

WHAT HAPPENS TO CREATIVE WORK IN THE AGE OF AI?

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FROM KETURAH'S ARTICLE

“Are we learning AI so it can become another tool in our creative process, or are we being asked to train ourselves to compete with the very technology being positioned to replace us?”



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THE ARTICLE

WHAT HAPPENS TO CREATIVE WORK IN THE AGE OF AI?

BY KETURAH MOODY

EMERGING LEADERS INITIATIVE FELLOW

With AI becoming more common, there is a growing conversation both in the workplace and online about the future of hiring creatives, especially in marketing. Businesses can now attempt to produce promotional content themselves for the relatively low cost of an AI subscription instead of hiring creative professionals.

Similar shifts are happening in music, where AI can generate artists, personas, lyrics, and tracks, and in film and television, where the use of AI-generated scripts has become a growing concern. It leaves me with a question that I think is on many creatives' minds: Will there come a point when our work is considered obsolete? As a social media manager and content creator, I've already experienced the conflict between the time good work requires and the speed clients expect.



THERE IS OFTEN LITTLE RESPECT FOR THE ACTUAL CRAFT BEHIND THE SERVICE WHEN YOU'RE TOLD TO "JUST WHIP SOMETHING UP" OR EXPECTED TO CREATE AND DELIVER CONTENT THE SAME DAY.

AI is only increasing those expectations. If a business owner can generate something in seconds, it can create the perception that all creative work should happen that quickly, whether the result makes sense strategically, looks good aesthetically, or actually resonates with the intended audience.

Yet, I've also seen what happens when creatives are removed from the process. You're often called back to put out the fires, especially in social media marketing. Sometimes it's poorly executed content. Other times, it's a strategy that doesn't work or a public backlash that could have been anticipated with the right people involved. At the same time, creatives are being told that we need to learn AI, become experts, and adapt so we aren't "left behind." But what exactly does left behind mean? Are we learning AI so it can become another tool in our creative process, or are we being asked to train ourselves to compete with the very technology being positioned to replace us?

That question feels even more complicated as people begin marketing themselves as experts with titles like “AI graphic designer,” while artists and designers are searching for work. The rise of these new roles only adds to the uncertainty around where traditional creative expertise belongs as AI becomes more common in the industry.

Still, there are signs of a counterculture forming, with marketing labels like “human-made” potentially becoming more prominent, similar to the way vegan, non-GMO, and clean beauty became signals of consumer values. We’re already seeing early versions of this sentiment online, with artists participating in a viral trend that proudly emphasizes their work was handmade rather than generated, using the caption, “***Forget AI, I made this with my own hands.***”



IF THE EVENTUAL GOAL IS FOR AI

AND HUMAN CREATIVITY TO WORK IN TANDEM,

*how do we use AI to expand what
creatives can do while protecting the
value, dignity, and economic opportunities
of the people behind creative work?*



THREE QUESTIONS KETURAH LEAVES US WITH



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Tool or Competitor?

Are creatives learning AI to expand what they can do — or learning it to compete with technology that may replace some of their work?

Will “human-made” matter more?

Keturah sees signs of a counterculture in which human-made creative work may become a signal of authenticity and value.

What must we protect?

If AI and human creativity are going to work together, how do we expand what creatives can do while protecting their value, dignity, and economic opportunities?