

Chapter 1

Artworks in Search of their Artists in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the realm of art marks a significant moment in the ongoing relationship between technology and creativity. This study explores the impact of AI on traditional notions of authorship, creativity, and the role of the artist, examining how art consumers perceive AI-generated artworks. Utilizing a two-phase approach, the research combines a quantitative analysis of an online survey with qualitative insights from an interview with prominent Turkish AI artist, Refik Anadol. Findings indicate a growing acceptance of AI as a legitimate contributor to the creative process, though a discernible bias remains against AI-generated art. The article highlights the need for ongoing investigation into how AI will continue to shape artistic practices and cultural perceptions, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and diverse approaches to the evolving relationship between humans and machines in art.

INTRODUCTION

The trajectories of technological advancements and the evolution of art have historically intersected with each influencing the other. The methods of artistic production, the perception of art by its audience and the messages conveyed through art have been fundamentally shaped by the technological capabilities of the society

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in which the art is created. With the significant technological advancements of recent decades machines have increasingly entered domains traditionally reserved for human creativity, particularly in areas requiring high levels of originality and expression. Over the past decade artificial intelligence (AI), a system driven by complex algorithms, has become pervasive across various aspects of life including the arts. As with previous artistic forms that reflected the realities of their respective eras AI art represents a contemporary reflection of the society in which we live. It serves as a modern medium that encapsulates the interaction between the digital and physical realms. More specifically, the integration of AI in the creation of art blurs the boundaries between these realms thereby opening new horizons for artistic innovation.

The use of AI in the production of art garnered significant attention in the art world in 2018, when Christie's auctioned an AI generated portrait produced by a collective of artists employing AI. The portrait, titled Portrait of Edmond Belamy, was sold for over 430,000 U.S. dollars (Anantraschi & Bul, 2022; Christie's, 2018). This portrait was generated based on a dataset encompassing fifteen thousand portraits from the 14th to 20th centuries (Arjan & Chatterjee, 2022). The sale of this portrait by Christie's, a reputable art institution, sparked intense debates regarding the legitimacy of AI generated works as art.

Given that human creativity has long been considered integral to the essence of art and culture the rapid advancement of generative AI challenges traditional conceptions of art and raises critical questions regarding the acceptance of AI in creative processes and the evolving dynamics of human machine interactions. Can individuals discern computer generated paintings from those created by humans? Do audiences exhibit a preference for human created art? Is there an inherent bias against AI generated art? Do individuals attribute creativity to generative AI systems? Furthermore, in the context of AI generated artworks, who should be considered the artist?

Although many studies have sought to answer these questions, this study stands out by employing a two-phase approach, combining both survey results and the findings of a leading artist in the field.

This article seeks to investigate the extent to which art consumers exhibit bias in attributing creativity to AI generated artworks and whether they recognize such works as legitimate art. Additionally, this study explores the potential of AI systems to replace human artists. Specifically, it examines the question of authorship in AI generated art: Who is the artist when an artwork is produced by an AI system?

The initial section of this study provides a theoretical background by reviewing existing research on the relationship between AI and art. The subsequent section presents a quantitative analysis based on an online survey designed to elucidate the perceptions of viewers regarding AI generated art and AI as an artist and a qualitative

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