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FOREWORD

Explorations in Art and Generative AI, highlights ways in which visual art students in the selected topics course VISA 3830: *Explorations in Art and AI* (Fall 2024) engaged with generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that are both reflective of and responsive to contemporary discussions in art and technology. These students investigated the role of Gen AI in each of their unique art practices, exploring AI as a tool, collaborator, and/or conceptual influence. These artworks produced in the course and accompanying exhibition (which took place at the TRU Art Gallery March 17-29, 2025) is timely and relevant, as it delves into the cultural, ethical, environmental and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in the arts.

Students in this course were challenged to use Gen AI in ideation, proposal and statement writing, creation, and critique, examining how Gen AI could be engaged at various stages of artistic production. They experimented with image and text-based Gen AI platforms to brainstorm, create content, and produce written materials supporting artistic production. Through this process, students encountered Gen AI as a sometimes-useful tool fraught with ethical dilemmas. The process has been both exciting and worrisome as students explored the potential uses and impacts of this technology.

Course exercises and content was accompanied by written reflections and extensive philosophical and ethnical discussions about originality, authorship, copyright, appropriation, environmental impact, and artistic control.

The course was designed to guide students through a structured artistic process with Gen AI, which included generating initial ideas, critically refining them with Gen AI tools, and continuously documenting their experiences and thoughts. This iterative process allowed students to evaluate and integrate Gen AI's influence on their concepts and final work, as well as how their own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about Gen AI evolved through their experiences using it.

This course was intended as an exploratory model for integrating Gen AI into art education, inviting students to critically assess and creatively employ Gen AI. The aim was to foster a critical understanding of Gen AI's role and impact on their artistic practices and self-perception as artists. The artworks, processes and statements on the following pages showcases the intersection of art, education, and Gen AI, contributing insights into how emerging artists adapt to and critique Gen AI's growing presence. It underscores the role of Gen AI in expanding the boundaries of artistic practice and invites the community to consider the implications



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of human-machine collaborations in art-making.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

- › All of the students, including the students who were in the class but did not contribute works to the exhibition or this publication, for being brave in trying new things and for trusting me through the process.
- › Nicole Favron, Research Assistant and Curator of the “Explorations in Art and Generative AI” exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery, March 17-29, 2025.
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Ethics

All artworks, statements and research data are shared in accordance with TRU’s Research Ethics Board and with permission of the students.

Use of AI: This foreword was produced with the assistance of CHAT-GPT 40 by adapting a statement written for the art exhibition that accompanied this course. To produce this statement, I customized a GPT by feeding it course content, including the course outline, assignment parameters, ethics application, grant application and lecture content. I then described to the customized GPT that a dissemination outcome of the research completed in this course is an art exhibition. I described the objective of the exhibition and the context of the particular art gallery and asked it to generate a curatorial statement. I adjusted my prompt and iterated five versions of this statement using the customized GPT. I then compiled elements from each of the five statements to form one statement, then heavily edited it to ensure it reflected my intentions.

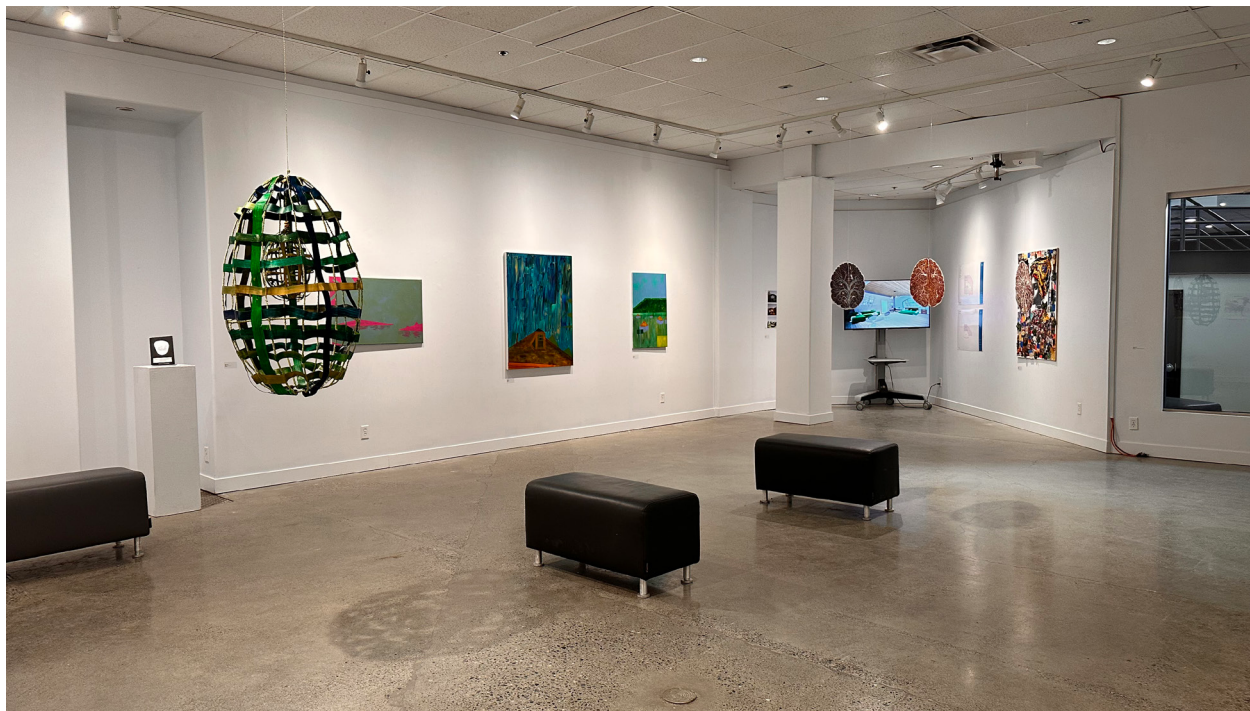


Figure 1. Exhibit Installation 1 - Southeast View (Photo credit: Twyla Exner)