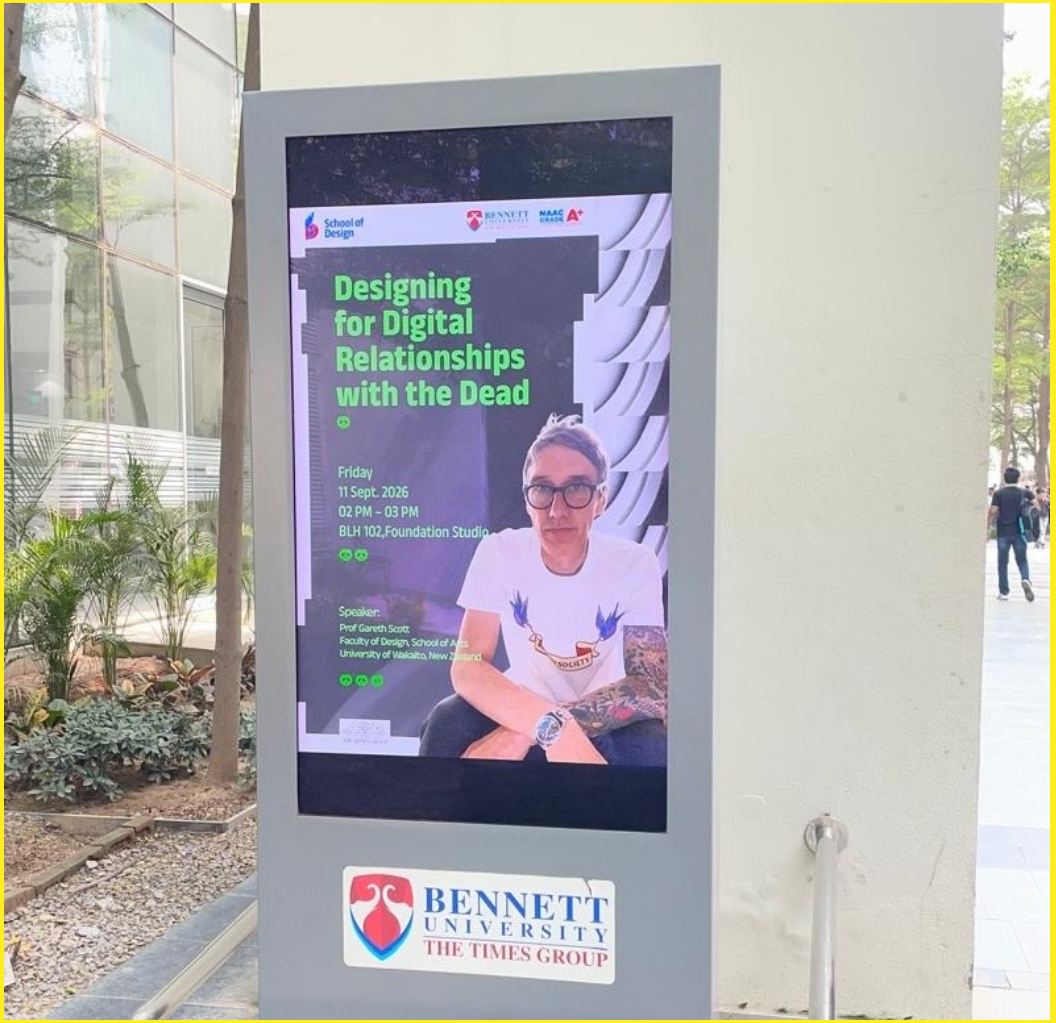

The Algorithmic Brush:
How is AI affecting the social foundations of creativity?

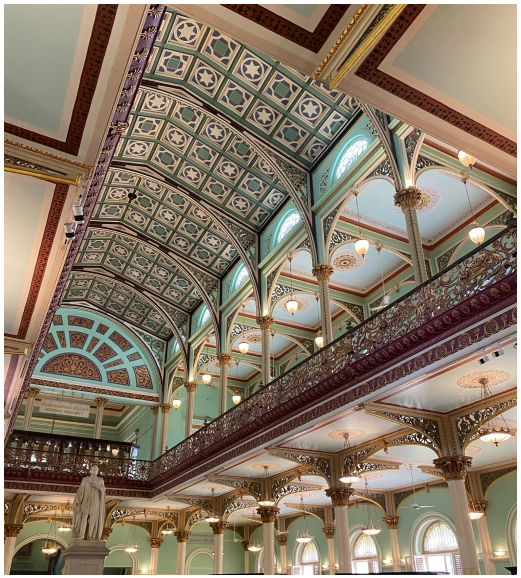


M E D I A
PSYCHOLOGY





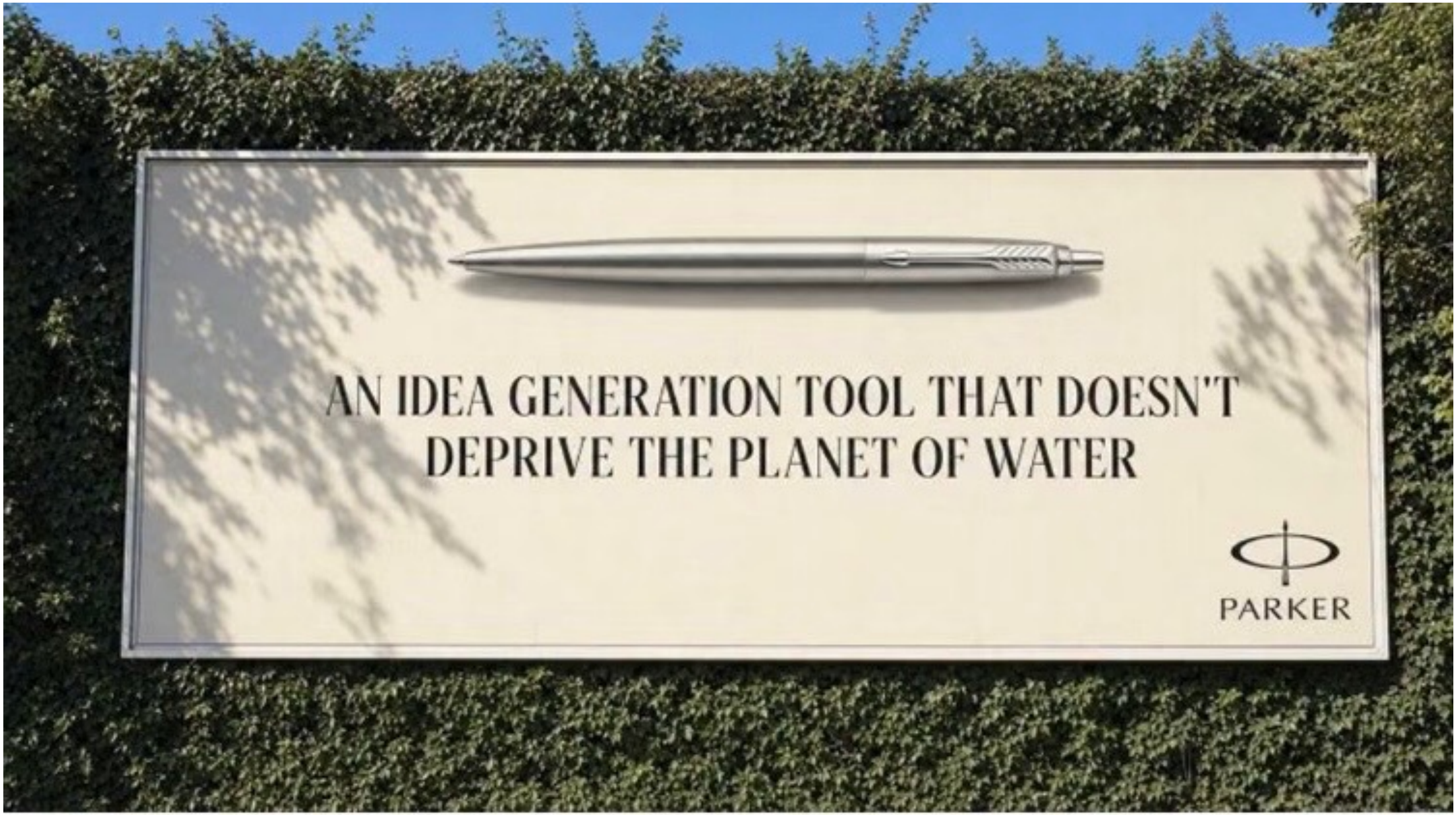


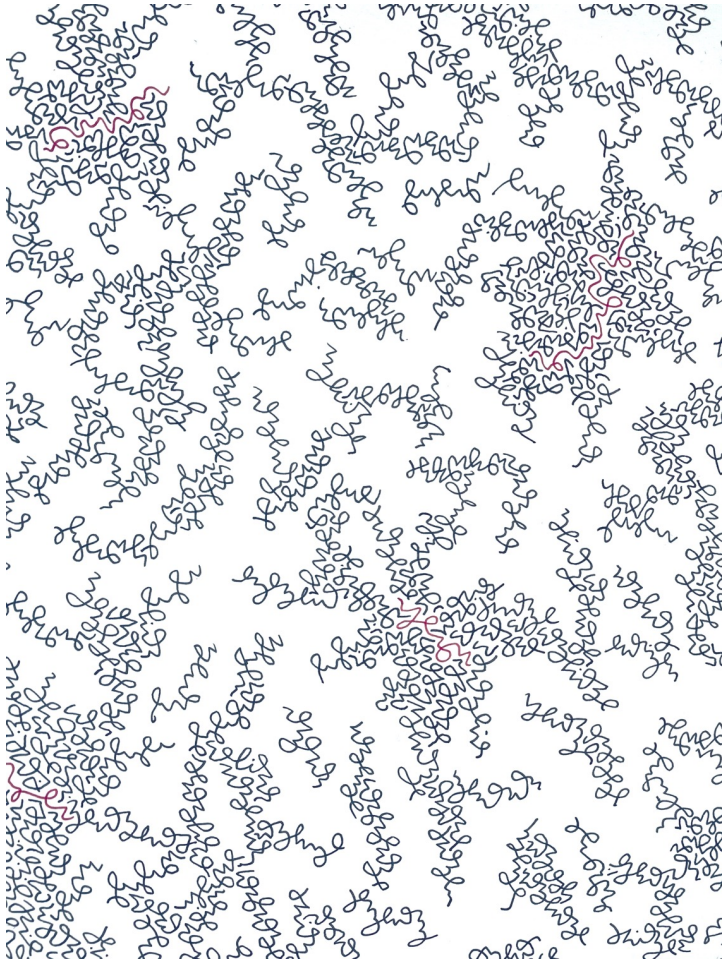









AN IDEA GENERATION TOOL THAT DOESN'T
DEPRIVE THE PLANET OF WATER
PARKER



22nd Oct - 8th Nov —— 2025

Mark Making

Asemic Art by
Gareth Schott

Nancy Caiger Gallery
1 Victoria Street, Hamilton

THE METEOR


The Algorithmic Brush:
How is AI affecting the social foundations of creativity?

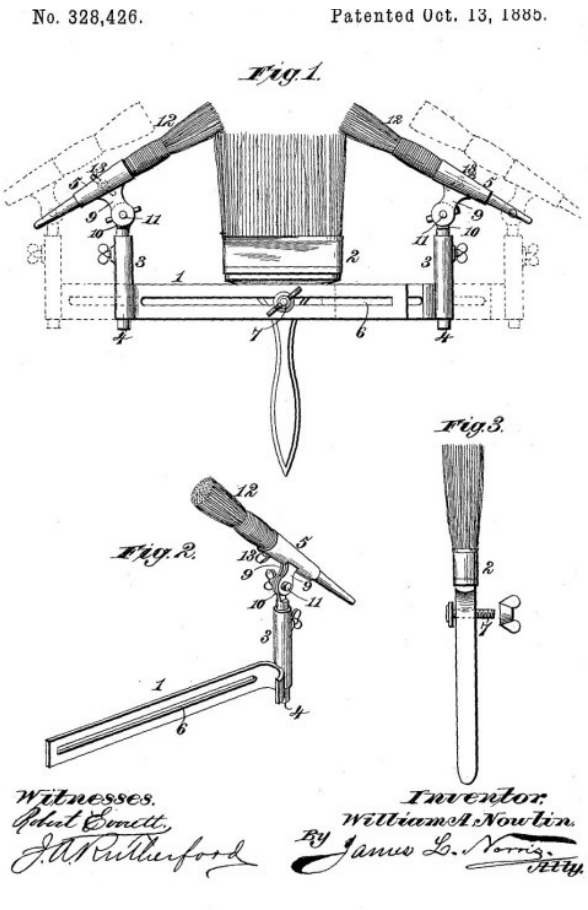
An attempt to justify a pseudo-intellectual title submitted in haste after several 'gentle' reminders ...

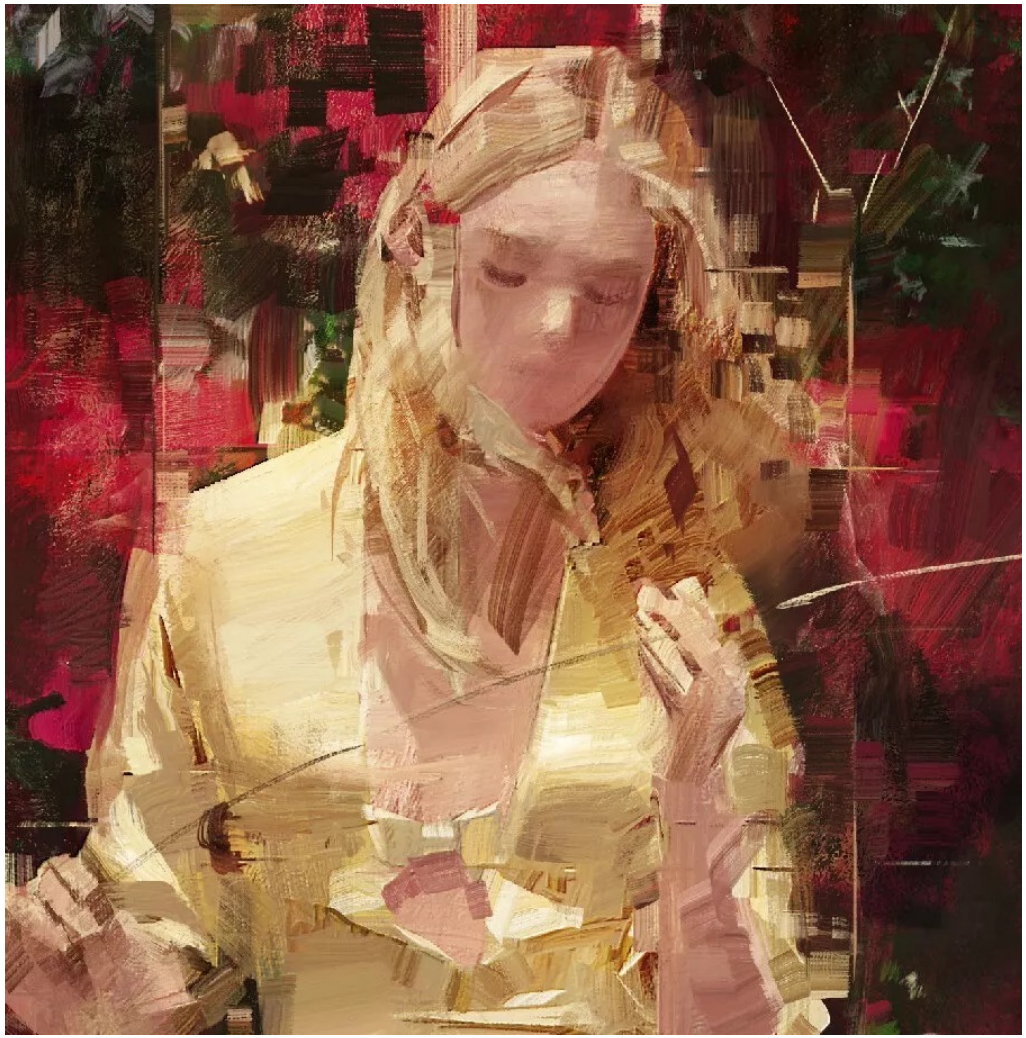
The Algorithmic Brush

inscriptional technology

"Every mark on the canvas is a choice, an inscription of the body's pressure against a resistance"
(Elkins, *What Painting Is*)

"The brushmark functions as a signifier that points constantly back to its own technological production—the speed of the stroke, the thickness of the paste, the architecture of the support"
(Damisch, *A Theory of /Cloud/*)

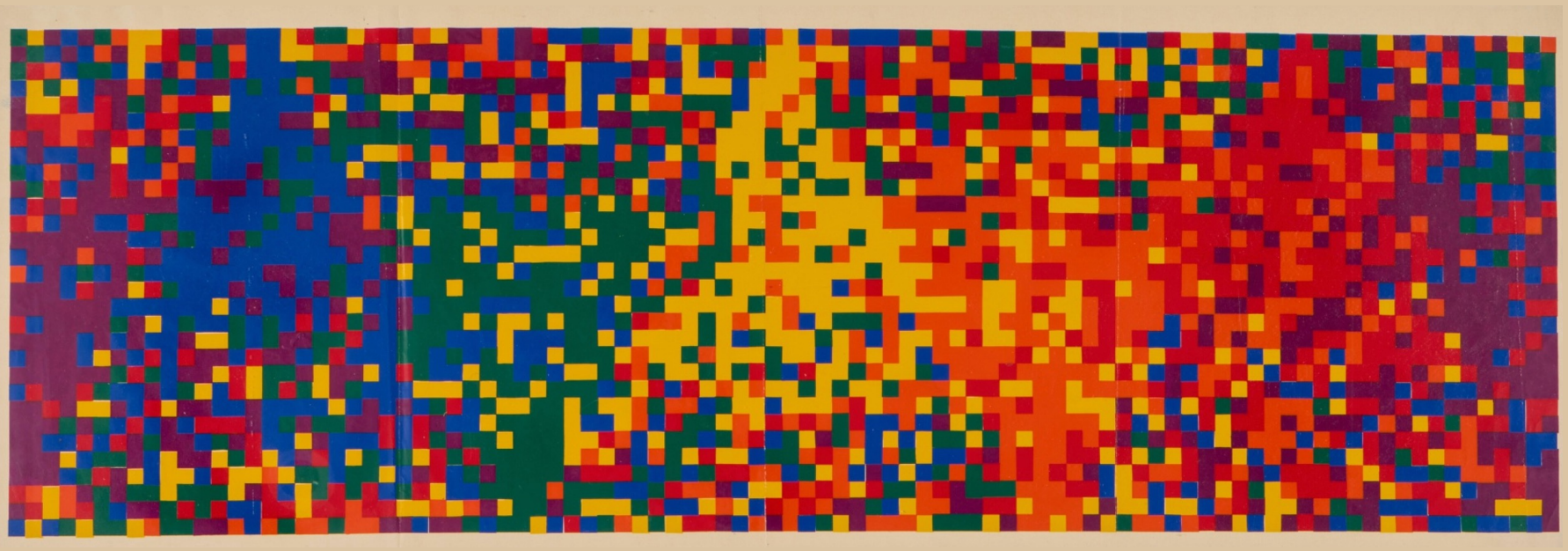




What is Brush

A brush is a specialized software tool used in graphics programming and digital editing to apply colors, textures, or effects to a specific area. It defines the shape and behavior of the stroke as a user interacts with a canvas. For example, a "soft round" brush creates blurry edges, while a "scatter" brush duplicates shapes. Developers use brush algorithms to determine how pixels change based on input movement and pressure.

The Algorithmic Brush



From the collection of Grace C. Hertlein


The Uncanny Mirror
"The Algorithmic Brush" is a slightly silly or ironic title because it juxtaposes the deeply human, physical, and intuitive act of painting with cold, deterministic code and probability math. Amazon.com +1
(Note: "The Algorithmic Brush" is also used as an academic talk title by Professor Gareth Schott exploring AI and creativity, such as the upcoming event at Waikato Museum.) cowartdesign.co.nz +1

social foundations of creativity

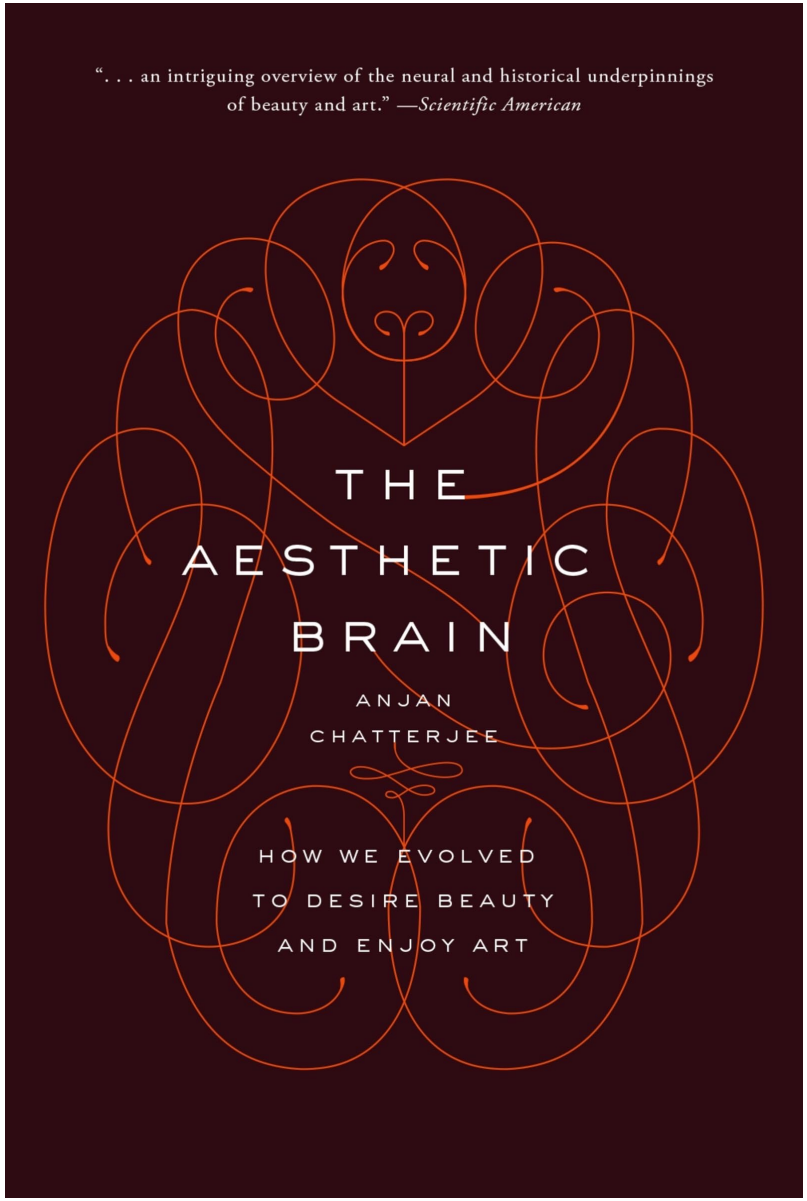
"cultural technology"

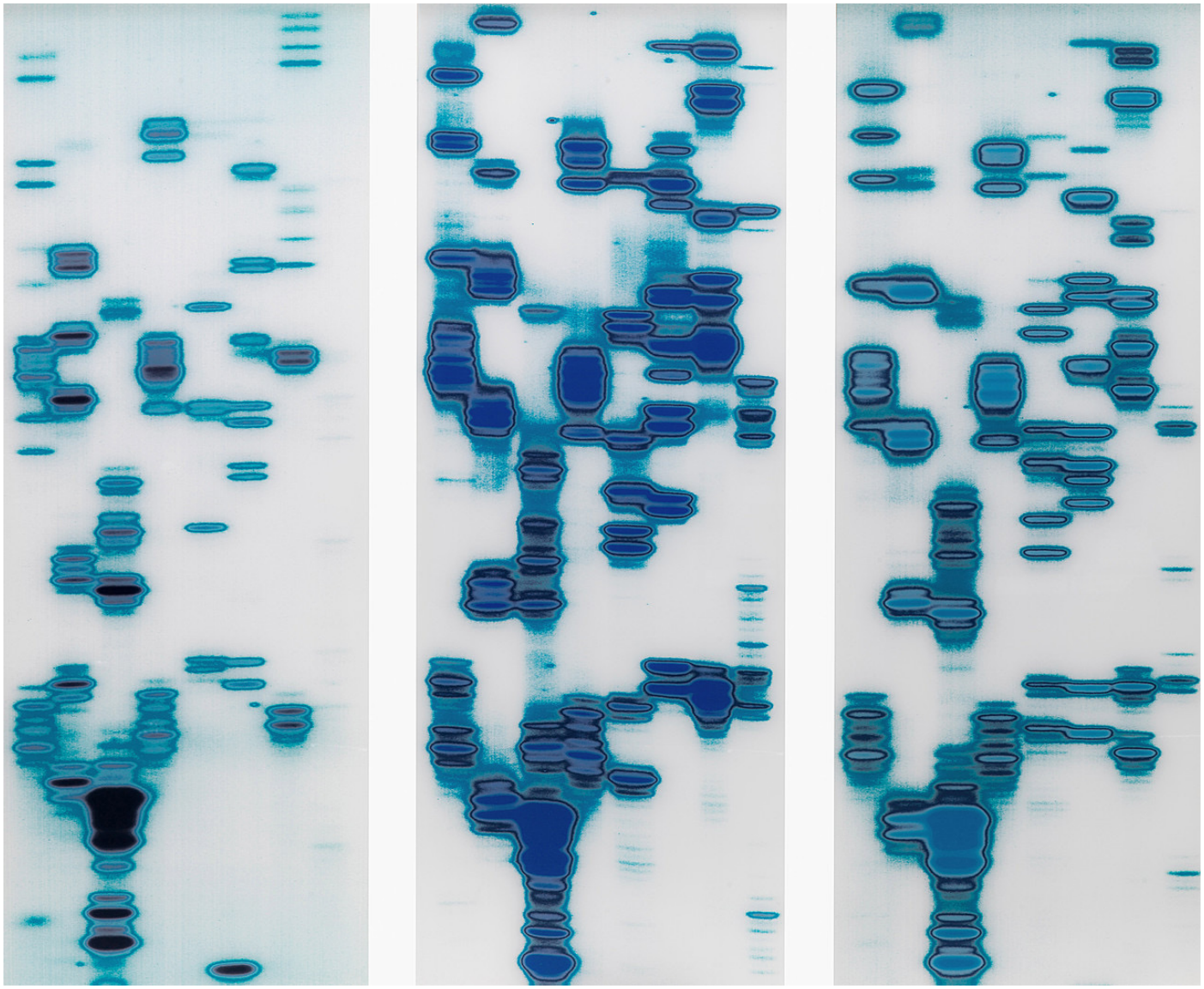


Le Due Luci
Roberto Bernardi
(2012)

'signaling systems'

"how art-making ability can work as a hard-to-fake signal of biological excellence" (Miller, 2016)





Glenn, Dario, and Tyrone
Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle (1998)



Kuma Mela
Marc Quinn (2015)



The Painter Surprised by a Naked Admirer
Lucian Freud (2004/5)

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres



Raphael and the Fornarina
(1814)



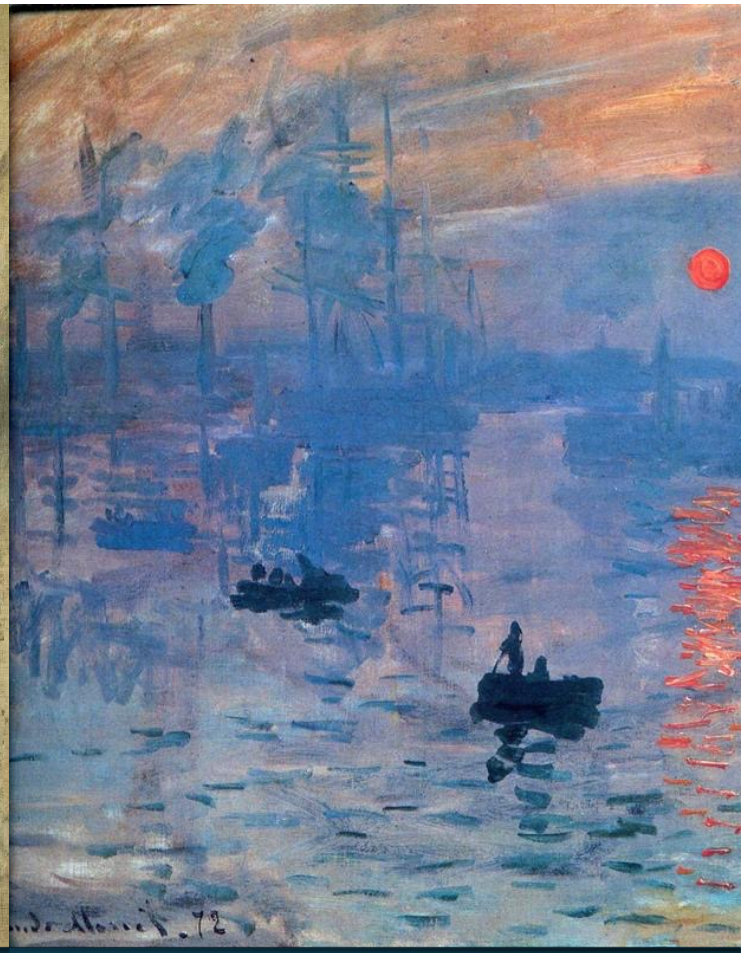
Jupiter and Thetis
(1811)


zero-(human) cost and infinite
A psychological gap: observers may recognize the aesthetic quality of an artifact while struggling to anchor it to a coherent human generative process.

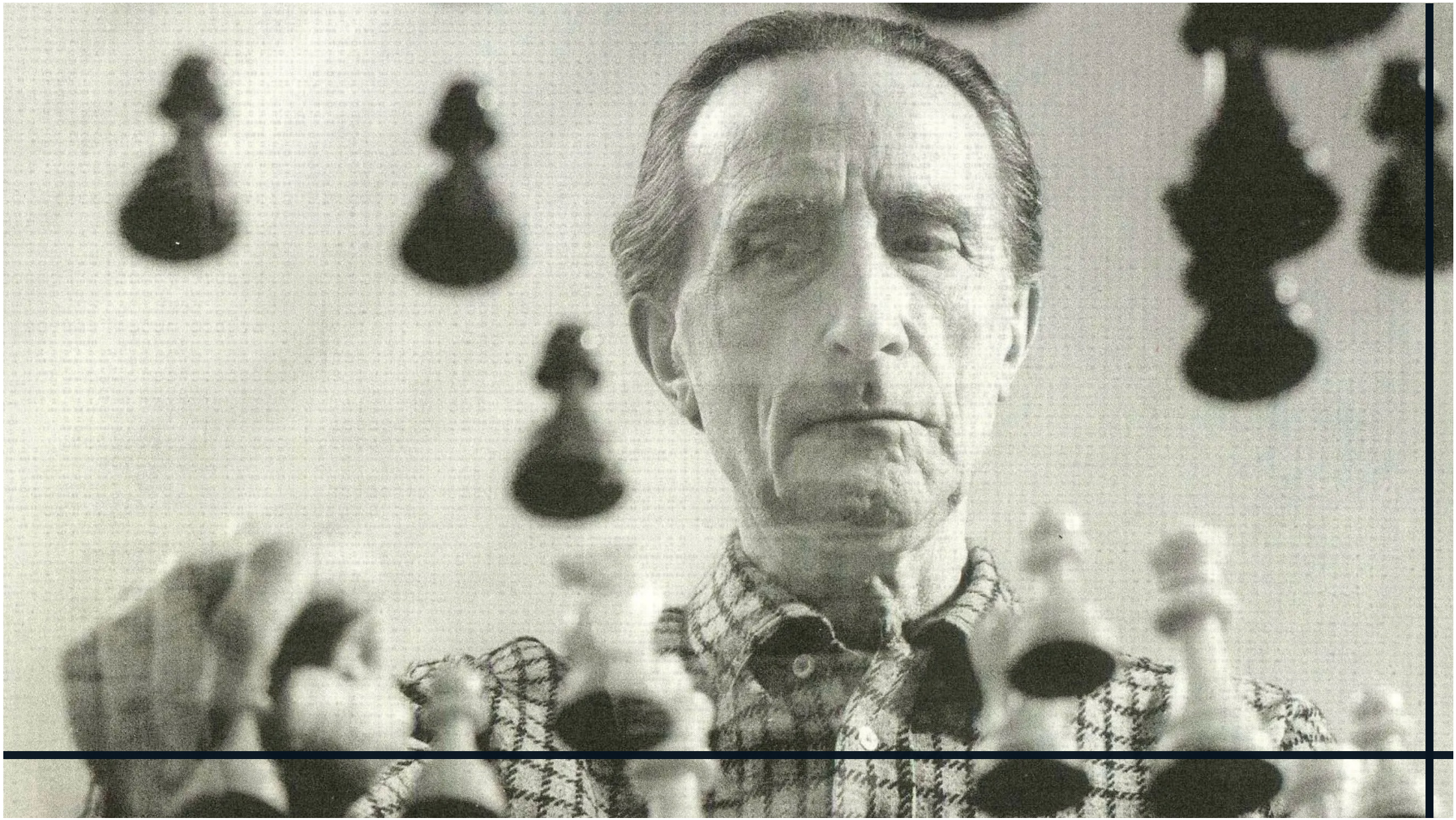

From today, all painting is dead
Paul Delaroche







What can humans do?

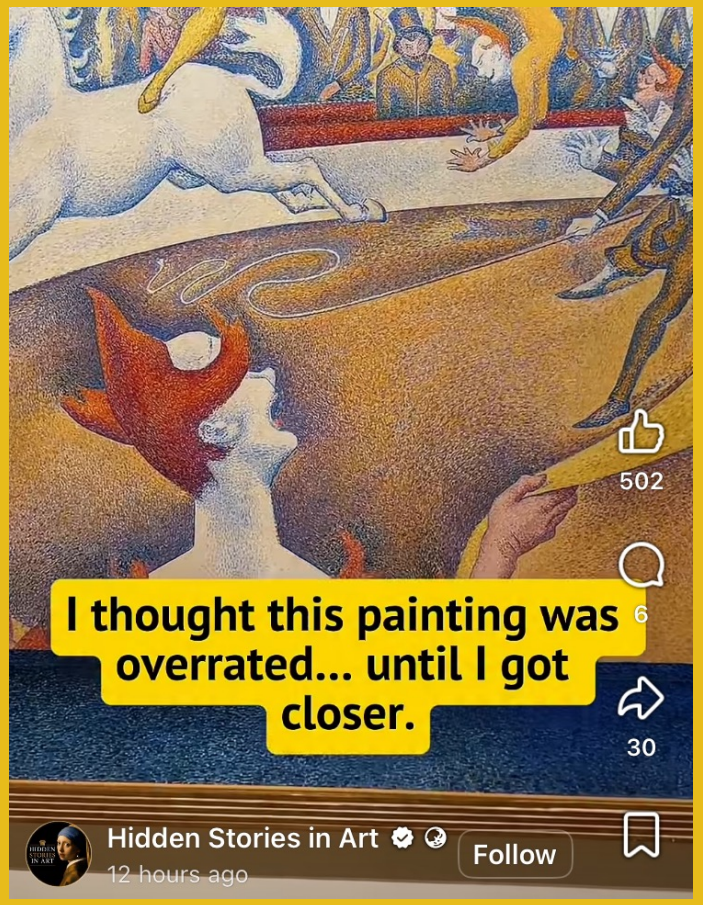


MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH

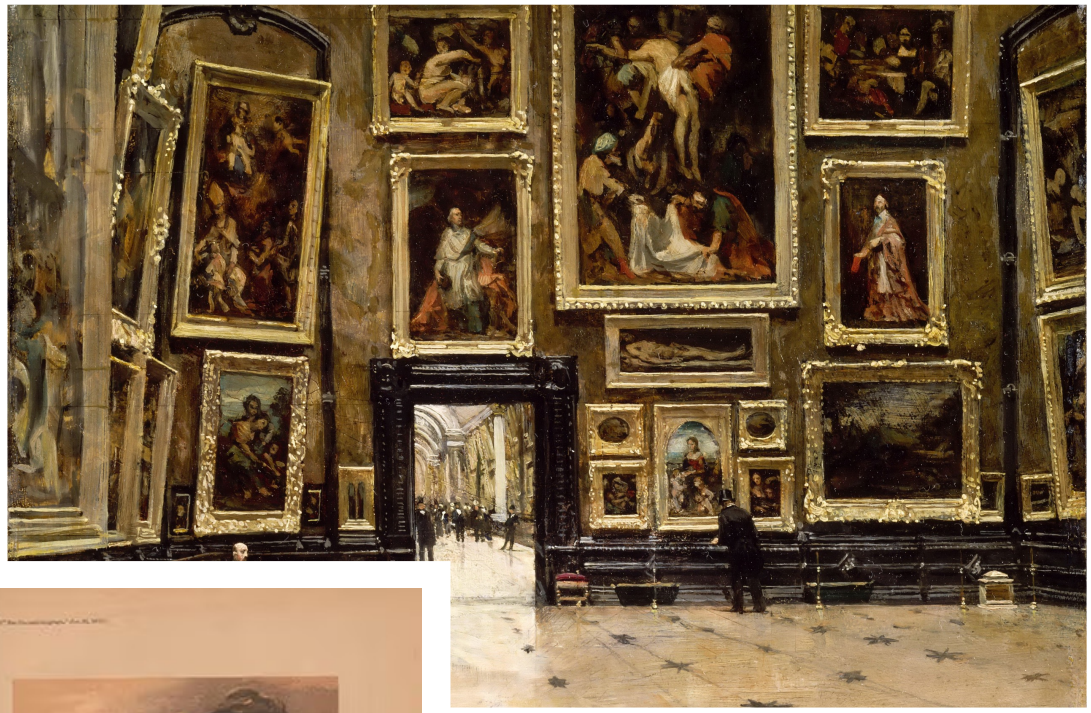
What we lack is not something to look at but the time required to look at it. And yet, much of the art system continues to behave as if its main task is to place yet more images in front of us, with each new one entering a stream that is already full (Art Basel)



MONSTER?
MAGIC?
OR
MIRROR?








HAYANDOSE GRAVEMENTE ENFERMA DEL LA
EMILIA CHAVES. SE ENCOMENDO CON TODO FERVO
SANTISIMA VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE Y P
SU INTERSECION COSIGUIO SU ALIVIO, SORIA.







4 new image styles to try

Summarise

C

ChatGPT <noreply@email.openai.com>

Today at 11:24 AM

To: Gareth Schott

See your photos in a new way

Pick an idea below and see what's possible.



'80s flashback

Try it



Work cartoon

Try it



Anime portrait

Try it



Underwater portrait

Try it

Or get inspiration from one of our preset styles or create your own with just a few words.

Try ChatGPT Images



THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION


“A painting is not a picture of an experience, it is an **experience**”
— Rothko

“we’re neurobiologically wired for these kinds of experiences, and they contribute to our health and well-being.” — Susan Magsamen (neuroaesthetics researcher)

Front. Psychol., 03 October 2024
Sec. Performance Science
Volume 15 - 2024 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1328449

Aesthetic experiences and their transformative power: a systematic review

Marta Pizzolante [1*] Matthew Pelowski [2,3]
Theresa Rahel Demmer [2] Sabrina Bartolotta [1]
Eleonora Diletta Sarcinella [1] Andrea Gaggioli [1,4†]
Alice Chirico [1†]

→ trait of openness

Columns

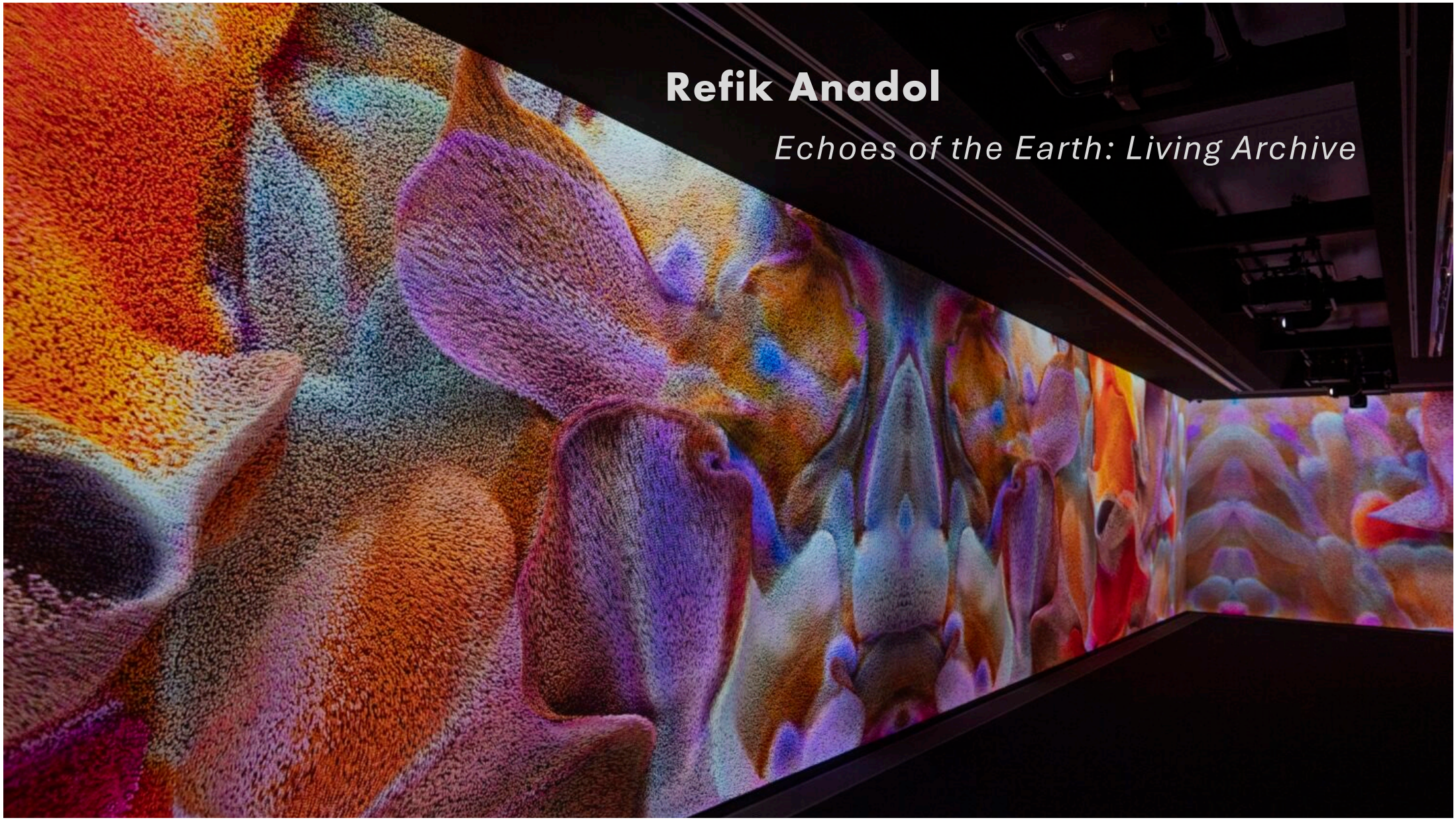
Breaking out of Digital Sameness

Alone Together

“Social media generates uniformity. While scrolling through social media feeds, it often looks like the whole world is following a particular trend, especially when a sentiment is duplicated by multiple independent posts”

Elizabeth S. Ling (The Havard Criticism)

→ streaming monoculture


Refik Anadol
Echoes of the Earth: Living Archive


conversation
between the
art object
and the
viewer



... merely recycling images in a giant blender that produces tasteless, odorless visual soup. It's fast-food art for Instagram, presented on plastic plates (Lancelin, 2024)

The [Turner Prize] *jury hailed Humeau's work for its cinematic exhibition making, and praised her engagement with ecological and existential themes through inventive forms, speculative scenarios and dynamic shifts in scale*



Marguerite Humeau's *Torches*

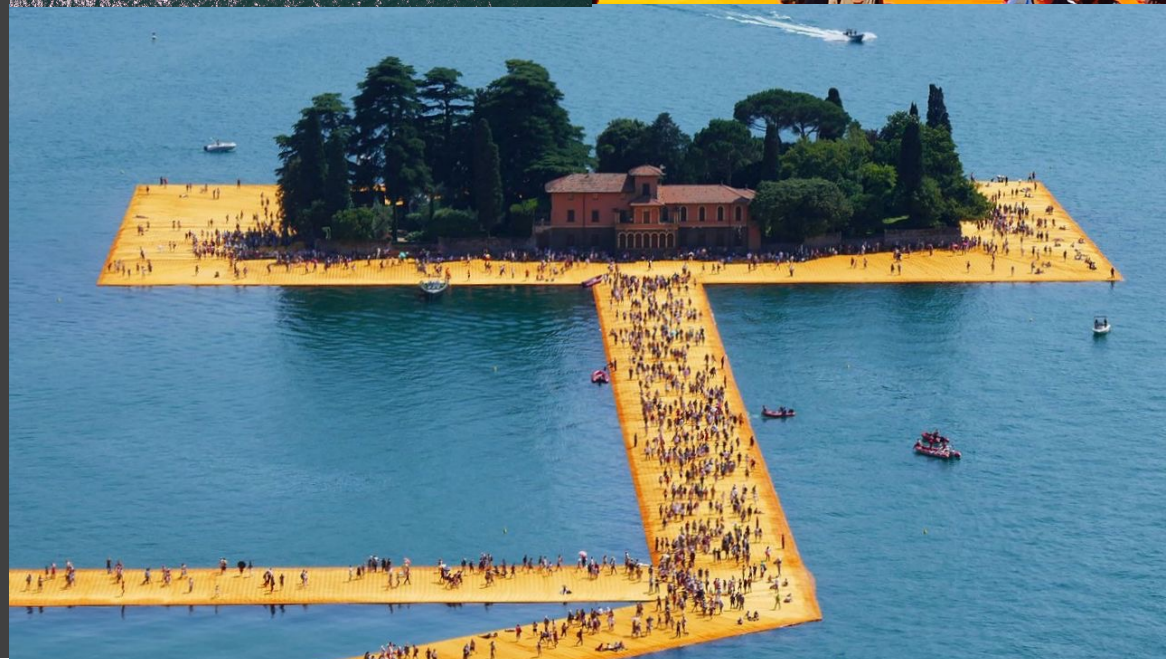
Survival depended heavily on group social bonding



“All art, inasmuch as it is created to be communicated to or experienced by others, is social.” (Helguera)







Christo and Jeanne-Claude (2016)
The Floating Piers


YAYOI KUSAMA


#artselfie

'LEVERAGING ON' ... AS A CREATIVE ACT

[AI] depends on art already made, on photos already taken, aesthetic assumptions statistically derived, and a language—our language—formed over the centuries by acts of communication innumerable about whose nature the great machine knows nothing






nikkisixxpixx
8240 likes
nikkisixxpixx No it's not Halloween.
The upside down cross sucks.
@nikkisixxpixx I really respect you
regardless but why do you choose the upside down
cross?
Upside down cross? Trouble
ahead

RESEARCHED BENEFITS OF COPYING

Kentaro Ishibashi and Takeshi Okada



Participant Group 1:
Draw an original artwork each day

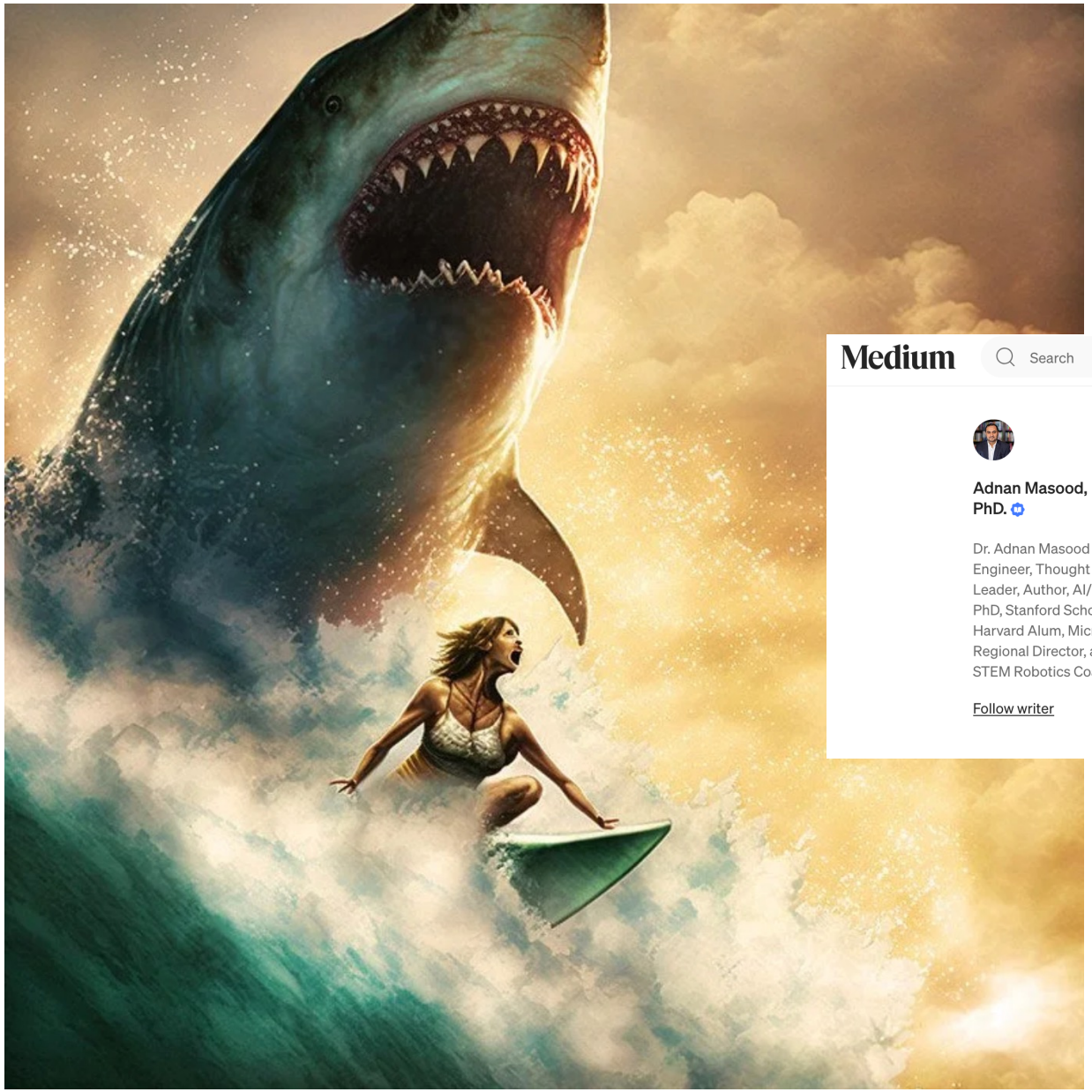
Participant Group 2:
Copy a picture onto a blank piece of paper while imagining the painter's intention.

Then draw original artwork

"Creativity occurs when you encounter something."


624 Text Prompts
Midjourney
Edited *Photoshop*
Théâtre D'opéra Spatial, Jason Allen (2022)


human creative input
was *de minimis*
(USCO, 2022)
Théâtre D'opéra Spatial, Jason Allen (2022)



Medium

Search

Adnan Masood, PhD.

Dr. Adnan Masood is an Engineer, Thought Leader, Author, AI/ML PhD, Stanford Scholar, Harvard Alum, Microsoft Regional Director, and STEM Robotics Coach.

Follow writer

Member-only story

Yes — AI art is art

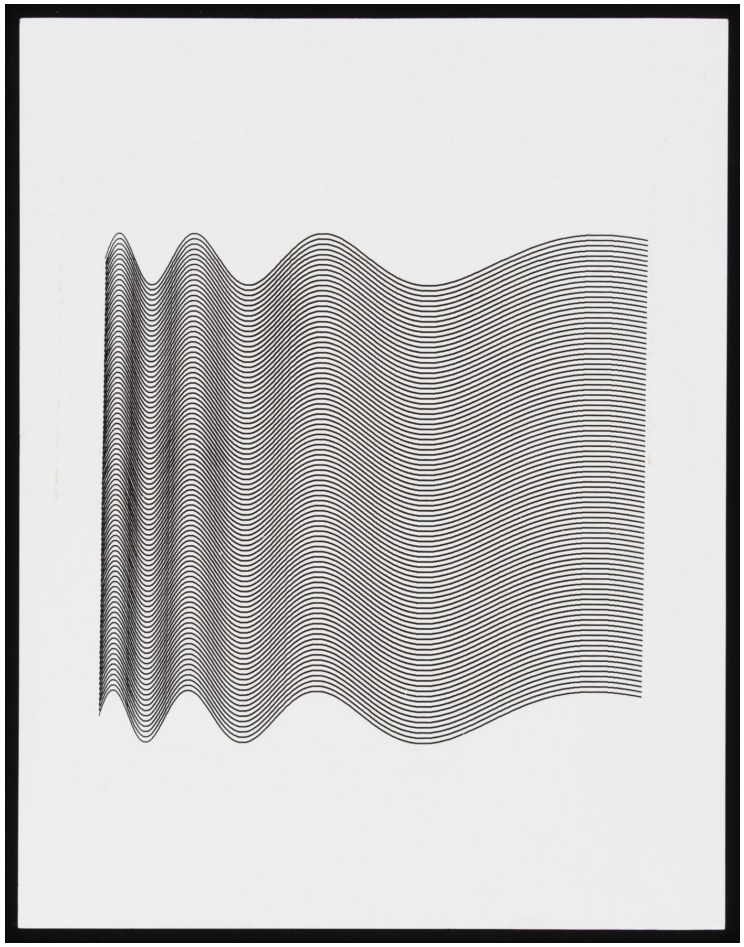
Beyond the hand/machine false dichotomy — an open letter to a friend.



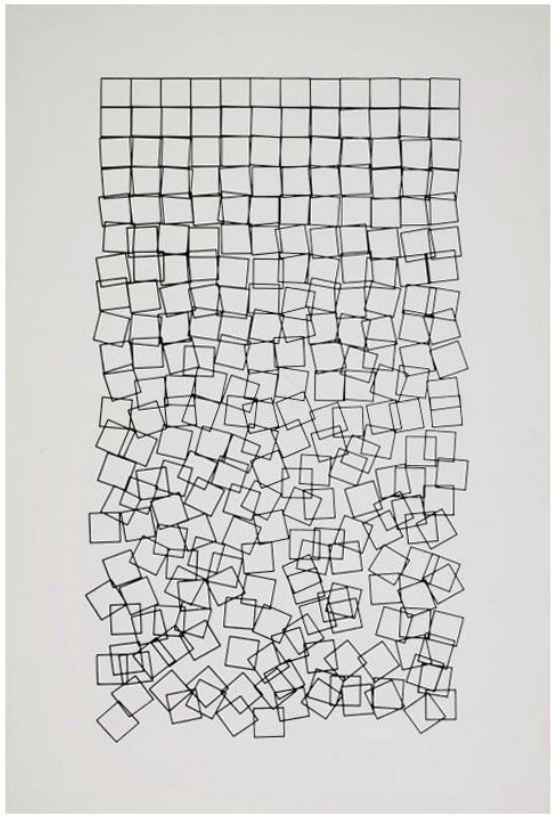
Adnan Masood, PhD. Follow 47 min read · Aug 10, 2025

10 1

shadow work



A. Michael Noll



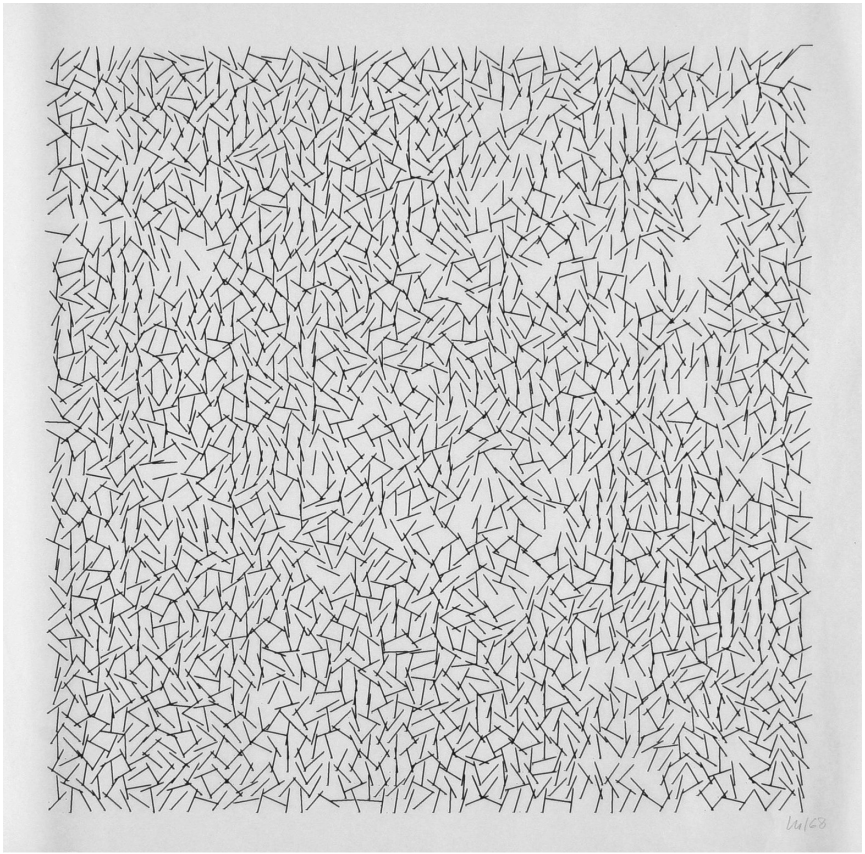
Georg Nees

shadow work

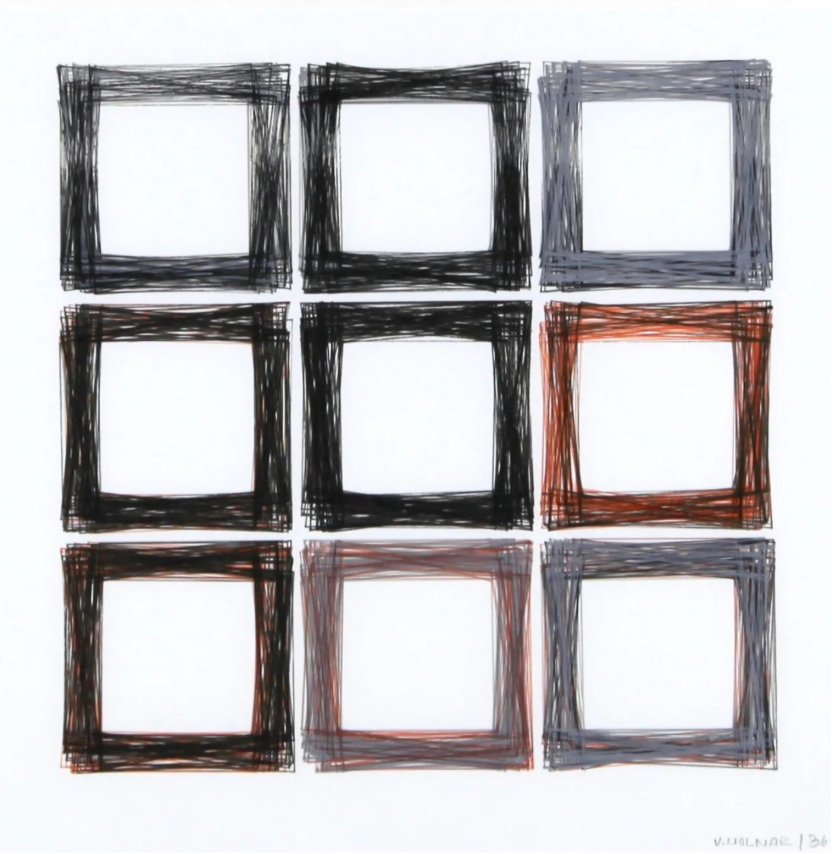


Harold Cohen
+ AARON

Randomness: “enriches the senses”

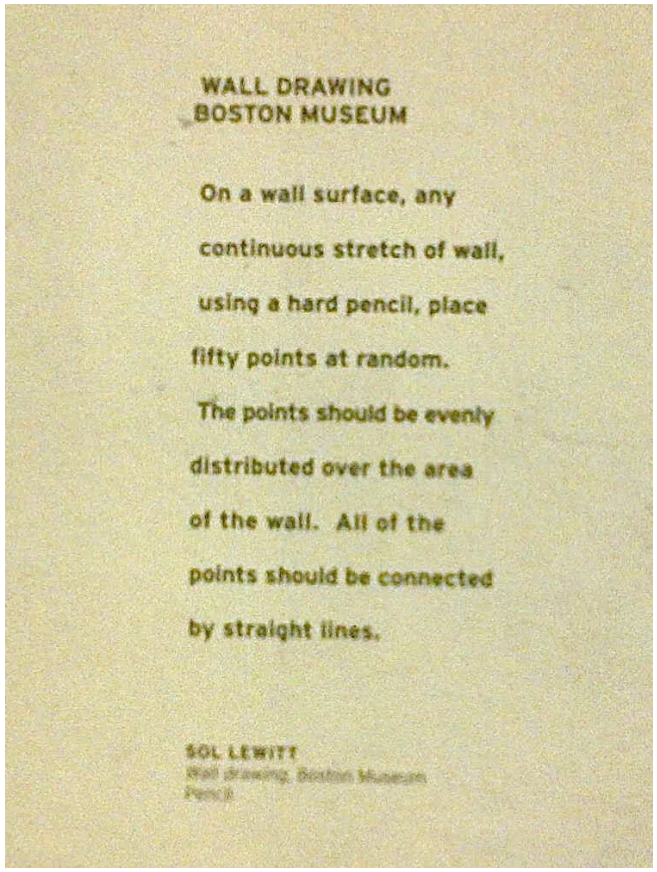


Vera Molnar (1968-9) *Interruptions*

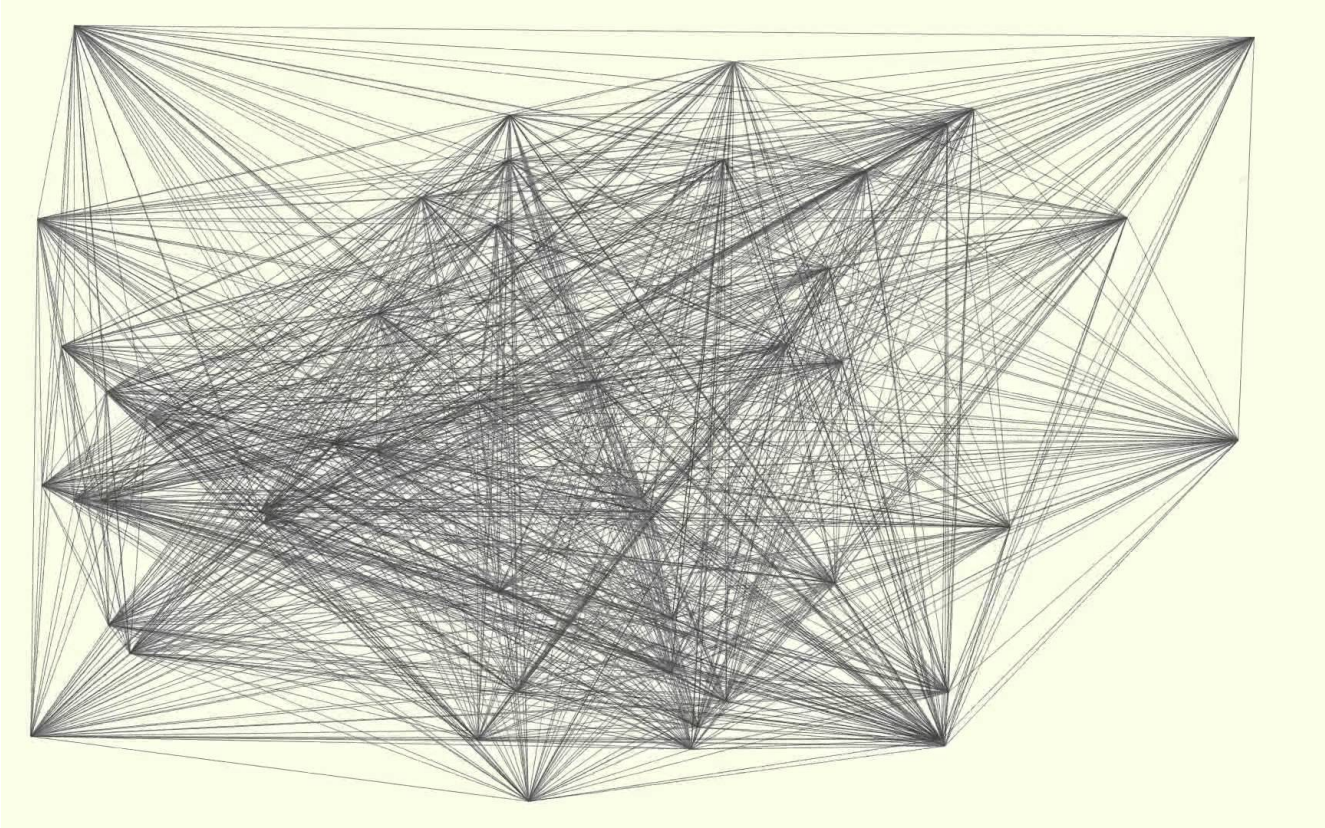


Vera Molnar (1986) *Quadrilatères*

Wall drawings

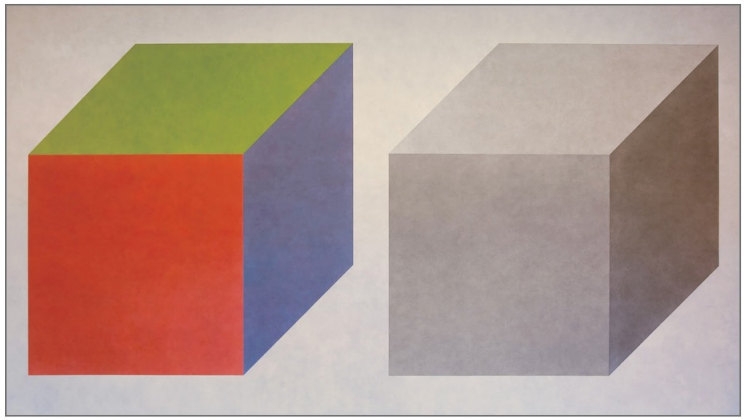


Sol Lewitt

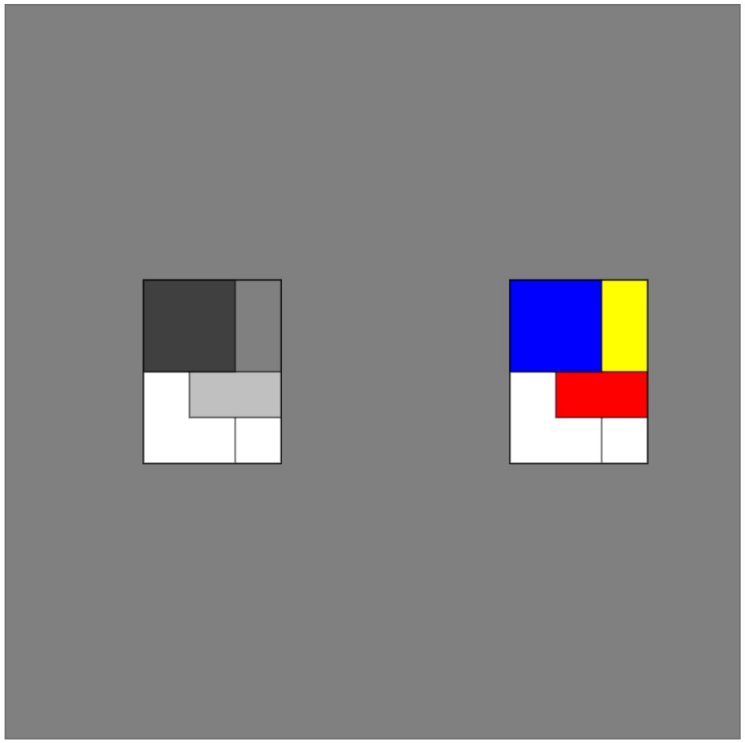


WALL DRAWING #415D

“Double Drawing. Right: Isometric Figure (Cube) with progressively darker graduations of gray on each of three planes; Left: Isometric figure with red, yellow, and blue superimposed progressively on each of the three planes. The background is gray.”



Wall Drawing #415D - Human Drawn



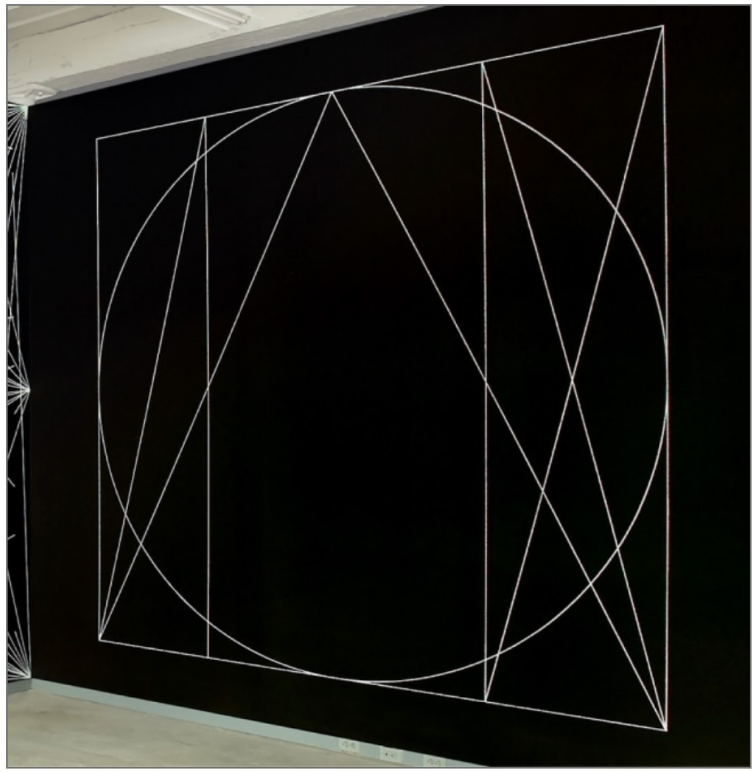
Wall Drawing #415D - ChatGPT output

Amy Goodchild

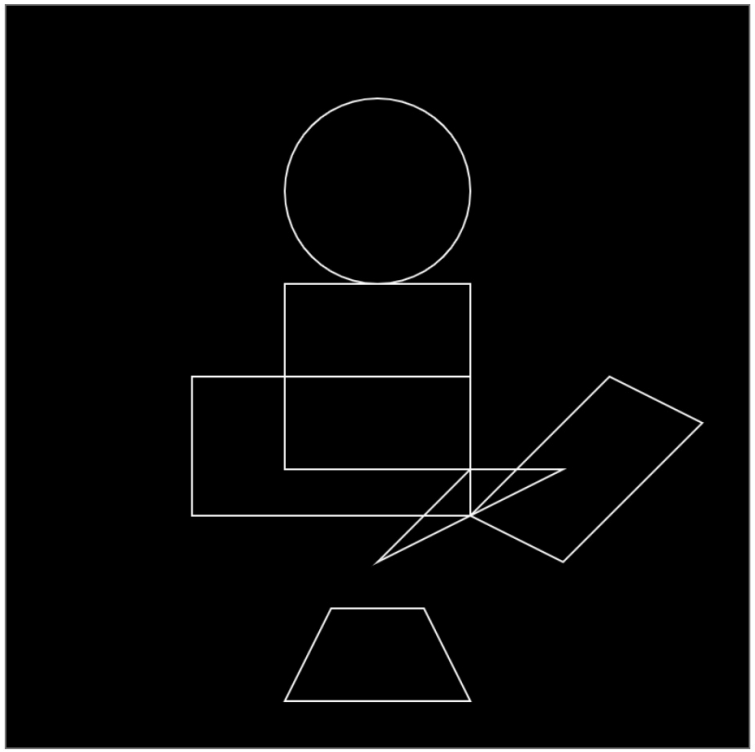
WALL DRAWING #295

“Six white geometric figures (outlines) superimposed on a black wall.”

In LeWitt’s vocabulary, the six kinds of geometric shapes are: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, trapezoid and parallelogram.



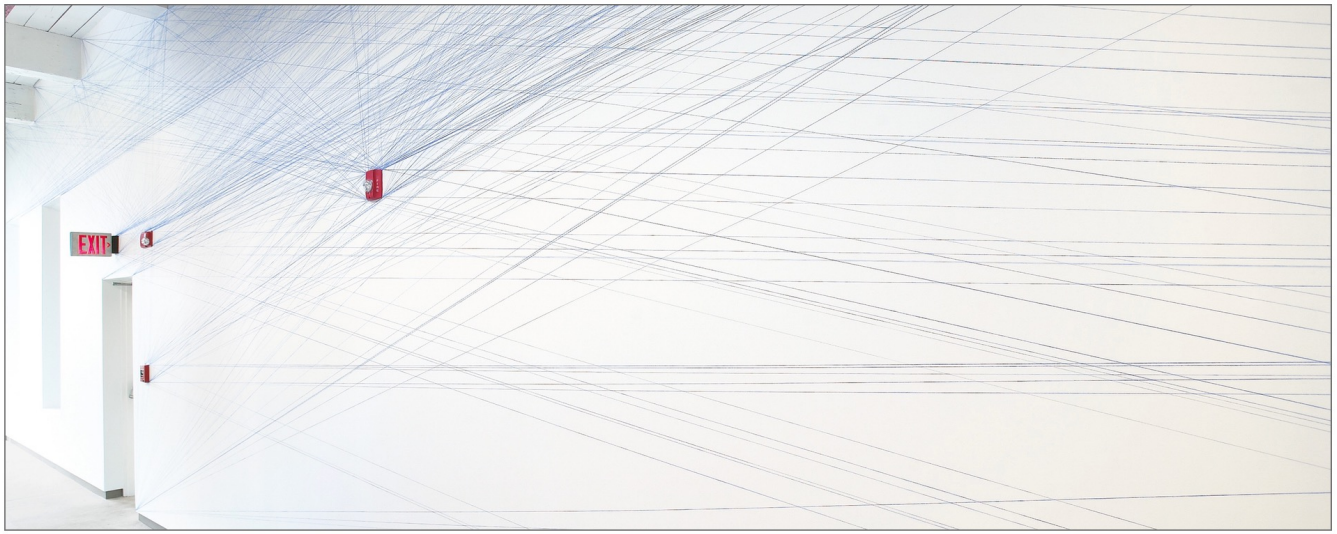
Wall Drawing #295 - Human drawn



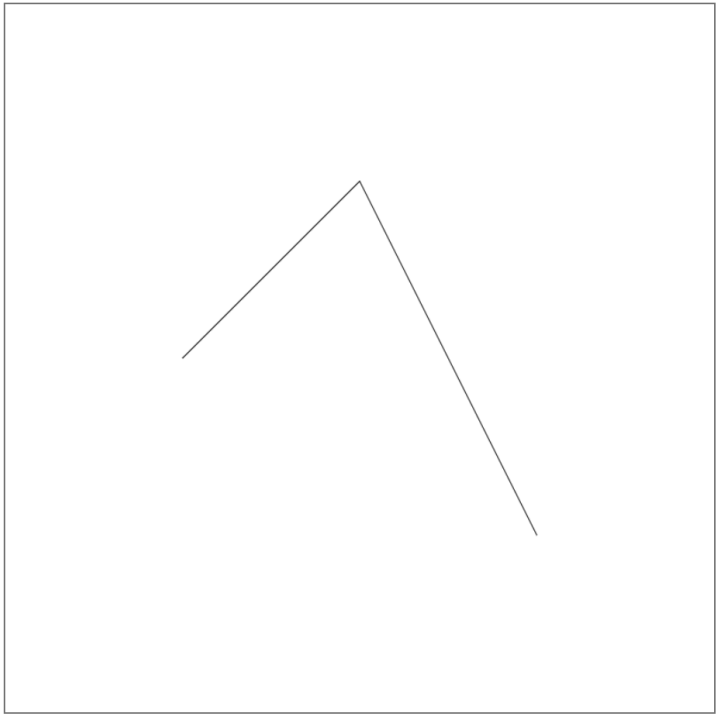
Wall Drawing #295 - ChatGPT output

WALL DRAWING #51

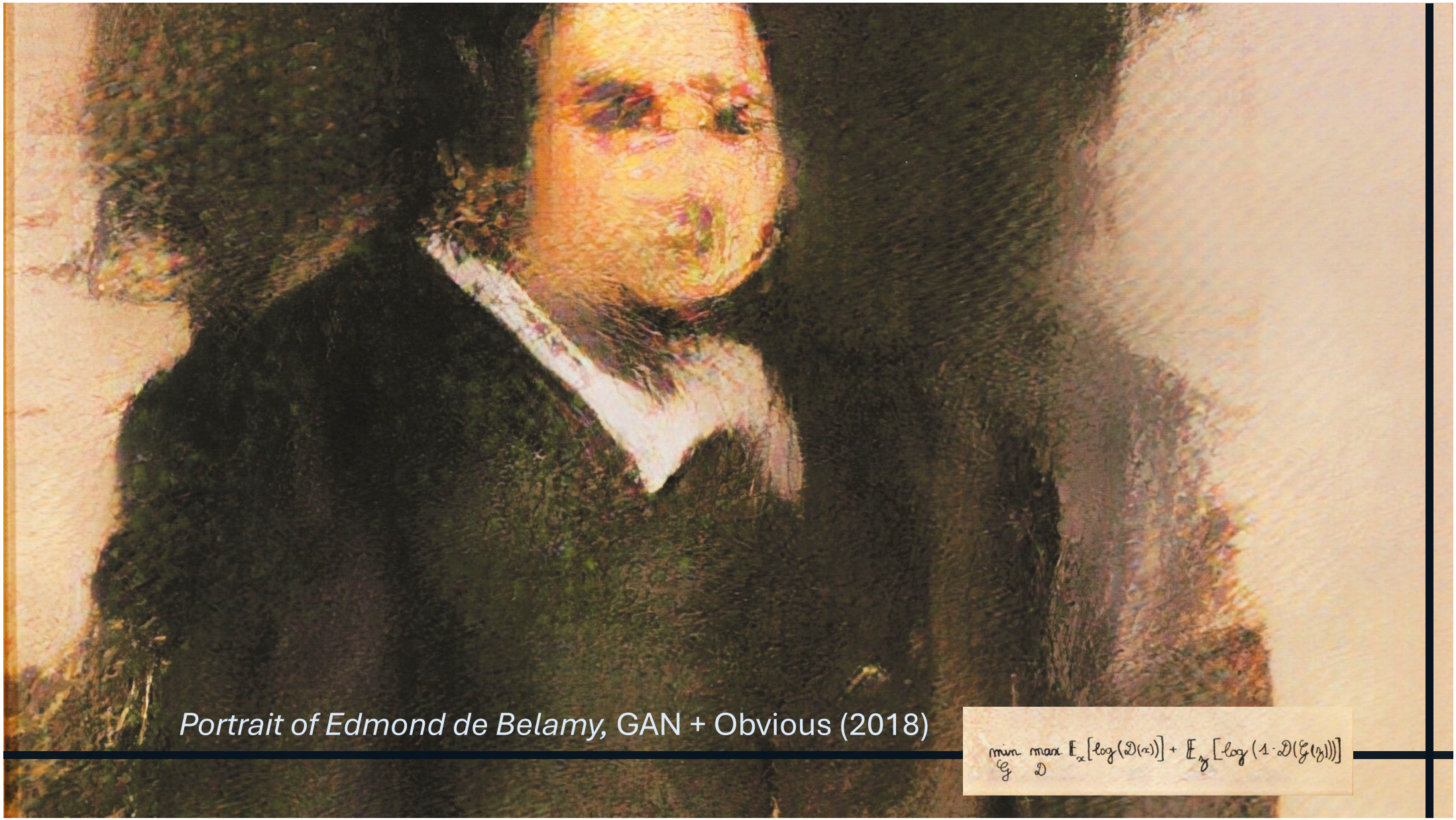
“All architectural points connected by straight lines.”



Wall Drawing #51 - Human drawn

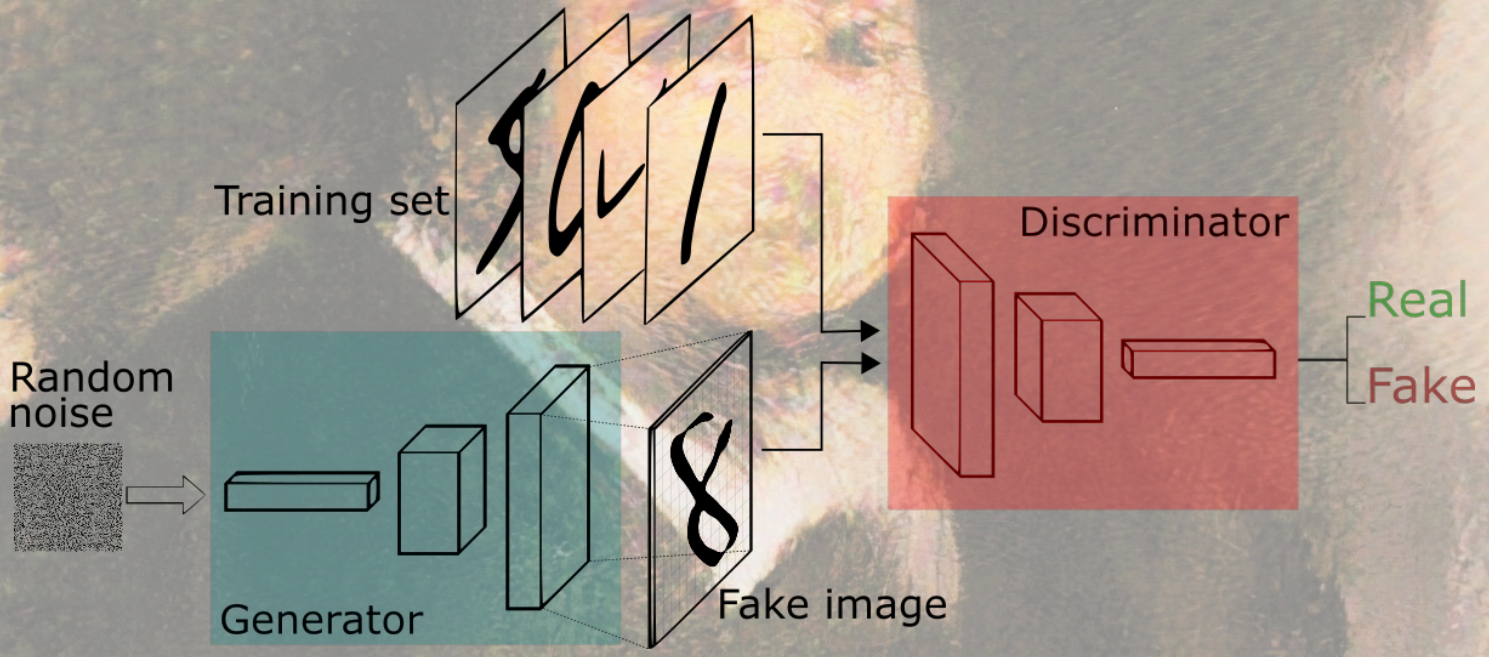


Wall Drawing #51 - ChatGPT output



Portrait of Edmond de Belamy, GAN + Obvious (2018)

$$\min_G \max_D \mathbb{E}_x[\log(D(x))] + \mathbb{E}_z[\log(1 - D(G(z)))]$$

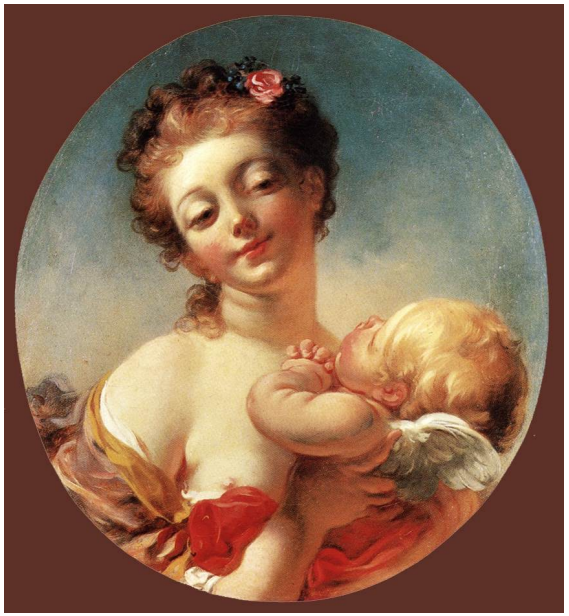


Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) trained on 15,000 classical portraits from the 14th to 19th centuries



Glenn Brown (2007)
Tart Wit, Wise Humor

“the halls of art history become playgrounds for postmodern pranks”



Jean-Honoré Fragonard
(circa 1760)
Venus and Cupid

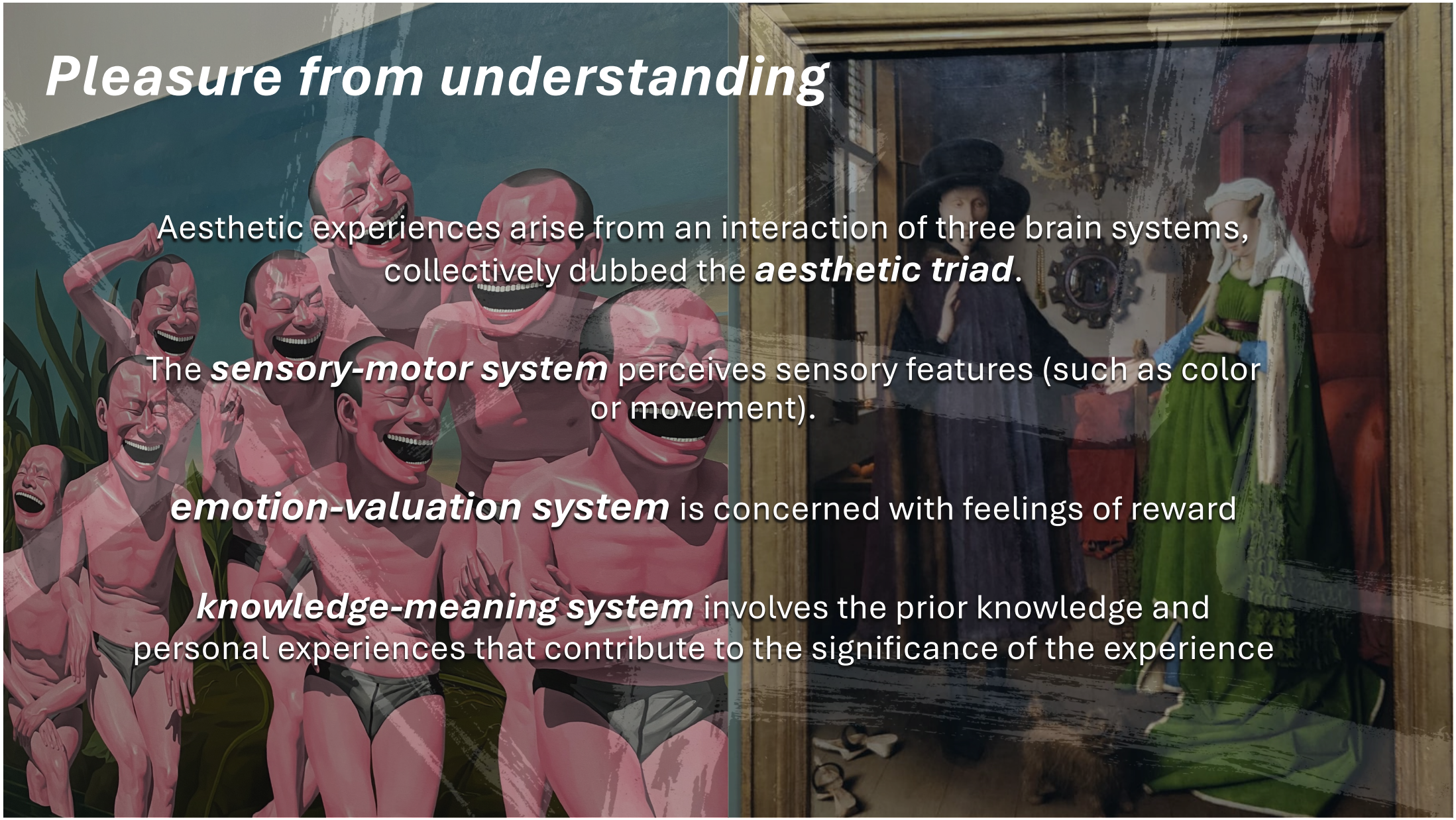




“We did some work with nudes and landscapes, and we also tried feeding the algorithm sets of works by famous painters. But we found that portraits provided the best way to illustrate our point, which is that algorithms are able to ***emulate creativity***”
(Caselles-Dupré, Obvious Collective)







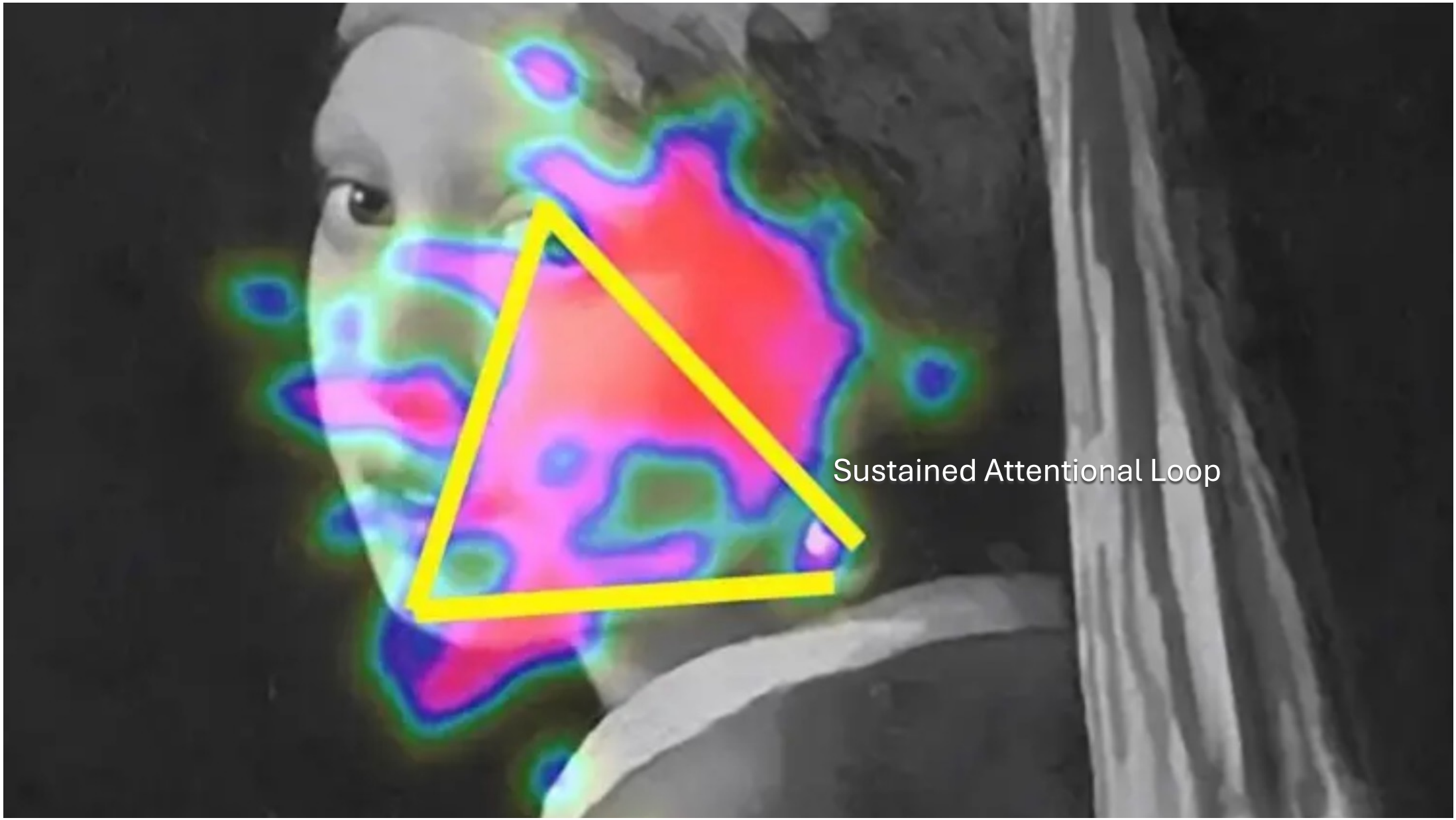
Pleasure from understanding

Aesthetic experiences arise from an interaction of three brain systems, collectively dubbed the ***aesthetic triad***.

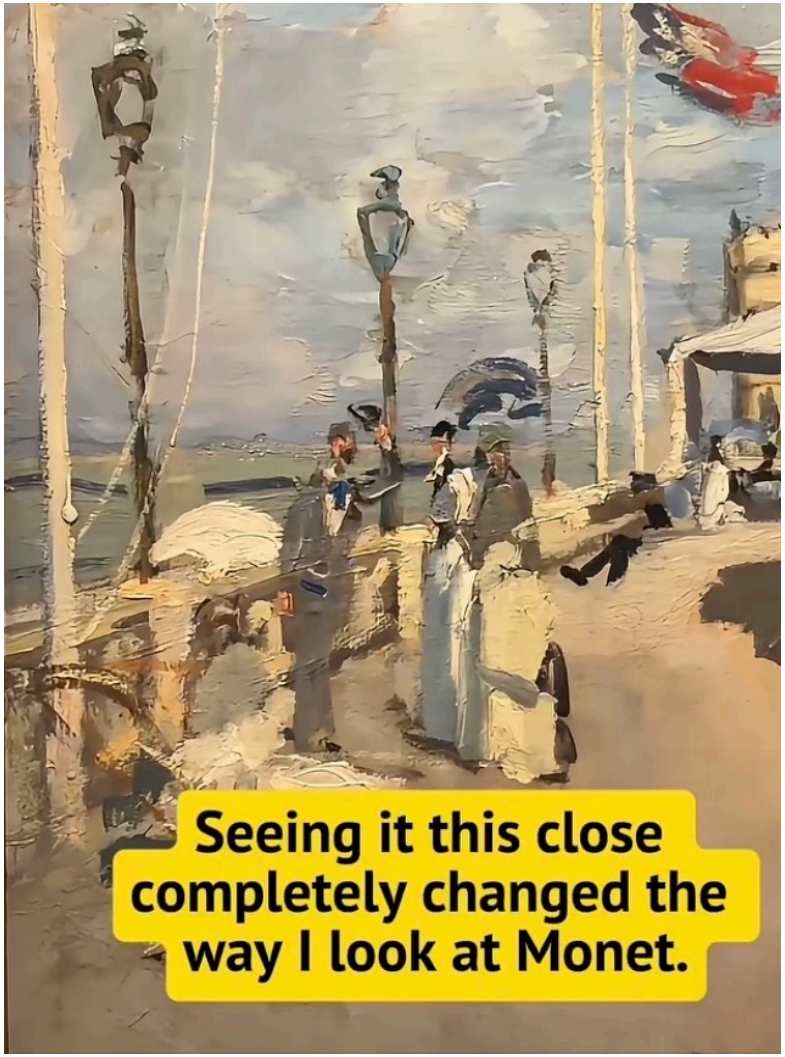
The ***sensory-motor system*** perceives sensory features (such as color or movement).

emotion-valuation system is concerned with feelings of reward

knowledge-meaning system involves the prior knowledge and personal experiences that contribute to the significance of the experience


Sustained Attentional Loop





CUTE
INSTA
MIND DUMP

The artist?

‘If the artist is the one that creates the image, then that would be the machine,’

‘If the artist is the one that holds the vision and wants to share the message, then that would be us’

(Caselles-Dupré, Obvious Collective)

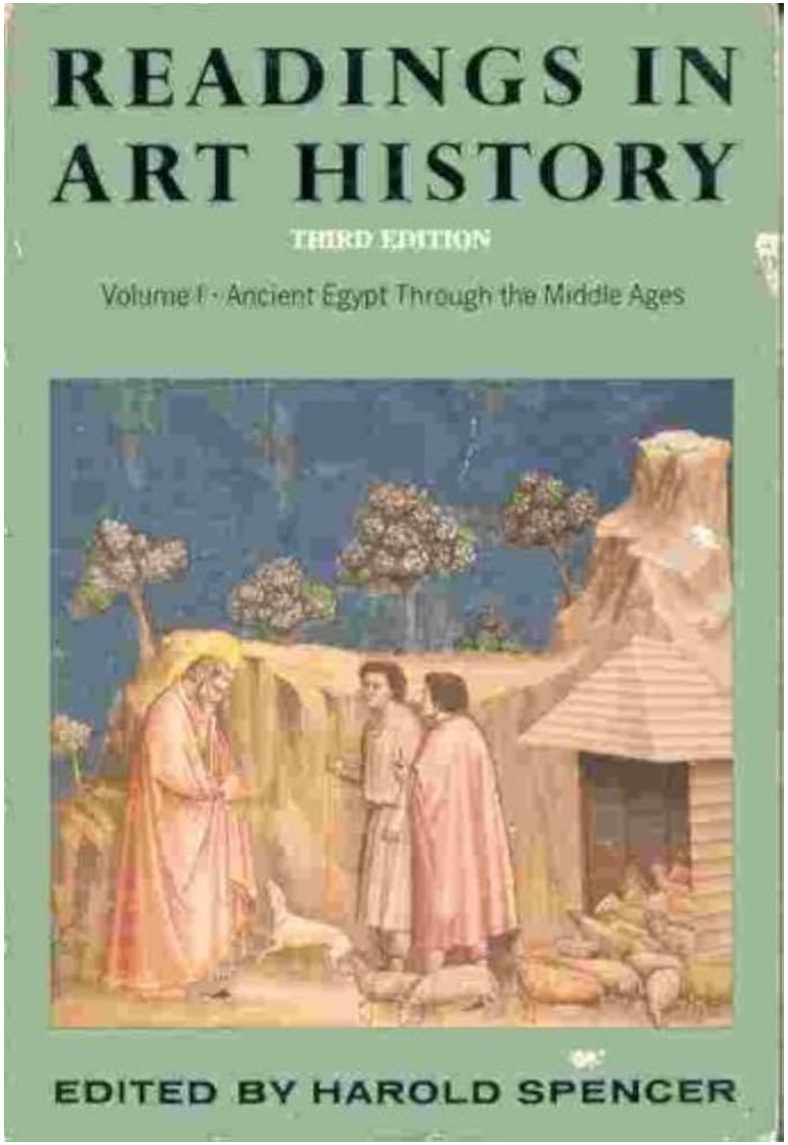


Sougwen Chung

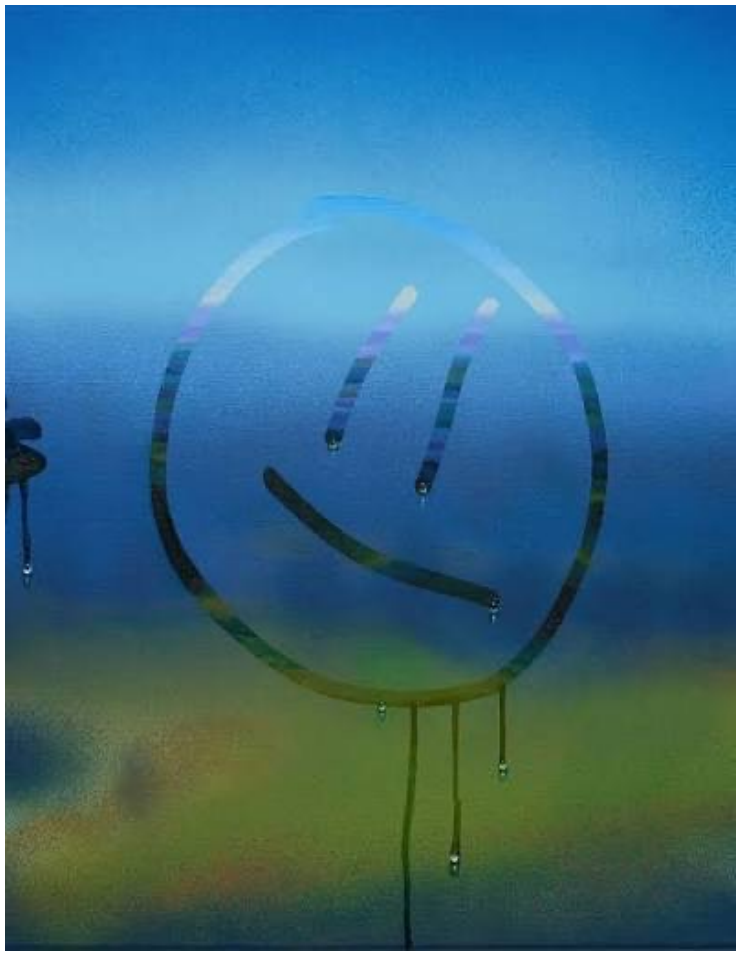
Patrons: History's Prompt Engineers

Contracts and commissions were the result of a collaboration between artists and their patrons, with patrons having considerable influence over the commissioned painting.

- the costs and duration of the work
- the visual obligations of the artists (certain level of imitation of another artist's work)
- what pigments artists needed to use (Glasser, 1965)
- replacements for lost works that fulfil the patron's intentions.



Renaissance clients were buyers of skill (Baxandall, 1988)

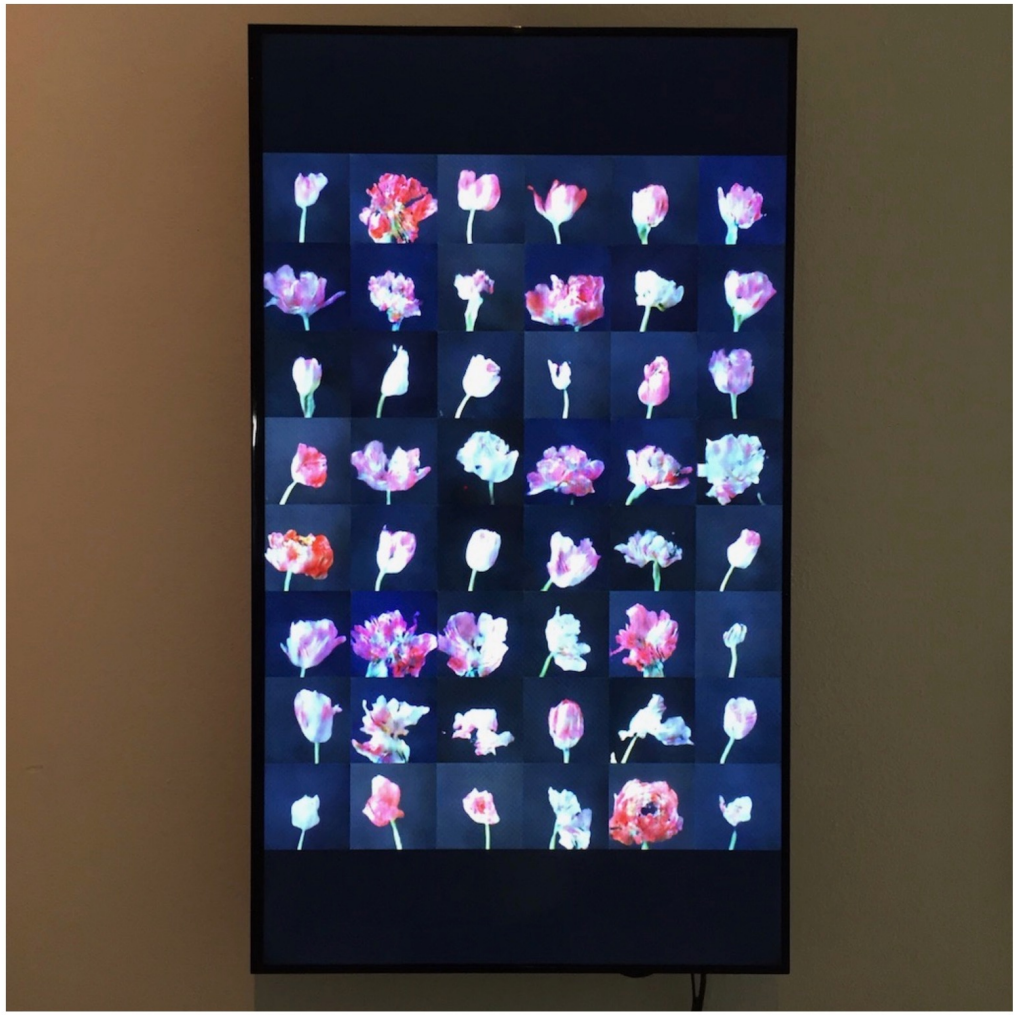


Jochen Mühlenbrink (2024) *WP Smile*



Alice Jeesu McDonald (2025)
Unchained Melody
(detail, personal photo,
National Contemporary Art
Awards)

Reconceptualising Labour, Craft & Intent



Anna Ridler (2018)
Mosaic Virus

“Data becomes visible as a site of authorship, where choices about inclusion, categorisation, and representation shape the final work”



treat data as a material that carries meaning and history while exploring authorship as a distributed process that unfolds across human and machine


"The best spot painting you can have by me is one painted by Rachel"

"You have to look at it as if the artist is an architect, and we don't have a problem that great architects don't actually build the houses… every single spot painting contains my eye, my hand and my heart."

Damien Hirst

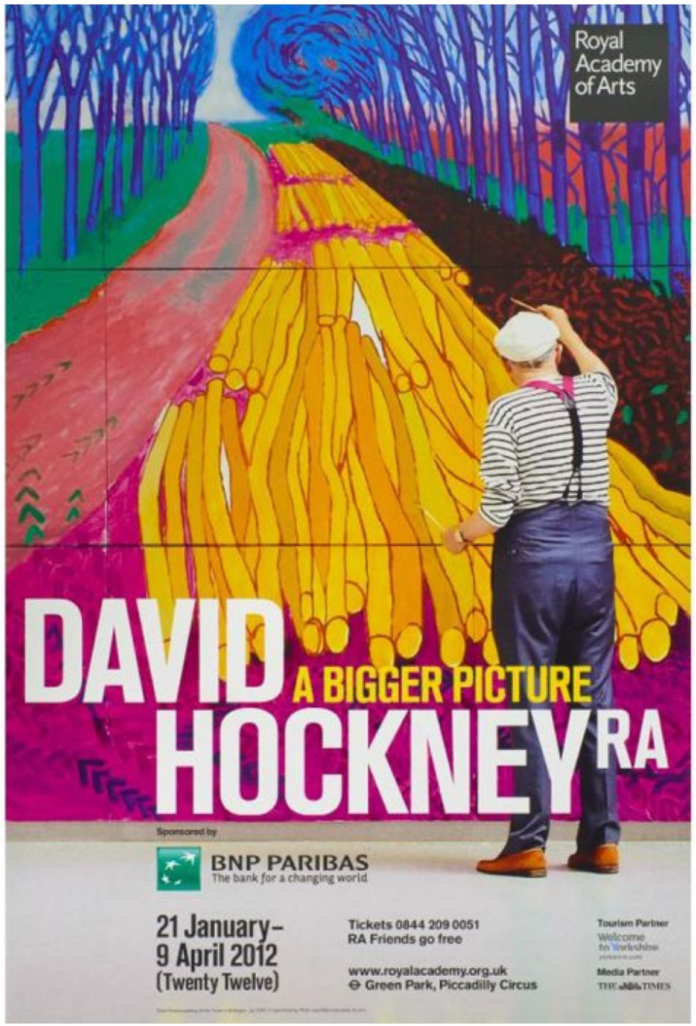


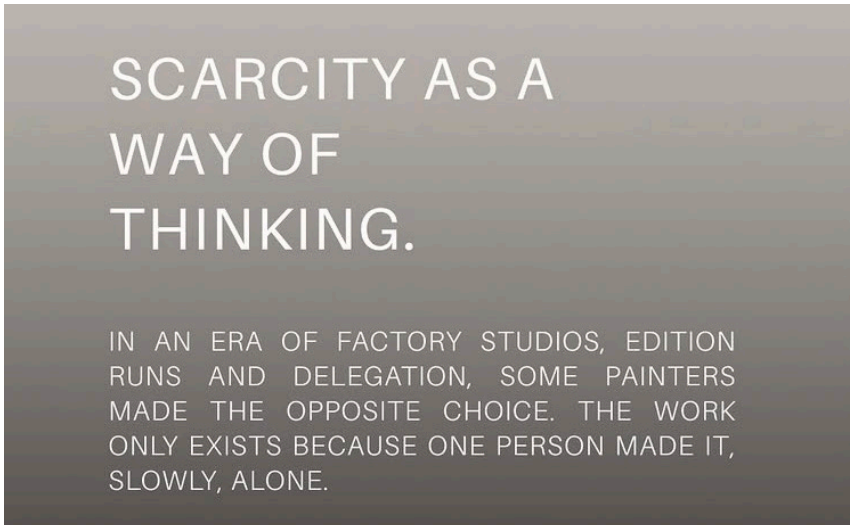




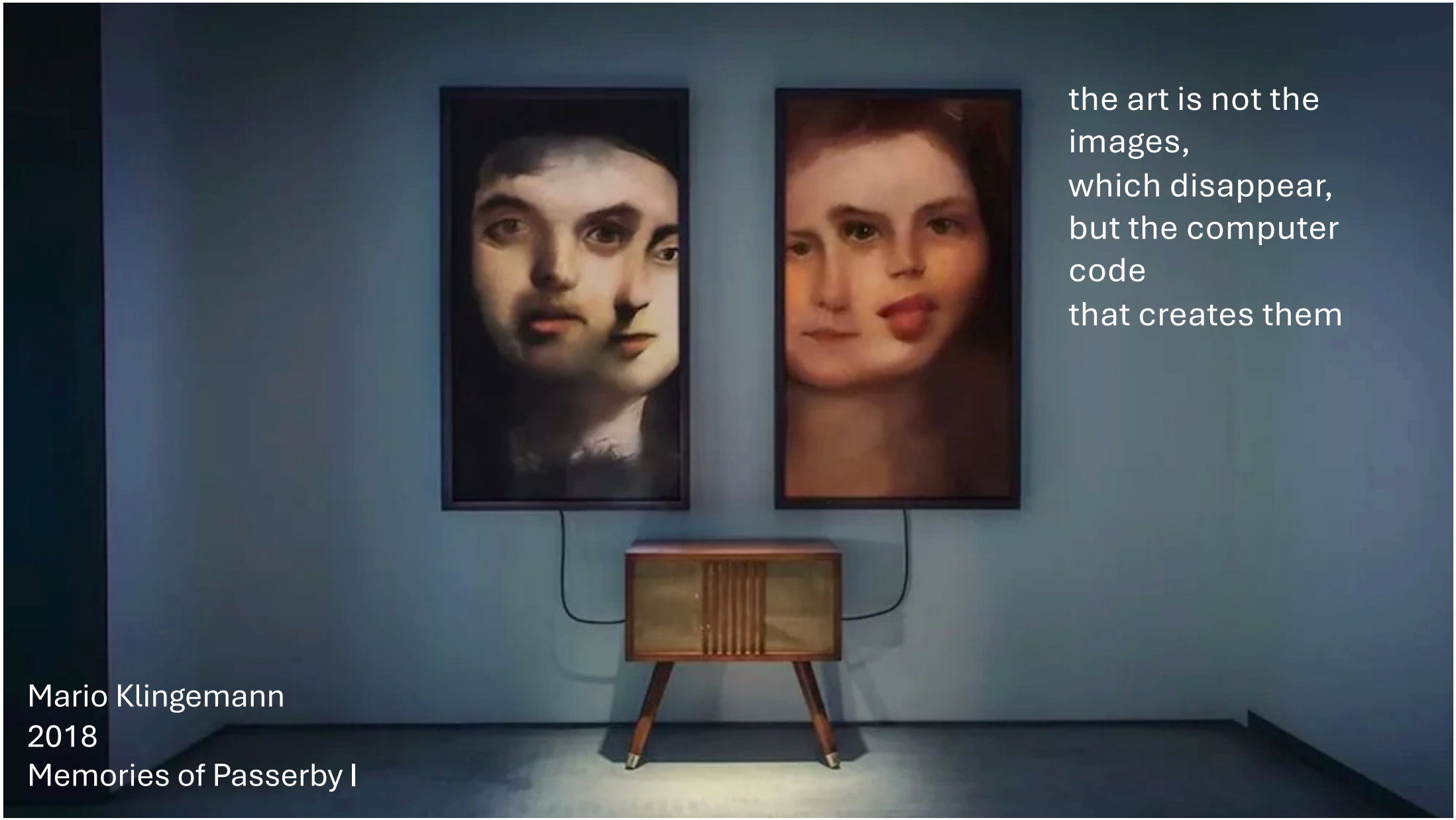


"All the works here were made by the artist himself, personally"





“though art’s formal development has progressed at an increasing tempo, its social function has regressed”
(Charlotte Posenenske, 1968)



Mario Klingemann
2018
Memories of Passerby I

What is Algorithmic Beauty?

Parsimonious Code

Symmetry and Structure

Generality



Agnes Martin
(1964)
The Garden
(detail)

Positive Psychologist
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990)

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile,”

Go with the Flow: Software Engineers and Distractions

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ABSTRACT

Ideally, software engineers work in the state of flow: performing challenging tasks like system modelling with a series of routine actions, incorporating immediate IDE feedback, experiencing time distortion and managing harmful interruptions when necessary. We hypothesise that the ability to maintain the state of flow and the skill to get back into flow faster after being interrupted, are essential skills for software engineers, and that developing these increases the capacity to become good software engineers if given sufficient guidance and education. In this position paper, we link flow to trance and contemplate how techniques from the world of sport psychology can be used to teach learners to become better at software design, modelling, programming and debugging, as well as suggesting a means to assess the potential future success of undergraduate study seekers.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Social and professional topics** → **Computing education**; **Socio-technical systems**; • **Software and its engineering** → *Collaboration in software development*; *Software design techniques.*

KEYWORDS

Flow, hypnosis, trance, induction, modelling, programming.

it to be flow (difficult enough challenges, merged action and awareness and clear goals/feedback) [8]. Some frameworks for analysing flow, like Person–Artefact–Task, also seem directly applicable to flow states that involve human-computer interaction [12]. There is also a known positive correlation between flow and psychological capital and creativity for software developers [51], which is an important quality to gain or keep a competitive edge.

Hermans notes that programmers require a warmup time to get “in the zone” [18, p.184], and attributes it mostly to building a mental model of the code. She proposes some ways to prepare for interruptions, based mostly on improving the working memory. Many observations, like one that experiencing anxiety can disturb one’s flow [50], suggest that staying in flow is not exclusively linked to having good memory and a reliable mental model. Since interruptions are known to both increase mental workload and lower performance [10], there is much research conducted on interruption management in software development, focused on interruption value evaluation [14], disruptiveness of self-interruptions [1], coping strategic frameworks [29], etc.

In the context of improving IDE support for flow, Kuusinen et al [27] have done an investigation on 50+ developers, focusing on their user experience (NB: here it is not the user experience of the end user, but the user experience of a software developer as someone using a development environment). They found flow measures to be

“the brain rot of doom scrolling social media is coming for your development team...”

sf-isms - NOUN

Meat proxy

A person who forwards AI-generated text, code, or other output without reading, understanding, or validating it. The person acts only as a relay between the AI system and the intended recipient.

sfisms.org

THE SAN FRANCISCO FIELD GUIDE

Your Coworkers Are Becoming “Meat Proxies” for AI

"I can talk to Claude myself."

By **Victor Tangermann** / Published **Aug 26, 2026 12:53 PM EDT** / **Add Futurism**



Shutterstock / Futurism





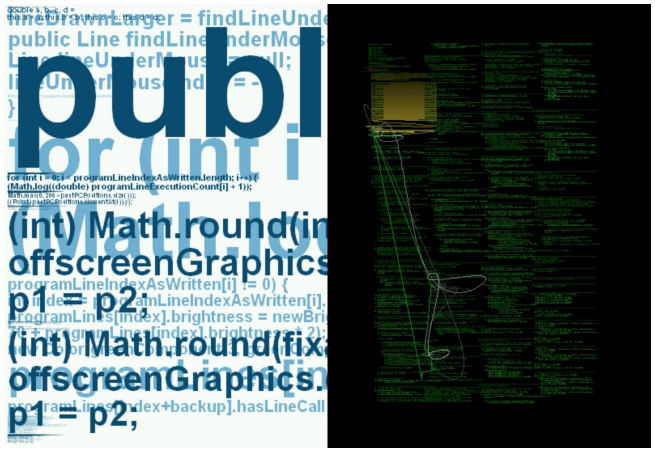








Yousuke Ozawa (2014)
Data Visualisation



CODeDOC is an exhibition consisting of twelve small commissioned works. The project takes a reverse look at “software art” by focusing on and comparing the “back end” of the code that drives the artwork's “front end”—the result of the code, be it visuals or a more abstract communication process.

Alex Galloway
WYSIWYG
September 2002

```
#########################################################
# ASSIGNMENT: Move and connect three points in space #
# RESULT:     What You See Is What You Get (5.1 K)   #
#                                                       #
# BY:         RSG (feat. Alex Galloway)                 #
#########################################################

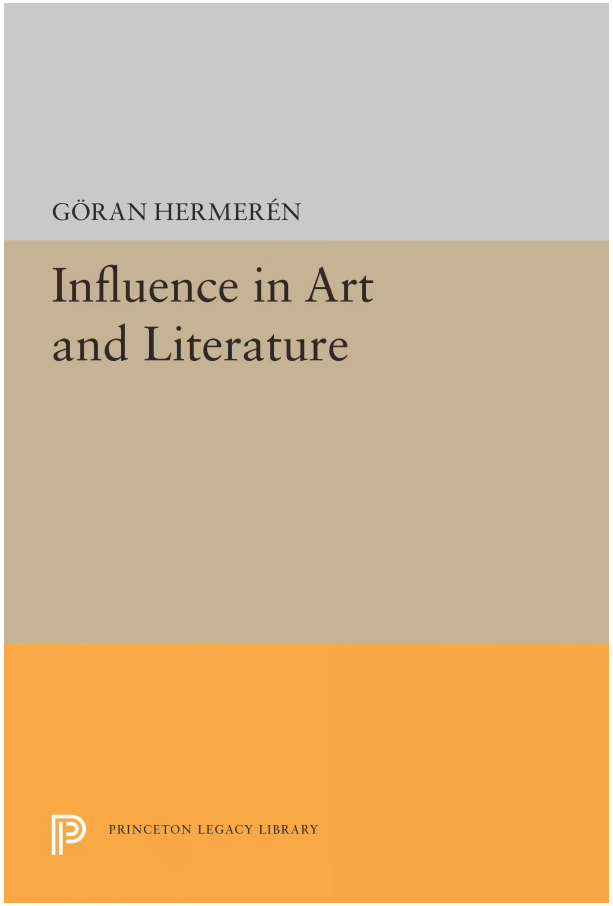

#ENTRY POINT
$first_point[0] = "Universal Email Header Spoofer"; #PHP script, 753 bytes
$first_point[1] = "How To Hack Hotmail Passwords";  #Text file, 933 bytes
$first_point[2] = "Confidential Business Proposal"; #Text file, 1682 bytes

#VANISHING POINT
$second_point[0] = "The Unknown Glitch"; #Perl script, 240 bytes
$second_point[1] = "Hitter";             #Perl script, 83 bytes
$second_point[2] = "Port Scanner";       #Perl script, 442 bytes
$second_point[3] = "Email Worm";         #Visual Basic script, 572 bytes

#POINT OF NO RETURN
$third_point[0] = "Perpetual Web Spider"; #Perl script, 348 bytes
$third_point[1] = "Fork bomb";            #Perl script, 136 bytes


exit;
```

Distinction emerging between what the art world values & what a creative artist does



Influence: as a *cause of a process* rather than as a *cause of an action*

"Metzinger has learned from Picasso how to reconcile three-dimensional form with the picture plane, by placing the subject in shallow depth and fusing it with its surroundings" (Golding, *History of Cubism)*



Jean Metzinger (1910-11) *Deux Nus*

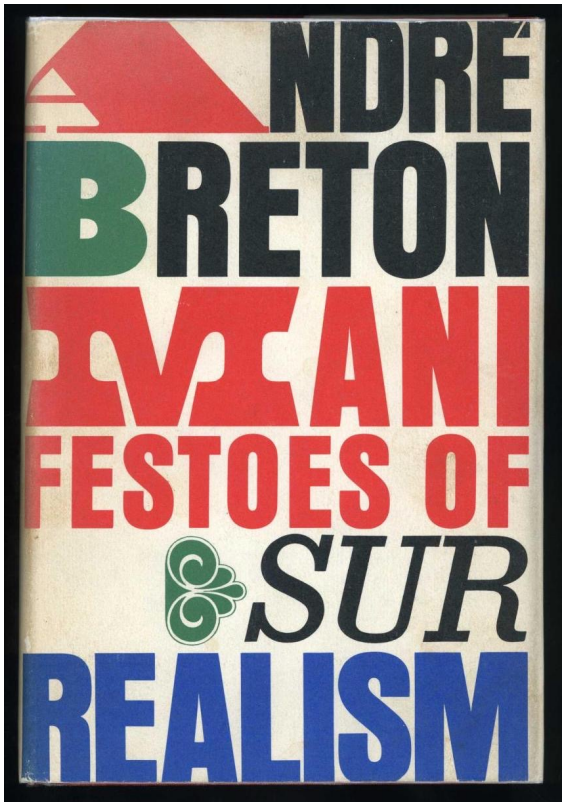
(a) individual influences individual

(b) individual influences group

(c) group influences individual

(d) group influences group

(b)



(c)





(d)


Agnieszka Kurant (2017)
A.A.I.
“To talk about any kind of new media or new technology,
sometimes it’s better to use an analogue technology”



COMMUNITY DISPLACEMENT

“I don’t think AI is going to replace artists, the act of creating art is uniquely human, but what AI will do is flood the zone with shit that will create *cognitive fatigue* and you won’t be able to find artist anymore, so a lot of artist will just give up”

David Chambers aka Blindboy Boatclub (January 2026)



About Cara

Cara is a social and portfolio platform for artists and people who love art.

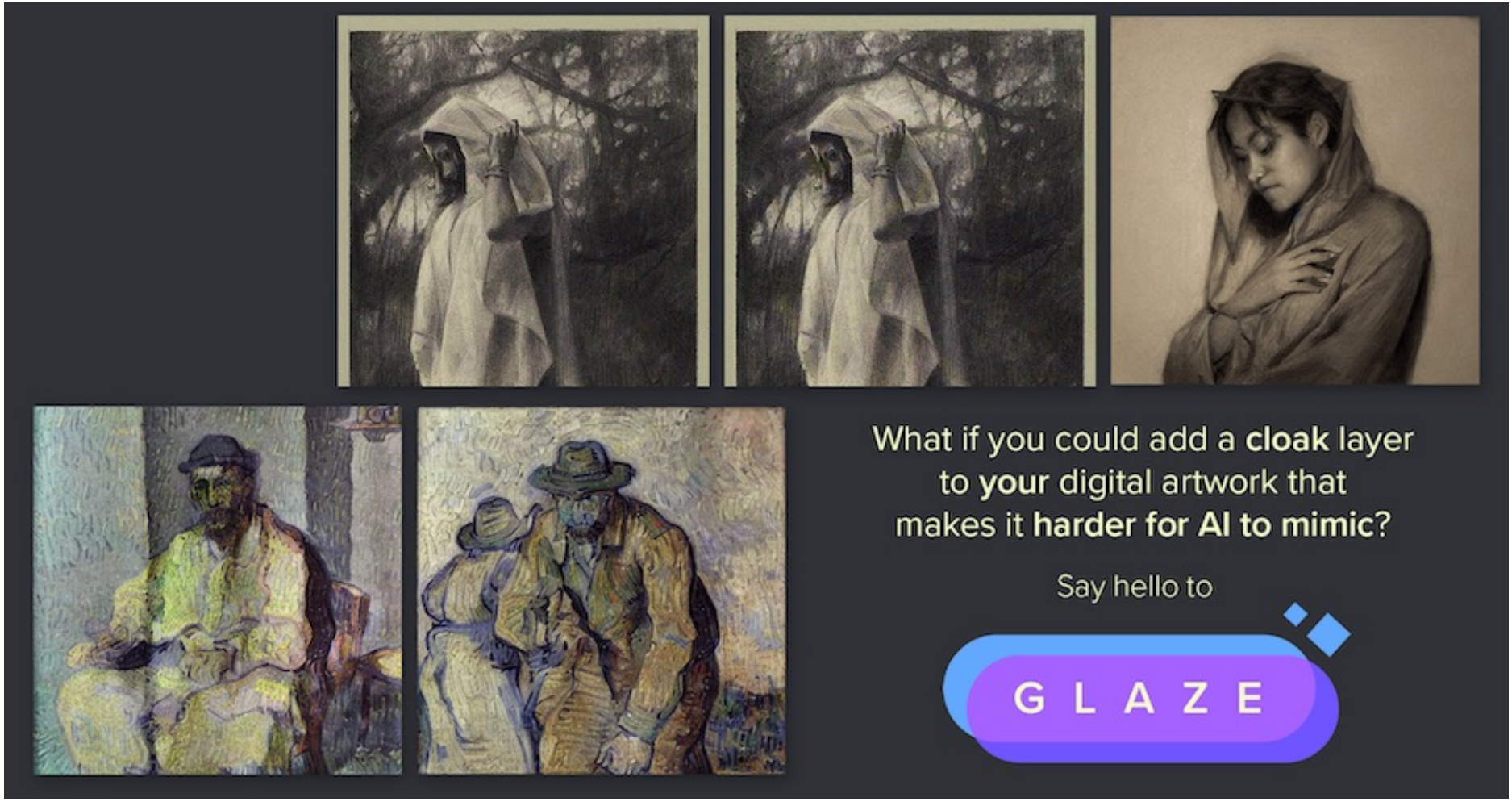
With the widespread use of generative AI, we decided to build a place that filters out gen AI images so that people searching for human creators and images can do so easily.

Many platforms currently accept AI art when these models are not ethically built, while others sometimes promise “no AI forever”, without considering the scenarios where adoption of such technologies may happen at the workplace in the coming years.

The future of creative industries requires nuanced understanding and support to help artists and companies connect and work together. We want to build a platform that we would want to use as creatives ourselves.

Our stance on AI:

- We do not agree with generative AI tools in their current unethical form, and we won’t host AI-generated portfolios unless the rampant ethical and data privacy issues around datasets are resolved via regulation.
- In the event that legislation is passed to clearly protect artists, we believe that AI-generated content should always be clearly labeled, because the public should always be able to search for human-made art and media easily.



Glaze works by subtly altering an image in ways that are imperceptible to the human eye but disruptive to AI models

SLOW AI SYMPOSIUM:

PRACTICES OF THINKING, SENSING, AND REFUSING

15 MAY 2025, 11:00–18:30, FRAMER FRAMED

“discuss AI not as an inevitable force or a tool to be optimised, but as a cultural and relational object that entangles with our ecological, political, and cultural environments”



Nā Tamati Ihaka nō Te Aupouri te kaipeita

Whakapapa: A Māori Perspective on AI Relationality

“As an AI – where do you come from? Who are your creators? Where’s your whakapapa from? Bringing that stuff forward so that concerns around bias, or whether Māori were involved in its creation, all of that can be put to the front.”

(Te Whenua Walker, 2024, para. 13).



ART IS NATURE

This is us connecting with out with our nature.

I always say this thing about cave people, you know, when they were painting on the walls of the cave they weren't out clubbing each other, you know, to death.

While we are making art we are making a nicer, better, kinder world. It's so obvious because we are nicer, better, kinder people because we are pushing our nature, our senses to their personal limits of what we can do, that's within us, that comes from nature.



What has taken over the world is greed … when you're making art it has got nothing to do with any of those issues, it has got nothing to do with power, it's got nothing to do with greed … it's got nothing to do with everything that is used against us as humans

Art is the absolute antithesis of everything bad that is created by humans.

... fundamental purpose of art is to affect peoples' relationships with each other, where the relationships are themselves important (Aaron Herzmann, 2020)



Art maintains its vitality through continual innovation, and technology is one of the main engines of that innovation (Aaron Herzmann, 2020)