The Intersection of Art and Technology

To prepare for our session, please give some thought to your feelings about how the relationship of art and technology has led to innovation in both areas throughout human history and to how you feel about where these writers and artists think it might be taking us in the future. Then write a response of at least 200 words and submit it to lewesseminar@gmail.com by Monday, February 10. All responses will be posted on this website. Please review others’ responses in advance of our session on Wednesday, February 12.

Not all artistic expression is dependent on technology. Think spoken word, expressive movement, singing, whistling, body percussion, and the like. But more complex art forms and those that are not based in real time do depend on tools. Musical instruments, paint, sculpture, writing, etc. Here is a simple overview of how art and technology has interacted through human history:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_for_invention_in_the_arts>

And here is a short article describing some technological aspects of visual art in our time, along with a quick explanation of some of the issues involved:

<https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/the-serious-relationship-of-art-and-technology>

For a much deeper dive into the issues of technology and an approach to policies for supporting the cultural and innovative importance of the intersection of art and technology, here is a fairly long article. If it’s more than you want to take on, familiarizing yourself with the executive summary is worthwhile on its own:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2019/634439/EPRS_IDA(2019)634439_EN.pdf>

Once you have approached the first three articles, find a little time to spend with this video:

<https://www.ted.com/talks/refik_anadol_art_in_the_age_of_machine_intelligence?subtitle=en>

Here are some writing prompts you might want to use, but you should feel no obligation to do so:

1. Art has intrinsic value to the individual artist, to the consumer, and to the culture at large. But it provides significant value to society in other ways as well, particularly in that it drives technological innovation. With this in mind, to what degree should public resources be made available to the individual artist?
2. If public or private resources are provided to the individual artist due to the extrinsic value of their work, i.e. that these investments are intended to return technological return, does this undermine the integrity of the artwork created?
3. We saw some remarkable potentialities in the materials we reviewed for this month’s session. Are these troubling to you? Do they expand your idea of what is art?
4. The creative mind will always seek new and innovative ways to solve problems in artistic expression. Thus, is it realistic to think that governmental policy could realistically limit potentially dangerous expansion of technology as it applies to art? If it could, would this be a good thing?
5. Some cultures feel unfettered artistic expression is a dangerous thing. What is your position on this, particularly in regard to art and technology?
6. In the introduction to the article prepared for the European Parliament, the author defines his terms in this way: *Technology makes tools; art makes meaning. Technology is human creativity directed towards usefulness, whereas art is human creativity directed towards goodness, beauty and truth. Technology is a means to other ends; art is its own end. (Woodbridge, 2017).* Are there other ways to define these ideas? And, if so, would these alternative definitions impact your thoughts on the issues presented?

Submitted by David White. January 2025