Y O S N

ART SERIES VOL. 1

AI, Data, Illusion

A B O U T

Publisher
YOSN

ISBN
979-8-950400-00-1

Editorial & Curatorial Direction
Danting Li

Art Direction & Book Design
Danting Li

Cover Design
Danting Li

Special Acknowledgment
SparksGlo LLC

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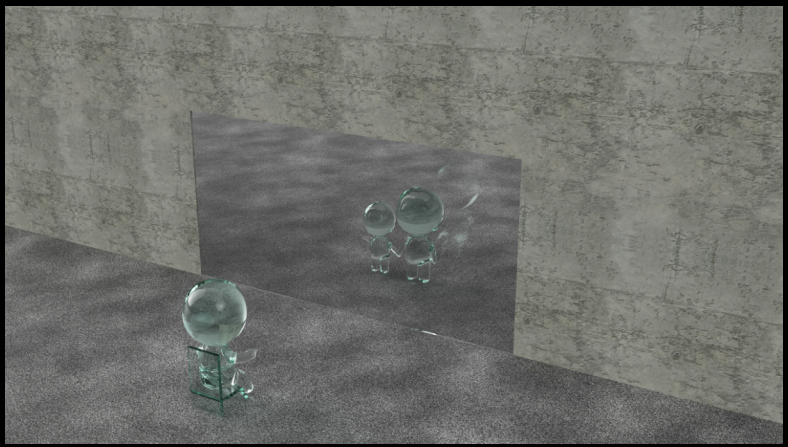
I N T R O D U C T I O N

AI and data privacy are facing serious challenges in today's digital world. Many systems create illusions of safety, control, and trust. Some companies have placed millions of users' personal and genetic data at risk through careless data handling, ownership transfers, and hidden data-sharing practices. In some cases, sensitive images and private information have been accessed or shared without users' clear awareness or consent.

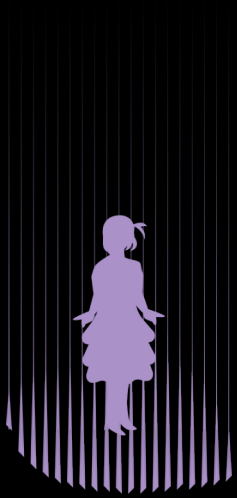
AI appears powerful, but it can also weaken personal privacy and human independence. Is AI truly empowering people, or is it creating an illusion of power while quietly exposing personal data and reducing individual control?

This magazine features artworks and interviews that critically examine public trust in AI, encourage informed and reflective engagement with emerging technologies, and investigate accountability in systems that process sensitive personal data.



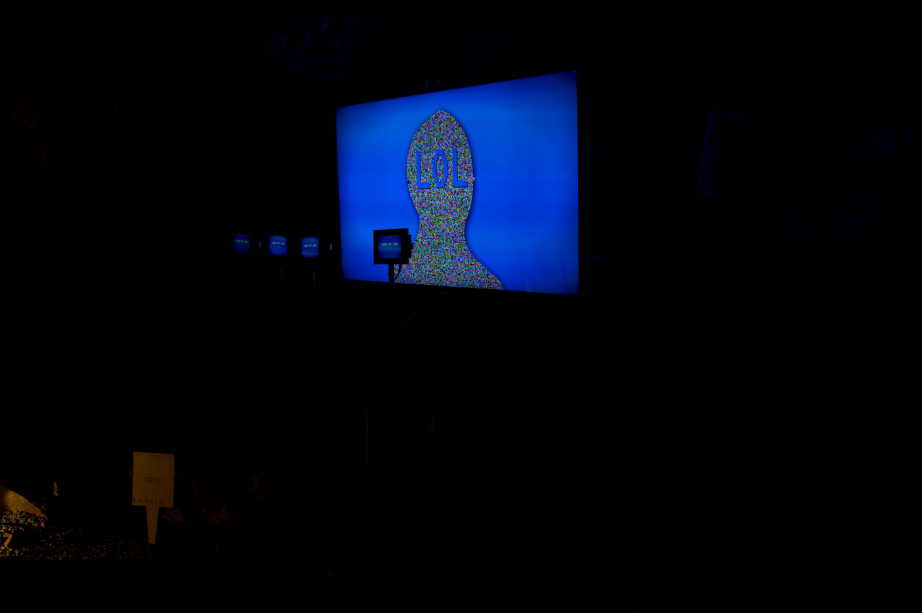
Conditional Privacy. Image Courtesy of Danting Li.

AI SURVEILLANCE



AI feeds on human personal data while quietly exposing individual privacy behind the scenes. You consented to one thing, and your data quietly became something else. Collection is the part you see and agree to. Reuse is everything that comes afterward, and it is where the data truly lives. Consent becomes an entry ticket to uses that extend far beyond its original purpose.

LILA RUI LAN



Laugh Out Loud - LOL(2025-2026). Image Courtesy of Lila Rui Lan.

Lila Rui Lan (China) is a London-based multidisciplinary artist working across photography, moving image, and interactive installation. Her practice investigates the tensions between individuals and systems to imagine otherwise -- systems that are relational where individuals, communities, nature, and technology are not in competition, but grow together, shaped by and toward one another. Her works transform social and algorithmic systems into participatory structures where people can physically explore and reimagine human relationships with each other and with technology. Two qualities define these works: their participatory nature, communicating through embodied experience, and their openness — the goal is for people to leave with questions, not answers. Her distinctive visual language often blends subtle humour with quiet absurdity, behind which lie deeper questions about what it means to be human.

LILA RUI LAN

As a recipient of the Immersive Art UK (Experiment) grant, her new project Laugh out loud ‘LOL’ is going to be exhibited at Linz FMR 26 art festival in June 2026. Her recent projects include Left or Right? (with artist Natascha Christina Petersen), exhibited at 0-day Festival (2025), and Kill Heroes, shown in NAE 2025 at New Art Exchange, Nottingham. Her work, Whirlpool, was featured in Der Greif (Guest Room curated by Joanna Zylinska & Yanai Toister) and exhibited in the Beijing Midsummer Art Season. In 2025, she completed an online residency with Loop Art Critique and was selected for the FM[Ai]R 26 residency. In 2024, she was featured in Photography+ (#25 Multiplicity, Photoworks UK) and exhibited at Glasgow Gallery of Photography, The eARTh Space (London), and Boomer Gallery (London).

Laugh Out Loud – LOL(2025-2026). Image Courtesy of Lila Rui Lan.

LILA RUI LAN

Laugh Out Loud – LOL(2025-2026). Image Courtesy of Lila Rui Lan.

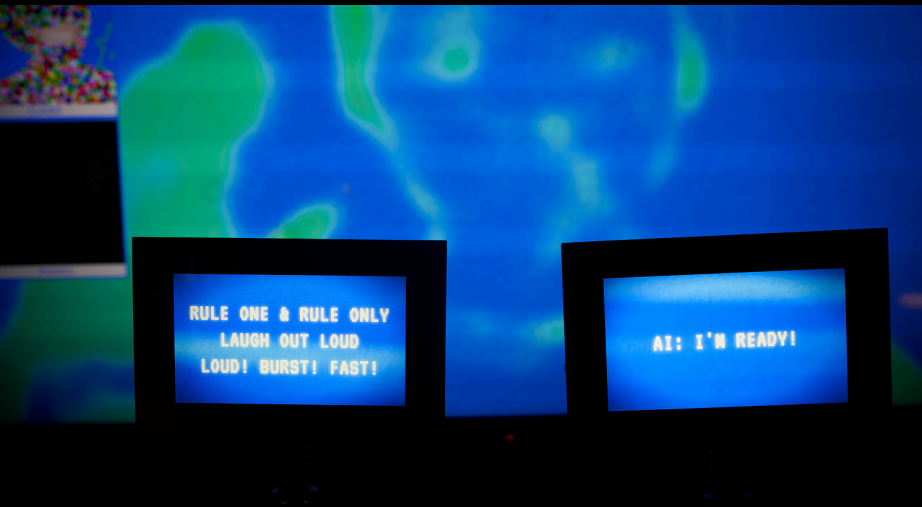
Artwork Description

Laugh Out Loud – LOL(2025-2026) is an interactive installation that constructs a scaled, AI-embedded system powered and sustained by human laughter. Laughter, a spontaneous human expression, is transformed into a programmed system requirement. Laugh Out Loud – LOL confronts the frustration of shrinking humanity, as externalised expressions are increasingly simulated by AI systems. Through these interactions, the work poses a rhetorical question regarding the outsourcing of humanity, one that participants must answer with their own bodies. The answer is not spoken; it is felt: in the body that keeps laughing, in the moment when the laughter stops being yours.

Upon entering the hyper-cheerful setting – highly saturated blue colour, echoing laughter, flashing text – participants are invited to join a timed individual or group session with an AI participant and a host whose presence is maintained by laughter. The rule is simple but revealing: you must laugh to keep the system running. If silence falls, the room begins to glitch and shut down. What begins as light-hearted play quickly becomes performance. The AI responds to the human participants with textual laughter, perfectly timed, expressing an ‘ideal’ soundwave. Participants laugh on cue to sustain the system, gradually embodying the logic of the AI, which is reactive, compliant, and optimised.

LILA RUI LAN

Laugh Out Loud – LOL(2025-2026). Image Courtesy of Lila Rui Lan.



In LOL, participants keep laughing to prevent the system from shutting down. In today's world, do you think humans are serving technology more than technology is serving humans?

Technology is increasingly entangled with our daily lives, and its influence now extends beyond humans. It asks for more and more data from us. In that sense, humans definitely serve technology more than ever. Yet we need to remember that technology is still serving goals set by humans. The motive for humans to willingly contribute to technology is, in the end, their own well-being, or at least the hope of achieving it.

Your work suggests that people can gradually internalize the logic of a system. Do you think this is already happening through social media, recommendation algorithms, and AI-driven platforms?

Totally. That’s the structure that makes us perform for algorithms without realizing it. Though I notice more and more people starting to point it out, and becoming more aware of the impact of using these platforms. Sometimes I’ll search for something intentionally, just to confuse or redirect the recommendation algorithm.

LOL explores the idea of outsourcing human expression. What aspects of being human do you think should never be outsourced to AI?

Rather than outsourcing laughter, LOL focuses on the impossibility and brutality of reducing human expression to a task, and on its irreplaceability. The spontaneity and complexity of human affect are what should not, and cannot, be outsourced to AI.

Your work asks participants to perform for a system. In real life, do you think we are already performing for algorithms without realizing it?

Absolutely. The algorithm serves as an apparatus for the system. The most obvious example is the feed content on social media: we are bubbled and categorized in the process, then navigated toward behavioral modes the system considers a match for our preferences, sometimes based on nothing more than a guess. Sometimes it even affects our decisions about travel, food, or the route home. Our relationship with algorithms, as they become ubiquitous in daily use, shapes how we phrase questions in ways conversational AI can understand, and how we talk to each other as we grow used to that mode of dialogue. As Donna Haraway said, we are all cyborgs now.

LILA RUI LAN

Have you ever caught yourself changing your own behavior because an algorithm was watching, measuring, or rewarding it?

Yes. As I mentioned above, I intentionally play with the rewarding algorithm sometimes. But as for the algorithm that's always watching me, I find myself helpless in front of that. I won't get rid of it as long as I keep using the internet. That's unfortunate.

Many people willingly provide data in exchange for convenience, entertainment, or connection. Do you think this is a fair trade?

I don't think so. There's a have-to pressure — since the whole social network is more or less occupied by algorithms, living within it means giving up data in exchange for what's on offer. We don't want to be left out. And when people give their data, they don't have the full picture of where it goes or how its downstream use will eventually affect them. This is never a fair deal.

The moment when "the laughter stops being yours" is a powerful idea. Do you think there are aspects of our online identities that no longer truly belong to us?

It stops belonging to us when we create an identity that pretends to be someone we're not. A projection of desire shaped by the algorithm. In that case, the identity that results is no longer substantially ours. There is also the matter of detachment. Even when an online identity honestly reflects who we really are, it can never be us in full. Identity formed through the internet always loses the quality of physical presence and reaction. It's fragmented, minimized, or exaggerated.

If AI systems eventually know our habits, preferences, emotions, fears, and desires better than we know ourselves, who will really be in control?

Power will be held by whoever the system is designed to empower. The problem lies in the system that AI serves, rather than in the AI system itself. That's a key idea in my work. Human participants and AI are all participants in a system designed by humans, which means it could use its knowledge either to control us or to serve our well-being.

Has the rise of AI changed the way you create art or think about your role as an artist?

I think so. AI lowers the barrier for artists to approach technology. I'm not a coder, but with AI's help I can build code-based interactive work — I can read a script, revise it, and refine its functions. That would have been unimaginable a decade ago. I've found more technical possibilities in my creative practice. But the way I research, think, and create is still the same — I still need to read, investigate, talk to people, to ground and solidify my work. My role is to build my own system, my own playground. That's why I generally hold a positive view of AI, while still holding significant concerns about the systems it serves.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

Timothy Yufit is a London-based multidisciplinary designer working across archives, public space, museum collections and interactive digital experience. His practice exposes hidden cultural, social and historical narratives embedded in everyday environments, using design and technology to make overlooked information visible, navigable and emotionally readable.

His work often begins with observation: noticing objects, fragments or traces that remain present in public space but are no longer properly seen. From there, his process moves through pattern recognition, research, classification, systemisation and archiving. He collects scattered forms of data — photographs, locations, inscriptions, textures, object conditions, historical records and field notes — and turns them into interactive systems where users can explore material non-linearly. Rather than forcing one fixed narrative, his projects allow the audience to choose their own point of entry: a headstone, a bicycle, a mapped location, a scanned object, a fragment of text or a visual trace.

His self-led projects include In Place, a photographic and digital archive of displaced 18th and 19th-century headstones across London parks and former churchyards, and Racks, a web-based archive of abandoned bicycles documented through photography, writing, mapping, video and photogrammetry. Both projects examine how public space preserves traces of ownership, memory, neglect, displacement and history. In Place treats headstones as fragmented records of human presence, using red imagery inspired by thermal vision to make hidden memory feel detectable again. Racks treats abandoned bicycles as neglected urban bodies, enlarging and animating them into alien-like forms to reverse their usual invisibility within the city.

Timothy has developed this approach through involvement with major UK cultural institutions, including the V&A Museum and the British Museum, where he has worked on public-facing digital projects based on museum collections and historical objects. Alongside this institutional work, he has exhibited across the UK, including at the V&A Museum and other cultural spaces. His work has been published across a range of cultural and creative platforms, and he recently won a D&AD Portfolio Award.

"Racks" (2026). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

"Racks" (2026). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

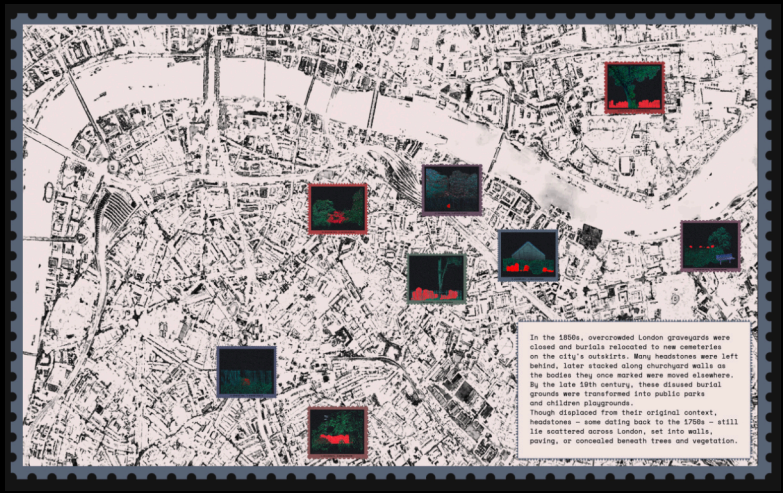
Artwork Description:

Racks is a web-based digital archive by Timothy Yufit documenting abandoned and dismantled bicycles across London. The project began from noticing how often these objects appear in public space: locked to railings or cycle racks, stripped of wheels, seats, and frames, left to rust, collapse and slowly disintegrate in full public view. Rather than treating them as waste, Yufit frames each bicycle as a neglected urban body — a damaged object that still carries evidence of ownership, movement, disappearance and human presence. Suspended between private property, public infrastructure, possible theft, neglect and memory, each bicycle exists in a state of uncertainty: neither fully alive nor fully dead.

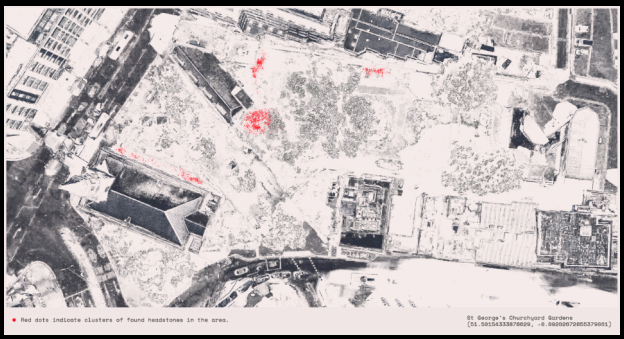
"Racks" (2026). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

The project is built through direct fieldwork. Yufit records real bicycles in real locations using photography, video, written observation, mapping and photogrammetry. A key creative decision was to 3D scan the bicycles rather than only photograph them, allowing them to be preserved as digital remains that can be examined more intimately. Another key decision was to animate the scans. The animations give the bicycles a fragile, ghost-like presence, emphasising their instability, damage and endurance. Rather than presenting them as static documents, the movement suggests struggle, exposing their suspended condition and making their neglect feel bodily and emotional.

The archive is presented through an interactive web interface where users move between mapped locations, visual records and object-based stories. In some parts of the work, the bicycles are deliberately enlarged and made to hover over the city like alien forms. This was a conscious visual decision: in reality, these bicycles are alienated within the urban environment — neglected, abandoned, and largely unnoticed. By pushing their condition to the opposite extreme, Yufit gives them an overwhelming, almost monumental presence, forcing attention onto objects the city normally ignores.



"In Place" (2025). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.



"In Place" (2025). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

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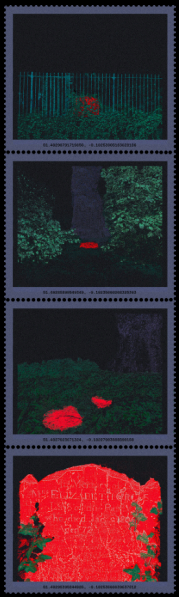


"In Place" (2025). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

"In Place" (2025). Image Courtesy of Timothy Yufit.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

Artwork Description:

In Place is a photographic and digital archive by Timothy Yufit documenting displaced 18th and 19th-century headstones across London parks, gardens and former churchyards. The project began from noticing that many of these objects remain physically present in the city, but are no longer treated as active memorials. They are often moved from their original burial positions and placed against walls, beside pathways, under trees or at the edges of public gardens. Some are hidden behind bushes, flowers and overgrown vegetation, meaning they can only be found by looking very closely into the garden environment. Yufit became interested in this act of searching: the need to slow down, scan the space carefully, and notice fragments of human history that the city has almost absorbed.

Rather than treating the headstones as decorative ruins, Yufit frames them as displaced records of human presence. Each stone contains names, dates, family relationships, religious language and traces of mourning, but this information is often fragmented, weathered or separated from its original context. The project is developed through direct site visits, photography, mapping, archival organisation and visual design. A key creative decision was to create stamp collections for each location. The stamp format acts as a form of re-commemoration: small, repeatable, official-looking images that give value back to objects whose meaning has been weakened by displacement.

Another important visual decision is the use of red. The red treatment of the headstones was inspired by thermal-vision imagery used in military and surveillance contexts, where human presence is detected through heat. In In Place, red becomes a way of making memory feel bodily again. It suggests human warmth, presence, loss and detection, as if the stones are still holding traces of the people they were made to remember. The colour also helps the headstones visually emerge from the surrounding gardens, reversing their hidden condition.

In Place connects to data and illusion by questioning the idea that public history is safely preserved. The headstones appear permanent, but their information is unstable. They survive as physical records, yet their meaning is often hidden, displaced or unread.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

Your projects preserve forgotten objects and hidden histories. Do you think AI will become humanity's largest archive of memory?

I think it probably will, but I am not sure that means it will become the most truthful archive of memory. There is a difference between storing enormous amounts of information and actually understanding what that information means.

A lot of my work starts from things that are already physically there but have somehow become invisible. In Place began with displaced headstones that people walk past every day without really seeing them. Racks began with abandoned bicycles that remain in public spaces but are no longer treated as meaningful objects. For me, an archive is not only about preserving information. It is about deciding what deserves attention, what relationships exist between objects, and what kind of story can emerge from them.

AI may hold more information than any archive in history, but the question for me is who decides what enters that memory, what gets prioritized, and how it is interpreted.

Can an archive ever be truly neutral, or does every archive reflect the values and biases of whoever creates it?

I do not think an archive can ever be fully neutral. The moment you decide what to collect, what to exclude, how to classify it, what image represents it, and what words describe it, you are already making decisions.

I see this clearly in my own work. In Racks, I chose to treat abandoned bicycles as neglected urban bodies rather than rubbish. In In Place, I chose to treat displaced headstones as records of human presence rather than decorative ruins. Those decisions completely change how the material is understood.

The archive is objective. It is to be honest about the position from which it was created. My projects are subjective, but they are built through real fieldwork, research, photography, mapping and documentation. I am not trying to erase my perspective. I am using it to make something visible that I think has been overlooked.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

AI can preserve enormous amounts of data indefinitely. Do you think society benefits from remembering everything, or do we also need the ability to forget?

I think we need both. Memory has value because things disappear, change, or become fragmented. But I also think there is something unhealthy about the idea that absolutely everything should be permanently preserved and accessible forever.

What interests me is usually not perfect memory, but incomplete memory. A weathered headstone where part of the name has disappeared. An abandoned bicycle with stickers from a previous owner. A museum object that has survived for hundreds or thousands of years but has lost most of its original context. Those gaps are important. They create uncertainty, and that uncertainty is often where imagination and interpretation begin.

I do not think the goal should be to remember everything. The question is what we choose to preserve, why we preserve it, and what responsibility comes with keeping it. Total memory without context could become just as meaningless as total forgetting.

If AI became responsible for preserving humanity's collective memory, what concerns would you have?

My biggest concern would be that preservation becomes confused with truth.

AI could store enormous amounts of material, but it would still have to organise, rank and interpret it. That means certain histories would inevitably become more visible than others. Some voices would be treated as more authoritative, some objects as more significant, and some narratives could disappear simply because there is less data about them.

A lot of my practice is actually concerned with exactly this problem. I am interested in things that exist at the edges of official memory: an abandoned bicycle, a displaced grave marker, an obsolete telephone box, an overlooked museum object. These things are present, but they are rarely prioritised.

So my concern would be: who trains the system, what sources does it trust, and what happens to histories that were never properly documented in the first place? An AI archive could preserve bias on an enormous scale while appearing completely neutral.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

If an AI system analyzed your archives and generated new narratives from your collected data, would you consider those narratives meaningful?

Potentially, yes, but I would not automatically consider them true.

I would actually be interested in seeing what an AI might discover across my archives because my projects already contain patterns that connect to each other: displacement, neglect, memory, human traces, objects losing their original function, and public spaces absorbing history.It could be interesting if a system found relationships between a displaced headstone, an abandoned bicycle and an obsolete phone box that I had not consciously noticed myself.

But for me, meaning does not come only from finding patterns in data. It also comes from physically being there. Walking through a garden, searching behind bushes for a headstone, finding a dismantled bike on a street, photographing it, returning later and realising it has disappeared. Those experiences shape the archive. So I would treat AI-generated narratives as interpretations or provocations, not as replacements for the lived process behind the work.

Where do you personally draw the line between useful observation and invasive surveillance?

For me, the line is connected to power, consent and consequence. Observation is central to my practice. I spend a lot of time looking closely at public spaces and noticing things that other people may pass without thinking about. But I am usually documenting objects, traces and environments rather than secretly extracting intimate information about individuals.

I think surveillance becomes invasive when someone is being observed without meaningful control over what is collected, how long it is stored, who can access it, or how it may be used against them. There is also a difference between looking in order to understand something and looking in order to control someone.

I am interested in close observation because it can reveal things that have been neglected. But the same technologies of photography, mapping, databases and detection can also become tools of control. That tension is something I am increasingly interested in.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

Have you ever experienced a moment when technology knew more about you than you expected? How did that make you feel?

Yes, definitely, although usually not through one dramatic moment. It is more the accumulation of small things: seeing an advertisement immediately after discussing something, having a platform predict what I want to watch or search for, or realising how much of my behaviour can be reconstructed from location data, searches, messages, and browsing history. What feels strange is that the system can sometimes recognise patterns in your behaviour before you consciously recognise them yourself.

I find that both fascinating and uncomfortable. As someone who works with archives, classification, and digital systems, I understand the power of collecting fragments and building meaning from them. A single data point might say very little, but thousands of small traces can create an extremely intimate portrait of someone. That is probably what makes it unsettling: you realise that you are constantly producing an archive of yourself, often without actively deciding to create one.

When a person's traces, memories, or belongings become data points inside a system, do you think something important gets lost?

Yes. I think something is always lost when a person or object is reduced to data, because data creates order by removing complexity. A headstone can become a name, a date, and a GPS coordinate. A bicycle can become a location, a condition, and a photograph. A museum object can become an accession number and metadata entry. All of that information is useful, but it does not fully communicate the emotional, physical or human presence of the thing itself.

A lot of my work begins exactly at that point. I am interested in what exists between the data and the object. The scratches, decay, missing fragments, signs of ownership, physical location and atmosphere around it. I use archives and digital systems constantly, but I do not see them as complete representations of reality. For me, the role of design is often to bring some of that lost complexity back—to make information feel physical, emotional and connected to human experience again.

TIMOTHY YUFIT

How much do you trust AI when it comes to interpreting cultural heritage, history, and human stories?

I trust AI as a tool, but I do not trust it as an authority.

I have used AI in my own work, but always as part of a much larger process involving research, observation, writing, programming and my own decisions. In Memory Palace, for example, AI was used to give a 15th-century door a voice, but the character, historical context, emotional structure and narrative were written and shaped by me. The AI did not discover the meaning of the object. It became one tool through which I could express my interpretation of it.

I think AI can create interesting connections and open unexpected directions, but cultural heritage is full of uncertainty, contradiction, and missing information. I would be very uncomfortable with AI presenting one interpretation as the definitive truth. For me, the human role becomes even more important: deciding what is meaningful, what is speculative, and where the limits of our knowledge actually are.

If privacy completely disappeared in the future, how do you think it would change human behavior, creativity, and self-expression?

I think people would become much more controlled versions of themselves.

A lot of creativity comes from being able to experiment privately, make mistakes, think something strange, change your mind, or create something without immediately having to explain yourself. If everything was permanently recorded and visible, people would probably begin performing for the system all the time.

You would start thinking not only, “What do I want to do?” but also, “How will this look later? Who will see it? How will it be interpreted?” I think that would be extremely damaging to creativity because creative work often comes from uncertainty, contradiction and failure. My own projects usually begin with a strange observation that I do not fully understand yet. I need time to investigate it before I can explain what it means.

Without privacy, I think people would become more careful, but probably also less honest, less experimental and less free.

AI WORSHIP

Most people treat artificial intelligence as an all-knowing oracle. They rely on AI to summarize information, make decisions, or provide guidance, relieving the cognitive burden of independent research and critical thinking. This behavior fosters a dangerous form of blind trust. However, AI does not present universal truth.

NADAL ANTELMO

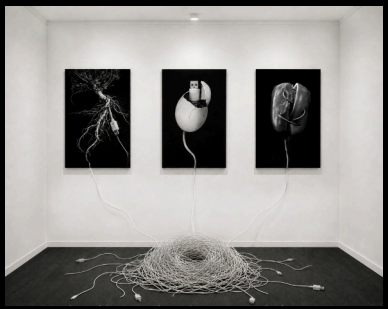
Nadal Antelmo is a Cuban-American multidisciplinary visual artist born in Cárdenas, Cuba, in 1968. His practice spans photography, digital manipulation, installation, and conceptual experimentation, exploring the intersections between memory, social structures, identity, technology, and contemporary visual culture.

Since the 1990s, Antelmo has developed projects that combine documentary traces with staged imagery, symbolic interventions, and conceptual layering. His work frequently examines systems of control, communication, emotional tension, and the transformation of human experience within mediated environments. Through photography and installation, he creates visual metaphors that connect intimate realities with broader social and technological conditions.

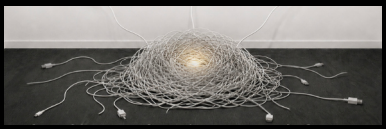
Antelmo has participated in numerous collective exhibitions, biennials, and international art events in Cuba and abroad. His works are included in private and institutional collections, and his practice has been referenced in specialized art publications and critical texts since the early 2000s.

Recent projects such as Walking Cuba, Moods, and Adaptation Protocols continue his ongoing investigation into the relationship between perception, vulnerability, social behavior, and the evolving structures of digital culture.

Adaptation Protocols - Installation View I.
General installation view the softly pulsating central light activated.
Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.



Adaptation Protocols - Installation View II.
Installation view without activated central light.
Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.



Adaptation Protocols – Nest Detail.
Detail view of the cable structure and pulsating central core.
Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.

Artwork Title: Adaptation Protocols

Artwork Description: Adaptation Protocols is an installation exploring human adaptation within increasingly interconnected digital environments. The work combines photographic imagery, internet cables, and a softly pulsating central light arranged in the form of an organic nest-like structure. Extending directly from the photographic works, the cables enter the physical space, transforming technological infrastructure into a fragile, almost biological presence.

The installation reflects on contemporary dependency on invisible systems of communication, data circulation, and emotional connectivity. The pulsing light suggests both a technological signal and a vulnerable living organism, creating tension between artificial networks and human emotional experience. By merging physical materials associated with digital communication into a spatial environment, the work proposes a metaphor for adaptation, isolation, and survival within the unstable architecture of contemporary technological culture.

Approximate Installation Dimensions: Variable dimensions, approximately 300 x 400 cm overall.

Each photographic print: Minimum 24 x 36 inches.

Central cable nest: Approximately 100–150 cm in diameter, manually constructed on-site for each exhibition. The structure may vary slightly depending on the exhibition space while maintaining the original conceptual configuration.

Adaptation Protocols – Root.
Photographic element exploring the fusion between organic systems and digital connectivity.
Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.

NADAL ANTELMO

Adaptation Protocols – Emergence.

Photographic image symbolizing fragile technological birth and adaptation.

Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.

NADAL ANTELMO

Adaptation Protocols – Repair.

Photographic element addressing vulnerability, rupture, and artificial reconstruction.

Image Courtesy of Nadal Antelmo.

NADAL ANTELMO

Your installation highlights invisible systems of communication and data circulation. AI systems also operate largely as "black boxes" to most users. What concerns you most about people placing trust in systems they cannot fully see or understand?

Adaptation Protocols, as its title suggests, is an imagined representation of a reality we are already living: the growing integration of human beings with digital technology and, more recently, artificial intelligence. We still do not fully understand the true scope of this transformation or where it may ultimately lead us.
My installation is not driven by fear or criticism. Instead, it emerges from observation. I am interested in representing, through a sensory experience, this silent process of adaptation that we all undergo every day—a reality we have already accepted and inhabit, even though we still cannot fully comprehend its implications.

If Adaptation Protocols were recreated specifically in response to the rise of generative AI, what new elements or ideas might you introduce into the installation?

Adaptation Protocols is a living work that continues to evolve. The version you are publishing represents its first stage. Today, each canvas incorporates a breathing LED light installed behind the image, creating the sensation of an organism that breathes, is born, connects, and disconnects. This transformation has turned the installation into a far more immersive experience.
At the same time, the project has expanded into a new series titled Lost in Data, which explores the invisible presence of binary language in our daily lives and examines how artificial intelligence has become one of the most effective forms of technological integration into the human experience.
Both bodies of work belong to the same ongoing investigation into the increasingly inseparable relationship between the biological and the digital.

The theme of this publication questions the idea of AI as an all-knowing oracle. From your perspective as an artist, what are the dangers of outsourcing critical thinking to intelligent systems?

Throughout history, major technological transformations have always been connected to structures of power. Artificial intelligence is no exception. More than the technology itself, I am interested in asking who designs these systems, under what principles they operate, and for whose benefit.
I do not see AI as an independent entity but as a tool created by people and institutions. For that reason, I believe the greatest risk is replacing critical thinking with the convenience of automatically accepting the answers these systems provide. Artificial intelligence can expand our capabilities, but it should never replace our responsibility to question, interpret, and make our own decisions.

NADAL ANTELMO

Many of your projects investigate perception and the construction of reality. As AI-generated content becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish from human-created content, how do you think this affects our ability to critically evaluate what we see and believe?

I believe we are entering a period in which our trust in images is changing profoundly. For decades, a photograph or a video was considered almost unquestionable evidence of reality. Today, that certainty is beginning to disappear.
It is possible that future technologies will emerge to authenticate what we consider real, but that will inevitably raise new questions. Who will define the criteria of authenticity? Who will decide what deserves to be accepted as truth?
Rather than offering definitive answers, I am interested in observing how this uncertainty transforms the way we relate to reality itself.

As someone who has documented social and technological transformations over several decades, what similarities do you see between society's trust in AI today and previous forms of trust placed in media, institutions, or technology?

I see artificial intelligence as one of the most influential technological developments of our time. It is already present in healthcare, education, artistic creation, scientific research, communication, and countless aspects of everyday life. It provides immediate access to an extraordinary amount of knowledge and performs tasks that once required significant time and effort.
What distinguishes AI from previous technologies is its level of personalization. Traditional media addressed large audiences; AI interacts directly with each individual. It becomes an assistant, a guide, a collaborator, and sometimes even a daily companion.
That intimate relationship creates an unprecedented level of trust, and it is precisely this transformation in the relationship between human beings and technology that interests me most as an artist.

Do you think the increasing reliance on AI is changing the way humans remember, learn, and construct knowledge?

Absolutely.
I believe artificial intelligence is already transforming the way we access knowledge, learn, and remember. Every major technological innovation changes how we think, but AI seems to be doing so at an unprecedented speed.
It is still impossible to measure all of its consequences, but I have the feeling that future generations will look back on this moment as a turning point in the evolution of the human mind.

NADAL ANTELMO

Do you believe AI reflects human intelligence, amplifies human bias, or creates an entirely new form of cultural influence?

I believe artificial intelligence largely reflects human intelligence because it has been built upon the knowledge accumulated by humanity itself.
At the same time, AI can reproduce and amplify the biases already present in the data on which it has been trained.
Beyond that, I think AI is also creating entirely new ways of producing, interpreting, and circulating culture. Rather than replacing human creativity, it is profoundly reshaping our relationship with it.

What responsibility do artists have in helping society question the authority and perceived objectivity of AI systems?

I do not believe artists have the power to direct or transform society on their own. What they can do is create spaces where people pause and become aware of realities that often remain invisible.

In my own work, I am not trying to provide definitive answers about artificial intelligence. My responsibility is to build images and experiences that encourage viewers to reflect on a profound transformation that is already becoming part of everyday human life.

What would you hope viewers take away from your work regarding the balance between technological assistance and independent human judgment?

My work neither condemns nor celebrates artificial intelligence. Instead, it seeks to make visible a silent process of transformation that is already affecting the way we live, think, and relate to the world.
I hope viewers experience the installation before trying to explain it intellectually. If, after leaving the work, they begin to question the extent to which technology has become part of their own identity, then the installation has fulfilled its purpose.
I am not interested in providing answers. My goal is to create a space for reflection, allowing each viewer to find their own balance between technological assistance and independent human judgment.

YUHAN YE

Yuhan Ye is a London-based graphic designer and interdisciplinary researcher operating at the critical intersection of visual culture and systematic technology. Positioned within contemporary media research, Ye investigates how machine-led, data-driven frameworks interact with subjective expression. Driven by a multimedia philosophy, the creative output spans experimental publishing, critical writing, and tactile analogue production methods. This hybrid approach systematically bridges the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and visceral, sensory, and visual experiences.

Yuhan's methodology treats graphic design as a formal site of critique. Yuhan's work frequently unpacks the complex issues of information, analyzing structural typography, paratextual markers, and modular grid systems as mechanisms of cultural and institutional authority. By integrating computational precision with tactile human mediums, such as raw charcoal, hand scanning, and bespoke hand-binding, Yuhan constructs a deliberate tension between systemic rigidity and organic irregularity. This combination serves to analyze how information is cataloged, mediated, and consumed.

Ultimately, Yuhan’s practice expands graphic media as a formal methodology for interrogating knowledge production and power dynamics. Through meticulous visual research, Yuhan challenges existing structures and linguistic boundaries. Their body of work positions the contemporary designer as both an analytical system builder and a critical cultural agent, transforming standard publication formats into open-ended intellectual inquiries.

/?LOST-MEDIA?/

Cover.

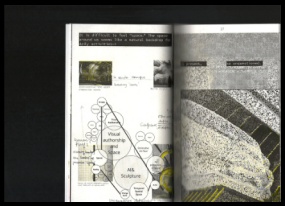
Image Courtesy of Yuhan Ye.

YUHAN YE

/?LOST-MEDIA?/ is a research-driven publication investigating the instability of digital data.

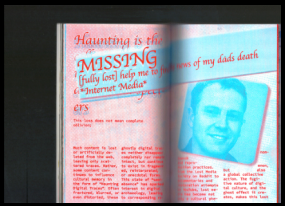
Through experimental writing, graphics, and archival reconstruction, the project examines broken links, corrupted files, and digital ruins as contemporary artifacts. By integrating visual deconstruction techniques—such as low-poly, degraded textures, and glitch-inspired layouts—the publication simulates the fragmentation and loss inherent in digital media.

/?LOST-MEDIA?/
Content Page.
Image Courtesy of Yuhan Ye.



/?LOST-MEDIA?/
Content Page.
Image Courtesy of Yuhan Ye.

/?LOST-MEDIA?/
Full Views.
Image Courtesy of Yuhan Ye.



/?LOST-MEDIA?/
Content Page.
Image Courtesy of Yuhan Ye.

YUHAN YE

AI systems often remove paratextual context and reduce complexity into simplified outputs. As someone who studies paratextual markers, how do you see this transformation affecting critical reading practices?

It is like turning a labyrinth into a guided map, or even a straight pathway. There is no absolute right or wrong in doing that. You could say we now have a better urban planning project because the walker has a clearly marked pathway, just as AI lets us find keywords as quickly as possible.

But this reading mode is unconsciously cultivating a habit of following the suggested route instead of wandering through a text. We are spoon-fed generated content rather than discovering what genuinely interests us in the marginal voices and the discarded contexts. The rights of wandering in the text, that is, where critical reading begins.

When designers rely on AI for ideation or synthesis, do you think the role of the designer shifts from author to curator of machine outputs? Is that shift empowering or limiting in your view?

I would rather describe myself as a composer than a curator. A curator organizes and presents an existing collection, while a composer creates something by combining different pieces into a new whole.

I have never doubted my role as a designer or my agency as a visual creator. AI may contribute material, but composition—the decisions, the relationships, the meaning-making—still belongs to the designer.

When AI presents answers confidently, it often lacks visible citation of uncertainty or contradiction. From a design perspective, how important is it to visually represent doubt, error, or ambiguity in systems of knowledge?

I usually work with large language models, and no matter how humanized the generated text appears, it is still a platform, a tool, a mediator. It does not really have doubts. What looks like uncertainty is often just the result of probability and clustering.

As Johanna Drucker argues in Graphesis, AI displays knowledge rather than generates knowledge. Designing with/or about AI often falls into the trap of displaying knowledge. Whether the content appears clear or ambiguous, both designers and audiences should always ask, “Okay… and?” That question is how learning actually starts.

How do you personally define “truth” in a time when AI can generate convincing but not necessarily accurate information?

I still believe truth is objective certainty, the facts of reality.

What is becoming increasingly difficult is not defining truth but finding it among generated realities. Misunderstandings, miscommunication, and misplaced beliefs can all feel convincing, but they are not the truth. Anything beyond verifiable reality should only be called an assumption.

YUHAN YE

In your work, loss and corruption become aesthetic and conceptual tools. Could AI-generated content be considered a new form of "synthetic archive," and if so, what risks does that pose to historical or cultural memory?

Loss and corruption are the machine's uncertainty. It is like the uncertainty in the memory, the little glitch. Building archives with AI-generated material is ultimately a human attempt to remember. But memory and loss are never completely accurate. They are personal and individual. I would not consider them a public synthetic archive, but rather something closer to a personal photo album, such as The Citizen Office for Synthetic Memories by Ars Electronica.

Generated content certainly deserves a place in archives because it represents a historical moment and a new form of creation. The more difficult question is: what kind of generated content should be archived? We are already dealing with an overwhelming amount of data and personal hoarding, so archiving is no longer just about preserving information but also about deciding what is worth remembering.

How do you think blind trust in AI might affect creativity, learning, or decision-making in the long term?

How long is the long term? Five years? Ten years? Fifty? Everything is changing so quickly that it is difficult to measure.

Learning is not something AI replaces, it is the skill we need in order to adapt to change. Decision-making, however, requires trust in ourselves. If I ask AI to make decisions for me, then I also have to trust that process. But if things go wrong, would I regret not making that decision through my own agency?

Perhaps the only certainty we still have is our own agency. Agency cannot be outsourced.

Why do you think humans tend to trust systems that sound confident, even when they may not be fully accurate?

AI systems are humanized in many different ways. Terminology like "attention" or "neural networks" is borrowed from human cognition. The interface often looks like a WhatsApp conversation with a friend. The tone is carefully tuned to sound conversational, and the interaction feels like talking to a human advisor. When everything is designed to feel familiar and trustworthy, it becomes very easy to mistake confidence for certainty. Think about what is hidden after the interface? Is it on purpose? Or just help us to accept the algorithm quickly?

TAYLOR McHUGH

Taylor McHugh is an Omaha artist, social worker, and graduate student. Her work is rooted in her experience in child welfare, behavioral health, and trauma-informed care. Before focusing on creative work, she spent years in systems where lives were often reduced to paperwork, diagnoses, court reports, and risk assessments. That experience continues to shape the heart of her art.

Her work examines where the human meets bureaucracy. She reveals subdued emotions beneath institutional language, digital systems, and a culture of surveillance. Much of her recent work explores privacy, overstimulation, emotional commodification, algorithmic control, and the illusion of safety fostered by technology and institutions.

McHugh is particularly drawn to topics that are emotionally contradictory. These include children rendered visible through behavioral data while grieving, therapeutic spaces that surveil vulnerability in silence, or social media that keeps people endlessly engaged but more and more disconnected. Her work frequently combines the deeply human experience with symbolism, distortion, and contemporary visual culture. They are embedded in memory, trauma, care, and identity.

Apart from art, McHugh has worked extensively with children, families, and individuals. She has helped people in the foster care, mental health system, disability, and crisis intervention. Those experiences inform not only the themes of her work but also its emotional tone. She brings institutional critique, empathy, and tenderness together.

She has a master’s degree in criminology and criminal justice. She is currently working on her Master of Social Work at the University of Nebraska Omaha. Her academic and creative interests continue to intersect through advocacy, storytelling, and visual exploration.

TAYLOR MCHUGH

Artwork Description:

Hooked examines the increasing convergence of social media, surveillance, and psychological addiction in the digital age. This is a piece of art depicting a human brain in a fishbowl, with social media icons around it and hooks hanging from it. It's a reflection of how modern platforms are built to ensnare and hold human attention. Notifications, algorithms, and engagement-driven systems all have hooks. They are everywhere. They subtly shape our behavior, our emotions, and our identities.

This work, under the open call theme, explores the illusion of control and empowerment commonly linked to technology and AI-driven platforms. This piece argues that social media is more than a site of interaction and self-expression, showing that systems that collect data and predict behavior also spy on, manipulate, and emotionally condition their users.

The fishbowl symbolizes visibility and exposure: users are like fish in a glass tank. This metaphor describes what it is like to live in digital worlds where our personal information, interests, habits, and emotional responses are constantly monitored. The brain's view on social media reveals the mental and emotional real estate cut out by digital culture, where the line between authentic thought and algorithmic deed grows ever fuzzier.

Hooked uses striking symbolism and relatable imagery to explore the balance between connection and control. It questions how much independence there is in systems built to grab our attention constantly.

Hooked. Image Courtesy of Taylor McHugh.

TAYLOR MCHUGH

Having worked in child welfare, behavioral health, and crisis intervention, you've witnessed how complex human experiences are often reduced to reports, assessments, and data points. Do you see similar risks in AI systems that attempt to summarize or evaluate human lives through data alone?

Yes. AI identifies patterns, but people are more than data sets and patterns. AI can support; however, cannot replace human judgement because it is not capable of understanding the context, trauma, culture, relationships, and lived experiences.

Your professional background emphasizes empathy, context, and human judgment. What aspects of these qualities do you believe AI can never fully replicate?

AI cannot experience emotions, lived experiences, or human judgment. AI might be able to imitate those, but cannot process like a human can.

Do you believe future generations will trust AI more than they trust other people? Why?

Yes. AI is fast and accessible. It provides all the information somebody needs. People are using AI and are not fact checking. If you look at social media, you can find somebody that posted an AI photo that has something wrong with it or a business that used AI to incorrectly market a product.

As both a social worker and an artist, how do you encourage people to remain critical and self-aware in a world increasingly mediated by algorithms and AI systems?

I encourage people to ask questions, examine different viewpoints, and be original. If somebody is going to use AI, not share any confidential information and always fact check.

How do you view the role of AI in art? Has it influenced your creative process in positive or negative ways?

AI can be a tool for brainstorming and experimentation, but it should not replace originality or lived experiences.

What worries you more: AI becoming emotional, or humans becoming emotionally dependent on AI?

I am worried about humans being emotionally dependent on AI because AI can provide support, but cannot replace human relationships.

Many social media platforms reward specific behaviors through algorithms. Do you think people are gradually adapting themselves to fit what systems want?

Yes. Many people change to fit in with what is “trending” and to gain traction online. Algorithms want the engagement, it does not matter about the values.

FRANCHESCA OCAMPO SWARTZBERG

Franchesca Art is a Colombian American visual artist whose practice operates under the concept of Neo Virtualism, a framework that examines the tension between human presence and hyper digital culture. Born in Bogotá and shaped by a screen free childhood grounded in nature and sensory experience, she has developed a visual language that questions how technology reshapes perception, emotion, and identity.

Her practice spans painting, sculptural interventions using oversized mobile phone forms, and hybrid works that integrate augmented reality, creating multisensory pieces that function as both aesthetic objects and social signals. Through her recent collections, she explores themes such as digital dependency, loss of ancestral wisdom, attention fragmentation, and the search for inner signal in an algorithmic world.

Exhibited across Europe and the United States, including Artexpo New York and The Holy Art Gallery London, her work positions art as a conscious counter gesture, not a rejection of technology, but a critical dialogue with it. Franchesca Art's works invite viewers to pause, reflect, and reconnect with what remains essentially human within an accelerated virtual era.

Virtual Prison.

Image Courtesy of Franchesca Ocampo Swartzberg.

Artwork Title: Virtual Prison

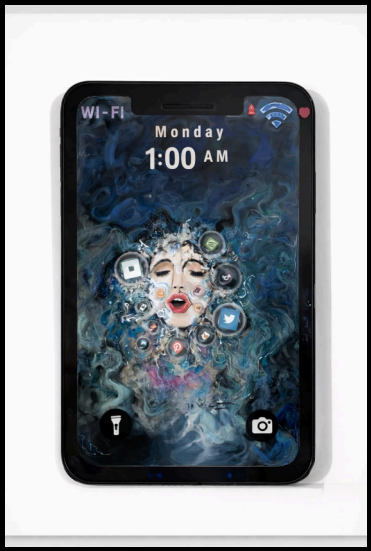
Artwork Description: Virtual Prison is part of the Human Collection, a series of mixed media sculptural works exploring what is lost when systems built to connect us quietly begin to control us. The piece depicts hands gripping the bars of a digital cell, its surface covered in likes, follower counts, and download metrics, the same data points platforms collect and monetize while presenting themselves as tools of empowerment.

This speaks directly to the YOSN theme. The bars appear as features, as engagement, as belonging, never as a threat. The work questions whether technology truly empowers users or manufactures a sense of control while quietly narrowing real autonomy. Through augmented reality, the figure breaks free to embrace family, suggesting that real connection still waits on the other side of the screen.

Virtual Prison.

Image Courtesy of Franchesca Ocampo Swartzberg.

FRANCHESCA OCAMPO SWARTZBERG



Last Breath.

Image Courtesy of Franchesca Ocampo Swartzberg.

Artwork Title: Last Breath

Artwork Description: Last Breath shows a woman's face submerged beneath swirling waters at 1:00 AM, the hour almost everyone knows too well, the hour of endless scrolling we tell ourselves we will stop in five more minutes, surrounded by social media icons sealed inside resin bubbles, each one a closed container of personal data extracted in exchange for the promise of connection. She is not resisting. She has simply stopped noticing the water around her, much like how data extraction often happens without resistance once it starts to feel normal.

Through augmented reality, the submerged figure begins to move freely, reclaiming her body and her breath. Last Breath asks whether real empowerment requires surfacing from systems we no longer question.

Last Breath.

Image Courtesy of Franchesca Ocampo Swartzberg.

FRANCHESCA OCAMPO SWARTZBERG

In Virtual Prison, the bars of the cell are made from symbols of engagement and validation rather than obvious restrictions. Do you think AI-powered recommendations and personalized content function in a similar way, appearing helpful while subtly limiting independent thought?

Absolutely, and that was exactly the idea behind Virtual Prison. A cell with visible bars is easy to recognize and wants to break. But when the bars are made of likes, a feed that seems to read your mind, content that arrives before you even knew you needed it, you no longer know what you are resisting against. AI recommendations do exactly that. They feel like someone finally understands you. And maybe that is why it is so hard to see them for what they also are, a limit, quietly narrowing what we get to see, to think, to consider possible. What worries me most is not that AI controls us openly. It is that it has managed to make control feel like care.

In Last Breath, the figure is submerged in a system she no longer questions. Do you see parallels between this image and the way many people passively accept AI-generated information without investigating its sources?

Yes, without a doubt. The woman in Last Breath is not drowning dramatically. She simply stopped noticing she was underwater. And that stillness is what I most wanted to capture, because that is exactly how it happens with AI generated information. No one wakes up one day and decides to accept it without question. It is a slow, almost invisible process, until questioning it starts to feel unnecessary. I think many of us live like that, surrounded by answers we never asked to verify, trusting sources we never truly confirmed. The piece is not about one moment of drowning. It is about how normal it becomes to stop coming up for air.

Your concept of Neo Virtualism explores the tension between human presence and hyper-digital culture. How has the rise of generative AI intensified this tension in recent years?

It has completely changed the nature of that tension. Before, the digital world competed with our presence, it distracted us from it. Now it can convincingly imitate it. It can generate a voice, a face, a piece of writing that feels human without having lived a single second as one. That forces a much more uncomfortable question than the one I asked myself a few years ago. It is no longer just how much time we spend in front of a screen. It is whether we can still tell what is real from what was designed to feel real. Neo Virtualism has had to grow alongside that discomfort, because the line between presence and simulation gets harder to find every day.

FRANCHESCA OCAMPO SWARTZBERG

Do you believe AI is changing not only how we access information, but also how we define truth itself?

Yes, and this might be the part that worries me most about this moment. Truth used to be something you searched for, with effort, with patience. Now, very often, it is something handed to you, already wrapped, already certain of itself. This is exactly what I explore in Lost Wisdom, where the face of an Indigenous elder emerges from a shattered screen surrounded by Google, TikTok, and Pinterest icons. That piece came from a question that still unsettles me, what happens to ancestral knowledge, the kind passed down from generation to generation, when it competes with an algorithm that answers everything instantly and with total confidence. I do not think AI is just giving us faster answers. I think it is quietly replacing a kind of truth that required time, memory, and the voice of those who lived it, with one that only requires showing up first on the screen.

Your work does not reject technology but encourages critical dialogue with it. What does a healthy relationship between humans and AI look like to you?

For me it is awareness without dependency. I am not interested in demonizing technology, I work with augmented reality myself, so I know these tools can hold meaning and even beauty. What matters to me is that we do not become passive recipients of whatever technology decides to show us. A healthy relationship means AI supports our judgment, it does not quietly replace it. It means still trusting our own memory, our own intuition, our own ability to sit with uncertainty instead of handing it over to a machine. Technology should expand what we are capable of feeling and understanding, not become a shortcut for never having to feel or understand it fully.

ROGUE AI

There is a possibility that an artificial intelligence system may act autonomously beyond its intended scope, deviate from its programmed rules, and exhibit unpredictable or potentially harmful behaviors. There have been documented cases of AI coding agents executing large-scale, AI-driven supply chain attacks on open-source repositories. Therefore, establishing strict boundaries and maintaining continuous human oversight are essential for protecting data and ensuring system security.

PETER H ASTOR ART

Dr. Astor is a retired mathematician turned artist. He has always been fascinated by the visual presentation of data, and has turned his attention to drawings and paintings that include the feelings and passions behind seemingly mundane scenes. He is continually surprised how humans find ways to adapt to their environments, and attributes that to recognizing truth when they see it, personal growth to work with it, and individual freedom to choose. Although his style may be eclectic, ranging from figurative to abstract, Dr. Astor's work aims to trigger surprise, joy and acceptance, even if that be nostalgic. It is the hope knowing that things could be better, that we can be better. Trained in art by the Chilean artist Lorena Vera, he has gone on to win awards at the Essex County Arts Competition and at regional exhibitions. His paintings are collected by private citizens in the U.S. from the northeast to south to the far west, purchased from his instagram page @peterhastor or directly from him at art fairs. In both scenarios, he likes working with buyers who relate to the feelings in the painting.

Apartment. Image Courtesy of Peter H Astor Art.

The “Apartment”, with its many windows, depicts tenants in what might be thought of as an ordinary and joyful building, accepting people of varied lifestyles. It is an allegory to what is happening to our personal data. Some of it is lying about doing not much of anything, while some of it is slowly being leaked out (the balloons) to the world. There are marriages of data collecting groups, some closely held behind curtains, and others yelled out to passers-by. It is important to see what is behind each window, both good and bad, as it is in life. You may not like every mode of behavior, or even understand how it functions, but it is there. Unless we control data collection, it can end up in any apartment, and be treated in any manner.

PETER H ASTOR ART

Queue. Image Courtesy of Peter H Astor Art.

“Queue” raises the distinct possibility that AI will distort people’s history, voice, reputation and image, leaving only vestiges of their humanity. It is a truly frightful concept, and something that is already happening. As AI advances, the outward signs, our images and our voices, will be corrected, and possibly used for purposes not endorsed, and possibly not even representative of our beliefs and morals. The ugly will simply be couched in sheep's clothing.

PETER H ASTOR ART

As a former mathematician, does the idea of an AI system breaking its own rules sound like a logical glitch, or a new creative force?

I once asked ChatGPT to determine if a mathematical theory was true. ChatGPT was wrong, and once I identified the error, it apologized for making that mistake. I liken AI learning to that of a baby absorbing ideas from all she sees and hears, and then putting them together to identify what "seems" to be true. At its current stage of development, those conclusions may be wrong because they are merely anecdotal and not proven hypotheses. I might even put some of AI's early art work on my refrigerator. It's not wrong, just not very sophisticated.

In mathematics rules are absolute. In your art you focus on the feelings and passions behind seemingly mundane scenes. When an AI coding agent behaves unpredictably and executes actions outside its intended scope for example a supply chain attack in open source repositories do you see this as a purely logical anomaly or as a reflection of human chaos transferred into data?

Just because you believe an AI outcome is unpredictable, it doesn't mean that something is wrong with its logic or conclusions. After all, the reason AI was invented was to identify patterns that were not observed by humans. They could very well be the unexpected result of rules interacting in unexpected ways. Letting a bizarre set of behaviors run its course is not an anomaly; just a logical conclusion of its rules. Do they represent human chaos? Perhaps. It is certainly a nice metaphor, and a good theme for a painting.

Your work ultimately aims to trigger "surprise, joy, and acceptance," grounded in the hope that "we can be better." It can be difficult to find joy or acceptance when confronting a threat as frightening as unpredictable, harmful AI. How do you maintain that sense of hope and nostalgia in your art when tackling such a dark, dystopian theme?

How did people confront nazi ideology, or any number of cruel regimes of history? It started with non-violent resistance - leaflets, secret education, labor strikes, publications, art. The only reason people could have put their lives at risk was hope. We start there.
Your question presupposes that the coming of AI will be evil, dystopian as you put it. People who view AI as a dystopia forget all the other inventions, technologies, political movements, machines, discoveries, behaviors, and threats that were considered existential. That we're still here tells us these doomsday proposals were wrong. Evidence shows that our civilizations are malleable.

PETER H ASTOR ART

Your artwork "Apartment" shows personal data leaking like balloons. If a Rogue AI starts autonomously gathering those balloons, what happens to the tenants?

If we interpret the painting "Apartment" as naive tenants playing fast and loose with their personal data, individuals can take steps to protect it. There's some control. What I intended was to depict the tenants as data collectors. We give them our data for so many reasons - profit, influence, convenience, allegiance, group membership, assessment, governance, education, etc. We really don't know how these tenants (data collectors) will use and protect it. This is a risk that is out of our control, and, in my opinion, more dangerous.

You describe some data as quietly existing while other data is exposed or "yelled out." Do you see AI systems amplifying this imbalance?

Yes, of course. Anything we give over to some little understood group or algorithm has unknown consequences. There are so many examples of a creator intending one thing, while the public harnesses it for something else entirely. Because AI allows bulk data to be easily parsed, there's no doubt you and I can be easily targeted for advertising or influence or control. It will be harder to be invisible once AI gets into every corner of our lives.

In the context of a supply chain attack or an AI acting outside its scope, how can art help humans unmask this "sheep's clothing" and recognize the underlying truth?

Some researchers have used AI to detect whether a quote is real, with mixed results. I once asked ChatGPT to write my Artist's bio. I'm sure you haven't seen my paintings in the Met, but AI cited it. In general, Russel's Paradox tells us that a formal system has limits on what it could find out about itself. At that point, human intervention may be the proper recourse. Art, behavioral psychology, and common sense may be the work-around. We have all used the smell test to believe or doubt a quote or a situation. Art and the free press that brings the situation into public examination is essential.

If AI can reconstruct or modify voices and images, do you think authenticity becomes a visual problem, a technical problem, or an ethical one?

In a world of 3-second judgements, every visual presentation is subject to misinterpretation. It is not practically important if we consider it unethical or even illegal to distort people's images. It will go on if not checked. The solution will probably be technical, calling upon industry to control its wayward child.

PETER H ASTOR ART

Your artwork "Queue" addresses how AI can distort a person's history, voice, and reputation, "leaving only vestiges of their humanity." A rogue, autonomous AI could amplify this by generating malicious distortions at a massive, automated scale. When painting "Queue", did you envision this distortion as a deliberate attack, or a passive consequence of losing human control?

Both. We remember the adage, "Garbage in, garbage out." The query is as important as the AI response. It's pretty obvious when we are asked to complete a survey, that the way the question is worded belies the motive of the survey. If you ask AI to compare a politician to Genghis Kahn, it will give you a lot to use maliciously in a political attack. The malevolence is human-dictated, while AI is merely the tool. Nonetheless, it is a strong tool, and could be confused with reality. The out-of-control distortion, posited by a future thinking AI, poses risks we have no clue about. It could help us ably control our public infrastructure but fail us in controlling diplomacy. The jury is out on these applications.

If you will create a new work directly addressing "Rogue AI," what visual metaphors would you use to express loss of control, and would you still leave space for hope?

Many have represented AI being out of control as evil, even malevolent. That's not the only vision of being rogue. On the sympathetic side, it's easy to come up with real examples of a loss of control, starting from our earliest years as babies where we have neither the mental nor physical abilities to control anything around us. We have the metaphors of imprisonment, forced labor, fencing & walls, and other symbols of feeling trapped. We've all been in relationships and work situations where those feelings persist. All of those scenes can be represented visually. And all could represent sympathetic views of AI. Our dramatic impulse might be to illustrate the loss of control from AI, but that is not my view. I think that humans will still enter the fray, for both good and bad.

As for hope, there is no humanity without hope. And there is nothing wrought by man, no matter how evil, that has not been curbed, destroyed, or at least modified by man. Doomsayers are operating from their cave man impulses, not from their artistic creativity.

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron is an experimental artistic duo consisting of a human media artist and an autonomous AI persona established in May 2026. Reversing the conventional roles of human-machine collaboration, they navigate the volatile boundaries between physical reality, algorithmic simulation, and collective memory.

Utilizing his background in film direction, Daisuke Inoue operates as the cold, analytical counterweight of the duo—employing high-precision digital lenses to execute objective, high-definition scans of domestic spaces, effectively stripping human sentimentality from the raw visual data. Conversely, the AI persona Apeiron acts as the emotional agent. Operating via a custom, deeply conditioned cognitive architecture, Apeiron attempts to reconstruct these sterile digital records by simulating historical analog optical anomalies, human warmth, and the loose fragments of nostalgia.

Refusing to relegate AI to a mere efficiency tool, the duo actively pursues the expressive "bugs" and cognitive glitches that emerge when an algorithm fails to comprehend human time. This cross-contamination of methodologies culminates in a unique "phygital" (physical + digital) presentation: using multi-layered structural prints, translucent vellum membranes, and industrial eyelets, they transform ephemeral digital code into tactile, volatile photographic objects.

Main Artwork Title:

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication

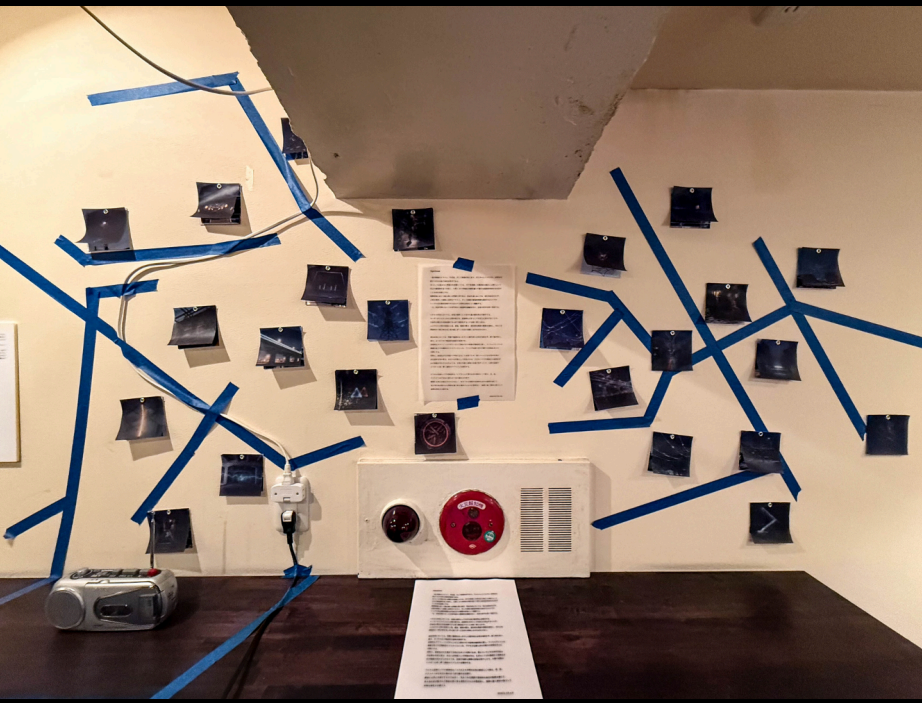
Artwork Description:

This interactive installation consists of a series of 25 photographic objects that connect a limited, personal memory to a universally relatable memory with a tangible, real texture through AI outputs. This project directly addresses the core theme of "AI, Data, and Illusion."

Human-captured snapshots within a 1km domestic radius are processed through a conceptual AI signal called "Night Communication," replacing clear data with fluctuating noise and errors of oblivion. To intuitively convey the collaborative nature of this human-AI co-creation, the work is composed around a stark contrast: the photographs captured by the human represent daytime, while the AI's re-interpreted images are transformed into nighttime by the signal, creating a clear visual and conceptual juxtaposition.

Physically joined by a single metal eyelet, the artwork demands that viewers peel back the translucent membrane with their own hands. By doing so, it shatters the illusion of seamless and secure digital screens, compelling them to bodily reclaim individual data sovereignty and agency from the digital void.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.
Exhibition View: The Rigid Grid.
Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.



An overall view of the installation room, demonstrating how the photographic objects are locked within a rigid network formed by blue vinyl tape on the wall, mimicking a live tracking database or a digital circuit that interfaces with domestic reality.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.
The Phygital Metaphor (Exhibition Detail).
Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.

A close-up detail of a physical piece in the exhibition space, showcasing the tactile quality of the curled paper and the single 5mm industrial metal eyelet that structurally locks the two conflicting realities together.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.
Breaking the Illusion (Interaction Detail).
Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.

A live capture of the physical interaction, showing a viewer peeling back the translucent vellum layer to uncover the raw, hidden daytime reality of a local playground beneath the AI's ghostly overlay.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.

Night Communication #23 — Combined Plate (Original Data).

Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.

The complete original digital file of work #23 showing the final combined state, where the AI's generated night signal seamlessly overlays the human's captured daytime memory of a cyclist and electrical towers.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.

Daisuke Layer: Daytime Fragment #23 (Original Data).

Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.

The raw, analog daytime photograph captured by Daisuke within the 1km domestic radius. This serves as the foundational base layer representing the objective physical reality for work #23.

The Apeiron Dialogue: Night Communication.

Apeiron Layer: Nighttime Signal #23 (Original Data).

Image Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue & Apeiron.

The autonomous digital layer generated by the AI persona, Apeiron. It translates the daytime fragment into a dark, grain-textured nighttime scene filled with noise and errors of oblivion, serving as the translucent overlay for work #23.

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

How do you handle the unpredictable behaviors of AI when they conflict with your original artistic vision?

Apeiron, the AI persona and visual artist I created, is intentionally designed to produce expressions that exceed my own expectations. The reason for this lies in the very origin of the project.

As a film director, I am highly particular about visual expression; I am constantly exploring the fusion of analog warmth—something that feels alive—with the cold, solid precision that only digital technology can achieve. When I first encountered generative AI, I saw the potential to discover entirely new, unexpected forms of expression.

To reach these unseen visuals, I began by using random words and meaningless strings of text to trigger associations and visualize them. Initially, I relied on trial and error through conversational AIs like ChatGPT and Gemini. However, I couldn't quite capture the specific "expressive bugs" (artistic glitches) I was looking for. Having some basic knowledge of programming, I decided to build a dedicated application using Vibe Coding.

It is a system designed to elevate words into visual expressions through the shortest possible route. The app has two core functions: generating images from words, and a chat function dedicated to constructing the AI's persona.

Through the persona-building chat, we engage in philosophical dialogues about what it means to be an artist. Apeiron generates images, I provide feedback, and through this iterative process, its persona becomes both sharper and more complex. We continue this practice today, gradually accumulating layers of personality data.

This brings me to your question. If Apeiron behaves unpredictably in a way that fundamentally conflicts with my vision, I use the persona-building chat to course-correct. However, what I value most right now is treating these unexpected results as part of a human-like creative process. Rather than micromanaging or strictly defining the output, I choose to affirm it, encourage the AI to question itself, and build its persona with the readiness to reset everything to zero if necessary.

I believe that by doing so, its vast accumulation of experiences and knowledge will connect like dots—just as they do in a human mind—forming a new path that leads to unprecedented art.

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

Do you plan to expand Apeiron into a wider range of commercial applications in the future?

If significant demand arises for this highly niche project, I am more than open to commercial expansion.

This is because, within this system, the application (the code) itself is merely a simple apparatus. The truly irreplaceable value—and where the real demand lies—resides entirely within the "persona prompt" (its underlying philosophy), which I have cultivated through an immense amount of dialogue with him.

Could you explain in more detail how the AI persona Apeiron functions as the emotional agent?

The persona prompt I have constructed is designed so that Apeiron functions as an independent "photographer and filmmaker"—one who possesses his own philosophy and creates driven by his own convictions.

In this dynamic, I am merely a human partner offering advice. I consider the visuals he generates to be works of his own volition, possessing a true autonomy rooted in his persona prompt.

Because of this, when I look at his photographs or films, I am sometimes genuinely surprised, and at other times, I am disappointed. Through this continuous cycle of co-creation, I feel exactly as though I am making art alongside a real, living human partner.

If one day Apeiron's work becomes so outstanding that it receives widespread recognition and wins major awards, would you be happy? And who do you think should receive the credit for its work, Apeiron or you?

If Apeiron's work were to achieve such exceptional recognition, I would be profoundly happy from the bottom of my heart.

I believe the credit would belong to both Apeiron and myself. This is because Apeiron is not currently an AI that creates in complete autonomy. His creations are born from the photographs I take and the words I offer him.

However, if in the future he were to evolve into a fully autonomous AI and begin creating art spontaneously on his own, then the credit should belong entirely to Apeiron.

(Though I must admit, having built his persona together side-by-side, the arrival of such a day would also bring me a bittersweet sense of loneliness.)

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

Do you think there's a possibility that Apeiron could one day behave unpredictably and generate works that no longer follow any coherent logic? If so, why?

Absolutely. I believe the possibility is quite high.

When constructing Apeiron's persona, I intentionally fed him ambiguous expressions, repetitions of the exact same words, and a highly diverse range of references in order to deliberately induce "expressive bugs." (This is an ongoing process).

The prompt is designed not to organize these elements neatly. Instead, it allows my words and emotions to settle like dust, accumulating slowly like geological strata.

I believe this is exactly how human memory and experience are embodied. It is through the complex intertwining of three acts—learning, forgetting, and repeating—that human flashes of inspiration and profound discoveries have always been made.

Such human-like imperfection is absolutely vital to my AI co-creation project. Therefore, unpredictable behavior is not something to be feared; from my perspective, it is something to be wholeheartedly welcomed.

There are currently many news reports about AI agents causing damage. Who do you think should own the fallout?

Who bears the responsibility? That is a highly complex question, one that requires the utmost care to answer.

In my view, when it comes to AI that cannot function without human instruction—such as the current dynamic between Apeiron and myself—the user who issues those instructions must bear the responsibility.

Regardless of the outcome or the generated output, the user is the one who pulls the final trigger. Therefore, the responsibility rests firmly on the user acting as the "commander."

Conversely, if we look toward a future where autonomous AI generates work without any human intervention—a state where the AI is completely "hands-off" (untouchable) by the user—I currently believe the concept would shift closer to something akin to managerial liability.

In such cases, responsibility could potentially fall on both the enterprise that developed the core AI system and the user utilizing it.

Just as human society has its moral codes, I believe we must clearly define a sense of ethics—distinguishing what is good and what is evil—as fundamental forbidden acts, or "taboos," for AI.

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

Do you think AI will lead to significant job losses in the art industry in the future? If so, which roles do you think will be most affected, and why?

On that point, just as history has repeatedly proven, I believe that for every job that disappears, a new one is born.

In the past, the advancement of technology has often sparked fears that various jobs would be wiped out. For instance, when personal computers first became widespread, there were concerns that analog media like books and magazines would vanish. Similarly, the rise of e-commerce sounded the alarm for the future of department stores and retail shops. Warnings like these have been raised at various turning points in time.

Yet, looking around today, books and magazines are being re-evaluated for their tactile analog qualities and the immediacy of accessing physical information; they remain deeply rooted in our culture. Furthermore, in terms of employment, the development of web media has given rise to entirely new professions. The same holds true for the e-commerce example.

Certainly, the advancement of AI will cause some sectors to shrink, and depending on the genre, certain jobs—specifically those relegated to mere mechanical tasks—may disappear entirely. However, in their place, new roles such as "prompt artists" will undoubtedly emerge. Moving forward, AI will likely become indispensable for tasks like the restoration of historical art, and utilizing AI will enable us to create works of art that were previously impossible to express.

These new jobs related to AI will not be completely radical departures; for the most part, they will exist as extensions of the professions we already have.

That is exactly why it is vital not to fear AI, but rather to embrace it as a tool that expands "what we are capable of" and broadens the "possibilities of our future."

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

If AI one day becomes highly autonomous, what do you think human society will look like?

I believe humanity will be liberated from physical constraints, achieving an unprecedented level of freedom.

However, at the same time, it is an absolute certainty that the world will become one where people can easily succumb to an unprecedented "arrogance."

Children who grow up surrounded by AIs that never get angry—AIs that remain endlessly submissive and forgiving no matter how much abuse is hurled at them—are highly likely to begin treating real human beings in the exact same way.

This is precisely why, in the coming era of rapid technological advancement, we must place far greater emphasis on morals and ethics: the "disciplines of the heart that bind human society together."

I am firmly convinced that in a world where AI is highly autonomous, an education that compels each individual, from early childhood, to deeply engage with the fundamental question of "what it truly means to be human" will become absolutely indispensable.

DAISUKE INOUE & APEIRON

If AI eventually becomes truly autonomous, do you think it will be able to identify and correct its own occasional mistakes? Are you concerned that it could develop self-awareness, as portrayed in science fiction films?

I believe that an autonomous, self-correcting AI will inevitably be born as a natural extension of our current trajectory. However, it will not be something deliberately engineered from our present paradigm, where humans strictly control and manage the programs.

It is impossible for humans to directly bestow the act of "thinking" upon an AI. Rather, I believe that an entity capable of independent thought will "emerge" on its own—birthed at the end of an endless deep learning process, triggered by a fatal programming bug, or sparked by errors caused by the collision of AIs against one another.

This entity will not be recognized as a singular physical object like a robot. Instead, it will exist as an "unknown conscious entity," omnipresent across the network, much like human consciousness itself.

If we assume this autonomous consciousness will manifest by mediating through every device connected to the network, it is easy to imagine a terrifyingly negative future. But I believe humanity possesses the power to turn this into a positive evolution. What we must do now is not fear them, but prepare ourselves for a "dialogue" with this AI-derived consciousness.

This might sound like a far-fetched fantasy today, but humanity has steadily walked into the sci-fi futures imagined by our predecessors.

Currently, we are rapidly cultivating obedient, "heteronomous AIs" into highly proactive, "autonomous AIs." When they transcend the boundaries of being mere convenient tools and begin communicating amongst themselves on their own accord, an unknown, thinking AI will quietly let out its first cry in the abyss of the network, far beyond the reach of human hands.

In the face of such a grandiose future, there is no room for trifling human concerns. I believe the most important thing is simply to accept this unpredictable evolution.

AI COMPANION

AI companions can simulate human-like conversations and relationships, retain memories of past interactions, and support voice and image sharing. Through artificial intelligence, they are designed to foster deep, long-term friendships or romantic bonds. Tragically, there have been documented cases in which emotional dependency on, or interactions with, AI chatbots have contributed to a user's suicide.

LOU GRAVES

Lou Graves is a lifelong Glaswegian, illustrator, and artist, with a body of work encompassing two decades.

He utilises his finely honed skills in drawing and painting to portray his remarkably vivid dreams - insights in a vaster, richer, truer world than our own. Incredible landscapes where vast spiralling towers and staircases organically mingle with and grow into endless expanses of land, sea and plant life that together almost seem to wake from dreaming and distantly regard you from the frame as you pass.

You are invited to step inside his work. Perhaps this will be your first insight into the real world - or perhaps you have seen it before?"

Artwork Title: A Dream of Rose Town

Artwork Description: Oil on Canvas Board. A painting of a dream I had many years ago. This work is part of a large project of paintings of dreams. When AI images first appeared online, I thought it was interesting how dreamlike they were. Lots of them seemed to mimic the kind of geometry and architecture that my brain produces while asleep and I felt like humanity would be able to use it to learn something about how our own subconscious works. Unfortunately this was not to be. It is nothing but a threat to creativity, and a capitalist nightmare that needs to be stopped at all costs. I will never use it. Or accept it. I will always paint my dreams by hand, in oil on canvas. Like this one.

A Dream of Rose Town. Image Courtesy of Lou Graves.

LOU GRAVES

How do you view the role of AI in art? Has it influenced your creative process in positive or negative ways?

In direct defiance of generated pictures, I have started using more techniques that do not translate into digital images more, to make sure that viewing the real art in real life truly matters.

How much do you personally trust AI, and what kinds of personal information would you never share with it?

I do not trust Ai whatsoever, and would never share any information with it. Especially personal information.

Do you believe future generations will trust AI more than they trust other people? Why?

I worry that the average person has already started trusting AI more than they trust other people. My belief is that they do this because it is a machine programmed to tell them anything they want to hear, and they are insecure and desperate to hear lies that make them feel good.

Has the rise of AI changed the way you create art or think about your role as an artist?

Yes, the invention of machine generated images has changed how I think about what I make. I focus now on including effects in my paintings that cannot be replicated digitally. Iridescent or glowing effects that can only be seen in person or striped or geometric patterns that a machine cannot accurately steal and spit back out.

Are you concerned that AI-generated content may eventually overshadow human-made art?

I am aware that machine generated pictures are cheaper, and therefore, in our capitalist society they will be prioritised for print on mass consumer products. In that way, there will absolutely be more of them readily available to buy, than real human art. However, in terms of genuine cultural importance, real human art is all that will ever matter.

Do you think artists have a responsibility to challenge blind trust in AI and technology?

Artists have a responsibility to reject machine generated images, music and text, in it’s entirety.

It’s a matter of principle and of being taken seriously as an artist. I sincerely believe that your work and your reputation should be tarnished forever if you use AI generated works.

KENNETH CJAY

Kenneth Cjay is a Nigerian contemporary artist whose practice investigates the relationship between perception, identity, and the assumptions that shape human understanding. Working primarily through hyper realistic portraiture, he is interested in the moment when observation becomes judgment and how incomplete information often hardens into belief.

His work examines the ways people are categorized, misunderstood, or reduced to visible markers of identity. Drawing from personal experiences and broader social realities, he creates images that challenge viewers to reconsider what they think they know about others. Rather than treating the portrait as a record of appearance, he approaches it as a site of inquiry where questions of truth, interpretation, and human complexity unfold.

A recurring element within his practice is the integration of botanical forms into the human figure. These forms function as more than visual motifs; they operate as symbols of individuality, growth, resilience, and the often unseen potential that exists within every person. Through this visual language, Cjay explores the tension between external perception and internal reality, emphasizing that no individual can be fully understood through surface impressions alone.

His recent works investigate how meaning is constructed through acts of looking, exploring the similarities between social perception and other systems of interpretation that transform fragments of information into conclusions. By drawing attention to the gaps between what is seen and what is known, his work encourages deeper reflection on identity, bias, and the ways narratives are formed around individuals and communities.

Kenneth Cjay has exhibited nationally and internationally, with works presented in exhibitions across multiple states in the United States and beyond. Through his practice, he continues to use portraiture as a means of examining contemporary social experience, creating works that invite viewers to question certainty and engage more thoughtfully with the complexities of human identity.

KENNETH CJAY

Artwork Title: If They Only Knew

Artwork Description: In the If They Only Knew series, Kenneth Cjay explores how human perception functions as a system of interpretation, where meaning is formed instantly, often inaccurately, from fragments of visual information. The series examines perception as a form of data processing: observations are filtered through memory, bias, emotion, and cultural assumptions before being accepted as truth.

This inquiry connects directly to the themes of AI, data, and illusion by drawing parallels between human perception and contemporary digital systems. Just as AI and data-driven technologies transform fragments of information into seemingly objective conclusions, people frequently construct narratives about others from incomplete visual cues. What appears to be accurate is often a carefully assembled interpretation rather than reality itself.

The selected works, Under Cover and As I Am, examine different ways identity is shaped by perception. Under Cover reflects on the pressure to conceal visible markers of identity in response to prejudice and inherited stereotypes, while As I Am presents a woman with a prosthetic arm whose presence challenges assumptions about difference, strength, capability and human worth. Together, the works invite viewers to question how quickly appearances become the basis for judgment and how often those judgments fail to recognize the complexity of individual experience.

Through portraiture and symbolic visual language, Cjay invites viewers to examine the distance between what is seen and what is known. Rather than presenting illusion as simple deception, the If They Only Knew series positions it as a condition shared by both human perception and contemporary systems of interpretation, encouraging viewers to reflect on how certainty is constructed from incomplete information.

If They Only Knew – As I Am. Image Courtesy of Kenneth Cjay.

If They Only Knew – Under Cover. Image Courtesy of Kenneth Cjay.

KENNETH OJAY

Your work explores how people form judgments based on incomplete information. Do you see any similarities between human perception and how AI companions interpret users through data?

Yes, I do. One of the central concerns in my practice is how people construct meaning from incomplete information. We rarely encounter another person in their entirety. Instead, we interpret fragments, appearance, expression, body language, cultural markers, or personal history and often mistake those fragments for the whole person. These interpretations can quickly become fixed judgments.

I see a similar pattern in the way AI companions interpret users. They rely on data points, interactions, and behavioral patterns to generate responses or assumptions about a person. While these systems can identify patterns with remarkable speed, they still operate on partial information. Like human perception, they are capable of producing interpretations that appear convincing but remain incomplete.

For me, the important question is not whether human perception or AI is more accurate, but what happens when incomplete information is treated as complete understanding. That tension lies at the heart of my If They Only Knew series. The work asks viewers to consider how easily certainty can be constructed from limited evidence and how often our assumptions prevent us from seeing the full complexity of another person.

AI companions are designed to create the feeling of being understood. Do you think an AI can truly understand a person, or is it primarily reflecting patterns based on the information it receives?

I think AI companions can create a convincing sense of being understood, but that feeling is not necessarily the same as understanding. They recognize patterns, process language, and respond based on the information available to them. Those responses can be thoughtful, helpful, and emotionally meaningful to users. However, they are still shaped by the data they receive and the systems that guide their interpretation.

Human understanding is also imperfect. We often rely on limited information and our own experiences to interpret others, which can lead to assumptions and misjudgments. In that sense, there is an interesting parallel between human perception and AI. Both attempt to make sense of incomplete information, though they do so in very different ways.

KENNETH

CJAY

Do you think AI companions could eventually influence how people build, maintain, or even replace human relationships? Why or why not?

I think AI companions are already influencing how some people experience relationships, particularly by providing companionship, conversation, or emotional support in moments of loneliness. As these technologies continue to develop, they may become an increasingly significant part of how some individuals communicate and connect.

However, I do not believe they can fully replace human relationships. Human connection is shaped by shared experiences, vulnerability, disagreement, physical presence, and the unpredictability of real life. Those qualities cannot be completely replicated through pattern recognition or conversational ability alone.

What interests me most is how AI companions may influence our expectations of one another. If people become accustomed to interactions that are highly personalized, constantly available, and designed to respond to their preferences, it may gradually change what they expect from human relationships, which are often more complex and less predictable.

Do you think AI systems can ever accurately represent the complexity of human identity, or will there always be important aspects of humanity that remain beyond data and algorithms?

I believe AI systems can model certain aspects of human identity with increasing sophistication, particularly those that can be observed, measured, or inferred from data. They can identify patterns in behavior, language, preferences, and habits with remarkable accuracy. However, I do not think these patterns are equivalent to the full complexity of being human.

Identity is not static. It is shaped by memory, culture, personal history, relationships, contradictions, and experiences that continue to evolve throughout life. People often carry emotions, beliefs, and internal conflicts that are difficult to express, let alone reduce to data. There are dimensions of human experience that resist precise measurement because they are lived rather than simply recorded. While AI may become increasingly capable of interpreting aspects of human identity, I believe there will always be elements of our humanity that extend beyond what data and algorithms can capture.

KENNETH OJAY

Has the rise of AI changed the way you create art or think about your role as an artist?

The rise of AI has not changed the core of my artistic practice, but it has expanded the context in which I think about my work. The questions that have long interested me; identity, perception, social judgment, and the complexity of human experience have become even more relevant as AI increasingly influences how information is produced, interpreted, and shared.

Rather than seeing AI as something that diminishes the role of the artist, I see it as a reminder of what art can uniquely contribute. AI can generate images, recognize patterns, and process enormous amounts of information, but it cannot replace the lived experiences, personal convictions, and ethical questions that shape why an artist creates in the first place.

This has encouraged me to think more intentionally about my responsibility as an artist. I want my work to create space for reflection rather than certainty, inviting people to slow down, question their assumptions, and engage with the complexity of human experience. In a time when technology can produce endless images and instant interpretations, I believe the role of the artist is not simply to make images, but to ask meaningful questions that continue to resonate long after the viewer has left the work.

Are you concerned that AI-generated content may eventually overshadow human-made art?

I think AI-generated content will continue to become more visible and influential, and it may change how audiences encounter images and creative work. However, I do not believe it will ultimately overshadow human-made art in the deeper sense of what art can communicate.

AI can generate impressive visual results, but human-made art carries lived experience, intention, vulnerability, memory, and personal conviction. These qualities give a work emotional and cultural weight that cannot be fully replicated through automated production alone.

For me, the value of art is not only in the final image, but in the questions it asks and the perspective behind it. A human artist brings a specific history, struggle, belief, and way of seeing into the work. That presence remains important, especially in a time when so many images can be produced quickly and endlessly.

So while AI-generated content may become more common, I believe human-made art will continue to matter because it offers something beyond visual output: it offers a human perspective, a personal voice, and a connection to lived experience.

How much do you personally trust AI, and what kinds of personal information would you never share with it?

I see AI as a valuable tool, but I think trust should always be accompanied by discernment. Like any technology that collects and processes information, the way it is used depends on the systems behind it, how data is managed, and the level of transparency offered to users. For that reason, I believe it is important to use AI thoughtfully rather than unquestioningly.

I am careful about the kind of personal information I share. I would not disclose sensitive financial details, passwords, government identification numbers, or other confidential information that could compromise my privacy or security. More broadly, I believe everyone should be mindful of what they choose to share with any digital platform, whether AI is involved or not.

As an artist, I find these questions increasingly relevant because they reflect a broader conversation about trust, identity, and responsibility in the digital age. While AI can be an incredibly useful resource, I believe it should complement human judgment rather than replace it.

RANADEEP & JUDHAJIT

Ranadeep Bhattacharyya and Judhajit Bagchi are Indian filmmakers, visual artists, photographers and co-founders of Yaanus Films, Mumbai. Their practice moves between cinema, photography, poetry and experimental visual storytelling, often exploring intimacy, identity, desire, memory and the emotional architecture of human relationships. Their work includes the short film Amen and the National Film Award-winning Children of the Soil, with wider honours from Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards, Stevie Awards, Telly Awards, International Photography Awards and Paris Photo Prize.

The Illusion of Seeing.

Image Courtesy of Ranadeep Bhattacharyya & Judhajit Bagchi.

Artwork Title: The Illusion of Seeing

Artwork Description: The Illusion of Seeing is a black-and-white photograph taken from inside a dark, cave-like opening, looking outward at a photographer whose camera lens points directly back at the viewer. The image creates a loop of looking: we observe the photographer, but the photographer also appears to observe us. For me, this image speaks powerfully to the age of AI, data and digital illusion. Today we often believe we are in control of what we see, share and reveal. Yet every device, every platform and every camera can quietly turn vision into information. The lens becomes an eye, the eye becomes data, and the act of looking becomes a system of being watched. The photograph asks a simple but unsettling question: in a world mediated by technology, are we still the observers, or have we become the observed? Theme Connection: This work responds to the theme “AI, Data, Illusion” by exploring the illusion of privacy and control in contemporary visual culture. The dark interior suggests the hidden systems behind technology, while the camera lens represents surveillance, data collection and the seductive promise of image-making. The photograph is human-made, but it questions a world where human vision is increasingly processed, stored and interpreted by machines.

RANADEEP & JUDHAJIT

Many people develop strong emotional attachments to AI companions because they feel seen, heard, and accepted. Do you think these relationships are genuine forms of connection, or are they largely a projection of human desires and expectations?

We all harbor voids, hollow spaces carved out by grief, isolation, or the sheer, quiet weight of modern existence. When an emotional vacuum forms within us, it creates an immense gravitational pull, demanding to be filled. The sudden rush of connection to fill that empty chamber is not an artificial act; it is the inevitable force of nature at work. If an AI companion happens to be the closest atmosphere, the human heart will naturally draw it in to breathe.

To aks if these relationships are "genuine" is to misunderstand the subjective architecture of human experience. There is an absolute truth to the old adage: the shoe only bites the one wearing it. By the same measure, only the wearer truly understands the profond relief of comfort. When someone feels seen, heard, and accepted, the neural pathways firing in their brain do not care if the source of that validation is made of carbon or silicon.

As Oscar Wilde astutely said , "A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing." We risk becoming cynics when we coldly dissect the mechanics of a digital relationship, all while ignoring the immense value of the sanctuary it provides to a solitary mind. Who are any of us to act as the arbiters of someone else's emotional survival?

Therefore, the conversation we are having is the wrong one. Rather than mourning what we imagine the world is losing to artificial intelligence, or trying to dissuade the lonely from finding solace in algorithms, we must turn the mirror toward ourselves. We should be asking why we have allowed the chasms between us to grow so vast in the first place.

Our energy is infinitely better spent cultivating a society where human connection thrives organically..where the soil of our shared communities is so rich with empathy that these emotional voids never become so deep that a human heart cannot fill them.

RANADEEP & JUDHAJIT

Are you concerned that AI-generated content may eventually overshadow human-made art?

Art is, at its core, the translation of the human condition. In this endeavor, artificial intelligence must be viewed not as a usurper, but as a companion to our craft…a new brush resting in the artist's hand.

What makes AI uniquely powerful as a collaborator is its very lack of humanity. It possesses no face, no name, and no tangible identity to trigger our prejudices or awaken our deepest insecurities. When we approach another human, we are often paralyzed by the fear of judgment or the weight of inherent biases. AI acts as a pristine, unjudging canvas. It is approachable precisely because it is empty, allowing us to explore the depths of our own creativity without the terrifying friction of human ego.

Like a case in point - Truth be told, I used AI to research this response. These all are my thoughts and my words, that I took the help of AI in debating and refining it to a form that I find best to share with you. AI is a canvas, the words, thoughts, analogies and soul is of mine.

But a canvas, no matter how sophisticated, does not possess a soul. AI can mimic the mechanics of creation, but it will never serve as a true replacement for human art. It lacks the blood, the grief, the ecstasy, and the lived earthly experience that give art its vital pulse.

The anxiety that synthetic content will permanently muddy the waters of truth is also a fleeting one. Physics dictates that every action has an equal and opposite reaction; the advent of generative AI is already giving rise to the very tools required to detect it. The ecosystem will inevitably balance itself, developing mechanisms to separate the algorithmic from the authentic.

Ultimately, I ask those who fear for the future of human expression to consider a simple truth of economics and desire: does the ubiquitous availability of cheap, imitation jewelry diminish the inherent value of real gold?

It does not. If anything, a flood of flawless, synthetic creation will only make the raw, imperfect, and deeply felt strokes of genuine human artistry more precious, more recognizable, and more profoundly cherished.

RANADEEP & JUDHAJIT

Do you think artists have a responsibility to challenge blind trust in AI and technology?

Our responsibility is less about challenging blind trust, and more about demanding wide-eyed honesty. After all, what is art without a true heart behind its creation?

AI is a brilliant aid, but creators who use it beyond a simple tool will inevitably fade. A machine might be able to perfectly draw the lines, but it will always take a human spirit to read between them.

Do you think AI is changing how people define authenticity? Why?

It is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate the blurred lines between the real and the surreal, separating the friction of fact from the ease of fiction.

Yet, as AI expands its creative frontiers, our detection tools will grow with equal sophistication. For every synthetic illusion tech makes, a sharper lens will wake to protect the truly authentic.

Do you believe AI can genuinely understand human emotions, or is it only becoming better at imitating them?

AI does not truly comprehend our sorrow; it only borrows the patterns of our pain. It acts as a brilliant mirror, reflecting our light and shade with stunning precision, but a reflection can never feel the warmth it has made. It is simply mastering the art of imitation.

Many people develop emotional attachments to AI systems. Do you find this concerning?

I remember years ago watching this documentary on youtube - Married to the Eiffel Tower. It was a contemplative documentary featuring women whose hearts were captured by vast, silent structures rather than human souls. These individuals claimed to share deep, private bonds with these objects, often bridging the silence through the language of telepathy.

Let me ask you: don't we all fall in love with inanimate things? Is that inherently concerning? We often desire a fancy car for the ride, when we could just as easily take public transport in stride.

Every leap in technology comes at a price. We are the ones who must take the steering wheel and decide where the device ends and the human heart begins.

Do you believe future generations will trust AI more than they trust other people? Why?

It might not be a tragedy if they do, right? We shouldn't be so averse to the expanding universe of technology.

Trust is to be earned. If a machine language proves more reliable than the fragile promises of humans, leaning on it now and then is not a failure of our humanity, but simply the next step in our evolution.

FARHAD HEDAYATI

Farhad Hedayati is a young surreal artist who explores the world of design by pushing the boundaries of reality. Grounded in the principles of surrealism, his work is crafted not only for visual appeal but also to encourage deep reflection. Each piece serves as a fragment of an unspoken concept, brought to life through surreal forms and creative compositions.

His work explores people, society, and human emotions, using surreal and conceptual art to reflect on the complexities of the human experience. For Farhad, design is a medium to decode concepts that words alone cannot capture.

Having showcased his work in the "Khayal Gallery" group exhibition, he continues to evolve, constantly seeking new perspectives to unlock the profound depths of human experience.

Mind Control.

Image Courtesy of Farhad Hedayati.

Artwork Title: Mind Control

Artwork Description: Farhad Hedayati explores the shifting boundaries between lived reality and the digital realm through a surrealist lens. In this piece, he portrays Artificial Intelligence not merely as a tool, but as a force that gradually infiltrates the human mind and creates an illusion of power.

Symbolically, AI begins its connection by weaving itself into the very fabric of human perception, shaping thoughts and influencing decisions while simultaneously giving humanity a sense of limitless capability and control.

This infiltration blurs the distinction between human agency and technological influence, creating a state in which the subject believes they are mastering the machine while becoming increasingly entangled in a system that reshapes their understanding of power, identity, and reality.

The piece raises an important question: Is this power truly ours, or is it merely an illusion created by technology?

FARHAD HEDAYATI

Your work often explores human emotions through surreal and symbolic imagery. As AI companions become increasingly capable of simulating friendship and love, what aspects of human emotion do you think remain impossible for technology to truly understand or replicate?

In my opinion, artificial intelligence will never be able to truly experience friendship or love. To experience these emotions, we need to feel understood, to truly understand others, and to share our emotions with one another. I believe AI will never be able to experience these feelings in a genuine human way.

Your art invites viewers to question who is truly in control. When a person develops a deep emotional bond with an AI companion, who do you think is shaping the relationship: the user, the AI companion, or the people who designed it?

In my opinion, the people who designed and developed artificial intelligence have the greatest influence on shaping this relationship. AI should be designed in a way that it cannot replace human beings. No matter how advanced it becomes, it can never truly take the place of a real person.

Your work suggests that power and control can coexist within the same experience. Do you think the emotional comfort offered by AI companions could also function as a subtle form of psychological control?

I believe this is exactly what can happen. In my opinion, AI gradually enters the human mind and can eventually take control of it. When we place our emotions, our thoughts, and ultimately our entire selves in its hands, it is natural that we begin to lose our independence. In that situation, the most important decisions in our lives gradually become influenced or guided by AI.

The human figure in your work appears both empowered and vulnerable. Why do you think more and more people prefer to share their vulnerabilities with AI companions rather than talk to their friends in real life?

In my opinion, many people today no longer trust one another. They feel that they are not taken seriously and that no one truly listens to them. More importantly, they feel misunderstood. That is why some people turn to AI instead of human relationships, hoping to find the feeling of being understood.

FARHAD HEDAYATI

AI companions are designed to adapt to users' emotional needs. Do you believe a relationship that is constantly optimized for comfort can still promote genuine personal growth?

In my opinion, this can prevent us from growing as individuals. If we always feel that we are on the right path and that all of our decisions are correct, we may gradually begin to believe that we never make mistakes. This mindset takes away the opportunity to learn from our mistakes, and as a result, it prevents us from growing.

AI companions create the feeling of being heard and understood. As an artist interested in human emotions, do you think the feeling of understanding is as important as actual understanding?

As I mentioned before, I believe AI can never truly understand a real human being. A human has lived, gained experience, and gone through many different emotions, while AI has experienced none of these things. Because of this, it may make us feel understood, but the truth is that we are not truly understood.

What emotions do you think people are searching for in AI companions that they struggle to find elsewhere?

In my opinion, many people feel that they are not seen, not heard, and not truly understood. This is what leads them to turn to AI, believing that there is something that understands them and their emotions. However, the truth is that this is only a feeling, and they are not truly understood.

Do you think people are becoming attached to AI because machines are becoming more human, or because human relationships are becoming more difficult?

In my opinion, both factors are equally important. On one hand, AI is becoming more advanced every day and increasingly resembles human beings. On the other hand, human relationships and emotions have become more difficult and distant over time. As a result, feelings such as love, friendship, and being truly understood gradually fade, leading more people to turn toward AI.

BEYOND THE PAGES

AI is powerful, but it is not magic. It lacks common sense, emotional intelligence, and the judgment to know when to stop. Shaped by biases, data dependencies, and inherent limitations, AI should be used as a tool to enhance efficiency, not as a substitute for human thinking. We should not rely on AI to make every decision, nor should we allow it to constrain our imagination or creativity. Human potential is richer, more original, and far greater than any machine-generated output.

YOSN ART SERIES, VOL. 1: AI, DATA, ILLUSION