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In addition to the featured artworks, this special issue of *Future Earth: A Student Journal on Sustainability and Environment*, titled *Explorations in Art and Artificial Intelligence* (2025), includes a curatorial perspective by Nicole, the research assistant for Twyla Exner's project and the curator of the accompanying exhibition. In addition to curating the show, Nicole contributed to the photo-documentation of the artworks and supported the development of the exhibition website. Her reflections offer an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at the emotional and conceptual journeys of the student artists as they explored the possibilities and challenges of working with generative AI. Her statement captures the complexity of the creative process, the tensions of engaging with new technologies, and the thoughtful care that shaped a compelling and resonant exhibition.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

When I received the email advertising for this class, I was torn. On the one hand, my curiosity could have the chance to flourish in unimaginable directions, on the other hand, there was the chance that I would not be able to find a way to create with my artificially intelligent collaborator peacefully. I ended up deciding against taking the class. As the class came to a close in December 2024, an intriguing opportunity was presented to me: a research position that would help Twyla Exner analyze the responses her class had to this idea.

In researching the artist's responses to incorporating AI into their practices, I found a variety of emotions. These feelings often required thoughtful attention, more thorough research, and a grounding of the creative self. There were times of fear and curiosity at the thought of AI's capabilities and shortcomings, yet all came to recognize that AI has the potential to be a powerful tool that should be wielded thoughtfully.

Each artist had a unique approach to the use of generative AI. Participants were able to successfully incorporate their own individual styles and experiences in the works just as they would in any other art-making scenario. What emerged from these processes is a stunning variety of works that blend digital and traditional methods.

In curating this show I felt extremely proud of my colleagues for pushing their boundaries and embracing something new. My peers combated discomfort by putting their sense of self first and staying true to themselves and their artistic preferences. The work here is both beautiful and thought-provoking. I would reason that any art made with AI could be seen as a type of commentary on the medium; the medium is often part of the message, so the same way that a brush stroke can inspire an emotion so too could an artificial response to something very real. As we move forward, the integration of AI into the artistic process will continue to evolve and challenge our understanding of what art can be. Ultimately, the work presented here reminds us that art in all forms is a reflection of our time and a way for us to explore the new.