

Human Emotional Responses to Man-made art and AI Art: An Overview

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Abstract:

This overview examines how individuals emotionally respond to art produced by both humans and artificial intelligence (AI). It investigates perceptions of creativity and authenticity in each type of art and how these concepts influence people's emotions and interpretations. Findings indicate that AI-generated art often evokes curiosity and awe due to its technology and design. In contrast, human-made art tends to resonate more deeply with viewers, fostering stronger emotional connections and a sense of significance. The study also reveals that knowledge of whether an artwork was created by a human or a machine alters people's feelings about it. Overall, the findings suggest that while AI can produce remarkable and aesthetically pleasing art, true emotional depth and meaning are rooted in human experiences.

Keywords: Human Emotions, Artificial Intelligence, Art and Human Emotions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Think back to the last time a piece of art truly moved you. Perhaps it was a painting that brought a sense of calm, a song that revived a forgotten memory, or a photograph that stirred a quiet sense of hope. For centuries, art has been one of the most profound ways humans have expressed their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Each brushstroke, lyric, or captured image carries the imprint of its creator's feelings and intentions. As viewers, we connect not only to the artwork itself but also to the human story behind it—the mind and heart that shaped it.

However, in today's world, this deep human connection is being redefined. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced a new kind of creator—one that has no emotions, memories, or lived experiences, yet can produce paintings, melodies, and poems that seem to touch our hearts. With just a short description, such as 'a lonely robot in the rain,' AI systems can generate visuals that are often breathtaking, surreal, or even emotionally charged.

This development leads to an essential question: How do we, as emotional beings, respond to art when the artist is not human? Do we feel the same depth of emotion toward AI-created works as we do toward human-made ones? Many people find AI art visually impressive, yet describe it as lacking warmth or authenticity—the emotional resonance that comes from genuine human experience. Human-created art often carries a sense of purpose, vulnerability, and individuality, while AI art can appear striking but strangely impersonal.

Exploring these differences allows us to understand more than just technology; it invites us to reflect on the very essence of creativity and emotional connection. By examining how people emotionally respond to both human and AI-generated art, we uncover not only our perceptions of authenticity and meaning but also what it truly means to feel, create, and connect through art in an age where machines can imitate imagination.

In the study *AI-Assisted Artistic Creation: Emotional Expression and Ethical Considerations*, Ho (2025)^[10] investigated the growing role of artificial intelligence in artistic creation, emphasizing how technology influences emotional communication and raises ethical concerns in contemporary art. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and visual content analyses of AI-generated and human-created artworks. Results indicated that although AI-generated artworks can elicit curiosity, admiration, and interest, they are often perceived as less authentic and emotionally compelling than human-made pieces. Ho attributed this limitation to AI's lack of lived experience and cultural understanding, which are essential for emotional depth in art. The study further revealed ethical challenges such as bias in algorithmic training data, ambiguity in authorship, and the need for transparency regarding AI's involvement in creative processes. Ho proposed that AI should act as a collaborator that enhances human creativity rather than replacing it. The author concluded by emphasizing the need for strong ethical frameworks to ensure fairness, transparency, and acknowledgment of both human and machine contributions in artistic creation. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of maintaining human agency and emotional authenticity as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into creative and cultural practices (Ho, 2025).

Demmer, Kühnappel, Fingerhut, and Pelowski (2023)^[5] conducted an experimental study to examine whether individuals can form an emotional connection to artworks generated by artificial intelligence (AI), and how such responses compare to human-created art. Their research, published in *Computers in Human Behaviour*, investigated the extent to which emotional arousal and perceived intentionality depend on the origin of the artwork. The study employed a 2×2 factorial design with 48 participants who viewed a series of abstract black-and-white artworks. Each participant was informed—sometimes correctly, sometimes falsely—whether the artworks were created by a human or a computer algorithm. The findings revealed that participants experienced emotions and attributed intention to the artworks regardless of whether they were told they were made by a human or a computer. However, emotional intensity and engagement were significantly higher for artworks genuinely produced by humans. This indicates that emotional connection does not necessarily require human authorship, though people still perceive human works as more expressive and meaningful. The authors discussed that humans' aesthetic engagement is influenced by both visual properties and perceived intentionality of the creator, highlighting an enduring bias toward human creative agency even in the age of AI-generated art.

Bellaiche, Shahi, Turpin, Ragnhildstveit, Sprockett, Barr, Christensen, and Seli (2023)^[3] investigated whether people prefer human-created art over AI-generated art, and what psychological mechanisms underpin this preference. Published in *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, this research sought to determine the role of attitudes toward AI and perceived intentionality in shaping aesthetic evaluations. Participants were presented with artworks accompanied by labels indicating either 'human-created' or 'AI-created,' and they rated each on qualities such as beauty, profundity, and worth. The study found a clear preference for human-labelled artworks, even when the images themselves were visually identical to those said to be AI-generated. Participants' positive attitudes toward AI moderated this effect, reducing but not eliminating the preference gap. The authors argued that people's appreciation of art

involves not only aesthetic judgment but also social cognition—specifically, the belief that a human creator conveys meaning, intention, and emotional expression. Consequently, AI art is often perceived as lacking depth or communicative purpose, despite equivalent technical quality. The study contributes to understanding how human biases influence judgments of creativity and how societal acceptance of AI as an artist is still evolving.

Chen and Ibrahim (2023)^[4] provided a comprehensive theoretical exploration of emotional responses within AI-enhanced interactive installation art. Published in *Sustainability*, their review synthesized existing research from fields such as affective computing, emotion recognition, interaction design, and digital art. The authors aimed to establish a conceptual framework that explains how artificial intelligence technologies—such as machine learning, emotion detection, and adaptive interaction—can be integrated into installation art to enhance audience engagement and emotional experience. Their model identifies key determinants of emotional response, including sensory stimulation, multi-dimensional interactivity, and user engagement. Chen and Ibrahim propose that these factors interact dynamically to produce meaningful emotional exchanges between humans and AI-augmented environments. They also discuss the sustainability implications of AI-driven art practices, emphasizing the need for ethical and human-centered design principles. Overall, the paper bridges psychology, art theory, and technology studies by offering a roadmap for future empirical research on how AI can augment, rather than replace, human emotional creativity in the artistic domain.

Agudo et al. (2022^[1]) explored how the perceived authorship of an artwork—whether attributed to a human or an artificial intelligence system—influences the emotional and evaluative responses of viewers. Published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, the study investigated participants' judgments of sensitivity, emotionality, and artistic quality toward a range of artworks. Participants viewed identical pieces that were labelled differently (AI-created or human-created) and were asked to rate them across emotional and qualitative dimensions. Results showed that artworks believed to be AI-generated were rated significantly lower in emotional sensitivity, expressive depth, and overall quality than those attributed to human artists. The authors suggest that people hold implicit biases associating emotional depth and aesthetic worth with human creativity. This outcome highlights that the 'label effect' or knowledge of an artwork's origin has a substantial impact on emotional engagement and value perception. Even though AI systems can mimic visual styles, people seem to require a sense of human agency and intentionality to experience emotional resonance. The study offers valuable insights into how social cognition and attribution processes shape our experience of art in human–AI interactions.

1.1 What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a domain within computer science focused on developing machines and software that can carry out tasks typically requiring human intelligence.

To illustrate, a traditional computer program functions like a recipe. The programmer provides a specific, sequential list of instructions: 'If this occurs, then do that.' It can only perform exactly as directed.

In contrast, AI operates differently. Instead of issuing commands, we present it with examples, allowing it to discern patterns and establish rules on its own. It resembles teaching a child what constitutes a 'dog.' Instead of providing them with a textbook definition, you show them numerous images of dogs and say, 'This is a dog.' Over time, the child's mind grasps the patterns (four legs, fur, a snout) and can recognize a dog they've never encountered before. AI operates in a comparable manner.

1.2 What Are the Essentials for AI Learning?

To enable learning in AI, there are three fundamental components required:

Data: This serves as the “reference material” or the collection of instances. This data can consist of anything, such as millions of images or the complete collection of articles found on Wikipedia. A vast array of music, or—importantly for our discussion—a large compilation of paintings, sketches, and digital artworks spanning history and the internet.

A Model: This represents the ‘mind’ of the AI. It is an intricate mathematical formula crafted to identify patterns within the data it receives. It starts as a clean slate.

Training: This refers to the “educational process.” The AI model analyzes the extensive data, searching for prevalent patterns, links, and associations.

For instance, in an art dataset, it might discover that the term “sunset” is statistically associated with visuals featuring the hues orange, red, and purple; a bright circular shape positioned near a horizontal line; and dark outlines of trees or structures.

1.2.1 A Specific Type of AI: The ‘Generative’ Model

The AI technologies responsible for art creation belong to a specific category known as Generative AI. Their primary function is to produce new, original content—such as images, music, or text—that did not previously exist.

The predominant technology utilized for AI artwork is referred to as a diffusion model (which powers DALL-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion). Here’s a straightforward way to comprehend its operation:

The ‘Messy Room Analog’: Picture taking a clear, detailed image and then progressively introducing digital ‘noise’—random pixels, static, and fuzz—until the original picture is entirely obscured and resembles a chaotic, grey, snowy television screen.

The ‘Cleaning’ Method: The AI learns this procedure by being shown it countless times. It figures out how to reverse it. So, you present the AI with a screen filled with static and request, ‘Transform this into an image of a corgi dog wearing a beret.’

Utilizing Patterns for Creation: The AI taps into all the patterns it has derived from its training data (what ‘corgis,’ ‘berets,’ and ‘dog faces’ appear like from millions of pictures) to intelligently eliminate the noise and form the static into that new image. Essentially, it is making a well-informed guess, pixel by pixel.

The Essential Point: AI Compared to Human Intelligence It’s important to recognize what AI is not: It lacks consciousness. The AI has no thoughts, emotions, desires, or awareness. It doesn’t ‘grasp’ beauty or sadness the same way we do.

It has no Intent. It doesn’t seek to convey an emotion. When you request a ‘sad painting,’ it doesn’t experience sadness. It simply understands that, based on its data, images categorized as “sad” frequently feature specific colours (blues, greys), layouts (a solitary figure, rainy conditions), and themes.

It acts as a pattern-reflecting entity. In many ways, AI-generated art acts as a reflective surface showcasing the extensive dataset it was trained on. It reveals the patterns, styles, and concepts that are most prevalent in art created by humans. Its creative output is a form of recombination and remixing of pre-existing human ideas.

1.3. The Prevalence of AI:

To genuinely grasp our emotional responses to AI-generated art, we must first acknowledge that it doesn’t emerge in isolation. It enters a landscape where Artificial Intelligence is already intricately integrated into

our everyday lives. This pervasive presence of AI influences how we embrace, reject, or perceive its artistic outputs.

1.3.1. AI is Already Part of Our Everyday Lives

Long before AI ventured into art, it was present around us in often unnoticed ways. This has unconsciously shaped our expectations and comfort with technology.

The Social Media Curator: The algorithms that determine what content you encounter on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube are all driven by AI. They adapt to your preferences to display material that keeps you engaged. You are already forging a connection with an AI that strives to comprehend your emotions and likes.

The Digital Assistant: When you pose a question to Siri, receive a product suggestion from Amazon, or utilize Google Maps to discover the quickest way home, you are engaging with AI.

The content Recommender: Streaming platforms such as Netflix and Spotify employ advanced AI to evaluate your viewing and listening patterns to recommend your next favorite series or song.

Why this is significant for AI art: Since we are already accustomed to assigning tasks to AI and accepting its recommendations, the concept of it creating a piece of content—be it a playlist or a work of art—seems like a rational, albeit more evolved, progression. Our comfort (or lack thereof) with these everyday AIs lays the groundwork for our response to AI-generated art.² **The ‘Automation’ Mindset Compared to the ‘Creation’ Mindset**

This is an important distinction. We are used to having AI handle tasks:

Handling Calculations: Excel functions take care of math.

Handling Manufacturing: Robots execute assembly line operations.

Handling Choices: AI decides which movie to suggest next.

We find comfort in this because we perceive AI as an efficiency tool. It manages repetitive, tedious, or data-heavy tasks.

AI-generated art challenges this expectation. Art is not typically something to be automated. It is regarded as the apex of human creativity, emotion, and expression—the complete antithesis of mechanical, repetitive tasks.

Why this is significant for AI art: This conflict generates a profound tension. Our minds, trained to see AI as a useful but emotionless automator, must now reconcile it as a ‘creator.’ This is why many individuals experience feelings of unease, awe, or even a sense of betrayal. It seems as if AI has transcended a boundary, shifting from task execution to encroaching on a cherished human domain. This emotional struggle is directly influenced by the widespread presence of AI in the more mundane areas of our lives.

1.3.2. The Acceptance of Human-AI Collaboration

In numerous sectors, cooperation between humans and AI is becoming increasingly standard.

Healthcare professionals leverage AI to examine medical imaging for early disease detection.

Authors utilize AI applications like Grammarly for editing and recommendations.

Designers rely on AI to quickly produce multiple layout alternatives. In these situations, humans remain the authorities, the decision-makers, and those with intention. The AI serves as a robust assistant.

Why this is significant for AI-generated art: This shapes how we typically engage with AI art tools. Numerous individuals view themselves not as ‘users’ but as ‘directors’ or ‘collaborators.’ The emotional bond to the final image is not solely tied to the AI’s output; it connects to their own concept, their refinement of the prompt, and their selection process. The widespread acceptance of AI collaboration in

other sectors facilitates the acceptance of this model in art, leading to a more favourable and invested emotional response.

In these scenarios, the human remains the specialist, the one who makes decisions, and the individual with purpose. The AI serves as a valuable support.

Why this is significant for AI art: This shapes how we typically engage with AI art tools. Many individuals perceive themselves not as ‘users’ but as ‘directors’ or ‘collaborators.’ The emotional bond to the final artwork is not just tied to the AI’s output; it is connected to their own concept, their refinement of the prompt, and their curatorial choices. The widespread acceptance of AI collaboration in various fields makes this model more easily embraced in art, resulting in a more positive and invested emotional response.

1.4. Human Emotions:

An emotion encompasses a complex, holistic experience. It involves not just a thought in your mind; it is also a physical and psychological reaction to a stimulus—this could be an event, a recollection, or, notably, a work of art.

Consider emotion as your brain’s immediate, automatic assessment of whether something is beneficial or detrimental for you and how you should respond. It acts as a survival mechanism that aids us in navigating life.

1.4.1. The Three Components of an Emotional Experience

When you experience an emotion, it is actually a blend of three occurrences happening simultaneously:

1. The Subjective Feeling (The ‘What’)

This refers to the personal, internal sensation of the emotion itself—the name you assign to it. Examples: Joy, sorrow, anxiety, repulsion, astonishment, rage, wonder, reminiscence, disdain.

In the context of AI-generated art: This includes the ‘Wow, that’s stunning!’ (wonder) or the ‘Hmm, that seems unsettling’ (discomfort) you experience when observing an artwork.

2. The Physical Reaction (The ‘Body’)

This refers to how your body reacts physically to the emotion, which is primarily regulated by your autonomic nervous system (responsible for involuntary functions such as heartbeat).

Examples: Fear/Awe: Increased heart rate, tensed muscles, dilated pupils.

Disgust: A sensation of nausea and a visceral feeling of aversion.

Happiness/Joy: The release of pleasure-inducing chemicals like dopamine and serotonin, resulting in a sense of warmth or relaxation.

In the context of AI-generated art: That sharp intake of breath when an AI creates a stunning landscape is a physical reaction. The slight shiver or goosebumps from an eerie image exemplify this as well.

3. The Expressive Behaviour (The ‘Action’)

This reflects how you convey the emotion, either intentionally or instinctively.

Examples: Facial Expressions: Grinning, scowling, widening your eyes in astonishment.

Vocalizations: Gasping, exhaling deeply, laughing.

Body Language: Moving closer to something attractive, pulling back from something unsettling.

Actions: Sending the image to a friend, turning away from the display, writing a response.

In the Context of AI Art: Saving an AI-generated image to your device is an expressive action fueled by positive feelings. Similarly, quickly scrolling past an image that makes you uneasy is a response driven by discomfort.

Emotions are not merely arbitrary sensations; they have vital roles:

Motivation: Emotions drive us to take action. Discomfort encourages us to alter a situation. Curiosity inspires us to discover. This is vital for AI art—the sensation of amazement propels us to create more visuals.

Communication: Our emotional displays (such as smiling or crying) convey our internal feelings to others, facilitating social connections and garnering support.

Decision-Making: Emotions play a crucial role in our choices. Individuals with damage to their brain's emotional centers often find it difficult to make even basic decisions because they don't have a 'gut feeling' regarding what is best.

1.5. Psychological theories regarding human emotions:

1.5.1. The James-Lange Theory: Physiological Response Comes First

William James and Carl Lange – 1884

Main Idea: This theory suggests that our experience of emotions directly stems from our bodily reactions. We do not weep due to sadness; rather, we feel sad because we cry. The sequence is as follows:

Stimulus: We encounter something (e.g., a bear). **Bodily Reaction:** Our heart races, we run.

Emotion: Our brain interprets this physical reaction as fear.

Connection to AI Art:

An AI-generated image might be so visually overwhelming or unsettling that it triggers a direct physical response—a gasp, goosebumps, a feeling of unease in the stomach. According to James-Lange, your brain then interprets that physical reaction as an

Emotion: 'I have goosebumps, therefore this art is awe-inspiring' or 'My stomach feels uneasy, therefore this art is creepy.' The emotion follows the body's reaction.

1.5.2. The Cannon-Bard Theory: Body and Emotion Simultaneously

Walter Cannon and Philip Bard – 1927

Core Idea: Walter Cannon and Philip Bard argued that the physiological response and the subjective experience of emotion occur at the same time, but independently. One does not cause the other. They are both triggered simultaneously by a signal from the brain's thalamus.

Stimulus: We see something (e.g., a bear).

Brain Thalamus Activation: The thalamus sends two signals at once.

Simultaneous Result: The body prepares to run (heart races) and the mind experiences the feeling of fear.

Connection to AI Art:

When you see an AI image, the visual information is processed, and your brain triggers both the feeling and the physical reaction instantly and separately. You don't need to feel your heart race first to know.

Bodily Response: Our pulse quickens, and we flee.

Emotion: Our mind interprets this physical response as fear.

Relation to AI Art: An AI-generated picture may be so visually striking or disturbing that it evokes an immediate bodily reaction—such as a gasp, chills, or a sensation of discomfort in the stomach. According to James-Lange, your mind then perceives that physical reaction as an emotion: 'I have chills, so this art is awe-inspiring' or 'My stomach feels uneasy, so this art is creepy.' The emotional response follows the body's reaction.

1.5.3. The Schachter-Singer Two-Factor Theory: Cognition and Emotion

Stanley Schachter and Jerome E. Singer – 1962

Key Concept: This theory is particularly relevant for AI-generated art. Schachter and Singer suggested that emotions require two components:

Physiological Arousal: Initially, you have a general, unspecific physical response (e.g., your heart rate increases).

Cognitive Label: Subsequently, your mind quickly assesses the situation to identify a reason for this arousal and assigns a label to it. The same physical reaction could be interpreted as fear or excitement based on the context.

Example: If your heart races on a rollercoaster, you might interpret it as ‘excitement.’ If your heart races while walking through a dark alley, you might perceive it as ‘fear.’

Relation to AI Art: This theory effectively clarifies the tension caused by AI art.

Arousal: You observe a breathtaking AI-created landscape. Your heart quickens; you experience physiological arousal.

The Labelling Dilemma: Your mind attempts to categorize this arousal.

Without Context: You may simply designate it as ‘awe’ or ‘beauty.’

With Context (Realizing it’s AI): Your mind now faces a conflicting situation. It may reassess the arousal and categorize it as ‘fascination with technology’ or perhaps ‘discomfort due to its artificial nature.’ This is the origin of the ‘emptiness’—the cognitive label detracts from the unadulterated emotional experience.

1.5.4. Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus): Thought is Paramount

Richard Lazarus – 1966

Fundamental Concept: Richard Lazarus posited that a cognitive evaluation (appraisal) must precede any emotional or physiological reaction. We initially unconsciously evaluate whether a stimulus is (a) pertinent to our welfare and (b) positive or negative. Our emotional reaction is entirely contingent on this evaluation.

Primary Appraisal: ‘Is this beneficial or harmful to me?’

Secondary Appraisal: ‘What actions can I take? What resources do I have?’

Relevance to AI Art: This is highly pertinent.

Your emotional reaction to an AI-generated image is contingent upon your subconscious appraisal of it.

If you view it as ‘harmless and beautiful’ → you experience joy or awe.

If you see it as a ‘threat to human creativity’ or ‘misleading’ → you feel anger, fear, or disgust.

If you regard it as ‘irrelevant to me’ → you respond with indifference.

This theory clarifies why two individuals can have entirely different emotional responses to the same AI image—their personal interpretations of its significance and threat vary.

1.6. Human Emotions and AI Art:

Consider how you feel when you encounter a painting that resonates with you. It might evoke happiness, tranquillity, or even sadness. Those emotions are genuine and impactful. Next, let’s analyze why AI-generated art stirs feelings within us and why those feelings can be intricate.

1.6.1. Your Initial Gut Reaction (Prior to Thought)

This represents your immediate response. Your brain perceives the image and experiences an emotion before you even have the chance to reflect on it.

Wow! That’s Stunning! AI excels at creating beautiful, dreamlike images—vibrant sunsets, fantastical beings, grand scenes. Your eyes observe something delightful, prompting your brain to release a small burst of happiness. It’s a straightforward, positive sensation.

That's Strange... At times, AI produces images that appear nearly flawless, yet there's something slightly 'off.' A hand could have six fingers, or a smile may come across as unsettling. This evokes a peculiar, uneasy feeling. It's as if your brain is signalling, 'I don't trust this.'

The Essential Point: At this stage, the artist's identity is irrelevant. Your brain is merely reacting to the visual stimuli.

1.6.2. The Impact of Discovering a Machine Created It

This is where things become intricate. The moment you discover the art was generated by AI, your analytical mind engages, altering your feelings.

The 'Hollow' Sensation: Picture receiving a beautifully handwritten birthday card. It feels meaningful because you understand someone invested time and consideration into it. Now, visualize realizing that the card was, in fact, produced by a machine. While it may still appear nice, it feels less special. Meaningful. That's how many individuals perceive AI art. Understanding that there is no human sentiment behind it can render the art feel empty or less significant.

The 'Wow, Technology!' Feeling: Conversely, you might find yourself in awe. You could think, 'A computer produced that? That's astounding!' The sentiment isn't primarily about the artwork itself anymore—it's about being amazed by human innovation and technology.

1.6.3. How It Affects Our Self-Perception

This represents the most profound level. AI art doesn't merely stir feelings about the image; it evokes emotions regarding our humanity.

Fear: It can be daunting. If a machine is capable of creating art—something we believed to be uniquely human—what implications does that have for us? Individuals who are passionate about art might feel anxious that their craft is being eclipsed by machines.

Excitement: For those who lack the skills to draw or paint, AI can be thrilling. It enables them to input an idea and witness it come to fruition. They experience the joy of creating something for the first time.

1.7. Human Response to Art:

Human response to art is deep, intricate, and profoundly personal. It connects with every aspect of our existence—our senses, emotions, intellect, and spirit. These reactions extend beyond simply 'liking' or "disliking" something; they foster a dialogue between the observer and the artwork.

This response can be categorized into various interconnected levels:

1.7.1. The Sensory Response: The 'Gut Response'

This is the most immediate and instinctual layer of reaction. It concerns how the artwork feels to experience physically.

What it is: The direct, visceral effect of the art on your senses. It's the reaction that occurs before your mind has the chance to analyze or interpret.

Examples:

Visual Art: Being mesmerized by the vivid colours in a Van Gogh artwork, feeling tranquillity from the soft, blended blues in a Monet water lily painting, or feeling overwhelmed by the vastness of a large mural.

Music: Experiencing chills (frisson) from an intense vocal climax, feeling compelled to move to a rhythmic beat, or feeling tension from a dissonant chord.

Sculpture: Feeling the desire to touch a piece to experience its smooth or rugged texture.

In Simpler Terms: It's the 'Wow!' or 'Whoa...' that spontaneously escapes your mouth before you even consciously think about it.

1.7.2. The Emotional Response: The ‘Heart Response’

This layer is most frequently associated with art. Art is a potent medium for feeling, both the artist’s and our own.

What it is: The emotions and moods the artwork brings forth in you. An artwork can serve as a key, unlocking emotions that we have kept buried.

Examples:

A heart-wrenching play or movie can evoke tears, offering a sense of catharsis (the release of accumulated emotions).

An uplifting, cheerful song can quickly enhance your mood and induce feelings of happiness.

A dark, unsettling artwork may elicit sensations of sadness, anxiety, or wonder.

A nostalgic image can awaken a warm, sentimental yearning for times gone by.

In simpler terms: It’s the art that stirs emotions like sadness, joy, fear, serenity, or strength.

1.7.3. The Intellectual Response: The ‘Head Reaction’

This reaction taps into our curiosity and our need to derive meaning.

What it involves: The act of analyzing, interpreting, and understanding the artwork. What message is the artist conveying? What does it represent? How does it connect to the world or historical context?

Examples:

Interpreting the metaphors and symbols present in a Renaissance artwork.

Examining the social or political implications within a contemporary protest song or a satirical illustration.

Valuing the ingenuity of a conceptual art piece where the idea takes precedence over visual appeal.

Discussing the interpretation of an ambiguous ending in a film with a friend.

In simpler terms: It’s you pondering, ‘What does this signify?’ or ‘What motivated the artist’s choice?’

1.7.4. The Narrative Response: The ‘Story Reaction’

Humans have an innate tendency for storytelling. We frequently engage with art by creating a narrative around it.

What it is: Forming a narrative about the artwork, whether related to its subject or its backstory.

Examples:

Gazing at a portrait and contemplating the life of the individual portrayed. What aspirations did they have? What challenges did they face?

Observing a landscape and envisioning a stroll through it—what would you see, hear, and feel?

Being intrigued by the narrative of the artist’s life and its impact on their creations (e.g., understanding Frida Kahlo’s suffering informs our appreciation of her self-portraits).

In simpler terms: It’s your imagination crafting a story about the art.

1.7.5. The Personal and Associative Response: The ‘Memory Reaction’

This may be the most personal dimension. Our reaction is significantly influenced by our own history and identity.

What it involves: When a work of art resonates because it connects with a particular memory, experience, or facet of your own life.

Examples:

A song that plays during a significant moment in your life (such as a first dance or a road trip) can evoke those specific emotions forever.

A book with a main character who faces similar challenges to yours can create a sense of being understood and less isolated.

Your cultural history, beliefs, and individual preferences will greatly influence how you perceive and relate to a piece of art.

In Simpler Terms: It's the artwork reminding you of experiences from your own life.

1.7.6. The Spiritual or Transcendent Response: The 'Soul Reaction'

This represents the deepest and most indescribable level of response, where art can provide a transformative encounter.

What it is: A sensation of being linked to something greater than oneself—be it humanity, history, nature, or the divine. It's a feeling of awe, wonder, and profound tranquillity.

Examples:

Being in a majestic cathedral or ancient temple and experiencing a sense of smallness and reverence.

Hearing a moving musical composition like Handel's 'Messiah' or Arvo Pärt's 'Spiegel im Spiegel' and feeling uplifted.

Gazing at the night sky in a artwork or photograph and sensing a connection to the vast universe.

In Simpler Terms: It's the artwork taking your breath away and making you feel part of everything.

1.8. Human responses to AI-generated art.

1.8.1. Emotional & Psychological Responses

This refers to the immediate, instinctive reaction to discovering that something was created by artificial intelligence.

Awe & Wonder: Many individuals are astonished by the capabilities of the technology. The reaction tends to be more about the achievement itself: 'A computer made this? That's amazing!'

The 'Uncanny Valley' Effect: This involves feelings of discomfort, eeriness, or even distaste when an AI produces something nearly perfect but with subtle errors (such as a hand with seven fingers or odd-looking hair). It triggers a primal instinct that something feels off.

Disconnection & Hollowness: Upon discovering there is no human creator, some perceive the artwork as lacking depth and significance. The awareness of the absence of intent, struggle, or narrative behind its creation can render it feeling empty or superficial, akin to a beautiful but mass-produced item.

Curiosity & Playfulness: The ability to produce images from text prompts fosters a sense of experimentation. People experience fun and discovery while engaging with the AI to see what unique or extraordinary combinations they can generate.

1.8.2. Creative & Practical Responses

This reflects how individuals are utilizing the technology and incorporating it into their processes.

Democratization of Creation: This is an overwhelmingly positive reaction. Those without technical skills or the time to master traditional art forms can now visualize their concepts. Writers, game masters, bloggers, and entrepreneurs leverage it to create concept art, illustrations, and mood boards, igniting a new wave of creators.

The Rise of the 'Prompt Engineer': A new skill set is gaining importance: the ability to formulate specific, creative, and effective text prompts to direct the AI towards a desired result. This is emerging as a significant form of literacy in its own right.

Augmentation, Not Replacement (for many): A number of professional artists and designers are responding by incorporating AI into their creative tools. They utilize it for:

- Brainstorming & Ideation: Generating quick concepts and variations.
- Overcoming Creative Block: Using unpredicted AI outputs to inspire new ideas.

- Creating Base Layers: Employing an AI-generated image as a starting point or background to then digitally modify and paint over.

1.8.3. Critical & Ethical Responses

This encompasses the intellectual and philosophical reflections on the implications of AI art.

Concerns about Originality & Theft: A significant response from artists involves the assertion that AI models are trained on extensive datasets of existing artwork compensation. This results in claims of high-tech plagiarism and imitation of styles.

Discussions on ‘What is Art?’: AI prompts a reassessment of fundamental issues: Is human intention and emotion necessary for art? If a stunning image is produced by an algorithm utilizing statistical patterns, can it be considered genuine art, or merely a simulation?

Concern About Replacement & Devaluation: There exists a valid concern among professional illustrators, graphic designers, and concept artists that AI will diminish the economic viability of their skills, devalue their creations, and eventually replace human artists in various sectors.

Worries About Misinformation: The capacity to create hyper-realistic images (and videos) amplifies fears regarding ‘deepfakes,’ the dissemination of false information, and the decline of trust in what we observe online.

1.8.4. Socio-Cultural & Economic Reactions

This outlines how society collectively, and distinct groups within it, are responding.

Formation of Communities: Online groups (on platforms like Discord and Reddit) have emerged where individuals exchange prompts, celebrate outputs, and deliberate the ethics of AI-generated art, fostering a new cultural segment.

Disruption of Marketplaces: The art and stock photo industries are already experiencing an influx of AI-created content, sold at a fraction of the cost of human-created art. This situation is prompting market adjustments and discussions about the categorization and valuation of AI-generated works.

Legal and Regulatory Action: Governments and legal frameworks are starting to engage with these issues.

Critical questions under discussion include:

Copyright: Who holds the copyright for an AI-generated image? Is it the user who provided the prompt?

The entity that developed the AI? Or is it part of the public domain?

Labeling: Should regulations be in place that mandate AI-generated content to be distinctly labelled?

1.9. The Impact of AI on Human Beings

Artificial Intelligence is akin to a new, potent tool that is transforming nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Its influence encompasses both remarkable advantages and considerable challenges.

1.9.1. Positive Impacts

Convenience and Personalization: AI fuels recommendations on platforms like Netflix and Spotify, identifies the best routes on Google Maps, and provides responses from Siri or Alexa. It adapts to our habits to enhance our everyday experiences and efficiency. It’s akin to having a personal assistant who understands you well.

Advancements in Crucial Areas: AI acts as an exceptional research companion.

Healthcare: It can examine medical images (such as X-rays and MRIs) to support doctors in detecting diseases like cancer sooner and with greater accuracy than sometimes possible for the human eye.

Science: It aids researchers in modelling climate change, uncovering new materials, and grasping intricate physics issues at speeds unattainable by humans alone.

Automation of Risky or Monotonous Tasks: AI and robots can assume responsibilities that pose dangers to humans (like handling toxic substances) or are repetitive (like sorting goods in a warehouse), allowing individuals to focus on more creative and complex tasks.

1.9.2. Negative Impacts

Employment Displacement and Economic Transition: This represents the most significant concern. AI can automate not only manual jobs but also roles in the ‘knowledge economy,’ such as data analysis, basic graphic design, and even some elements of writing and coding. This can result in job losses and necessitates a reevaluation of education and training for future careers.

Concerns Over Privacy: AI systems rely on data—personal data. They monitor our online activities, purchases, and movements. This raises hazards of endless surveillance and our private information being utilized in ways we have not authorized.

Bias and Inequality: AI learns from existing human data. If that data contains human prejudices (such as racial, gender, or cultural biases), the AI will replicate and magnify those biases. This can generate unjust results, like AI-driven hiring tools favouring specific demographics or law enforcement algorithms targeting particular communities.

Erosion of Human Skills: AI art harnesses the overall influence of AI and directs it towards the deeply personal aspects of creativity and emotion. Its impact is both significant and individual.

1.10. The Impact of AI Art on Human Beings

AI art takes the general impact of AI and focuses it directly on the deeply human realm of creativity and emotion. Its effects are profound and very personal.

1.10.1. Positive Impacts

Democratization of Creativity: This stands out as the most notable advantage. For the first time, everyone—regardless of financial resources, education, or artistic skills—can turn their imagination into reality. All you need is a concept and the words to express it. This becomes a powerful medium for self-expression and storytelling for countless individuals.

Explosion of New Ideas and Styles: AI lacks the creative barriers that humans often encounter. It can merge ideas in unusual, innovative, and inspiring manners (e.g., ‘a cathedral of light, inspired by Van Gogh’). This can act as inspiration for human artists, offering new ideas to investigate and develop further.

Accelerating the Creative Process: Professional artists, designers, and filmmakers can use AI as a high-powered sketch tool to swiftly generate concepts, brainstorm ideas, and develop mood boards. This saves time and enables them to concentrate on refining and executing their best concepts.

1.10.2. Negative Impacts

The Crisis of Meaning and Value: This represents the central emotional effect. Art created by humans is appreciated not only for its aesthetic appeal but also for its narrative, intent, and the artist’s struggles. A child’s artwork is cherished due to the effort and emotion invested in it. For many, AI-generated art feels empty or ‘soulless’ because it lacks that human narrative. This raises fundamental questions about our understanding of art.

Devaluation of Human Artists: If businesses can produce a logo or illustration at no cost in a matter of seconds using AI, why would they pay a human artist a fair wage? This poses a significant economic risk to illustrators, concept artists, and graphic designers, potentially making creative careers seem less sustainable.

Erosion of Technical Skill: The process of learning to draw or paint—filled with its challenges and diligence—instills discipline, problem-solving abilities, and a profound respect for skilled artists. There is concern that skipping this journey might result in a diminished appreciation for the substantial talents needed to create art manually.

Ethical and Legal Confusion: AI art models are developed using millions of existing images, frequently without the original creators' consent. This gives rise to major inquiries:

Is it plagiarism? If an AI generates work in the style of a living artist, is it theft?

Who retains ownership of the artwork? Is it the person who crafted the prompt? The company that produced the AI? This ambiguous legal territory is causing considerable disputes.

1.11. The Emotional Impact of AI Art

Art produced by AI transcends mere visuals; it represents a novel experience that invokes a wide array of human emotions. Its influence on our feelings is multifaceted, presenting exciting new opportunities while also introducing specific challenges.

1.11.1. Positive impacts

1. Feelings of Wonder and Awe

What it is: AI is capable of producing stunning, mind-blowing visuals that surpass human ingenuity—surreal landscapes, complex patterns, and fantastical beings.

Emotional Impact: It stirs a child-like sense of wonder, amazement, and inspiration. The vastness and beauty of its creations can make the world appear more enchanting and filled with possibilities.

1. Empowerment and Joy of Creation

What it is: For those who have always wished to produce art but believed they lacked the necessary skills or training, AI tools serve as an entry point. You can articulate an idea and watch it come to life in moments.

Emotional Impact: This fosters intense feelings of fulfilment, pride, and happiness. It opens up creativity to everyone, allowing anyone to feel the excitement of manifesting an idea from their mind. It can be incredibly empowering and enhance self-worth.

2. Curiosity and Playfulness

What it is: Creating AI art resembles a collaborative exploration. You can experiment with prompts, witness surprising outcomes, and refine your ideas in an enjoyable, pressure-free manner.

Emotional Impact: This evokes sensations of curiosity, thrill, and playfulness. It transforms the process of art-making into an adventure of discovery and gamification, providing entertainment and mental engagement.

3. Connection and Sharing

What it is: Individuals share their AI-generated artworks online, building communities centered around crafting prompts and appreciating one another's creations.

Emotional Impact: This nurtures a feeling of belonging and shared experiences. It fosters new methods for people to connect, work together, and experience a sense of community, fulfilling a fundamental human emotional necessity.

1.11.2. Negative Impacts:

1. The 'Hollowness' or Emotional Emptiness

What it is: Realizing that a stunning artwork was produced by an algorithm devoid of feelings, experiences, or intent can alter our perception of it.

Emotional Impact: The art may suddenly seem empty, meaningless, or superficial. It parallels receiving a mass-produced greeting card instead of a personalized note—the wording may be identical, but the emotional weight is absent. This can lead to disillusionment and a sense of disconnect.

2. Unease and the ‘Uncanny Valley’

What it is: AI often generates images that are nearly flawless but contain subtle, glitchy imperfections—like a hand with seven fingers, misaligned eyes, or unrealistic physics.

Emotional Impact: This elicits a profound sense of discomfort, eeriness, and distrust. This sensation, referred to as the ‘uncanny valley,’ acts as our brain’s instinctive alarm, indicating that something is amiss. It can turn the experience into one that is unsettling rather than enjoyable.

3. Anxiety and Fear of Obsolescence

What it is: For artists and creators, watching AI swiftly replicate styles and techniques that required years to master can feel extremely threatening.

Emotional Impact: This creates feelings of anxiety, fear, and insecurity regarding the future. It prompts concerns such as, ‘Will my skills still hold value?’ or ‘Is human creativity being supplanted?’ This can lead to significant emotional distress and a sense of diminished worth.

4. Confusion and Existential Dread

What it is: AI art compels us to examine the essence of art, creativity, and our own humanity. If a machine is capable of producing this, what does it imply about our distinctiveness?

Emotional Impact: This may result in confusion, existential uncertainty, and even a mild identity crisis. It’s an uncomfortable sensation that challenges long-held beliefs about what is intrinsically human, making the world feel less secure.

1.12. AI Art and Its Impact on Human Behaviour

AI-generated art not only evokes emotions in us; it also directly affects our actions and behaviours. Our emotional reactions propel us to act in new and varied ways. This influence can be observed across a spectrum ranging from positive to negative.

1.12.1. Positive Impacts:

1. Behaviour: Exploration Through Play and Experimentation

Emotional Driver: Curiosity, Wonder, Joy.

How it Manifests: The ease of entry (merely typing a prompt) and the unpredictability of outcomes encourage continuous experimentation. Individuals spend hours testing various prompts, combining unusual ideas, and sharing their most amusing or surprising results. This transforms the process of creating art into a playful activity, a characteristic often linked with gaming and hobbies.

2. Behaviour: Boosted Creative Confidence and Output

Emotional Driver: Empowerment, Satisfaction.

How it Manifests: A person who previously lacked confidence in drawing can now produce an intricate image for their D&D character, design a concept for a novel, or create a personalized illustration for a blog. This achievement fosters a sense of capability, prompting a shift in identity: they begin to see themselves as a ‘creative person.’ Consequently, they may increase their content production, initiate new projects, or utilize their creations in various aspects of their life and work.

3. Behaviour: Development of New Communities

Emotional Driver: Connection, Belonging.

How it Manifests: Online platforms (such as Discord servers, Reddit communities, and Twitter/X hashtags) have surged with people exchanging prompts, tips, and AI-generated art. The emotional need for connection with like-minded individuals drives community formation. People collaborate, provide feedback, and cultivate a shared culture surrounding this innovative tool.

4. Behaviour: Utilizing AI as a Creative ‘Collaborator’

Emotional Driver: Inspiration, Awe.

How it Manifests: Professional artists, writers, and designers are altering their workflows. They harness AI to overcome creative blocks, produce mood boards, or quickly visualize ideas. The emotional impact of being inspired by AI’s unexpected results promotes the integration of AI into the conventional creative process as a brainstorming partner, rather than a substitute.

1.12.2. Negative Impacts:

Behaviour: Avoidance and Rejection

Emotional Driver: Anxiety, Distrust, Disgust (The Uncanny Valley).

How it Manifests: Some individuals experience discomfort and a sense of ‘hollowness’ with AI art, leading to active opposition. This behaviour includes:

- Curating Media: Opting to follow exclusively human artists on social platforms.
- Seeking Authenticity: Giving higher value and preference to traditional art in response to AI.
- Criticizing and Debating: Spending time online contesting the use of AI-generated art, emphasizing its shortcomings and ethical concerns.

Behaviour: ‘Prompt Engineering’ Instead of Traditional Skill Acquisition

Emotional Driver: Convenience, Instant Gratification.

How it Manifests: Why invest years in mastering painting techniques when one can create a masterpiece in mere seconds? The emotional gratification of immediate results can result in undervaluing traditional practice and the virtue of patience. The skill that becomes prioritized is ‘prompt crafting’ (understanding which words to use), potentially at the cost of essential artistic foundations like drawing, color theory, and composition.

Behaviour: Artistic Identity Crisis and Withdrawal

Emotional Driver: Fear, Insecurity, Devaluation.

How it Manifests: For numerous human artists, the emotional toll is more than mere sadness; it poses a significant threat to their financial stability and personal identity. This can lead to specific behavioural changes:

Changing Careers: Some artists might decide to exit the field completely.

Defensive Stance: Others may vigorously emphasize their ‘human-made’ distinction as a crucial selling point.

Exhaustion: Attempting to keep pace with the unceasing output of AI can result in fatigue and a retreat from the creative process.

Behaviour: Reduced Emotional Engagement with Art

Emotional Driver: Emotional Numbness, Over-saturation.

How it Manifests: When inundated with countless stunning AI-generated images daily, the uniqueness of each picture diminishes. The emotional response of ‘awe’ becomes increasingly difficult to provoke. This can lead to the tendency to rapidly scroll through art, consuming it in a disposable manner and failing to cultivate a deep, enduring connection with any of it. Art transforms into background noise instead of a focused experience.

II. CONCLUSION:

The reviewed studies collectively reveal that artificial Intelligence is reshaping how people perceive emotion, authenticity, and creativity in art, while also exposing deep-seated biases about what makes art 'human.' Research by Demmer et al. (2023) and Agudo et al. (2022) shows that although AI-generated artworks can elicit emotional responses, people still associate genuine feeling, intention, and expressive depth more strongly with human creators. Bellaiche et al. (2023) found that even when artworks are visually identical, those labelled as human-made are preferred over those labelled as AI-made, underscoring how perceptions of authorship strongly influence aesthetic judgment. Chen and Ibrahim (2023) highlight a more integrative perspective, proposing that AI can enhance emotional engagement and interactivity in art installations when used to support, rather than replace, human imagination. Similarly, Ho (2025) discusses the ethical and emotional dimensions of AI-assisted creativity, noting that while such art can intrigue and inspire, it often lacks the authenticity rooted in lived experience. Together, these studies suggest that emotional connection to art is shaped not only by its visual form but also by the perceived agency and intentionality behind it. Even when people respond emotionally to AI art, their understanding of authorship alters how deeply they engage. This indicates that human experience and meaning-making remain at the core of artistic appreciation, while AI serves best as a collaborative tool that broadens creative possibilities without displacing the emotional depth unique to human expression.

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