

No. 3: AI in Filmmaking

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Calm down. I know what some people are expecting me to say. They expect me to bash the art of filmmaking, but I strive to do the opposite. There are some things that AI just cannot replicate, and one of those things is creativity (I will elaborate on this in a future essay). Filmmaking is one of the most intricate creative endeavors in the modern age. Whether it's a YouTube video or a blockbuster film, there are a multitude of things that need to be done before, during, and after filming. Each step of the way is a display of creativity that comes together in a feast for the eyes.

The filmmaking process for many directors and creatives seems to be a sacred process for them, and I seek to respect that feeling. The process of making art is just as important, if not more important, than the art itself; that's why figuring out where AI fits into the equation is so hard. So let's just start out with some clear no's. I believe that parts of the filmmaking process that are directly tied to the final product, the film, should not be interfered with by any form of AI. This would include screenwriting, cinematography, acting, and editing. All of these things are core to the quality of the film and are a vehicle for the creative vision of all the people involved. It is very difficult for AI to come up with creative decisions that will produce new cinematic masterpieces like *The Godfathers* or *Pulp Fictions* of the world. There is a certain uniqueness to human creativity that emerges from the financial and personal situations of everyone involved in the production. The stylistic choices that emerge as a result cannot be replicated by AI. Yes, I'm aware that deepfakes are being increasingly used throughout the industry, but when I refer to acting, I mean the performance of it. Deepfakes are primarily used to change the appearance of an actor, not their performance. Some people may be surprised that I

mentioned editing as a no. Currently, many tools exist that speed up the editing process, but I think they disrupt the creativity of the filmmakers. In filmmaking, the edit is just as important as the act of filming itself. The editing makes or breaks the final production as it determines the mood, tempo, pacing, look, and final meaning of the film. The edit is what confirms the creative vision and should be left to the filmmakers to make the final decisions.

The place where AI has a place in filmmaking is in the processes that happen behind the scenes. Two examples are in the planning and storyboarding of a film. AI can assist in researching places to film, historical details, and maintaining a schedule for a shoot. With regard to storyboards, I think that generative AI can help filmmakers develop their ideas in the early stages of production. Instead of rough initial sketches, they can generate images that better represent what they envision. Simply put, I think that generative AI can enhance the flow of ideas for filmmakers. In the end, final storyboards should be done by artists as they are the best possible way to capture the true creative vision of the directors. Another place for AI is in the creation of VFX for films. I'm not saying that AI is going to replace VFX artists. What I am saying is that AI can greatly benefit the process of creating visual effects for films. AI is already speeding up the VFX workflow through tools that make rotoscoping, motion capture, model creation, and simulation easier or more efficient [1]. None of these tools can replicate human artists, but they can allow them to create things they never could have deemed possible.

There is a place for various forms of AI in the filmmaking process, but the level of impact it can have really depends on the production team. My stance treats the filmmaking process with great respect and argues that AI shouldn't be used in places that directly affect the film itself. It should, however, be implemented in ways that allow for the creative vision to eventually become a reality. Whether this is by speeding up logistical things, allowing

filmmakers to better brainstorm ideas, or making the lives of VFX artists easier, AI's place in creative fields is in ways that enhance people's creativity, not ways that seek to replicate it.

[1] "AI Tools for VFX | MOD VFX Blog," modvfx.com. <https://modvfx.com/blog/ai-tools-for-vfx>