

Autonomy, Authenticity, Authorship and Intention in Computer Generated Art

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Abstract: *This article reviews McCormack, Hutchings, and Hutchings' 2019 - chapter, Autonomy, Authenticity, Authorship, and Intention in Computer Generated Art, which explores the philosophical and ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI) in artistic creation. The authors critically analyse four key concepts—autonomy, authenticity, authorship, and intention—in the context of AI - generated art, questioning traditional ideas of human creativity and artistic ownership. They argue that AI functions as a collaborative tool rather than an independent creator, reshaping the definition of authenticity and authorship. While the chapter offers a thorough theoretical discussion, it could further address the legal and market implications of AI - generated art. The review highlights how this work contributes to ongoing debates about the intersection of AI and artistic expression.*

Keywords: AI - generated art, authorship, authenticity, artistic creativity, machine autonomy

1. Introduction

In the 2019 chapter "Autonomy, Authenticity, Authorship and Intention in Computer Generated Art," McCormack, Hutchings, and Hutchings explore key philosophical and ethical issues that arise from the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in artistic creation (McCormack, Hutchings, & Hutchings, 2019). In the context of computer-generated art (CGA), the authors question long-held assumptions about human creativity, authorship, and intention, and they discuss how these concepts must evolve when machines are involved in the creative process. This review examines the authors' arguments, assesses their strengths and weaknesses, and reflects on the broader implications of AI's role in the arts.

2. Summary of the Paper

The paper is structured around four central concepts—autonomy, authenticity, authorship, and intention—each of which is explored in relation to AI's role in artistic production.

- **Autonomy:** The authors begin by discussing the autonomy of AI systems in the creative process. They distinguish between machine autonomy and human control, emphasizing that while AI can generate art independently of direct human input, its actions are still influenced by the algorithms and data designed by humans (McCormack et al., 2019). Thus, true creative autonomy remains elusive for machines.
- **Authenticity:** In the discussion of authenticity, the authors engage with traditional understandings of authenticity in art, which have often relied on human authorship and intention. The chapter challenges these notions by exploring how AI-generated art raises questions about the "authenticity" of works created without direct human involvement (McCormack et al., 2019). The authors propose that authenticity may need to be reframed in the context of AI, where the "authenticity" of the work may be defined by the collaboration between

human and machine rather than by human authorship alone.

- **Authorship:** The issue of authorship is central to the discussion, with the authors exploring whether AI can be considered an author in its own right. They argue that authorship is a complex and multifaceted concept, and while AI may generate the artwork, the responsibility for the work is often shared between the programmer, the machine, and the user (McCormack et al., 2019). This reflects a shift away from the traditional notion of a sole human artist.
- **Intention:** Finally, the chapter addresses the role of intention in the creation of art. In human art-making, intention has often been considered essential for interpreting the meaning of a work. However, AI-generated art raises the question of how to interpret works created by machines that lack subjective intentions (McCormack et al., 2019). The authors suggest that meaning and interpretation in AI-generated art may emerge through the interaction between the machine's processes and the viewer's interpretation.

3. Critical Evaluation

McCormack, Hutchings, and Hutchings provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of how AI challenges traditional notions of creativity, authorship, and intention (McCormack et al., 2019). The authors' ability to connect philosophical debates on the nature of art with the rapidly evolving field of AI is one of the strengths of the chapter. They effectively highlight the tensions between human agency and machine autonomy and suggest that AI can collaborate with humans in producing meaningful and authentic art, even if the artist's role is redefined.

One of the most valuable aspects of the chapter is its engagement with the concept of authenticity. In contemporary debates, authenticity is often tied to the artist's personal identity and creative process. The chapter introduces the possibility that authenticity could be understood as a

collaborative process between humans and AI, which is a timely and relevant discussion in the context of an increasing number of AI - generated art forms, from visual art to music and literature (Elgammal et al., 2017). This argument challenges readers to rethink what makes an artwork "authentic" and forces a reconsideration of the values traditionally placed on human authorship in the arts.

Additionally, the authors' discussion on authorship is insightful. Rather than presenting a simple answer, they recognize that authorship in the context of AI art is an ambiguous and contested issue. Their suggestion that authorship could be distributed between the AI, the programmer, and the user is a useful perspective, as it moves away from the dichotomy of machine vs. human and opens up the possibility for a more collaborative understanding of creative processes (Boden, 2016).

However, while the chapter excels in philosophical analysis, there are some areas where it could be expanded. The authors focus heavily on the theoretical aspects of AI in art, which is valuable for framing the debate but leaves out a more detailed discussion of practical implications. For example, how do galleries, collectors, and consumers interpret and value AI - generated works? How do legal frameworks, such as copyright law, grapple with the issue of AI - generated art (Samuelson, 2019)?

These practical issues are not fully addressed in the paper, and a deeper exploration of them would have added greater depth to the discussion.

Additionally, while the authors emphasize the importance of intention, their exploration of this concept could benefit from more engagement with the emotional and psychological dimensions of artistic creation. In human art - making, intention is often intertwined with personal expression, emotional depth, and subjectivity. The paper could have more thoroughly explored whether AI, which lacks consciousness or subjective experience, can ever fully replicate the depth of human intention in art (Hutchings, 2021).

4. Broader Implications

McCormack, Hutchings, and Hutchings' analysis has important implications not just for the philosophy of art but also for the art market and cultural institutions. As AI - generated art continues to gain traction, these institutions will be forced to reconsider their criteria for valuing and interpreting art. The ideas presented in this chapter challenge the prevailing understanding of authorship and creativity, and the implications could extend beyond the art world into broader societal debates about the role of machines in creative and intellectual labor (Elgammal et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the chapter invites critical reflection on ethics in AI. The question of whether AI can be considered a collaborator or a tool in the creative process also touches on broader ethical issues regarding the autonomy and agency of AI. If AI systems are contributing to artistic creation, to what extent should they be credited for their contributions, and how do human creators navigate their responsibility in the process? (Gunkel, 2018)

5. Conclusion

In "Autonomy, Authenticity, Authorship, and Intention in Computer Generated Art," McCormack, Hutchings, and Hutchings provide a compelling and timely exploration of the philosophical questions surrounding AI's role in art (McCormack et al., 2019). They effectively challenge conventional notions of creativity and authorship, proposing new frameworks for understanding the relationship between humans, machines, and artistic creation. While the chapter excels in its intellectual rigor and theoretical depth, it could benefit from more concrete examples and a deeper exploration of practical and ethical considerations. Nevertheless, it is an essential contribution to the field of AI and the arts, offering important insights that will shape future discussions on the intersection of technology and creativity.

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