Generative AI and Visual Creativity: An Analysis of AI-Assisted Digital Artworks on Social Media

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Abstract
In the realm of social media, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have reached the pinnacle of achievement and further development, revolutionizing the modern digital creative world. By examining how content producers and digital artists use AI-driven technology to create visual elements and additional artworks, this study investigates the effects of generative AI tools, particularly on visual creativity. The study is to investigate the evolving link between human creativity and machine-generated outputs in digital arts through the use of a qualitative content analysis approach. Twenty digital artworks and social media posts made using AI-based tools like Midjourney and Instagram AI filters were chosen for the study through judgmental sampling from digital sites like Instagram, Behance, and ArtStation. Using a structured coding methodology, the text was methodically analyzed with an emphasis on creative goals, technological indicators, and visual artistry. This method made it possible to recognize recurring themes and patterns in AI-assisted artistic creations. The results reveal the creation of a unique "AI aesthetic," marked by recurring visual trends like glitch effects, hyperrealism, and surrealism, indicating an increasing standardization in AI-generated graphics. The study also emphasizes the importance of human-machine collaboration, in which artists use manual edits, suggestions, and their own artistic intent to direct AI results. The study also looks at how these activities affect how people view art, creativity, and authorship in the digital age. This work advances knowledge of digital creativity and the redefining of artistic expression in contemporary media contexts by offering insights into the cultural and creative consequences of generative AI.

Keywords: Generative AI, Digital Artistry, Visual Creativity, Social Media, Human–Machine Collaboration

Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence has become a game changer in the world of modern creative sectors. In opposition to traditional digital tools, which are mostly used to execute, generative AI is actively involved in content creation by generating images, styles and compositions based on

algorithmic learning. The swift proliferation of AI image-generation software has radically changed the very idea of visual content, its creation, and distribution.

Social media, such as Instagram, Behance, and ArtStation, have become the major locations of the spread of AI-assisted artworks. These platforms do not only demonstrate creative output but also have an aesthetic direction due to algorithmic visibility and interaction with audiences. The increased visibility of AI-made visuals undermines the established ideas of creativity, originality, and authorship.

Although generative AI makes creative production more democratic through the reduction of technological barriers, it simultaneously brings up the issue of aesthetical homogenization and artistic individuality dilution. The current paper is expected to explore the impact of generative AI tools on visual creativity in social media contexts and the bargaining of authorship in AI-inspired artistic activities.

Conceptual Background & Theoretical Framework

The modern digital age is becoming more conceptualized as a socio-technical process that is mediated by technologies and cultural platforms. The Generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems questions conservative human-written definitions of creativity in generating visually creative output through the various mechanisms of algorithms. According to the theory of computational creativity, AI systems introduce creativity as a result of combinatorial processes, not as a result of deliberate originality.

The theory of human-machine collaboration presents an effective way of interpreting AI-assisted creativity. Instead of working autonomously, generative AI technologies are more of joint partners that are directed by human cues, filtering software, and narrowing algorithms. This agency of the collective highlights the fact that human judgment is still important in creative production.

The platform theory also explains the fact that social media algorithms can influence creative practices. Social Media enthusiasm on visual stimulating content is more likely to motivate creators to use AI to create algorithm-supporting appeals. Combined, these theoretical models describe the relationship between technology, creativeness, and platforms in digital artistry artificial intelligence.

Review of Literature

Artificial Intelligence and Creativity

The issue of artificial intelligence and creativity has been debatable among scholars over the past few decades. The initial debates on machine creativity were concerned with the issue of whether computational systems could be rightfully termed creative or they were just simulating creativity. Odens (2016) defines the concept of creativity in computational systems as the ability to generate outputs which human observers consider novel and useful. She classifies creativity into combinational creativity, exploratory creativity, and transformational creativity and contends that creativity that is mostly involved in artificial intelligence involves combinational creativity, whereby AI is used to rearrange already existing elements in new ways.

Even though AI remains an artificial invention, it is not conscious or experiencing emotionality, and its ability to produce new and novel outputs is a challenge to the conventional human-coded definitions of creativity. According to recent research, the viewers tend to assess creative products not by their identity of the author but by their aesthetic value, which erases the boundaries between art created by a human and a machine (Elgammal et al., 2017). This change has immense implications on the conceptualization of creativity in digital space.

Generative AI and Visual Art Practices

Visual arts have been one of the areas that have been influenced by generative AI, especially significantly. DALL·E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion are tools based on deep learning, which can be used to create images using textual prompts. The systems are trained on large volumes of data which contain millions of images, and they therefore learn visual patterns, styles and composition patterns. Therefore, in seconds, generative AI is able to create very detailed and aesthetically advanced paintings.

Elgammal et al. (2017) presented the idea of Creative Adversarial Networks (CAN), which proved that the AI systems could produce the works that do not follow the existing styles but still have aesthetic unity. They propose that AI-created art pieces are commonly viewed as the same as art created by a human in terms of creativity and aesthetic worth. Nevertheless, researchers warn that these types of systems are mostly based on preexisting data, which casts doubts on novelty and production independence (Hertzmann, 2018).

Human–Machine Collaboration in Creative Processes

The greater literature incorporates more into the cooperative aspect of AI-aided creativity. One of the arguments made by researchers is that AI can serve as a replacement to human creativity instead of treating it as an independent creator. AI can be a creative companion of humans. Hertzmann (2018) claims that AI tools are to be perceived as extensions of human creativity, and artists are in charge of the conceptual direction, choice, and refinement.

Research pertaining to digital arts and its practices admits that artists regularly have an iterative process with AI systems refining prompts and editing outputs manually to fit their creative vision (McCosker and Wilken, 2021). The given collaborative approach emphasizes the role of human agency in AI-assisted art and dispels the narratives that depict AI as a substitute of human artists.

Social Media Platforms and Digital Creativity

Social media sites are essential in influencing the modern creative trends. Social media platforms like Instagram and Behance are acting as exhibition spaces and cultural mediators, thus, affecting the trend of aesthetics and creative standards. Manovich (2020) claims that cultural values such as software tools and algorithms used in platforms become part of artistic creation and lead to the homogenization of visual aesthetics.

It has been shown that algorithmic recommendation systems favor eye-catching and trend-affiliated content, which the creators are encouraged to adjust their styles to (McCosker and Wilken, 2021). In this regard, generative AI applications give an artist a platform to generate visually optimized content in line with platform-based aesthetics, thus supporting specific visual patterns.

The Emergence of Algorithmic and AI Aesthetics

There are a number of scholars that have studied the development of algorithmic aesthetics in digital art. Visual styles that are determined by computational processes and software constraints are called algorithmic aesthetics. This aesthetics have become dominant with the emergence of generative AI. Some of the characteristics of AI generated digital artifacts include hyperrealism, symmetry, surreal imagery and so forth as a reflection of the training datasets and model architectures etc.

According to Manovich (2020), such standardization is a consequence of software culture, where tools define the creative opportunities. Even though algorithmic aesthetics are capable of making images more attractive, they also lead to the feeling of homogenization and the disappearance of creativity. This conflict has been especially noticeable in the social media space, as comparable AI-generated fashions start to spread like wildfire.

Authorship, Originality, and Ethical Concerns

The use of generative artificial intelligence in the creative generation has elicited a lot of ethical arguments around authorship and ownership. As Floridi et al. (2018) argue, AI-based content breaks the legal and ethical norms because the traditional ideas of authorship are based on the volition and responsibility of humans. In the cases when creative outputs are the result of algorithmic processes, the demarcation of responsibility is complex and many-sided.

There are also concerns among scholars about the use of data and intellectual property since AI systems are trained using existing works without the consent of the original creators. The issues highlighted by these concerns highlight the need to have ethical principles and policy frameworks that will govern AI-aided creativity in the arts.

Research Gap Identified

In spite of the abundance of literature on the subject of artificial intelligence, creativity, and digital art, there is, nevertheless, a definite lack of empirical qualitative studies on the topic of AI-generated visual content on the social media platform. These days, scholarly work is more of theoretical expositions or controlled experimental realities, than real creative practices. This paper aims to fill this gap by using qualitative content analysis on AI-assisted digital artworks shared on social media, which will offer a contextualised view of how the generative AI influences visual creativity, aesthetic trend, and authorship ideas.

Research Gap & Objectives

With the rapid development of such a phenomenon as generative artificial intelligence, an extensive academic interest in the use of AI in creative industries has begun, especially in the areas of visual art and in digital media. The theoretical debates around computational creativity, ethical issues surrounding the use of AI-generated content, and the experimental analysis of how the audience will react to the machine-generated art objects have been discussed at length in existing literature. Although these publications provide useful conceptual information, some of their key gaps are not addressed, especially in the framework of actual creative practices in social media.

To begin with, a lot of the available literature on AI and creativity is performed in controlled or experimental settings, focused on individual AI systems or artworks created in a laboratory. These recidivist ways of approaching have a habit of failing to capture the use of generative AI tools by creators in daily digital milieus. The active and interactive quality of social media platforms, in which artworks are disseminated, received and processed by various audiences, is an under researched issue in empirical studies.

Secondly, there is a lack of qualitative studies that synthetically study visual features of AI-generated or AI-assisted works of art spread on social media. Although researchers are ready to accept the production of algorithmic or AI-making aesthetics, the analysis of such tendencies has few investigations using systematic qualitative methods, including content analysis. Therefore, the aesthetic norms, common patterns, and visual idioms related to the generative AI are still underrepresented in the scholarly literature.

Thirdly, the current literature is inclined to focus on technological possibilities or ethical issues of AI without giving sufficient attention to the human agency of inventive activity. The degree to which artists affect AI-generated outputs via timely design, choices, editing, and conceptualizing is rarely leveraged at the in-depth level. This weakness impedes a holistic approach to the allocation of creativity between human creators and AI systems.

Lastly, there is also an apparent gap in the research on the impacts of the use of generative AI tools on perceptions of creativity, originality, and authorship among digital makers. With AI-created images taking over a bigger space on social media, the conventional ideas of authorship and originality in art are brought into doubt. However, there is little empirical evidence that studies these changing perceptions in the context of real-world creative communities.

Considering these gaps, there is an urgent desire to conduct qualitative and context-specific studies that challenge AI-mediated digital artworks in the context of social media. Such gaps can be filled to help create a more complex picture of generative AI redefining creative practices, visual culture, and conceptualisations of creativity in the digital era.

Objectives

1. To analyse the visual tendencies in the works of art supported by AI.
2. To examine the issue of human-machine collaboration.
3. To investigate the changing attitudes to creativity and authorship.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The current research will take a qualitative approach as its research design to explore how generative artificial intelligence affects visual creativity within the social media setting. The qualitative approach is chosen due to the fact that it enables a detailed explanation of meanings, trends, and creative processes that pertain to AI-assisted digital art pieces.

Research Questions

The research questions directing the study are as follows:

- **RQ1:** What visual trends and aesthetic features can be observed in digital artworks created with the help of AI and shared on social media?
- **RQ2:** How do human creators engage with generative AI tools in the process of making digital art?
- **RQ3:** What is the effect of the use of generative AI on the perception of creativity and authorship in digital art?

These are exploratory research questions that are quite appropriate in a qualitative study based on content analysis.

Universe of the Study

The study universe is the AI-generative and AI-assisted digital artworks posted on visual social media websites. These platforms are among the key spaces of modern digital creativity and offer the access to a wide range of artistic expressions that are influenced by tools of generative AI.

Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling method was used to find twenty AI-enhanced digital artworks published through Instagram, Behance, and ArtStation. The selection algorithm required them to explicitly recognize the role of AI and publicly verify the accessibility of the material. The choice of these digital platforms was due to their established importance in the presentation of digital and AI-based creative works.

Sampling frame — the following criteria operationalised the sampling frame:

- The artist should clearly identify the piece of work as an AI-generated or AI-assisted artwork.
- The art has to be made accessible to the public on the platform.
- It has to be mainly a text of visual creativity as opposed to a commercial or promotion text.
- The art piece has to prove the visible use of generative AI applications.

The artworks were obtained on the basis of the following sources: Instagram (AI-generated art and digital images created with the use of AI tools), Behance (an AI-based digital art page), and ArtStation (digital works created by artificial intelligence and their hybrid forms). These platforms were chosen because of their credibility, popularity among the digital artists and because of their relevancy to visual creativity.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research was based on secondary information which was retrieved through social media posts posted publicly. A detailed coding system was developed to consider visual aesthetic, technological markers and creative will. The data was subjected to a thematic analysis so as to reveal repetitive patterns and meanings to the research questions.

The major sources of secondary data included: Hashtags on the Instagram AI Page, Behance AI Art Projects, and ArtStation AI Generated Artworks. These sources make up internationally recognised platforms which contain authentic, creator-attributed digital artworks, which means the reliability and credibility of the dataset.

Ethical Considerations

All the analysed material was publicly available, and no personal or confidential data were used. The identities of the creators were anonymous, thus maintaining ethics of compliance in the use of secondary data.

Findings & Discussion

The qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of the twenty AI-assisted digital artworks published on Instagram, Behance, and ArtStation were analysed. The analytical interest was in the determination of the visual patterns, creative processes and descriptions of authorship that were visible in the visual contents as well as the textual descriptions.

Visual Patterns and Aesthetic Characteristics

One of the interesting observations of the analysis was that certain visual features were repeated in several art works such as hyper realistic surfaces, very detailed image, surreal or dreamlike scenes, symmetrical compositions and bright colour bands. The artworks had a significant degree of stylistic similarity even though they were created by different people and were showcased on different platforms.

These repetitive elements imply the creation of a familiar AI-based aesthetics in digital art created with the help of generative AI tools. The predictability of the visual styles also implies that algorithmic procedures and training samples have a significant impact on creative works. Although these images can be said to be highly eye-catching and technically advanced, their resemblance leads to some form of aesthetic standardization in AI-based creativity.

On the whole, the data analysis provides three important insights: the development of a specific visual style of AI; intense indications of human-machine collaboration in creative manufacturing; and changing conceptualizations of creativity and authorship in digital art. All of these facts indicate that new AI-based generative tools are transforming the visual creativity of social media platforms.

Human–Machine Collaboration in Creative Processes

The examination has also shown that AI-generated artworks were actively manipulated by human creators. Citations are most commonly generated using referred prompt creation, iterative generation, selection of preferred outputs and hand post-processing. This means that AI tools should be seen as creative facilitators, and not creative agents. The conceptual framing of artworks and the refinement of AI-generated images was evidently done by humans. The results emphasize an equally effective creative procedure where the human imagination works along with the machine computation. This reinforces the sense of creativity as a collective experiment of humans and technological machines.

Creativity and Authorship in AI-Assisted Art

One more important conclusion is related to the changing attitudes to creativity and authorship. Numerous creators made it clear that they used AI tools but at the same time became sure of their creative input. The use of the terms AI-assisted, co-created, and experimenting with AI was a common denomination of the idea of authorship. Through the analysis, creators do not view AI-generated art as an underminer of human creativity. Instead, AI is considered to be something that opens the range of creativity without limiting it, and human control and intent are preserved. The trend is possibly reflecting a larger cultural tolerance to hybrid creative activities in digital space.

Conclusion, Limitations & Future Scope

Generative AI technologies are reshaping the digital arts through facilitating human and machine creativity in digital art. Despite the introduction of aesthetic standardisation, human creative judgement is at the centre of AI. This research provides empirical information to media studies and highlights the need to conduct research on the issue of audience reception and ethics in the future.

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