I want to give some context for anyone reading.

I pursued a degree in illustration and interactive design, and It took me twice as long because of disability. At some point I was going to school full-time, then working three part-time jobs while also trying to manage getting my father help for his illness.

I worked in digital advertising for over a decade. At different times I was a studio artist, sound developer, motion graphics artist, made assets for games, did storyboarding, graphic design, art direction, development, etc. the majority of those things I had to teach myself. It was mentally and physically difficult due to my disabilities and so many times I wanted to give up. I worked on brands like Hanes, Kelloggs, ADP, Lenovo, Ulta, etc. etc.

I eventually become too physically disabled to continue working.

Working in digital advertising I became very familiar with the tools used and the process to get things created, approved, and sent out. A big part of our work was social media, which is heavy on algorithms. Truthfully a lot of the "AI" we're seeing now is not true AI but very complex algorithms being fed and created for a specific task.

I am not in anyway against this as a concept, I can absolutely see how AI could be beneficial for society as a whole.

I think there's something to be said with the intent when we create these technologies, and how they are created and perpetuated. Why did we prioritize tech that widely only benefits corporations who are already experiencing record profits, with an invested interest in undercutting artists?

When we think of all the things that we could use AI for, including better medical care and access, Assistive devices for people with disabilities, etc, we have to consider why the priority was made for AI art, writing, and other creative based ventures?

These are fed by databases of stolen artwork that artists have absolutely no recourse to have their work removed from.

And yeah, my work is absolutely in the stable diffusion art database. Has been from the very beginning. The entirety of DeviantArts Library was added to the database from the very beginning without artists consent or knowledge, going against even their own terms and conditions. It's one of the many lawsuits that have been filed.

I say this not as sour grapes, but for people to consider: there are artists with significant disabilities whose artwork is being stolen and fed to the database against their wishes. Is it really OK for us ethically to create these technologies "for disabled creators" by stealing from other disabled creators?

Among the artwork included in the database was one piece I created tackling bipolar 2 disorder, and a piece created in conjunction with someone on the spectrum to help demystify it a good 10 years ago.

As we speak I have been bedridden for 10 days for acute health reasons, and will most likely continue to be so for 20 more days while attempting to get treatment. I, of all people, understand the temptation to use AI generators.

But I refuse, and will continue to refuse until ethical AI has been created that is legislated to keep to ethical standards and protect disabled creators like me.

How could this look like?

Only create databases of ethically sourced artwork. No adding art to the database without consent. Allow artist to remove it at a later date if necessary.Create a payment system similar to stock photo aggregates to incentivize adding to such a database.

Stop the practice of allowing companies to create a database of a specific artists style to be used to create content, thereby avoiding having to hire the artist. I actually think there is value in this practice if it is done with consent, but being able to undercut hiring an artist and using their definitive style sourcing their images without their consent is super unethical.

Those are just a few things.

The crux of it is that in these cases where technology moves faster than laws and legislation, it takes time for the law to catch up with the technology. We cannot legislate this technology based on current laws, because it simply did not exist in the mainstream several years ago.

This is new territory, and we need to treat it as such, considering the ethical implications not just for now but for the future.