



ARTICLE

Visual Art and Artificial Intelligence: Tensions between Ethics, Aesthetics, and Authorship in the Algorithmic Age

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the visual production of contemporary art, generating debates about authorship, creativity, and aesthetic legitimacy, while addressing the ethical and labor implications of automated creation. The main objective of this research is to explore the perception, production, and philosophical implications of AI-generated visual art, with an interactive art installation serving as the case study. The study adopted a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, structured in three phases: a visual and aesthetic analysis of the work using tools from visual studies and computational aesthetics; a critical documentary review on digital art and algorithmic ethics; and an interdisciplinary critical analysis that integrates ethical, cultural, and technological dimensions, considering viewer interaction and the material conditions of production. The results reveal that AI reconfigures visual identity by fragmenting and distorting human images, creating a dynamic perceptual experience influenced by viewer interaction. This process questions traditional notions of authorship, authenticity, and creativity, also highlighting the aesthetic, cultural, and labor implications of contemporary digital art. In conclusion, the research demonstrates that AI not only transforms visual language but also reshapes perceptions of identity and authorship in the digital age, while raising relevant ethical questions about the invisibility of human labor and power structures in algorithm-mediated artistic creation.

Keywords: AI-Generated Art; Algorithmic Aesthetics; Visual Culture; Digital Identity; Portrait; Art Ethics; Precarious Labor; Digital Media

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has undergone a radical transformation in visual production within contemporary art. Today, platforms like DALL·E, Midjourney, and Runway have made it easier to generate complex images through generative algorithms, blurring the borders between human creation and automation^[1]. This phenomenon of technological change has generated an intense debate about authorship, creativity, and the aesthetic legitimacy of machine-generated works^[2]. These tools have driven innovations in the processes of artistic creation, production, and distribution in the visual and digital fields. Various tensions and criticisms have also arisen, particularly those linked to the ambivalent perception of these works—contradictory or provocative themes, ambiguity in representation, art style or technique, morality and social values—on the part of the viewer. Most often, the public evaluates them under notions of ‘authenticity’, ‘originality’, or ‘intention’, which presuppose an exclusively human relationship with artistic production, generating an ontological and epistemic conflict over the role of the creator and the status of the artwork.

In turn, the algorithmic infrastructures that underpin these visual productions operate under often invisible underlying dynamics. For example, these practices include the massive collection of data without the consent of the subjects or original authors, the use of images without adequate recognition or compensation for the artists, and the precarious working conditions associated with the development and maintenance of AI models. These issues not only question the legitimacy of automated production but also expose the structures of power and inequality inherent in these systems, which, despite their neutral appearance, are marked by dynamics of exploitation.

The analysis of AI-generated art must transcend the fascination with technological novelty and adopt a critical perspective. It is essential to interrogate the regimes of representation, the politics of subjectivity, and the forms of agency present in contemporary cultural production. In this sense, three crucial questions arise: what does ‘creation’ entail in an algorithmic environment? Who can be considered the author of a work created by AI? And how do the biases inherent in databases shape the aesthetic imaginaries and visual representations generated by algorithms? Reflecting on these questions opens a space for rethinking art, creativity, and

justice in the digital age, where the intersection of technology and culture redefines our conceptions of authorship and value in art.

This research addresses these questions through a visual study of the custom installation ‘Corrupted Portraits’ (2023), a series of AI-generated portraits featuring faces that are fragmented and distorted. The study focuses on two key aspects: first, AI-generated works are perceived aesthetically and emotionally compared to human-created works; and second, the emerging ethical and labor-related implications that arise from the use of AI in contemporary art production

To this end, a visual-analytical and critical approach is adopted in a dialogue with works on aesthetic perception^[3], the ethics of digital art^[4], and visual culture^[5, 6]. The works in ‘Corrupted Portraits’ are not only configured as aesthetic objects, but also as critical interfaces that make visible, through the crisis of representation, the algorithmic bias and the inherent precariousness of art mediated by technology. The expansion of AI in the artistic field has given rise to a profound transformation in the practices of production, perception, and reception of visual images, questioning the three traditional notions of authorship, visual identity, and aesthetics, which are fundamental pillars of contemporary art.

Several studies have analyzed the effects of AI on visual aesthetics and public reception in art^[7, 8]. Research suggests that viewers often have difficulty distinguishing between human-generated and AI-created works, revealing cognitive and creative biases that affect artistic evaluation^[3]. This phenomenon not only influences the aesthetic experience but also calls into question the legitimacy of algorithmically generated art.

The introduction of AI in the arts raises profound ethical and social questions. In particular, the expansion of algorithm-mediated arts generates a deontological crisis in digital art, characterized by the precariousness of creative work, the lack of transparency in automated creation processes, and the dissolution of the traditional concept of individual authorship^[4]. Faced with this reality, AI-generated art is presented not only as an aesthetic experiment but as a critical gesture that makes visible the tensions between subjectivity, technology, and symbolic power.

From a theoretical perspective, a concept of ‘algorithmic aesthetics’ has been proposed to describe the emergence

of new visual forms that do not derive exclusively from human experience or intention, but from the generative and statistical logic of algorithms^[6]. These images, although created by non-human systems, trigger complex emotional and cultural responses in the viewer. This phenomenon aligns with the idea that, in the digital age, the activity of ‘seeing the world’ is not a passive act, but a practice laden with ideology, technical mediation, and power relations^[5].

In the field of artistic creation, cognitive and motor aspects, such as eye movements in the painting process, have also been investigated. This approach enables a comparison of the ways humans and machines perceive and create, highlighting ontological and methodological differences. Recent studies in perceptual psychology and neuroaesthetics have shown that the attribution of authorship, whether human or artificial, directly influences the viewer’s emotional and cognitive response to images. For example, knowing that AI created a work can negatively affect its aesthetic assessment, revealing a persistent tension between technological innovation and cultural prejudices against automated art^[9–11].

Simultaneously, major art studies have documented the shared creative agency between artists and algorithmic systems^[12, 13], showing how this hybridization alters the control parameters and the aesthetic experience in pictorial creation. There are substantial differences in the eye and visuomotor movements of human painters compared to generative AI models, as an ontological and methodological gap in creative dynamics is evident^[14, 15]. However, some researchers on the perception of AI-generated digital portraits have shown that algorithmic faces provoke an ambivalent experience in viewers, ranging from fascination to emotional bewilderment^[16–18].

The main objective of this research is to explore the perception, production, and philosophical implications of AI-generated visual art, with an interactive art installation serving as the case study. Within this framework, the following specific objectives are proposed:

- To explore the aesthetic and conceptual implications of AI-generated works in contrast to human artistic production, especially regarding concepts of identity and authorship.
- To research the perceptual and cognitive biases that affect the public reception of AI-generated images, building on previous studies in perception and neuroaesthetics.

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- To reflect on the ethical crisis and job insecurity associated with the incorporation of algorithms and automated systems in digital art.
- To foster an interdisciplinary dialogue that links new theories of visual culture, algorithmic aesthetics, and technological ethics to understand the transformative role of AI in contemporary artistic practices.

The artwork ‘Corrupted Portraits’ is presented as an exemplary case study illustrating the conceptual and technical shifts that AI introduces into contemporary visual and media art. Through a critical and interdisciplinary reading, this study articulates a series of aesthetic, ethical, and phenomenological dimensions that emerge in the interaction between the viewer and the algorithmically generated portraits.

2. Theoretical Framework

The growing presence of AI in visual creation processes has given rise to new issues that require interdisciplinary approaches for their critical analysis. Fields such as cultural theory, the psychology of perception, computational aesthetics, and the ethics of digital art offer key conceptual tools for examining the symbolic, cognitive, and social impacts of these technologies. From these perspectives, this research analyzes the work ‘Corrupted Portraits’ as a representative case of the contemporary tensions between automation, subjectivity, and art production.

2.1. Algorithmic Aesthetics and Automated Visual Production

The concept of algorithmic aesthetics has been formulated in studies to describe how algorithms not only automate visual creation processes but also generate formal and symbolic structures that destabilize traditional aesthetic conventions^[2, 6]. Unlike conventional artistic practices, these productions are governed by a generative logic, meaning they don’t respond to direct human intention, but rather to statistical parameters, machine learning, and emerging visual combinatorics.

These images, although produced by non-human systems, can provoke complex emotional and cognitive responses, calling into question creativity as an exclusively human at-

tribute. In this study^[5], he argues that, in the digital age, the act of ‘seeing’ is profoundly influenced by technologies, transforming the perceptual experience into a practice mediated by visual power relations and algorithmic structures.

This technological shift imposes a reconsideration of the classic interpretative frameworks of art, giving rise to an aesthetic regime where authorship dissolves, the artistic object becomes unstable, and interpretation depends on new forms of algorithmic reading.

2.2. Perception and Cognition in the Evaluation of AI-Generated Art

The aesthetic perception of AI-generated works has been the subject of study in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroaesthetics. Recent research^[9–11] has shown that prior knowledge about a work’s authorship significantly influences how viewers evaluate it. When an image is identified as the product of an algorithmic system, it tends to receive a less favorable evaluation and generate a weaker emotional connection, regardless of its formal or expressive attributes.

This phenomenon reveals a persistent cognitive bias, reflecting the tensions between the humanist tradition of art and contemporary technological innovation. Although AI-generated works exhibit high levels of visual complexity or expressiveness, public perception hinges on the idea that subjective intention overrides aesthetic value.

Additionally, studies on eye movements and motor patterns in human artists have revealed distinct forms of visual attention, compositional exploration, and gestural control that contrast with automated image-generating processes^[14]. These differences are not only technical but also ontological, as they refer to distinct conceptions of what the creative act entails: an embodied, situated, and temporal activity in the human case, versus a statistical, decontextualized, and reproducible operation in the algorithmic case.

2.3. Ethics, Precarity and Authorship in Digital Art

In the context of digital art, the integration of AI has raised ethical questions regarding the precarization of creative work, the opacity of technological systems, and the dilution of authorship^[4]. The production of algorithmic works

in the digital art field is based on structural conditions that are often invisible, including massive data mining, the outsourcing of precarious cognitive labor, and complex algorithmic training processes. These dynamics pose substantial ethical challenges and reveal the high social, environmental, and labor costs involved in current models of artificial intelligence, while also straining traditional notions of authorship and creativity.

This new environment becomes ambiguous; that is, generative systems can produce images without direct intervention from the human creator, but they operate on previously curated, selected, or modified materials. This situation strains the legal and philosophical notions of intellectual property, aesthetic responsibility, and artistic recognition.

The work ‘Corrupted Portraits’ critically situates itself within this framework, problematizing not only the aesthetics of AI-generated images but also the socioeconomic and ethical conditions that make their existence possible. Rather than celebrating automation, it proposes a critical look at the logic of technological delegation, symbolic expropriation, and the dehumanization of the artistic process.

2.4. Interdisciplinarity and New Visual Subjectivities

The emergence of AI-generated art demands interdisciplinary approaches that integrate knowledge from neuroscience, critical theory, the sociology of work, and computational ethics. This convergence allows us to analyze not only aesthetic objects but also the forms of subjectivity that emerge in the interaction between automated systems and human beings.

From the perspective of neuroaesthetics^[9–11], differential processes of perception have been documented depending on perceived authorship; from the perspective of cultural criticism^[2, 5, 6]. It is argued that the digital image constitutes a field of ideological and political dispute, just like the sociology of work^[4], which denounces the structural precariousness hidden behind the practices of artistic innovation.

Thus, algorithmic art not only transforms visual language but also reconfigures forms of agency, experience, and symbolic legitimation in contemporary culture. AI-generated images, far from being mere technological products, must be understood as symptomatic expressions of a new regime of

subjectivity, marked by automation, algorithmic surveillance, and identity fragmentation.

3. Methods

This study adopted an interdisciplinary qualitative approach, aiming to critically examine AI-generated art through the analysis of a personalized art installation. The methodology was structured in three sequential phases, each supported by theoretical frameworks and analytical techniques recognized in the fields of visual studies, digital aesthetics, and technological ethics.

3.1. Visual and Aesthetic Analysis

The first phase consisted of a formal and symbolic analysis of the visual components of the installation, focusing on the two video channels that make up the work. Methodological tools from visual studies and computational aesthetics were applied to deconstruct elements such as facial fragmentation, the rhythm of visual distortions, color usage, and audiovisual editing.

This analysis was based on the ‘algorithmic aesthetics’ concept, proposed to describe emergent visual forms generated by computational processes that escape traditional artistic intent^[2, 6]. In turn, the contributions considered the role of visual technologies in shaping power relations in contemporary culture^[5].

3.2. Documentary and Contextual Review

The second phase conducted a critical review of academic literature to situate the work within contemporary debates around digital art, algorithmic ethics, and the working conditions of creative labor. This review also incorporated studies on precariousness in digital environments^[19], distributed authorship^[20, 21], and social problems arising from artistic automation^[22–24].

Likewise, special attention was also paid to the warnings about the ideological implications present in AI-generated images and the need to interpret them in light of their sociopolitical contexts. In this way, the work was positioned within a field of tension that transcends the visual, allowing for a critical reading of the incorporation of aesthetic, ethical, and structural aspects.

3.3. Interdisciplinary Critical Analysis

The third phase consisted of a critical analysis that integrated the visual findings with the ethical, cultural, and technological dimensions discussed in the specialized literature. This integration sought to understand the work from a broader perspective, addressing not only its formal composition but also its relationship to current debates surrounding AI and digital art.

The viewer was considered an active part of the interpretive process. The installation responded to the observer’s bodily movement, modifying the visualization of the portraits. This interaction revealed a key phenomenological dimension: perception is not limited to the image, but is constructed in the encounter between subject, machine, and environment^[4, 9–11]. Thus, the work generated a space where the connection between technology and visual experience became central.

Furthermore, an analysis of the material conditions of production was incorporated, highlighting how the integration of AI into art transforms not only visual languages but also labor dynamics and professional recognition systems^[19]. The qualitative and interdisciplinary method allowed for a holistic understanding of the artistic phenomenon, considering both the formal dimension and the social and ethical implications.

To this end, the justification for the three fundamental phases corresponded to the adoption of this methodological approach to analyze the complexity of the study and the need to overcome reductionisms. An interdisciplinary perspective was essential to interpret contemporary digital art in its entirety, integrating visual analysis, sociopolitical contexts, and ethical dimensions^[22]. This method facilitated in-depth critical reflection on the contribution to new knowledge and scholarly discussion about the intersection of AI, art, and visual culture.

4. Results

The ‘Corrupted Portraits’ visual analysis is conceived as a methodological strategy that enables the examination of the formal, symbolic, and compositional dimensions of an audiovisual installation generated through AI. This type of analysis goes beyond the technical description of images, taking into account their aesthetic operations and signifying

effects. In this case, the visual study of the installation allows for the identification of key features of contemporary digital art, such as facial fragmentation, algorithmic distortion of human features, and perceptual ambiguity in the construction of visual identity^[25, 26]. These characteristics not only reveal technical aspects of AI image-generation processes, but also articulate a reconfiguration of traditional codes of visual representation.

The three images offer distinct perspectives of the artwork, visually highlighting the key elements under analysis. These include a general view of the installation, a series of distorted portraits from one of the channels, and a fragmented image generated by AI.

This image features three black-and-white portraits arranged in a triptych format, displaying faces distorted by digital effects that simulate scanning glitches or horizontal fragmentation. The figures in the three portraits, while recognizably human, are partially disfigured, with markings that evoke visual compression processes or transmission errors. The central portrait in the series stands out for its linear and organic texture, while the side portraits present greater visual density; one even appears to be a negative inversion of the other. The composition suggests an exploration of the disintegration of identity in digital contexts (**Figure 1**).

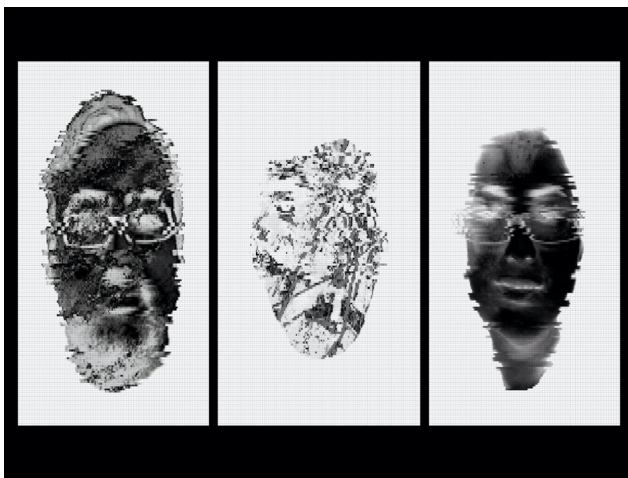


Figure 1. Screenshot of the work 'Corrupted Portraits' showing one of the AI-generated portraits.

In this colorful composition, three faces appear distorted through a glitch aesthetic, using a saturated neon palette that includes greens, pinks, blues, and yellows. The textures resemble a textile surface or digital canvas, and the facial figures blend with displacement effects and visual

noise, creating an unstable perception of the human form. The intense use of color and distortion emphasizes the loss of structure, offering a reflection on the transformation of identity in virtual environments (**Figure 2**).

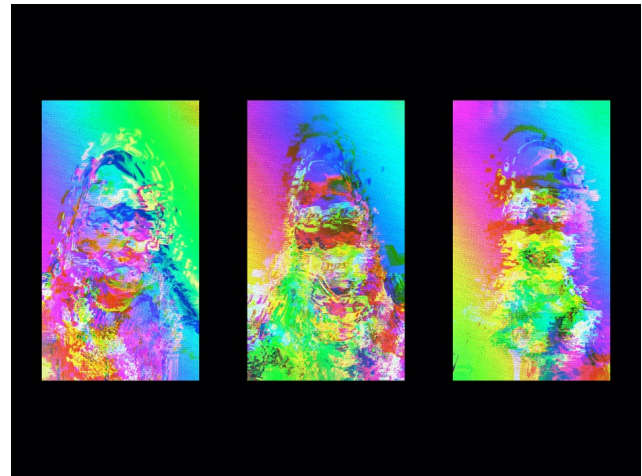


Figure 2. Screenshot of the work 'Corrupted Portraits' showing one of the AI-generated portraits.

The image shows three faces set against a black background, each constructed through symmetry and the superimposition of intense colors resembling thermal maps. The central portrait is the most defined and frontal, while the side portraits display more abstract structures, possibly resulting from mirroring or visual inversion. The colors—reds, greens, blues, and yellows—are layered in a way that evokes scientific or biometric visualizations, suggesting an introspective or psychophysiological reading of the human face as a territory for digital analysis (**Figure 3**).

The three figures are organized around five axes that allow for a detailed exploration of their formal, perceptual, and symbolic dimensions. These axes—(1) general description of the work, (2) formal analysis of channel 1, (3) formal analysis of channel 2, (4) viewer interaction and experience, and (5) aesthetic and cultural implications—structure the study across interrelated layers of meaning, enabling a critical and in-depth reading of the installation. This classification follows a qualitative methodology of visual analysis, which helps identify aesthetic patterns, compositional strategies, and symbolic implications in the treatment of the digital image. Through this approach, the work is positioned within contemporary debates on identity, technology, and representation. Beyond formal description, this analytical structure allows for a critical examination of the perceptual and cul-

tural effects produced by the installation, offering an interpretation grounded in the theoretical frameworks discussed in previous sections.

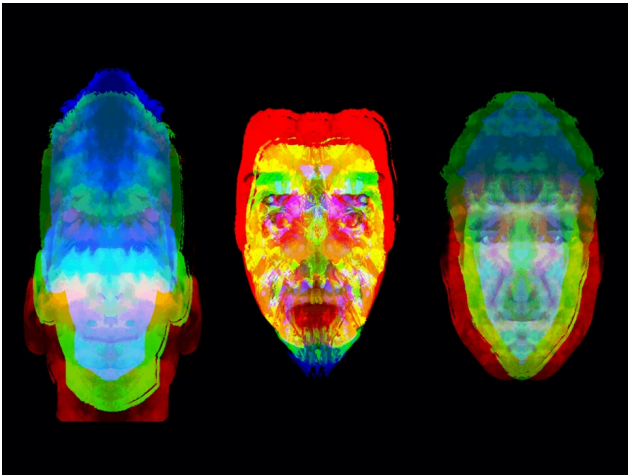


Figure 3. Screenshot of the work ‘Corrupted Portraits’ showing one of the AI-generated portraits.

4.1. General Description of the Work

The ‘Corrupted Portraits’ artwork is a video installation consisting of two simultaneous channels of AI-generated digital portraits, presented without sound. The piece invites viewers to physically move around the installation to observe the images from multiple angles, creating a dynamic, mutable, and multifaceted perceptual experience.

This spatial and interactive arrangement not only multiplies visual perspectives but also actively engages the viewer in a continuous process of reinterpretation, challenging the usual passive reception of the artistic image. In doing so, the artist prompts a reflection on the fragmented and mutable nature of identity in the digital age.

4.2. Formal Analysis of Channel 1

The first channel presents a series of human faces that appear to undergo processes of visual corruption: facial features blend and distort, creating an effect of continuous melting and fusion. The color palette is highly contrasting, ranging from delicate pastel tones to vibrant neon that emphasize the artificiality of the images.

These visual distortions call into question the stability of the represented identity, generating a sense of ambiguity and disorientation. The aesthetic perception of AI-generated works is affected by fragmentation and visual alteration,

which can trigger ambivalent emotional responses in the viewer—such as a mix of fascination and unease^[10–12].

This channel challenges the traditional notion of the face as a stable and coherent sign of human identity, shifting it toward a more fluid and mutable concept. The tension between the familiarity of the human form and technological distortion suggests a critique of how technology mediates the construction of the self in the contemporary world.

4.3. Formal Analysis of Channel 2

The second channel features, the faces that appear to be reflected on a mirrored surface, but these reflections are fragmented, displaced, and reorganized in a non-linear manner. Missing or rearranged facial elements create a discontinuous, almost kaleidoscopic image. The dominant tones are earthy and muted, contributing to a melancholic atmosphere and a sense of wear or deterioration.

This fragmented visual effect disrupts the expectation of coherence and unity in the image of the face, foregrounding the disintegration and multiplicity of the self. Research has shown that human visual attention focuses on specific facial patterns to construct emotional meaning; however, the fragmentation presented here subverts this logic, challenging the viewer to reconstruct or reinterpret the represented identity^[9].

The fractured representation of the face can be read as a visual metaphor for fragmented and dissociated identities in the digital age, where the multiplicity of data, profiles, and online representations produces an increasingly decentralized experience of the self—one that is also more vulnerable to technological manipulation.

4.4. Interaction and Viewer Experience

A fundamental component throughout the visual study of the personalized art installation is the viewer’s physical interaction with the piece. Movement around the screens alters the perspective and perception of the images, causing them to visually change and shift based on the viewing angle.

This interactive design promotes an immersive experience where perception is not static but a dynamic and relational process. This interactivity highlights the technological mediation inherent in contemporary digital art and challenges the classical separation between creator, artwork, and re-

ceiver, revealing a distributed authorship and a collective aesthetic experience^[22].

The viewer's active participation also emphasizes the idea that visual identity is a relational and mutable construct, not a fixed fact, aligning the work with current discussions on intersectionality and representation in contemporary visual culture.

4.5. Aesthetic and Cultural Implications

From a critical perspective, the work raises questions about the role of AI in artistic production and the construction of visual identity. The distortion and fragmentation of the faces can be interpreted as a metaphor for the disruptive impact AI has on traditional notions of authorship, authenticity, and creativity.

Moreover, the piece reflects an inherent tension between fascination with technological possibilities and fear or rejection of the loss of humanity in art. This phenomenon is linked to documented perceptual biases toward AI^[10–12], which influence how audiences' value and emotionally respond to machine-generated works.

Finally, the installation also functions as social critique, highlighting labor and ethical precariousness in the field of digital art. The invisibility of human labor behind AI systems and the complexity of distributed authorship raise urgent questions about justice, rights, and recognition in contemporary artistic practices, aligning with visual and critical studies^[9, 22, 24].

5. Discussion

The art installation positions itself at the critical intersection of art, technology, and identity, providing a platform to explore the aesthetic and cultural transformations triggered by AI in contemporary visual production. This work not only showcases the technical possibilities of AI to generate complex and fragmented images but also problematizes the social, ethical, and perceptual implications of these emerging technologies.

5.1. Reconfiguring Authorship and Creativity

The incorporation of algorithms into artistic creation marks a paradigmatic shift in classical notions of authorship

and creativity^[7, 27, 28]. The work in question reflects this transformation, as the presence of AI as a producing agent introduces a hybrid and distributed form of authorship. This raises questions about creative responsibility and intellectual rights—issues that remain unresolved in the field of digital art.

The distortion and fragmentation of faces in 'Corrupted Portraits' symbolize the duality between the human and the artificial, reflecting the uncertainty about what truly constitutes an original work in a context where the machine actively participates in the creative process. This uncertainty translates into the emotional ambivalence experienced by viewers, who are confronted with images that are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar^[29–31].

5.2. Aesthetics of AI: Between Familiarity and Strangeness

The aesthetics generated by AI challenge traditional categories of the beautiful and the disturbing. This phenomenon—such as the creation of images that blend the familiar with the unknown—produces a sense of uncanny familiarity or the uncanny valley, which influences the viewer's perceptual and emotional response^[29–31]. In this aesthetic, as seen in the visual study of the personalized art installation, the coexistence of recognizable human faces with their deformations and fragmentations materializes, evoking both empathy and unease.

However, this study^[2, 6] expands the reflection from the perspective of algorithmic aesthetics, where the machine not only replicates existing visual patterns but also generates entirely new forms that elude human logic. This ability to produce unpredictable and dynamic images—such as those that change with the viewer's position within the installation—redefines the traditional aesthetic experience and places the audience in an active and participatory role.

5.3. Interaction and Technological Mediation

The spatial interaction proposed by the installation, with the possibility of altering visual perception through physical movement, reveals a new mode of mediation between human and machine. This collaborative relationship redefines the artistic experience as a dynamic process, rather than a one-way act of passive contemplation.

This aspect aligns with the view that AI aesthetics favor forms of art that incorporate interactivity and variability, where meaning and form are constructed in real time and collaboratively between technology and the user^[2, 6]. The installation thus becomes a space where perception and visual identity are contingent and mutable, reflecting the complexity and fluidity of contemporary visual culture.

5.4. Ethical and Social Implications

Beyond the aesthetic dimension, a critical reflection emerges on the ethical and social aspects involved in AI-mediated artistic production. Concerns are raised about labor precarity and the invisibilization of human work in the digital realm—issues that are exacerbated by increasing automation and the use of algorithms^[22–24].

Distributed authorship, in which humans and machines collaborate indistinguishably, challenges traditional systems of recognition and compensation, putting social justice and the fair valuation of artistic labor at risk. The artwork can be interpreted as a critique of these dynamics, highlighting how visual identity and human creativity are being mediated—and at times stripped away—by technological systems that remain opaque and unregulated.

5.5. Contributions to the Contemporary Debate

This research is part of a broader debate on the role of AI in visual culture and contemporary art. The coexistence of fascination and resistance toward AI reflects an ethical and aesthetic crisis that calls for an interdisciplinary and critical understanding^[27].

The artwork ‘Corrupted Portraits’ functions as a device that amplifies these tensions, inviting us to question not only the nature of identity and visual perception, but also the social and economic structures that shape artistic production in the digital age. This approach is essential for moving toward fairer, more ethical, and more creative models for the future of art and visual culture.

6. Conclusions

This visual study of the custom art installation ‘Corrupted Portraits’ exemplifies how AI has moved beyond being

merely a technical tool to become an active agent in contemporary artistic creation. This work establishes distorted portraits through dynamic visual interaction. This also reflects the current shifts around identity, authorship, and perception in an increasingly algorithmically mediated culture. Through the visual and critical analysis developed in this study, it has become clear that AI not only transforms aesthetic languages but also raises fundamental ethical and political questions about symbolic production in the digital age.

From an aesthetic perspective, the work falls within the field of algorithmic aesthetics, where real-time image segmentation is generative (and created) from data, interaction, and variability in digital art. This approach breaks with traditional notions of the visual as a stable representation by introducing a logic of fluidity, uncertainty, and process. The viewer ceases to be a passive observer and becomes an agent who co-creates meaning through their interaction with the work.

In symbolic terms, the distorted faces in the installation argue visual metaphors for the fragmented and fluid identity of our time. Facial representation, historically an emblem of identity and recognition, appears here as an unstable surface, altered by algorithmic processes that blur its contours. This tension between familiarity and strangeness—the human and the artificial—aligns with the concept of critical double visions, such as uncanny familiarity, and it contributes to visual development through the transformation of technology and subjective experience.

On an ethical and social level, the analysis reveals the problems linked to distributed authorship, job insecurity, and the opacity of algorithmic systems in the artistic field. Far from being a neutral aesthetic exercise, the work highlights how AI systems operate within unequal power structures, where human creativity can be devalued or rendered invisible. This critical dimension is key to understanding AI-generated art not only as a formal innovation, but also as a space for symbolic and political contestation.

The installation is not limited to a reflection on technique, but rather extends toward a broader interpretation within visual culture studies. The human face, fragmented and altered, becomes an emblematic figure of contemporary subjectivity: shaped by data, interfaces, platforms, and discourses that constantly reconfigure the visible and the representable. Based on these findings, a series of recommendations is proposed to guide the work of artists, curators,

and researchers involved in the field of AI-generated art:

1. To promote a critical and ethical practice, aware of the social and symbolic impacts of AI.
2. To explore new forms of shared authorship that recognize collaboration between humans and automated systems.
3. To make algorithmic biases visible and challenge them, preventing work from perpetuating stereotypes or inequalities.
4. To promote transparency in creative processes, including the provenance of data and the technologies used.
5. To establish interdisciplinary bridges that enrich artistic creation with contributions from philosophy, sociology, ethics, and data science.
6. To recognize the agency of the viewer as an active participant in the construction of meaning.
7. To defend justice in automation by demanding decent working conditions and recognition for those involved in the development of creative systems.

Finally, this study provides substantial evidence on AI-generated visual art from both technical and aesthetic perspectives. It is a profoundly interdisciplinary phenomenon, reshaping the boundaries between the human and the artificial, the visual and the conceptual, the individual and the collective. In the face of this transformation, the role of art is more necessary than ever as a space for imagining, critiquing, and constructing alternative forms of technological creation, perception, and coexistence.

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