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CART-498
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2025-01-22

On GenAI and its Applications in Creative Fields

As the discourse around GenAI and its applications in creative fields continue everyday, our duty as artists is to reflect and work with the tools to better understand this newest phenomenon and analyze its implications on our domain. A better understanding can only be achieved through applied practice.

This assignment was a very good introduction to how a simple setup could be prepared to achieve reasonable results with GenAI models, and in a sense, understanding that accessibility to these models comes with a certain technical barrier is apparent throughout this practice. Although there are multiple commercial (and to some extent open-source) tools that take away the technological barriers, in another sense they compromise the openness and true accessibility of these mechanics in creative fields.

As a new media artist, understanding this new era of cybernetics (explicitly implied by the GenAI wave) is very important to understand how GenAI could be used as, firstly craft, and secondly as play. I believe the first assignment showed the potential for both, as we get to be playful: infinite generation of pictures while tweaking the prompts and models and details. And equally consider it as craft: achieving an aesthetic for a potential artwork that might require more work than most consider. Hence, my understanding of this domain is that we still don't know everything (impossible!), and we need to be playful with this phenomenon to achieve a crafting point (that might be useful for an artistic/creative practice.)

As per inspiring artists, I enjoy Refik Anadol's work¹ because of the intentionality behind the technical machine learning process. Especially the Machine Dreams work and its reinterpretation of 200 years of art at MoMA. Also, Arshia Sobhan's work with calligraphy² and Machine Learning is very enjoyable as it sometimes creates interesting outcomes by earlier GAN models (which I personally prefer than the ultra realistic models of today). It also perfectly reflects on how these models (with the use of small datasets specifically) could be a potential crafting tool in a creative process.

¹ <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5535>

² <https://www.metacreation.net/projects/ensemble>