



YES BUT IS IT ART?

Studio Kroner presents a month-long exploration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) through art and discussion.

Featuring:

- Judi Bommarito
- Alan Brown
- Teri Campbell
- Patrick Lichty
- Brandy VanGessel
- Attorney Douglas Gastright
- Cincinnati School for the Creative and Performing Arts

We've all heard about artificial intelligence, largely known and referred to as AI, and if you've ever asked Siri and Alexa to do something for you, you've used artificial intelligence. With the introduction of Chat GPT from Open AI, you can now generate copy using AI, but did you know that AI is also now being used to create or generate what's known as *text-to-image* art?

The phrase "text-to-image" defines the AI process, meaning you type in the text of what you want to see or produce, and the AI program will then generate the image or artwork based on your text input. Using AI text-to-image engines or programs, such as DALL-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion, you can type in a prompt as simple as "lamps and tree-lined street," and the program will create an image.

The question of whether AI-generated art can be considered "art" is a complex and hotly debated topic, but whether we like it or not, AI-generated art is here to stay. As a way to meet this moment and explore the burgeoning role of AI as an art form along with its impact on traditional artists, artist Paul Kroner, owner of Studio Kroner, poses the question, "Yes, But Is It Art?" in a month-long exhibit and symposium that opens Thursday, May 18th and runs through Saturday, June 17th, 2023.

"Yes, But Is It Art?" will feature five artists—Patrick Lichty, Alan Brown, Judi Bommarito, Teri Campbell, and Brandy VanGessel—as they investigate the creative potential and limitations of text-to-image based artwork. Kroner will also welcome aspiring playwrights and actors from the Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts to perform a series of short skits about innovation and disruption, and Attorney Douglas Gastright will bring his expertise regarding the legal challenges and implications facing artists using AI to a panel discussion.

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— Judi Bommarito



From top to bottom: Teri Campbell, Alan Brown, Brandy VanGessel

While some artists aren't yet convinced of its merits, others are enthusiastically throwing their weight behind it. One such artist is Cincinnati photographer and digital artist Alan Brown, who will be one of the featured artists in "Yes, But Is It Art?" Brown says he likes to think of AI programs as tools in his tool belt. He also approaches them with an attitude of discovery. "I stumbled across AI last year in January when it was just starting to become a thing, and one of my favorite things to do is to find out how to use the technology and what I'm going to do with it. And now, I'm pretty much working in various AI programs every day."

Judi Bommarito, Detroit-based conceptual visual storyteller and fine art photographer, uses Midjourney, and like Brown, she thinks of it as a tool, similar to the way she uses Photoshop to manipulate her images. She says, "I consider it to be a tool for people that are already experienced artists, not necessarily something for somebody to use in replacement of being an artist. The medium allows for the expansion of creativity. It's not just the result."

Another featured artist, Teri Campbell, owner and creative lead at Teri Studios, was quick to learn about and use AI as it became available. His enthusiasm for AI is immediately apparent. "I feel like I'm more excited about my future as an artist right now than I was when I got my first camera. I'm so amped about what's going on, what we're able to do now, and how you can produce things so quickly and iterate ideas and just having a blast. I mean, I feel like I'm so much more prolific now than I ever was."

Like Campbell, Brandy VanGessel, a multidisciplinary designer and creative director, is also excited about the opportunities for efficiency and accessibility this tool offers. "I'm really looking forward to talking about the opportunities this opens up for people who either physically wouldn't be able to create art like this, or people who don't necessarily have the time to develop these really specific skills."

This is a very disruptive technology, but photography didn't kill painting. The record player didn't kill sheet music... This is changing the game radically, but on the other hand, it isn't going to completely destroy everything."

— Patrick Lichty



From top to bottom: Patrick Lichty, Judi Bommarito

When asked what she'd like viewers to walk away thinking about after the exhibition, VanGessel says, "I hope they are inspired to try it out for themselves. I think the more people use it and understand it, the more possibility there is." She adds, "This is just so amazing to me because someone that wouldn't have the time to devote all those hours to it is still able to bring their ideas to life, and I hope that is just something everyone walks away inspired to do."

Patrick Lichty, a media "reality" artist, curator, and theorist, believes it's wise to proceed with caution. "It is exciting. It is fun. And it probably is, you know, the next new thing, but we should be looking at the backside of the blade, too." He notes how Marshall McLuhan (Canadian philosopher) believed that technology creates solutions while it creates equal or almost equal problems, how it can be disruptive. Lichty goes on to clarify that just as caution is warranted and necessary even, AI engines, as disruptive to the art world as they are, do have a place. "This is a very disruptive technology, but photography didn't kill painting. The record player didn't kill sheet music. It changed the environment. This is changing the game radically, but on the other hand, it isn't going to completely destroy everything."

This exhibition, like others Kroner has organized and hosted, "uses art as a conduit to facilitate conversation and tackle difficult subjects about the world around us." So while there is a natural excitement for what AI can do to help artists, this exhibit also considers how AI threatens traditional artists who have spent years perfecting their skills and style. Kroner adds, "We're at a point where AI is relatively new to the art world, and there are still many questions to consider. Like other innovative disruptions from our past, it is important for us to put this moment in historical context and ask, 'is this art?'"



Exhibition and Symposium Information

Events for “Yes, But Is It Art?” include:

Thursday, May 18Opening Reception, 6-9 pm

Saturday, May 20.....Artist Talk with Patrick Lichty, Judi Bommarito,
and Brandy VanGessel, 1-2 pm

Performance by the School for the
Creative and Performing Arts, 7-8 pm

Sunday, May 21Performance by the School for the
Creative and Performing Arts, 1-2 pm

Saturday, June 3.....Panel Discussion with Artists Alan Brown,
Teri Campbell, and Attorney Douglas Gastright,
6-7 pm

Saturday, June 17Closing Reception, 2-5 pm

About Studio Kroner

Studio Kroner features local, regional, and national artists on a rotating basis, including resident artist Paul Kroner. Our mission is to use art as a conduit for discussing big and small ideas about society and to provide an arena for exchanging ideas about the world around us.

For more information about this exhibit and symposium, contact Paul Kroner at 513.428.9830 or email paul@studioKroner.com.

More information about Studio Kroner can be found at studiokroner.com.

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