

## Understanding The Relationship Between AI, Art, and Inspiration.

It's fair to say that most computer scientists and programmers are not fine artists, nor do they fully understand the practice involved in creating fine art. I am a fine artist. I started drawing and sketching as soon as I could hold a pencil. I drew my own hands, the objects and places around me, and the faces of my loved ones. That was my introduction to the world of art, and once I entered that world, I became completely immersed.

Back in the 1970s, when I was a child, there was no video content for artistic inspiration. Yet, I can say with absolute certainty that the path I followed is the common practice of all fine artists; that artists learn by observing and borrowing from the work of others. Sometimes that looks like plagiarism, but in the process of imitation, we are learning to create. I believe that every artist is informed and inspired by each and every piece of art work they encounter whether "irl" or online.

Picasso was influenced by African tribal art, particularly African masks. It's widely accepted that a significant portion of his abstraction, especially his depiction of faces and eyes was inspired by these traditions. He rejoiced in that visual language, absorbed it, and regurgitated it into something uniquely his own.

## The Practice of Learning from Masters

All practicing artists are inspired by those who came before them. In my case, at the age of 12 or 13, I came across a coffee table book on René Magritte. The awe it generated in me still informs my work today.

We cannot create in a vacuum.

Artistic inspiration is sparked by studying the works of masters.

It's a longstanding practice for art students to study, copy and paint the works and masterpieces hanging on the walls. Learning art is not purely theoretical (although theory plays a role), it is deeply practical.

It involves studying how others have solved creative problems before us.

Creation is, at its core, an act of problem solving.

Drawing, for instance, is often painful and challenging. If one seeks only pleasure from creative expression, best to turn to crafts like cross-stitching, crocheting, or wood whittling.

(Although I have now come to believe that the best of craft is also fine art.)

Fine art demands confronting difficulties, grappling with failure, and pushing through discomfort, much like the process of creating elegant, sophisticated software.

## On Accusations of AI "Plagiarism"

When I hear criticisms that AI-generated art is "plagiarism" because the models are trained using publicly available artwork. I find that perspective deeply misguided. All artists throughout history have been inspired by, and have learned from their contemporaries and predecessors.

For example, in contemporary Australian art, the thick, impasto semi-abstract expressionist style owes much to Ben Quilty, who popularized and trailblazed that aesthetic. Many artists of his time and those that followed adopted, adapted, or were clearly influenced by his technique. That is not plagiarism, it's evolution, a natural progression of aesthetic language.

To call the feeding of publicly available visual material into AI models "theft" is absurd. It would be like accusing someone of plagiarism for visiting a library to study art books. AI simply democratizes access to visual knowledge, flattening privilege barriers that once existed between those who could afford elite art education and those who could not.

### Why AI Struggles with Hands and Feet

Another fascinating point: if you examine AI-generated images and videos, you'll notice that hands and feet are often depicted poorly, sometimes bizarrely. Why? Because in traditional art, hands and feet are notoriously difficult to draw. Many artists either avoid them or depict them poorly, and that lack of quality data is reflected in the AI's outputs.

If we fed AI millions of examples of finely drawn hands by the work of masters like Michelangelo, Dürer, Rembrandt, and Da Vinci I can only imagine it would improve the rendering of AI generated hands particularly in Video generation . The reality is that even in the history of human art, there are relatively few examples of perfectly executed hands, and thus, AI mirrors the gaps in human endeavor.

### The Real Creative Power: Editing and Curation

The greatest misconception about AI art is that it automatically produces masterpieces. My experience is that 95% (perhaps more) of my own AI outputs are uninspired, never used, hallucinogenic or just plain bad.

What matters is editing, the human act of sifting through, curating, stitching together, and refining outputs into something meaningful.

As actress Frances McDormand once said about filmmaking, "the real movie is made in the editing room." The same principle applies here: great AI generated visuals are not created; they are edited into existence. It is still an intensely creative process, but it has changed who can participate. AI has democratized filmmaking, illustration, and visual storytelling like never before and for that, I cannot speak highly enough of its potential.

The first time I opened Runway, my jaw dropped. I saw the sheer revolutionary power at our fingertips. Yet, AI is flawed and evolving, just as all creatives are flawed and evolving. It is nowhere near ready to "take over the world " but it is a monumental force allowing for the democratisation and dissemination of information, inspiration and creativity.

Agnes Bruck  
Insta. @aggybees

0408208331