

10

tips to getting the most out of MidJourney

(with tips, prompts and examples)



mexican skull, kawaii --v 3 --q 2

Why this document?

If you have reached this document I guess you know what MidJourney is, right? If not, [visit their website](#).

I had created this document for myself, to organize the learnings I was getting as I used MidJourney (MJ), watched videos of artists, got inspired by other creations... But reading and commenting in forums with different people, I thought it would be a good idea to publish it, to help others accelerate their first steps.

For this reason, I don't give any explanation of how to register in MJ and how to use Discord, but I'm going to give tips and tricks with examples. If you haven't used it yet, here are some basic links to get you started:

// [Quick Starter Guide](#)

// [The MidJourney WebApp](#)

// [User Manual](#)

// [MidJourney Beginner Tutorial](#)



mexican skull::1 --iw 3 --v 3

(the image was a black and white portrait photo of me)

Learn what MidJourney is good at

Before starting with the 10 tips, I will share one that I think is key: **know what MJ is good at and don't be obsessed with achieving the impossible.** MJ has infinite potential and I'm sure he will evolve very fast offering greater possibilities but currently it has limits and it's important to know them.

Currently MJ is very good with textures and lattices, with galactic imagery and daydreams, with visualizing strong and mystical feelings. He is very good at depicting well-known elements, which have a lot of pictures on the Internet.

But it's not good with parts of the human body like hands, feet or eyes. It's not good with sophisticated interactions (for example, a sorcerer who is mixing two colored potions) or generating hyper-realistic people, photographic quality (for this is better DALL-E 2) or when you want something very concrete with a very high definition (for example, a monkey thinking like "Rodin's Thinker"). Nor will it version a photo you upload in a specific style (e.g. "my Simpsons style portrait").



mexican skull--v 3

Learn what MidJourney is good at

The reason is because of how MJ works (see [Diffusion Model](#)) where the elements of the image are not what they seem. With perspective, a rose will look like a rose but when you look at the details (*zoom in*) you will see that there are imperfections, errors. MJ generates an element to make it look like it is but it really is not. When you want a lot of detail or hyperrealism, MJ doesn't work (right now) and elements that need detail (like the eyes on a person's face) fail miserably.

The irony is that precisely because of that, his creations are magical and dreamlike, something fantastic when you really want it to be so.

Something he is very good at is skulls and that is why I have chosen the famous Mexican skulls to test and compare throughout the document. Now it makes sense the cover and my creepy "portrait", right? 😎💀



mexican skull::1 with a snake::3 --q 2 --v 3

Learn how to use the “switches”

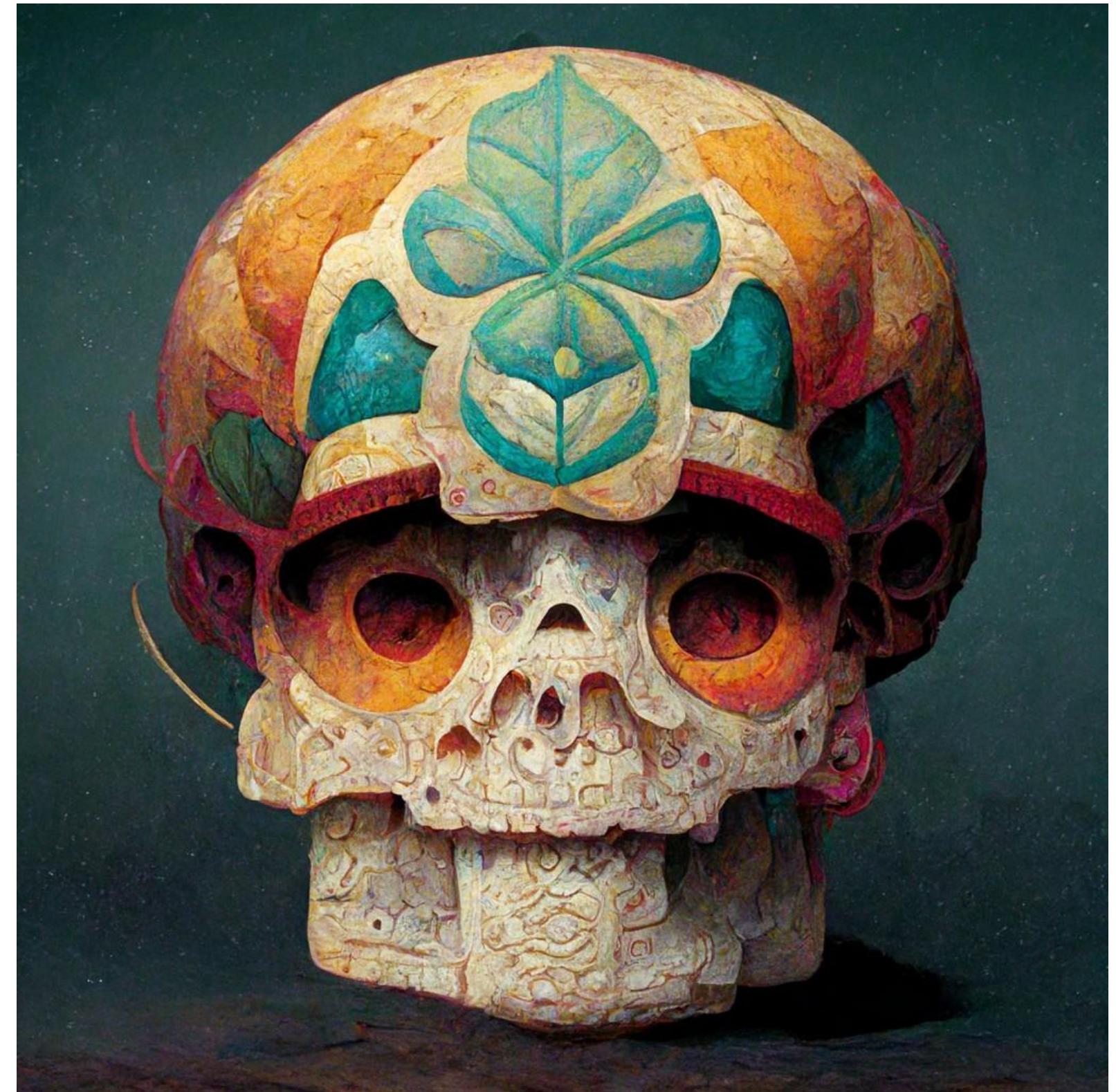
The “switches” are the parameters that you enter at the prompt using “--” and it’s important to control them to get the most out of MJ.

In [this link](#) you have all of them explained but the ones I use the most are: the version (important to use always the last one, in this case the 3 [--v 3]), the quality, that is, how much rendering quality time you want (in my case, although it takes more time, I use most of the time a value between 2 and 5 [--q 2]) and the aspect ratio of the image (height and width).

This last one is specially important because depending on your choice the result can change a lot and not only because of the image size, but also because MJ can generate something very different.



When you want to generate concrete elements (like a Mexican skull) the best is the square format. When you want to generate a full-body person, it’s better to use the vertical ratio (9:16). And if you want to generate a landscape or something where the environment is important, use a landscape format like 16:9.



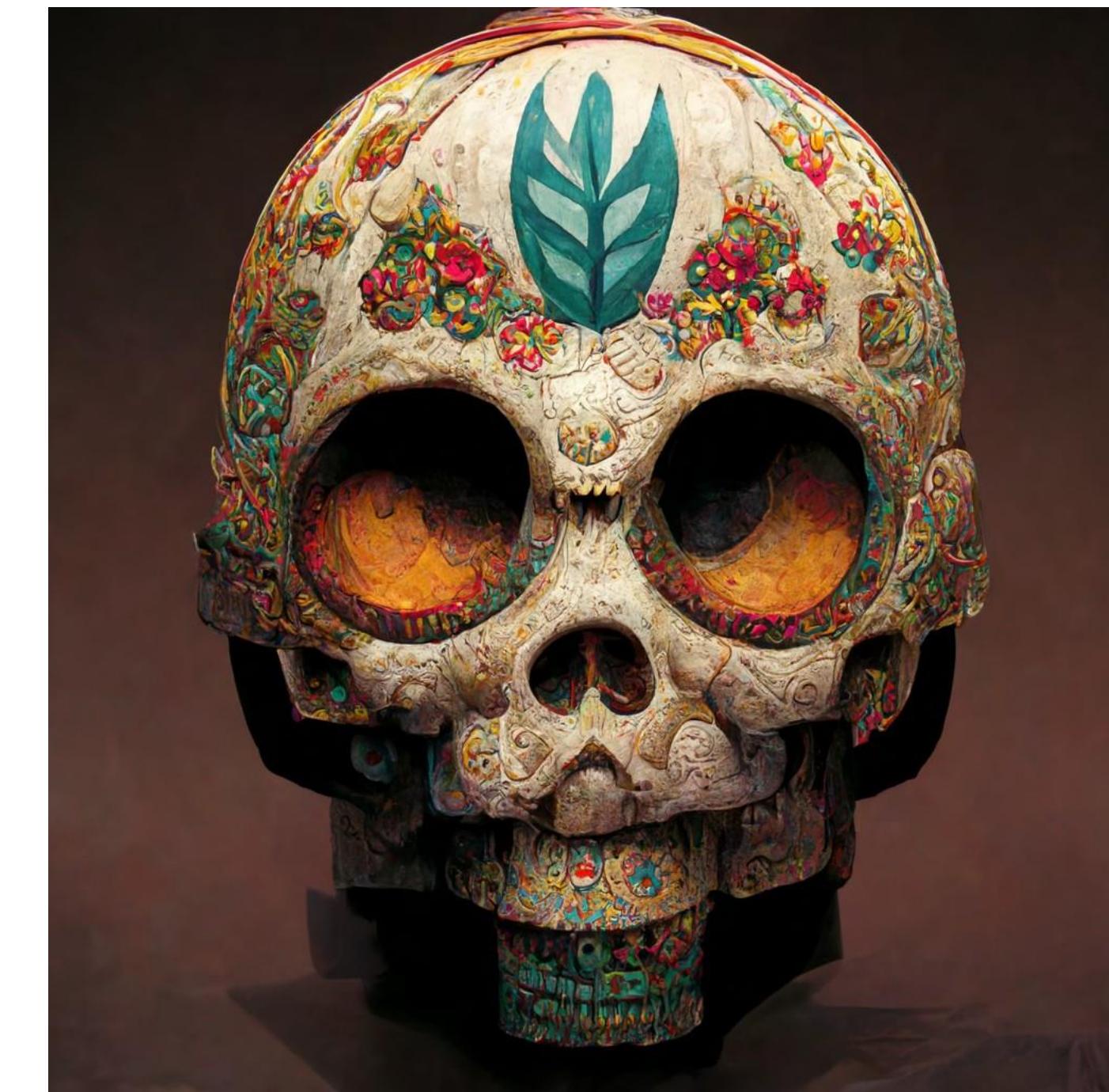
mexican skull --q 2 --v 3

Quality

How much render quality time you want to spend. The default value is 1. Higher values cost more (resources and time) and lower values cost less, but the results are much better.



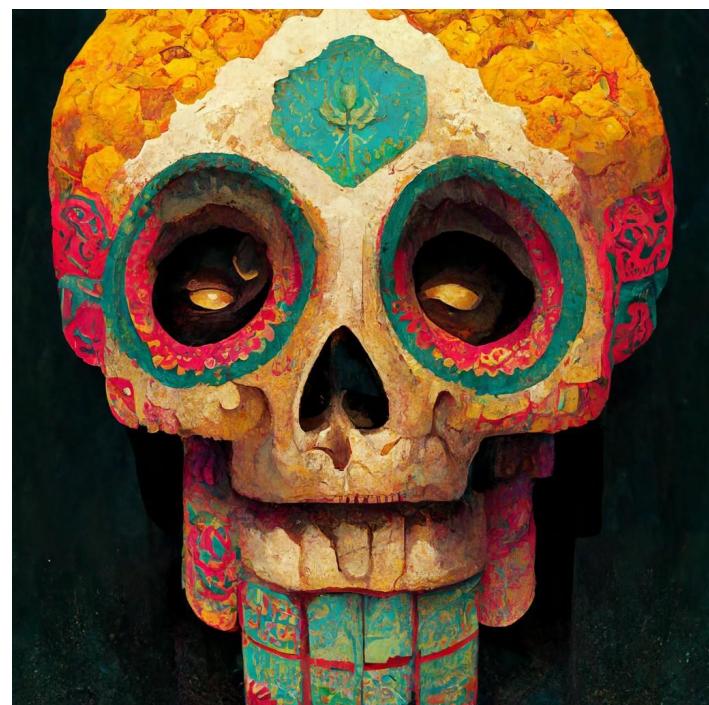
mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull --q 2 --v 3

Aspect ratio

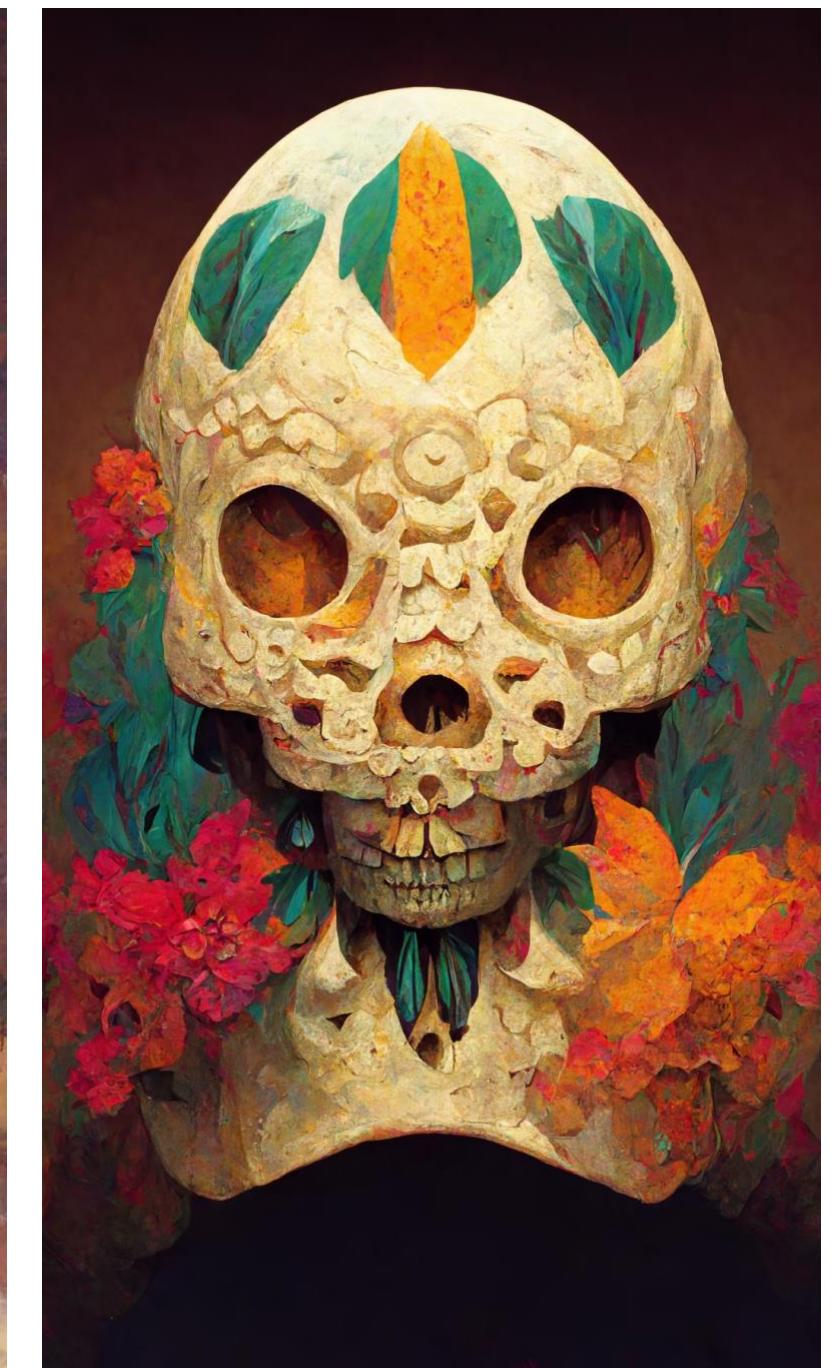
The images below have been generated with the same *prompt* except for the aspect ratio. It can be seen that in the landscape format the coherence is lost. On the other hand, in portrait format, this is not the case.



mexican skull --v 3



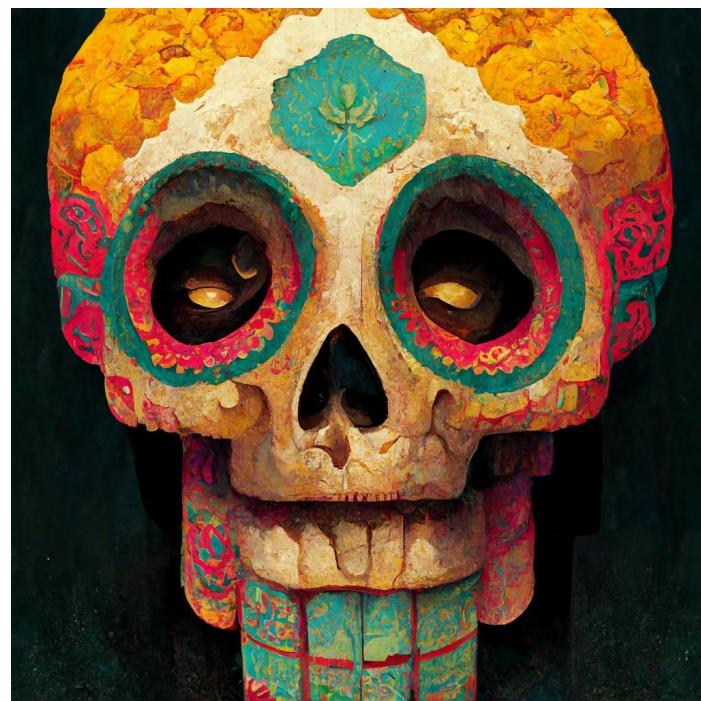
mexican skull --ar 16:9 --v 3



mexican skull --ar 9:16 --v 3

Aspect ratio

There are many shortcuts to detail the aspect ratio without giving the exact aspect ratio or resolution. For example `--s1` equals `--w 320 --h 256` or `--wallpaper` equals `--w 1920 --h 1024 --hd`. As seen below, a "wallpaper" format also makes the image, in this case a concrete object, lose coherence.



mexican skull `--v 3`



mexican skull `--wallpaper --v 3`

Handle MJ's level of creativity

Although stylize (--s) is another *switch*, I have separated it to give it the importance it should have. Although it's complicated to explain this parameter, we could say that the higher it is the more creative freedom MJ will have.

The default value is 2500, allowing it a certain creative and interpretative freedom. If this is reduced, the result will be closer to the description provided in the prompt. If it is increased, MJ will give results further away from the *prompt*, although it will always be based on it.



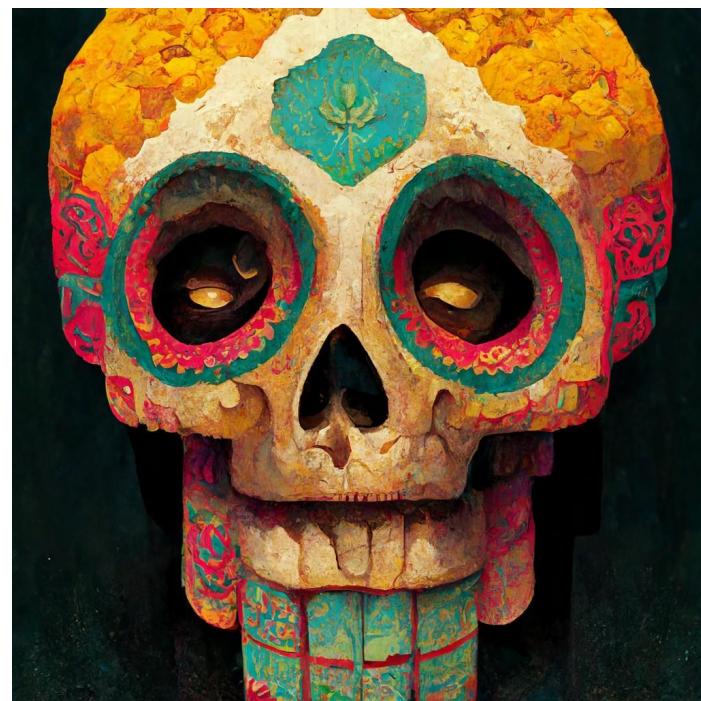
This parameter is very interesting to look for surprising and innovative results. If we want to indicate the direction to MJ but we want it to elaborate a composition with freedom, where we do not enter, this parameter is key.



mexican skull --s 6000 --v 3

Stylize

Below we can see the original image, without parameters except for the v, where the stylize is 2500. The second image has a stylize of 6000 and in it we can see some evolution, introducing other elements, moving out of the skull. The third image has a stylize of 60000, allowing MJ an extreme creative freedom and obtaining a different result but based on the *prompt*.



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull --s 6000 --v 3



mexican skull --s 60000 --v 3

Use the weights to control the composition

Probably the most important parameter of the *prompt* is the weight. For that reason, I have also dedicated a tip to it.

The weights allow you to tell MJ which elements of the *prompt* description should have more strength (weight) in the final composition and which less. To include it use the :: after a description followed by a number. This number will represent a weight relative to the sum of all the numbers you use. In the example we have used 1 and 1, so the weight of each element is 50% (1/2 each).

Negative weights can also be used. In fact, the use of "-0.5" is equivalent to the "--no" parameter that allows us to indicate which elements we do not want to appear in the final composition.



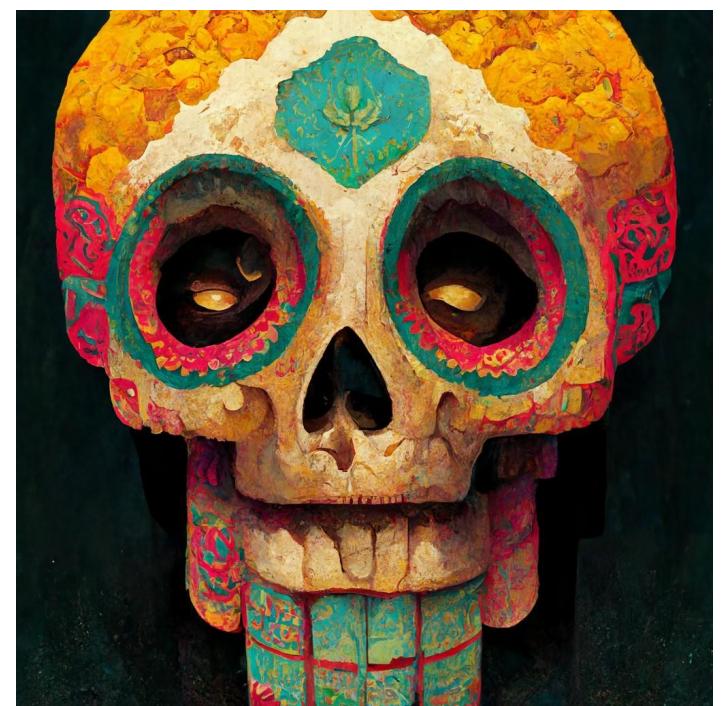
The use of weights makes the compositions vary a lot. My advice is to be patient and do a lot of "trial and error" until you get the result you are looking for.



mexican skull::1 with a snake::1 --q 2 --v 3

Weights

In this case we are giving the same weight to the skull as to the snake, which is why MJ generates snake-like skulls, including scales and other reptilian elements.



mexican skull --v 3

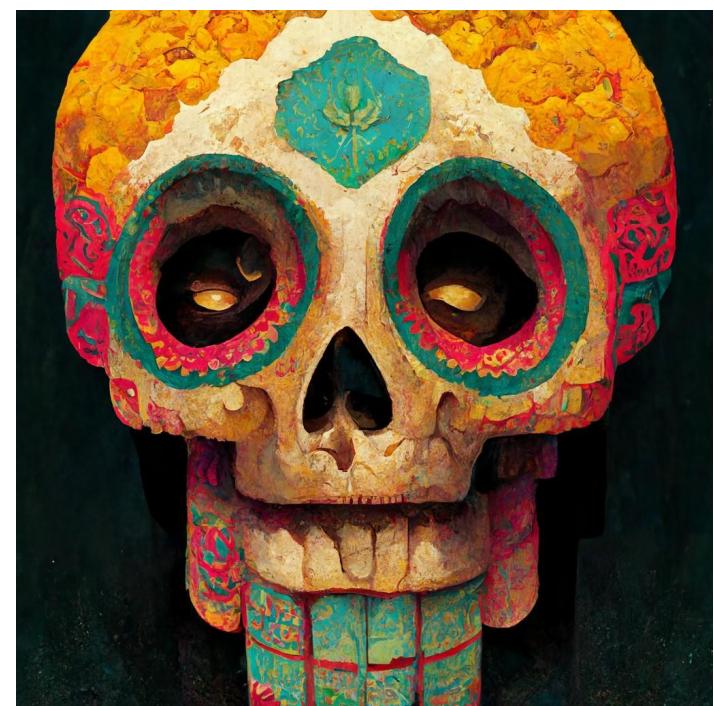


mexican skull::1 with a snake::1 --q 2 --v 3



Weights

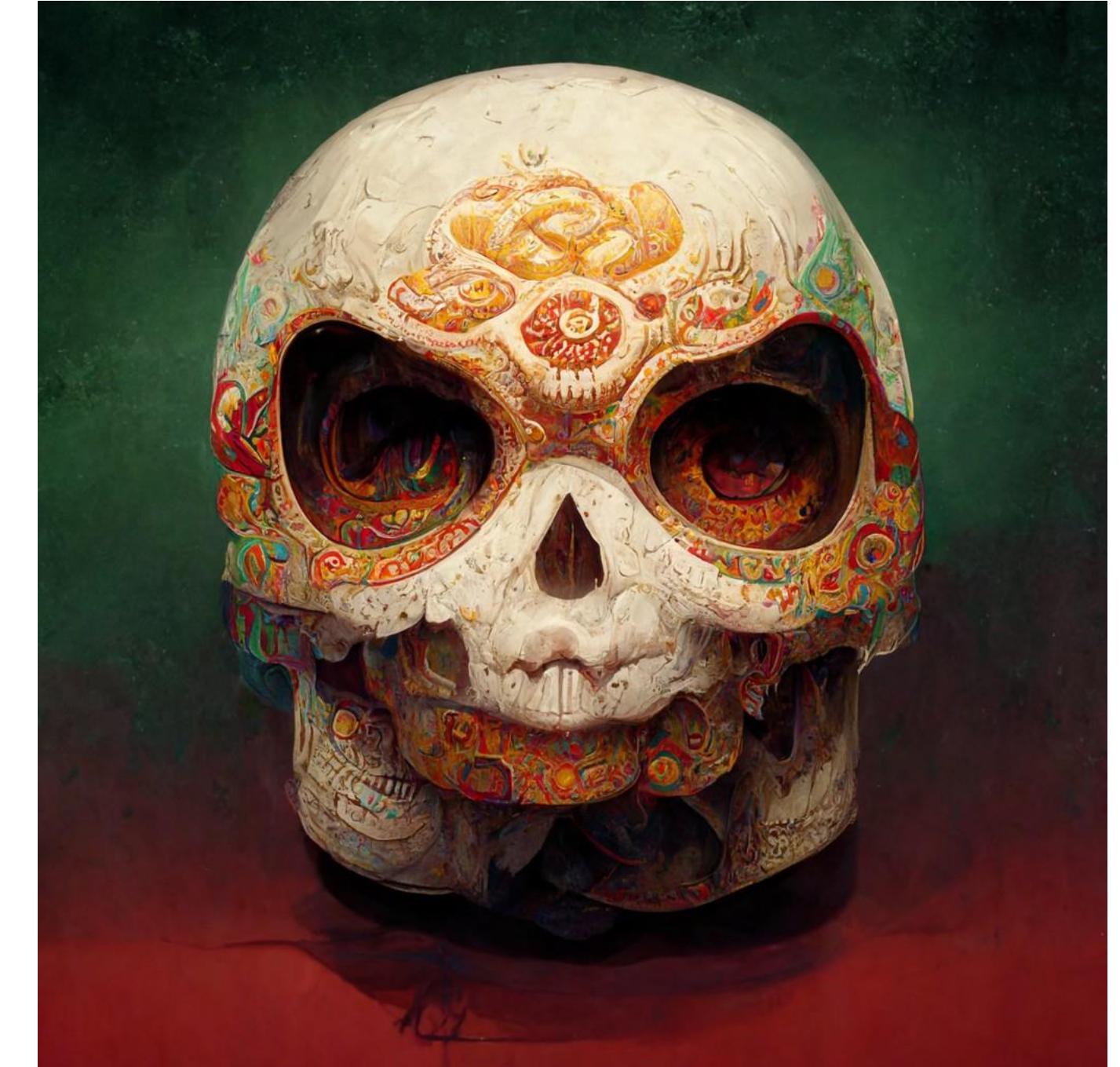
On the contrary, in this example we are giving more weight to the skull (2/3) than to the snake, that is why MJ generates skulls with some detail linked to the snake but very subtle or minor.



mexican skull --v 3

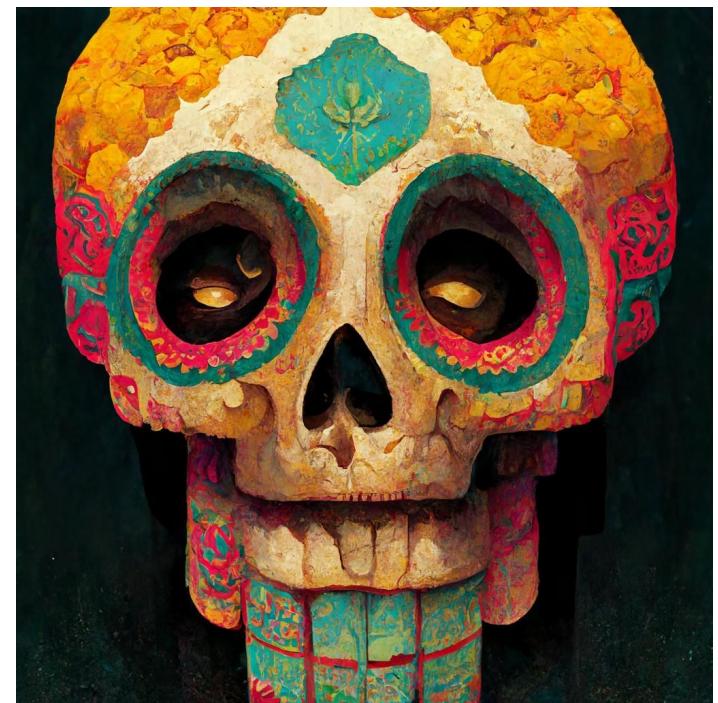


mexican skull::3 with a snake::1 --q 2 --v 3



Weights

Finally, in this last example we are giving more weight to the snake (2/3) that takes the leading role, leaving aside the skull or being able to intuit it in the form that generates the snake around the person's head.



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull::1 with a snake::3 --q 2 --v 3



Use reference images to better control the style

Another very powerful technique to help MidJourney refine what we want is to use reference images. There are two ways to do this.

The first is by seeding other images that we have previously generated. A seed is a random number that MJ uses for the generation of the final image and in [this link](#) you can see how it's extracted. The use is as shown in the example of this page (--seed).

The other way is by one or several images taken from Internet (or that you already have). In [this link](#) you will find how to use Discord to upload images. To use them, just include the URL before the *prompt*, and in [this other link](#) there's a very complete document to be able to manage them.



A key is to use the reference images in combination with the weights so that you can control the result. Several examples are shown on the following pages.



mexican skull --v 3 --q 2 --seed 22277

Reference image

In this case we are giving the same weight to the skull (text) as to the reference image (the Terminator skull), so MJ generates skulls with a more mechanical appearance and a metallic texture.



Imagen de referencia



mexican skull::1 --iw 1 --v 3 --q 2



Reference image

On the contrary, in this example we are giving more weight to the skull (2/3) than to the reference image, so MJ generates skulls with some detail linked to the reference image but very vague and subtle.



Imagen de referencia



mexican skull::3 -iw 1 --v 3 --q 2



Reference image

Finally, in this last example, we are giving more weight to the reference image (2/3) and for that reason the skulls have become robotic, more similar to the Terminator.



Imagen de referencia



mexican skull::1 --iw 3 --v 3 --q 2



Aurimas Aleksandras Nausėdas

Create in an advanced way with nested prompts

One of the last discoveries I made was the use of complex prompts, that is, nesting different prompts by using [] and the + symbol and playing with the weights to get really powerful results.

Although it's not something I have read anywhere, I have the feeling that MJ works best when you start the *prompt* with the general description and then include details, styles... In the case of nested prompts the same thing happens.

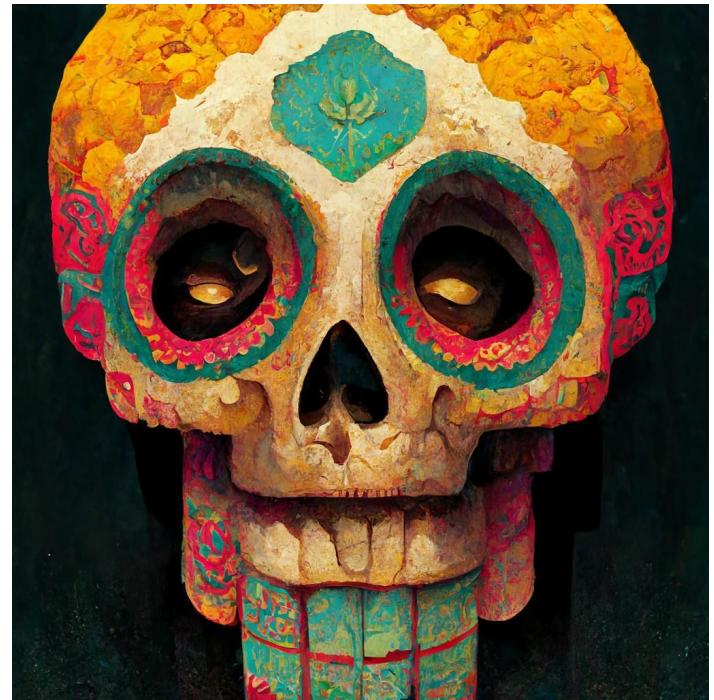
- 💡 As in the case of weights, the use of nested prompts can make the compositions vary a lot. Be patient, test and repeat until you are fine-tuning and getting the result you are looking for.



```
[mexican skull, sharp details]::3 +
[red roses, sharp details, very intricate]::1
--q 2 --v 3
```

Nested Prompts

In this case we are giving more weight to the first *prompt*, the skull, and less to the second, the one centered on the roses. For that reason, the roses become details within the skull.



mexican skull --v 3

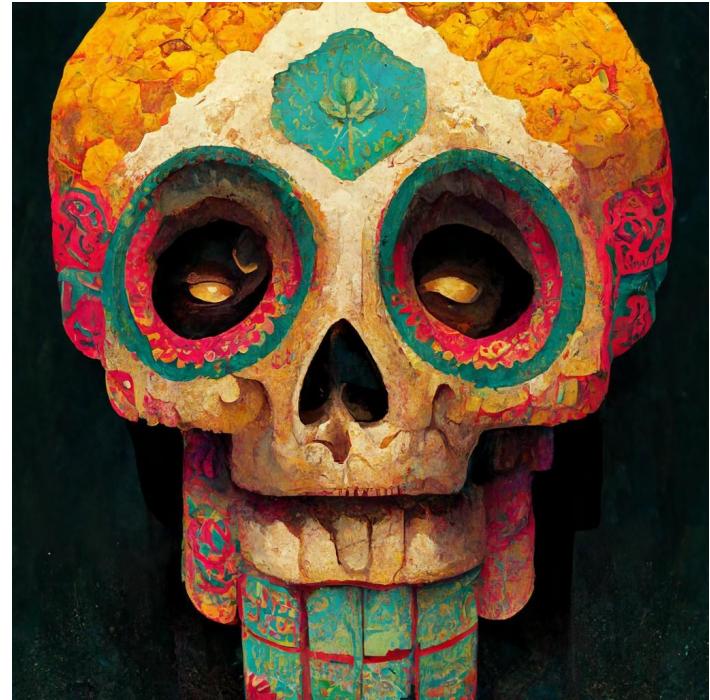


[mexican skull, sharp details]::3 + [red roses, sharp details, very intricate]::1 --q 2 --v 3



Nested Prompts

In this second case, we are giving more weight to the second prompt, the roses, and less to the first, the skull. As you can see, the roses have become the protagonist and the skull has moved to the background or become an add-on.



mexican skull --v 3



[mexican skull, sharp details]::1 + [red roses, sharp details, very intricate]::3 --q 2 --v 3



Resolution, details and rendering

Once you've mastered the *switches*, it's time to start getting creative and fine-tune the *prompt* with resolution, details and rendering.

There are many words you can use to get better results, there is even a parameter that is `--hd`, which uses a different algorithm that is potentially better for larger images, but with a less consistent composition. The words I usually use are:

- *Sharp details, very detailed, ultra detail or intricate* to highlight details
- *Photoreal, hyper realism or 8k* to make it more realistic
- *Octane Render or Unreal engine* to achieve a rendered result



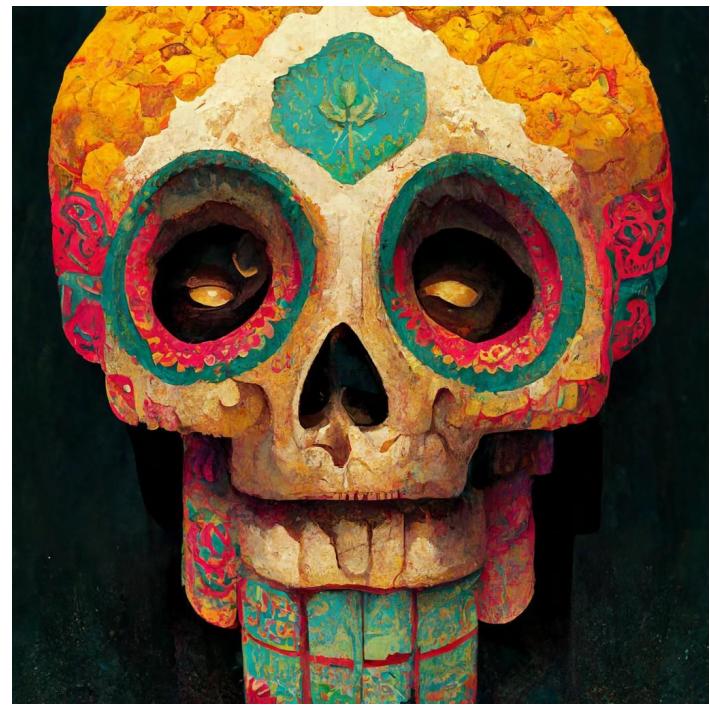
My advice is to use the HD parameter for abstract and landscape *prompts*; the renderings for objects, the realistic results for people and the details for the rest.



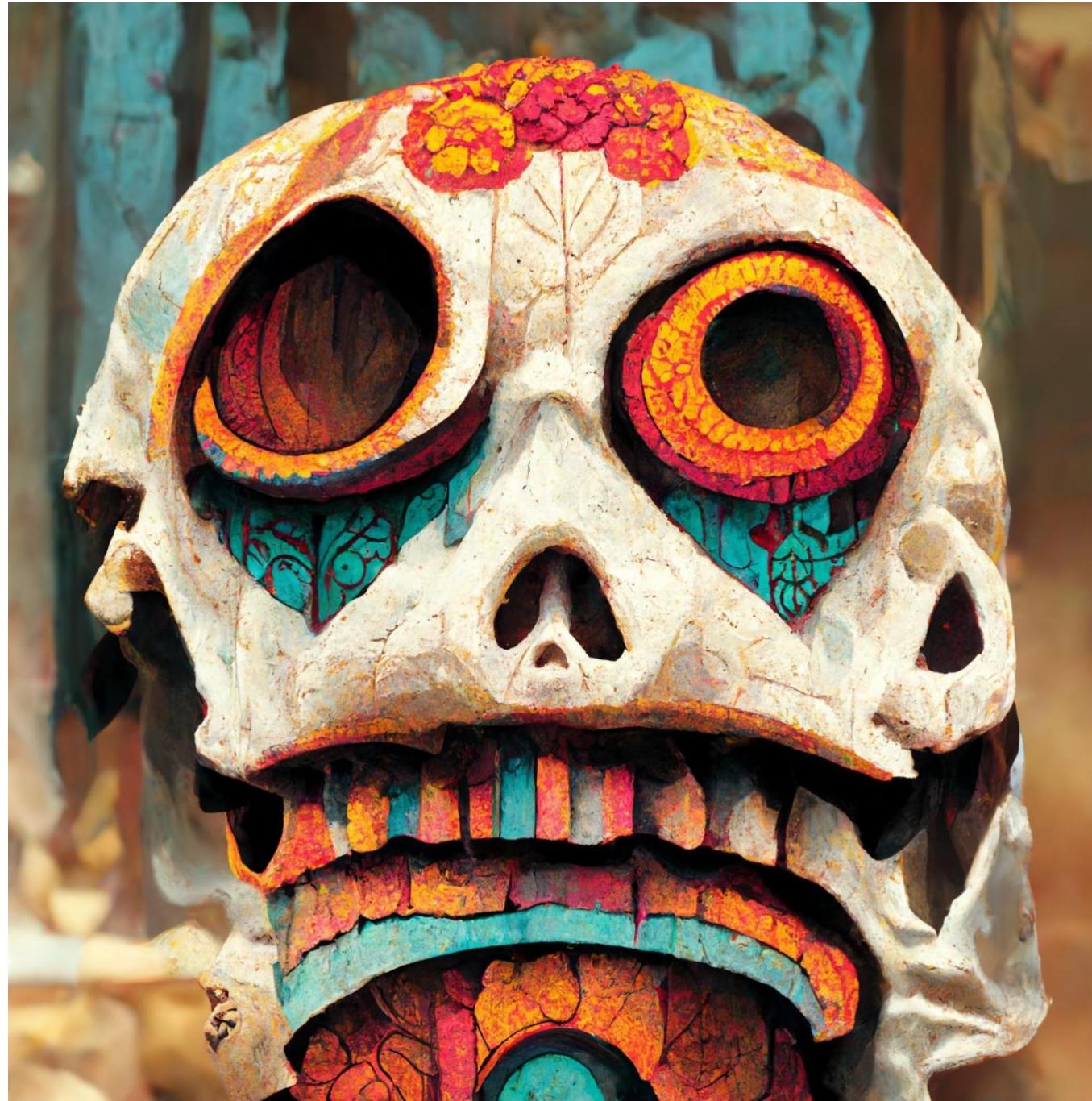
mexican skull, sharp details, very detailed --v 3

Resolution, details and rendering

HD uses a different algorithm that is potentially better for larger images, but with a less consistent composition. Since our case is a skull, you can see the loss of consistency but the gain in realism in the textures.



mexican skull --v 3

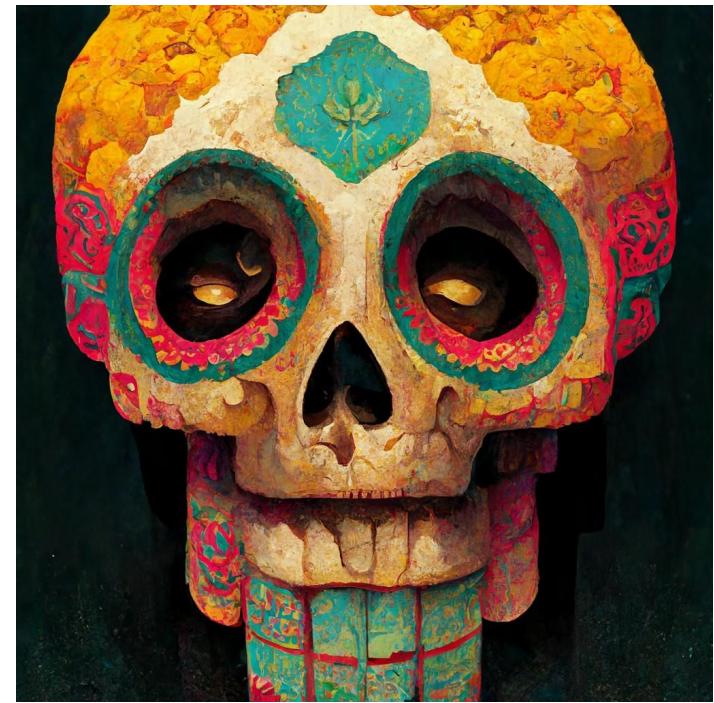


mexican skull --v 3 --hd



Resolution, details and rendering

The use of words related to details increases the elements of the skull, giving them greater realism and a higher quality finish.



mexican skull --v 3

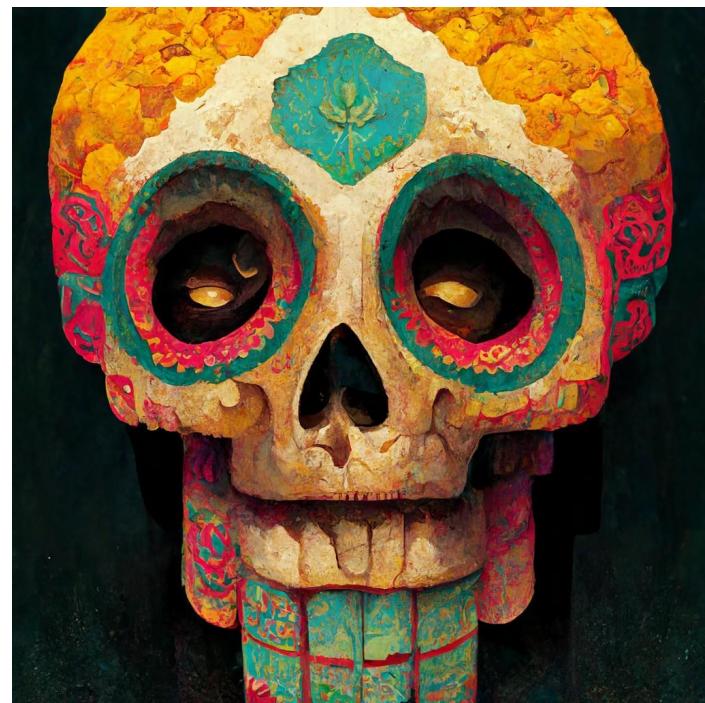


mexican skull, sharp details, very detailed --v 3



Resolution, details and rendering

Including 8K and similar words, improves the quality of the final image, giving it more realism and in many cases a more cinematic look, for example with blurring and depth of field.



mexican skull --v 3

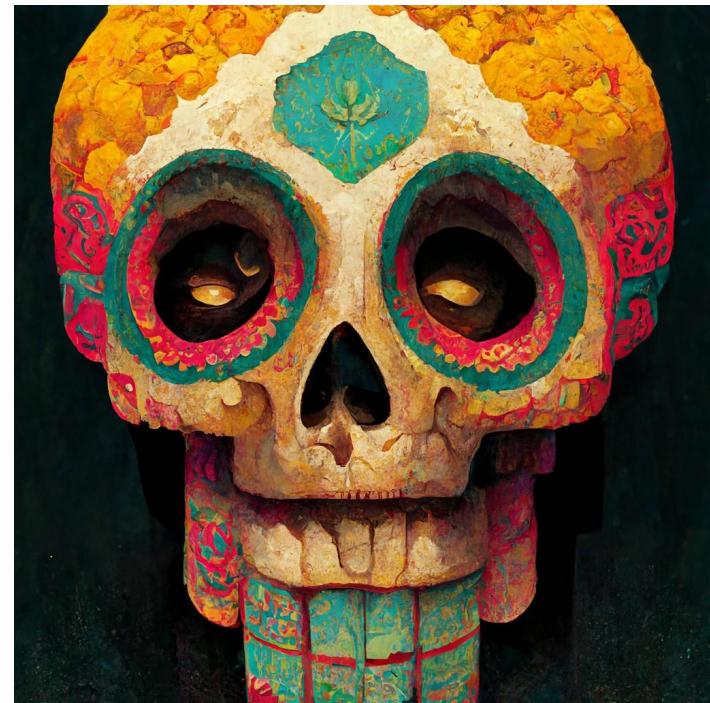


mexican skull, 8k --v 3



Resolution, details and rendering

OctaneRender is a physically accurate rendering engine that allows you to compose spectacular, cinematic quality scenes with lighting and a myriad of materials. In the results you can see the realism of the finish and textures.



mexican skull --v 3

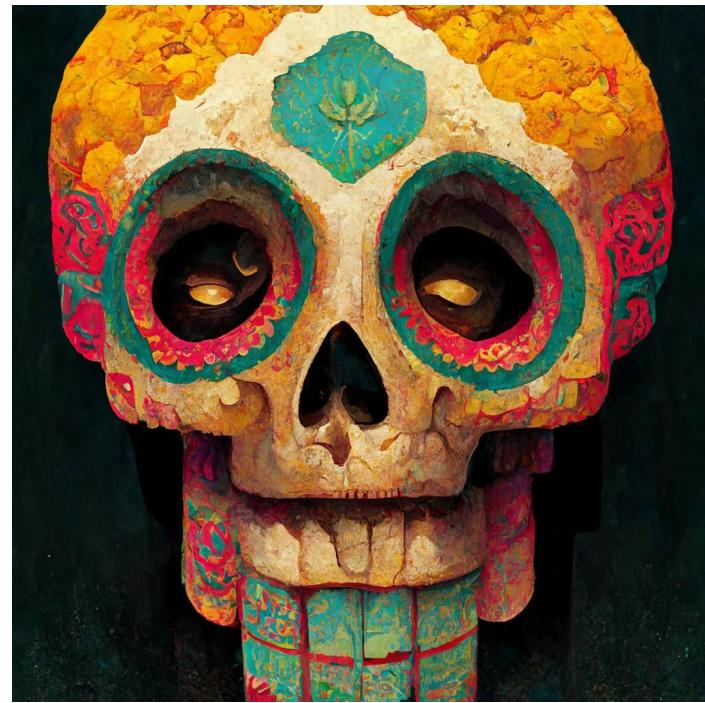


mexican skull, octane render --v 3



Resolution, details and rendering

Unreal Engine is probably the world's most advanced 3D creation tool for photorealistic images and immersive experiences. The result is more "video game" style than Octane Render but depending on the case we may be interested in using it.



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull, unreal engine --v 3



Elements of reference

In addition to the reference images, we can use words that evoke a specific style to give the image. We can use an infinite number of variables:

- Places with their own personality such as New York or Japan
- Movies or series with recognized styles such as Blade Runner or Matrix; or genres such as manga or science fiction
- Artistic movements and trends such as cubism, expressionism, impressionism...
- Famous artists: painters, illustrators, sculptors...
- Famous people

In short, any element that has a very distinguished style and that you want to impregnate the final composition.



My advice is to give it a try. I've become very fond of choosing specific artists, sometimes even mentioning specific works by them, and films and genres. But I encourage you to try and even discover new formulas.

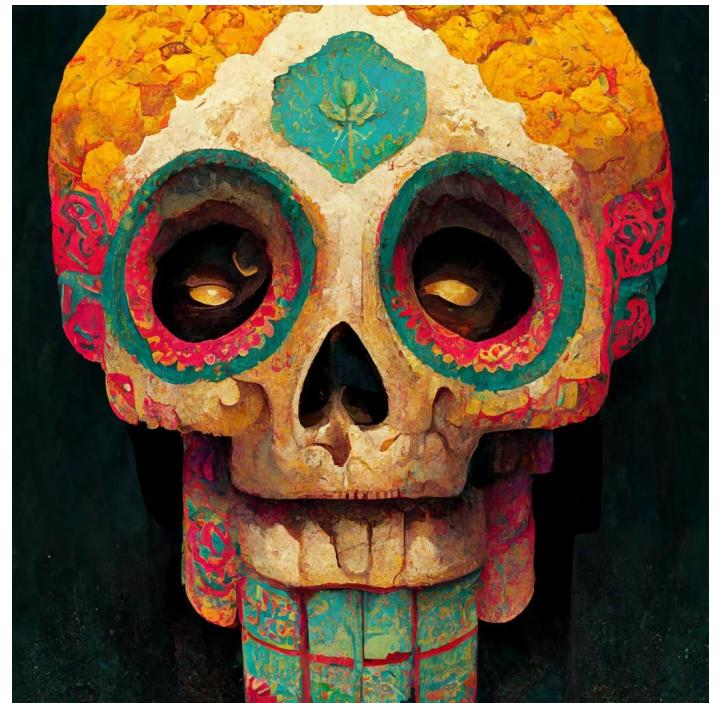


mexican skull, by Gustaf Klimt --v 3 --q 2

Artists

For this example I used **Arthur Rackham** as the artist.

Works by Arthur Rackham >



mexican skull --v 3



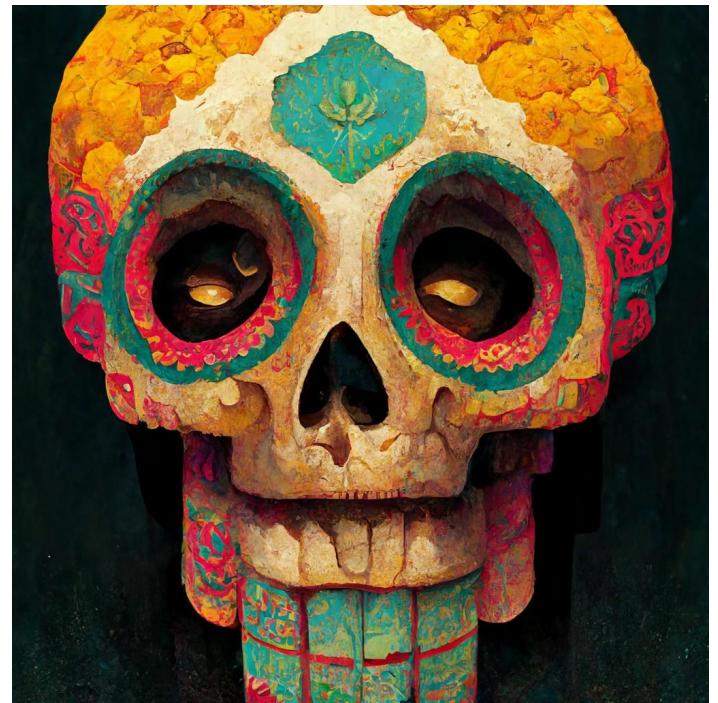
mexican skull, by Arthur Rackham --v 3 --q 2



Artists

For this example I used **Dave McKean** as the artist.

Works by Dave McKean >



mexican skull --v 3



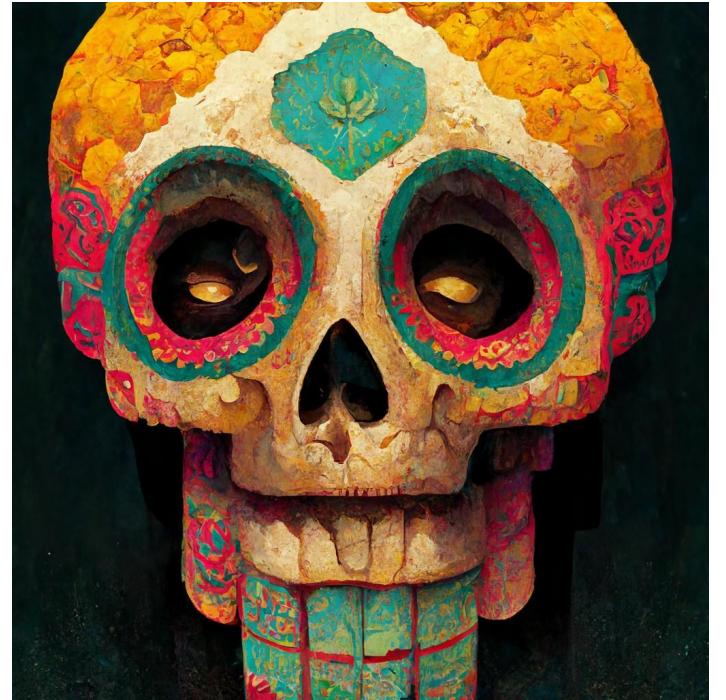
mexican skull, by Dave McKean --v 3 --q 2



Artists

For this example I used **Gustaf Klimt** as an artist.

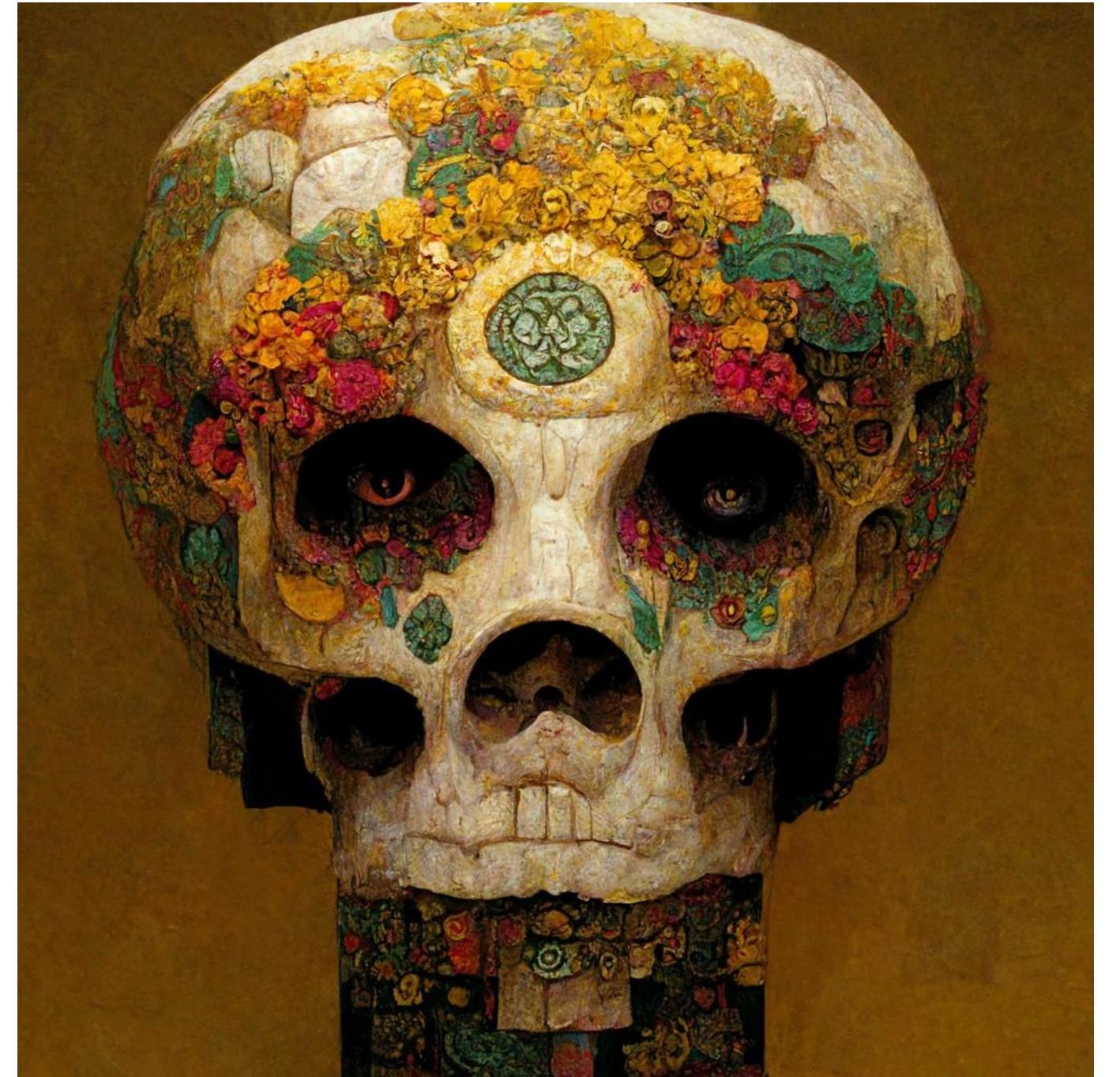
Works by Gustaf Klimt >



mexican skull --v 3

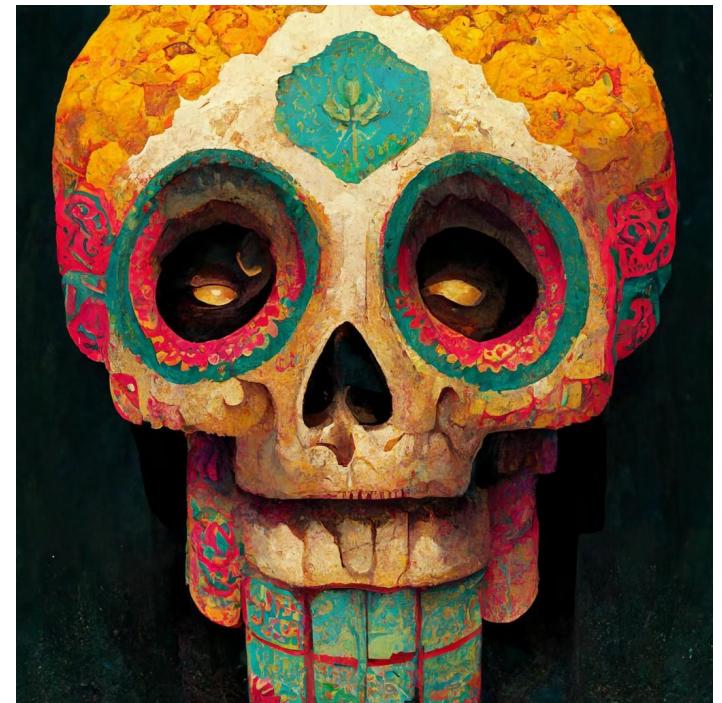


mexican skull, by Gustaf Klimt --v 3 --q 2



Famous people

For this example, I used **Donald Trump** as a reference person.



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull, look like Donald Trump --v 3 --q 2



Camera, lenses, types of film...

In addition to the reference elements, there are an infinite number of parameters that we can use to refine the style and final result of our image. Some of them are:

- Cameras and scenes: cinematic, dramatic, golden hour....
- Types of camera and film: drone, DSLR, night vision, polaroid, lomography, Fujifilm Superia...
- Film size: shot on 8mm, 9.5mm, IMAX 70mm....
- Lens type: Macro, Microscopic, Fisheye Lens...
- Camera settings: Long Exposure, Double-Exposure, F/2.8...

In short, as with the reference items, anything you can think of linked to the camera and that is relatively well known, MJ can probably simulate it.



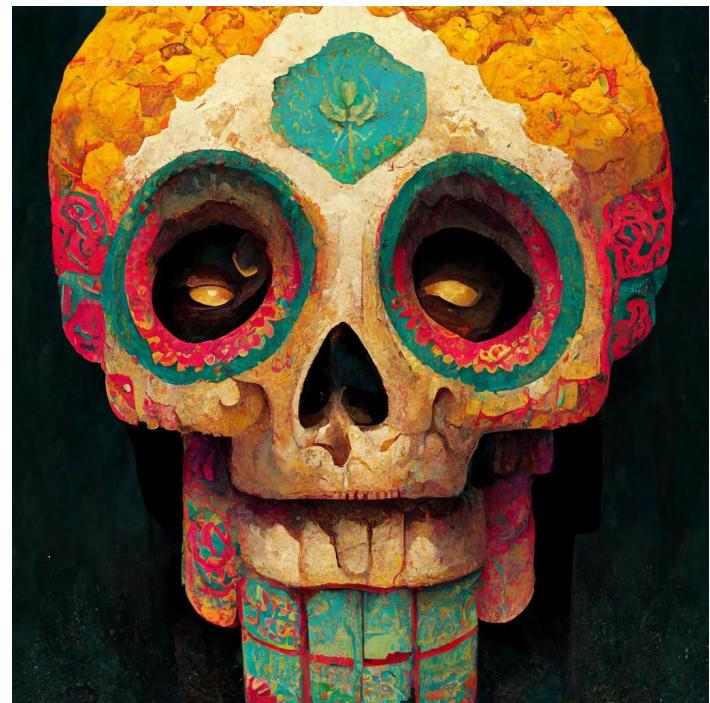
As in the previous case, my advice is to try. I use cinematic a lot when I want a realistic finish. Then, for specific applications, I use other camera specifications. I encourage you to try and even discover new formulas.



mexican skull, cinematic --v 3 --q 2

Camera, lenses, types of film...

The type of camera indicated in the *prompt* is **Cinematic**.



mexican skull --v 3

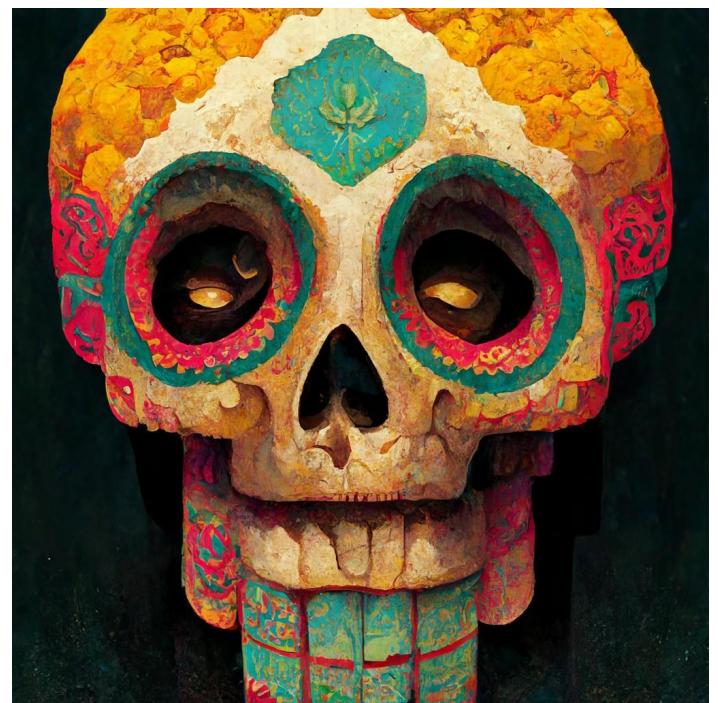


mexican skull, cinematic --v 3 --q 2

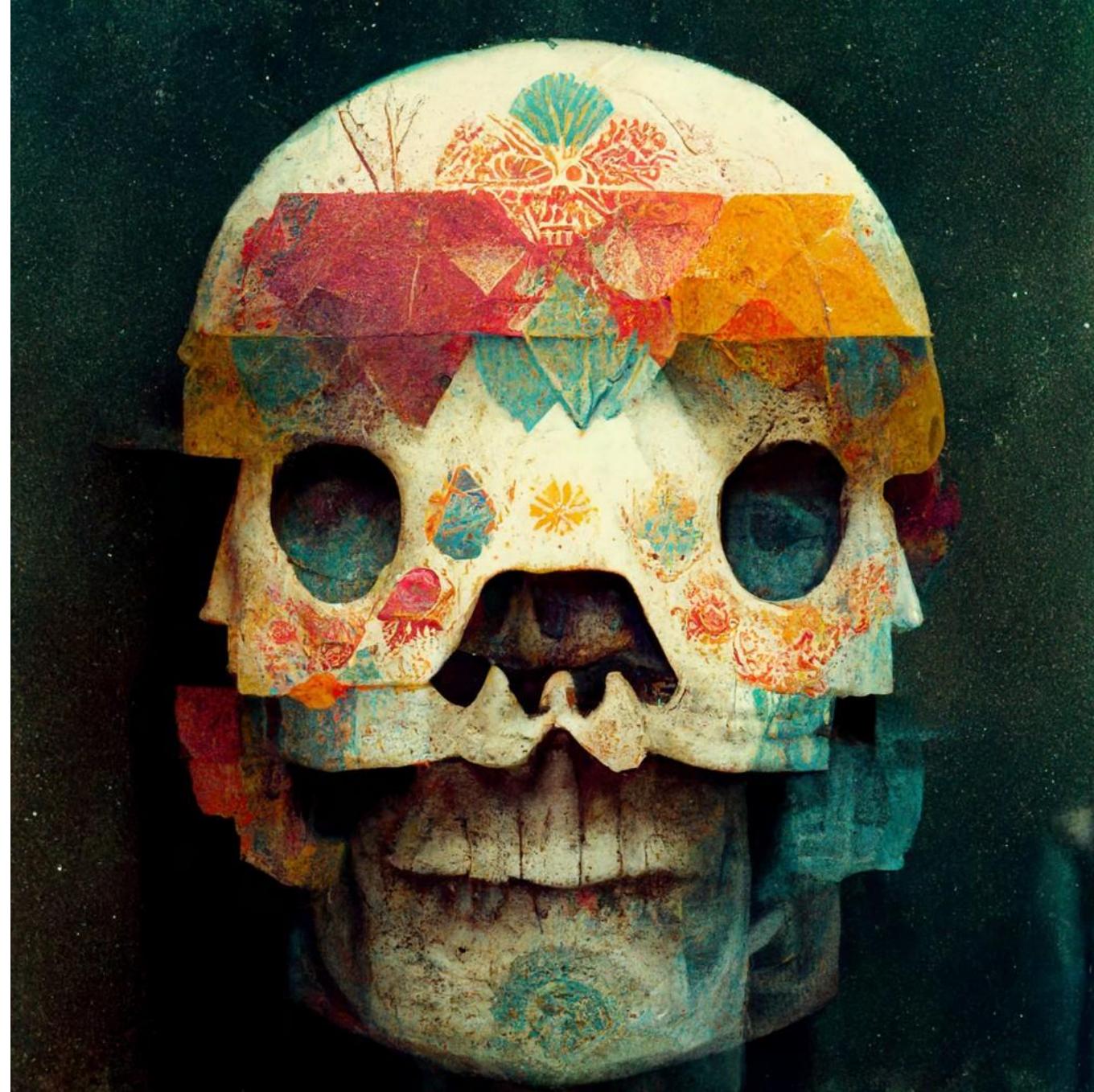


Camera, lenses, types of film...

The type of camera indicated in the *prompt* is **Double Exposure**.



mexican skull --v 3

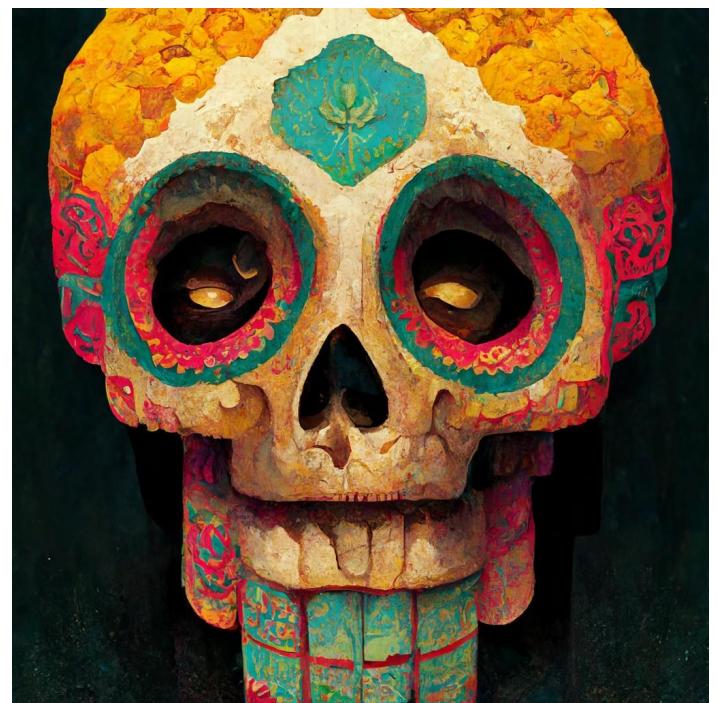


mexican skull, double-exposure --v 3 --q 2



Camera, lenses, types of film...

The type of camera indicated in the *prompt* is **Lomography**.



mexican skull --v 3

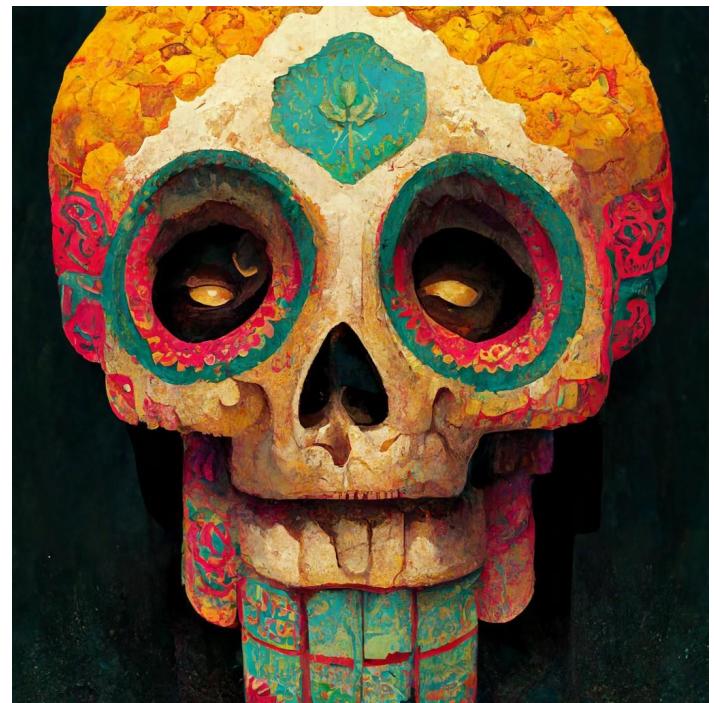


mexican skull, by Lomography --v 3 --q 2



Camera, lenses, types of film...

The type of camera indicated in the *prompt* is **Polaroid**.



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull, by Polaroid --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

We have already talked about artistic movements but there are other styles that can also be used such as those of a computer from the 90's (16-bit), an illustration style such as Kawaii or formulas such as origami.

You can also combine styles by mentioning several at once or even naming several artists, creating new formulas or even new artistic movements. Who knows? The sky is the limit! 😎🤖

 Someone who has done a spectacular job testing and compiling is Will Wulfken. I recommend visiting [his Github](#).

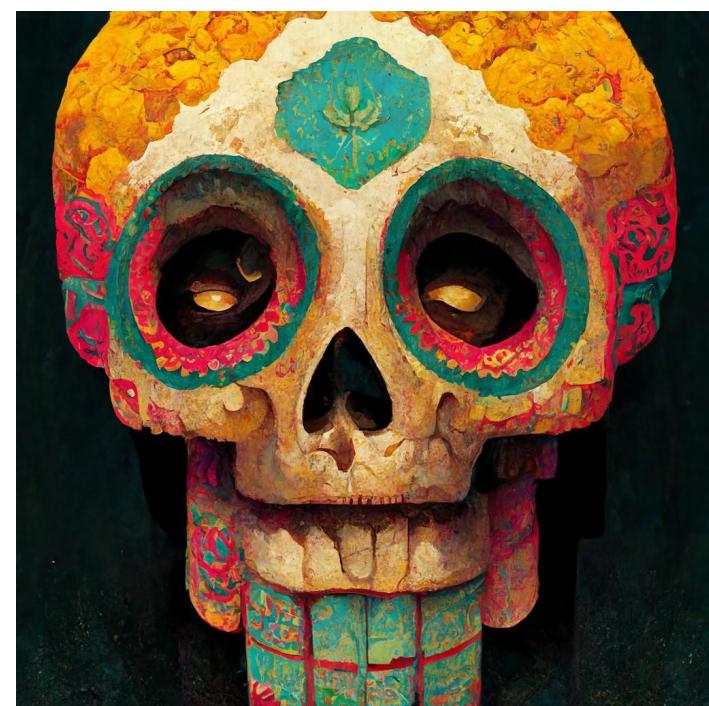
 I also recommend using websites like [Promptomania](#), not only because they make it easy to generate prompts, but also because they show you in an structured way many types of styles, materials, artists, cameras... It's a very good way to discover them.



mexican skull, pixel art --v 3 --q 2

Other styles and materials

The style indicated at the prompt is **16-Bit**



mexican skull --v 3

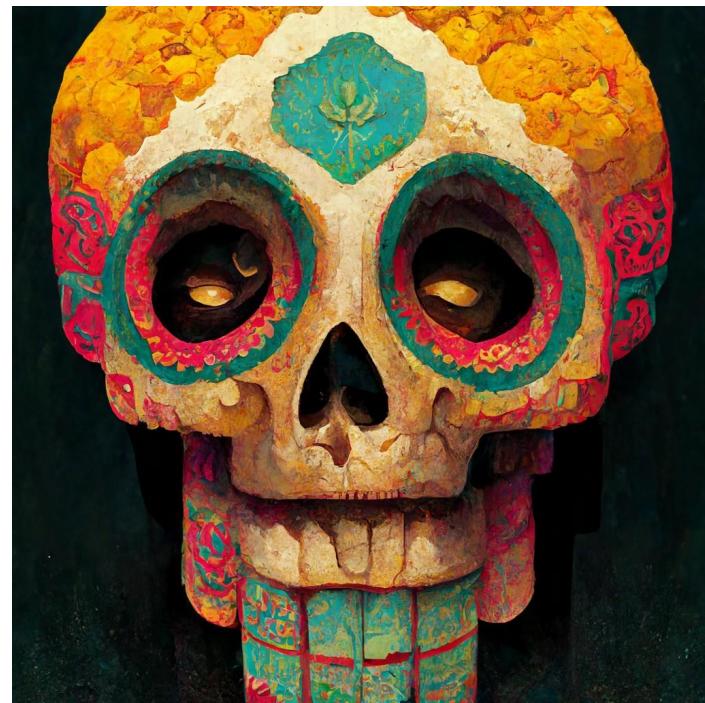


mexican skull, 16-bit --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

The style indicated in the prompt is **Isometric**



mexican skull --v 3

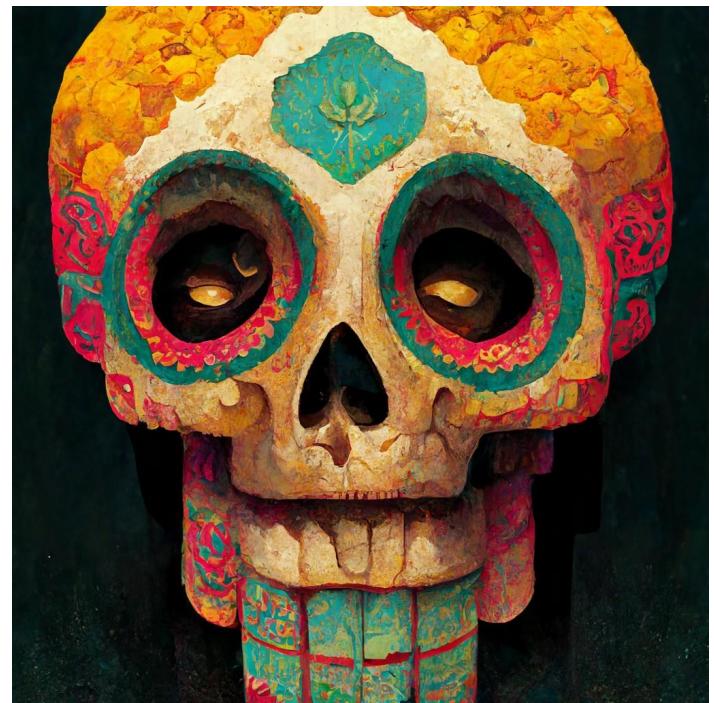


mexican skull, isometric --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

The style indicated in the prompt is **Origami**



mexican skull --v 3

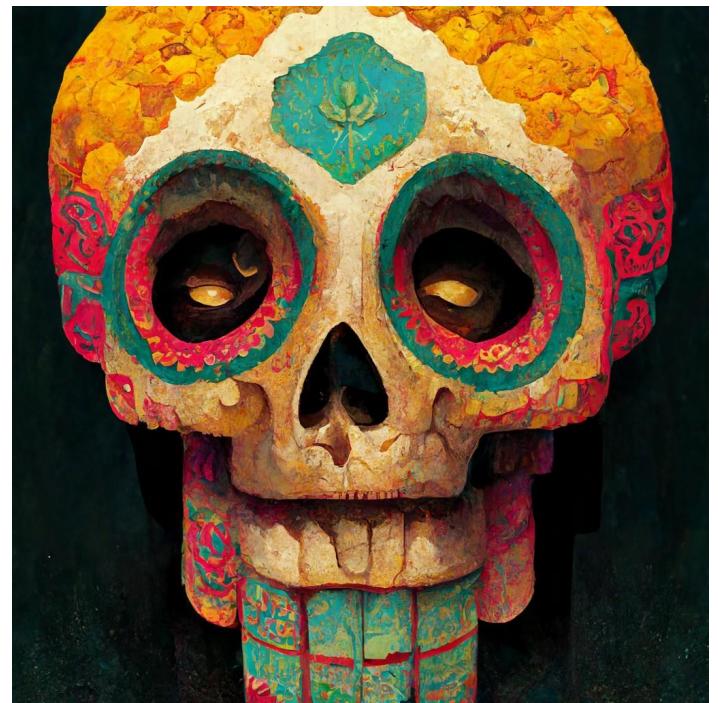


mexican skull, origami --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

The style indicated in the prompt is **Paper Diorama**



mexican skull --v 3

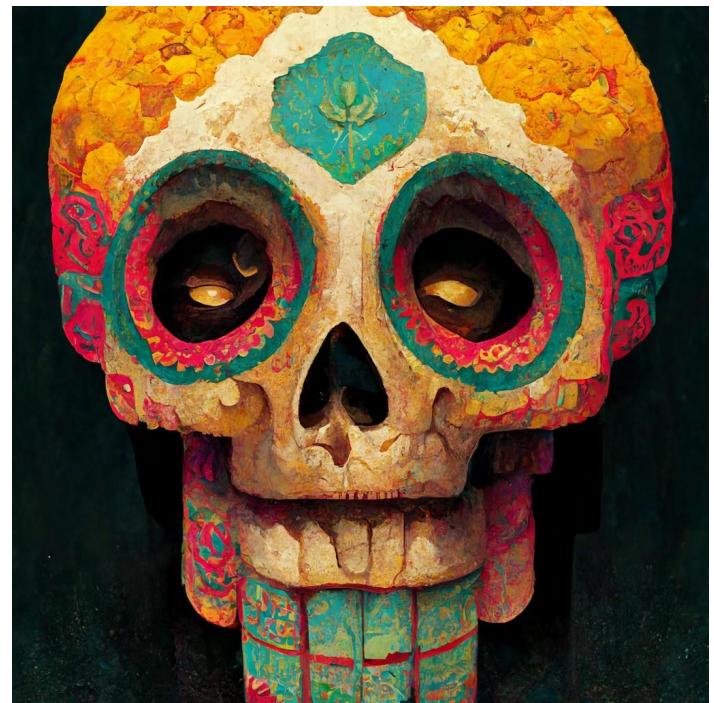


mexican skull, paper diorama --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

The style indicated in the prompt is **Street Art**



mexican skull --v 3

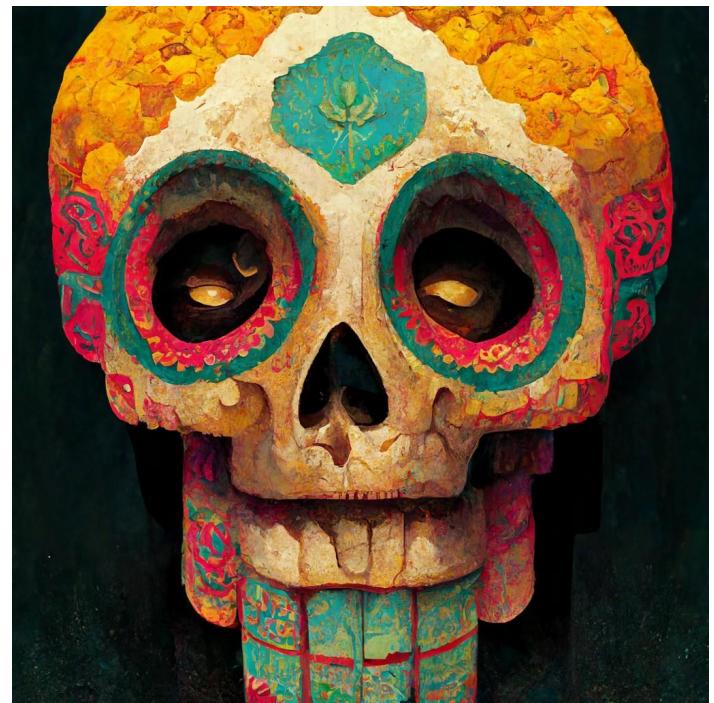


mexican skull, street art --v 3 --q 2



Other styles and materials

The style indicated in the prompt is **Tattoo**



mexican skull --v 3



mexican skull, tattoo --v 3 --q 2



Sometimes: less is more

As a final tip: **less is more**. When you become obsessed with MJ generating what you have in mind, you start adding a lot of parameters, nesting prompts... And the result not only does not improve, but generates something totally different.

Maybe in the future MJ will be able to generate this kind of results, but right now the fun is in its "creative capacity", in that it surprises us and helps us discover new formulas.

Different artists are using alternative tools to edit MJ's creations and get the results they want. For example, **Photoshop** for retouching, **FaceApp** for portraits or **Comic Life 3** to generate comic strips. There are even experiments with multiple AI, using **DALL-E 2** after MidJourney or even **Stability AI**, with surprising results.



mexican skull, kawaii --v 3 --q 2

#Bonus: links to go deeper

I hope you have enjoyed this document and that it helps you to get started in this fascinating world. Here are some links to go deeper:

- // [Resources Links from MJ Team](#)
- // [Tips for Text-Prompts from MJ Team](#)
- // [MidJourney Feed \(requiere estar registrado\)](#)
- // [Lista de Youtube con diversos videos](#)
- // [MidJourney-Styles-and-Keywords-Reference](#)
- // [200 CLIP+VQGAN keywords on 4 subjects](#)
- // [Grupo de Facebook Midjourney AI](#)
- // [MidJourney Prompt Builder](#)
- // [MidJourney CheatSheet](#)

Thank you! If you want to contact me, here are some ways to do it:

_ MidJourney: [@davidalayon](#)
_ Twitter: [@davidalayon](#)

_ Instagram: [@davidalayon](#)
_ LinkedIn: [David Alayón](#)



mexican skull::1 --iw 3 --v 3

(la imagen era una foto retrato mía en color)

Thanks!

**10 tips to getting the most out
of MidJourney**

(with tips, prompts and examples)



mexican skull, kawaii --v 3 --q 2