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by Mr Adnan

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Art:

Challenges of Authorship, Ethics, and Creativity in the Age of Generative Tools

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Major	
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Research Problem

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral tool in digital art, raising profound questions about creativity, authorship, and ownership. Platforms such as DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, and Midjourney allow users to generate images from text prompts, democratizing access to art making but simultaneously undermining traditional notions of originality and intellectual property. While AI provides artists with innovative methods of creation, it also introduces legal and ethical dilemmas, such as the unauthorized replication of styles and the use of copyrighted material in training datasets. This proposal addresses the urgent problem of how AI is reshaping digital art production, with specific emphasis on its impact on authorship, ethics, and the sustainability of artistic practice.

Existing Literature

Previous studies on art and technology have shown how innovation challenges established boundaries. The introduction of photography in the 19th century and digital tools like Photoshop transformed artistic practices, generating debates about legitimacy and authenticity (1). Similarly. Generative AI continues this trajectory but at unprecedented speed and scale. Scholars have highlighted the potential of AI-driven creativity (2), while also warming about risks such as plagiarism, dataset bias, and economic displacement of artists (3). Recent controversies, such as the withdrawal of Boris Eldagsen´s AI-generated photograph from an international competition, underscore the cultural and ethical tensions (4). However, most existing research focuses on technological capabilities or legal implications. There remains a gap in exploring how artists themselves perceive and respond to these challenges.

Research Question

How is Artificial Intelligence influencing creativity, authorship, and ethics in digital art, and what strategies can support fair artistic practice in the age of generative tools?

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach will be adopted to capture both broad patterns and individual perspectives:

1. **Quantitative survey:** An online questionnaire will target aprox 200 digital artists across platforms such as Instagram, ArtStation, and Discord. It will measure awareness, attitudes, and concerns regarding AI in art, using Likert-scale items.
2. **Qualitative interviews:** In-depth semi-structured interviews with 10-15 artists will explore lived experiences, focusing on issues of style appropriation, creative opportunities, and ethical dilemmas.
3. **Case analysis:** Selected public controversies (e.g., lawsuits against Stability IA, competition debates) will be examined to contextualize findings.

Data will be analyzed using statistical methods for survey responses and thematic coding for interviews, ensuring reliability and triangulation of insights. Ethical safeguards include anonymity, informed consent, and voluntary participation.

Research Topic: Significance and Innovation

This study is significant because it addresses a timely, global issues: the future of creativity in the AI era. Unlike prior literature that primarily examines technology or law, this research centers the voices of digital artists, providing original insights into how communities adapt to disruption. By combining empirical data with case studies, the project contributes both academically and practically, informing policymakers, platforms, and artistic communities.

Expected Outcomes and Conclusion

The research is expected to:

- identify the main challenges artists face regarding authorship and ethics in AI art.
- Reveal attitudes toward AI as a threat versus a creative tool
- Provide recommendations such as watermarking systems, clearer copyright protections, and ethical guidelines for dataset use.

Ultimately, this study will highlight how society can balance technological innovation with the protection of human creativity, ensuring that the digital art ecosystem remains both innovative and fair.

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