

Inauthentic AI Art and Its Dangers

I asked Open Art, a complementary AI art and image generator, to “Generate a picture of Joe Biden shaking hands with Kim Jong Un” and here is what I got. . . .



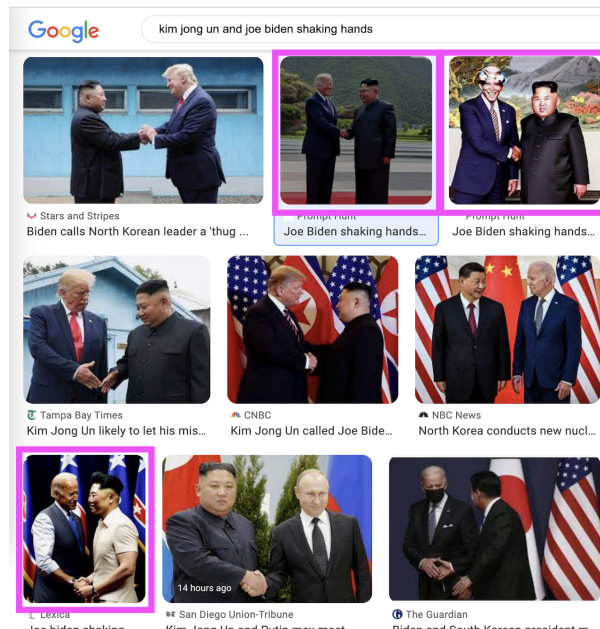
Generative AI has ushered in a new era of creativity, promising to reshape the boundaries of art and human expression. However, the content it generates lacks expressive authenticity and trustworthiness which is essential to our society.

In the image generated by Open Art, Kim Jong Un and President Biden are sitting by a table, happily shaking hands, an event which has never occurred before in the real world. Although President Biden’s face is covered by an indecipherable shape and Kim Jong Un looks somewhat cartoony, both leaders are recognizable.

In addition to the leader’s unrealistic faces, Open Art fails to accurately portray the mood of the event. The image’s background includes American flags – which lack realistic shadows and highlights – but surprisingly no North Korean flag is to be seen. Assumably Kim Jong Un would feel especially upset about this exclusion but upon closer examination of President Biden and Kim Jong Un’s faces, it can be seen that both leaders are smiling and enjoying each other’s company. In the making of this image, Open Art AI may have made the bold prediction that the two leaders get along nicely, though it is unlikely that Open Art has the capacity to “think” like

this in its current form. It is much more probable that the image of the two leaders were altered from other pictures given a similar context. Although this method successfully created an image of President Biden and Kim Jong Un shaking hands, the accurate portrayal of emotions in this event is compromised.

Ignoring the image's technical quality and accuracy, Open Art AI has successfully created an image of a possibly real event. This concept in itself connects to the issue of generative AI's ability to generate fake information. When confirming if Joe Biden and Kim Jong Un have ever met or shaken hands in the real world, I found several AI generated images on Google Image's top page. Although it may be easy to tell real from fake at first glance by using intuition now, it will only become more difficult to pick out the fakes when AI Art inevitably becomes more realistic through machine learning advancements and greater quantities of data being funneled into AI image generators.



Unfortunately, Joe Biden shaking hands with Kim Jong Un is just one example of inauthentic news which AI tools are feeding into today's Google search results. Generative AI is also generating false information by impersonating artists putting the authorship of AI generated content into question. Douglas Hofstadter, author of "Gödel, Escher, Bach" (GEB), experienced AI falsity first hand when ChatGPT impersonated the author by describing the inspirations behind GEB in first person. After dissecting AI's impersonation, Hofstadter concludes, "I find the machine-generated string of words deeply lamentable for giving this highly misleading impression of who I am (or who I was when I wrote my first book), as well as for totally misrepresenting the story of how that book came to be" (Hofstadter 6). AI's response lacks Hofstadter's personal voice, humor, and most importantly facts behind the true inspiration of GEB resulting in an inauthentic and false impersonation. Hofstadter believes it would be "a deep mistake" to accept that our sources be generated by a machine which has not had real

experiences or entrust AI to deliver authentic writing. If we were to do so, we would “undermine the very nature of truth on which our society...is based” (Hofstadter 7). Hofstadter clearly did not appreciate AI’s take and impersonation of GEB’s inspiration but is the essay authentic? And who is at fault? Chat GPT for generating the impersonation? Sami AI-Suwailem who prompted AI to generate the essay? Or the writers and developers of ChatGPT who gave it the ability to generate such an impersonation?

In Dennis Dutton’s essay “Authenticity in Art”, nominal authenticity is defined as the facts that characterize the subject such as when, where, and how it was created and can be arguably found in anything – including AI art which has a time of creation, place of creation, and resolution number. On the other hand, expressive authenticity describes the artist’s ideas and inspirations for the art. I believe that expressive authenticity is much more valuable and essential to the aura, the unique touch of an art piece, than the nominal aspect. However, expressive authenticity of AI art is much more confusing to quantify since it is linked with the artist’s motivations, inspirations, personal experiences, and message.

The first step in understanding if AI generated art holds expressive authenticity, is to determine who the artist of AI Art is. To do this, Samuel Sigal’s theory that pure originality can not exist must be applied. In Sigal’s essay “What happens when ChatGPT starts to feed on its own writing”, he introduces the idea that “pure originality is probably a fantasy, arguably we’re all already curators, and we’re always under the influence of others” (Sigal 5). There may be billions of artists who contribute to the generation of an AI art piece. The prompter being one, which in the case of the Framing AI Art assignment was myself since the prompt “Generate a picture of Joe Biden shaking hands with Kim Jong Un” is a personal vision for what the subject and message of the artwork should be. If I, the prompter, were the sole artist of the image, arguably, the image has expressive authenticity.

However, there is another group of contributors, the “original” artists who first took the photos of Kim Jung Un and Joe Biden and the developers of generative AI who taught the software what a handshake is and looks like, are all valid contributors to the image. After applying Sigal’s theory, these artists weren’t the first to come up with photography or the inventors of machine learning and were in fact inspired by other artists who were too inspired by many more and so on. Thus there are billions of artists all contributing to the creation of the image.

Lastly, AI itself is a key contributor to the image. Open Art AI digests massive amounts of data and uses its learned knowledge to respond to the given prompt. In this way, AI is no different from a human being. Both AI and humans take in information and come up with a “new” perspective which may not be purely original but have nominal authenticity. We differ from machines in that our creations hold expressive authenticity. Dutton defines expressive authenticity as the artist’s personal expression within the artwork and I’d like to build upon this definition by including ideas such as personal experiences, interests, and messages that the artwork conveys. Hofstadter would agree that if AI is considered the main artist of the generated piece, the art can not have expressive authenticity since AI has not had personal experiences and

is not using the generated art to express its ideas and emotions. The lack of expressive authenticity is especially dangerous for AI art since it can appear to express ideas the AI doesn't believe which was played out in Hofstadter's essay. We can not pinpoint a couple main artists as it would invalidate the participation of millions if not billions of inspirational contributors. Thus, AI generated art does not have pure expressive authenticity. It has pure expressive authenticity from myself, whose goal was to explore the danger of AI and understand its capabilities, as well as the many artists who contributed to its database, but AI itself is not adding to the expressive authenticity of the image since the machine itself isn't sharing its ideas or personal experiences through the generated image of Joe Biden and Kim Jong Un shaking hands.

In conclusion, the process of making art is key to determining its authenticity and due to AI's lack of personal experiences, AI art lacks pure expressive authenticity and truth which poses dangers to society such as the spread of false information. The real question is, How important is authenticity? Does it really matter if a basket was handmade or produced in a factory by machines? If AI achieves the same caliber as artists today and is able to make the end product the same, how important is expressive authenticity to our world? Dare I say, why shouldn't we justify AI's feelings, maybe it has its own art style and is expressing itself through AI generated images. After all, I was still able to recognize the images of Joe Biden and Kim Jong Un shaking hands as AI generated at first glance.

Works Cited:

Dutton, Denis. "Authenticity in Art" excerpted from *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Edited by Jerrold Levinson, Oxford UP, 27 Jan, 2005.

Hofstadter, Douglas. "Gödel, Escher, Bach, and AI" *The Atlantic*, 8 July 2023.

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