Assignment 1 (Surrealistic Collage) Reflection

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Generative AI is a way of creating new images, sounds, or text by learning patterns from large collections of existing examples instead of following fixed rules. Diffusion models like Stable Diffusion take random noise and slowly turn it into an image that matches a text prompt. The creative part is how the artist guides the process, choosing concepts, selecting style, and shaping meaning.

In creative fields, generative AI helps artists explore ideas quickly and test combinations of visual elements that might take much longer by hand. It is especially interesting when used for surreal or symbolic art, because it can combine different eras, styles, and cultural fragments in surprising ways. At the same time, critics use the term *AI slop* to describe generic, low-effort AI imagery that floods social media, and they mention that this kind of mimicry misses the point of art (Carr, *What Is AI Slop?*).

One artist whose work inspires me is Beth Frey, a visual artist who uses AI alongside her traditional practice to create strange, dream-like imagery that embraces the uncanny and the unexpected. Her pieces don't try to copy photographs or realistic scenes; instead, they explore absurd juxtapositions and weird character forms. Almost like letting the machine dream alongside her own creative imagination. This surreal approach reminds me why artists invented collage long before AI existed: to make meaning out of unlikely combinations, emotions, and time-collision, not to reproduce reality.

References:

1. Carr, Aaron. "*What Is AI Slop? A Technologist Explains This New and Largely Unwelcome Form of Online Content,*" *The Conversation*, January 15, 2024, https://theconversation.com/what-is-ai-slop-a-technologist-explains-this-new-and-largely-unwelcome-form-of-online-content-256554

2. CBC Arts, "*AI Is Transforming Visual Culture Faster Than You Can Say 'Slop',*" *CBC*, December 19, 2025, https://www.cbc.ca/arts/ai-is-transforming-visual-culture-faster-than-you-can-say-slop-9.7021370