

## SECOND IN A SERIES

# How much of the work is the artist and how much is artificial intelligence?

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As rapidly evolving artificial intelligence sweeps across Burke County, one of the most significant expansions is the technology's entrance into the art world.

Burke County is strong in the arts, especially visual and acoustic. Visual murals blossom around the community centers and new music reverberates through the streets. AI tech can help grow this established scene. But it could also threaten it.

Essentially, the growing technology of AI art utilizes evolving computer programs with access to hundreds of thousands of images gleaned from the internet, such as paintings, photography, digital art, and visual works. The programs recycle, alter, and present this computer-generated art based on prompts from users.

## ISSUES WITH AI

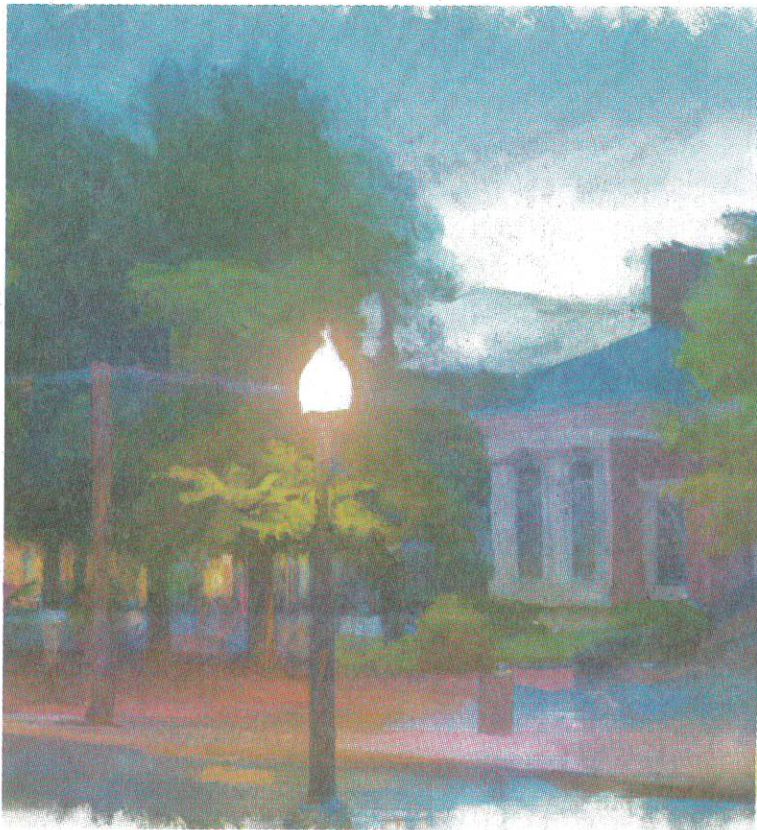
Local artist Laura Bill, who recently organized the Game of Shrooms in Morganton, said that one of the major issues with this new technology is copyright infringement. She points out that, "A lot of the data sets that AI is programmed with are not necessarily fully licensed... the artists that they are combing through to feed the AI aren't being attributed at any point."

Similar to the introduction of photography into the art world, AI technology is going to have grand repercussions on defining what "art" is, how much skill and dedication is required to produce art, and what tools artists should disclose using in their work.

Another broader issue with AI art is removing locality from art commissions. Bill said one of the drawbacks of AI art is that "it takes [art] out of the local sphere because then you're just getting into the internet and the digital world."

Kara Jones, a local artist and former art teacher, said AI can be used as a tool to "really jumpstart the creative process. It is definitely not something that is the final [product], but if you're having writer's block, it is a good way to launch you in the creative process."

Jones said that, "For me, being an artist is amazing and wonderful. But it also is a source of income and a job, too. With any job, it's nice to have resources and support to do that job better, but AI can help provide that as well."



FOR THE PAPER

This image is AI-generated from an algorithm called DALL-E, prompted by "An impressionist painting of Downtown Morganton, North Carolina."

AI artwork can be an effective tool to help artists build ideas and inspiration, but relying fully on the product means that local artists become irrelevant.

Mark Poteat, Western Piedmont Community College Arts Coordinator, said he sees AI as "a scary thing, but also a helpful tool." In the art world, he said it can be a competitive adversary to push art to new levels.

In agreement with other artists, Poteat believes that AI "is something that can really make the future extraordinary, but like with any technology in the wrong hands, it could be the opposite."

## DETECTING AI ARTWORK

AI-generated is presenting prevalent issues on a national level. Some researchers, such as those behind the University

of Chicago's "Glaze" product, are working on ways to stop artwork from being stolen by these AI programs.

There are several algorithms in progress that are advertised to detect AI art. Tests with a few of these programs were used on the AI-generated artwork in this article. The results were mixed:

Huggingface.co was 67% sure that the art was human-produced. Thehive.ai 100% identified it as both AI and, specifically, DALL-E created. Illuminary.ai marked the AI probability as 7.3%.

## AI IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Outside of the visual arts, artificial intelligence is heavily incorporated into the musical creative process. Artificial intelligence breached the audio world years ago and has been used in perfecting mixes, building beats, or filling in the gaps for bands. There is AI technology that can create music based on someone's preferred mood, length, and taste.

Ricky Rodriguez of Bombhouse Studios in Morganton, said that in the music production world, the new technology has significantly changed the scene.

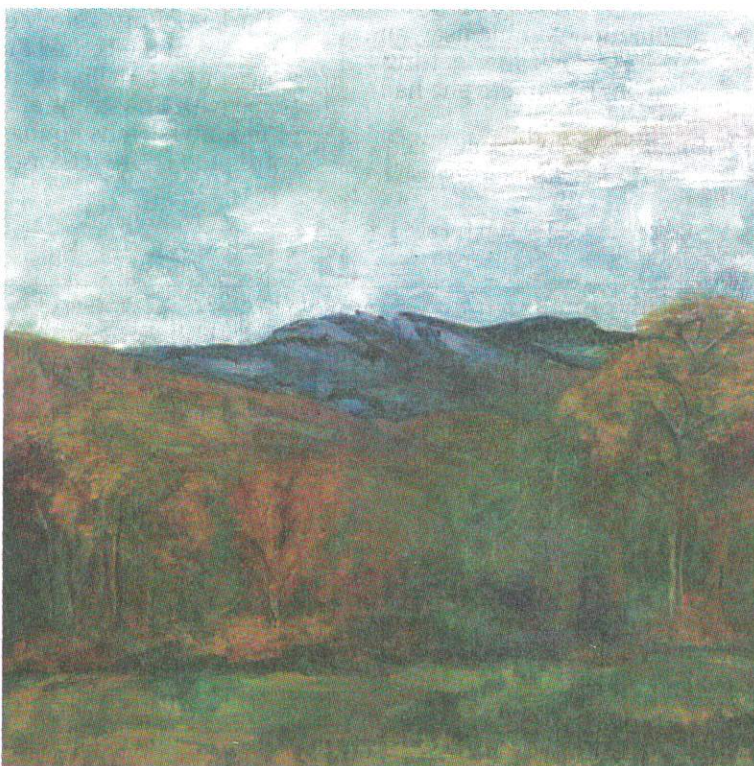
Rodriguez compares the introduction of AI to the introduction of the internet, which drastically changed the music industry and removed a degree of locality from the scene. He said that since the internet allows music to be mixed anywhere, artists may send their files to studios globally.

Similarly, the introduction of AI tools makes it easier for audiophiles to mix their own music, rather than spending years learning the manual skills. AI tools, such as Izotope, can automatically mix and master recordings.

Much like the visual arts, however, AI tech "still needs a degree of human connection," Rodriguez said. Any automatic mixing software still requires humans to listen and change aspects of the sound to make it appealing to human ears, he added.

Overall, AI tools such as DALL-E or Izotope are already changing the art world.

However, the general consensus is that to make a final product worth time, money, and effort, there must be heavy human participation in any art.



KARA JONES / FOR THE PAPER

This image is original artwork produced by artist Kara Jones, titled "Grandfather."

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