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Artistic Experience in Creating Visual Works through the AI Art Generator Midjourney

Irwandi[1]*, Raynald Alfian Yudisetyanto[2], Ahmad Fathurrizqi As-Sirry[3]

[1,2,3]Program Studi Fotografi, Fakultas Seni Media Rekam, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta

Corresponding author:
Irwandi
insinyurwandi@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of Generative AI and Text-to-Image Generators has introduced a paradigm shift in art production, challenging traditional notions of creativity and authorship. This study aims to examine the "artistic experience" of creators in the process of producing visual works using the Midjourney platform, specifically within the context of urban photography (portrait, street, and landscape). Employing a qualitative descriptive method, this research utilizes Terry Barrett's theory of photography criticism as a methodological bridge to translate visual elements such as Subject, Form, Medium, and Style into precise linguistic prompts. The findings reveal that while Midjourney can successfully reconstruct the "image logic" of a scene based on text, it introduces a significant "aesthetic deviation." Comparative analysis shows that AI-generated images tend to be hyper-realistic, displaying "more mature" color tones and a cinematic polish that often removes the raw, authentic grit found in human-captured urban photography. Furthermore, the study identifies a "framing effect," where direct comparison paradoxically heightens the appreciation for human creativity. The research concludes that the integration of AI into the creative process does not eliminate the artist but fundamentally shifts their role from a technical operator of visual machinery to a linguistic architect. In the urban creative ecosystem, this implies a new form of literacy where the ability to articulate visual concepts textually becomes as crucial as the ability to capture light, democratizing artistic creation for urban society while raising new questions about the ontology of authenticity.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; artistic experience; art generator

ABSTRAK

Pengalaman Artistik dalam Menciptakan Karya Visual melalui Generator Seni AI Midjourney. Kemajuan pesat AI Generatif dan Generator Teks-ke-Gambar telah memperkenalkan pergeseran paradigma dalam produksi seni, menantang gagasan tradisional tentang kreativitas dan kepengarangan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti "pengalaman artistik" para kreator dalam proses menghasilkan karya visual menggunakan platform Midjourney, khususnya dalam konteks fotografi urban (potret, jalanan, dan lanskap). Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini memanfaatkan teori kritik fotografi Terry Barrett sebagai jembatan metodologis untuk menerjemahkan elemen visual seperti Subjek, Bentuk, Medium, dan Gaya ke dalam petunjuk linguistik yang tepat. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Midjourney dapat berhasil merekonstruksi "logika gambar" suatu adegan berdasarkan teks, ia memperkenalkan "penyimpangan estetika" yang signifikan. Analisis komparatif menunjukkan bahwa gambar yang dihasilkan AI cenderung hiper-realistis, menampilkan nada warna yang "lebih matang" dan polesan sinematik yang sering menghilangkan kekasaran dan keaslian yang ditemukan dalam fotografi urban yang diambil oleh manusia. Lebih lanjut, studi ini mengidentifikasi "efek pembingkaian," di mana perbandingan langsung secara paradoks meningkatkan apresiasi terhadap kreativitas manusia. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi AI ke dalam proses kreatif tidak menghilangkan seniman, tetapi secara fundamental

menggeser peran mereka dari operator teknis mesin visual menjadi arsitek linguistik. Dalam ekosistem kreatif perkotaan, ini menyiratkan bentuk literasi baru di mana kemampuan untuk mengartikulasikan konsep visual secara tekstual menjadi sama pentingnya dengan kemampuan untuk menangkap cahaya, mendemokratisasi penciptaan artistik bagi masyarakat perkotaan sekaligus menimbulkan pertanyaan baru tentang ontologi otentisitas.

Kata kunci: kecerdasan buatan; pengalaman artistik; generator seni

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) technology has undergone significant development and has penetrated various aspects of human life. Artificial intelligence, better known as AI, is a field of computer science that focuses on creating systems and tools that are capable of imitating and performing tasks traditionally associated with human intelligence, including problem solving, understanding, learning, pattern recognition, and interaction. Here are some examples of how AI is implemented in various sectors of human life: *first,* public administration uses AI to improve public services by providing technology-based services in the form of applications that are capable of automatically replying to chats, processing documents, and analyzing data as material for policy making. *Second,* in the legal field, AI is used to streamline the drafting of legal contracts and also reduce the risk of bias in legal decision making. *Third,* AI has the potential to revolutionize the world of education by providing effective learning experiences. AI is also used to develop and compile a curriculum based on student needs (Bangsa et al., 2025). AI has also penetrated the world of creative arts and is capable of creating inspiring works. The use of AI in the creative arts will be the focus of this study.

The history of AI use in the arts began in the early 1960s when researchers experimented with computers to create works of art. Michael Noll, a computer engineer from Bell Labs, successfully created a computer program capable of creating geometric patterns similar to the artwork of Piet Mondrian. In today's digital age, the use of *artificial intelligence (*AI) technology in the creation of visual art has become more popular, especially with *the text-to-image art generator* method. This technology allows artists to quickly and easily create realistic and complex works of art based on specific keywords or *prompts*. The transformation of the medium and the digital platform ecosystem in Indonesia has accelerated the circulation of creative content, while also encouraging the trend of cinematization in various media formats (Sari et al., 2025). These changes have not only affected consumption patterns, but also created significant socio-economic consequences for those involved in the creative industry. Adapting to the dynamics of the platform is crucial for art creators to maintain the relevance and economic value of their work in an increasingly competitive market.

One of AI Art Generator platform that focuses on developing creative text-to-image art creation technology is Midjourney. Midjourney platform users have also experienced a dramatic increase in recent years since the release of its open beta version in 2022. The Midjourney platform provides a new alternative for creating visual artworks with faster results compared to doing it manually, as well as producing realistic and creative visual works for its users. Midjourney is capable of influencing the idea exploration stage and prompt formulation strategy in design practices and processes, integrating generative models such as (Zhou & Lee, 2024).

The process of creating photos with a text-to-image AI art generator through keyword/prompt input involves several stages, including: 1) Inputting keywords/prompts, where users can enter keywords/prompts to be used as input for creating photos. These keywords can be visual descriptions of the desired image. The AI platform will then process the image; 2) After the keywords/prompts are entered, the generative AI art model will process the image and generate a new image that matches the visual description of the keywords.

This research will test and evaluate the resulting photo, particularly the extent to which the work matches the visual description of the keywords entered. It will examine the technical and creative factors required in using Generative AI technology. The evaluation will be conducted by comparing the photo work with s created directly by humans.

This research will provide deeper insights into how AI influences artists' creativity in creating works of art, as well as the ethical challenges associated with the use of AI in creative arts. The results of this research can be a reference for artists, researchers, and technology developers to improve the use of Generative AI in creative arts ethically and effectively.In the context of urban society, the democratization of art creation through AI offers new opportunities for city residents. The barrier to entry for documenting or visualizing urban life is lowered; one no longer needs expensive camera gear, but rather 'prompting literacy'. This shifts the urban creative landscape from being exclusive to equipment owners to being inclusive to those with narrative ideas.

This research is of critical importance because Generative AI technology is increasingly being used in creative arts and digital content in general. However, there has been little research conducted to understand the artistic experience of creating art through AI, as well as the ethical challenges associated with the use of this technology. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the artistic experience of creating art through AI, how AI influences artists' creativity in creating art. This can help artists and technology developers to improve the ethical and effective use of AI in creative arts. In addition, this research is also urgent in order to provide further understanding of the impact of generative AI technology in creative arts on society and culture. In some cases, the use of AI can spark controversy and damage the integrity of artwork, thus requiring research to deepen our understanding of the social and cultural impact of deep fake AI in creative arts. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to improve the ethical and effective use of AI technology in creative arts, as well as to contribute to our understanding of the impact of this technology on society and culture.

2. Literature Review

Nowadays, AI has become a major subject of scientific research in various disciplines. AI-related technologies have developed rapidly in recent decades, greatly influencing the fields of science, philosophy, and art. The debate regarding human-made or machine-made creations is often discussed by scientists and artists, but the public tends to view AI-made works as lacking in creativity and dismiss them as not involving human intervention (Millet et al., 2023). Technology has brought significant changes to the process of creation and also to art education, which is the main focus of this study.

Based on the researchers' literature search, there are previous studies related to this research. The first is a study by Cetinic and James entitled Understanding And Creating Art With AI: Review And Outlook, published in 2021 (Cetinic & James, 2021). This study attempts to analyze the use of AI in the process of creating digital art. ECetinic and James reflect on humanistic values in viewing the development of AI technology in digital art. The study also attempts to reveal issues in the use of AI in art, both in terms of ethics, copyright, and the originality of digital art.

Next is a study by Thanh Thi Nguyen, Quoc Viet Hung Nguyen, and Dung Tien Nguyen entitled Deep Learning for Deep Fakes Creation and Detection: A Survey, published in 2022 (Nguyen et al.,

2019). This study attempts to explain the technical workings of various AI platforms in reconstructing and creating ideas or concepts provided by humans. In this study, Thanh Thi Nguyen et al. describe various applications that offer the creation of visual art using AI, and discuss the various algorithms and technologies used in AI platforms to create visual art. By reviewing the background and working system of Deep Fake, this study attempts to provide an overview of the process of creating a digital photographic work produced using artificial intelligence mechanisms and how to detect a visual work created using AI.

3. Methods

This study uses several methods to obtain the results, namely:

A. Literature Review and Data Collection
   A literature review was conducted to find the workflow of creating photos through AI. The literature review will be conducted on scientific publications and popular articles discussing AI and the visual world. The data used in this study are photographs of humans taken directly and photographs produced using Midjourney generative AI. The data collected will be taken from various sources such as the internet or by taking photos yourself.

B. Identification of Keywords/Prompts
   The keywords/prompts used in the Midjourney generative AI platform to generate photos will be identified through the use of the platform. The use of the platform will be repeated several times with variations in keywords/prompts.

C. Generative AI Model Creation
   The AI Art model will be created using the Midjourney platform with the previously identified keywords/prompts.

D. Model Testing and Trial
   The created AI art model will be tested by comparing the generated photos with photos of humans taken directly. The photos generated by both methods will be assessed based on the results and the similarity between the original photos and the AI generated photos.

E. Data Analysis
   The model testing data will be analyzed using statistical methods to understand the differences between photos taken directly and photos generated using Midjourney. The analysis results will then be used to identify the most effective keywords/prompts for generating realistic photos with generative AI technology.

The research process in examining artistic experiences in using Midjourney involves a number of steps that allow artists to explore concepts and play with elements of words to produce creative visual artworks. This description will discuss the steps in this research process.

First, this research began by searching for as many references and scientific publications as possible that discussed the creation of creative artwork using Midjourney. This initial step was important in order to gain a good understanding of how the Midjourney works in producing artwork, as well as how to use the it correctly and effectively so that it can produce the desired artwork.

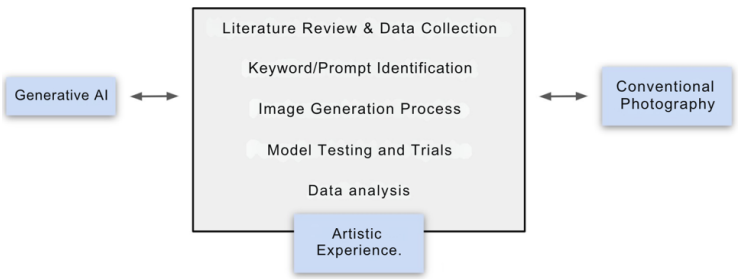


Figure 1: AI artistic experience research chart

After that, we searched for various references to works art creative that were created using the AI Art Generator 'Midjourney', which gave us an idea of the platform's potential and inspired me with existing works of art. The Midjourney platform has a Community Showcase that displays various works created by its users.

The next step in the research process is to develop a draft of the topic or theme of the work that will be used as research material. The agreed-upon topic or theme of the work is then communicated to the research participants. The participants then create photographic works based on the agreed topic or theme, namely photographic works with the themes of street scene photography, portraiture, and landscape. After obtaining the photographic works from the participants, the researcher attempts to compile keywords or prompts based on the description of the participants' photographic works using Terry Barret's theory of photo criticism, which can be found in his book "Criticizing Photographs" (Barret, 1988).

1. Describing photos
2. Interpreting photos
3. Evaluating photos

There are eight important elements for describing a photo:

1. Subject
2. Form
3. Medium
4. Style
5. Comparing/contrasting
6. Internal and external information
7. Description and interpretation
8. Description and evaluation

After obtaining data in the form of formal analysis of several participants' works, the research continued by processing the data into a prompt or keyword that could be accepted by MidJourney. In creating keywords or prompts, several alternatives were made for comparison and also translated into English to obtain more accurate visual works.

The final stage of this research is to test the model and also conduct trials by comparing photographic works produced by humans using cameras with photographic works produced by the Midjourney based on input keywords or prompts. Photos produced by both methods will be assessed based on the results and similarities between the original photos and the AI/generative AI regenerated photos.

4. Results

A direct comparison between AI and human works actually increases the perception of human creativity, a phenomenon called the framing effect. This finding is important for curatorial approaches, as the arrangement of an exhibition can influence the audience's assessment of artistic value. The right presentation strategy can strengthen the appreciation of human work while providing context for the role of AI in art (Horton et al., 2023).

In the comparison of the first *portrait* photography work created by the participant, it shows a man in his 30s wearing glasses and waiting for his goods at the market. The atmosphere of the market can be seen from the foreground and background in the photo, which shows a scale and traditional market goods. The man is posing sideways with a broad smile, revealing his teeth. What has been described above is then processed in the description of the work using Terry Barret's theory to obtain the following keywords or *prompts*:

A man shows his smile with his teeth visible. He works at the market wearing gray clothes and a white cloth on his shoulders to wipe away sweat. In the background are his merchandise, which at first glance appear to be cooking spices in red packaging and some staple foods such as potatoes. The background is slightly blurry because the focus is on the human subject. Natural light, 18mm focal length, f/12.

Participant **AI**

Figure 2: Comparation portrait photography

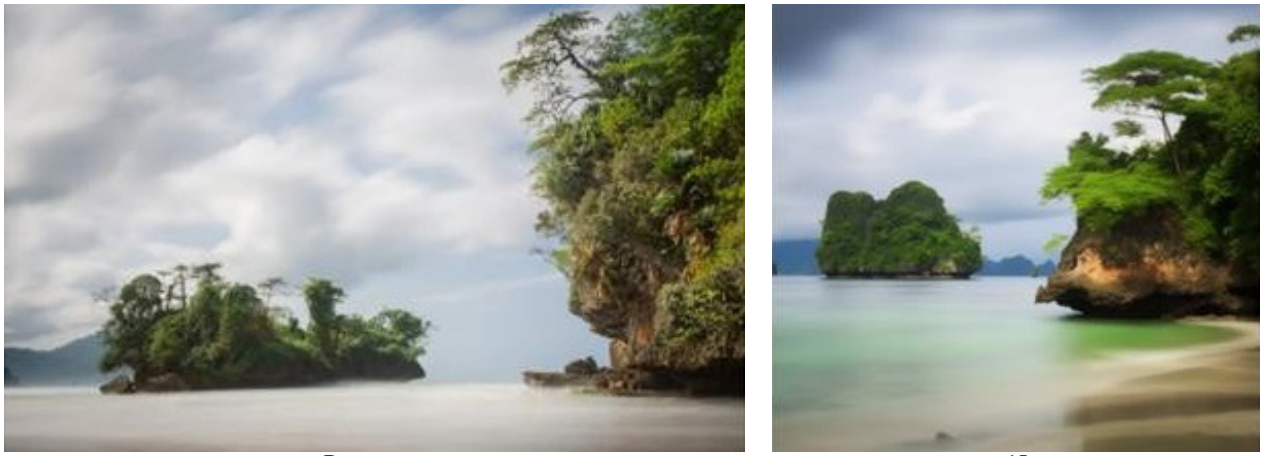
Based on the prompt above and inputted into the AI Art Generator MidJourney platform, it produced a work that can be seen in the image on the right. From the visual work produced, there is a fairly high percentage of similarity. The main object, a man posing with a smile, is well visualized, although there are some differences in the details of the face and the clothes worn. However, an important note in this study is that the visual work visualized by the MidJourney AI Art Generator platform can fulfill the image logic conveyed in the keywords or prompt. The environment surrounding the main object, which is a traditional market, is also well depicted and at first glance appears to be a photographic work created using a camera, and the main object also looks like a real human being, not like a painting or hyper-reality animation.

Table 1: Comparation portrait photography

Comparative Aspect	Human Photography (Participant)	AI Generation (Midjourney)	Analysis & Aesthetic Deviation
Subject & Visual Description	A man in his 30s wearing glasses, posing sideways with a broad smile revealing his teeth, waiting for goods at a traditional market.	The main object is well-visualized as a smiling man with glasses, consistent with the prompt description.	**Image Logic:** The AI successfully fulfill the "image logic" conveyed in the keywords. The subject looks like a real human, not a painting or hyper realistic animation.
Context & Background	Features a scale and traditional market goods (spices in red packaging, staple foods). The background is slightly blurry to focus on the human subject.	The environment is well-depicted; the background merchandise resembles the description of spices and staple foods.	**Detail Variance:** While the atmosphere is captured, there are differences in specific details of the face and the clothes worn compared to the specific human subject in the photo.

In comparison, the second landscape photograph shows a natural scene on the coast, surrounded by karst cliffs covered with green coastal vegetation on the right side of the photo. In the middle of the photograph is an island surrounded by the sea and covered with coastal vegetation. In the background, there is a sky covered with thick white clouds and, in the distance, a range of mountains can be seen lined up far behind. This description is then formulated into a keyword or prompt that is entered into the MidJourney AI Art Generator platform, resulting in the following prompt:

A landscape image of a beach with karst rocks covered in vegetation on the right side and a small island surrounded by seawater in the center. The small island is covered in green vegetation. A cloudy sky serves as the background of the photo. On the left side, there is a backdrop of dark green mountains. The photo uses



Participant **AI**

Figure 3: Landscape photography work

low-speed technique, resulting in smooth water and clouds. Natural light is used, with a focal length of 18mm and an aperture of f/12.

This comparison shows how the prompt or keyword entered into the MidJourney AI Art Generator is able to effectively visualize the images created by participants using their cameras. Objects described in words can be visualized and produce a fairly high level of similarity. The arrangement of the visualized objects is also quite good in line with the input prompt.

Table 2: Comparation landscape photography

Comparative Aspect	Human Photography (Participant)	AI Generation (Midjourney)	Analysis & Aesthetic Deviation
Subject & Visual Description	A beach scene with karst rocks covered in green vegetation on the right, a small island in the center, and a mountain range in the distance.	The AI visualized the objects described in words (island, vegetation, mountains) effectively.	**Arrangement:** The arrangement of the visualized objects is quite good and aligns accurately with the input prompt logic.
Technique & Atmosphere	Features a scale and traditional market goods (spices in red packaging, staple foods). The background is slightly blurry to focus on the human subject.	The environment is well-depicted; the background merchandise resembles the description of spices and staple foods.	**Similarity:** This comparison demonstrates a fairly high level of similarity between the human creation and the AI visualization based on the text prompt.

Participant **AI**

Figure 4: Comparation street photography

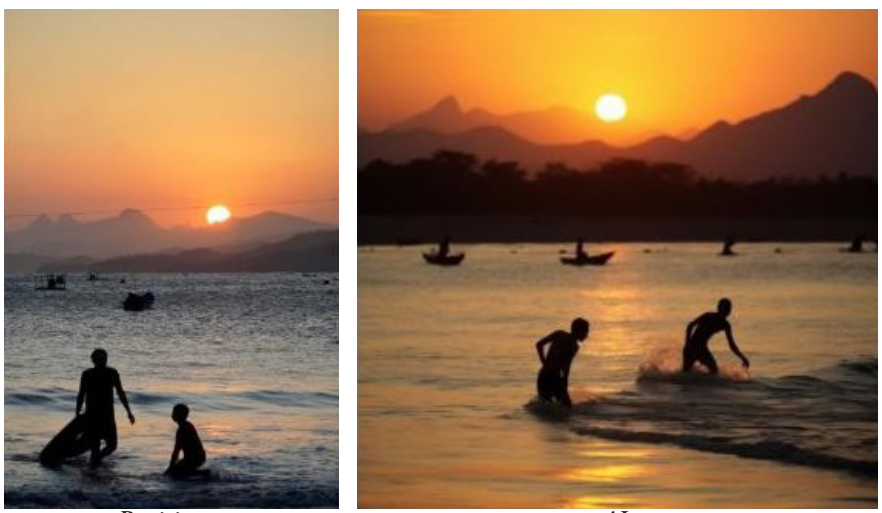
In the third participant's work, a middle-aged man wearing white clothes is seen riding his old bicycle from the left side of the image to the right, passing through a shopping area as seen from the folding doors and the atmosphere of the street he is passing through. There is a mural attached to the wall with writing that cannot be read clearly. This streetscene-style photograph is in black and white. Based on this description, the following prompt was created:

A middle-aged man wearing a white shirt rides an old bicycle from left to right. The background of the photo features folding doors and a mural on the wall. In the foreground is a stretch of highway. Using black and white photography, focal length 17mm, f/5.0. Using natural light.

By comparing the participants' photographic works with the results of the prompt input into the MidJourney AI Art Generator, it can be seen that the inputted prompt successfully visualized the photographic work. The main object is well depicted, although there are some differences, such as the type of bicycle and the shape of the building that forms the background of the work. However, the atmosphere created by the MidJourney AI Art Generator is close to that of the participant's photographic work. The black and white tones are also similar to the participant's original work, although there is a slight exaggeration in the work generated by the AI.

Table 3: Comparation street photography

Comparative Aspect	Human Photography (Participant)	AI Generation (Midjourney)	Analysis & Aesthetic Deviation
Subject & Visual Description	A middle-aged man in a white shirt riding an old bicycle from left to right. Background shows folding doors and a mural on the wall.	The main object is well-depicted, capturing the action of riding a bicycle and the white clothing.	**Object Interpretation:** There are differences in the specific type of bicycle and the architectural shape of the building in the background compared to the real location.
Style & Tone	Black and white photography using natural light.	Produces a black and white image with similar tonal values to the original work.	**Exaggeration:** While the atmosphere is close to the original, there is a slight **aesthetic exaggeration** in the black and white tones produced by the AI.



Participant **AI**

Figure 5: Comparation landscape photography

The fourth participant's work is a landscape photograph depicting dusk on a beach, showing the silhouettes of two people playing on the shore and several boats that have not yet docked. The background

of this work is a mountain range visible in the distance, with an orange sun beginning to set between the mountains. In this image, the participant used a specific camera model, namely the Nikon D850. Based on this description, the following keywords or prompts were compiled:

The silhouette of a group of people playing in the water at sunset on the beach, taken with a Nikon D850 camera, streetscene style, orange and gold colors, with a mountainous landscape in the background.

A comparison between the fourth participant's work and the results of the prompt entered into the MidJourney AI Art Generator shows a high degree of similarity between the photograph taken by the participant and what was visualized by the MidJourney AI Art Generator. This includes both the atmosphere depicted and the details of the objects in the foreground and background. There are only slight differences in the color tones produced by the MidJourney AI Art Generator. The work produced by the AI displays more mature colors compared to what was produced by the participant's camera.

Table 3: Comparation landscape photography

Comparative Aspect	Human Photography (Participant)	AI Generation (Midjourney)	Analysis & Aesthetic Deviation
Subject & Visual Description	Silhouettes of people playing in the water and boats at dusk. Background features a mountain range with an orange sun setting.	The AI visualized the atmosphere and details of objects in the foreground (silhouettes) and background (mountains/ sun) with high accuracy.	**High Similarity:** This case shows a high degree of similarity between the photograph taken by the participant and the AI visualization.
Color & Mood	Captured with a Nikon D850, featuring specific orange and gold colors of a natural sunset.	The AI generated similar color palettes but with a distinct difference in tone quality.	**Mature Colors:** The deviation lies in the color tones; the AI-produced work displays "**more mature colors**" (more saturated/ polished) compared to the raw output from the participant's camera.

5. Discussions

Aesthetics as a study of art philosophy is inherent in a person's view of a work of art (Dharsono Sony, 2004). In the creative process, artists strive to communicate ideas through works or objects of art to the public. The public who enjoy and evaluate these works will give diverse assessments, depending on their background, experience, and aesthetic preferences. The public's view of a work is the result of a dialogical interaction between the artist and the art lover through the medium of the work itself. If a work does not receive recognition from the art public, then it risks being forgotten and losing its relevance.

John Dewey, in his book Art as Experience (John Dewey, 1951), classifies artistic experience into two categories: artistic experience (art of production) and aesthetic experience (perception and enjoyment). Artistic experience focuses on the creative process, including the artist's subjective involvement in creation, while aesthetic experience relates to the public's appreciation and enjoyment of the work. Jacob Sumardjo asserts that the essence of art lies in the artistic experience of the artist themselves (Sumardjo, 2000).

Referring to Dewey's Art as Experience, Generative AI shifts the 'art of production' from a somatic experience (holding a camera, waiting for light) to a linguistic/cognitive experience. The artist becomes a writer/director. The artistic struggle is no longer about ISO or Shutter Speed, but about diction and syntax in the prompt.

In the context of this study, the discourse surrounding artificial intelligence-based art is still dominated by discussions of the final results of the work, while studies on the creative process and artistic experience behind it are relatively limited (Elgammal et al., 2017). Therefore, this study seeks to explore three main

aspects: (1) the artistic freedom provided by AI; (2) the influence of AI on the creativity of artists; and (3) the prompt formulation strategies used to produce photographic visual artworks. This study is also part of a roadmap for ongoing research on the use of AI art generator technology in creative art creation.

Regarding artistic freedom, AI creates a paradox: it offers unlimited visual iterations (freedom) but binds the artist to the dataset's logic (limitation). The artist loses total control over specific details (like the exact shape of the bicycle in the street scene). For creativity, AI acts as a catalyst for 'imagined reality,' allowing urban artists to visualize scenes that may be impossible to capture physically, thus expanding the boundaries of urban documentation. Does this threaten the authenticity of urban documentation? AI-generated street photography presents a 'simulacra' of the city it captures the idea of the city, not the event. Therefore, in the urban society's arts, AI serves not as a documentary tool, but as an interpretative tool.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the result of a long journey in human technological development. Terminologically, Artificial Intelligence is composed of the word Artificial, which means something that is deliberately created or produced by humans to imitate something that is natural. *Intelligence* comes from the Latin word *intelligo*, which means "I understand," which was absorbed into English as the word *Intelligence* or can be interpreted as the ability to understand and apply knowledge (A.S Hornbay, 2018). Etymologically, Budiharto defines artificial intelligence as a field of computer science that encompasses how humans know, understand, predict, and manipulate things that are larger and more complex than ever before (Budiharto, 2014). The history of human civilization has always developed in line with the development of technology created by humans. Artificial Intelligence is one of the technological breakthroughs that has had a systemic impact on human civilization. Artificial intelligence limits humans in terms of personal choices (Bullock, 2019). However, this very limitation is what compels a profound adaptation, pushing humanity to evolve its modes of interaction and creation. In the realm of art, AI, particularly through text-to-image generators, challenges humans to master a new form of visual literacy, requiring them to articulate ideas and imaginations not with brushes or cameras, but with descriptive language. This process, facilitated by applying theoretical frameworks like Terry Barrett's photo description theory, enables the creation of a precise visual language. Artists must now craft prompts that act as detailed blueprints, instructing the AI to generate outputs that align as closely as possible with a envisioned reality. Despite the technological intermediary, this intricate process of conceptualization, iteration, and refinement remains a deeply human and artistic experience, ensuring that the creator continues to undergo a genuine artistic journey, mirroring the *"art of production"* described by Dewey.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that the artistic experience in the era of Generative AI has transformed. The artist's role in the urban creative ecosystem has shifted from being a technical operator of visual machinery to a linguistic architect. While AI democratizes visual creation for urban society, it introduces an 'aesthetic gap' where authenticity is traded for hyper-realistic perfection. The limitation of this study lies in the lack of deep ethical examination; however, it paves the way for future research on the ontology of 'synthetic' urban photography.

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