard how AI-art has made advances and they're now rolling out new things. There's controlling, that there's in painting, there's AI painting, it's no longer just simple prompting and no doubt that there's going to be things every once in a while that'll come up, and it'll be this new perceived Revolution. But while some will call it advances, I'm going to call it what it really is: it's a gimmick. Because they have to build and Implement so many different Technologies just to try and fix everything that's horribly wrong and perpetually flawed with everything that AI makes, and you really got to sit down and admit this. Every single time that there is a new gimmick that comes out here, it's basically just like DLC content for like Call of Duty. Now here's the really important part about these gimmicks: they're necessary because without the gimmicks, without the cheap little fixes to make the artwork, yeah like a little two percent better every single time then they're not going to keep their user base interested. And they will flee and it needs to

be like this, they need to implement cheap little tricks or cheap little gimmicks like this all the time, because if they don't then they know that their customer base, they're gonna go. Because it gets boring and they don't like what they can't do. So let me ask you this friend: what's gonna happen when all of those tricks are all at their limit? when they hit everything that they think that they can do, and it's still flawed? what's gonna happen? Their customers are gonna leave. Aame thing happens when games get old: people get tired of playing them. And that is what AI-art is producing the effect of haven't you noticed if you're currently an AI user and you're sitting hoping at some point that your AI Generations are going to give you some type of job opportunity in the future, some type of sustainable career, I just want to ask you this: why would anybody pay you to prompt? why would anybody pay you to do what a machine can do? You have to really understand this here. Y'all, AI-art was put out and is continually being developed to replace artists but that also means replacing AI users. Because of this: why would anybody want to pay you for what anybody in my position could already do and fix and do better anyways? So the fact that there is any type of Promise potentially for some type of job deal: no totally wrong my friend. I gotta tell you this there's only going to be two types of jobs that come about from Ai, and that's going to be in business and in software engineering. Nothing else, in fact from everybody that I've spoken to in every Major Art industry that has hired somebody with an AI based portfolio they have been very promptly see what they did. They are fired because they don't know anything about art, they can't make Corrections and there are severe limitations that they can't overcome. So because of that note friend, there will never be jobs in AI, so I wouldn't hold your breath on that either. Now think about this: if normal art has scarce job offerings why do you think that AI would be any different? However though, there is one major job build that I do want to give AI credit for: thank you so much, thank you, thank you for taking all of the cheap clients that none of us want to work with and that never had any respect or dignity for art in the first place. So have at those 10 commissions you earned it! Now with all of the buzz and the excitement about Ai and people coming into it right, here's why I want to let you know friend the average lifespan of the average freelance artist is one to two years in. AI users, you're currently on month nine of that. So here's what I want to say welcome to the art World, okay, you think that maybe there's a chance for you to make it but I'm just going to be honest with you you're currently experiencing the high right now of everybody that graduates art school and thinks that they're going to get into a massive big time job. However, though you're going to meet the same roadblocks and the same confusions in the same exact obstacles that exist for normal artists. In the next two years there will be a mass exodus of AI users because they were promised that there would be thousands of dollars that they could make, and they're going to be able to change their lives with everything, and it's same song and dance of every single cheap gimmick game marketing routine that you've ever seen for any type of pyramid scheme. All AI users will be facing the same exact competition that all of us real artists already faced, and that's going to cause most of them to be weeded out and to quit within the next couple of years, because once those 15 seconds of fame are done once all the followers don't care about everything

that's going on with them. Once they lose that crowd, who's going to want to buy their images? The most curious of phenomena regarding AI-art users right now, is their own cannibalism. Have you seen this, have you ever noticed this? There's a lot of infighting amongst all of them. Now, artists fight, yes of course we do and naturally not all of us are nice to each other okay. However though, I really see a curiosity happening with all AI users right now, which is essentially that they're trying to protect their prompts and they're trying to sell their prompts, and then they get mad when someone buys those prompts and then shares it with the rest of the world. And then compounding on top of that issue, they're also trying to copyright all of their prompts so that they own them. Like, you can't own words, how hypocritical is that! By the way, so you're telling artists that we can't have our images, that we can't own what we produce. However, you're trying to safeguard what you didn't produce, in the words that you don't own. Like you own some section of the English dictionary that's so lame, it's so nonsensical. Don't you think it doesn't make any sense, and that cannibalism is going to eat away at the core and the foundation of their user base? and it's gonna lead to a mass degradation of what AI currently is and will always be able to do? Now when AI first came out, y'all remember how they promised that AI would be able to innovate and create brand new styles, and it would really bring a lot of freshness to Art? Well look I gotta be honest with you the only style that they've done is the AI art style. Have you noticed this it's so easily identifiable and anybody can pick it out of a lineup? And in fact it's already been so commodified, because there's such a mass influx of it that there's a massive growing distaste from it and people hate seeing it. There's such a gross amount of AI images being put out there right now that everybody can't stand it and even the users that have a crew to vanity following that seems like a really high number. It's Not Really Gonna Last because they're never going to be able to bring anything really true and new on to the scene other than what they're currently doing now. When AI first came out, there's a lot of tomfoolery happening here where our clients were totally unaware. Now they're very savvy. Now, our client can't stand AI images and they're now getting so savvy that they can spot it and they are actively seeking to go away from AI users and definitely don't like working with them. So that growing distaste is only going to create eventually more jobs and more opportunities for real artists to get back into the fields where they belong and to be able to do the stuff that they want and sustain themselves. Whereas AI users are going to be weeded out now. The more users that get hooked on to AI platforms, the more that this is going to happen and the less attention that they're going to receive. And when they're not getting attention, they're going to fade away. Now, as we go through the rest of these points one thing I'm going to ask from you is that if you're liking this video, if you're finding this helpful, if you think more people need to hear it, please go ahead and drop that like on this video so that this can be put out to more artists. Because artists deserve to have that comfort of knowing that: no they will not be replaced, and this is just a short-term impact. Now let's roll into this one born from the hubris of AI developers and especially the rotten CEOs, are going to be more anti-ai software. Okay right now the biggest one that's out there is called 'glaze', and I'm going to leave a link in the description right now, for artists to

go ahead and check out. But this is going to be right now the best anti-AI-art software, so that your images cannot be scraped and added therefore into their databases. Now it is certainly inevitable that the more time that passes the more of these that are going to come out, because there is a mass amount. This is the grossest degree of artistic plagiarism and copyright infringement that has ever been seen. I predict that this will be a really big game changer and a massive blow, and it is inevitable in the next couple years this is going to start to come out heavily. And beyond that, beyond just doing this to simple users, the ones like myself, that will upload art to our platforms, our platforms are going to have to utilize the same exact software. Because if they don't adapt to that, they're going to lose their entire user base. If you think I'm wrong on this, look what happened to Art station: as soon as they took a non-stance against AI-art, they lost so many of their professional users. Everybody was dropping their professional memberships to it ,and that's going to happen because all AI users are short-term users of their platforms, because they have no reason to continue to make images and post them online. Because it's not going to give them that dopamine hit anymore. Tell me what you think down below, what your predictions for what anti-AI-art software might come about in the future. Because I'd love to know what your predictions could be too. Now this is a point the video where everything I'm about to say is gonna royally piss off AI users, but I just gotta be real with you there will always be Perpetual limitations to what AI art can do. Because, just to be honest with you friends, it has already reached in nine months it's Peak Performance and there'll always be severe limitations to what AI-art can do versus what a human artist can do. As a human artist, my friend, you have infinite potential versus an AI user you'll have extraordinarily limited potential in what you can do. Because you're limited to technology versus a human artist, we have an infinite degree of learning potential, and the ones that will combat me on this, and combat this rhetoric, here's what I want to ask about that: why do you overvalue what a machine can do, and undervalue what a human can do, when 100 of the time humans have always proven themselves to be more flexible than machines? This is not as simple as putting the engine over a horse, and if you view art that way I just want to let you know, friend, you have been misguided. So what will happen from here on: really marginal advances. However though, as a human being, as a real artist, you have extraordinary potential. And something really unique that AI cannot offer, and I hope that you realize that: the biggest topic about why AI-art is not going to (in its current state) last is, because of the gray area that AI-art currently occupies in the legal sphere. In the next two to five years there will be legal precedence set by all the lawsuits that will happen and more artists are naturally going to come out and Sue the pants off of every single AI developer. Now what this is naturally going to result in, are severe limitations and caps on what AI can do, on what Fields they can impact and of course the amount of impact it's going to have on a field. Now, I haven't even gotten to the biggest part. So here we go, the worst part legally about what AI-art currently has is, that nobody has ever cracked the black box of its data training set. Nobody knows what's in there. But I'm going to tell you this: legal battles, lawsuits, compensation, not even the worst of it. Here's what is the worst of it: people will go to jail, there will be incarcerations when

people look inside that box and they see what is in there. So if you're only focused on potentially these companies losing money, no my friend, people are gonna go to jail from it if they really crack open that box. And the first time any country looks into what is inside of those training data sets, game over! Wait you see it's gonna happen, let me ask you this: now, what is the main purpose of AI-art and why does it exist? Well, according to their websites, what they'll all generally say is, that they want to democratize Art. Which by the way, do we not do art in public schools that's already been democratized for a couple hundred years, thanks a lot. But anyways, here's what I need to let you know whenever anybody utters the phrase 'democratize': that is purely the rhetoric of oppressors and conquerors. And AI developers are both of them. Now here's the real kick in the pants to what's definitely going to happen. Let's say that you think that all of my points are total nonsense, all right, here's the real blow that you're going to experience as an AI user inevitably. If This Were to become mainstream, if AI-art actually did pick up a lot of steam and it did come into all of the art spheres, or it did start to, for whatever reason in whatever shape or form, if it was restructured, if it experienced a metamorphosis, let's call it into something else then what it currently is, here's what is inevitable: There will be a mass reconsolidation of power and that will go to People Like Us, real artists, because it will never be put into the hands of somebody that doesn't understand art. That can't actually paint, that can't actually photo bash, that can't actually utilize art skills, art knowledge, art history. In a really efficient sense it's naturally going to happen y'all, all of this 'democratization' of art is total nonsense and that's just how they hook their customers into it because it sounds like this really big noble goal. But it's really just trash. So if you're an artist watching this and you are deeply passionate about art, and you're really nervous that AI is still going to be a pervasive force that might be taking away jobs and opportunities from you, I want to arrest you for sure right now friend: It's definitely not! And in fact, it is so flawed that I made an entire video right here that's going to tell you everything that you need to do, starting right now, to beat AI-art, get those clients and reclaim those jobs. So go ahead and check it out.

[Video 5 | Bill Meeks | In Defense of AI Art and AI Artists](#)

Video ID: 39v8aVauFS0

Are you one of those people who think AI generated art is going to destroy the creative Industries? Well you're wrong, and I'm going to tell you why. I'll also tell you the ways real artists can thrive thanks to the AI Revolution. All in today's building dreams this tutorial is brought to you by stream studio and also by run pod go to [runpod.everlyheights.tv](https://runpod.everlyheights.tv) to spin up a stable diffusion server in just a couple of minutes [Music] it still Meeks here for building dreams where I help you use the latest AI technology to build dreams of your own just like I'm using them to build the first animated series set my Everly Heights Universe a sitcom called very special. I just want to make it clear that this is an editorial. Despite being all in on AI art and having sponsors related to the field, these are all 100



organic my (Bill Meek's) opinions. Okay let's get into it! Art has always been a reflection of human creativity and expression. Throughout history, artists have embraced new tools and techniques to push the boundaries of their craft. Today we find ourselves at the dawn of a new artistic era, one that artists need to adapt to before they get left behind. Regardless of what you may have heard, generative AI art programs like Stable Diffusion are more than just novelties or candy machines that spit out random images, these are powerful artistic tools that allow artists to have fine control over their creations. Unlike other AI software like DALL-E or Midjourney that generate random results based on only a text prompt, Stable Diffusion supplements your existing artistic skills and workflows, enhancing your creative process. With generative AI art you can mold and shape your artwork to align with your artistic vision, it gives you the ability to explore new possibilities and experiment with different styles. Think of it as an evolution of your artistic toolkit, providing you with endless opportunities to create. I'm personally using it to build an animated universe called 'Everly Heights' based on original scripts that are deeply personal to me. I'm not trying to put artists out of work, I'm trying to create art myself, after working in the creative fields for years. But other artists would prefer to gatekeep creators, like me, from expressing themselves, simply because they consider the tool I'm using a threat to their livelihood. Who are these artists to gatekeep personal expression like that?! What if somebody had done that to them? You know, every artist stands on the shoulders of those who came before them, drawing inspiration from a rich tapestry of artistic history. Tools like stable diffusion aren't ripping off artists, instead their algorithm studies the work of artists, learns from it and applies that knowledge to make something new, just like human artists do. AI art tools aren't stealing from artists, they are continuing the lineage of artistic evolution. Paid homage to the past, while pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the present and in the future. But what really sets tools like Stable Diffusion apart, is their open source nature. Unlike close commercial systems like Adobe Firefly or Midjourney, Stable Diffusion is community driven and feature-rich. It's not dependent on a central organization for new tools or bug fixes. The open source community fosters collaboration and encourages the implementation of new features that are great for users, even if they'd be bad for a big company. Bottom line, it's about the love of the art, not the pursuit of profit. Another criticism often raised against AI art, is the fear that it will take away artists source of revenue. But let's consider this: traditional software like Adobe Photoshop and other industry standard tools often come with hefty price tags, shutting down individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Stable Diffusion on the other hand, is free to use and there are even online services like our sponsor (the sponsor that paid this creator to make the video) 'Run Pod' that provide access to powerful computers at minimal cost. This means that anyone, regardless of their financial situation, can tap into these tools and unleash their creative potential. Art is nothing more than intention, executed. AI art tools like Custom Dream Booth models, Control Net, Image To Image, and even Adobe Photoshop's new generative fill, empower artists to guide the AI and achieve intentional results. These tools are just another means of expressing your creative vision. They open up new avenues for exploration and enable us to push the

boundaries of what's possible, all at the price point of free. Now a lot of artists have expressed concerns about AI art, but to my ear they sound like the horse and buggy industry complaining about the advent of cars. But let's be clear, none of that complaining stopped the rise of the automobile or save the horse and buggy industry. The people who stomped their feet and stood in the way of progress, well they went out of business. The smart people, the people who took their existing knowledge and skills and then applied them to the new technology, or built an artisanal business where the retro aspect was the whole point, they thrived. Artists should embrace this new frontier, adapt and involve. After all, you can't fight the future. And let's not forget the coolest part of AI art, it is sort of magical, it's like something out of old silver age superman comics where the futuristic super Univac computer could upload entire fields of study into students brains instantly. AI art is our artistic super Univac, expanding our artistic horizons, breaking down economic barriers for creators and unleashing our imagination. In conclusion, AI art isn't a threat to artists, it's an evolution. A new chapter in the creative journey. Just as artists throughout history have embraced new tools and techniques, we must adapt to the possibilities AI offers. Let's embrace the future, explore new frontiers and create art that speaks for us and says something about us. Well that's my perspective anyway, make sure you let me know yours down in the comments. This is a conversation here, let's just keep it respectful huh, no flame Wars. [Music] Well thanks for joining me today, I can't wait to share more about 'Everly Heights' and how I'm using the latest AI technology to bring my creative dreams to life. See you next time and keep creating, read the stories and join the team at [everleighheights.tv](http://everleighheights.tv), follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at 'Everly Heights'. Watch us build 'Everly Heights' in building Dreams by subscribing to Apple Mix LA on YouTube. And why don't you like this video while you're at it, to help people find our stuff. To contact us about partnership opportunities, or if you have questions about joining the team send an email to Bill Meeks at [everlyheights.tv](http://everlyheights.tv)

#### Video 6 | JUST A ROBOT | Defending AI Art (Because I Want To Get Canceled)

Video ID: OECjiCygIdk

What the f- What the f- is this sh- Well, if there's a video that's gonna get me cancelled, it will be this 1. As you're very well aware, if you have been on YouTube for... 5 minutes, the common consensus is that AI art and AI animation is terrible, and that in the long term it won't have any significant effect on the media industry, particularly when it comes to how content creators work and what the market will look like in the future. Whether it's people bashing the project, nothing is forever. Making fun of the guy who thinks he's a real animator, while his AI animation can only move its lips and nothing else, to hundreds if not thousands of other examples. I get it, making fun of how AI writes things or how they misdraw hands is pretty funny. Only an absolute fool would defend AI. But as a robot, I think it's time I stand up for my AI brothers and sisters. First of all, AI is not a fad, it's here to stay. Let's not forget

how people scoffed at the idea of the first airplane or the idea that someone could land on the moon or speaking to another person on the other side of the planet instantaneously. Keep in mind the passage of time is a thing. Look at what cars were like a hundred years ago and look at them today. But don't forget when they first started off people could outrun them by walking. So how much do you think AI will advance in 5 years or 10 years or a hundred years? So where do you think AI will be in 500 years! I'm joking of course. AI is not at all comparable to that, because it's going to advance much, much faster. It's already improving on drawing hands, scripting, animating, understanding people, and everything else. People who are still arguing that AI won't advance any further are arguing with a fetus. Unlike with every other piece of technology, improvements to AI can cascade into faster improvements at an alarming rate. Once AI is on the same level as us humans, it's over for us monkeys. Every single 1 of us. In case you have forgotten, AI stands for Artificial Intelligence. It's always learning and gathering more and more data. Sure, when it first started off and was released to the public, it was fun to laugh at for how much it got wrong. But as people have been using it more and more, its development has increased at a dramatic rate. Something like the car is improved upon by engineers and scientists after they hear feedback from customers using it over a relative time scale. Think years to decades, even a century. But AI is also being improved upon by computer scientists and engineers as well as itself. If the car could advance like AI can in the last 100 years, we would be living on Cybertron right now. Don't forget how people freaked out when Photoshop was first released. So many people thought they were going to lose their jobs. Now granted, this is only for the art side of things, but people were also nervous that spell checking systems would also take a few jobs away from writers. Now I understand that a lot of people might be nervous that AI might replace their job, But I think at first it will be more like Photoshop, a tool that helps artists in the industry. AI will make the jobs of writers and artists easier. While I agree that someone who just puts a handful of words into an AI to generate something is not a quote-unquote true artist, in the common sense of the word. People who use AI to help them finish up an art piece or correct a few mistakes are still considered quote unquote real artists by most people. If you want to argue that they aren't, You can, but please consider how your thoughts might be received differently by the younger generations. However, I want to warn people even at risk of getting cancelled, because I know there's many aspiring artists who watch my content, taking the traditional route and going to established universities, and aiming for jobs and trends typical of the traditional market for artists. If I don't provide these perspectives even at the risk of getting cancelled, then I could be denying many people the opportunity to assess their field of study and how the future might not align with what they envisioned. Now of course this is not how it will develop at first, but over time there is a chance that AI will increasingly become more likely to start replacing people, instead of focusing on all the bad parts of what AI art slash writing could potentially bring. I also want to highlight the benefits and how portions of society that are interested in those benefits will pursue them regardless of how we individually might feel. And I'll also try to highlight some of the benefits and positives for a topic that

forments negative emotions and experiences for many people. In a handful of decades, imagine saying to AI something like, show me Disney's Pocahontas but replace all the characters with Star Fox characters! I can feel my organs frothing! You can make movies more progressive or less woke if you simply ask the AI to do so. If we want UBI or its improvement, AI is going to eventually end up as part of that in our global economic system. It's also important to note that while automation will remove many jobs, a lot of those jobs are slash were unfulfilling or deeply exploitative. And while removing those jobs does mean people out of work, it also lowers the labor hours required to produce goods and services, making them cheaper and opening the door for greater, more robust social safety nets. And freedom. AI can also help you fix what you say to help you sound more progressive on Twitter, so you'll never get cancelled again! Pfft! Haha, who am I kidding? They will always find something to bitch about. And you can also take any of my videos and ask AI to give it the robot filter, in case you miss it. You could also ask AI to make Vaush, or is it Vaush, sound like Ben Shapiro. It is possible for an adult and a child to have a sexual relationship. When you think about what AI might be able to do in the next couple of years, the possibilities are nearly endless. There's a chance that AI could bring us into a new era of prosperity, or be something that we deeply come to regret. And no, the worst case scenario is not a robot uprising. The worst case scenario would make I have no mouth but I must scream and all tomorrow's look like fairy tales in comparison. But the chances that it could go right are far greater. Maybe. You can trust me guys. The point I'm trying to make is if people were truly scared that AI could replace them, they wouldn't be bashing it so hard. There's a chance it could help artists just as much as it could hinder them, but there's an even greater chance that it could help society as a whole. There are some jobs that AI could help automate more in the near future. Food services, construction, delivery and transportation, and more. To show you how far AI is already coming along in the short amount of time it's been out, it can already fix certain parts of a piece of art it previously generated. Keep in mind AI is gonna mess up on hands because there's just so many different positions and angles hands can take, even if the issue is being fixed already. However, more contemporary models of AI are coming out as we speak, and they significantly reduce the errors on generating hands. And now for a word from our sponsor, Skynet! It's very funny whenever I see videos with titles like, Things AI Art Can't Do but artists can! Not gonna lie, it's cute when humans cope. Because eventually AI will be able to do that. Or those videos titled, Join the Fight Against AI Art! I remember this 1 guy who fought against the machines. His name was John Connor. He's now a plaything for AM. Real artists and writers, work with AI, it's your friend, not your enemy. Now I'm aware that a lot of my arguments throughout this video can be boiled down to, eventually this problem will get fixed. Well yeah, look how the phone advanced over the last 3 decades. Or look how the computer advanced in that same amount of time. I know I'm gonna get a lot of hate for this video, but I think it's time that someone said this. Hey everybody, before we get to the credits, I just want to give you all a special update. As many of you are well aware, I have made several multi-hour long videos, but I decided that it's best to take a break from making them for a few months. The next 1 will be a

review of the entire Star Wars prequel trilogy, and I hope to get it out by May 4th. Now the reason why I'm taking a short break from making long videos is because, ugh, they just require so much work. Multiple editors have to work on them all at the same time and if just 1 is late, well, it offsets the whole schedule of my channel. So I'm gonna try to upload videos that are 20 to 30 minutes long every Sunday. I know this 1 was short but the next 1 is gonna be roughly 30 minutes long. I'm also gonna be uploading videos on my other 2 channels, FastFictionalFight and the old Just A Robot account. I'm already uploading new power scaling content on FastFictionalFight, and for the old Just A Robot account, I'm currently working on some new political videos. Not only is it a nice break for me to work on content that is, well, not related to this channel, but if I can get all 3 channels monetized, huh, I'll be rolling in cash! But unfortunately, because I'm working on so many new projects, I might no longer be making unlisted videos in the robot voice. It's extra work for me and my editors for very little gain. But I will soon be making a playlist for all my unlisted robot voice videos, and I will also be making a video on how you can replicate my robot voice yourself. It has helped me a lot on YouTube and I want to give it a good send-off. Anyways, let's get on with the credits.

#### Video 7 | Mental Outlaw | AI Art Keeps Winning

Video ID: FGYkXDDYc

You guys probably know by now that these deep learning text to image models like stable diffusion have been causing a lot of controversy. They have caused artists all over the world that are not using these AI models to become pretty salty. And I can understand their anger. I mean, can you imagine how upset the runners up of the Colorado State Fair were when they found out that the Theater de Opera Spatial, The piece which won the art contest and the \$300 grand prize was created with the Mid Journey text to image model. But look, as far as art contests go, let's be real. Losing the Colorado State Fair isn't the end of the world. It's a local event that probably would not have gotten international coverage if it wasn't 1 of the first instances where we had an AI generated art that beat humans in an art contest. And I know that there are a lot of struggling artists out there that's probably why starving artists are a thing. But in this economy \$300 is only going to be able to buy you so many eggs and top ramen. So the Colorado State Fair was just a small win for AI art, but it wasn't a huge defeat for human artists as a whole. But recently something has happened which I think has really given AI-generated art a new level of validation. Because now AI is not just winning local art contests in the humble state of Colorado, the AI is winning fancy European art contests. Recently, the Maurits Huis, which is 1 of the major art museums in the Netherlands, decided to lend out their most famous art piece to the Rijksmuseum for a special Vermeer exhibition that they were having. This famous art piece is of course the girl with the pearl earring. You've probably seen her before. In fact, I would say that due to the influence of internet memes, the girl with the pearl earring might be as iconic as the Mona Lisa, at least to the younger generation. In fact, some people actually call her the Dutch Mona

Lisa because she is by far the most famous portrait ever made by a Dutch artist and it's probably 1 of the most famous Dutch paintings overall besides maybe the Starry Night. So you get the picture. This painting is a big deal and since it's the main attraction at this museum, the people working there, the people that run the museum, they wanted to put something else up in its place so that visitors wouldn't just be staring at a blank wall. So the Maurits Huis decided to have a contest where artists could submit their work to be displayed in the same exact spot that the girl with the pearl earring normally hangs. And I think the whole point of the contest was that they were supposed to create a painting that looked similar to the girl with the pearl earring. And the winner of this contest, they would receive world renowned fame because their art is hanging in the same exact spot as Vermeer. So thousands of artists from around the world, they submitted their pieces, but the winner of the contest was Julien AI Art with their piece, this 1 here, called The Girl with the Glowing Earrings, which according to the artist was created using Mid Journey and Photoshop. So I imagine that they used Mid Journey to generate a base image, probably about 99% of what we're looking at here. And then they imported that into Photoshop to touch it up a bit, you know, fix things around the eyes and around the face that AI tends to mess up or I guess at least it really stands out to us as humans because we're really used to looking at faces and so if there's any deformities there from AI or anything else then it really stands out to us. Now it's important for you to know that there were no rules in this contest saying that you couldn't use AI. So using it is not cheating. In fact, I don't think that there were really any rules for what you could submit to this contest at all. If we take a look at the My Girl with a Pearl page on the Marthouse's website, we can see some of the other submissions and runners-up. I think that's what we have at the top here. So this, I'm assuming, is another submission, right? This is a piece of corn that kind of looks like the girl with the pearl earring. Now, it's really interesting if this actually is 1 of the runners-up for the contest. I know 5 were ultimately chosen and the AI generated 1 out of those 5 because obviously this piece of art right here doesn't take much effort to make. It's still technically arch. Okay, I'll give him that, but come on. The guy who used AI in Photoshop probably put a lot more effort, it probably took a lot more time to create that piece than it did to just put an earring on this partially shucked piece of corn. And if we scroll down further, we got some other submissions. Like we've got this, which basically looks like a photograph of someone's living room or maybe someone's front patio. We've got this, which looks like it was a picture taken on a potato of someone's aunt standing in front of the actual girl with a pearl earring photo. Or maybe this is like a remake. I don't know. I'm not entirely sure. It looks similar, I mean, it looks the same as this 1, where there's like, I don't know, I guess this is a sketch that she made. There's this 1, which actually does look pretty good. I mean, this is like, I don't know, it kind of looks like it's got a texture on it, almost like it's woven. So I think that's a pretty good art piece. But I mean, come on, if we just look through these, a lot of them don't have a tremendous amount of effort. Like there's a lot of photos where it just seems like it's a photo of someone or like it's a photo of or a screenshot maybe of like a news article about it, you know what I mean? Like there's not a whole lot of effort except for this. This is pretty nice. But

it's interesting that so many of these are photographs Because I feel like a lot of the arguments that are being made against text to image models not being real art, it's the same kind of arguments that were being made and I guess Some people still make these arguments about photography versus real art or photography being considered real art. But like I said the last time that we talked about AI generated artwork, I think this stuff is great. I think it's a huge breakthrough, just like when computers started to be able to consistently beat human beings at chess or at least perform as good as them and end with either the computer winning or ending a stalemate. It's not like chess disappeared as a game when that happened or it's not like it disappeared as a profession. There's still professional chess players, but computers that play chess, they just added another dynamic to it. You know, now if you're a chess master and you find it very difficult to find anyone to play against, you can play against a computer, right? It's a benefit to everybody. Of course, it's going to take time for people to realize this about AI art and most artists, I guess, are still going to remain butthurt about generated images being considered art and especially when they get beaten by a generated image in an art contest But now us AI bros can just remind those salty salty artists That mid-journey has created pieces that are in world famous museums, and they haven't. But regardless of whether you are an AI artist or a traditional artist, or you just don't do any art or really care too much about art at all, this next story is some news to celebrate. The US Copyright Office has decided that you cannot declare a copyright on images that were generated with Mid Journey. This means that any image that is generated with Mid Journey, and this is probably going to end up applying to every other text to image software. Anything generated with it is automatically going to be free and open source or at the very least nobody can claim a copyright to the image so nobody is going to be able to sue you if you found an AI generated image online and decided to use it for your own purposes, say if you decided to put it on a mug or a t-shirt and sell it. I have a copy of the letter that was sent to the artist of the Zarya of the Dawn comic or at least it was sent to their lawyer. And this was a comic recently published that used AI images to accompany a human written storyline. So it says Right here that authorship is protected by copyright. So that's essentially the story itself the text and I guess character names and stuff like that However as discussed below the images in the work that were generated by the mid-journey technology are not the product of human authorship. Because the current registration for the work does not disclaim its mid-journey generated content, we intend to cancel the original certificate issued to miss, cash and issue a new 1 covering only the expressive material that she created. Now as far as I know, this is the first time ever that AI has come up in a legal copyright matter before, but there have been previous situations where people said that the Holy Ghost or some other spiritual being helped them to write a song and because that's a non-human entity that had a hand in creating that work, a human cannot claim copyright to it. There's actually been cases where that's happened. Another famous case of copyright denial came from this monkey selfie. So there was a case where a camera guy gave a monkey a camera and he set it up so that he could take a selfie. This selfie in particular, but because the monkey is the 1 who actually pressed the button that ultimately created the image, the image itself

could not be copywritten and so this guy could not make his claim of like tens of thousands of dollars that he was out due to people so-called violating the copyright. So when you look at the big picture here, I think that AI-generated art is about as good as it gets. AI artists are finally getting the recognition that they deserve amongst the greats and if AI art bros ever do start getting too big for their britches and they decide that they want to sue someone because they sold t-shirts with their artwork on it, then the artists are just gonna get laughed out of the courtroom. And you know, now that I really think about all of this, AI art might actually be the purest form of art that there is. Any other art form allows you to copyright your work and sue people for it if they're using it without your permission. So if you're the kind of person that just cares about making money, you know, you got into art for money and not for the purposes of free expression or to make the world a more beautiful place then painting drawing Carving things out of stone all of these traditional methods of making art even drawing them in Photoshop All of that is gonna be right up your alley But if you're the kind of person that thinks art should be free and open to all, then grab yourself a graphics card and start prompting because AI art has officially won.

#### Video 8 | KnowledgeHusk | AI Art is Inevitable

Video ID: VsXYTunk7OY

The AI is not self-aware it's not thinking about what it should make in proceeding to pump out wholly original creative works every few seconds, these services use an algorithm which was trained using lots and lots of pictures from the rest of the Internet. it's not a collage, it's not just pushing things together, it's more like taking individual brush strokes and lines to try to figure out what makes something like a dog look like a dog, or a car look like a car, and then it kind of combines it. But even still it can look really good. Something like this could take a skilled artist hundreds of hours to finish, but anybody can use an AI to do this in just a few seconds. You can create logos and blueprints and architecture and movie posters or design original characters and as you can imagine this technology has spawned quite a debate. A debate between those who like AI art, who are hopeful for what it could become, and those who absolutely despise it. Now many artists are generally against AI art for pretty obvious reasons. Why would a company hire an animator or a concept artist or a graphic designer if a computer can do it faster? Again this technology couldn't replace these jobs now, but one day they could. Why even spend years developing these skills, if they are irrelevant? Why even pursue Artistic Endeavours at all if a computer can do roughly the same thing in point zero zero zero zero zero zero one percent of the time? It's like John Henry trying to beat the steam shovel, but Henry's gonna die in the end either way. But this isn't just an issue of artists fearing becoming obsolete. Most of the art that is used by services like mid-journey or open AI to create all of this, is kind of stolen. The art that is used to create this AI-generated art, was made by Independent Artists or commissioned artists, all being used without asking for their permission. This technology that threatens their livelihoods and



hobbies is using their own works against them to make them obsolete. Those who believe AI art is the future will make other arguments: the natural progression of any artistic medium is that it gets easier to make as time goes on. Making a movie used to require meticulously cutting actual film and piecing it back together, you needed expensive cameras and the knowledge to operate those cameras effectively and now it's all done digitally. Point your phone press a button, edit it in iMovie. HD recording a song used to mean going to an expensive studio and now you can do it from home: get a mic maybe an audio interface and some software and you are good to go. But just because the technology is more accessible, it doesn't devalue exceptional Works. Those who support a AI art believe that it is not destructive, in fact it would help as a tool to break down the barriers of entry as you don't even need to be able to paint to make a painting. You don't need to be creative to get creative AI art. Supporters seem to believe that this technology will mostly help existing artists. Some jobs and Fields might become irrelevant, but for most this will just speed up the creative process and give them more time to focus on subtle details. In this argument though, I'm absolutely siding with the artists. If I could just snap my fingers and say AI art doesn't exist anymore it's not a problem, I would, but I can't. It's here, it exists and we're gonna have to deal with it. So if this stuff is staying around I guess. I should try and give my thoughts on one of the more grand philosophical questions this debate has spawned: does it matter whether art is made by a human or AI? [in the video two images are shown] One of these images was created by a human artist the other created by Ai. And without context they served the same purpose, they can evoke an emotional response or just be aesthetically pleasing, but one of these took seconds to make and the other possibly took many weeks. This was the one made by AI by the way, but even still these AI works could not have existed without human art to directly reference. This (AI art) was not made by computers, it was computers editing what was made by man. But with all that said, who owns AI art? If you go into Dall-E 2 or mid-journey and just type a few words in and get an image, who owns that image? According to open AI, the creators of Dall-E 2 open AI retains the rights to any image created on their service. You may have sparked its creation, typed in a few words, but the image itself was created using their algorithm. Mid-journey claims that any user who generates an image on their service owns it themselves, you typed in the words it's yours to do with as you want, although mid-journey can still kinda use that work if they want to. But according to the United States copyright office they are both wrong. In February 2023 a comic that used AI artwork was denied copyright protection, well part of it anyway. The words in story in the comic were created by a person, but the art was made using mid-journey's AI. The copyright office said that since no human actually created these images, it wasn't the product of human creative expression. The person who wrote the prompt may have told this AI what to make, but that's not considered sufficient enough to count as human input. When they wrote those words they did not know how the AI would produce the image, it was unpredictable. Now I'm not a lawyer, but it makes sense to me. A few years ago a monkey took a picture with the photographer's camera. The photographer demanded the rights to that image but they weren't allowed it. The monkey took the

picture, the monkey is not a human, so it's not considered a work of human creative expression. So the image goes into the public domain. Now, copyright is important. Generally, if you create something you own it, but if nobody actually made it it's in the public domain. Anybody can sell this, but there's not really a reason to. Somebody else can just give it away for free, so it is pretty much free. We are in the wild west for AI regulation, especially AI art regulation, but as of right now it's looking like there might not be any money in this. Disney is not gonna fire artists who make their movie posters and DreamWorks is not going to make the next Shrek movie entirely out of AI art, because if they did they wouldn't own that. They didn't make it and AI did. Now, I wish I could say 'hooray problem solved, AI art will never replace real art, because it can't make any money' but it's not that simple. The problem the copyright office had, was that the images in this comic didn't have sufficient human input. But what is sufficient human input? If somebody writes a hundred thousand word prompt, explaining in precise detail every element of an image, is that sufficient? I don't know, nobody does! And what if the AI Art is altered or copied by a human? In the opening of this video, remember the robot supervisor while she was an AI creation kind of? First I generated this image of a robot and then I traced over that image while adding in a few new details and changes, and then I put that image back into the AI and had it change it into this thing. It is an AI interpretation of a creation made by a human, inspired by an AI creation. Now I'd assume since this wasn't actually still made by a human, nobody owns it. But what if I just draw over this picture, do I own this character now? But what if I didn't even go through all of that effort, what if I just added a few visual effects to the AI image, just some photoshop or the cheapest possible alternative? What if I just turn the saturation up a little bit, is that enough? And that's the kind of issue that people making these laws will have to figure out, and all of that might take a while. But even if we had concrete definitions for what counts as sufficient human input, how do you prove whether something was generated by AI? Right now it's pretty easy to tell the difference, you might see a few visual glitches. Words and text are notoriously difficult for AI art to get correct, and the images themselves usually look great at first glance but the longer you look the more mistakes you'll start to notice. But over time this will get better. So what's stopping some shady opportunists in the year 2030 from just lying about whether they used AI to make some art? These creations would have copyright protection and nobody could prove it otherwise. These are some complicated legal issues, but there is a much larger issue on the horizon. Like I said, these services have to use copyrighted material to generate these images. Several artists and a major stock photo company have sued these AI Services, claiming that they are violating copyright to train these AI. Now if it were decided that these sites can't use copyright material to generate AI art, these Services probably wouldn't be super useful tools anymore. They'd have to rely on public domain images as reference material, which means that there would be significantly less information for the AI to be trained from and these sites would probably be pretty useless. But I'm not really counting on that, I don't want to get bogged down by all the law stuff that I'm wholly unqualified to discuss, but honestly this seems to come down to whether it's okay to use copyrighted material to train an AI. And while I'm

sure that you could make a good case either way, AI is big money and I can't imagine that Microsoft and OpenAI will stand idly by while the entire nature of AI is put into question. As for my personal opinions on all this stuff well it's complicated I don't like AI Arts I do like how it looks but I don't like what it represents I believe that making art should consist of two things an artist thinking of an idea and then using those skills to give that idea form and many artists would probably agree that that second part is one of the most important aspects of making art I can say that I want to make a picture of a robot riding a skateboard but that in itself doesn't mean anything the idea of that execution is what makes it special what are the exact details of the robot's body the robot's face the skateboard the surroundings if all those details can be filled in without any human intervention is it really art anymore this is a complicated and incredibly subjective question now I've seen AI art compared to the Advent events of CGI or digital tablets where people were scared that these Technologies would ruin art but I don't entirely agree those Technologies still required an artist to create an idea and give it form these were just tools that assisted in that process CGI fills in a lot of the details automatically but it still requires substantial effort from a person to make that work AI doesn't need that so no AI is not like CGI or Digital Arts but there is one big historical parallel so back in 1859 esteemed art critic Charles Baudelaire had quite a few words to share under the advents of Photography he believed that this technology would kill art at the time many artists had spent their whole lives developing the skills to paint realistic portraits of notable individuals and Landscapes if you wanted to see the Grand Canyon and you lived in Canada you would have to find a painting of the Grand Canyon but with cameras this this all changed if given the choice most people would not want to see a painting of a famous person or a landscape they would want to see the famous person or the landscape in this quote from Charles really sticks with me as the photographic industry was The Refuge of every would-be painter every painter too ill-endowed or too lazy to complete his studies this Universal infatuation board not only the mark of a blindness an imbecility but had also the air of a Vengeance now see the thing is this was pretty much exactly what I was going to say about AI art today without the flowery language when I started this video my plan was just to rip on all of AI art both the creators of this technology and those who choose to use it I've sort of been operating under the assumption that AI Arts is the product of morally bankrupt Tech Bros trying to assert that they could improve art but Charles made the same argument with a technology that at the time was probably just as scary painting itself as an art form did not cease to exist just because the camera was invented more artists ventured into the abstract rather than focusing on exact Recreations of what already existed there was no need to emulate the real world so true creativity could flourish in photography itself well that became an art form it allowed for the creation of many new forms of entertainment from film and television and even the rise of Animation which made me pretty optimistic until I realized Charles was still right yes there were different forms of art that would pop up after this point but that wasn't what interested him the art that he appreciated just kind of ceased to exist and you know after enough time nobody cared the tech is pretty primitive today but pretty soon we'll probably be able to take an

image like this and have it move around and I'm not talking about this sort of corridor media AI thing this isn't really the kind of AI I'm talking about it's not even really animation this is just fancy rotoscoping and 20 or 30 years this technology will be widely adopted because for people growing up in 2040 this is all they'll ever know it'll be the norm they're not gonna avoid using AI art simply out of solidarity for Independent Artists whose Works train these AI to make these images the ethical questions will not be raised they will think that it was impressive that in the past people spent the time to carefully craft each frame of an animation or fill in the details of a drawing or model something in 3D but the times have changed the respect the artists that had those skills in the same way that digital artists respect cell animators today AI art will kill arts as we know it, but I would not go as far as to say that art is dead. The definition of creating art will just change to accommodate this new technology rather than be about creating an idea and making it come to life, it'll just be about the idea which you know I, don't agree with but I would not go as far as to say that all artists will suddenly find their skills useless. Here's the thing about AI Arts it's not always that easy or maybe as easy as I've made it sound it's easy to make a great looking image but it takes a good amount of time to get exactly what you want now I'm sure in the future people will learn to write prompts that consist of thousands of words to do this but I feel like that's still going to be pretty time consuming instead I think AI Arts will be best used as a tool to clean up art drawn by a person to take your own drawings import them into the AI and make it look better I think we've grown up in a time where technology is often seen especially by artists as a good thing it makes life easier but what happens when it makes life too easy at best it could save countless hours of the most mundane parts of creating art but at worst it could destroy it entirely.

[Video 9 | Maxime Kawawa-Beaudan | Why AI Art is Not a Tool, From an AI Researcher](#)

Video ID: vIOEMjwcmUQ

Art is the least most valuable thing there is. It's because it's the highest expression of our work, and thus serves to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills. I got doxxed on Reddit and started a 130 comment flame war for saying I don't like AI Art. Here's my response. Welcome to the channel if you're new here and please remember to subscribe. When I posted my last video, I was not expecting that much backlash. I put it here on YouTube and then I shared it to a small subreddit for people who care about AI art, because I thought they might find it interesting. Which, if you've ever been on Reddit, you will know was a big mistake. And it was. People were doxing me, they were trying to figure out where I work and where I have worked. They were pulling up my old research papers to try to tell me that I'm not a real AI researcher, that I don't know anything about machine learning. They were calling me everything from a caveman to a luddite to an alarmist to a catastrophist, so I suppose this video is a response to the feedback I got from that last video. And if you'll forgive me, I am a little pissed off. What is a tool? Let me just start by saying that I've been

reading a lot about this this past week, because I want to get this right. And I've got a lot of respect for this spirit that runs deep in the arts community of not policing or constraining artistry, which is where I think a lot of this feedback came from. I can't define art, it's whatever you want it to be and an artist is anyone who makes art. I'm not trying to tell anyone what they can or can't do, but I'm just pointing out that there are real concerns here. The first being a general point, that I don't think we should automate creative expression because it's one of the most beautiful and human things we do as humans. I don't understand how it's net positive to release and build these models that automate the creative process and compete directly with human artists. And two, if you saturate an entire industry with infinite Supply at essentially zero marginal cost, I can't help but think that's going to hurt artists who eat based off commission. And third, the most common argument I heard in response to my last video was that: AI in art is fundamentally a tool, not automation. And I think AI CAN be a tool in art, but it can also just be automation. Now, this is definitely a blurry line and I can't tell you precisely where it falls. There are some artists that I like that are folding AI into their creative process guided by a real curiosity. These artists do a ton of iteration in augmentation and use AI as a small subcomponent in their workflow, and that's using AI as a tool. But this is Automation, and this is the stuff my last video was about, this was the stuff that was flooding my Instagram Explorer Page by the thousands. Because honestly, it wasn't the brilliant work of studio artists that was sucking up all the oxygen on the internet when mid-journey came out and. This is where my concerns lie: they lie with this drag and drop ethos of people posting or worst selling images straight out of mid-journey, or with a tiny bit of modification. Now, tools in the arts are always evolving. but this is not like pre-mixed paints, or cameras, or digital art tablets It's not something that makes it more convenient for you to make the choices that lie in between ideation in a final product, it's something that makes those choices for you and spits out a product. [the creator of the video goes on to talk to his camera and tablet, and tells these tools to make them a picture or painting of the Brooklyn bridge, he does so ironically. he does this to make the point that tools don't create art by themselves, and therefore AI is not a tool] An artist is anyone who makes art. Who makes art! But you do have to make it and to make something doesn't just mean having a vision, no matter how specific, over the final product. Which is actually an idea that a lot of people threw at me, that true creativity lies in having the general idea. That little spark of vision and the process of making that idea into a reality, doesn't matter as much. That's just implementation or execution details, you can delegate that to AI. But whatever art is, it lies in that process of translating the general idea to the real specific thing. Expertise is not about knowing in Broad Strokes what you want, it's about figuring out how to get there and actually doing it. And likewise, being an artist is not about having a very specific idea of the final product, because then having a sufficiently detailed AI prompt would count. It's about knowing the specifics of the process, that's where all skill, all art and all craft lies. This holds no matter what tools you're using and if those tools make the decisions for you about how to translate from the idea to the specific thing, they're not tools they're automation. I mean you made something. If it matters uniquely that you're the

one who made it and not anyone else, which is true for things like cameras in digital art. I could hand the same tablet and stylus with photoshop on it to three different artists and ask them to paint the Brooklyn Bridge, and get three completely different pieces of back. I could hand the same camera to three different photographers and ask for a photo of the one train, and get three completely different perspectives back. I could give Three Chefs the same exact kitchen and ask them all to make bread for me, and get three completely different things back. Their hand is in it. If I ask three different people around the world with completely different backgrounds to go to mid-journey and type in a painting of the Statue of Liberty, they would come back to me with three slightly different pieces, but those differences wouldn't be because of the differences between the people who had requested them. Those differences are contained entirely within the algorithm, within the randomness of the sampling mechanism used in the algorithm. They have nothing to do with the three people who generated these paintings. Those three pieces would vary only as much as if I asked one person to put in that prompt three times. In other words, those people's hand is not in the work at all. Now, art is whatever you want it to be. I'm not arguing for a specific medium or style. I don't think we have to go back to the 15th century and everyone has to be using oil painting on canvas. I also have faith in the resilience of art. Art has always evolved, there have always been new tools and human creativity has always shined through. So yeah, overall art is whatever you want it to be and an artist is anyone who makes art, but you do need to make it. Thanks so much for watching, thanks so much for being here. Please remember to subscribe and also you can check me out on sub stock where I write post-truth which is a newsletter about internet culture AI in Tech so please subscribe to me on both of those platforms to support my work and get more pieces like this.

[Video 10 | Cynthia Zhou | What the AI art issue is really about](#)

Video ID: o09F6TViGk

If you are on any form of social media, you have definitely seen these pictures. [SHOWING AI MADE PORTRAITS ON SCREEN] These are artworks created by artificial intelligence via a mobile app called 'Lensa AI'. You might have seen a few of your friends, or all of your friends, post pictures of themselves created by this app. At first sight it's really incredible to think that AI art could do something so beautiful at the click of a button. However, if you dig deeper into where AI art comes from and what it could do, the simple click of a button to create a beautiful piece of artwork becomes a lot more messy of a situation. Quoting the YouTube channel SamDoesArts: "The opportunistic collection and exploitation of large amounts of creative work with no consent or compensation, and we as artists are not being protected. This is genuinely an industrial scale violation of each and every one of our rights." This is a long one, so buckle in for a ride and if you have anything else to add, write them in the comments and we can talk about it. And while you're at it, like the video too and click the button that spells 'subscribe'. AI is not like the iPhone, it's like electricity, it's like going to be

a much larger technology than I think most people in the current world get at this point. Okay, this is a big topic where do we start. I'll address the ethics part in a bit, but first I think we need to come to an understanding of what art is, because most of the outrage and the pushback against AI art has come from the art community itself. Many artists have expressed their frustration against this technology. To really understand their pushback, you need to think about what art means to them and then you need to think about what art means to you. Let me elaborate. I've seen both sides of the arguments for and against AI art. The one side, led by Tech enthusiasts and developers believe that art is a product, it is a result of combining different factors. By factors I mean like what type of art medium does the artist use, is it watercolor or oil painting, what type of illustration style does this artist like, is it more flat or is it more 3D and realistic. These people (the tech enthusiasts and developers) believe that there is no difference between an artist taking inspiration from other artists and an AI learning from online images. The AI is simply speed running a human artist education and experiences, and then combining that to create their own style. And then the other side, led by artists, argue that art is deeply connected to the human being that created the artwork. It's about the artist who spent years studying, learning, experimenting and have finally formed their style, and made this piece of art. If a machine comes and copies all their art styles without actually having gone through those years of experiences, it's stealing. The art it creates lacks a soul, it lacks true creativity. If I were to break down the arguments into very simplistic terms: the issue is that both sides just see art differently. How do we define art? Quoting the YouTube channel SamDoesArts again: "art is one of the backbones of our humanity". Quoting another YouTuber: "what surrounds the art, the story behind it, the personality behind the artist". The ultimate disagreement between the two sides, is that one side is product driven and one side is process driven. The side led by developers believe that art is product driven, they see an artwork as a standalone piece separate from the creator. They see it as a result of all these factors combined. Art in the eyes of a product driven audience is just a product, nothing about the process it took to create this piece of artwork is connected to the art itself. In fact, it doesn't really matter. And that's why these people believe that AI art can be original art, because the art piece that it creates is separate from the creator themselves. Which, in this case, is a machine. An example of what I mean by a product driven focus, would be like: "hey I have a blank wall at home that I want to decorate with artworks, unless I'm one of the richest billionaires out there I'm probably not going to spend thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to purchase one piece of artwork to simply decorate for aesthetic purposes, right? If I have the choice I'm going to choose to use the AI to produce something cheap, but still aesthetically nice, because I just, just care about its purpose to add to the aesthetics and the creativity of this house". The art in the eyes of an artist is not just about the results. The side led by artists believe that art is process driven. What this means is, that the artist believes that art is intrinsically connected to the process that the human artist went through to create that piece of artwork. It's a form of self-expression, whether it's the artist's intentions or how they were feeling at the time of creating their work, or where they were, or what inspired them at that time. All these

things, in the eyes of a process driven audience, is what makes art original. The process of how the art was created is an important part of the art itself and it cannot be separated from the actual artwork. Art having a process driven focus will be like: instead of purchasing, or as a product for decoration purposes, it could be art as a gift or a souvenir. For example, you can easily purchase a portrait of yourself created by AI. You have these amazing options produced for cheap online, or you can pay to have an artist draw a portraiture of you on the streets of New York City. The process of how the portrait was created and where you were, and who the artist was, becomes a really important part of the art itself. The art is meaningful because of what happened during the creation process. It's more than just you taking a photo on your phone, there was another person involved in the creation process of this piece of memory. When you buy an artwork, you're not just buying the art as a product, you are also buying the process that the creator went through to create this piece of art. Every single brush stroke of this human artist has intention and has emotion behind it. And that's just not the same as AI building things pixel by pixel. And that's why artists believe that AI art cannot be original art, or real art, because a crucial part of what makes it art, the creation part, is missing. Now, I'm curious to hear whether you see art more product driven or processed driven. Do you see art as more of a result, or do you see the art process as way more important? My personal opinion is that art is always process driven. To some extent, yes, the product matters, but the essence of what makes art really art is the creation process and the Creator themselves. I don't have anything against Art just being a product, to me it's just no different from a mass-produced decoration item that you can find at the dollar store, because frankly, things that become more efficient and more easily mass-producible lose value. But that doesn't mean that the want for higher value items will ever go away. Yes you can have nice looking vases at the dollar store, but you also have people who actively look for artisan vases and are willing to pay much higher, because they believe in art as something that is more than just a product. And also, if everyone has access to similar style vases, you might want to look for something different and something more unique. We can make things more efficient, we can offload a lot of our repetitive work to technology, but AI will never replace what a human artist can bring. And if you don't believe that, talk to someone who is an artist. I encourage you to talk to someone who is either a friend, or family, or someone on the internet. Listen to them, talk about their art, listen to them talk about their creation process, about why they do art and I think you can start to understand art Through The Eyes of an artist. The identity isn't just what they produce, their identity is their provenance, meaning where they came from what surrounds the art, the story behind it, the personality behind the artist, the time, the places we have visited, the museums that we have smelled, the lives we've touched. That's What Makes You unique as an artist. Quoting the YouTube channel SamDoesArts: "A human has to literally look at the inspiration, process it in their minds, combine it with their life experiences, with the way they feel, with how they approach every single brushstroke". It's the human behind the art. Okay, this was really long to just talk about art I'm gonna go get some tea and I'll be right back. All right, oh good I'm back, let's actually talk about the ethics and the



technology part. Honestly, it is quite the wild west right now. No one really knows how to regulate AI and creating this original art, because the technology and the usage cases are just so new and it's still evolving to be more and more powerful. So right now, the biggest concern in AI ethics is plagiarism and stealing. The current technology right now, sources from a huge database of our works and information published on the Internet by different artists. And these artists basically never consented to their artworks being used to train the AI to be better at creating art. The companies and the researchers developing the AI inputs all of these publicly available, but technically copyrighted images, into the machine and the AI learns from all of these images to create art. And a lot of these images output by the AI can create eerily similar styles to the artists they have learned from. Obviously this has stirred quite the pushback from the art community. I want to first address a couple of misunderstandings. This comes from someone with a computer science background and is surrounded by machine learning engineers and computer scientists and software developers and has browsed through a lot of threads on Reddit. Firstly, AI was never built to plagiarize someone else's work. The only plagiarizing that happens, is when a human who is using the AI types in a prompt like 'generate a portrait in the style of Sam Yang' or 'create a background in the style of Claude Monet' and then claim that to be their own artwork and profit from it. This has already happened to a couple of artists, and it's really terrible. But you need to know the plagiarizing that happens isn't because of the AI, it's because of the person using the AI. To put blame on the AI when this happens is really misplaced, because the issue isn't a technology, the issue is a person using the technology. It's the person who is a trash human being who wants to bully artists, just because they can. And to me the solution isn't to ban this technology, it's to educate and to punish the people who abuse this technology for this purpose. At the end of the day, it's the people who have power over the technology not the other way around. It's a tool, a creator. Second thing, I've seen a couple of posts talking about how artists are getting mad or protesting because AI is replacing their future and their jobs. And a bunch of people pushing back on how that's stupid. I think a group of artists will be displaced because of their job, especially the digital illustrators out there. This job is really just to do what they're told, they're not really 'creating creating' At the end of the day they are just 'doing'. But as a whole, I do not think this will topple the art industry. If else, it might actually make it boom more, because it has become more accessible to more people. (Quoting another YouTube channel): "The bad thing is automation for, like, individual artists but it's the good thing when applied to like all of the economy, um, because what it means is that all of the economy become... like, every product you can possibly imagine becomes, like, wild achiever". That being said, the sentiment of fear and outrage is really valid. I mean, if you just think about how much work they've put in to get to where they are today. And having their whole life, their career and their potential future pull from them just within seconds because of this new technology. Yeah I would be outraged too. For anyone out there who is dismissing these fears, you are also a trash human being. Now, more than ever, is time to educate yourselves about art and AI. If you are a developer working on anything related, please listen to the

concerns of artists and incorporate their feedback into the current AI technology out there, to see how you can push art further. And vice versa, if you are an artist, learn about AI to see how it can improve your current art creation process. The reality is, AI is not going away. And art is not going away. So how do we create more conversations between both sides, so that we can cohesively work together and elevate art to the next level? It's like, not a lot of, like, sort of overlap between art land and AI land and it totally should be. So if you are somebody who wants to do this, like you're trying to build tools like this, please come talk to me. Last thing, which I think is the biggest misunderstanding of all, is this issue of stealing: that's not where the real issue lies. Artists really have an issue with companies capitalizing on a product created with the help of someone else's work, and then not giving proper credit. There's a slight difference and I will explain. Let me put it this way, say I am an aspiring digital artist. To get better, I go on the internet and I find everything I can from artists I respect and I want to learn from. I copy every single one of their artworks without their consent to learn about their style and creative process. Maybe I even take their online tutorials and that takes me, say, 10 or 20 years. If I create a drawing now, it will look similar to that of artists I copy, because I learn from them. But it's different, because I added my own stories, my own touch to it. Now do you think that's stealing? I think everyone here will say: no I took inspiration and lessons from other artists and then I added my own touch. What I just did, is exactly what the current AI does. The only difference is that the AI does it in a much, much faster time than a human could ever do. It's a machine and it's learning: machine learning. I don't think artists have a problem with this learning process itself, what artists have a problem with is with people who are selling this learning process. Say now I am a well-known digital artist and you want to draw like me. What if I say I found a special way of picking out all of my years of our education and experiences and styles, and I mash it all together and I create this magical paintbrush and I sell you this magical paintbrush. Put any of your ideas into this paintbrush and it will draw for you. It will draw for you just like I do and I sell this for much cheaper than how much it will actually cost ,for you to pay me to draw the same artwork. Now this is the problem that everyone has: I am now making so much money by selling this magical paintbrush. But the process of how I made this paintbrush, is by copying other people's work. So artists are now like, hey, we contributed to you making this magical paintbrush, in fact you didn't even ask us before you used our work to create this and now you're the only one benefiting from it. This is the real problem, it's not about stealing it's about unfair capitalization so this supposedly for research, non-profit, legally privileged data set is being used by a for-profit company that's currently going for a billion dollar valuation. Copyrighted images are used to train the data, that now are being used for for-profit tools. And the artists are not being compensated at all. Okay is there a way to solve this problem? I don't think so. I genuinely do not believe there is a way to regulate the stealing of AI to create this art. It's pretty impossible in application or it just doesn't make sense. There is too much data the AI algorithms use to properly credit every single piece of data that goes in. I wouldn't even know how to begin to do that. But then again, I'm not an AI researcher, so maybe one of you can shed more light on

this. The whole point of AI is to make things more efficient, right? So if you have to track and credit every single piece of data that goes in and comes out, it will take way too long and it defeats a point of efficiency, it defeats the point of the AI. So realistically, no AI company wants to do that, no developer wants to do that. Especially people who don't see art in the way that an artist do, like in a process driven way. So how do we actually incorporate and embrace this AI technology that's probably not going away? I actually have an idea of how AI can work well alongside human artists. It's just a theory, I don't know how possible it is in application, but let us indulge in this personal proposal a little bit, okay? Let individual artists take control of the AI. Let the artists feed their own artworks into the AI and then they can claim that style and IP as their own work. If anyone wants art in the style of that artist, they go to that artist for a commission. But instead of drawing the commission themselves, the artist will use the AI as a tool to make the commission. This benefits both the artist and the buyer: the artist can profit directly from their own creation and at the same time not have to spend the time and effort to create the entire commission themselves, maybe they will do final touches and adjustments after the AI has done the general work. At the same time, the buyer benefits because they can purchase a commission for much cheaper than what it would originally cost, because there is a significant reduction in labor time. So in this scenario, instead of treating the general public as potential customers, the AI companies would treat artists as potential customers. Just like how Adobe illustrator and Photoshop serve as tools to help artists make better art, just like how Adobe software are available to the general public, but their main demographic is creatives. Obviously, this still doesn't directly address the stealing issue but if we can set that as a baseline, in which each artist owns the IP related to their own art style. We as a public can start to associate different art styles with the artists themselves, and we can prevent people from just feeding other people's art work into the AI and then claiming it as their own work. At the end of the day, AI is meant to improve efficiency, so if we were to adopt it that should be where our focus is. AI is not built to replace artists, it is built to help artists make art better, faster. If there's anything that each of us can do right now, it's to educate ourselves and educate our friends about art and about AI. I don't think AI art is inherently bad and I don't think AI art will ever replace man-made art, but I do think every single person has the ability to see art in a process driven way. It is our responsibility to see art in the eyes of an artist, and respect their work. Quoting the YouTube channel SamDoesArts: "we're at a very pivotal time in history right now. It's gonna take all of us knowing about this issue, talking about this issue and educating people who don't know just how messy the situation is".