Mermaid Art Centre – Policy For Use Of AI Art

What is Generative Artificial Intelligence?

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) is a form or forms of artificial intelligence that creates new content, including text, images, videos, audio, 3D models, and computer code.

Like Large Language Model Artificial Intelligence (LLM AI), Gen AI draws on what it 'learns' across any or all of the digital universe it can access in order to create new media or content.

AI models extrapolate and learn patterns from this existing data. It will create outputs that resemble or emulate the data they are trained on. Users can ask the model to create content by imposing a set of parameters, or prompts, to make the 'new' work.

Our concern surrounding the use of Gen AI to make artwork in this way relates to how it accesses its source learning material. AI models are trained by consuming the data they are given. This may include, and is not confined to:

- Legally protected and copyrighted works
- Original art where the creator has not granted permission for it to be used to train AI
- Images existing in the Commons where usage permissions pre-date the advent of AI

Human biases and ethics are also part of this diet of data. Consequently, no AI can be deemed impartial, nor is it generally possible to interrogate its methodology when creating content.

Environmental Impact

We also recognise the significant detrimental environmental impact of AI. This is due to the energy necessary to fuel the computing power that is needed. The volume of power also means that there is a huge demand on the water required to cool servers and the electrical infrastructure to prevent overheating and maintain optimal operating temperatures.

In June 2026, the UN warned, "Artificial Intelligence is not only responsible for worrying amounts of earth-warming greenhouse gases: the technology's environmental footprint is also expanding at a pace that could strain the planet's natural resources."

In Ireland, despite ambitions to generate 80% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, EirGrid projects that data centre demand will continue to climb, potentially reaching roughly 31% to 35% of Ireland's total electricity demand by the mid-2030s.

Our Policy

Mermaid Arts Centre therefore does not accept visual art works that are substantially or fully generated by Gen AI. This includes media of all forms, including photography, video, illustrations, paintings, drawings, prints or 3D works.

However, this policy does not preclude the use of AI assisted tools which might be employed to facilitate making work. Examples of such tools include Adobe Photoshop, Midjourney or Leonardo.AI, where human creative input and physical effort are the primary driver when making the work.

We adopt this policy in order to continue to champion and protect the rights of artists to make work, and support the right for our audiences to avail of original, human made work through our programme.

We do ask that artists using any AI assistive tools observe and respect this policy and are:

- Fully transparent regarding AI use to assist in the making of work
- Do not infringe on any Copyright or Intellectual Property Rights
- Reduce AI usage or seek alternative tools in order to reduce the AI footprint

Developed by Anne Mullee, Gallery Curator

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