



### Who Decides What Art Really Is Anymore?

By Dale Jodoin  
Columnist

Walk through almost any downtown today and you will run into something called "art." Sometimes it is beautiful. Sometimes it makes people stop and think. Other times people stand there wondering how it ended up funded, displayed, and protected from criticism. That is not an insult. It is a real question many ordinary people are asking. What exactly is art anymore, and who gets to decide? Years ago the word artist brought certain images to mind. A painter over a canvas. A sculptor shaping stone. Somebody is making pottery by hand. A musician spending years learning an instrument. A poet writing from heart-break or experience. Even if people did not personally like the work, they could usually see the skill and effort behind it. Today the definition feels much wider. One person types words into AI software and creates a stunning image in seconds. Others place random objects into a gallery and call it an installation worth thousands of dollars. Somebody splashes paint across plywood while critics praise it as a deep expression. Meanwhile a man making handmade leather goods in his garage may never once be called an artisan. A mechanic rebuilding a classic car engine with creativity and precision is rarely invited to arts festivals. A woman writing poetry online that touches thousands of people may never receive a grant or public recognition. So where is the line now? That question makes some people uncomfortable because art has become strangely protected in modern society. The moment somebody questions whether something is truly art, the reaction can become defensive very quickly. People are told they simply do not understand creativity or culture. But ordinary people are allowed to ask questions, especially when taxpayer money is involved. Cities across Canada, including Oshawa, spend public money every year on grants, installations, festivals, and arts programs. Some programs are valuable. Community pottery classes, painting workshops, music programs, and theatre groups can bring people together in meaningful ways.

The problem is many residents never even hear about them. Most people do not know where the funding goes, who receives it, or how certain projects get selected. Sometimes it feels like the same small circles approving each other while the public stands outside the conversation. That creates frustration. People begin wondering whether art has become less about community and more about politics, connections, and social groups. Modern art is also tied heavily to identity and ideology now. Conservatives celebrate one kind of expression. Progressives celebrate another. Activist art gets praised in some places while traditional work gets ignored. In other circles modern abstract work is mocked while realism is treated as the only "true" art form. Everybody seems to have their own definition. Maybe that has always been true. Art has always been subjective.

One person sees emotion in a painting while another sees nothing at all. One person hears poetry that changes them while another shrugs and walks away. But what feels different today is how stretched the word has become. The label "artist" now covers almost everything. If everything is art, does the word still carry meaning? That is not an attack on AI either. AI art raises fair questions. If somebody uses imagination and detailed descriptions to create an image through technology, is that really less creative than abstract painting? Some people say yes because software produces the image. Others argue the human idea behind it matters most. There is truth on both sides. Photography faced similar criticism when cameras first became common. Traditional artists once argued photography was not real art because the machine captured the image. Today photography is accepted almost everywhere as an art form. AI may eventually follow the same path. Still regular people see contradictions. A carpenter building a handcrafted table is called a tradesman. Somebody arranging objects inside a gallery is called an artist. A welder creating functional work is labour. A welder shaping metal into abstract forms is culture. Who decides which one receives praise, grants, and public attention? Critics? Committees? Universities? Social trends? Money? Sales complicate things even more. Some people argue art proves itself through value. If buyers are willing to spend thousands then clearly it matters. But popularity alone has never been proof of quality. Fast food sells more than gourmet meals. That does not make it better cooking.

The same applies to culture. Sometimes art becomes important simply because influential people say it is important. Galleries promote it. Critics praise it. Institutions fund it. Eventually many people become afraid to question it because they do not want to sound ignorant. Meanwhile talented local creators often remain invisible. There are painters quietly working in apartments. Craftsmen building furniture by hand. Musicians performing for tiny crowds. Seniors teaching carving, pottery, sewing, and woodworking after decades of experience. Most will never receive headlines or grants. Yet many ordinary people would probably connect more deeply with their work than with another abstract steel structure sitting in the middle of a public square. Maybe that is the real issue. Not whether modern art is fake. Not whether AI counts. Not whether abstract work matters.

The real problem may be that communities no longer feel included in the conversation. Art became something discussed inside committees, institutions, and cultural circles while ordinary people drifted further away from it. People want art they can connect to. They want open events, public discussions, and community festivals where culture feels shared instead of managed from above. Maybe art is not dying at all. Maybe the definition has simply become so broad, so political, and so protected from criticism that regular people no longer feel welcome inside it. And when that happens the word itself begins losing weight. Not because creativity disappeared. But because too many people stopped asking the simplest question of all. What actually makes something art?

### Some Job Seekers Are Beginning to Acknowledge the Advantages of AI-Led

By Nick Kossovan

Increasingly, I'm hearing from readers who prefer AI-led hiring over the traditional human-led process. In all fairness, most of my readers tend to be early adopters of technology rather than fighting the inevitable. They cite several distinct advantages: · Elimination of unconscious human bias: AI evaluates your data, not your pedigree. · 24/7 scheduling flexibility: You interview on your schedule, not the hiring manager's. · Standardized questioning for all candidates: All applicants are measured by the same yardstick. · Elimination of "mood-based" interviewer variability: You won't be disadvantaged because a hiring manager is having a bad day. · Reduced social performance anxiety: No awkward small talk or trying to read a stranger's poker face. · Ability to interview in a comfortable, private environment: Full control over your surroundings. · Focus on objective data rather than "cultural fit" stereotypes: Pivot away from "clique" hiring. · No interruptions or leading questions: You get a fair shot at making a "Why I should be hired" case. · Privacy from immediate judgment regarding physical appearance: Your words and metrics carry the weight, not your outfit or non-verbal cues. This isn't just an anecdotal whim; it's a measurable reality. A large-scale field experiment led by researchers Brian Jabarian of the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and Luca Henkel of Erasmus University Rotterdam, involving roughly 70,000 applicants, found that 78 percent of candidates preferred AI job interviews to human interviews.

The pearl-clutching needs to stop. Humans have always gravitated toward the consistency of machinery over the unpredictability of their fellow humans. We swapped the village blacksmith for the precision of the assembly line because we wanted a product that worked every time, not just when the craftsman was in a good mood. We traded the bank teller for the ATM because it's available 24/7 and processes your transaction without judgment. Job interviews are no different; they're business transactions in which the human element is invariably the weakest link. When your candidacy is evaluated by an AI, you receive a standardized experience. Every candidate is asked the same questions, in the same tone, and assessed against the same metrics.

Let's be honest: a human interviewer gets tired, hungry, or bored by the fifth candidate of the day. They rely on "gut feelings" to make hiring decisions. AI doesn't have a gut. It doesn't get hungover, it doesn't watch the clock, and it doesn't care where you went to school. AI-driven hiring processes make your skills the only currency that matters.

Critics—most often frustrated job seekers—argue that AI lacks "empathy." My response: Good! Whether a candidate can debug legacy code, calculate inventory turnover ratios, or optimize supply chains doesn't require empathy; it requires objective assessment.

Lindsey Zuloaga, VP of Data Science at Pattern, noted in HireVue's official industry breakdown, *Decoding AI in Hiring: Unveiling Facts and Myths*, published in September 2023: "AI in the hiring process allows for a more consistent and objective evaluation of candidates, focusing on job-relevant skills rather than the unconscious biases that often cloud human judgment." Furthermore, AI-led interviews offer a level of convenience that human schedules can't match. You can record your interview at 10:30 AM on a Sunday without using a "sick day" or playing calendar tag with a recruiter. AI has streamlined the hiring process to respect job seekers' time, something most human resources departments have long forgotten how to do. Let's be honest: the outcry against AI hiring is largely rooted in bruised egos. Job seekers want to feel "seen" and "heard," but corporate hiring isn't group therapy. If your objective is a paycheck and a role where you can deliver measurable value, it shouldn't matter whether the initial gatekeeper is a line of code or a human.

Readers of *The Art of Finding Work* know my position: you're a one-person business offering a solution-based service. Professional service providers don't complain about the procurement software clients use; they navigate it to land the contract. Complaining about AI-led hiring isn't a strategy; it's an unproductive temper tantrum. It's like a horse-and-buggy driver shouting at a passing Model T. You can yell all you want; the use of AI isn't slowing down. AI-led hiring isn't a passing fad. Talent acquisition is increasingly using it because it's cheaper, faster, and, most importantly, provides data-backed results. Employers define what's "fair," not the job seeker. If employers believe AI helps them identify candidates who'll meet their KPIs and stick around for a while—there's no empirical data proving otherwise—they'll use it.

For the anti-AI crowd: Whether a company uses AI in its hiring process isn't your decision. Understand that AI isn't swayed by superficial details; therefore, job seekers must emphasize measurable accomplishments, which few do. Treat your applications and AI-driven interviews as a technical audit. Employers don't owe job seekers a "human touch." They owe it to themselves to find the best candidate for their business (keywords). If employers believe AI can help them find that candidate, who's a job seeker to take issue with that? Of course, once you pass through the AI gauntlet, you'll still have to deal with a human; all the advantage AI gave you up to that point goes out the window. That's the hiring process today.

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