

The Resurgence of Tactile Animation in the Face of AI

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INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that artificial intelligence (AI) is an uprising technological advancement currently being molded and changing the world as we know it. AI is affecting many industries, but the biggest impacts have been felt in the world of artists and creatives. The response to AI ranges from outcries for legislation and restriction to fascination of the new technology. There is a return to handmade and mixed-media techniques in direct response to a digital and AI driven culture. It is important to contextualize the animation industry, specifically on how it has reacted to technological advancements in the past. AI has created a form of competition that has diversified the animation industry. It is so important to remember that animation is not a genre, but a medium. With artists, studios, and companies taking stances on how to either incorporate or renounce AI, there has been a shift in the output of the industry. There has been a huge resurgence of tactile animated movies appearing in box offices and home streaming services, including *Anomalisa* (2015), *The House* (2022), *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* (2022), *My Life as a Courgette* (2016), *Mad God* (2021), Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs* (2018), and Laika's *Missing Link* (2019) and their soon-to-be-released film *Wildwood* (2026). *Loving Vincent* (2017), another honorable mention, is a spectacular film made entirely of frame-by-frame hand-painted animation. Pixar is releasing an animation that will utilize a similar hand painted technique in their upcoming film *Gatto* (expected 2027). Disney Insider released that the film will be reminiscent of the 2D–3D hybrid being explored in animation right now (Pillot, 2025). With the major animation corporations following the trend of tactile animation, it's only a matter of time before the entire animation industry completely changes – more than it already has.

Competition can help diversify and expand the content being distributed. In the screen-saturated world of AI textured and handmade animation still resonates. People want to feel something real and human-made. Laura U. Marks, a philosopher and scholar, in her article titled “Haptic Visuality in Animation”, writes, “If every object and event is irreducible in its materiality, then part of learning to touch it is to come to love its particularity, its strangeness, its precious and inimitable place in the world... Part of materialism, then, is celebrating the uniqueness of the other. Things, people, and moments pass, they age and die and can never be duplicated; so materialism’s close corollary is cherishing” (Marks, 2002, p. xii). This ‘cherishing’ has become so prevalent in today’s current climate. Animation is able to reflect and adhere to this need by producing more textured, imperfect animation. Have you ever heard of the phrase: ‘you need to touch grass’ when you or someone you know is shocked by the amount of digital content consumed in a day? It is a familiar concept of the human desire to refocus themselves by interacting with the world in a less digital, more natural way. The animation industry is responding to this desire. An industry that is no stranger to adaptation. Paul Wells, a widely published scholar in animation and film studies, defines animation as a flexible, ever-evolving form – not a fixed industry product. Wells highlights how the materiality of clay (a common animation medium) demonstrates animation's malleability and capacity to literally evolve as it has done so many times before (Wells, 1998, p. 77). Learned animators should take note of the animated materials regularly consumed. Notice if it intentionally shows the human hand creating the visuals on the screen. Is it promoting a clean, smooth, digital finish – or an imperfect, *human* touch?

CONTEXT OF THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY

Almost every generation can point to a technological development that redefines their world or industry and ultimately replaces some aspect of the human workforce. Some easily mentionable advancements include the printing press, sewing machine, internet, emails, and the .com bubble. All of these innovations caused strife and fear in the eyes of the public. A fear of the unknown – a fear of change. In her book *Animation: The Global History*, Maureen Furniss highlights how in every generation, there is a reshaping due to technological advancements. These technological advancements reshape art industries like the animation industry each time they are introduced (Furniss, 2016). As it was true for days past, it is important now to grab the reins of this reshaping before it gets out of control. The control should be in the hands of the artist, the worker, and the individual. The possibility of negative, detrimental outcomes of this technological surge comes when the reshaping is in the hands of corporate giants and commercialized companies. Animation has always been about experimentation. Whether it is handmade, mixed media, or *even* digital, animation is constantly reinventing itself. Paul Wells, an internationally established scholar, argues that metamorphosis – the ability to change not only an image, but an idea – is the core of animation (Wells, 1998, p. 89). This ever-changing animation is best embodied in mixed media animation, or tactile animation. Tactile animation emphasizes the embodied labor behind it. This type of animation is about expression rather than perfection, while 3D and 2D animation are often associated with cleaner, more polished aesthetics. Movies that fit within this clean aesthetic include *Toy Story* (1995), *Brave* (2012), *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010), and *The Polar Express* (2004). Some of these films are uncanny with their attempt at replicating human features with 3D software. So why is it important that tactile animation

captures the human hand behind the art? Maxine Sheets-Johnstone captures the sense of beauty and true definition of animation in “Animation: The Fundamental, Essential, and Properly Descriptive Concept” by writing, “Everything living is animated. Flowers turn toward the sun; pill bugs curl into spheres; lambs rise on untried legs, finding their way into patterned coordinations. The phenomenon of movement testifies to animation as the foundational dimension of the living” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 375). Animated life is all around us. It’s a part of our world as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone describes. The culture and fervor that surrounds the world of animation is helped in part by this ever-changing world we live in. Hence, why animators and artists feel so strongly in their response to AI in protecting the tactile style of animation.

Further corroborating this point, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone writes, “emotion arises out of or from motion, motion in the sense of felt dynamic stirrings, felt inner commotions—a bodily ‘arthquake’ as it were” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 378.). This ‘arthquake’ causes tremors that continue the movement and creation of handmade animation in response to AI. Coralie Lamotte studied many manuals written for the creation and study of animation. She found the principle and fundamental techniques almost always boiled down to hand drawn analogue techniques (Lamotte, 2022). Artists return to what is foundational and true for their artistic genre. Yet, there is a difference between returning to fundamental techniques and plagiarizing other artists work. The current systems of AI seem to struggle with this task. Barry Salt has some brilliant conclusions about how technology affected art when studying the evolution of fiction filmmaking in the late 1800s (1895 – 1900). He found that “The copying of subjects that has already been mentioned as taking place - by Méliès of Lumière and Paul subjects, and by the Edison Co. of Méliès - was no more than simple plagiarism, and did not give rise to the

variation, elaboration, and combination that was to be a powerful motor for the evolution of film form from 1900 onwards” (Salt, 1992, p. 39). Copying past works will not diversify or improve any industry. Studying past masters and virtuosos can help improve an artists' skills.

Nevertheless, unless these skills are applied to original content, the product is only plagiarism.

This plagiarism is found in modern age AI in the method it uses to combine other artists' materials to 'create'. The animation industry has started to fight AI on legal grounds as well as moral. Many artists and organizations have sued AI for using their art in their databases. The Authors Guild, Disney, and Warner Bros. are among many claiming damages for alleged mass infringement from AI software's such as OpenAI, Midjourney, and other image-generator defendants (Sparks, 2025). It is understandable that these big corporations like Disney and Warner Bros are protecting their content, copyright, and profits in response to AI. But what about the everyday artist? What steps can they take to protect their work, rebel against AI, and simultaneously not get left behind in this new wave of technology?

Martin Heidegger, a notoriously compelling German philosopher, addressed the question of technology and its effects on humans lives in his work: *The Question Concerning Technology*. There he defines the various frameworks in which to analyze the different levels in which technology affects us. According to Heidegger, technology is a way of seeing the world through how we interact with it (Heidegger, 1977). How we interact with technology will define how much we value our world. If we utilize technology that plagiarizes and exploits past content to create, then how much faith do we have in ourselves, the human race, to create original material? I refer again to Martin Heidegger who states, “The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought” (Heidegger, 1977). So, do not go peacefully into the

blissful ease of AI and other technological advancements. Just because it makes life easy does not mean it makes life better. If we utilize AI for brainless, meaningless content, then that is what our world will reflect. AI can be a tool used for good; a tool that helps to improve everyone's lives. With the right guidance and control, this is still an achievable goal.

PERSONAL AUTHORSHIP IN MATERIAL PRESENCE

Tactile animation is the inhabitant of hard work, skill, and human-made art. In the beginning, the learning of animation was from lessons and manuals – rather than online databases. Coralie Lamotte's study of these early manuals on animation found how much care, labor, and physical technique went into animation from the very beginning. In parallel to the surge of digital techniques, Lamotte writes, "The emphasis on hand-drawn animation, at a time when a new form of animation was pushing it aside, can be read as a reaction to the transformation of the technological landscape" (Lamotte, 2022). If the reemergence of tactile animation has happened before, who is to say it can not happen again? Digital techniques have become a very important part of the animation industry today. In the book written by David Fox and Mitchell Waite on how to better animate on your personal computer in the 1980s, they write that it is, "...unlikely that a computer will ever be able to automatically produce original animations which possess the depth of character of the classics" (Fox and Waite, 1984). Yet today, AI has made some non-human generated animations and live action footage. It is only a matter of time before these generated animations are clean and stylized. Following this advancement, will AI have the ability to encompass the depth that the human hand and mind is able to convey? Ellen Rocha writes in her book *Beyond Materiality in Animation: Sensuous*

Perception and Touch in the Tactile Existence of 'Would a Heart Die?' on how haptics focus on not only the sight, but the touch and the soul of the process (Rocha, 2016). Haptics refers to the emotion and depth conveyed through the imperfections that reveal the artist's hand on the screen. She goes on to write about how the personal touch of an animator, the tactileness and imperfection, elicits a sense of touch that is embodied by the viewer through vision (Rocha, 2016). Generated animations continue to lack human touch as they lack the human behind the art. Tactile animation, also referred to as haptic animation, is meant to portray the artist behind the art. If imperfections are the soul of the animation, then AI is lacking the most integral part of art.

CASE STUDIES: MEMOIR OF A SNAIL



Figure 1

(Annecyfestival, 2025, 00:33)



Figure 2

(Annecyfestival, 2025, 00:29)



Figure 3

(Annecyfestival, 2025, 02:14)

This imperfect style of animation is exhibited well in the stop motion animated film: *Memoir of a Snail*. In the ‘making of’ YouTube video, you can see how the artists quite literally leave their fingerprints on the work – an expression of authorship through tactile imagery. Their handprints are visible across the sets and characters. You can almost feel the effort and emotion poured into every movement and set piece. In Figure 1, the main character is confronted by

bullies. Their faces have noticeable textures and imperfections, which emphasize just how flawed and intimidating they are meant to appear – evoking emotion from the viewer. We also get a glimpse of the family’s everyday life (see figure 2). Notice the back cushion between the two children sitting on the black couch. See those lines? They are subtle, but they really show the literal hand of the artist (i.e. a fingerprint). The fingerprint is not only the artist leaving their human mark – and signaling to the public that this is a human-made artwork – but the human mark also signifies the time, effort and thought that goes into creating such art. The art would not exist without the creator. This forms a tactile style and constructs an unseen ‘aura’. Even if you do not see the actual lines of the artist’s fingerprints, there is no doubt that their hands created every emotion displayed by the characters (see figure 3). Walter Benjamin writes in their book *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* on how painting keeps its “aura” – its sense of being made by someone, not something. He goes on to explain, “Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin, 1936, p. 2). Originality and authenticity are tied to handmade work. Handmade work usually means there is a certain material being manipulated. There is authorship in the material itself. Jane Bennet, a professor and researcher, writes, “A life thus names a restless activeness, a destructive-creative force-presence that does not coincide fully with any specific body. Life tears the fabric of the actual without ever coming fully ‘out’ in a person, place, or thing” (Bennett, 2010, p. 54). Bennett seems to be describing ‘a life’ as an active force inherent in materials, implying that materials themselves have a kind of vitality. In the context of tactile animation, this idea is reflected in how the physical qualities of materials – like texture, weight, and movement – can enhance the emotional depth and authenticity of a piece. The imperfections and subtle variations in handmade

materials used in animation can communicate a sense of human touch and intentionality. The creation of this tactile handmade movie, *Memoir of a Snail*, has resonated with many festivals and audiences. It has received multiple awards based on audience and judges' approval such as São Paulo International Film Festival Jury Prize and FCAA Best Film; and has been nominated for even more awards including Best Animated Feature from Critics Choice Awards, A Golden Globe, and many more (IMDb, 2025). This film's success is due to multiple factors: the story, acting, design, and more. Yet, its ability to connect with its audience through tactile animation cannot be overlooked. Animated works will resonate with audiences on a more emotional level because it can be seen, almost felt, that a human being has designed this art.

CASE STUDIES: THE MICHELS VS. THE MACHINES

The practice of tactile animation has leaked into the digital world just as much as the stop frame and mixed media world. There are many instances of films, commercials, and shorts that are made using digital 2D or 3D software that *replicates* the handmade effect of stop motion or handmade animation. The difference between the AI replication and digital artists replication of tactile animation is the artist themselves. Tactile and haptic animation do not exist by definition without the artist. The lack of which leaves Ai with a soulless copy of a soulful technique. One movie that envelops the emotional replication of tactile animation is *The Michels vs. The Machines*. When there is a strong emotion being portrayed on the screen by a digital 3D character, they add a 2D animation that replicates a handmade stop motion style. This style is tied to multiple factors within the film. An established magazine for CG professionals writes, "The film utilizes two different animation styles: an illustrative, hand-painted approach used for the human world, and a slick, realistic approach typical of CGI for the robotic world"

(Moltenbrey, 2021, para. 8). This tactile 2D style is not only seen during the emotive scenes, but it also has ties to the settings in which the characters are inhabiting. It is significant that these moments of tactile animation are tied to the scenes set in the ‘human world’ juxtaposed to the mostly CGI ‘robotic world’. This trend of mixing tactile animation with digital animation is penetrating many different mainstream movies including *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (2022) and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023). Mike Lasker, who also happens to be the visual effects supervisor on *Spider-Verse*, interviewed on his thoughts about *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* states, “It was very artistic and gave the film a home-movie feel, and it helped connect the audience to Katie as an artist” (Moltenbrey, 2021, para. 38). Animators and artists alike are using tactile and familiar styles to help better connect to audiences.



Figure 4

(Deadline, 2022)



Figure 5

(The New York Times, 2021)



Figure 6

(Eddy, 2025)

This attempt to bring in a more classic animation style is prevalent in the shots and scenes where the main character, Katie Mitchell, is portraying strong emotions. In figure 4-6, you can see the 3D character of Katie exhibiting an intense feeling. Whether it be hope, excitement, or

dedication, the character is paired with an overlying 2D illustration. This is meant to convey the humanity – the true sensations that our protagonist is exhibiting. Even if the animation is created digitally, there is still a theme of using tactile animation to accurately portray emotion. There is a true response to the lack of humanity on some digitally created content. Animators and storytellers are attempting to connect to their consumers and the other artists in the industry through imperfect haptics and art. Just as leaders in the industry like Guillermo del Toro, Wes Anderson, Laika, Disney, and Pixar are implementing.

CASE STUDIES: FOREVER GREEN



Figure 7

(Zahed, 2025)

As a final animated reference to support the resurgence of human-made tactile animation, *Forever Green* (2025) is a CG short film that was created to replicate the look of a wooden carved character. The producers themselves spoke on their approach to creating a world and character that felt "tactile and authentically hand crafted" (Animation Magazine, 2025). This

approach has led to a heartfelt character that easily blends with his wooden surroundings. The expressions portrayed by this bear are more nuanced than they would've been if it was a clean, limited animation.

This renewed interest in tactility within contemporary animation practice has diversified the output of the animation industry. Not only has there been more film-festival and critic acclaimed stop frame, handmade animated films, but digitally animated films are also utilizing tactile animation. Artists like Mike Lasker and the writer Walter Benjamin are highlighting the importance of creating and supporting human-made artwork. The aura of an artist is more noticeable than ever in contrast to AI-generated imagery. Visible craftsmanship is not seen as messy or inexperienced, but as contemporary, emotive work. This response to AI has diversified aesthetic strategies and prioritized artistic labor in the content created by animators.

RESPONSE TO DIGITAL AND AI – THE REBUTTAL AND THE FUTURE

AI and digital animation are powerful tools that can streamline creative workflows like never before. It is a new kind of tool, but it doesn't replace human intuition or authorship. Lev Manovich, a well-known theorist, artist, and writer delves into the world that AI is already creating:

We can only talk about fully AI driven culture where AI will be allowed to create the finished design and media from beginning to end. In this future, humans will not be deciding if these products should be shown to audiences; they will just trust that AI systems know best – the way AI is already fully trusted to choose when and where to show particular ads, as well as who should see them. (Manovich, 2018, p. 8)

AI systems are already taking some jobs off the plates of humans. This can be a positive development for many communities and industries if properly vetted and built. The animation industry has already found ways to utilize AI in the more streamlined creation of animation. In a

peer reviewed paper, “Artificial Intelligence in the Creative Industries: A Review” written by Anantrasirichai & Bull (2020), it is found that tedious tasks, like rotoscoping or compositing, can be automated and driven by AI – ultimately leaving the artistic decisions to the artist. In a survey conducted by computer scientists and engineers identifying the uses, benefits, and effects of AI tools in character animation, they found that the time and cost to create animations using AI software is significantly decreased (Abootorabi et al., 2025, p.4-16). AI is being used to generate movement and facial expressions for animated characters. Whether these animated facial expressions are uncanny or human is up for debate. Animators are spearheading the prompts and parameters of these tools to increase competition by making animation more streamlined and accessible. With all technological advancements, there is a cost. Setting aside the loss of jobs and artistic vision that can accompany these innovations in the animation industry, there is also an impact being made on the environment. It is important to remember that AI is a non-human system. Kate Crawford defines AI as, “...not in the cloud – they are on Earth, in data centers, run on coal” (The Atlas of AI, 2021, p. 28). These are costs and problems that need to be considered when implementing this new technology. The godfather of AI himself warns us of the possible and almost unavoidable costs likely to ensue in his poignant and ominous Nobel Prize acceptance speech:

If the benefits of the increased productivity can be shared equally it will be a wonderful advance for all humanity. Unfortunately, the rapid progress in AI comes with many short term risks. It has already created divisive echo-chambers by offering people content that makes them indignant. It is already being used by authoritarian governments for massive surveillance and by cyber criminals for phishing attacks. In the near future AI may be used to create terrible new viruses and horrendous lethal weapons that decide by themselves who to kill or maim. All of these short-term risks require urgent and forceful attention from governments and international organizations... We have no idea whether we can stay in control. But we now have evidence that if they are created by companies motivated by short-term profits, our safety will not be the top priority. We urgently need research on how to prevent these new beings from wanting to take control. They are no

longer science fiction. (Hinton, 2024, para. 3-4)
Even with these warnings, AI is an incredibly valuable tool that cannot be replaced. No matter what we do at this point, it will be a part of our lives. The benefits of AI rely on ethical, sustainable, and human centric guidance. The risks to the environment and social norms of society require active oversight by people and organizations that are not led by financial or political gain. The world of animation is at a crossroads. Depending on the choices we make in the very fast approaching years, AI can either enrich or diminish creativity.

CASE STUDIES: GROTTY CORNERS

Currently, AI can mimic animated work. AI also has the ability to make every other kind of content, genre, and art. Thankfully, it has not replaced human-made animation yet. An artist named Dougy Pledger has been experimenting with AI since April 2023 hoping to delight and disgust his audience (Pledger, no date). Part of his content that truly stands out is Grotty Corners (2024).



Figure 8
(dougy, 2024, 06:34)



Figure 9
(dougy, 2024, 07:30)

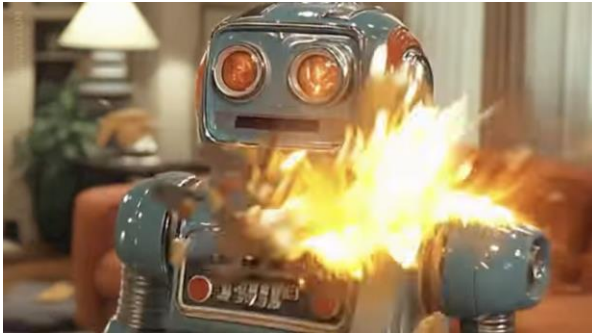


Figure 10

(douggy, 2024, 04:08)



Figure 11

(douggy, 2024, 01:16)

This fast-paced unsettling AI-generated episode shows how human-made animated qualities are being regurgitated. There are instances of special effects that seem messy and disproportionate (see figure 10). This is a skill that practical and digital special FX artists take years to hone and develop. At the moment, AI is only able to make a cheap reproduction of this skill. Yet, it's only a matter of time before it catches up to the human-made ability to make things explode on screen. There are also instances of characters in Grotty Corners that would usually be made with either practical effects or CGI (see figures 8 and 11). As the scene changes, or even within the same shot, there is an odd morphing of the characters on screen. This inconsistency would usually be caught by the human eye and fixed before releasing a film to the public. The point of this experimentation by Douggy Pledger was meant to replicate the nostalgia felt when rewatching TV shows from the 70s. Yet another example of the creeping ability of AI to replace a skill – almost... but not quite. Then there is the mock reproduction of stop motion animation – the puppets and set design are heinously reproduced. In figure 9, you can see the credits title sequence (with nonsensical credit titles – by either the incompetence of the AI machine, or a purposeful joke from Pledger himself). This sequence seems to be a journey

through the intestines of a humanoid specimen, revealing at the end a large cavern filled with more creatures. AI is already getting incredibly close to replicating a scene one would usually see produced by a stop frame animation studio.

The industry has already started to rebel against AI, in more ways than just bringing back the tactile animation. One of the solutions to the problems that AI causes is writing in legislation and guidelines for artists and corporations to use. Aardman, a well known animation studio, who made classic Claymation films like *Wallace and Gromit*, have started to discuss the fear involving the rules that would permit companies to use copyrighted materials unless creatives opt out (New AI rules could spell end for Wallace & Gromit, 2025). Many artists online have started posting their materials with captions and descriptions such as ‘human-made’ or ‘no AI was used in the creation of this’. Other industries have already made some sweeping changes in reaction to the emergence of AI. Artist guilds have started to protect actors against AI usage and misuse following a SAG-AFRA strike. This included a deal named the “2025 Interactive Media Agreement” that included informed consent protocols for AI usage and defending performers careers against AI misuse (BBC News, 2025). For writers, the Authors Guild has implemented some new certifications as well. An online portal was made by the Authors Guild in the US to enable writers to certify that their work is human-made. Now a special logo can be added to their published works to signal their distinction of ‘human-made’ from ‘AI made’ (The Authors Guild, 2025). The beauty of tactile animation and stop motion animation is that the work shown almost always is able to portray the human hands creating it. Arguably, the tactileness of an animation is enough of a ‘human-made logo’. We are seeing a change in the artistic industry. Change that is going to be mediated through legislation and certifications. The future is coming quickly, and we need to decide how to mold it.

FUTURE OF ANIMATION: COMPETITION CREATES DIVERSITY AND ANIMATION IS NOT A GENRE

AI will transform the animation world by sparking fierce competition. From now on, I cannot imagine an industry that will not have polarized views on the use of AI in artistic creation. We must remember that animation isn't a genre; it's a medium. This competition between generated and human-made art will fuel more diverse and exciting work. Xu Yiren, a researcher at the Faculty of Science, University Malaya, found that the animation industry is at risk of losing "distinct directorial style and artistic coherence" with the use of AI, and therefore handmade work might rise in value as a response (Xu, 2025, p. 5). Already there is a cry for handmade, human-made art. While scrolling through social media or browsing for a show to stream, people have been analyzing to determine if the content was AI or human-made. It matters. There is a difference, and most analytical people search for it. Qingke Liu, a PhD researcher in animation-related studies, and Hui Peng, of Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications, both state that "...artificial intelligence will be a powerful creative tool for animation creators, and it is difficult to replace people's aesthetic emotion and rational thinking activities. In the art of animation creation, technology is the approach; animation works are the ultimate goal. The linkage between technology and animation art can achieve the continuous progress of animation creation" (Liu and Peng, 2021, p. 5). AI can accelerate animation production, but emotion and personality in animation come from human decisions. AI will never fully replace handmade or mixed-media work because it just doesn't carry the same feeling. On the other hand, if society stops trying to distinguish between what is AI and human-made, there might be a future where AI animation is the main type of animation and is not seen as less than

when compared to human-made art. By analogy, consider the sewing machine. The fashion industry is a booming artistic scene - and last I checked a dress that is hand sewn is not seen as less artistic than one that is sewn with a machine. Most fashion companies tend to sell textiles sewn by the human hand at a higher price than those mass produced by machinery. These next years are crucial in defining what humanity sees as important in all creative industries. We need to decide what matters to us as a society and as an industry. Will we be a species defined by doom scrolling and mindless content generated by corporations and algorithms with the intent to enslave the minds of the masses, or will we focus on the humanity of art and creation? I understand how people may fear AI. The answer is *not* to ignore it. We need to research and define the scopes at which AI can interact within our lives and our art.

Alan Warburton, a PhD researcher at Birkbeck's Vasari Research Centre for Art and Technology, studied the effects and responses to AI. Warburton states, "I see both sides: the media industries who love the spectacle of new tech, and the culture industries who are much more suspicious and reticent. This polarisation tends to obscure the real issues. And generative AI is here to stay" (Warburton, 2023, 01:09). As we look to the future, there is an uncertainty of which stance to take. Whether to help grow AI, or to restrict it. Either way, an animation industry without AI is almost inconceivable at this stage. Alan Warburton goes on to introduce this idea of 'the futch' (pronounced like the beginning of the word *future*). A play on words for the term future where society focuses on the things technological advances can give them, but not the problems that they also inherently will cause. He goes on to say, "But 'the futch' is flawed. It's often about disruption and consumption rather than construction and consolidation. It's about better screens not bigger pictures, and upgrades not utopias" (Warburton, 2023, 16:07 – 16:38). If the future of AI is left in the hands of corporations and companies that care more about the

immediate profits to be made, rather than a sustainable and human centric future, then AI is likely to become a terrifying entity to be reckoned with.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence can be a tool to help streamline many animation processes, as seen by the studies done in the “Artificial Intelligence in the Creative Industries” review. It creates a platform for accessible creativity and learning. Yet, it threatens the artist and their human-made work. With these advancements come new systems, technologies, and evolving values. Animation is not a genre, but a medium capable of producing a wide range of content. Competition between tactile and digital animation can allow the industry to flourish more than ever before. Already, we have seen how the animation industry reacted to AI by producing more tactile content - whether ‘true’ stop frame, handmade animation or digital animation that replicates the emotive tactile feel of handmade animation. Currently, the animated materials made by AI are still unpolished and identifiable, but it won’t be for long. Grotty Corners is an off-putting representation of what AI is currently capable of, but 3 or 5 years ago the technology was primitive compared to the current abilities shown. Even this paper – the topics and ideas portrayed – will be outdated within as little as a year.

We, as artists and humans, are responsible for guiding these changes. The trend of tactile animation resurging is a direct response to AI-generated content. If we continue to encourage handmade and tactile animation as we have been, I believe there is hope for a future, or ‘fuch’, where AI and human-made work can coexist and diversify the output of the animation industry. Our next steps seem to include passing thoughtful legislation to foster a landscape that supports diverse and innovative work and to mindfully consume content that supports artists. It is a

frightening time to be a creative in this modern age, but we must not lose sight of what is important. Continue to research. Continue to question. Continue to dream.

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For the sake of clarity, it is important to understand how AI was used in the making of this thesis. Early on, I decided to use it only in ways that would help streamline my process. No AI-generated artwork was created specifically for this paper, and no AI was used in the creation of the original concepts, conclusions, or arguments. Beyond that, AI was only used for grammar and spelling support - similar to common spell-check tools like Grammarly. It did not play any role in developing the ideas or arguments about the emergence of AI in the animation industry and its impacts. It is important to take steps to negate the impacts made by AI. It is equally important to not be left behind in this new age.

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