My name is Alyssa, I've been an artist since I was 11 and uploading that art online to a website called Deviantart since I was 13. Nearly my entire artistic journey from 13 until 24, 11 years, is documented on this website. in 2022 DeviantArt took every single piece I had ever uploaded to the site and scraped it for their AI tool "DreamUp." DreamUp is Deviantart's native AI tool, which they charge users to utilize either via premium membership or with individual prompt charges. To say I found this devastating and a betrayal of trust is an absolute understatement.

Since this incident, I have done research on Ai and the way that it functions. First of all, I feel strongly that the term "AI artwork" is disingenuous. These algorithms are trained to recognize images by being funneled billions of images and recognizing pixel patterns in those images. The only reason it knows what's "good" or "bad" is not based on intuition, but by pattern recognition of billions of images, by picking up on patterns that other *humans* have defined for it. It's nothing but a pattern-recognizing algorithm, and in no sense is "intelligent" or able to make its own decisions other than what humans ask it to do.

There have been those that say tools such as Midjourney are learning from a "reference" as an artist does. But this is simply not the case. The way Midjourney processes information vs a human observing and developing an artistic skill is different on a fundamental level. Midjourney has access to a library larger than any human could physically ever have access to. But, it can only ever get better at creating what it has already studied. A human may be less accurate, have less of a body of reference to refer to when creating art, but humans throughout time and art history have created revolutionary styles by breaking artistic conventions at the time. Impressionism, Cubism, Dadaism, and every other art movement was created because human artists, using the fundamentals of art that they had learned, purposefully chose to break those conventions to create something new, interesting, and thought-provoking. Midjourney, as it stands, is simply incapable of doing this.

It's my opinion that companies like Midjourney are unethically using the work of hundreds of artists, without their consent or permission, to make bank off of their work. Midjourney would simply be nothing without the work of these artists, and projects like Glaze and Nightshade from the University of Chicago have proven this. The only way to use AI ethically moving forward, would be to take two crucial steps. The first would be that AI tools would be free and open source, or to pay artists residuals for their work, but with the amount of work scraped this would be nearly impossible. The second step, and this one is crucial, is that every image generated by an AI tool immediately becomes public domain.

As an artist, I do have a bias here. But my bias is that living is nothing if we cannot make art. Art is more than just pretty pictures, it's a way to connect with others and get a glimpse into another person's soul. To see their desires, what they're passionate about, to understand them on a level that isn't possible with speech alone. You simply cannot do this with an AI, and if we attempt to automate human artists out of existence, we will lose a crucial part of our humanity and our identity as a society.

I urge the US copyright office to stand with artists and prevent AI generated images from being copyrighted.

Thank you,

Alyssa K.