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The role of artificial intelligence in art

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a significant influence in the art world, prompting reflection and introspection. This phenomenon raises the question: how could this have happened? This article explores the interrelation between AI-generated art and the concept of artwork's aura, particularly in how art profoundly engages with otherness. The inquiry into whether AI relates to otherness is central to this discussion. The research methodology employed in this study combines scholarly research and literature review with the author's personal experiences in painting, artistic observation, and experimentation with various art techniques. The methods used include descriptive analysis, classification, observation, and interpretive analysis of examples of AI-generated images. The conclusion drawn from this investigation is that AI-assisted works cannot be considered art as long as AI simulates the language of other artistic media.

Keywords: Jacques Derrida; Art; Otherness; Aura of artwork; Artificial intelligence; Contemporary art

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1. Introduction

This article explored the relationship between the aura of original artworks and those generated by artificial intelligence (AI), focusing on the concept of otherness. The main concern is understanding the circumstances that led to the integration of AI in art.

The paper aims to highlight the significance of an artwork's aura and the negative effects of undervaluing its worth.

In the contemporary context, conceptualism in art often takes precedence over the artwork's aura, leading to a degree of rationalization in the arts. This rationalization occurs when artistic creations separate form from content. Art is inherently tied to the medium in which it is created; for example, a painting produces an experience whose content cannot be disentangled from the medium used to realize it. This painterly realization embodies artistic truth, not conceptual knowledge. The form (corporality of artwork) gives rise to the content (reference), and no content is predetermined; rather, the form establishes it. Since the content of a painting can only be expressed by its concrete corporality, it involves the simultaneity of matter, form, and content. Martin Dixon describes this interplay as an oscillation between the artwork's corporality and its reference (e.g., aura).[1] However, when the form is separated from the content in artistic creation, this oscillation ceases, and the aura is lost. As a result, the value of the artwork is determined by its concept, idea, and information, suggesting that the

artwork's creation merely serves to support these elements. AI serves as a radical example to discuss the consequences of rationalization in art.

Can AI be used as a tool for artists to produce art? Before analyzing AI-generated images, it is essential to consider the conceptual differences between AI-generated images and AI-generated art. Given that art involves a dynamic interplay between form and content, between reference and corporality, it is questioned if AI-derived images can contribute to the process of creating an artwork, considering that AI can only simulate the effect of corporality.

Art produced by AI would suggest that AI is an author or co-author, but this is not feasible. AI cannot establish the kind of relationship with otherness that is essential for artistic creations. Only humans can engage in such a relationship, which is fundamental to art. Therefore, while AI can be used by artists to create art, it cannot be considered as the author or co-author of an artwork. This limitation also prevents AI from creating a novelty (*novum*), a concept that will be explored further in this paper.

The primary concepts examined in this paper include the aura of an artwork, AI technology, the concept of otherness, and the concept of novelty (*novum*) in art. However, there are certain epistemological limitations to defining the term "aura." One challenge is that it cannot be precisely and positively defined; instead, it is often described using negative terms and an apophatic approach. According to Janu Mieszkowski, the aura – which is characterized as unapproachable incarnate – challenges the traditional experience of authenticity and its relationship with the viewer. Robert Kaufman defines aura as the trace presence of something no longer literally or physically present but still shimmering, conjuring otherness, and simultaneously attracting and repelling us.[2] In exploring the concept of aura, the viewpoints of several authors were examined, including Benjamin Walter, Magdalena Zięba, Raúl Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Reece Gielen, Badry and Lubis, and Martin Dixon. Focusing on Martin Dixon's perspective, which describes the aura of an artwork as an oscillation between the corporality of the artwork and its reference, the subsequent question is posed: if the oscillation between the corporality of the artwork and its reference is essential to art, how can it be generated in AI images that simulate an artwork's corporality? It is important to emphasize the difference between works that simulate corporality (e.g., with the assistance of AI) and those that lack it, such as literature, which is inherently disembodied. Regarding the concept of otherness, the perspectives of Jacques Derrida and Emanuel Levinas were considered. To Adorno's notion of novelty in art, the perspectives of Boris Groys, Katarina Rukavina, and Lev Manovich were examined.

2. The otherness in the context of an artwork's aura

What about the artwork's aura? Is there any connection to the passage from Mark's Gospel: "His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them" (Mark 9:3)? If bleach cannot achieve such an effect, then it suggests this is not a natural occurrence. How does bleach relate to these clothes, and what does it represent in this context? What is the connection between this whiteness and the dresses, as well as the naturalness of the painter's canvas? The whiteness described in the biblical context represents a supernatural or divine transformation, which cannot be achieved naturally through bleach or any other mundane means. Similarly, the aura of an artwork is not an everyday phenomenon. Through Derrida's interpretation of Levinas's concept of otherness, the aura of artwork can be understood to otherness.

Art addresses otherness by creating something that did not exist before. Levinas's concept of otherness, as outlined in "Totality and Infinity," involves a metaphysical desire for the absolute Other,[3] where the Other is not reducible to the Same. In this framework, the relationship between the Same and the Other is such that, while the Other communicates with the Same, it remains transcendent and fundamentally beyond the Same's full grasp.[4] Levinas describes this transcendence, which signifies a relationship with a reality infinitely distant from the self, as metaphysical.[5] According to Levinas, without such a separation, there would be no possibility of truth, only mere existence. This separation, however, is characterized by a distance that is both insurmountable and surmountable.[6] Derrida builds upon Levinas's metaphysics of desire, describing it as a surrender to the call of the absolutely irreducible externality of the Other. However, he also emphasizes that desire is not hapless, as it retains its openness and freedom.[7] The encounter is made possible by the Other, which is unpredictable, and therefore there is no predetermined conception of the Other.[8]

Derrida argues that creation is fundamentally the creation of the Other, and it is only possible through the concept of fatherhood. The relationship between a father and son transcends all categories of logic, ontology, and phenomenology.[9] Levinas, in Derrida's view, addresses the question of original difference, highlighting that our relationship with the Other – face-to-face, without mediators and unification – stands in opposition to the traditional understanding of logos.[10] The messianic eschatology that inspires Levinas is often interpreted in terms of the most

irreducible aspects of experience, namely, the passage and exit to the Other.[11] Art, in a fundamental sense, engages with otherness because it co-creates something that did not exist before. It becomes part of the metaphysical desire for the Other, serving as a co-interlocutor with the absolute. The Other's irreducibility produces the aura of the artwork. This aura, as a fragile phenomenon in a dynamic dialog between presence and otherness, serves as an indicator of the relationship between the artwork and the Other. The subsequent sections will explore how art is a contingent interlocutor with the absolute in the co-creation process, leading to the emergence of the artwork's aura.

3. The aura of the artwork as an indicator of the relationship between contingency and absolute

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines "aura" as a special quality or feeling that seems to come from a person, place, or thing.[12] To contextualize this concept within the realm of AI-generated art, we will first need to explore aspects of an artwork's aura to gain a more thorough comprehension. These aspects are related to Walter Benjamin's interpretation of originality and reproduction, in which he argues that the aura is lost in reproduction.[13] According to Magdalena Ziębahe, the art of the past two decades has accelerated and intensified the depletion of the aura. Radical artistic practices have contributed to the erosion of traditional cultural values, as described by Benjamin. This can be seen in the proliferation of silkscreened photographic images in the works of Warhol and Rauschenberg, as well as the industrially manufactured, repetitively structured works of the minimal sculptors. Art appropriation aims to recycle the authenticity of the original while generating new interpretations.[14]

Raúl Rodríguez-Ferrándiz notes that, according to Benjamin's interpretation, an aura is an authentic appearance of a work of art that manifests in a material capacity within the tradition in which it was created. In reproduction, the properties of the original work are omitted, causing its aura to disappear (aura, according to Benjamin, cannot be reproduced). Rodríguez-Ferrándiz examines the implications in new media and contemporary cultural production, where reproducibility is not degrading but rather a principle of production itself. Consequently, the concept of "original" is lost, as reproduction becomes integral to the art form.[15] He suggests that it is the aura of information that allows digitality to transcend physical form in contemporary artworks, rendering them "immortal." This "immortality" is no longer related to the uniqueness of the original, which traditionally guarantees the authenticity of its copies. Instead, it arises from the multiplication of identical instances, creating a paradoxical aura based on the reproduction of an infinitely multiplying binary code.[16] To understand what the aura of information is, we must first grasp the general concept of aura. Aura manifests at the irreducibility of the Other, serving as an indicator of a phenomenon where the relationship between presence and otherness, contingency and absolute, flickers. From Rodríguez-Ferrándiz's perspective, cultural objects are not merely objects of thought but also actions and experiments open to further manipulation and co-production. This perspective highlights how cultural experience is no longer restricted to the contemplation of an object; instead, it involves navigating between different points rather than delving deeply into one aspect.[17] This dynamic is exemplified by the Internet, where links lead to other texts, and enjoyment is derived not from contemplation but from creating the product, even if it is temporary.[18] In the context of post-production, Rodríguez-Ferrándiz refers to Nicolas Bourriaud,[19] who believes that the traditional distinctions between production and consumption, creation and copying, have been erased, making concepts such as originality and creations obsolete.[20] Artists take information and cultural codes from heritage or everyday life, not creating but programming forms.[21] The artistic strategy of post-production involves mixing and combining, whereas hyper-production is viewed by Bourriaud as a cultural ecosystem,[22] where reality is replaced by montage.[23] In line with Bourriaud's views, Rodríguez-Ferrándiz believes that the target recipient is no longer merely contemplative but also participatory; the consumer is also a post-producer.[24] Regarding these interpretations of aura, a certain rationalization of artistic expression is discussed, where the "auratic" activity of the artwork is based on information as a "means" of interchange, compilation, assembly, and co-production. However, in creative discourse, the exact opposite is accurate: as Dixon's example of Warhol's artwork will demonstrate, "information" comes from the aura, with the artwork's form and content operating simultaneously and the "reference" oscillating with the artwork's physicality. Techniques involving the exchange of information, or information itself, are not the source of aura.

Before Dixon's claim, the perspectives of Reece Gielen, A.I. Badry, and A.Y. Lubis regarding the relationship between aura and information or artworks without physicality are noteworthy. Gielen examines the branding process in marketing, arguing that this process is how information "gets" an aura. He relates this procedure to an artwork's aura, suggesting that marketing activities can transform a product (brand) into a kind of idol. Similar to Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Gielen distinguishes aura from physical attributes by viewing it as a quality of information and the identity associated with the brand.[25] In branding,

there is no tangible version; instead, the brand occupies a distinct economic domain denoted by copyright and trademark.[26] Gielen points out that the contextualization of a brand can lead to its idolization.[27] Works of art in the 21st century behave similarly, existing as both works of art and goods. Consequently, artworks can manifest an aura not only in the artistic sense but also in terms of brand identity.[27] Brand identity is analogous to artist identity, serving as a code or style and an indicator of a role within a particular (sub)culture.[28] Gielen considers subcultural influence crucial for understanding the concept of auratic activity in this context. In other words, when art became accessible to the working class, the roles within the cultural framework were no longer characterized by hierarchies. As a result, the ritual function of art became dependent on how the working class understood the subcultural context and meanings of the art.[29]

Badry and Lubis assert that "digital art is not merely a reproduction".[30] They align with John Andrew Fisher's view that modern technologies have not only expanded established art forms and generated new art ones but also altered the way traditional art forms are experienced. This has potentially diluted the status of the fine arts. When examining this remark within the context of creating art, digital art exhibits distinctiveness and originality, in contrast to Benjamin's statement regarding machine reproduction. Badry and Lubis claim that the process used to create digital art differs from that of traditional art production or machine reproduction, as it is based on immaterial production. The primary legitimate material required for digital art is a computer with a display to process the content, allowing artwork to exist without physical form.[30] However, as will be demonstrated by examples of AI-generated works, these immaterial works often mimic physical forms. According to Badry and Lubis, every new technique or technological advancement used to convey art can have its own uniqueness, provided that originality is not based on aura but rather on the method of production.[31] This perspective is problematic because it suggests that artistic work is defined by its methodology, yet in art, a method does not guarantee artistic achievement. Badry and Lubis claim that digital art maintains its uniqueness even in the absence of aura due to its immaterial character.[31] To understand this uniqueness, it is essential to clarify what it entails. Uniqueness in art is not about the quantity of innovative and creative methods used but rather the quality of the artwork, which is recognized as a *novum* in art theory.

The "aura" that arises from cultural exchange and branding, or artworks without physicality, is not characterized by oscillating between form and content. Instead, it tends to return the attributes to the viewers via cultural exchange or branding in a "deified" version, resembling a presentation or a spectacle. According to Donald Kuspit, the spectacle has supplanted the aura of artistic creation as a form of secular holiness in post-arts society (holiness without the divine).[32] There is a clear difference between aura and spectacle; while a spectacle works by projecting certain attributes onto a product, an aura is characterized by a flickering between presence and otherness, an "excess" that is evident yet inexplicable in the work of art. This distinction leads to the conclusion that if the aura cannot be reduced to information and its activity, then the information itself cannot have auratic properties.

Martin Dixon refers to an uncontrollable coincidence during the screen-printing process as a "failure" in reproduction, characterizing it as an auratic excess. Dixon reminds us that technology is often believed to destroy the cultic and auratic aspects of art. However, this holds true only if technology functions and behaves as intended.[33] Technological malfunctions can occur, allowing art to emerge through reproduction. The concept of aura persists in cultural and esthetic philosophy due to its dialectical interaction with technology.[34] Benjamin claims that technological reproduction eliminates the aura, but Dixon aims to demonstrate that the aura remains attached to artworks through malfunctions, noise, and distortion inherent in any medium.[34] Dixon contends that even if the aura were to be eliminated by technological replication, it would reappear due to technological malfunctions. He illustrates this with Warhol's work of art;[35] a series of monochromatic silkscreens from the mid-60s called *Death and Destruction* (Figure 1), where the main principle of Warhol's work lies in numbing the viewer to contemporary horrors through repetitive representations. However, as Dixon notes, the repetition in Warhol's work is never identical due to the technical process of reproduction malfunctions and presentational errors. This creates

Figure 1. Andy Warhol's *Death and Destruction*. Image used with permission from Gwen Fran via Flickr.

subtle and obvious variations, or textural noise, with the screen-printing technique creating these variations in the reproduction. In this technique, the repeating grid format is not perfectly constructed, leading to variations such as misaligned or overlapping prints. This result in a competition between the information content of the image and the esthetic problems of pattern, color, and shades.[36] The viewer's vision oscillates between content and form, reference and surface, unable to integrate these aspects into a cohesive whole. This oscillation fascinates because it draws attention through erroneous repetitions, which Dixon interprets as an auratic flicker or a murmur of consciousness, even thematically a murmur of conscience. Aura, therefore comes from a disconnection between expectation and reality, or a form of failure. Unlike "ideal objects," this type of "defect" and coincidence relates to the relationship between presence and otherness. Specifically, a technical malfunction in Warhol's piece results in an "excess" piece that extends beyond the display itself. Dixon notes this as an oscillation between content and form that cannot be synthesized into wholeness;[1] it cannot be self-identified. This is an event of infinite flickering, which is the aura.

Referring to Derrida,[37] it becomes clear that the relation to non-presence is not obscured by the existence of the original impression; rather, non-presence enables the emergence and ever-renewing intactness of the original impression. This relationship also eliminates the possibility of self-identity *per se*. In Warhol's example, self-identity is subverted through technical malfunctions, suggesting a kind of "excess." Non-presence allows for the appearance of this "excess," which lacks a "counterpart" in the pre-existing essence. Instead, it arises from malfunctions and coincidences that contribute to the authenticity of the artwork. The metaphysics of presence fails to account for the potential of coincidence and "excess," which are crucial to the artwork's authenticity. This metaphysics seeks for the artwork to fully express an idea, self-identify, and be recognized in line with ontologically, teleologically, or epistemologically truths. In addition, it aims for the artwork to be a tautology that expresses the essence or reveals the truth as the occurrence of being. However, such subjugation of the artwork is not possible. As it resists self-identification, the artwork conveys otherness – which is elusive, unconquerable, and defies conceptual explanation, granting access to infinity.

If a work of art is not preceded by a given essence, what is it about? There are two possible explanations: either it has to do with original and authentic creativity, or it relates to what Derrida terms as inscription and rewriting, leaving a trace. The idea that there is no foundational essence lies at the heart of Derrida's deconstruction.[38] Derrida claims that history cannot exist without writing because "inscription" is a constant force, and deconstruction begins with the notion that the sign precedes the truth.[39] What distinguishes these two options? Why would Derrida's writing and leaving a trace not be considered an original creation? Denying him this would imply that every act of leaving a trace is an original creation, which indeed occurs. However, not every malfunction results in a work of art; some malfunctions degenerate into kitsch, and this difference is recognizable. This is a disagreement with Derrida, highlighting that truth exists in art. If every writing and every trace were an original creation, it would mean that there is no difference between artistic and non-artistic works. As stated previously, co-creation is central to creativity. This thesis is based on the difference between artistic and non-artistic works, implying a criterion of truthfulness and an absolute criterion. An absolute criterion is only possible if there is an absolute. If truth exists in a work of art, it is possible only to the absolute. It appears that we are compelled to associate artwork with a pre-existing essence, which artwork persistently and apophatically avoids. Trapped between essence on one hand and the freedom and openness of inscription on the other, the only resolution is that original creativity is co-creation. Art is creative, i.e., co-creative because it collaborates with the absolute to arrive at a truth that did not exist before the artwork was created. The horizon-opening and "excess"-creating qualities of the artwork, composed of an infinite variety of "faces" of otherness, give it an aura that is ever new.

This text commences with a reference to a passage in the Gospel that describes a particular type of aura or halo. When discussing an aura, or halo, it is the radiance and atmosphere surrounding a person or phenomenon. The "excess" in the artwork appears manifest uniquely, indicating an interaction between form and content that flickers between the corporality of the artwork and its references. This dynamic makes the artwork inherently transgressive and impossible to replicate.

4. AI and the "new" work of art

The concept of aura remained relevant in art theory until the emergence of conceptualism, which shifted focus from aura to ideas and project propositions. Conceptualism in art tends to trivialize or deny the auratic characteristics of the artwork, criticizing the modernist stance from Benjamin to Adorno that an artwork's value lies in its authenticity through human creation. Instead, conceptual art emphasizes production over the artwork itself.[40] Miško Šuvaković points out that the rise of conceptual art was followed by post-conceptual productions, which transitioned from the literal to the fictional and from the

fictional to the virtual object. These virtual objects were presented as an atmosphere or aura in place of an absent three-dimensional (3D) object.[41]

When a reproduction replaces the original, the artwork's depths and auratic flickering are diminished. The reproduction loses some of the original's structure, including its oscillation between the reference and the painting surface, as well as its aura. For instance, a painting loses its painterly qualities, such as depth and plasticity, in reproduction. A painting can only be fully appreciated through the medium in which it was created, a fact often overlooked. The creation of a painting is inextricably linked to the painting process itself, which creates a new, previously non-existent occurrence. This occurrence addresses the characteristics that cannot be separated from its medium of realization in terms of content. This is not conceptual knowledge but a painterly realization of the artistic truth. The form (corporality of artwork) establishes the content (reference), which is not predetermined or added later. It involves the coexistence of matter, form, and content, where the painting mediums serve as the concrete corporality that allows the form content to be expressed.

The reproduction of artwork offers information but lacks plasticity, structure, the texture of the painting, the oscillation between the reference and the painting surface, or its aura. Consequently, the artwork is reduced to narrative interpretations that encourage further narrative experiences of artwork. This shift toward a narrative state is characteristic of post-painting, where the artwork's quality lies in its concept, idea, and information. In this understanding, it is believed that the creation of the artwork serves only to support the expression of a concept, idea, content, information, or essence.

How can the use of information (i.e., words and language), in the manner of rationalization, diminish or perhaps eliminate a painting's depth and transform it into a narrative state? What is it about the language damages the painting's aura quality? Language is the product of speech (i.e., expression), and speech is always a relationship. Speech is not only words; it involves real individuals with depths, emotions, gesticulations, and so on. Moreover, often, language is not directed toward speech (i.e., expression) as a relationship (depth), but toward narration (flatness). Since language, in the process of rationalization, can strip away an artwork's depth, what significance does it hold? A word that is both an act of speech and an act of artistic embodiment is creative. It carries the possibility of co-creation, giving birth to new realities and possibilities. When the word ceases to be an act of embodiment and co-creation, it becomes code or law. Without a relationship, language falls into rationalization, transforming words into objects or codes. What effect does rationalized language have on the painting, and how does it make the artwork's aura disappear? First, the word, as an instrument of ideas, concepts, and narration, was left without speech and relationship, leading to a rationalization of identity and representation. As a result, the painting becomes petrified by this rationalized language.

The decline of language is attributed to appropriation, which involves rationalization and the separation of language from speech and relationships. Language is a function of speech, and speech is characterized by relationships. Even in a monolog, speech exists as a dialog with oneself, where one part of the self speaks to another, illustrating the inherent otherness within oneself. Moreover undiscovered, as the "purpose" is co-creation rather than self-discovery. To be able to co-create, one must be free. There can be no speech where there is no Other/other, because the Other/other (even if I'm other to myself) draws us into speech. Language can be rationalized, "taken off," copied from speech-as-relation, and appropriated as a pattern; to speak technologically, it can be "downloaded" as a stand-alone entity when one forgets that language is a function of speech. Consequently, speech cannot exist without relationships, yet language can exist without relationships, becoming a code or pattern. Since speech in art is based on otherness as a relationship, the separation of language from speech (and thus from otherness) has significant effects on the aura and the use of AI in art.

The issue at hand is that language has become relationless and ceased to operate as speech. This is not about language generating reality or lacking reference (reality) but about language being left without speech due to the absence of relationships (i.e., otherness). Art is profoundly impacted by this loss, as it encourages imitation rather than creation. The effects of rationalized language use are evident in the interaction between AI and artistic creation. For instance, lawsuits against AI by artists are becoming more common. A notable example is a class action lawsuit involving three American artists, Karla Ortiz, Kelly McKernan, and Sarah Andersen.[42] After these AI systems were trained on the artists' works, the plaintiffs sought to safeguard the artists' copyrights. The lawsuit argues that interpolating existing artwork does not create new works but rather derivative, as pointed out by lawyer and programmer Matthew Butterick.[43] If the aura of artwork has become irrelevant by being reduced to information, idea, content, concept, and narrative, then AI uses these features to generate "new" works using parts-as-information from existing artworks. However, these are not new artworks, as pointed out by prosecutor Butterick, but narrative derivatives of old ones. They can also be obtained by imitating styles rather than taking literal segments of an artwork. To illustrate that

works produced by AI are not new artworks, it may be necessary to clarify what constitutes novelty (*novum*) in art.

The concept of novelty (*novum*) in art has gained prominence since the mid-19th century. Modern art, unlike earlier esthetics, is associated with the idea that art is a means for creating something new (*novum*).[44] Theodor W. Adorno asserts that the "new" is a blind spot and emphasizes the lack of knowledge about the abstract nature of novelty in art.[45] He argues that the concept of the new is more of a negative than an affirmation[46] and that it holds the potential to be infinite.[47] The realization of the *novum* occurs when the artist engages with otherness radically. This does not mean that the artist never begins with an idea or concept; rather, it emphasizes that the idea is merely the starting point and will evolve throughout the process, with the final result possibly diverging from the initial conception. For example, the painter is free to decide what to retain and what to overpaint at each step of the painting process.

Boris Groys offers contemporary interpretations of novelty (*novum*). According to Groys, a reproduction is perceived as potentially duplicated from the outset due to its lack of authenticity, rendering it placeless, virtual, and ahistorical. Groy suggests that Benjamin's distinction between an original and a reproduction not only allows for the possibility of creating a reproduction from an original but also for creating an original from a reproduction. This is exemplified when all documents in the installation, despite being placeless, virtual, and ahistorical, become originals.[48] Rukavina points out that Groys' thought is significant for understanding the concept of creativity in the context of contemporary art. However, Groys' explanation of how an original can emerge from a reproduction does not resolve the problem of novelty (*novum*) in art, which remains an unexplained value.[49]

Lev Manovich states that the term "new" re-emerged in the 1990s, shifting from being associated with specific media, such as print, cinema, or photography, to being linked with the media in general. This led to the emergence of the term "new media" emerged as a result, which colloquially referred to new cultural forms distributed through digital computers, such as computer games, websites, compact disk read-only memory, and digital versatile disk-read only memory, hypertext, and hypermedia apps. This phrase also conveyed a sense of radical cultural innovation.[50] However, according to Manovich, new media is still rooted in old media in terms of cultural languages.[51] The computer seems to have reinforced pre-existing forms rather than catalyzing the emergence of new ones. Manovich questions how to interpret the lack of radically new forms in a culture that is rapidly and extensively computerizing:[52]

> Consequently, 3D computer imaging imitates the look of classical cinema, complete with film grain, computer-based virtual spaces usually look like something which was already built in reality, flash animations on the web imitate old video graphics, and the web itself combines the layouts of pre-computer print media with moving images, which follow the already established conventions of film and television, and so on.[53]

Lev Manovich observes that new media produced by computers is designed to resemble old media. The avant-garde of today is characterized by the methods of media access, manipulation, and analysis methods based on computer technology. While the ways these forms can be used vary greatly, the forms themselves remain consistent.[53] Manovich notes that we transition from the new visions, typographies, and architectures of the 1920s to the new media of the 1990s. This shift is exemplified by moving from "a man with a movie camera" to a user equipped with a search engine, image analysis, and visualization programs. Furthermore, cinema, once the technology of seeing, is replaced by the computer, which serves as the technology of memory. This evolution transforms the avant-garde into software, transitioning from defamiliarization to information design.[54]

Harold Cohen's work highlights that machines' creative potential lies in their unique partnerships with humans rather than in their inherent artistic abilities.[55] This perspective is echoed in the experiments of artist Leonel Moura, who, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, experimented with robotic art and AI. Moura developed mobile robots that draw shapes based on color density, drawing inspiration from a tradition of artists who have sought to separate esthetic judgments from personal knowledge and narrow preferences.[56] In modern art history, there are several instances of accidental creations, coincidental finds, and unintentional procedures.[56] It is significant to note that Moura does not care if his artwork is created by machines or not as long as it is approved by the art world's gatekeepers.[56]

These observations raise the question of whether *novum* in art is a qualitative or quantitative characteristic. The distinction between *novum* and added actuality is essential for understanding whether AI can create *novum*. *Novum* is a qualitative value, contrasting with narrativeness, which relies more on adding "actualities" than on oscillating between artwork's corporality and reference. Narrativeness facilitated the method of computer-generated "artworks" because this type of rationalized language can exist without speech. It operates with the artwork's parts-as-information. In cases of narrativity, the "novelty" of the work is

achieved through the sequence of actualities, resulting in a mathematically linear "opened infinity" that inhibits the artwork's dynamic completeness. Narrativeness is more about the "staticity" of the artwork's narrative components multiplied than about dynamics. To explore these concepts further, one AI-generated item: *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial* by Jason M. Allen via Midjourney (Figure 2) will be examined.

Jason Allen earned the blue ribbon for his piece *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial* in the fair's competition for digital artists. This made it one of the first pieces created using AI to receive such recognition, provoking vehement criticism from other artists who accused him of infringement.[57] Allen claimed that he had been transparent about the origins of his work, submitting under the name "Jason M. Allen via Midjourney".[57] Many artists became anxious, questioning why anyone should pay for art if it can be generated by anyone using AI tools.[57] The use of AI tools in art has provoked intense dialogs about ethics and has been criticized by some as a form of high-tech plagiarism, as it relies on ingesting and reinterpreting existing artworks.[57]

The *Faceless Portraits Transcending Time* exhibition, hosted at the HG Contemporary Gallery in Chelsea, the center of New York's contemporary art scene, featured entirely computer-generated prints.[58] The catalog describes the exhibition as a collaboration between its creator, Ahmed Elgammal, and an AI named AICAN. According to HG Contemporary, it is the first solo gallery exhibition dedicated to an "AI artist".[58]

What is problematic about these AI-generated pieces in terms of art? AI tools do not begin with otherness but with specified variables that imitate particular painting languages and styles. By imitating the painting's surface, both examples imitate the specifics of the painting medium, which is an imitation of language without speech. The first example (Jason M. Allen via Midjourney, *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial*) mimics the Modern Style (art nouveau) and "impasto" painting effects. The second example, *Faceless Portraits Transcending Time* by Ahmed Elgammal through AICAN, compiles the styles of Frank Auerbach and Francis Bacon. However, Auerbach's paintings are characterized by a synesthetic appearance of the physical sensation of touching someone's face in the dark. Is it possible for AI to simulate this sensation (which is an integration of both the physical and mental aspects of the human experience) without tangible and material properties? Even if it were possible, would it be radically encountering otherness, as AI only simulates it without a real relationship to otherness? As such, it becomes apparent that AI gathers and processes only an artwork's narrative – not its relationship with otherness – compiling, modifying, quoting, and reassembling it. In the context of art, kitsch often manifests as falsehood through manipulation of the artwork's structure and artistic medium. Gustav Pazaurek was one of the earliest writers to discuss how kitsch arises from the misuse of artistic materials.[59] Kitsch commonly mimics the tangible aspects of art through narrative elements. Hermann Broch asserts that kitsch can mimic any artistic system.[60] A prior artistic critic would likely categorize this AI-created work as kitsch due to its deceptive relationship between corporality and reference (form matter and content). This categorization does not include artworks that intentionally employ kitsch, such as those created by Jeff Koons. The artistic material employed by Jeff Koons is not mishandled; rather, it is well suited to the reference.

Figure 2. Jason M. Allen via Midjourney, *Théâtre D'opéra Spatial*, 2022. Image used with permission from Wikimedia Commons.

Like prosecutor Butterick, it can be concluded that AI-generated items are not new works of art. Placing AI-generated items next to Warhol's artwork demonstrates the distinction between artwork and non-artwork. Warhol authentically handled artistic matter – the oscillation between the work's corporeality and reference – by contrasting his creations with those generated by AI, revealing that the latter lack this oscillation and do not, therefore, produce an aura. Narrativeness has facilitated this kind of AI action using language as a code. Works generated in this manner are artistically expressive; they do not provide artistic speech but offer a wide range of possible narrative interpretations. Going back to the earlier disagreement with Derrida, if art is merely a matter of inscription and rewriting, then AI-generated works are considered new writings (as new artworks), as it does not matter whether the artist or the computer "writes." However, if there is merit to distinguishing artworks from non-artistic works, then it is not just about writing but about truth and co-creation. Butterick's lawsuit against AI is based on the claim that interpolating someone else's artwork does not

create a new artwork but a derivative of the original. For AI to work in this manner and generate "artwork," the artistic language must be rationalized beforehand. AI cannot capture the aura; it can only control signs or codes from artwork because these are what can be copied, interpolated, compiled, and imitated. This is possible only under the presumption that an artwork's narrativity, rather than its aura qualities, defines it as artistic.

The overflow of hyper-reality resulting from narrative tends toward increased characterized by "distances," such as enumerations, hyper-factuality, hyper-production, and hyper-consumption, rather than depth. The logic of narrative drives hyper-reality, hyper-production, and hyper-consumption; lacking awareness of distance or the need for slowing down, nor does it allow for meditative immersion in depth. Since the aura of the artwork is tied to depth rather than the logic of enumeration, it is overlooked in the narrative approach. This happens when language ceases to be speech, becoming an independent code that may be utilized for operations, such as assembly, imitation, copying, and mimicking. Language is thus separated from speech, its closest relation, leading to presentation replacing speech and language mimicking expression-meaning by generating presentation-meaning. Consequently, AI performs a logical series of actions, made feasible by the presumption that an artwork's narrativity, rather than its aura qualities, defines it as artistic. If language is employed apart from speech, there is no differentiation between work produced by humans and computers. Wherever language ceases to be speech, artists will be "replaced" by AI. However, to distinguish between AI-generated artwork and one made by an artist, one must rely on the aura of the artwork. This suggests that an aura cannot be produced by AI. The significant distinction between conventional artistic materials and AI tools lies in the aura's ability to oscillate between an artwork's corporality and reference, a quality AI-generated art cannot achieve. AI works are absolute mimesis, or imitation without remnants; thus, unable to create novelty (*novum*).

As a pure mimetic principle and imitation without remnants, virtuality lacks an aspect of otherness as well as artwork's aura. In conclusion, AI could only control signs or codes, not the aura of an artwork, which it cannot simulate.

5. Conclusion

Vilém Flusser contends that contemporary society has established distinct boundaries between the domains of art and technology. The two branches of culture – arts as qualitative and soft, and science as quantitative and hard – are estranged from one another.[61] According to Fabian Wurm, Flusser was not a regressive cultural critic; instead, he viewed the computer as a catalyst for a small-scale cultural revolution.[62]

Regarding AI technology's application to the artistic sector, the following query still has to be answered: Does science make an effort to influence the usage of scientific language in art? Does rational thinking extend its methods to the arts? These are concerns that one is encouraged to consider.

This article explores the aura of artworks by contrasting AI-generated art with original works of art. The research led to the following query: how can art simultaneously convey some truth and subvert the permanence of presence? It is found that art achieves this by acting as a contingent interlocutor with the absolute. Art is drawn into the metaphysical yearning for the Other through the discourse of contingency to an absolute. The artwork's aura emerges from this process, serving as an indicator of the relationship characterized by an infinite flickering between presence and otherness.

AI employs rationalized language as a narrative rather than artistic speech (expression). AI cannot capture the aura of an artwork; it can only manipulate signs, codes, or styles from it. This study demonstrates the importance of emphasizing the aura of artworks to differentiate between AI-generated non-art pieces and real works of art.

AI-generated art is incapable of creating novelty (*novum*) because AI works are absolute mimesis, or replication without remains. It is concluded that AI cannot take over the aura; the aura cannot be rationalized or simulated. Instead, AI is limited to manipulating codes or symbols contained in an artwork. This article does not argue that it is impossible to establish the truth in an artwork created with AI assistance. Rather, it asserts that AI cannot be the author or co-author of a work of art. Artworks can be created using AI technology, but only if its creation retains its own artistic language – the language that encounters otherness.

AI-assisted works cannot be considered art as long as AI is employed as a language in artistic expression, imitating the language of other artistic media. However, AI has the potential to assist in art creation if it is used solely as a supplemental technical instrument and if the artwork's artistic language transcends it.

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