

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE HYBRID FUTURE

1. CONTEMPORARY AESTHETICS IN FRONT OF THE ARTIFICIAL AESTHETICS OF AI

To weave thoughts, and moreover to deal with contemporary art in the modern times in which we live, is like penetrating the invisible and bracketing the impossible. Indeed, we must emphasize that contemporary art gives priority to the concept of aesthetics (philosophy), the discovery of artistic value as sensory sound, the sensation and sensitivity of matter to concretize the idea of the artist.

In this perspective, Umberto Eco, through his approach to contemporary aesthetics, reevaluates matter as a discovery that takes place in the depths of the artist's subconscious, in the face of advanced computer technology. The discovery of the matter for the concretization of the sensory sounds of the contemporary artist is the very discovery of the concept of aesthetics, which illuminates contemporary art, where *"beauty, truth, invention, creation, are not part of an angelic spiritualization, but they have a relationship with the universe of things that are touched, that are smelled, that make a noise when they fall, that fall by the law of gravity, that are subject to consumption, alienation, decay, and development."*¹ This approach of contemporary aesthetics proves to us that matter transforms into the very body of the artwork, thus it is no longer just the physiological image of the creative artist, but the challenge to resist the advance of a new presence, such as artificial intelligence (AI²).

In an era where artificial intelligence is rapidly advancing, it is interesting to analyze the many philosophical and ontological implications of this technological revolution. Artificial intelligence, with its ability to think, learn and even "feel emotions", challenges our traditional concept of "human being". This, because the creation of thinking machines and the change of the ontological paradigm, puts the artist and contemporary art in front of survival, not to say: leads them to extinction. The human being is the creator of these potentially conscious entities, transforming them into the architects of a new age that undermines the foundations of metaphysics as we have known it since the beginning of human life.

In the wake of this technological revolution, the fundamental question of metaphysics would be: "What is being, existing?". This is a question that takes on a new dimension in the context of AI. This new entity equipped with artificial intelligence, in fact, presents a challenge to our understanding of being, as it offers a different form of existence than the organic one. Such an existence inevitably affects the essence of the contemporary artist's sensibility, which until now was the only and inalienable source of his invisible and intangible ideas, possessing them within himself.

¹ Eco, U. (2004). *Storia della bellezza*, Milan, Bompiani Editore, p. 402-405.

² AI – Is the English abbreviation of Artificial Intelligence. This phrase refers to the discipline that studies the creation of various computer systems capable of simulating human thought.

This new form of being, and therefore the new artist in terms of approach and in relation to rampant technological progress, raises fundamental questions about the nature of consciousness, identity and creative independence, which has made art contemporary to tend more to artificial aesthetics than to the genealogical semiotics of human existence.

For the contemporary artist, the concept of aesthetics in front of AI has undergone a fundamental shift in terms of meaning, since creating a work of art with any technique is no longer "exclusive" only to him, but an artist can now become and be anyone, thanks to AI mechanisms.

In this view, the question naturally arises: If artificial intelligence thinks, learns and feels emotions, is it possible for it to have a consciousness similar to that of a human? And, if so, what is the role and involvement of the artist and therefore of contemporary art in this new reality?

The existence of artificial intelligence and a completely virtual presence composed of algorithms and electrical impulses, force the artist's consciousness to reconsider its traditional positions and face new theoretical, aesthetic, substantive and meaningful challenges.

All this happens when the identity and autonomy of these new thinking "creatures" raise other ontological questions: – Can an artificial intelligence have its own identity, well-defined by name, surname, date of birth and place of birth, different from that of its creator? If so, what rights and responsibilities should this "creature" have? The birth of AI forces us to reflect on the boundaries between human and non-human, spiritual and non-spiritual, rational and irrational, redefining in the beginning, a new ontological order from the one we have taken for granted until now.

Therefore, artists, curators, critics, art historians and galleries will have to face another register of interaction in their contemporaneity, since now the parallel civilization that we created for ourselves creates everything through technology. In the wake of this revolution of a parallel civilization, where everything is created virtually; color, drawing, shapes, volumes, spatial conception, even the idea, the contemporary artist tends to give priority to the artificial aesthetic thought, rather than the academic preparation to fundamentally recognize the creative processes, from which he forms his maturity as an intellectual.

Undoubtedly, the very act of creating conscious artificial entities undermines the position of the artist as a privileged being who, apart from God, is the only living thing that creates its own universe. If humans are capable of generating new forms of consciousness, the role of the artist in the cosmic order is called into question. Moreover, it is the responsibility and reflection of the contemporary artist in front of artificial intelligence, which leads him to create according to the rules of artificial aesthetics, simultaneously revealing to us the ethical and moral challenges that arise from it.

The invention of artificial intelligence marks a turning point, not only for the survival of the contemporary artist as a whole, but also for the approach of galleries which already develop their activity with an updated methodology for the exhibition and sale of artwork.

An inseparable part of this revolution that has shaken the foundations of humanity is the curator, thus completing the artist-curator-gallery trinomial, where the role of the curator

is no longer as it was conceived from the beginning, but a fundamental and decision-making figure for organization and foresight to adapt to the new rules dictated by AI.

The emergence of thinking and potentially conscious machines redefines the concept of being in relation to time-space and above all, the limits of our thinking so far, prompting us to revise our ideas about consciousness, identity, belonging, anthropology, philosophy and metaphysics. Faced with this new reality, the contemporary artist should not "surrender" with the idea that he has already been "replaced" by AI, on the contrary, he has the task of adapting and developing new ontological and research models, in terms of aesthetics artificial, which can guide us in our navigation in this world of unstoppable development.

AI gives the artist and contemporary art the opportunity to rethink metaphysics and discover new frontiers of knowledge, confronting them with previously unknown challenges, but also with new technical flexibility full of surprise and excitement.

2. THE SEMIOESTHETICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BEYOND THE RATIONAL OF THE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST

The new approach generated by artificial intelligence has combined the two fundamental concepts of contemporary art, that of semiotics and that of aesthetics (philosophy) into one with semioesthetics. Two concepts that make up the entire creative process of the contemporary artist. The revitalizing mechanisms of artificial intelligence have become the perfect mediators between man and metaphysics, translating word into image. Such a process goes beyond the rational thinking of the contemporary artist, interfering and changing his artistic language.

The impact of artificial intelligence on the creativity of the contemporary artist should be seen more broadly: how does it appear, what mechanisms does it stimulate within the artist's subconscious and where does it lead his creativity? What are the challenges that the artist will have to overcome? Questions that include, not only the semioesthetic approach of contemporary art, but encourage discussions of how it affects the much wider market of visual arts, and therefore those artists who use the digital graphics technique to create their works, video art, digital painting, installation and other three-dimensional interactive applications.

Artificial intelligence has long been used by contemporary artists for conceptual experiments, semioesthetic research that explores new frontiers of art. This has awakened a special attention regarding the practice and calculation of two concepts, semiotics and aesthetics (semioesthetics) by the contemporary artist in the field of visual arts. In this perspective, we see how AI has encouraged today's artist to explore and discover new experiences throughout his creative process.

Despite the fact that we are dealing with a new reality, where words are easily translated into images, thanks to AI, for the contemporary artist to concretize his ideas, he will have to go through an unknown, surprising and complicated creative process. A process during which the artist must preserve the originality of the semioesthetics of his stylistic language. This is because the ease that artificial intelligence enables for the creation of the images it wants, simultaneously creates the phenomenon of devaluation and not recognizing the authorship, which is vital for the existence and the imprint in time and space of the artist. Confronting the phenomenon of loss of authorship leads contemporary artists to research and try different ways to be distinct among themselves, just as it still happens among artists who continue to create with traditional techniques of visual art.

If we go back in time, we can affirm that the first form of manifestation of human intelligence was art, a distinctive feature of *Homo Sapiens*, who, thanks to his ingenuity, represented what he saw in reality, in a concrete, interpreted and outstanding image from all.

Artificial intelligence and the metaverse consist of false likenesses of a human being within an artificially manipulated reality, creating the illusion of reality.

This dichotomy between the real and the artificial transcends the rationality of the man of our present, but not that of the contemporary artist and art. Despite the invention of AI, visual art is essentially a manipulation of real truth, as artwork by its very nature consists of “fake” images. The artist during the creative process is inspired by a particular phenomenon or aspect of the environment that surrounds him, but he never imitates (reproduces) or imitates (*mimes*^{[grc]3}) what is in front of him as it appears. The work of art that we see is the creation of the artist, which in order to arrive at the final image that we see, passes through the being of the artist, transcending his psycho-spiritual state of that moment, sensations, emotions and everything else that puts the artist in such inspiring conditions to create. Therefore, visual art in this dichotomy of relations, both rational on the part of the real artist and artificial on the part of AI, does not suffer a revolutionary chock, since the art he creates also carries falsehood, in relation to the real truth in front of him.

In this view, both the real artist and the AI artificial artist do not obey the universal principles of reality, but interpret them to create what we call ART.

The presence of AI is, however, an element of dramatic disruption in relation to what the contemporary artist has realized his ideas with artistic techniques known so far, which calls into question the role of the artist himself. The focus of the contemporary artist shifts to the creative act, to the idea and not to technical virtuosity; a change that is now a factual reality in contemporary art.

The contemporary artist turns to artificial intelligence to concretize his ideas and achieve impressive effects that shape the final image of the artwork. This relationship, where the real artist measures himself against the artificial artist, a new entity, of another mind, over which he has partial control. This dualism of the creative process proves that the artificial

³ *Mimesis* – is a term derived from the ancient Greek μίμησις^[grc]-*mimesis*-imitation/reproduction. With the concept of mimesis, Plato defines the similarity of empirical things with the idea that constitutes their universal type, considering artistic creations as imitations of real things found in nature, but also the imitation of ideas, referring to art in its entirety as spiritual matter.

semiotics goes beyond the rational of the real artist, which helps more than him in the final result for the creation of the artistic work.

However, the artificial AI artist, unlike the real artist, obtains not only synthetic images without feelings and emotions, but “terribly” accelerates the realization of the image, extremely shrinking the invisible vacuum that is located between the concept of TIME and the concept of SPACE. The speed of image creation is much higher than that of any previous artistic technique, stripping the creative process of the rationality of the human mind. A process that loses all the elements to be creative: we are dealing with a production of the image and not its creation. This is because the final image that we call “digital artwork” as opposed to the creation of the real artist, is subject to a dictated, iterative mechanism of the artificial intelligence algorithm.

The images produced by the AI are the end of a multifaceted “learning” machine, which manipulates vectors of random numbers, thus following the instructions of textual requests. Texts are the main source of artificial intelligence, which after processing them begins to “conceive”, produce groups of images related to them, transforming the word into an image of artificial semiaesthetics, completely without the need for human rationality.

In the interior of these “knowledge-making” machines, as well as in the interior of the real artist, there is the space where the ideas are beaten, the thing that stimulates the imagination to create the artistic work, or produce the artificial image.

3. CONTEMPORARY ART FROM THE CREATIVE ACT TO THE AI COMMANDED MECHANICAL ACT

The relationship between contemporary art and artificial intelligence belongs to a rapid development characterized by new works of art that highlight a critical reflection on the nature of the artist's creativity and the artificial images produced by artificial intelligence.

Important to understand in this relationship is the fact that contemporary art is realized in our present and by “research” artists who conduct conceptual research on art itself and what it represents. This has caused contemporary art to overcome itself and the *cliché*

stereotypes that have characterized it until now, often renewing itself within some concepts and terms understandable only by some experts in the field of contemporary art and galleries specialized in exhibiting this art.

But contemporary art with the invention of AI has moved from the creative act, to the mechanical act of commanding artificial coloring, according to the instructions that the numerical vectors address to the “brain” unit of the “knowing” machines of artificial intelligence. In this regard, a new and well-organized market for the exhibition and sale of digital works has been developed for several years, driven by the NFT⁴ phenomenon, which thanks to the blockchain⁵ technology guarantees the “authorship” of the digital work as a single one.

The relationship between contemporary art and artificial intelligence is multidimensional, ranging from aesthetic experimentation, to critical reflection on technology and redefining creative dynamics. The continued development of this relationship promises to bring further innovations and challenges to the world of contemporary art in terms of approach, processes, techniques and anthropological research, which directly affect the quality of the artwork created by the real artist and the artificial image of produced by AI.

The ongoing research of contemporary art always remains the phenomenology of urban anthropology. This is how contemporary art seeks to trace the phenomena of the present, prompting the artist's awareness to see artificial intelligence, not as the danger of its extinction, but as the mediator that connects two dimensions, the visible and the invisible that it is about metaphysics.

The silent transition from the contemporary art of the creative act, to that of the commanded mechanical act, is essentially the desire to overcome our limitations, as a way to discover the possibilities given by technology and the irrationality of AI.

4. ARTIST AND CONTEMPORARY ART IN RELATION TO *NOESIS* THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The history of artificial intelligence has been characterized by continuous progress towards the goal of creating ever more sophisticated learning machines. However, as we elaborated above, the real challenge of AI is not only about logical-deductive reasoning, but the ability to develop *noesis*^[grc]⁶, or the intuitive and direct understanding of concrete physical reality.

⁴ NFT – is the abbreviation of “non-fungible token” and represents the deed of ownership and the certificate of authenticity of the production of a digital artwork as a single copy of it, written on the Blockchain.

⁵ Blockchain – linked blocks, is a data structure consisting of a growing list of data, called “blocks”, linked together securely using cryptography.

⁶ *Noesis* – is a term derived from the ancient Greek νόησις^[grc]-*noesis*-knowledge/consciousness. This term was used for the first time by Diogenes of Apollonia (5th century BC), who asserts that the act of knowing (*noesis*) belongs to the omniscient God, who gives order and measure to the formation of the cosmos. *Noesis* assumes a central value in Husserl's phenomenological thought, for which (*noesis*) represents consciousness, which is a lived experience as a whole and as such, from the subjective point of view (i.e. the set of senses of

Noesis refers to the ability of the intellect to grasp universal ideas or truths without having to go through the process of reasoning. This form of immediate and deep knowledge represents a core aspect of human intelligence and poses a still-open challenge for the present and hybrid future of artificial intelligence. Moreover, when the latter is in front of the contemporary artist, and therefore, of the worldview of the existence of contemporary art as a semioesthetic approach.

Until now, developments in AI have made it possible to create machines capable of reasoning and learning by following complex logic patterns and algorithms. This extreme revolution of artificial intelligence likens concrete physical reality similarly to the *noesis* of the individual as a human being and the individual as an artist being, which represents a more holistic⁷ and integrated approach between the two dimensions, the real and the artificial.

This implies the need to develop new models of learning that take into account, not only logic and rationality, but also emotional, social and cultural components. All these characterize the knowledge of life experience as a human being, dictating then the intuition and approach as an artist being, to adapt and create works according to the new rules of artificial aesthetics.

The search for machines equipped with *noesis* will likely lead to a new generation of artificial intelligence, able to understand and interact with the world in a deeper and more meaningful way. This extraordinary technological achievement will continue to have a major impact on the development of the consciousness of the contemporary artist today, and the artificial intelligence artist of the hybrid future. A parallel presence, which will be the daily life of the thinking, conceptual artist, but no longer executing, as the creative process of the artwork will pass from the real artist to the implementing machines of AI, from the artist as a spiritual being, to the artist virtual.

Noesis in our contemporary artificial aesthetics takes on a different worldview compared to that for which Diogenes created it; it is the present future that helps create a relationship where AI and the contemporary artist collaborate with each other in complementary ways.

The invention of artificial intelligence for the artist and contemporary art has brought with it previously unknown challenges and opportunities in the field of philosophy, semiotics and metaphysics, which are the necessary elements for the creative process and for the entire formation of the artistic work itself. Challenges that put the existence of both entities in great dilemmas: the REAL ARTIST, a physical person who perceives the tangible and sensitive concrete, processes the reality experienced in the depths of his subconscious and creates the image thanks to the neurological mechanisms that stimulate the creative imagination. A

understanding), directed toward the intentional object of lived experience (such as perception, imagination, and memory). This is consciousness (*noesis*), which constitutes (the *Noema*) that pertains to thought/concept.

⁷ Holistic – is the interpretation of life phenomena in their totality and not separately from each other. This term derives from the ancient Greek word ὅλος^[grc]-*holo*-whole, referring to the theoretical and philosophical interpretation according to which the properties of a system cannot be explained apart from the totality of its individual components, since the functional summation of the parts is always greater, or in any case different, than the same parts taken individually. J. Smuts defined holism as: "...the tendency of nature to form wholes that are greater than the sum of the parts divided between them. This is thanks to creative evolution."

creative process that has a trajectory that transcends space-time from *noesis* and ends in *noema*^{[grc]8}. This process consisting of perception, consciousness and creation that animates matter, giving it a form and an order that belongs to the *Anima Mundi*^{[la]9}.

Whereas the AI VIRTUAL ARTIST is the multiplicity produced by electromagnetism¹⁰ created by artificially thinking machines that transcends the term *noesis* (of the mere conscious artist). Machines that are capable of overcoming the limits of logical-deductive reasoning, to achieve a deeper and more complete understanding of the phenomenology of contemporary art. This causes the final image of the artwork to be codified according to artificial aesthetics and no longer according to the sensibility, or psycho-spiritual state of a real artist.

In between this dualism between the real physical artist and the virtual AI artist interacts invisibly but sensitively electromagnetic waves, where **E** is the electric field and **B** is the magnetic field. They are usually described by vectors in a three-dimensional space. An electric field is a conservative force field created in space by the presence of stationary electric charges. While the magnetic field is a non-conservative vector field created by moving charges:

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} \quad \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

This process is complex, but capable of transmitting from the real artist data that is obtained directly from the artificial virtual artist. While the latter, thanks to the obtained data, generates the codified image according to artificial aesthetics. All this to show and demonstrate how the extreme technological progress is affecting the way of perceiving, thinking and creating of the contemporary artist. A developmental revolution of *noesis*, which will undoubtedly in the future reconceive the concept of time-space known until now and how the artist, or contemporary art interacts with it, in the sense of mastering the relationships form-volume=time+space.

This is a fundamental moment for the artist and contemporary art, because we are facing the fact of a restart, of a genesis that will "museumize" the entire preceding period of conceptualizing and creating the artistic work and, therefore, also of humanity in totality.

⁸ *Noema* – is a term derived from the ancient Greek meaning νόημα^[grc]-*noema*-thought/concept. This term was first used by Parmenides, who identifies it with "the thought of truth" not distinct from "true reasoning" thus being contrasted with "mortal thoughts" derived from the senses. According to Parmenides, ideas are nothing but thoughts (*noema*) of something thought as the totality of a single "one". While according to Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, "noematic content" (*noema*), is obtained from the "intentional awareness" of *noesis*. Thought (*noema*) coincides with the lived experience itself of objective perceived data, while the action of thought is *noesis* itself, which is essentially the subjective form of *Erlebnis*^[de]-experience.

⁹ *Anima Mundi* – is a philosophical term used by the Platonists to denote the vitality of nature in its entirety, united within a single living organism. *Anima Mundi* (Soul of the World) represents the calculating principle from which individual organisms take form, which, although each is formed and distinguished according to its own characteristics, are still connected among themselves by a common universal soul.

¹⁰ Electromagnetism – is an interaction that belongs to physics. Electromagnetic activity occurs between electrically charged particles via electromagnetic fields. The electromagnetic force is one of the four fundamental forces of nature. Electromagnetism is the dominant force in the interactions of atoms and molecules.

If artificial intelligence manages to assimilate *noesis* as well, then we will realize that we have taken the first step into the metaphysical beyond, which can support and enrich human experience in all its aspects. This means that for the first time AI overtakes its creator, the human.

The ultimate goal of this journey through the paths of the artist's practice and contemporary art is to understand how the technology invented by man to expand or enhance his physical and mental abilities to master the unmasterable, the universe, is advancing exponentially, making a new entity was born, that of "*Homo Artificial Artist*".

In this field, the International Biennale of Contemporary Art of Durrës seeks not only to bring together philosophical, conceptual, anthropological, semiotic approaches and artists from different nations, but above all, seeks to explore the metaphysical invisible, what only artificial intelligence can to penetrate it and therefore predict it, placing the hybrid future of humanity on the edge of doubt.

Artists are the vanguard of any social development and political system, and as such, with their foresight, they cannot remain silent, on the sidelines, against this phenomenon that drives humanity forward: "**Artificial Intelligence**", which, in addition to inclusive development, fundamentally endangers the existence of the human being itself and other living things that populate the planet Earth, giving the possibility of the unknown with it "**hybrid future**", for the re-creation in the beginning of a life, a dimension and a new existence.

This is to say and to witness through works of contemporary art, the likeness of our contemporaneity in which we live and the peace that awaits us in the unlive future.

Ph.D. OLTSSEN GRIPSHI

Founder & Curator of DIBoCA24