



Public Responses to AI Usage in Art: A Social Media Analysis

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Introduction

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) has started to develop and become a part of our daily life, a debate has surfaced: Is AI capable of doing artwork on par with human creations? The most popular debate on this topic is whether AI has originality, creativity, and aesthetic. Nowadays people share everything through social media, so the most efficient way to research the impact of AI is through analyzing art on social media. The main focus in this study is how audience reactions differ between social media posts by artists who use AI tools and artists who create without AI. Knowing how much like a certain work gets can help us interpret the preference of the audiences, for example if a non-AI work gets significantly more likes than an AI work, we can say that people like non-AI works more. Therefore, we can see how AI is accepted in our life through the research progress.

Literature Review

Researchers and writers studying the use of AI in art often focus on issues such as ethics, originality, creativity, artistic labor, and public perception. Across many articles and studies, a major theme is the tension between the promise or possibility of AI tools and the threats they pose to artists. This literature review highlights findings from seven recent sources that explore how AI impacts artists.

First, in the articles "Foregrounding Artist Opinions: A Survey Study on Transparency, Ownership, and Fairness in AI Generative Art" and "Language, Identity, and Ethics in AI-Driven Art: Perspectives from Human Artists in Digital Environments" (Torres et al. 2024), both research groups talk about AI stealing human ideas and plagiarism of artists' styles as a violation of ethical standards. Both articles posed the question: if AI became a partner in the creative process, would artists be benefited or harmed? For example, in "Foregrounding Artist Opinions" the researchers Lovato et al. 2024 say, "These tools have potential benefits for artists, but they also have the potential to harm the art workforce and infringe upon artistic and intellectual property rights" (1). The researcher points out that AI might lack artistic values. Similarly, the article "Language, Identity, and Ethics in AI-Driven Art" states, "The use of AI in creative works raises significant ethical challenges, particularly in terms of authorship and originality. AI systems are prompted on existing works, which can lead to concerns about plagiarism and intellectual property theft" (6). This article shows the same concern on AI threatening artists, both focusing on how AI takes human ideas and shares them as if they were their own. This leads to our next question on whether AI has its own originality.

Two articles focused on the authenticity, personal style, and originality of artists. In "The Paradox of Artificial Creativity," Manuel Garcia states, "It challenges scholars, artists, and society to reconceptualize not only the role of the creator but also the fundamental nature of the creative act in an era increasingly shaped by the influence of AI" (3). The author suggested the invention of AI generative art has shifted human perception of authenticity. The art world might change if generative tools continue to grow, artists could be negatively impacted by AI tools. He is fairly saying that we need to think about AI as a tool of art, how is it helping or damaging us. In the next article "Ethical and Philosophical Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence-Generated Art" by Wai Yie Leong, the researcher stated, "Here, AI can be viewed as an 'independent'

creative entity, although it lacks legal personhood" (6). This article raised a different argument, that AI could be an individual tool: it is not copying humans instead it could also create art.

Correspondingly, some articles tested the creativity of AI art. To start with, in the article "Foregrounding Artist Opinions" by Lovato et al states "Generative AI creators scrape artists' digital work to train Generative AI models and produce art-like outputs at scale. These outputs are now being used to compete with human artists in the marketplace as well as being used by some artists in their generative processes to create art" (1). AI tools could also be creative tools to the artist; AI could be used as a helper, improving on the artists' production. "The Paradox of Artificial Creativity" states AI creative tools open a broader market for artists. The development of AI enables new directions for artists. Although it might harm an artist's personal style, it is undeniable that AI created more opportunities. To strengthen this point, it is also in the paragraphs that "We found that 44.88% of the survey participants agree that Generative AI art models are a positive development in the field of art" (6). Agreeing with the point of AI opening a wider field, AI might provide more creative ideas that humans can't think of, and maybe broaden the market into technology fields.

Next, some researchers point out the existence of AI could lead to unemployment of artists. In the article "The Impact of Generative AI on Artists," by Reishiro Kawakami and Sukrit Venkatagiri, the researchers say the increasing involvement of AI in the human world has threatened artists. Human artists feel they are not needed, their jobs are taken, and that AI is starting to replace humans. There is no doubt that AI is harming artists more as it grows.

Finally, what does the public think about AI art as part of the larger AI vs human being discussion? The article "AI vs. Human Paintings" (Jiajun Wang et al. 2025) noted that people trust human art more than AI art, they see AI art as less authentic and are less able to connect with it. Zhou and Kawabata said "For example, eye-tracking studies have revealed an implicit negative bias toward AI generated art compared to human-created art, suggesting that artistic creativity is still predominantly perceived as a human attribute". In this quote, the researcher points out that humans appreciate human works, it is not an uncommon thing to have negative feelings for AI generated work. It is just a question of whether we accept AI to be shown to us or we only want to see human work.

While the existing scholarship addresses ethics, authenticity, creativity, labor, and public perception, there is very little research that considers these issues through everyday social media usage. While Wang et al. (2025) do offer some preliminary exploration of user engagement with AI art on social media, their study focuses exclusively on TikTok. The limits of this area of research motivate my current work. Social media like Instagram and YouTube offers a unique look into the minds of millions of people, revealing personal attitudes and responses.

Methods

For this project, we conducted a comparative analysis of audience responses to AI and non-AI artwork on social media. Because engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and follower counts are publicly visible, social media provides an accessible way to observe how audiences react to different forms of art. I selected two platforms, YouTube and Instagram, because they host large art communities and allow users to respond directly to creators. I focused my analysis on posts within these two platforms. The non-AI artists were selected from YouTube based on having at least 10,000 followers and regularly posting process or tutorial videos. These criteria ensured that each artist had an active audience and provided enough content for comment analysis. The AI artists were selected from Instagram, where AI-generated

art is more commonly shared and explicitly labeled. I chose artists who either consistently tagged their work as AI-generated or were publicly identified by audiences as using AI tools. This made it possible to compare how audiences react when AI use is disclosed versus when it is suspected. For each artist, I analyzed several recent posts, focusing on the comments that directly addressed the artwork, the process, or the artist's use of (or possible use of) AI. I recorded patterns in the content of comments, collected representative examples, and compared the tone and engagement styles between AI and non-AI posts. This method allowed me to identify recurring themes in audience appreciation, criticism, and trust.

Results

I came to the conclusion that people prefer non-AI artists. On the research of non-AI artists, I found that the comments under the posts are mostly complimenting the artist's skills and techniques. People appreciate the artists' hard work; it makes the audience engage and connect more. For example, an artist on YouTube, *SupperRaeDizzle*, shared videos of her making different types of work with mixed media (pencil, watercolor). She did small works like sketches and sometimes watercolor views. Her work was liked by people because she showed the process of creation. People like to watch videos that they can be a part of. In the comments section, people don't just say they think the work is pretty, they choose the parts they like and talk to the artist about their creative process. Specifically, an audience member commented, "I love that you are getting out of your comfort zone!" Another commenter wrote, "You really capture the essence of the original photo!" A non-AI artist connects with the people more; they might get more permanent fans than the other artists. People will follow the artist that they like, they will want to know about the artist. These comments are great examples of the artist using artwork to engage with the audience, making art a thing that can be felt.

Likewise, another influencer on YouTube called *Surrealart_noa* is an artist that posts videos of her pencil drawing works and process. Her videos focus on doing challenges with unusual drawing techniques. Her style of art has made the audience want to know more, to dive into her works. Watching her creation process led the audience to use critical thinking, the audience could analyze how they think the artist did on the challenge, and how this made a difference to the work. Some example comments are, "This diva always finds cool and creative stuff" and "drawing the face before the head is talent on another level." As was the case with the other non-AI artists, people comment on their process instead of just generally saying they think the work is pretty.

Comments on non-AI art:



Top Screenshot (AI-generated art comments):

- @yuni_the_fox7024 4 months ago
And also because of the recent ai gibli trend, its so much easier to tell if something is ai because its yellow. And that image you use is a perfect example, its very yellow. Even the blues lean towards a yellow color.
1967 replies
- @szarkarachel 4 months ago
The biggest giveaway for me is how... Smooth ai is. Everything is so smooth and shiny and always warm toned. And the soulless expressions are a big one too. Real artist put soul into their characters that ai can't mimic.
953 replies
- @HandmadeHappiness-you 3 months ago
"I don't want AI to do my art and write my book so I can do dishes and clean my bathroom. I want AI to do my dishes and clean my bathroom so I can do my art and write my book." —something someone said online somewhere, thought I'd share.
433 replies
- @dianapadgett 4 months ago
Ai art is bad not because it makes mistakes, or the proportions are weird, most artists can make mistakes like that. The argument against ai should not be based on the mistakes it makes but rather on the principle that it steals from artists and harms the environment.
843 replies
- @Jessica-ch1y1 4 months ago
Only problem with this is that sometimes artists don't draw straight lines, or the face perfectly symmetrical, and hands are hard so they could turn out kinda wonky. But then people accuse them of using ai :/
177 replies

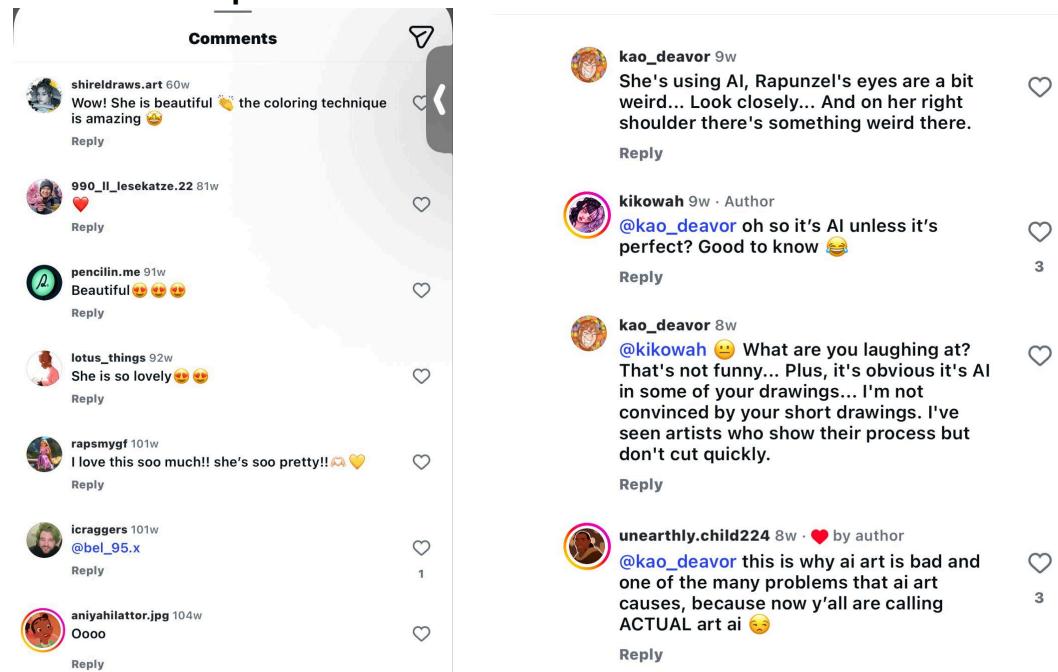
Bottom Screenshot (Drawing video comments):

- @kiyaxox 1 day ago
drawing the face before the head is talent on another level
84 replies
- @Claudiaaag2 1 day ago
I love this song and the combination with your drawings is perfect!! 🎉
10 replies
- @yorukiyoruki 1 day ago
Throwback to her amazing TOMIE videos! I've been watching you for over a year and just recently subscribed!
12 replies
- @sagegreenaesthetic57 1 day ago
This is so good ❤️ ❤️ ❤️
10 replies
- @Medosh_ASLAN 2 days ago
I am very obsessed with your drawing skills! Like, you can draw anywhere! I hope I will become an artist like you! ❤️
8 replies

On the other hand, the AI artists gained similar responses but on opposite ideas. As we also gathered comments under the AI artworks, what appeared interesting was that people did not reject AI totally; in fact, they might have accepted it if they were informed that there was AI in the work. One concern overall is that AI might steal artist's works and AI might plagiarize artworks without copyright. What we found is an artist on Instagram named *kikowah* was accused of using AI and saying she created the work. Because she is not showing her work process, people suspect that she used AI tools. But focus on how people appreciate her work, the comments are mostly just saying, "Lovely," or "Beautiful". Those comments are only

complimenting on what the audience sees, the audiences cannot say anything more because they don't know how it is created. Back to the question on using AI without informing, some people commented on *kikowah*'s work "She's using AI, Rapunzel's eyes are a bit weird..." and there are influencers on youtube like *SabinaBeeDraws*, analyzing *kikowah*'s work and pointing out AI. Under the comments of suspecting AI, people would follow the idea and start to reject this artist. Through this research, we can infer that people are not mad at AI art, they are mad at being exposed to AI when they are uninformed.

Comments on potential AI art:



The screenshot shows a comments section on a social media platform. The comments are as follows:

- shirldraws.art** 60w: Wow! She is beautiful. The coloring technique is amazing 😍
 - Reply**
- 990_ll_jesekatze.22** 81w: ❤️
 - Reply**
- pencillin.me** 91w: Beautiful 😍😍😍
 - Reply**
- lotus_things** 92w: She is so lovely 😍😍
 - Reply**
- rapsmygf** 101w: I love this sooo much!! she's sooo pretty!! 😍❤️
 - Reply**
- icridders** 101w: @bel_95.x
 - Reply**
 - 1
- aniyahilattor.jpg** 104w: Oooo
 - Reply**
- kao_deavor** 9w: She's using AI, Rapunzel's eyes are a bit weird... Look closely... And on her right shoulder there's something weird there.
 - Reply**
- kikowah** 9w · Author: @kao_deavor oh so it's AI unless it's perfect? Good to know 😂
 - Reply**
 - 3
- kao_deavor** 8w: @kikowah 😊 What are you laughing at? That's not funny... Plus, it's obvious it's AI in some of your drawings... I'm not convinced by your short drawings. I've seen artists who show their process but don't cut quickly.
 - Reply**
- unearthly.child224** 8w · ❤️ by author: @kao_deavor this is why ai art is bad and one of the many problems that ai art causes, because now y'all are calling ACTUAL art ai 😂
 - Reply**
 - 3

In addition, an AI artist called *noraspirt.aiart* classified herself as an AI artist and tagged AI under every post. For this artist, the comments are based on the work that the AI created. But there are still not a lot of comments about the artist, just like *kikowah*, the comments are just complementing the work on the surface. Even if people accept AI art, there is still a gap between the work and the audience. The public responds to non-AI works more because we are all human and we have feelings that can connect to each other. With AI generated work, there is nothing we can say about the creative process because it is only generated by a machine.

Discussion and Analysis

The results from the non-AI artists indicate that people tend to engage more with the creativity and process behind an artwork, instead of the final work itself. The comments non-AI artists commonly receive are the ones that reference their progress and efforts, because the audiences are able to participate in the process with the artists. When artists share their process, audiences are more emotionally connected, and understand how the art is made. So through analyzing two non-AI artists we can draw a predictable conclusion of the trend that people are more willing to connect to non-AI works because they appreciate the process more than the final artwork.

It is also important that as humans we value integrity. For example, the AI artists that have a suspicion of using AI art gets fewer positive comments. The negative comments those artists get implies the preference of audiences. Considering that the positive comments for AI art are surface level comments, this highlights the idea that human beings are hard-wired to have emotional connection with non-AI artworks. Other researchers also suggested that it is easier to connect personal qualities to humanized artworks than AI-generated works.

Tentatively, these results illustrate that the resistance of the public toward AI arts is not a fear of powerful technology, but a protection of human creativity. Especially now that social media has created a place for people to share things, the presence of AI could not be ignored anymore. While AI keeps on growing, our ability to distinguish valuable artworks is also growing. In a world where AI appears in every field, it is important for artists to have the chance to express their thoughts through artworks, and for us to still be able to connect our feelings.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This research paper demonstrates people's different opinions about AI versus non-AI artworks. Because the data that I received from the research presented a constant difference in the two fields, it could be eligible to make a conclusion of people's preference among AI/non-AI works. Future research on this topic could expand on the platforms enrolled, for example real-life artworks instead of only artworks that are being posted online. While I recognized that in this study the research method is limited on social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram, the results might not be generalized to every situation. Also, I only studied 4 accounts which might be a narrowed pathway to determine the results. Potential questions that might be unanswered are whether the negative effects of AI are based mostly on social or economic concerns.

Although I believe I did hit on something important in this paper, more research by others will be needed to expand on this project. As AI keeps on evolving, more understanding of what AI brings to us will be important to determine the positive and negative effects of AI. The rapid development of AI, the complexity and the diverse opinion of this topic make this a crucial topic for future studies.



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