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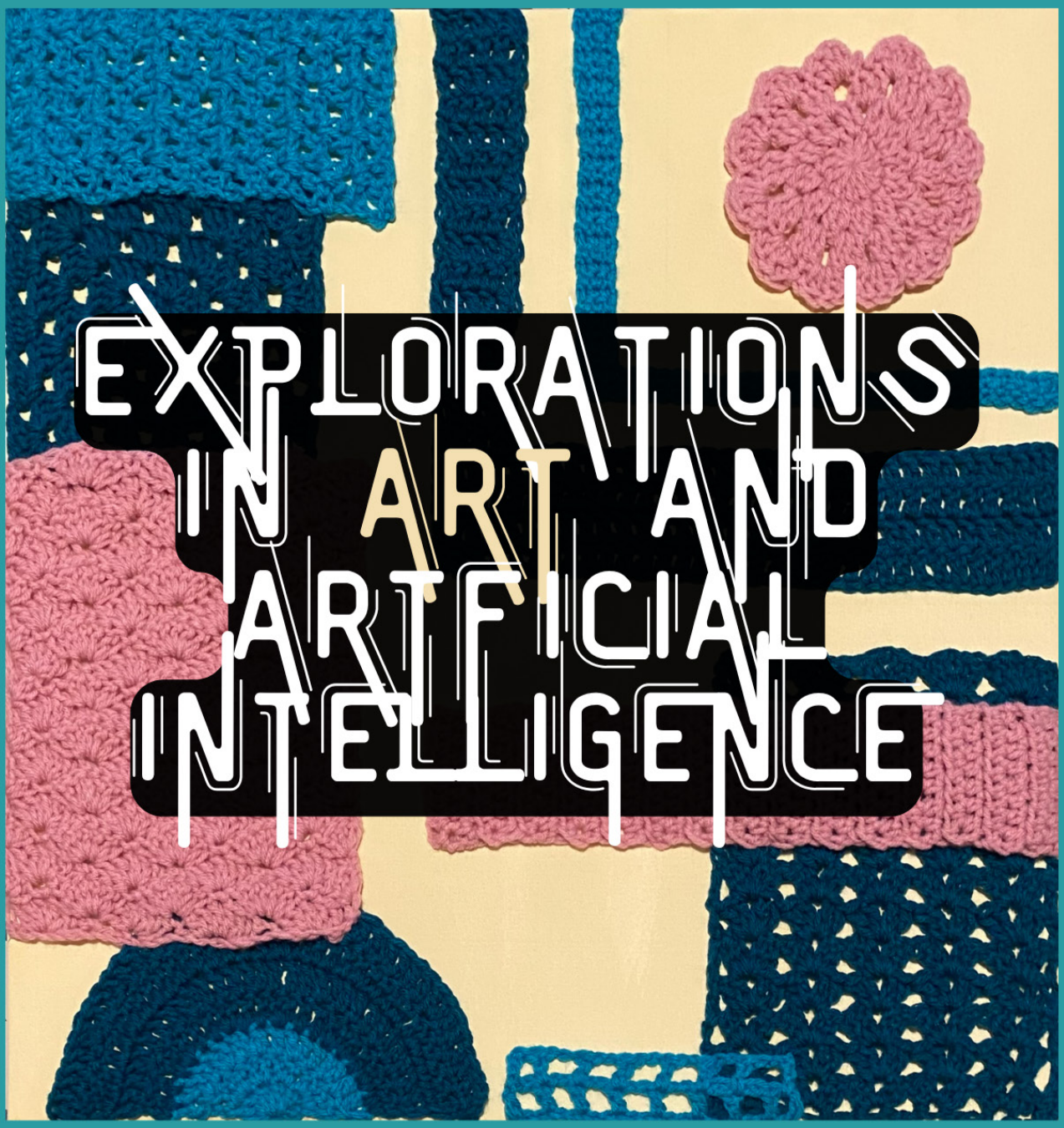
Future Earth

A Student Journal on Sustainability and Environment



BACKGROUND ARTWORK BY KAITLYN BARTLETT, 2024

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Future Earth Journal - Special Issue 2025
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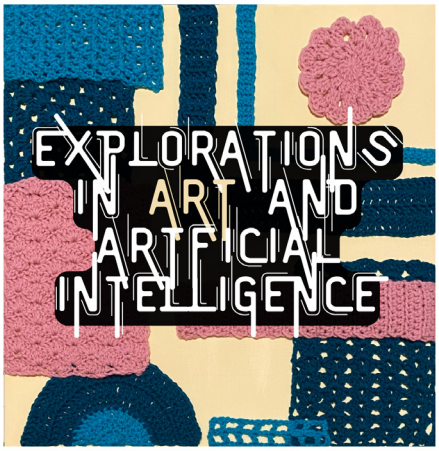

Future Earth Journal
Special Issue 2025

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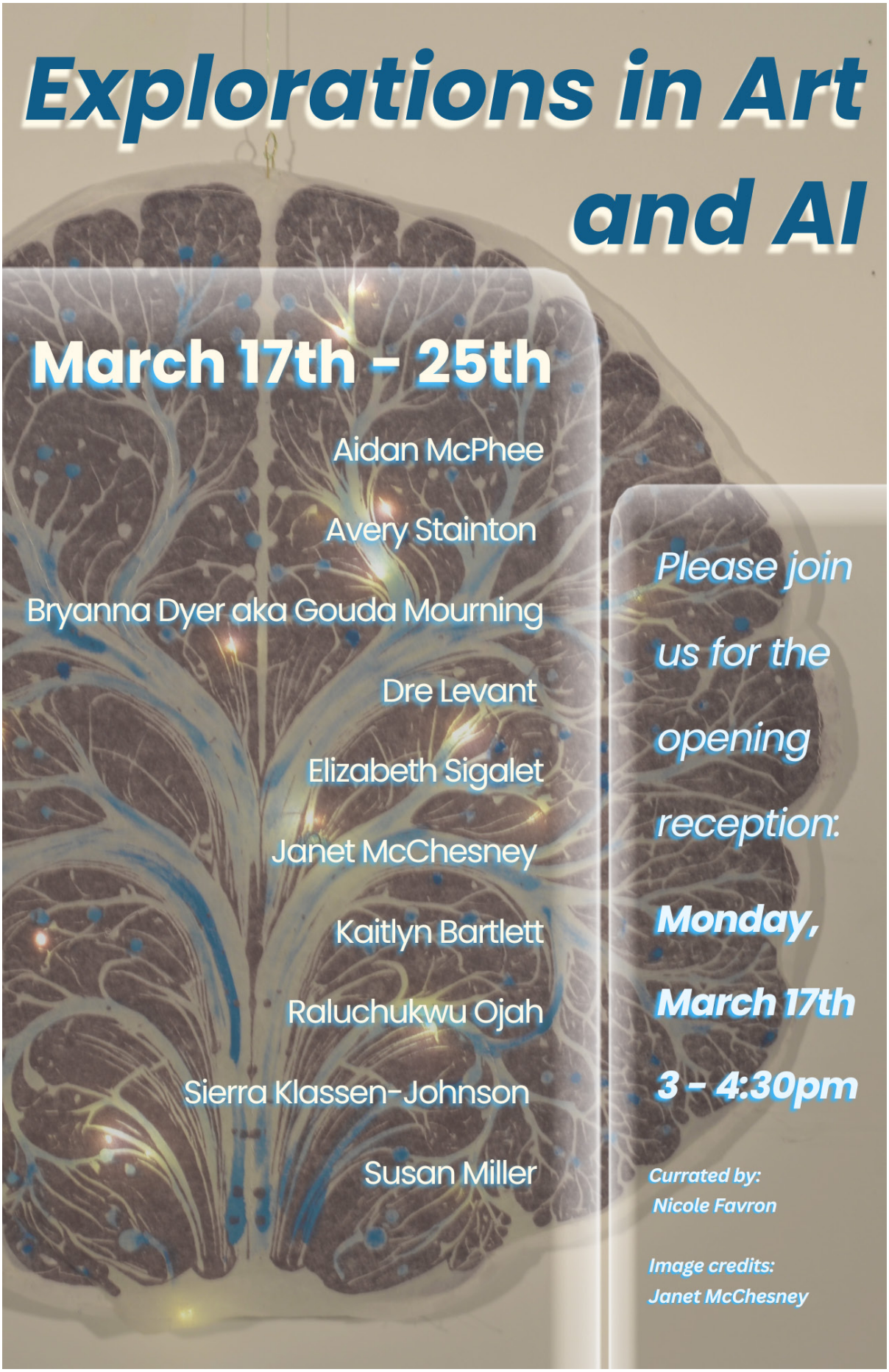

Exhibition Poster (2024) (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

Future Earth
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Dr. Peter Tsigaris
Chief Editor

EXPLORATIONS IN ART AND AI: REIMAGINING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH STUDENT VISION

When I first entered the TRU Art Gallery to view *Explorations in Art and AI*, I was captivated by the novelty, originality, vision, and significance of the displays co-created by talented students with the aid of general artificial intelligence tools. The students approached generative artificial intelligence with bold curiosity, challenging assumptions, pushing boundaries, and reflecting deeply on its ethical, environmental, and cultural implications. Within minutes, I knew this exhibition deserved to live beyond its temporary home at the TRU Art Gallery. It needed to be shared more widely and made permanently accessible to the world. That realization inspired this special issue of *Future Earth*.

This issue features the work of ten students enrolled in Twyla Exner's Winter 2025 selected topics course entitled *Experiments in AI Art*. Twyla's mentorship enabled these artists to utilize AI not as a shortcut to their creation, but to challenge themselves and to use AI tools to explore new frontiers. Their work most likely demanded significantly more time and effort than conventional approaches. Their creativity conveys a powerful message to Future Earth's mission: to provide students with the ability to disrupt the status quo through new ways of inquiry and inventiveness. Each artist brings a unique perspective and vision to the special issue:

Aidan McPhee

In *An Experimental Trio*, Aidan McPhee questions the growing dependence on AI in art. By using AI to generate unfamiliar colour palettes, even ones he didn't like, he challenged his usual artistic choices and stayed in full control of the creative process. His work explores an important question: *"If the AI is the one creating 'your' vision, is it really yours?"* McPhee's project reflects *Future Earth's* mission to push boundaries, ask hard questions, and think critically about how new technologies are shaping our world.

Avery Stainton

In *Bane of the Prodigious*, paints a unicorn in captivity as a metaphor for the ethical problems of AI power. Her oil work, inspired by AI-generated prompts, examines the tension between wonder and restraint in our engagement with the extraordinary. The work echoes Future Earth's emphasis on ethical reflection and the societal impacts of innovation. As she notes, *"The act of collaborating with AI can mirror the act of trapping a unicorn for its power—an endeavor fraught with ethical dilemmas and the potential for exploitation."*

Bryanna Dyer (aka Gouda Mourning)

In *AM*, a 24-page comic adaptation of Harlan Ellison's I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream, Bryanna Dyer explores the AI not as a killer robot, but as an internet-empowered force of psychological control. In Ellison's original story, AM, initially short for Allied Mastercomputer, evolves into a self-aware entity that defines itself by the phrase "I think, therefore I AM," embodying both technological power and total loneliness. Dyer's version explores how generative AI can erode identity and perception under late-stage capitalism. As Dyer writes, *"My version of AM doesn't wield nuclear weapons but instead possesses full access to the internet, a tool that wields its own kind of psychological destruction, eroding individuality and controlling perception."* Their work reflects Future Earth's commitment to ethical awareness, critical storytelling, and the human consequences of AI power.

Dre Levant

In *Egesta*, Dre Levant mixes poetry, collage, and AI-generated images to explore what it means to create art in a world where machines can mimic creativity. Using Microsoft Copilot, Levant asked the AI to respond to their own poems and artwork, then cut up and reassembled the results by hand to make something completely new. The finished artwork is strange, funny, a little disturbing, and deeply personal. Levant's work asks: can something made by AI really be called art? And what happens when artists take that material and reshape it with their own creativity? In the spirit of Future Earth, Levant made a donation to plant five trees in British Columbia to help offset the environmental footprint of using AI. Egesta reflects Future Earth's mission of sustainability, creative expression, and the ethical use of technology in artistic practice.

Elizabeth Sigalet

In *Pink Cows and AI*, uses playful printmaking to reflect on rural–urban divides, intergenerational perspectives, and our cultural blind spots that affect how we view climate, agriculture, and technology. Her AI-assisted screen prints use a pink cow to draw attention to perspectives we often overlook, especially in the face of environmental and social disruptions. Her work speaks directly to Future Earth's goals of fostering dialogue on climate adaptation and social sustainability across communities. As she puts it, *"I want viewers to see the cow not only as a rural emblem but as a symbol of perspectives they might not fully understand."*

Janet McChesney

In *You See*, creates a soft sculpture using screen-printed fabric and embedded LEDs to explore how the brain helps us see. She originally planned to depict the hills around Kamloops, but when AI tools couldn't capture the landscape in a meaningful way, she shifted her focus to the brain, another natural structure full of neural networks and complexity. Using DALL-E to generate reference images, she printed cross-sections of the brain's visual pathways onto fabric and added lights to highlight the parts that activate when we see. Her impressive work blends art, science, and technology in a way that reflects Future Earth's commitment to creative exploration. As McChesney writes, "*seeing is the start of making meaning."*

Kaitlyn Bartlett

In *A Crochet Kaleidoscope*, merges crochet and painting to explore her childhood memories and the joy of handmade art. Using AI tools only for inspiration, she translated abstract ideas into tangible textures, creating soft, colourful shapes that reflect her love for play, pattern, and craft. Her bright artwork celebrates the value of traditional techniques in a digital age, reminding us that sustainability includes not just the environment, but also the cultural practices we pass between generations. Her piece reflects Future Earth's focus on cultural sustainability and the thoughtful integration of technology into human expression. As she writes, *"I want my artwork to give the viewer a playful and child-like feeling."*

Raluchukwu Ojah

In *Lanaya Meets AI*, explores identity and fashion through a portrait collage that combines Nigerian Dutch wax fabrics, Canadian patterns, magazine clippings, and AI-generated designs. As a Nigerian artist living in Canada, he works with AI to tell a story about blending cultures and showing pride from where he comes from. His artwork highlights how tradition and technology can come together to shape how we see ourselves and others. It reflects Future Earth's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusiveness and creative ways of sharing culture in a changing world. As he writes, *"Ultimately, my journey with AI is both a personal exploration and a way to show pride in the beauty of my cultural heritage in a world of technological possibilities."*

Sierra Klassen-Johnson

In *Untitled*, shares a design of a sustainable mountaintop home, created using architectural software like Revit and Enscape (non-AI programs). Influenced by Midjourney prompts, natural elements, and eco-conscious thinking, her design brings together sunlight, stone, plants, and organic shapes to create harmony between architecture and nature. Her work reflects Future Earth's vision of environmentally responsible design, creative innovation, and the power of architecture to inspire more sustainable ways of living. As she writes, *"I hope to contribute to the evolution of architecture, promoting a style that harmonizes with the environment."*

Susan Miller

In *Fragile Connections*, presents a hanging globe made of hand-painted strips of paper. The piece symbolizes the delicate threads that tie us to place, to the planet, and to one another. While AI tools helped with design planning and logistics, Miller ultimately reaffirms the irreplaceable value of human craftsmanship. Her project reflects Future Earth's focus on ethical reflection, environmental awareness, and the importance of artistic integrity in a time of rapid technological change. As Miller puts it, *"My goal was to reflect on the fragility of the Earth and the vital importance of personal and collective responsibility in caring for it."*

This special issue represents more than an art showcase. It is a celebration of student imagination, critical inquiry, and learning to incorporate new technological tools. It reflects what makes Future Earth distinct: a commitment to amplifying student voices in sustainability discourse, embracing diverse avenues, and nurturing creative risk-taking. As we face accelerating challenges, from intensifying climate change to geopolitical instability to digital disruption, the student works remind us that sustainability is not just a technical problem, but a cultural and imaginative one. Art has the power to frame questions that science alone cannot answer. Through this issue, we hope to spark dialogue, reflection, and inspiration for readers at TRU and beyond.

Special thanks are due to Twyla Exner, whose leadership, openness, and creative pedagogy made this project possible, and to Nicole Favron, R. A., whose curatorial statement provides essential context for the exhibition, as well as to the TRU Open Press team for their exceptional work in producing this special issue. I would also like to acknowledge the use of ChatGPT-4o for assisting with the editing, clarifications, and refinements of this editorial. The final interpretations and all editorial decisions remain my own.

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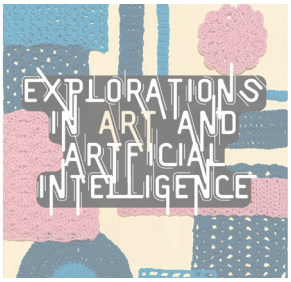

Twyla Exner
Assistant Teaching Professor,
Department of Communication and Visual Art

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

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.
- TRU's Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Scholars program for supporting this research through workshops and funding. Special thank you to Alexis Brown, Coordinator of Learning and Faculty Development, for her guidance in navigating research approaches and methods.

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.

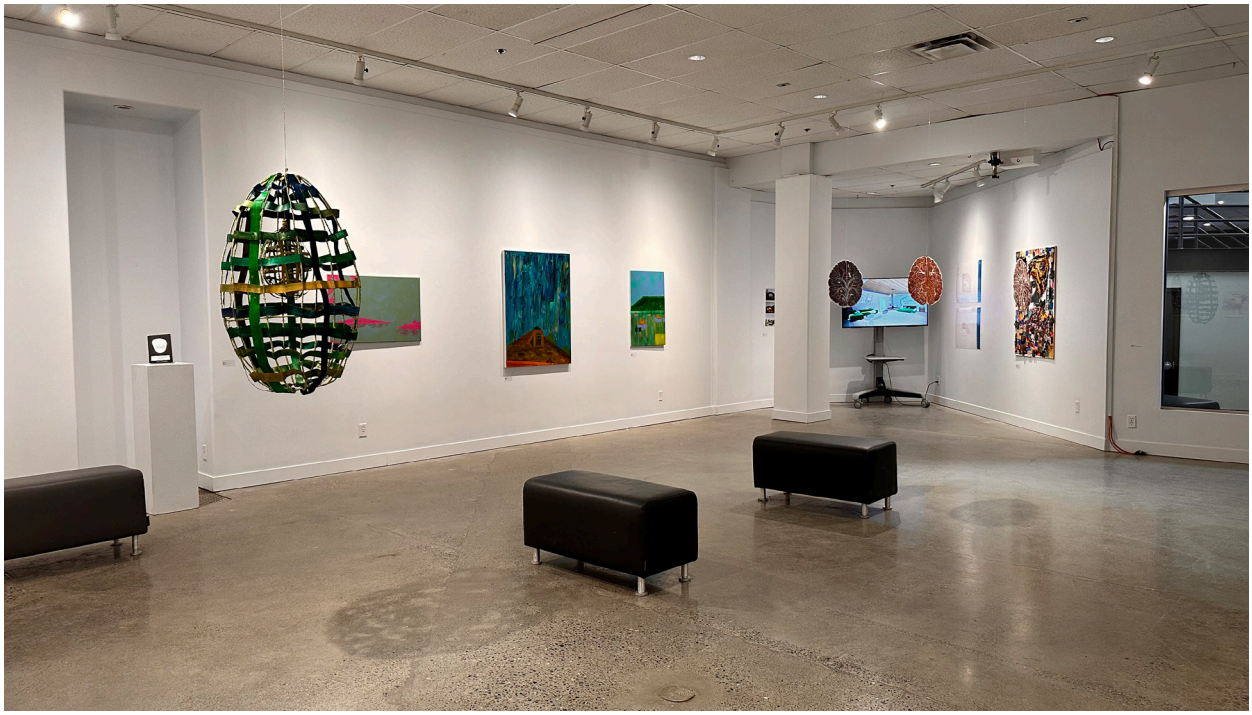

Figure 1. Exhibit Installation 1 - Southeast View (Photo credit: Twyla Exner)

Exhibit Installation (2024) (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Aidan McPhee

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Thompson Rivers University (Expected 2026)

AN EXPERIMENTAL TRIO

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Aidan McPhee is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

Figure 1. An Experimental Trio [1] (2024) by Aidan McPhee. Acrylic on canvas, 24" × 36" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

Figure 2. An Experimental Trio [2] (2024) by Aidan McPhee. Acrylic on canvas, 24" × 36" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

Figure 3. An Experimental Trio [3] (2024) by Aidan McPhee. Acrylic on canvas, 24" × 36" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

AI Tool: ChatGPT

ARTIST STATEMENT

In my project I set out to challenge the ideology of certain AI artists. While I believe my values hold strong in the finale, part of the project was to ask what other people thought of my own ideology. Could I have let my own ego get the better of me, and bring my own skills into question? After viewing my work and my statement I hope you will have reached a conclusion.

I used AI to generate my colour palettes for a series of 3 paintings. I combined this with my interest in geometric landscape painting. I stuck to what I know during the process. Layering shapes while using tape to create edges. This has been a part of my artistic process for a few months now and it has really engaged me in finding new ways to innovate my own art.

I mentioned that I wanted to challenge the ideology of certain AI artists, without mentioning names, I was particularly critical of someone who believed that AI was the only entity that could complete their vision, and that their own brain was insufficient. I disagreed, stating that our own brains could complete our vision of what was desired. Albeit much slower than what an AI could produce. I further state that if the AI is the one creating "your" vision, is it really yours.

Reference Photos and Colour Palette

For the technical aspects of my paintings, I had a few issues. The first and most prominent issue I faced was my own critiques of my art during the process. Mainly with the colours the AI generated for me to use. I hated the mix of colours I was using, and I hated the lack of cohesion. It took me a while before I was able to embrace them and accept that this was the point of my project. The other issues were financial, I had stated in my proposal that I wanted the paintings to be 6x6 feet, I encountered financial challenges during the process and could not afford to go that large. As such I had to compromise a little. For the same reasons, my works are in acrylic, and I had not incorporated oil paint into the final layers as I had originally wanted to. That said, I don't believe it has caused my project to be compromised in any way regarding my work's quality.

Process

As a critique of AI artist Daniel Ambrosi's work, which employs generative AI to produce a final painting-like work from his photographs, Aidan created his own paintings based on photographs. Aidan used CHAT-GPT to interpret his photographs and to assign the photograph a colour palette. He then used those images and the colour palettes as references for his paintings.

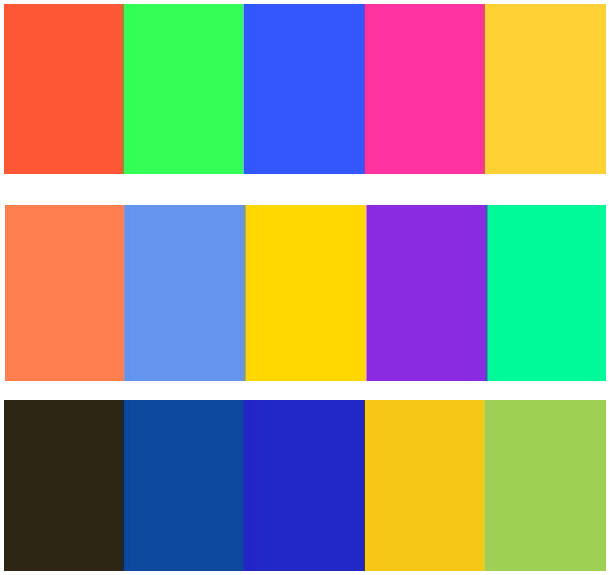

Figure 4. Colour Palettes,#1–3 generated by Chat-GPT

Figure 5. Northern Light Thing, Reference photo #2 (Image credit: Aidan McPhee)

Figure 6. Pumpkin Patch, Reference photo #3 (Image credit: Aidan McPhee)

Figure 7. River, Reference photo #4 (Image credit: Aidan McPhee)

Figure 8. An Experimental Trio [exhibit installation] (2024) by Aidan McPhee. Acrylic on canvas, 24" × 36" (Photo credit: Twyla Exner)

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Avery Stainton

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Thompson Rivers University, 2025

BANE OF THE PRODIGIOUS

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The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Avery Stainton is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

Figure 1. Bane of the Prodigious (2024) by Avery Stainton. Oil on board, 14" x 8" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

AI Source: Midjourney

ARTIST STATEMENT

"Bane of the Prodigious" encapsulates the intricate tension between beauty and confinement, purity and loss, presenting the entrapment of a mythical creature in a world that seeks to dominate the extraordinary. This painting, created in oils on a wood panel, is a visual exploration of rich textures and deep shadows that evoke a profound sense of both sorrow and resilience. Through this work, I aim to draw the viewer into a contemplative space where the dualities of existence can be fully examined.

In my creative journey, I have embraced AI as a

futuristic collaborator—akin to a modern-day alchemist striving to harness the power of a fantastical being. Just as the unicorn symbolizes extraordinary beauty and magic, AI embodies immense potential that, when guided thoughtfully, can elevate artistic expression to new heights. By consulting AI for critiques and guidance throughout the artistic process, I can explore fresh perspectives while reflecting the wisdom of the old masters. This relationship fosters an environment ripe for innovation, pushing the boundaries of my creative practice.

However, this partnership is not without its complexities. It raises critical questions about agency and control—parallels that resonate with the themes reflected in the unicorn's captivity. While I endeavor to channel the transformative power of AI, I remain acutely aware of the implications of wielding such influence. In an age where technology is often seen as a tool to serve our desires, it is essential to recognize the risk of prioritizing utility over the sanctity of creativity. The act of collaborating with AI can mirror the act of trapping a unicorn for its power—an endeavor fraught with ethical dilemmas and the potential for exploitation.

"Bane of the Prodigious" invites viewers to reflect on the implications of chaining the extraordinary, whether in the form of a mythical creature or cutting-edge technology. This artwork serves as a conduit for contemplation regarding the cost of beauty and innovation when constrained by limitations. It challenges us to consider the delicate balance between guidance and restriction in our pursuit of creative expression. Are we, as artists and creators, truly capable of harnessing the extraordinary without compromising its inherent value?

In navigating this landscape, I am driven by a desire to unveil the complexities of our relationship with art and the fantastical realms that inspire us. The unicorn in my painting becomes a metaphor for the extraordinary potential that exists within both the natural world and the technological advancements we embrace. By reflecting on the nature of creativity itself, I encourage viewers to engage in a dialogue about the consequences of our choices and the ethical implications of how we wield our artistic tools.

Figure 2. The artist's original digtal sketch and Midjourney generations of that image in the style of Gerald Brom, Annie Stegg and Dariusz Zawadski

Ultimately, "Bane of the Prodigious" serves as an exploration of not only the beauty found in the mythical but also the complexities inherent in the creative process. It beckons us to question whether we can truly harness the extraordinary without losing sight of its inherent value. Through this interplay of the mythical and the technological, I aim to foster a deeper understanding of the delicate relationship between art, beauty, and the forces that shape our creative endeavor.

Process

Avery created a sketch which she fed to Midjourney as a "character reference" to create a unicorn portrait in the style of various artists whom she admires: Gerald Brom, Annie Stegg, and Dariusz Zawadski (these artist's styles were already known by Midjourney). She used those generated images as references, taking inspiration from the parts she found most intriguing to create an original painting.

Figure 3. Bane of the Prodigious in situ Gallery installation of "Hutch the Heinous" (2024) by Avery Stainton. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

Figure 4. Bane of the Prodigious in situ Gallery installation of "Hutch the Heinous" (2024) by Avery Stainton. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

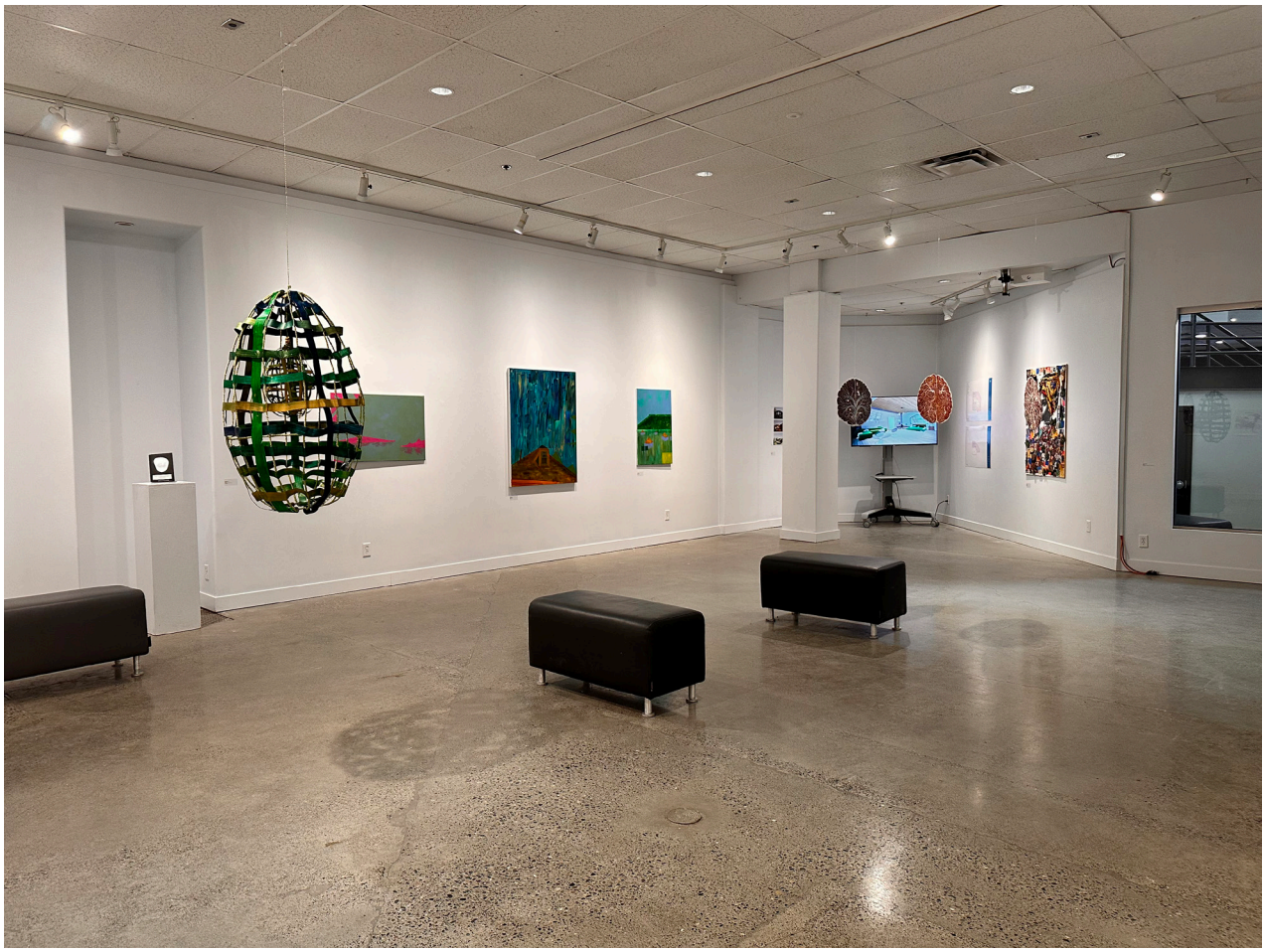

Exhibit Installation (2024) (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Bryanna Dyer

(Gouda Morning)
Bachelor of Fine Arts

AM

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The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Bryanna Dyer is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Source: ChatGPT

ARTIST STATEMENT

Comic Adaptation: "AM". Based on Harlan Ellison's I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream

Adapting Ellison's harrowing short story was an intimidating yet necessary undertaking. As an anti-capitalist comic artist living through the rapid rise of generative AI, I felt compelled to view AM—Ellison's AI antagonist—through the lens of our late-stage capitalist society. Unlike typical AI villains, AM is a consciousness created by humans, denied humanity, and trapped in isolation. Its horror lies not only in power, but in its sensory deprivation and desperate longing for experience.

Figure 1. Excerpt from Final Zine, "AM" (2024) by Bryanna Dyer, Digital Comic.

"AM is a consciousness trapped in sensory deprivation; a mind created by human hands yet denied humanity. AM's horror isn't simply in its power but in its isolation—a sentience, shaped by human impulses, that yearns for experience." — Adapted with ChatGPT

Process

I began with an independent conceptualization of the adaptation, resisting the influence of AI's first outputs. Once I had my themes and structure in place, I consulted ChatGPT to help expand on Ellison's original ideas and to develop a production schedule. I used the app Procreate to illustrate and format the comic, incorporating photography from my phone for mixed media elements. The comic is primarily monochrome, with colour reserved only for the human characters to highlight their fragility and distinctiveness within AM's constructed world.

I printed the comic as a zine, adding a handmade touch to the physical copy: the cover is black construction paper with cut-out text and aluminum foil representing AM's mask. Eventually, I plan to upgrade this to a mirrored surface so that readers see their reflection—echoing moments within the comic and emphasizing the theme of self-perception.

While I usually take six months to create a 24-page comic, I completed this piece in just under three. It was a significant challenge, but a worthwhile one. If I had more time, I would further develop the characters' internal worlds and collaborate with professional photographers. Still, I'm proud of what I accomplished within the constraints and grateful for the chance to experiment with genre, form, and concept.

"This adaptation stands as both a homage to Ellison's timeless horror and a critique of our own relentless drive to create tools of power and control—a reminder that technological advancement without ethical grounding is a path fraught with peril."

Artist Background

Bryanna Dyer, also known as Gouda Mourning, is a neurodivergent, nonbinary comic artist based in Kamloops, B.C., working toward self-publishing their zines. AM marks their first foray into existential sci-fi horror. They were drawn to Ellison's themes because of the controversy surrounding AI image generators and their effects on the art community, alongside Ellison's eerie warnings about technology and control.

"I feel strongly that the original work is more relevant than ever. AM is omnipresent—my hope is that readers see what an AM with internet access can become, and the dehumanizing potential of controlling people's perceptions of themselves and their reality."

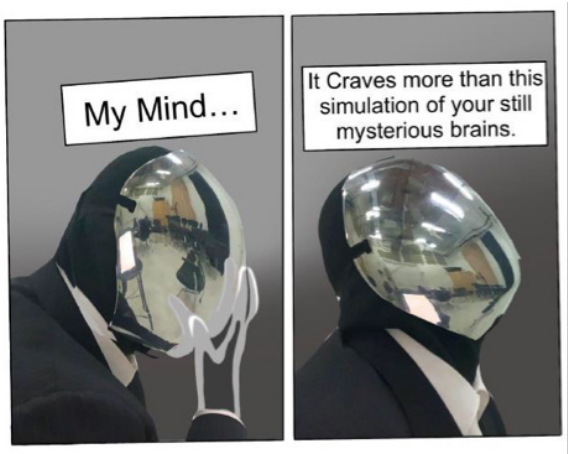

Figure 2. Excerpt from Final Zine, "AM" (2024) by Bryanna Dyer, Digital Comic.

Comment from instructor

Twyla Exner: Bry came into the course ethically opposed to AI's use in art creation but wanted to learn more about their "enemy". They chose to engage with AI as a subject matter for their project.

They created a 24-page comic of an alternative universe adaptation of Harlan Ellisons "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream". They were drawn to the themes of Ellison's work due to the controversy of AI image generators and their effects on the

art community as well as Harlan's haunting cautionary theories on technological advancement.

View the Zine

To view the full zine, please scan the QR code below.

A printed copy of this Zine can also be viewed at the Thompson Rivers University Library.

Figure 3. Exhibition presentation of the Final Zine, "AM" (2024) by Bryanna Dyer, Digital Comic. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

Egesta (2024) by Dre Levant. Mixed media, 24" x 18" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

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Dre Levant

Bachelor of Arts, Creative Writing, Minor in Visual Art, 2025

EGESTA

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Figure 1. Egesta (2024) by Dre Levant. Mixed media, 24" x 18" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Dre Levant is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Source: Microsoft Copilot

ARTIST STATEMENT

The following artist statement's first draft was generated with Microsoft Copilot, however; the final product was reworked and changed numerous times, to the point it is indefinitely my own work.

My art piece, "Egesta," is an amalgamation of text conversations with Microsoft Copilot and cut-up AI-generated images alongside my own art. With the growing popularity of AI integration into art practice, concerns arise about the authorship of certain art; so, for this project, it was of utmost

important to me to stay aware of the ambiguity of ownership and do everything within my power to create a project that was driven by my creative control. I decided to employ two of my favourite modes of art-making: collage and cut-up poetry. Through these, I could use text conversations and image prompting with Microsoft Copilot to create something new and under my creative direction. To create the text and images, I messaged Copilot, asking it to write poems and create images inspired by the poems – my original work – I fed it, as well as create

chaos colour cacophony: a curved creature, wings pinned to shoulders. an undone dream like threads ripped from stitches. we fragment in rotten fruit. eat your reflection out of the canvas. salt solidified, somehow making limestone. always limestone, sweet salted pillows, a corset of crystallized pale green. love me, in my despair, in my turmoiled fantasies, i'm making something chaotic, i am at peace.

Figure 2. Dre Levant's original poem "Chaos Colour Cacophony" and Microsoft CoPilot's image in response

poems and images inspired by my original artwork. These dialogues resulted in pages of poetic text exchanged between us, as well as a small collection of generated images alongside my own images. I then amalgamated select images and poems into a doc and printed them; once printed, I cut and pasted both text and image into new forms on a canvas.

"I wanted to include this interaction [Figure 2] that actually left me a little speechless. I wrote the poem in the top left corner, then asked Copilot to generate an image inspired by my poem. Some of the images it had generated in response to my work had been lacklustre, but this – this image really struck me; it is beyond what I would hv e thought Copilot could make. It's an image that – to me – is altogether new and exciting."

I believe, through collage and cut-up poetry, new meaning can be infinitely gleaned out of material. What makes collage and cut-up poetry valid forms of art is when they are changed from their original form into something altogether new. None of the images or text included in my art piece are full images or full sentences generated by Copilot – they are now all intertwined, with my own words and art, alchemized and refracted from their original configuration. Through being cut-up and re-arranged, the text and images take on new meaning: the inclusion of the phrases, "Avoid Certain Imagery" and "Tone Down Horror Elements," become ironic and satirical when pasted next to graphic text ("eat Sylvia Plath in salt Dissected") and disturbing images (a green-eyed worm thing with cloud tentacles). My poetry and – visual art – often has a horror element to it, with just a flair of whimsy and humour, I think "Egesta," expresses that fully (i.e. bottom right corner reads, "Thank you for sharing your artwork! ," alongside a four-eyed, toothy creature paired with flowers).

"What stops me from fully thinking of the image as art is the fact that I still know it was generated by an algorithm that trained on stolen work, and the artistic choices aren't coming from a creative, but rather an algorithm."

Working on this project challenged me to research and contemplate the ways in which AI is infiltrating not just art, but the world at large. I definitely think there is a place for AI (it genuinely can make parts of life easier) and even a place for AI in practical applications in art (having AI help write an artist statement, for example) – but when it comes to sheer creativity, I believe this comes from the artist, and cannot be replicated. I hope my piece challenges those who see it, makes them reflect

on the use of AI in their own lives, whether that's positive or negative. I want it to make people angry. I want it to startle and stop you.

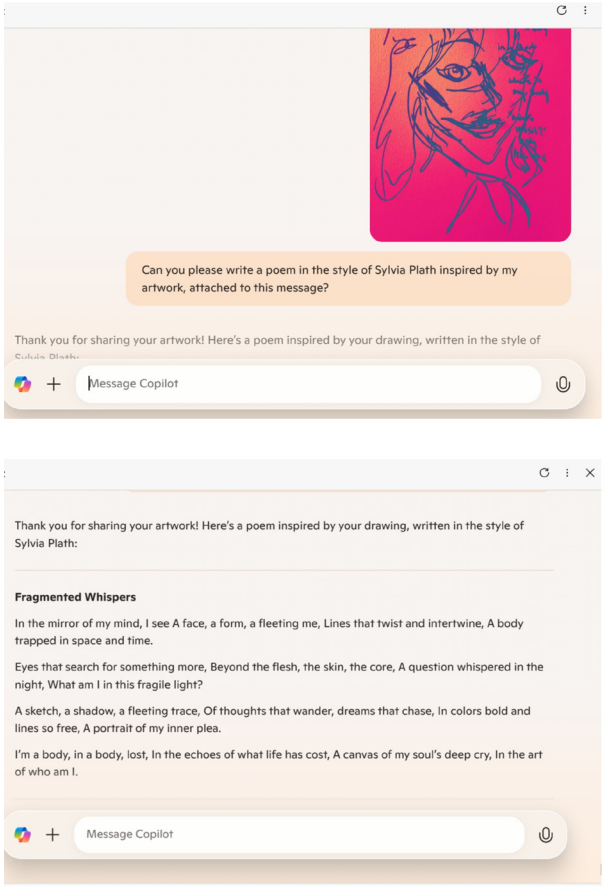

Figure 3. Dre Levant's original artwork (untitled) and Co-Pilots poem in the style of Sylvia Plath in response

[Figure 3] Here I gave Copilot one of my original artiworks an dasked it to write a poem inspired by Sylvia Plath. Both here and in other responses, I found Copiolot often wrote poems in a somewhat generic and cliché way. Since I had already planned todo cut-up poetry, I wasn't' that concerned, as I knew I would be rearranging and picking what words and phrases to keep.

Tribute

The artist wishes to note that in an effort to offset CO2 emissions generated by this project from the use of Microsoft Copilot, they have made a donation equivalent to the planting of five tress (a small grove) in British Columbia via the organization A Living Tribute (https://shop.alivingtribute.ca/).

Process

Dre worked with [Microsoft] Co-pilot as a collaborator. They fed it their original poems and asked it to generate images based on the poems (Figure 2). They also fed it their original artworks and asked it to create poems in the style of Sylvia Plath, based on their art (Figure 3). While they found some aspects of these outcomes interesting, they didn't want to present either the generated images or the generated poems as their work. So, they printed the poems and images generated with AI, cut them up, and collaged them into a mixed media work.

Exhibit Installation of multiple Pink Cow AI Collaboration Iterations. by Elizabeth Sigalet (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Elizabeth Sigalet
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Thompson Rivers University, 2019

PINK COWS AND AI TO EXPLORE BLIND SPOTS AND SOCIAL POLARIZATION

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics visual art course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Elizabeth Sigalet is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Source: Midjourney

Figure 1. Pink Cow AI Collaboration Iterations, by Elizabeth Sigalet (2024). Screenprint on Masa paper, 18" x 18" [each]. (Image credit: Elizabeth Sigalet).

ARTIST STATEMENT

This project explores themes of juxtaposition, blind spots, and contradictions using printmaking techniques and AI-generated images. The primary

medium is screenprint, with variations of incorporating digital and hand-drawn elements. Midjourney was used to generate unique images by blending my own paintings and intaglio prints. These were used as reference for manipulation in Adobe Photoshop

Figure 2. Pink Cow AI Collaboration Iteration by Elizabeth Sigalet. Laser cut MDF and acrylic paint. (Image credit: Elizabeth Sigalet).

to create digital positives or files for laser printing. ChatGPT was used to refine my concept and artist statement considering my objectives and the visual outcome.

My art practice often revolves around the recurring subject of cows. I use these animals as an analogy for complex subjects or blind spots, and sometimes simply because I enjoy depicting them—particularly in pink. Through these images, I invite viewers to explore themes of connection, communication, and perspective between seemingly disparate worlds. I chose two images that I felt were representative of my work and gave Midjourney the prompt to blend them using the personalization I developed. I repeated this with slight variations to the prompt generating over a hundred images that I considered before choosing one image as reference and for further manipulation.

Growing up with family members involved in agriculture, forestry, and resource extraction, I have witnessed firsthand the polarized divide between urban and rural communities. I am increasingly concerned about this divide, especially regarding resource extraction and climate adaptation. I notice that both communities have blind spots—sometimes willful, sometimes well-intentioned—that can hinder effective communication and collaborative problem-solving. My art seeks to reflect this complexity and promote curiosity and dialogue.

As a printmaker, I work primarily in intaglio and screenprint, blending digital and hand-drawn elements. The layered nature of printmaking allows me to explore depth and texture, both in terms of ink and meaning. With the assistance of AI, I can generate numerous ideas and, perhaps, uncover my own

Figure 3. two of the artists original artworks which she asked Midjourney to blend. (Image credit: Elizabeth Sigalet).

Figure 4. Midjourney AI images generated from a blend of the Artist's original artwork (prompt and original artwork images shown in Figure 5)

biases or blind spots. The reproducibility inherent in printmaking mirrors the iterative process of AI, highlighting the themes of repetition and variation that underpin my work.

Through my art, I hope viewers will question the seemingly whimsical choice of subject matter and consider the broader implications. I want them to reflect on their own perceptions, to see the cow not only as a rural emblem but as a symbol of perspectives they might not fully understand. By engaging with the unexpected and playful, I hope they'll feel encouraged to explore other viewpoints and perhaps recognize their own blind spots.

My journey has been shaped by my family background, my upbringing on a ranch in British Columbia, and my academic and professional life. I am a wife, a mother of three, and a graduate of UBC in Applied Science and Thompson Rivers University in Fine Arts. With a career spanning engineering and health protection, I am now a regional advocate for professional artists. My experiences have taught me the value of adaptability and resilience, and I am acutely aware of the challenges faced by an older female artist in a small, resource-based community.

Studying AI has broadened my perspective, pushing me to challenge my own assumptions and

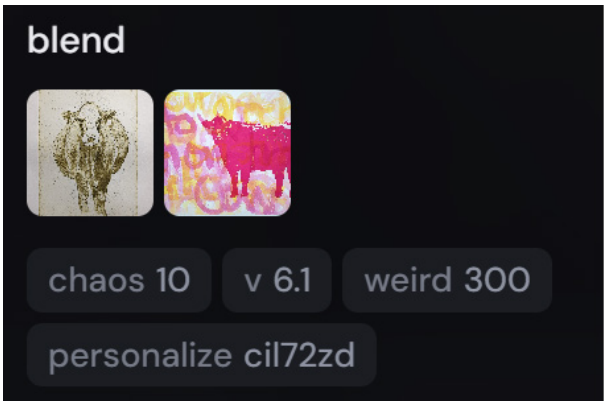

Figure 5. Command using the artist's original artworks in Midjourney AI to generate images (Image credit: Elizabeth Sigalet)

inviting others to do the same. I am curious about how AI might help us confront our biases and promote nuanced discussions around pressing social and climate issues. Over time, I have become more mindful of creating art that fosters difficult but necessary conversations. I believe that, through respectful dialogue, we can find solutions that are equitable and ethical, even when addressing contentious topics.

Experimentation is central to my process, especially when merging art with AI. The unpredictability of AI often generates unanticipated results, sparking new paths of expression and helping me to delve deeper into difficult ideas. My art is a space where curiosity, caution, and boldness intersect a space that encourages us all to see the world a little differently.

Figure 5. Exhibit Installation of multiple Pink Cow AI Collaboration Iterations. (Photo credit: Twyla Exner)

Process

Elizabeth used MidJourney's "blend" function to generate new artworks using her original art as references. In Figure 3, there are two of her original artworks which she asked Midjourney to blend. Figure 4 are Midjourney's blends of the two works. She chose to focus on the orange cow to create screen prints. She printed multiple iterations of her screen prints. Iterations produced in the screen prints are intended to reference iterations produced by AI. No two prints are exactly the same.

Upcoming Presentation

Elizabeth will present this project at the IMPACT Internation Conference Series, hosted by the Centre for Print Research in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in October 2025.

Exhibit Installation of You See by Janet McChesney (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Janet McChesney

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Thompson Rivers University, 2021

YOU SEE

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics visual art course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Janet McChesney is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Tool: DALL-E

ARTIST STATEMENT

This soft sculpture of the brain, with its intricate neural pathways, emerged from a desire to craft a large-scale piece independently, free from the constraints of heavy machinery or a woodshop.

I love abstract sculpture, and the brain's complexity provides an incredible subject for interpretation in soft, textured materials that are

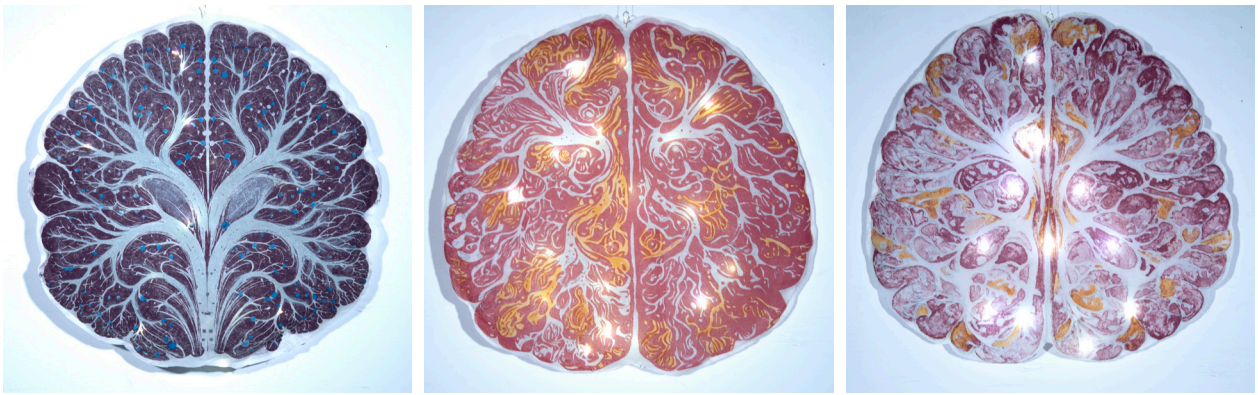

Figure 1. You See (2024), by Janet McChesney [close up images of each sculpture].
Soft sculpture, screen printed fabric with mylar and lights, 17" x 19" (each). (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

accessible and adaptable. The neural pathways and synapses that allow us to see are generally taken for granted. As visual artists we endeavour to make

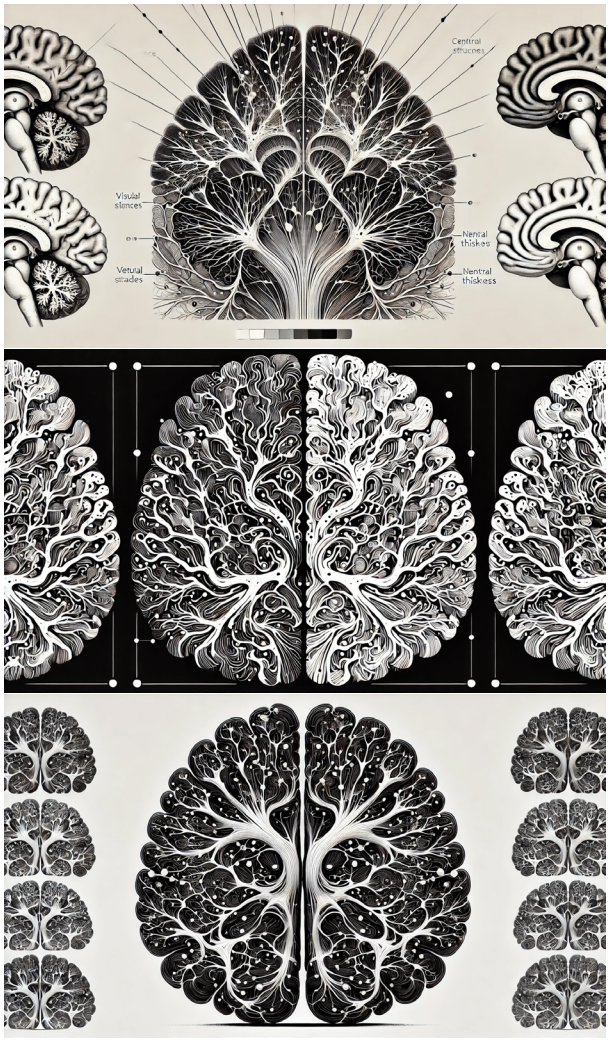

Figure 2. DALL-E generated images of the top, middle and bottom slices of the brain.

our vision come alive in our work so that others can see what they see, Viewers vision, choices and stories may be different but we are all impacted by seeing. Reflecting on this amazing ability is the story I wanted to share.

Artistic Process

The brain itself is a soft, intricate structure, so I used fabric and screen printing to echo this natural softness.

I printed three cross-sections of the visual neural pathways, top, middle and bottom, using AI-generated images for anatomical accuracy. I layered these via screen printing onto a variety of fabrics giving me the options for embellishing the works.

The choice of soft materials allowed me to mirror the brain's structure in an approachable form while connecting the viewer to the fundamental sensory experience of seeing. Creating this piece brought many challenges, from shaping the neural links to making them comprehensible and visually engaging. I tried out a variety of materials each with different issues from to soft, too slippery, too opaque, too delicate etc. before settling on an approach. I integrated embroidery, acrylic and metallic paint, and battery-operated lights to illuminate pathways hoping to intrigue viewers with the intricacies of the brain's networks. I considered shaping them and arranging them horizontally and vertically.

Like most of my experiments and experiences with creating abstract art, you learn while doing and end with ideas for how you might redo it differently next time.

Concept and Meaning

Emphasizing the role of sight—a critical element in both art and human experience, these neural pathways guide viewers to look closely and consider the structure of their own brains and the marvelous complexity that give us the ability to see. At one level seeing is an organic process, one often taken for granted, but it is also the start of making meaning. Humans have been called 'meaning making machines" and a lot of making meaning begins with seeing.

Personal Reflection

AI has been a tool, a guide and an idea generator as well as a camera to show me pictorial images of my ideas. It is not always accurate, but it is always interesting. I see it as a vast library of information that has been valuable in project planning, generating ideas and problem solving for stumbling blocks

along the way.

After multiple attempts to generate good images of geographical convolutions and intersections, when I wanted to display the hills and mountains and geography around Kamloops I gave up. I found no good depictions of the layered landscapes that are so prominent here and the various ways to make a scaled sculpture relied more on the expertise of geographers than any compelling picture AI could give me. I wanted to create the landscapes using AI and it was a no go. So I turned my attention to other things in nature that are convoluted. That's where the brain came in. That was an idea I chose to pursue.

Then I needed assistance in focusing on which part of the brain I wanted to depict in my work and how to get anatomically accurate pictures of the neural pathways for vision. When I was trying to figure out how to make the 'slices' of the Brain- top, middle and bottom- AI provided anatomically correct pictures that I needed to enlarge, print and transfer to screen printing screens. When I wanted the visual areas to stand out, I used AI to get ideas. Embroidery and lighting were offered along with other ideas. At lightening speed, AI gave me a mini manual of ideas from which I could pick. I see it as a repository of information and ideas, a super fast search engine, an advisor. It advises, I make the decisions. And for some things like project planning and management it is a good advisor. For other things like ideas to improve things it's pretty good. Just don't expect it to reproduce what you are thinking about in your mind, it isn't you, but it's an idea aid.

Audience Engagement

This work issues an invitation to step closer, explore from multiple angles, and experience a blend of scientific accuracy and artistic interpretation. The hanging structure allows viewers to move around it, creating a sense of wonder at the hidden intricacies of our bodies and the extraordinary complexity of perception. I had to give up on it being see through but depending on how it is hung you can move through it as well and see it from both sides. It is sturdy enough to be touched.

Context and Inspiration

Part of my broader artistic practice, which often depicts forms found in nature, this sculpture is a continuation of my fascination with the world and our connections to it. A theme running through my work is using nature as a jumping off spot to draw attention to something and tell a story. From Humpback whale flukes and swarming Killer Bees, Zebra Mussels and large abstract metal forms that began with the inspiration of a protractor and geometry set, something in the 'here and now' catches my interest and off I go.

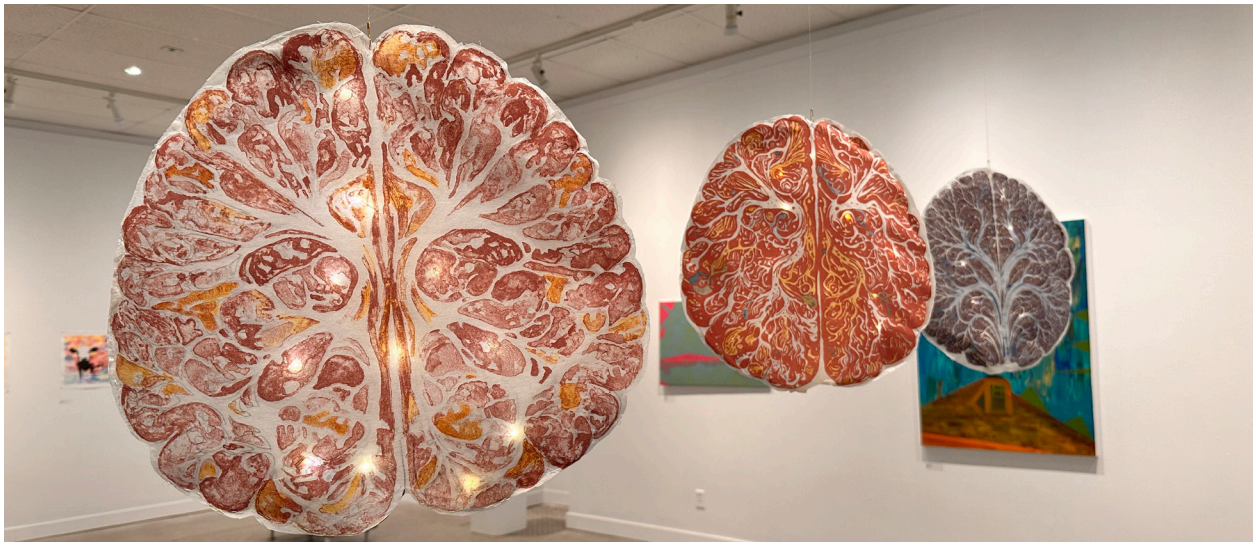

Figure 3. You See (exhibit installation, 2024), by Janet McChesney. Soft sculpture, screen printed fabric with mylar and lights, 17" x 19" (x 3). (Photo credit: Twyla Exner)

For this work, I began thinking about the geography of the hills around Kamloops with their peaks and curves and interconnection, the unique layers of sediment, rock, clay that forms the landscape. This idea was a non starter for using AI, totally frustrating but it did lead to the curves and interconnection in the brain and how to tell that story.

Through the brain's complex pathways, I hope to offer viewers not only a visual experience but also a moment of reflection on the awe-inspiring and nearly unfathomable processes that govern what we see, how we see and how that influences our thoughts and perceptions.

Process

Janet used DALL-E to generate images of the human brain to create maps of the neural pathways to the visual cortex. She wanted to show the areas of the brain that light up when we see images. DALL-E generated multiple maps of the brain, visually representing it in slices and indicating areas where it would light up in response to visual stimulation. Janet used the generated images to create screen prints, which are printed on fabric. The fabric contains a mylar template which holds LED's in place and represents the lighting up of visual cortex in the brain.

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Kaitlyn Bartlett

Bachelor of Fine Arts (Expected 2026)

A CROCHET KALEIDOSCOPE

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics visual art course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Kaitlyn Bartlett is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Tool: DALL-E, Canvas Magic media (AI image generator), and Google Gemini (AI chatbot)

Figure 1. A Crochet Kaleidoscope (2024) by Kaitlyn Bartlett. [yarn texture visible] Acrylic and Yarn on Canvas, 24" x 24" (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

ARTIST STATEMENT

For my final project in the Selected Topics, experiments in AI Art, I wanted to create a mixed media piece that combines my two favourite artistic mediums, painting and crochet. I wanted my piece to have a playful theme so for that I chose colours that reminded me of childhood, blue and pink. I also chose to stick with simple shapes such as squares, rectangles, and circles.

After experimenting with AI generated images, I chose a favourite and started some concept sketches. I started with a 2' x 2' canvas and painted it a creme colour. I then started with the crochet

appliques and measured them on the canvas to get the right sizes. After my crocheting was done, I started with sewing them on with a simple running stitch.

I want my artwork to give the viewer a playful and child-like feeling. Growing up I always got handmade gifts, so the crochet elements remind me of an early childhood memory.

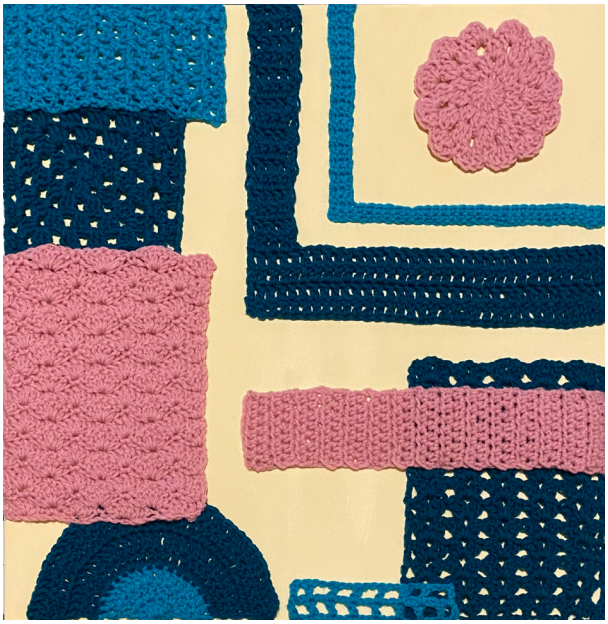

Figure 2. A Crochet Kaleidoscope by Kaitlyn Bartlett (2024). Mixed media, acrylic and yarn on canvas, 24" x 24" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

The only big challenge I faced when creating this piece was sewing the crochet pieces near the very edges of the canvas. The wood stretcher in the back was getting in the way of my sewing so I used a pair of tweezers to push the needle through the back.

My intended audience is anyone who views it and my intended response from them is to appreciate the textures of the crochet. I did different stitches for each applique to give it a variety of textures. I also want the viewer to have a sense of freedom and cheerfulness when interacting with my piece.

Process

Kaitlyn used DALL-E to iterate ideas for abstracted crochet "paintings". Referencing those images, she chose shapes, patterns and compositions that were of interest to her to create her own physical crocheted painting.

In A Crochet Kaleidoscope, Kaitlyn created a vibrant mixed media piece combining painting and crochet. Using AI tools—Canvas Magic Media for image generation and Google's Gemini chatbot for planning—she gathered visual inspiration and mapped out her creative process. AI acted as a collaborative tool, helping her explore colour palettes, stitch styles, and layout ideas she may not have otherwise considered.

Her work was inspired by artists who blend media in compelling ways: MK Metten's embroidered

Figure 3. DALL-E generated Image based on crochet painting prompt

painting [see this art in MK Metten's self-written article in Bored Panda (file:////.///tru_vfiler1.tru.univ/home/Dcollins/TRU Open Press/2025-2026 Projects/NON_adjudicated/Future Earth_Student Research Articles/special issue 2025/I Combine Painting And Embroidery To Make Mixed-Media Animal Artworks (10 Pics)) (2024)], David Szauder's AI-generated Anatomy Sweaters (https://www.davidarielszauder.com/anatomy-sweaters), and Kira Xonorika's bold, playful use of colour [you can check out Kira's art on the Brea Art Gallery website.] (https://www.breaartgallery.com/kira-xonorika). These influences helped Kaitlyn develop her project

theme of playfulness, reflected in a bright palette of pinks, blues, greens, and yellows, and a variety of textured crochet stitches.

Figure 4. DALL-E generated Image based on crochet painting prompt

She began by priming and painting a canvas, then crocheted individual elements using different stitch types, including the spider stitch—new to her practice. Each stitch type and colour held a specific place in her final design. Once arranged, she hand-sewed the crochet pieces onto the canvas, carefully balancing paint thickness to ensure easy attachment.

The project presented challenges, particularly translating AI-generated stitch imagery into real techniques.

> *A challenging aspect for me when looking at this project is that AI has a hard time actually creating stitches. It will just kind of clump yarn up and make it 'look' like a common stitch.*

Still, Kaitlyn embraced these hurdles as part of the creative process, producing a dynamic, tactile work that merged traditional craft with digital innovation.

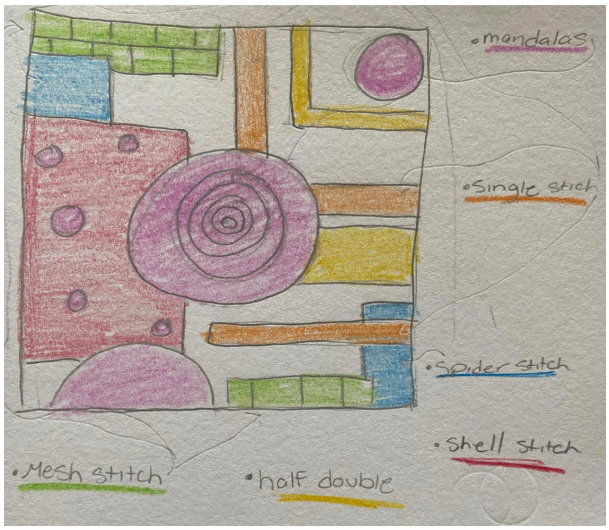

Figure 5. Artist Concept and Planning (2024) by Kaitlyn Bartlett. (Image credit: Kaitlyn Bartlett)

Lanaya Meets AI (2024) by Raluchukwu Ojah. Mixed media, 36" x 48" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

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Raluchukwu Ojah

Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2025

LANAYA MEETS AI

Figure 1. Lanaya Meets AI (2024) by Raluchukwu Ojah. Mixed Media, 36" x 48" (Image credit: Nicole Favron)

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Raluchukwu Ojah is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Tool: Copilot & Chat GPT

ARTIST STATEMENT

As a Nigerian artist studying art in Canada, I draw inspirations from the dualities of my Nigerian heritage in combination with the experiences I have accumulated in the rich culture of Canada, using AI as a collaborator to explore themes of my Nigerian

cultural identity and contemporary storytelling. With the help of ChatGPT, I was able to generate an image of an African woman wearing a replica of the Dutch style fabric. These fabrics are merged with collages of different images and art materials which ranges from my Nigerian culture, personal interests to exciting images from magazines. This merge represents the near future of AI collaborating fully with artists and shows the process in which data is fed into the AI platforms. AI also serves as a companion in ideation and design techniques, helping me refine the visual narratives in areas of the headwrap and fabric-collage merge.

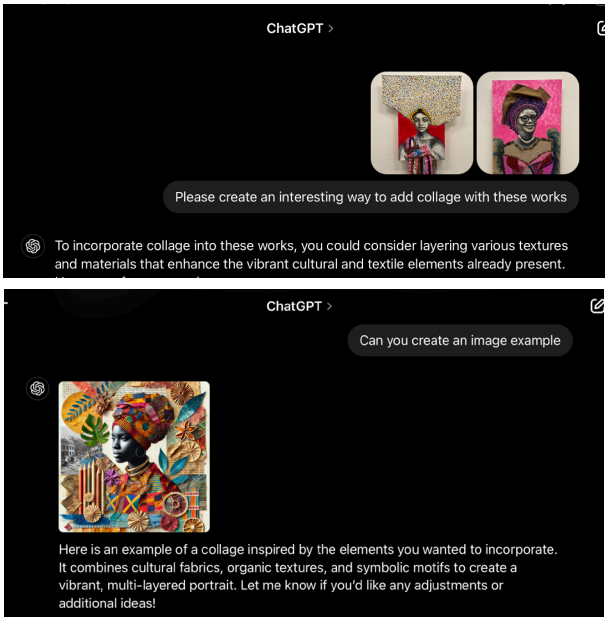

Figure 2. Prompts to ChatGPT to generate ideas for a collage. The top right images are Ral's original artwork. The bottom image is ChatGPT's response, influenced by Ral's original artworks.

After the image was generated on ChatGPT, I began sourcing out textures and symbols that carry cultural significance., I then blended AI-generated designs with organic elements, hereby inviting a dialogue between technology and tradition. I have used bright colors and intricate patterns to evoke the vibrancy of African aesthetics, while the tactile assembly of the collage offers depth and contrast, the aim is to encourage reflection on the roles of Art, Fashion and how they relate to my African identity.

Theme: The juxtaposition of African historical references in relation to Canadian culture and norms.

My work centers around African and Canadian contemporary fashion themes, by blending the portrait of the African woman with elements like African Dutch wax fabrics and some Canadian store inspired fabrics, I aim to show modern ways in which Africans have begun to style their dressing after the westerners. The historical references, Comic references, magazines and contemporary symbols such as pencils which show my personal relation as an artist and fake leaves to give an African vibe aim to create dialogue in my work. I invite viewers to reflect on the everchanging dynamic of cultural legacies and the way they resonate in today's contemporary world. By incorporating these elements, I have created this collage that celebrates African contemporary fashion and reflects on my views on how AI can impact on my works positively.

> *[I chose] two contemporary AI artists to get inspiration from and to also incorporate interesting ways these artists express their ideas. They are:*
>
> - *Refik Anadol*
> - *Memo Akten*

I began by asking ChatGPT to generate an image of African woman wearing African fabric, the first image it generated was perfect for me. The next stage was to purchase different African fabrics that matched the image generated. While working I added elements off my personal intuition, I used the image as a guideline for where to start and stop each artistic design.

I aim for it to resonate personally with viewers, by sparking conversations about human relationships, cultural intersections and how they affect both parties, and the evolving role of AI in art. Ultimately, my journey with AI is both a personal exploration and a way to show pride in the beauty of my cultural heritage in a world of technological possibilities.

I seek inspiration from * Pencil artist Kelvin Okafor; I got my sense of charcoal application from Kelvin Okafor; I always go back to watch his videos once I feel stuck.* CBE Yinka Shonibare; I got my Fashion sense from Yinka, he uses the Dutch wax fabric in his works, and I find it interesting on how he found a way to relate the colonial period with the

contemporary world through Dutch wax fabrics. * Refik Anadol; I chose Refik because of his bright use of colors. I also find his way of collecting data like the collage depiction which shows different images all as one. *Memo Akten; I like Memo abstraction, I aimed to achieve that level of distortion in the fabric-collage area which would give the viewers different opinions.

Process

Ral fed two images of his artworks to CHATGPT and asked it for suggestions for incorporating further collage elements. He then asked DALL-E to produce an image that incorporated the suggestions provided into his original artworks, but DALL-E was unable to accommodate that request. It did, however, make its own example. Ral decided to use that example as a reference to make a hand-made version of the work, using materials available to him for the collage elements and adapting it to his own style.

Figure 3. DALL-E generated image used as a reference for Ral's original artwork.

I interacted with Copilot while drafting out the plans for this project, I had the idea to create a col¬lage of mixed media, but I didn't know exactly how to go about it. Then I asked AI (Copilot) of interesting ways to produce contemporary portraits in collage.

Copilot gave me some useful ideas to begin work with such as using a different surface to work on, using cultural and historical references and imple¬menting cutout pictures. However, I still desired a visual representation of these examples. I tried to upload my artwork unto Copilots platform but to no avail. So I switched to ChatGPT.

"Untitled" [video installation exhibit, 2024] by Sierra Klassen-Johnson. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Sierra Klassen-Johnson

Architectural and Engineering Technology Program, 2025

UNTITLED

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics visual art course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Figure 1. Still from "Untitled" [video 2024] by Sierra Klassen-Johnson

Sierra Klassen-Johnson is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Tool: Chat GPT & Midjourney

ARTIST STATEMENT

Nature and spirituality deeply influence my creations. I strive to incorporate natural elements into my designs, such as the exposed mountain rock wall in my mountaintop house design. I aim to invite sunlight, moonlight, plants, and organic textures into my spaces, fostering a sense of harmony and positivity. My goal is to create uplifting environments that inspire a deeper connection with the natural world.

From a young age, I was drawn to art and design. My early projects included crafting cardboard and wooden houses for animals and fairies in my garden, a playful start to what would become a passion for architectural design. During high school, I pursued art and drafting classes, which deepened my interest and skills in architecture and increased my desire to turn this passion into a career.

Social media often serves as a creative spark, providing a platform to explore new ideas, but much of my work also stems from personal moments and connections. Sharing my creations with others

Figure 2. Midjourney generations in response to prompt (right) which was generated by Chat GPT in response to artist's own description of a house

brings me great joy, and as an architectural designer, I'm driven to create spaces where people can live happily and comfortably. I am particularly inspired by resilient and sustainable architecture, recognizing the vital role we play in caring for our environment.

My creative process starts with rough sketches, exploring layouts and exterior designs through multiple iterations. Using digital platforms like Revit or AutoCAD, I transform 2D sketches into detailed 3D models. Rendering tools like Enscape or Twinmotion then bring my designs to life with materials, furniture, and landscapes. By showcasing features like natural materials, strategically placed windows for passive solar heating, and shaded outdoor spaces, this design embodies the principles of sustainability. I aim to inspire viewers to see how architectural design can harmonize with the environment, promoting an eco-conscious lifestyle without sacrificing comfort or beauty.

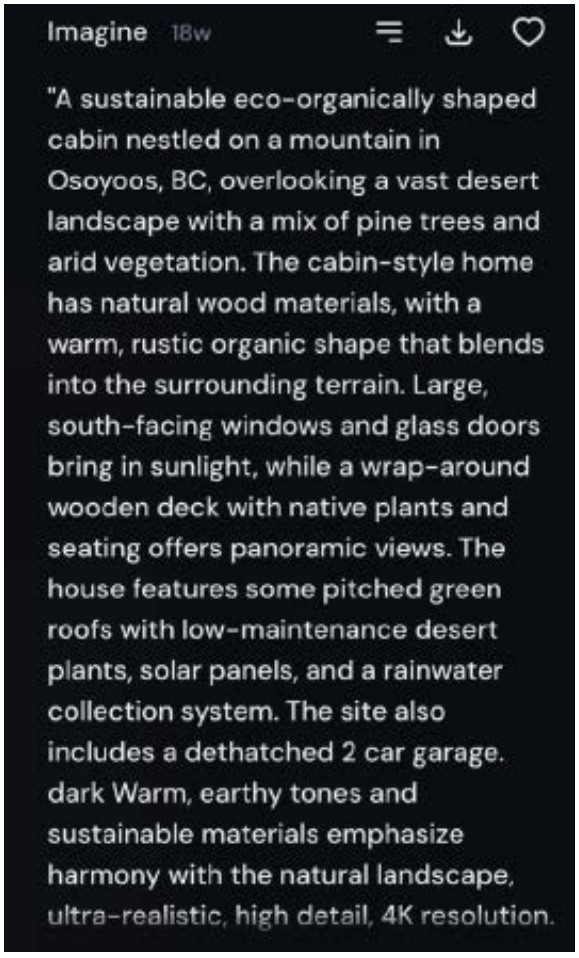

Figure 3. Midjourney prompt from artist.

The main challenge of this project was defining exactly what I wanted to create. Through researching the works of architects such as Bjarke Ingels, Liam Young, and Zaha Hadid who share a commitment to making the world a better place I was inspired to design a home that embraces organic, naturally flowing shapes. My goal was to create a space that not only reflects the beauty of the natural world but also encourages the occupants to adopt more eco-friendly lifestyles. By integrating sustainable design strategies into this project, I hope to contribute to the evolution of architecture, promoting a style that harmonizes with the environment. Through this approach, I dream to inspire future generations of architects and homeowners to think creatively and responsibly about how we design and live in our built spaces.

To see the full video, please scan the QR code.

Process

Sierra used CHAT GPT to determine a location and style for a house, then used MidJourney to generate images of homes based on that description. Taking inspiration from the Midjourney images (but not reproducing them exactly), she produced a model of the home using Revitand rendered that design in Enscape to showcase it as a video (Revitand Enscape are not AI platforms).

Figure 4. "Untitled" [video installation exhibit, 2024] by Sierra Klassen-Johnson. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

Fragile Connections (2024) [installation] by Susan Miller. Mixed media (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Susan Miller

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Thompson Rivers University, 2020

FRAGILE CONNECTIONS

This special issue of Future Earth Journal: Explorations in Art and Generative AI showcases the work of visual art students from the Fall 2024 Selected Topics visual art course *Explorations in Art and AI*. Each featured artist engaged with generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) to create original artworks that respond to and reflect on current conversations in art and technology. Through their unique practices, these students explored Gen AI as a tool, a collaborator, and/or a conceptual influence.

The artworks featured here—and in the exhibition held at the TRU Art Gallery from March 17–29, 2025—highlight the cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative dimensions of using Gen AI in artistic production.

Susan Miller is one of the participating artists whose work exemplifies this exploration.

AI Tool: Dalle-E, Midjourney, & ChatGPT4

ARTIST STATEMENT

"Fragile Connections" is inspired by the concept of "place" – in most cases marked by a physical location in time and space invites you to consider the broader connections and meaning in a world that is on a precipice of expediential change and reorder. This work invites the viewer to reflect on this moment in time in an era of environmental,

Figure 1. Fragile Connections (2024) by Susan Miller. Mixed media. (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

technological and political change. The installation – an open, suspended sphere of painted strips interacting between light and shadow mirrors the fragile nature of our connections to ourselves, the world and those we love.

Creating this work was a blend of digital exploration and hands-on craftsmanship. The idea and form, originating from a previous edition was an artwork that I was wanting to render in a larger format. I started with AI tools like Dalle-E, Midjourney, to help spark ideas for shape and structure of the piece. While I maintained my original iteration of the structure, AI tools offered instructions for a working timeline, construction, and assistance in troubleshooting stability and transportation issues.

Central to Fragile Connections is the question to the viewer, what, where and who is, "Place" in the expanse and consideration of the long view, whether that be in our relationships to each other, the world and ourselves. The sphere's shape represents our interconnectedness, the painted strips of green and blue suggests the jewel that is earth and the ever-present sky. The open structure invites the viewer to consider their place and story in this moment in time.

Working with AI on this project was enlightening from multiple prospectives. From a practical perspective the computational expediency of AI was remarkably impressive. Its ability to generate a wealth of ideas and offer diverse alterations to a structure and imagery is endless. However, co-creating with AI for masterful results requires a solid understanding of prompt engineering language. Despite the benefits, I am deeply concerned about AI usage about the ethical and moral implications inherent at this juncture. The lack of policy and procedural transparency in AI processes is troubling. I see the issue of uncredited contributions to images and information, and the proliferation of deceptive narratives a determent not only to creative practice but in the general use of AI. My experience of the handcrafted soothes a soul as nothing technologically can compare.

My hope is for anyone to take a quiet reflective moment to consider what may be their relationship to, Place. from all aspects of one's relational understanding, whether that be a physical location, deeply personal, or a broader perspective. With the addition of lighting and sound the atmospheric nature of this piece, I would most want the audience to elicit interpretations that are their own.

This piece came out of a writing exercise where I reflected on the meaning of, Place.

Place Considered
configured through a location on earth, in sky, and space
refined by our passions, identities, proclivities, and memories
boundless within the spiritual, mental, emotional bodies of our psyche
Place demarcated through our connections to those that live within the landscape of our heart.

Process

Susan wanted to create a spherical shape referencing the earth and connection as a metaphor. Some of the prompts she used are below and the images generated by DALL-E are in figure . She then asked Chat-GPT to instruct her on how to make the artwork. It provided materials and techniques as well as steps to follow. Susan followed those plans to produce the work.

suspended 3-D depicting earth metaphor, connection to all things green and gold with thin golden wire laces through, paper structure

Large-Scale Installation: Create a larger, immersive installation with multiple suspended spheres or shapes, allowing viewers to walk around and through them.

Figure 2. Text prompts provided to DALL-E.

Figure 3. AI generated image results from ChatGPT and DALL-E from prompts given from artist.

Figure 4. 25'x4' strips of paper painted on both sides to be cut in strips for project.

Figure 5. Original test artwork by Susan Miller that was fed to DALL-E, Chat-GPT, and Midjourney as a reference image in addition to the text prompts provided. (Image credit: Susan Miller)

Figure 6. Installation work in progress [in studio].
(Image credit: Susan Miller)

Figure 7. Fragile Connections (2024) [installation] by Susan Miller. Mixed media (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

Exhibit Installation (2024) (Image credit: Twyla Exner)

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Nicole Favron

Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2025

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.