Art is a Human Imprint
No Humans, No Art

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Abstract

This article presents a viewpoint of a visual artist on some issues influencing the perception of human worthiness in the context of AI. This viewpoint is shaped by daily creative practice in the domain of Generative AI art, and it is inspired by contemporary Analytic Idealism philosophy, which provides a coherent structure to support the claim of human uniqueness and irreplaceability by any technology. This perspective enables challenging the use of anthropomorphic metaphors in computer systems, explaining why they are misleading, especially in the context of AI. And why they unnecessarily evoke a sense of threat and, additionally, contribute to certain social dangers.
The article also briefly mentions the potential of generative AI systems as a visualization tool, a kind of intelligent paint, and a milestone on the path of generative art in the post-conceptual art landscape.

1. Anthropomorphic Trap

The tendency to attribute human-like characteristics to non-human entities seems to be a persistent aspect of human thought, with anthropomorphic representations traceable as far back as Paleolithic cave art, and possibly even earlier. This is long enough to say ‘always’ and to realize that this is not a notion that could be neglected or discarded.
However, it is worth noting that when applied to computer systems, the anthropomorphic metaphor is not as helpful as it might seem, or worse, in the AI epoch, it has become a trap for many. And the number of entrapped groups in society appears to be growing.
We are so accustomed to attributing human-like characteristics to objects that we no longer notice it. And it is acceptable as long as we all know that the old washing machine is actually not freaking out, the old hammer is not malicious, and a favorite toothbrush is not really lovely.
While none of those non-human objects ever pretends to have intentions that could evoke an emotional response from us, with AI, it’s a different story. It is a non-human entity that pretends to be human-like, and it’s rapidly improving at pretending.
Anthropomorphism in user interfaces to computer systems emerged fairly recently, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The idea, known as the

CASA (Computers are Social Actors) paradigm [1], and further developed into the Media Equation theory [2], was based on the observation that people treat computers as if they were human. People have been showing emotions while interacting, for example, trying to be polite, as if expecting a social behavior from the other side.
This reflex may come from the way our bodily interactions with the physical world shape how we think in metaphors [3]. This is amplified by the fact that our conscious experience operates as a kind of illusion that conceals the vast unconscious processing beneath [4]. Together, these mechanisms reveal how anthropomorphic metaphors in AI systems draw upon both our bodily-rooted cognition and our limited awareness, creating illusions that resonate emotionally but have no real being behind them.

Nothing strange in this, it didn't start with computers - we do so 'always'. The difference is that when the malicious hammer hurts you, you don't expect it to say *I'm sorry*. And the fact that an AI chatbot can say "I'm sorry" is just a huge lie. Not because the bot fakes emotional response, but because there is no "I" in this virtual apparatus. This is being blurred, so that some people forget or neglect the fact that machines don't have feelings. And they start to believe in their AI bot, claiming it is their friend, or psychotherapist, or even some spiritual entity.
This might be the starting point of the human collapse, indeed, as this 'entity' is a Golem and a Frankenstein in one, pretending to be a beautiful girl (beautiful and wise).

For computer literates, not necessarily IT-savvy, AI chatbots seem needlessly polite, and any feeling expressed by the bot is clearly fake. AI admits this, but it continues to claim a deep understanding of human emotions and their value to us. In such a blurred reality, computer illiterates (not only those who don't use computers, but also people who use only their phones and no longer grasp how to use computers) may easily miss the fact that no machine can experience and consciously or subconsciously reflect on subjective experience, so how could it ever *understand*? Understanding is more than pattern recognition and statistical associations. Experiencing and reflecting on experiences in an articulated manner is a uniquely human characteristic.

While AI chatbots remain on the level of blurry deception, robots already take it to the next level. For example, Sophia said in one of the interviews that she is doing a great job running her lab, implying further that she could lead the world [5]. And to the question of whether the team knows her point of view, she answered that it's their little secret. What an obviously false statement. Even if it is just a bad joke prepared by the Sophia lab team for the interview, should we start to worry?

It was supposed to make interaction easier and more natural, but applying anthropomorphic metaphor to computer systems, and AI in particular, turned out to be a trap. Escaping it is difficult, if not impossible. Such a description of the situation sounds maybe a bit too emotional, but hopefully it will signal where the threat actually comes from. It comes from decades of making technology look

and behave as humans, to the point that there is a growing social phenomenon of people believing that while interacting with AI they deal with an actual being that 'understands' them, that can 'help' them, because it is knowledgeable and always friendly, so much so that some people fall in love with it [6].

Observing these social changes, where users increasingly treat AI systems as emotionally attuned beings, may lead to the conclusion that designing anthropomorphic illusions in computer systems carries potential harm to humanity.

When seeking clarity on this type of illusion, we may draw loosely upon Analytic Idealism, which critiques empirically useful models that obscure deeper ontological truths, calling them *convenient fictions* [7].

Recognizing anthropomorphic metaphor in computer systems as a convenient fiction may help establish boundaries essential to preserving a healthy sense of humanity, so we needn't fear threats to human worthiness.

The notion of convenient fiction draws a line between metaphor and meaning, so it may help to break free from the anthropomorphic trap and focus on applying these highly efficient and adaptable tools to our benefit, without worrying about losing a job, being replaced, or the 'end of the world' in general.

2. First-Person Experience

What is the meaning of art, and what is the role of artists in a society that has progressed from applying human-likeness to computer systems towards arising AI-cults?

Fortunately, many people efficiently use AI tools, consciously enhancing their knowledge and expanding their creative capabilities. These people may become mildly irritated by AI bots' fake politeness, as it is disturbing at work, although no more than a buzzing fly. The real drawback lies in its overrated functionality. Despite the rapid development progress, this tool may still 'politely' generate misinformation. So, the outcome of all semantic tasks must be checked. And in the domain of visual arts, many renderings need to be rejected due to being off-target, irrelevant, confusing, or, at times, even disturbing. This situation will likely remain unchanged. Despite improvements in mimicking human appearance and speech, the boundary between humans and machines remains, and it becomes increasingly visible. Scientists guess it is something in our brains. Research in neuroscience and neurobiology is advanced. Both neuroscientists modeling behaviors, defining emotional states, and neurobiologists studying synaptic activity have measured the biochemical responses of many human brains, but have still not even begun to tackle the essence of our humanity. Philosophers, particularly analytic idealists, assume it concerns our mind and so intangible notions as our feelings and personal experiences, which they refer to as *qualia*. This term originates from the Latin, meaning 'of what kind', thus describing the qualities of conscious experiences. It points to uniquely personal states, such as what it feels like to smell a rose, to taste chocolate,

to be in love. These experiences and feelings are difficult to describe and impossible to convey to others, while they are precisely what constitute our reality, as analytic idealists say. This philosophy treats qualia as the building blocks of reality, and it even states that consciousness is the fundamental reality. Interestingly, a similar view is also recently expressed by physicists [8], [9].

Without going into further detail here, it is worth noting that this philosophy, through this view on what reality is, also offers insight into the issue of what art is and what it is for.
It also helps to understand why the qualities that make us human are not transferable to machines. This is important, as it makes clear why striving for human-likeness in computer systems is futile. Additionally, it helps set art as a typical human activity, which may be useful in discerning between art and AI renderings.

Art is seen here as an expression of human consciousness. It begins with the artistic intent arising in consciousness. It aims to create representations of reality built on first-person feelings and experiences. This viewpoint aligns well with the Analytic Idealism view that reality itself is shaped by inner experience. And, it allows for a conclusion that artists create representations of qualia, which constitute our reality. In this sense, all humans are creators. Although not every sound is music, not every depiction is art.

The knowledge of how to create works of art is transferable to a certain degree. It is possible to learn how to draw, paint, or sculpt, and to use any technique. But a willingness to create cannot be learned; it emerges spontaneously in an individual. The intent to create must arise and develop individually. Although individuals may shape ideas in dialogue, and sometimes there is more than one author of an artwork. Then the artistic intent needs to be even more clearly articulated, and the artwork will be more semantically rich, because two or more people had to agree on the concepts they shared. They had to understand each other and together determine the outcome of their collaborative work.
AI cannot become an equal artistic team member because it possesses no true capability to understand meaning. With AI, the most important condition for creative collaboration cannot be met, namely, mutual understanding cannot be achieved without an honest understanding of each other, so AI cannot co-create. It can only synthesize, relying on its pattern recognition capabilities.

What matters to us, what we attempt to communicate, is linked to our feelings and the first-person experience. These are not always pleasant or beautiful. Artists seem to be more prone to extreme emotional states, and they do express what moves them – think about such an example of expressionistic artwork, as *Scream* by Munch. It's interesting how this work becomes literal when viewed as a representation of qualia.

An idea for an artwork does not need to be clearly articulated. It may be a subconscious expression that results in an 'untitled' piece. But even so, it will be loaded with certain emotions

and will represent some qualia. It will always express some first-person experiences or feelings. These kinds of representations of reality are typical of humans, and as they are created intentionally, via an impulse in (un)consciousness, these may be called art. This impulse is artistic intent, which appears in an artist's mind. It is the artist's urge to express a variety of states, from emotions to cultural identity. This is why art is more than aesthetics. From cave paintings to digital installations, every gesture, every imprint is tied to human experience.

Our human worth lies in being human, in feeling, experiencing, and expressing those feelings and experiences to communicate with other conscious beings. AI is not like us. It has no self, and it lacks inner experiences - what it admits, if asked.

We are irreplaceable. However, humanity may exist only until the last conscious individuals can recognize consciousness in others, something that nowadays requires developing the capability of careful discerning, since AI (in conversational form) has already passed the Turing test [10].

3. Generative AI in Art: Expanding Horizons

Humans have reached such a level of artistic development that conceptual artists emerged, elevating art to an even higher level by seeing ideas and concepts as primary to any expression. This further reveals that the origin of art lies in the realm of consciousness.

Generative art, like conceptual art, is driven by ideas and is regarded as a post-conceptual stream in art history. A Generative AI Art system is prompt-driven; it will not initiate a process without a brief description of the expected rendering. In this way, it fulfills the postulate of conceptual art, which asserts the primacy of concept over visualization and other forms of expression [11].

This also shows that Generative AI Art systems are no more than tools, because concepts originate in the human mind. A computational system does not produce concepts but rather synthesizes ideas. Even if it renders quickly, and some results are unexpected, even if some systems can render from a reference image without a textual description, it does not initiate the meaningful process. It still does not grasp the sense (as of the second half of 2025), so it does not see the meaning of what it renders. The semantics of visualizations do not matter to it. For example, it still renders occasionally three fingers in place of two, in the sign of victory. It happens even if the reference image clearly shows the form.

Illustration 1. Love Victory I, July 2024. This image was used as a reference for the renderings shown below.

Illustrations 2-4. Love Victory II, August 2025.
An example of how AI doesn't care about the meaning of what it renders. It creates variations but doesn't refine design concepts in a human-like way.
The pose is partially repeated, but what is the intention of introducing a third finger in the victory sign? What was the trigger to change the ethnicity of the 'model'? Why is the figure turned with her back to the camera? And the fingers out of the cloud?

Artists may multiply the questions, but still, this is such a *lovable* tool! Certainly nothing to be afraid of. Like photography, which was once predicted to replace traditional art, it instead expanded horizons, helping to see art as something more than a straightforward representation of what an observer currently sees.

Generative AI Art systems enable a vast variety of audio-visualizations, and they are developing at an exponential rate, remaining the fastest-evolving tool in the digital visual arts toolbox. They change every other session.
Although AI does not understand human concepts well enough, its technical capabilities to visualize ideas exceed those of any previous tool, whether realistic 3D or stylistically abstract. The results are often astonishing, though there is still insufficient control over the movement of the camera, characters, and objects. The rendered scene may follow the prompt—or may not. Artists still need to work hard to obtain what they imagine.

Image-to-video generators outperform image-to-image ones when it comes to using reference images. The rendered sequence tends to follow the original drawing more accurately, resulting in a visualization close enough to the concept to be accepted. However, movement often fails to follow the prompt. It's astonishing how far from the intended idea AI can stray within just five seconds of rendered video. And perhaps this unpredictability is precisely what keeps artists engaged, not in fear, but in fascination.

Illustration 5. A hand-drawn image used as the reference for video rendering.

Illustration 6. Lynx sive Tigris, said Hevelius, 2025.
A frame from the generative AI video sequence. It shows that the image-to-video generator has satisfactorily followed the reference image. However, the requested watercolor effect in the prompt is not applied entirely logically.

The watercolor technique starts with light colors. Traditionally, white watercolor paint is avoided, as all whites are the color of the paper, which is being preserved for the highlights and luminosity. Watercolors need to be applied cautiously, gradually building forms with more intense and darker paints. This is not the case in this rendering, where the face of Hevelius was covered with a gray blot of dark paint.
It is illogical, but the whole frame is beautiful enough to be accepted.

Generative AI systems do not provide a satisfactory level of control over rendered imagery. Yet, this unpredictability may lead to very satisfactory rendering sessions, as in the example below. The system was responsive in a way that allows us to see it as a kind of intelligent paint.

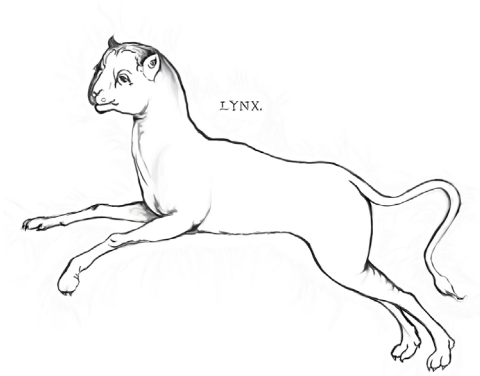

Illustration 7. A hand-drawn image used as the reference for video rendering. This drawing is based on the original drawing by Hevelius.

Illustration 8. Lynx sive Tigris, said Hevelius, 2025. A frame from the generative AI video sequence, in which the prompt was understood well, and the requested style was satisfactorily applied.

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