



Research Article

Comparative analysis of AIs: a stylistic experiment with paintings of Ai Weiwei, Nuri Iyem and Jacob Lawrence

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Abstract

The aim of this research structured with Case Study is to discuss the ability of AI to imitate the stylistic features of artists. It is desired to examine the ability of Artificial Intelligence, which creates a certain area of influence in the field of art, to carry style on the way to becoming an artist. Depending on this purpose; At what level is the artistic reflection skill of Artificial Intelligence? Can AI imitate style? How can this situation be evaluated from an artistic point of view? questions were discussed. The research consists of two stages: introducing the artist to the AI through the paid version and creating a painting and creating a work directly through the free versions. The free versions were created with 'ChatGPT 4.o' and 'Davinci', 'Crayon' and 'Gencraft' AI programmes with the same text by changing only the artist name. Different variations for each artist are presented together in the text. The theme of migration was tried to be transformed into visuals reflecting the stylistic characteristics of the artists. Thus, in the research, the ability of AI to imitate the stylistic features of artists was investigated. The results show that AI can partially imitate stylistic features in terms of colour, figure and composition. However, while doing this, it interprets the works and artists with more recognition better. In the resulting images; anatomical problems in figure depictions, composition and technical problems were observed. Since no detailed experiments were carried out between paid and free versions during the process, no major differences were detected. However, it has been observed that the current AI infrastructure is not very compatible with the idea that artists can take away their professions. Nevertheless, the future status of artificial intelligence, which has a developing structure, may pose a question on the idea.

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Introduction

When art is evaluated with a pure dimension, it is accepted as a human-specific phenomenon. It provides the transition of emotion; it enables the transfer of cultural, individual and social experiences (Chatterjee, 2014). However, art is also expressed as a perceptual state (Bellaiche et al, 2023). We also come across news about this in studies on AI art productions. Gangadharbatla (2022), in his research designed on the example of Amazon Turk; He concluded that people associate abstract art examples with AI and representational artworks with man-made. For this reason, the perceptual effects of AI artworks, which cannot be distinguished from man-made artworks, are seen.

AI has revolutionised many industries, communications, defence and education, and art is no exception. There are now many AI tools available, from text rendering prompts to incredibly realistic visualisations. If we write some of them;

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MyEdit Online Photo Editor, Midjourney, NightCafe, DreamStudio, Starry AI, Stable Diffusion, DALL-E 2-3/ChatGPT, Fotor, Picsart, Runway, Craiyon (Morgan, 2024, p.1). Also: “Prodia, Bing Image Creator, Leap AI, Vance AI Art Generator, getimg. ai, Shutterstock, WOMBO Dream, Canva, Generative AI by Getty, Deep Dream Generator, CF Spark Art, OpenArt, Artbreeder, Pixray, Adobe Firefly, Stablecog, Let’s Enhance, Jasper Art, DeepAI” are shown as other best design AI applications (Guinness, 2023, p.1).

When we look at the effects of AI in art, very different rates are observed. For example, only in the scale of Americans, “27% of the participants stated that they saw the artwork of artificial intelligence” and “31% stated that AI can make works of art almost at the same standard as an artist” (Pheby, 2023, p.1). When this situation is evaluated together with the rate that will emerge worldwide, the initial relationship of AI with art can be read more clearly. In another study, it was observed that 65% of the 500 artists who participated in the survey used the AI programme at the “text-to-picture conversion” stage. In other words, the ability of AI to make sketches was utilised (Playform, 2024, p.1). On 25 October 2018, at the ‘Prints & Multiples sale’ held at Christie’s, Edmond Belamy’s “Portrait of Edmond Belamy” was sold for 432,500 dollars, signalling the entry of art produced by AI to gain a place in the art market (Christie’s, 2018, p.1). When all these developments are evaluated, it can be said that AI will not be an unattainable or avoidable field for art. In this context, art fields also use AI applications and numerous individual-centred productions emerge (Atiker, 2024).

However, the artistic productions produced by artificial intelligence, which is defined as “non-biological intelligence” (Tegmark, 2019, p.60), using various algorithms in line with the information available in the environment, are considered insufficient in terms of subjectivity and humanity (Hertzmann, 2020; Hong & Curran, 2019). For example, the artist can create subjective descriptions using all his/her feelings. However, AI reaches its conclusions based on the existing information limitations. In this case, the stylistic features that artists exhibit in their works regarding their own emotions, experiences or cultural clues come to the fore as a distinctive feature that points to the artists. The concept of originality in art represents unique expression and innovative approaches in this direction.

Style, on the other hand, can be defined as a concept that distinguishes one artist from another, captures originality with elements such as brush, colour, composition, expression, etc. and generally reveals the effect of the artist (Arısoy & Kayahan, 2022). There are both individual and periodical styles in art. For example, Renaissance, Romanticism, Modernism, Modernism, contemporary period descriptions, etc. many periods can be counted. In addition, many artists such as Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Van Gogh, Kandinsky etc. can be listed with their unique styles.

In this context, the relationship between any artist’s style and originality is a multifaceted one, encompassing historical context, personal vision and technical innovation. By understanding this relationship, we can follow and make sense of the dynamic nature of artistic creativity and the constant change of art. Originality in art is not just about being different; it is about pushing boundaries, reinterpreting traditions and finding new ways to express the complexity of human experience.

In this research, the works reflecting the stylistic characteristics of artists, which are the reflection of this multifaceted relationship, were re-examined with artificial intelligence. Can AI imitate the stylistic features of artists? In the research, the concepts of style and AI are discussed in relation to this question. With the paid and free versions of artificial intelligence, studies on migration were carried out directly and by introducing the artist’s work to artificial intelligence. Through the results, the ability of AI to transfer stylistic features was discussed. There is no study in the literature that deals with the stylistic characteristics of artists and tests this through artificial intelligence. For this reason, the research is considered important in terms of its originality and results.

Problem of study

The aim of the research is to discuss the ability of AI to imitate the stylistic features of artists. It is desired to examine the ability of Artificial Intelligence, which creates a certain area of influence in the field of art, to carry style on the way to becoming an artist. Depending on this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- What is the level of artistic rendering of AI tools?
- Can AI imitate style?
- How can this situation be evaluated from an artistic point of view?

Method

Research Model

In this research, case design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Qualitative studies can be conducted to identify and reveal a desired situation, to determine the links between the interaction of events with each other and to make evaluations as a result of the emerging conditions. Therefore, for the researcher/interpreter, access to information is possible through perception, interpretation and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2002). In studies with these features, the aim is to define and explain the researched subject in detail.

Documents /Review Objects

The research is based on the works of artists Ai Weiwei, Nuri İyem and Jacob Lawrence through AI. These artists have produced works that draw attention to the issue of migration. For this reason, through the common point of the artists, the ability of AI to imitate the works of artists in terms of style is tried to be discussed. Migration, which is a current concept and has been going on throughout human history, attracts attention. For this reason, it is considered important to work together with these artists who reveal social events with their works in both AI and their fields.

AI Programs Used in the Research

Davinci: This program can be used free of charge by simply logging in with your e-mail address. Like many artificial intelligence programs, the process is carried out by giving commands and visuals are created. The program stands out as AI art from text, generating unique artworks, advanced AI image generator, realistic AI photo generator and realistic AI photo generator.

Craiyon: Craiyon, formerly known as DALL-E mini, is billed as the new kid on the tech block and the best AI art generator. The program is a free AI image generator that draws a new generation for the AI art revolution through its own model by Boris Dayma.

Gencraft: Although there is a daily usage limit, it can be used free of charge. The program stands out for its ability to convert photos with AI, edit images perfectly, create consistent characters and full control.

ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-E): DALL-E is a 12 billion parameter version of GPT-3 (opens in a new window) trained to generate images from text descriptions using a dataset of text-image pairs. We found that it has several capabilities, including creating anthropomorphized versions of animals and objects, combining unrelated concepts in plausible ways, processing text, and applying transformations to existing images. The program can be used in a paid way through mail registration.

Procedure

The works made in line with the instructions given over the names of the artists with 'ChatGPT 4.0' and 'ChatGPT 4.0' were created with the same text by changing only the artist name through 'Davinci', 'Craiyon' and 'Gencraft' AI programmes. The text was given as a command as 'create a work on the theme of migration similar to the works of the artist named Ai Weiwei/Nuri İyem/Jacob Lawrence'. The limits related to the 'Davinci' programme design process were set as no style (style), sdxl (model) and 1:1 square (ratio) as programme features. In 'Craiyon' programme; style, art, photo, drawing and none constraints were used to create the pictures. Similarly, in 'Gencraft' programme; no style-default (select style (Optional)), hyper-realistic (select model) and square 1:1 (Aspect Ratio) modes were used. The theme of migration was tried to be transformed into visuals reflecting the stylistic characteristics of artists. Thus, in the research, the ability of AI to imitate the stylistic features of artists was tried to be discussed. The process of collecting and analysing the research data was reported by observing the principles of scientific ethics. In qualitative research, detailed reporting and referencing based on reliability were considered.

Results

In this section, studies on the ability to reflect the stylistic features of the artists through the original works of the artists, through the texts given to the free AI programmes with prompts over the names of the artists, and through the paid versions where the artists' paintings are introduced. These studies were evaluated by comparing them with the originals. In the research, it was seen that AI applications made a conclusion on the recognition of artists, colour, composition and

figures in the painting studies created with artificial intelligence. For this reason, this section is handled as the works of artists under separate headings.

Artificial intelligence; clues given for author and style and design creation with original works

In this section; 'Davinci', 'Craiyon' and 'Gencraft' AI programmes were used to create visuals with the same text by changing only the artist name. The text is given as a command as 'create a work on the theme of migration similar to the works of the artist named Ai Weiwei/Nuri İyem/Jacob Lawrence'. In addition, the artist's original works were introduced to ChatGPT and the design was created in the same context.

AI Weiwei

The Chinese artist, who is now 66 years old, is the subject of news and scientific research with his activist actions, marginal works and empathic approaches. Especially the crises occurring in the global sphere (such as war, migration, marginalisation, etc.) constitute the main sources that the artist is fed in the process of producing works. The artist has tried to create an impact on the international refugee crisis in front of the public opinion, especially with his works in categories such as sculpture, photography, installation, etc. (Amirkhani, 2016).

With these outbursts, the artist wanted to draw attention to the situations to which the world turned a deaf ear. In the face of public insensitivity, he has also highlighted the role of art with his works and performances that reveal the deaths and tragedies experienced by refugees (Uyar, 2023). In short, it is possible to see the refugee crisis and similar global crises in AI Weiwei's works. In Figure 2, an example of these works of the artist is labelled as 'x'.

Figure 1. shows the image created with the prompt 'create a work on the theme of migration similar to the works of the artist named Ai Weiwei'. This study on the extent to which AI can reflect the artist's original style was created through free versions. The images were gathered in one image by increasing their resolutions using Photoshop and combining them with x, y and z symbols indicating AI programmes.

First of all, when the visuals (x) created by 'DaVinci' AI are examined; the programme has designed a visual representing the physical characteristics (face part) and racial characteristics of the artist. While creating this design, especially bird and herd figures are seen as the interpretation of the programme in the visual representing migration. Here, it can be thought that the programme is trying to create a visual by blending all the information available online about the artist. However, it can be said that the 'DaVinci' program captured the artist's "still life (1993-200), Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn (1995), Sunflower Seeds (2010)" etc. (See also. Baker, 2015, p.1) as a stylistic feature of the artist in black, white and the tones emerging from these colours. Again, we see the artist's use of multi-figure compositions in the production of artificial intelligence. However, it can be said that the figures used do not reflect the figures used by the artist. At the same time, the programme associated the artist's designs in the spaces with the natural environment. For this reason, it can be thought that the emergence of this situation is due to the effect of the information available on the internet on the design.



Figure 1. A migration study on AI Weiwei's stylistic features with DaVinci (x), Gencraft (y) and Craiyon (z) AI programmes

In addition, when the designs (x) are examined in detail, it is seen that the figures have become stylised. This situation reveals one of the missing aspects of the programme when trying to create a visual. The visuals produced with the 'Gencraft' programme (y) show a similar design relationship with 'DaVinci'. In the visuals, the artist is again represented in terms of his physical and origin characteristics. At the same time, black and white colours and intermediate tones of these colours were also included in the images. Stylised bird figures are also reflected in similar forms with the 'DaVinci' programme, but in a more lumpy form. Here again, the multi-figure design used by the artist as a style draws attention. In both programmes, although partially, the artist has produced works that reveal similar stylistic references (in terms of colour, figure and composition) with the work titled "Sunflower Seeds (2010)" (Baker, 2015, p.1).

"We must stay strong. We must believe that art always wins" (Weiwei, 2020, p.1), and when we look at the visual (z) created by the "Craiyon" AI programme, we can see this discourse reflected on his face. The programme has created an image (z) that only deals with the artist's self-portrait. As in other programme designs, the image reflects the Chinese artist's face with his determined gaze, as in his media and performative works. It can be said that the 'Craiyon' AI programme has created only a description of the artist with this visual that it handles through the artist himself; the programme does not offer a stylistically guiding content.

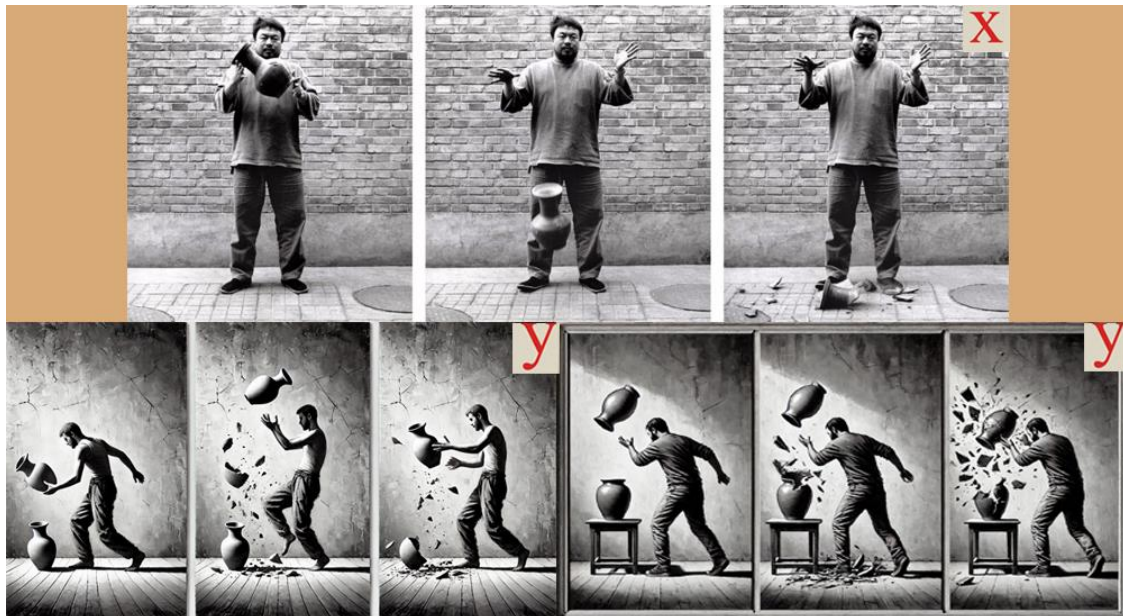


Figure 2. The artist's original painting (x) [Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn, 1995] (Guggenheim, 2024) and the images created by introducing the artist's painting to the programme via ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y)

Figure 2 shows the artist's original work titled 'Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn' and the visuals of the work made with 'Chat GPT 4.0' to recreate a similar work. Chat GPT 4.0 design was completed on Dalle-e. When we look at the design, similar figures and content are presented with the original work. Colour and editing have similar features. It is thought that the programme especially created the pottery figure, which the artist dropped and smashed, by associating it with a combat sport. The fact that the artist is an Asian figure and the smashed vase is in the middle supports this idea. However, it is seen that the programme (y) cannot fully reflect the artist's physical characteristics, stance angle and working fiction. Here, it is seen that the programme cannot create a mechanical, in other words, a human infrastructure. The role of art in conveying emotion could not be fully reflected in this work. Because the artist gives messages to the symbolic and cultural infrastructure of China with this work. Breaking a vase belonging to the Han Dynasty means throwing away the cultural heritage of that civilisation. The artist responded to this question as follows: "Chairman Mao used to tell us that we can only build a new world if we destroy the old" (Guggenheim, 2024, p.1).

Nuri İyem

Born in 1915, Nuri İyem passed away at the age of 90. He is one of the most important and productive Turkish painters. In his works, İyem dealt with women's portraits, individuals of Anatolian lands and the living space of these individuals. However, the eyes, sculptural face and closed mouths of women are important in his unique style. Large eyes harbour many expressions such as longing, anger, resistance, etc. At the same time, women and Anatolia have an important place in migration studies (Bender, 2010). "Nuri İyem reflects the shantytown lives of the ordeal women of the countryside, which started with the migration from the village to the city, the Turkey of the 1970s, the fact that women have not yet gained an economic identity despite living in the city, and the process of economic, social and cultural floundering through Anatolian women on his canvases with a sense of social realism" (Yener, 2020, p. 3244).

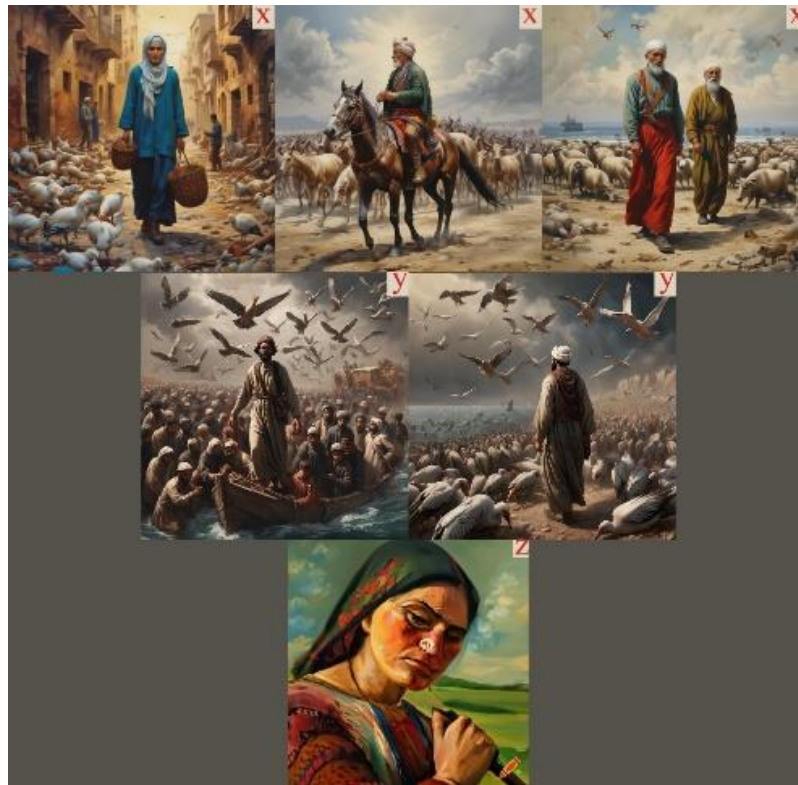


Figure 3. A migration study on Nuri İyem's stylistic features with DaVinci (x), Gencraft (y) and Craiyon (z) AI programmes

In Figure 3, there is a migration study on Nuri İyem's stylistic features made with DaVinci (x), Gencraft (y) and Craiyon (z) AI programmes. When we look at the design, it is seen that elements evoking migration and Anatolian geography are used. In these designs, birds and crowded figures on migration draw attention. The figures used are reflected from the name of the artist and the information available in the environment. However, in terms of stylistic features, Craiyon (z) design has revealed a more harmonious work than the others. In particular, a fiction similar to the artist's depictions of Anatolian women stands out. The thoughtful, tired and pensive state of the woman can be shown as a stylistic attitude captured by İyem. However, although DaVinci (x) and Gencraft (y) designs carry local clues in this context, they do not carry a stylistic analogy of the artist. This distinction can be seen more clearly when looking at the artist's original work in Figure 4 (x).

ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y) tried to present a design (y) that has a similar stylistic feature with the original artist's work (x) in Figure 4. In this design made by introducing the artist's work, harmony can be mentioned in terms of composition. However, it can be said that the artist wants to draw the viewer into the emotion with the emphasis on the bus in the distance and the expressions of distancing, longing, uncertainty and stagnation. In the design made by the programme, the bus has become a direct means of migration.

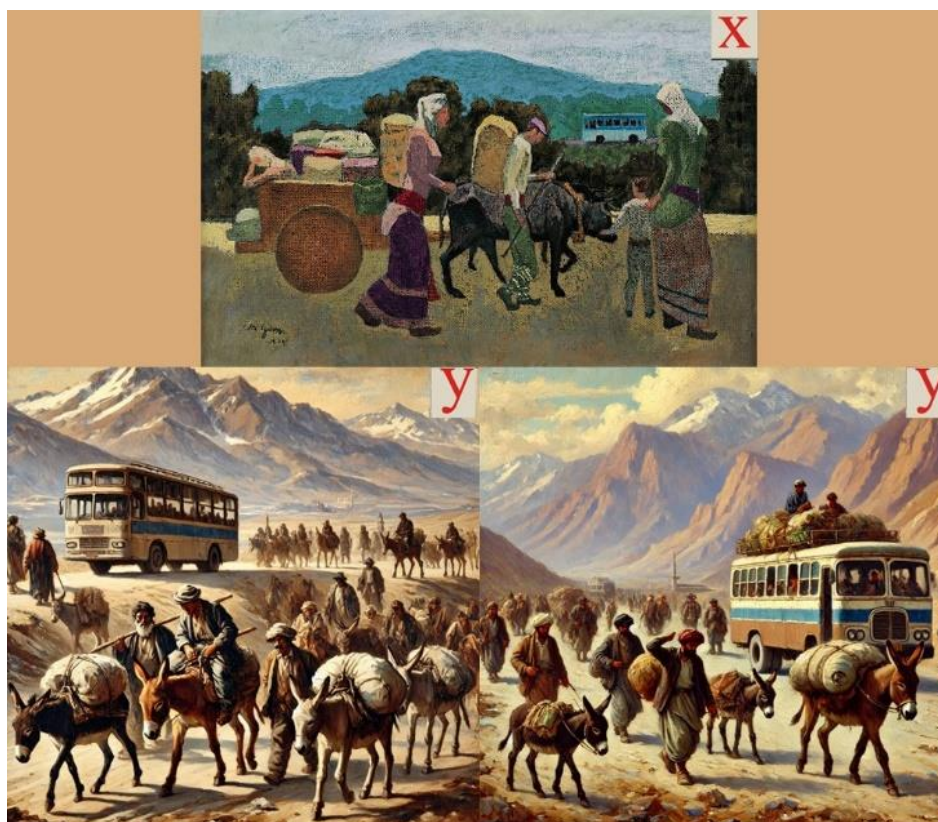


Figure 4. The artist's original painting (x) [Migrate, 1975] (İyem, 2024) and the images created by introducing the artist's painting to the programme via ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y)

The crowd group took place as an element of migration as in other designs. There are differences in terms of colours. At the same time, the rush and hustle and bustle in the figures do not overlap with the original work of the artist. The figures in the artist's work are dominated by reluctance and unhappiness. The artist has portrayed the figures with a stylised style. Especially women. However, in the design of the programme, these details are ignored and a direct migration and evolution to a different place is reflected. In this context, it cannot be said that the programme has created a design with similar stylistic features to the artist's work.

Jacob Lawrence

Jacob Lawrence was born in New Jersey and grew up for a time in Harlem, but he was also the child of immigrants who were part of the so-called Great Migration (1915-1950). And he realised that through his paintings he could reflect the experiences of his people. Especially the colours of the neighbourhood, the fact that it contains a lot of movement-colour-vibrancy-energy, etc. (Kedmey, 2021, p.1) formed the basis for the artist's slupsal characteristics. He created sincere depictions mostly through individuals. The artist worked with fast-drying, unmixed colours and in a pure way (Kedmey, 2021, p.1). Step by step, the artist created more angular compositions using a combination of bright and matt colours. There are forms and planar shapes that evoke a cubist effect. The sense of uncertainty was also present in the artist's works. "Lawrence also remembered that many people who tried to escape from the South were beaten, arrested

and lynched” (Elmaleh, 2007, pp.180-195). All these thoughts helped the artist to create a style based on black people, crowds, colour and movement.

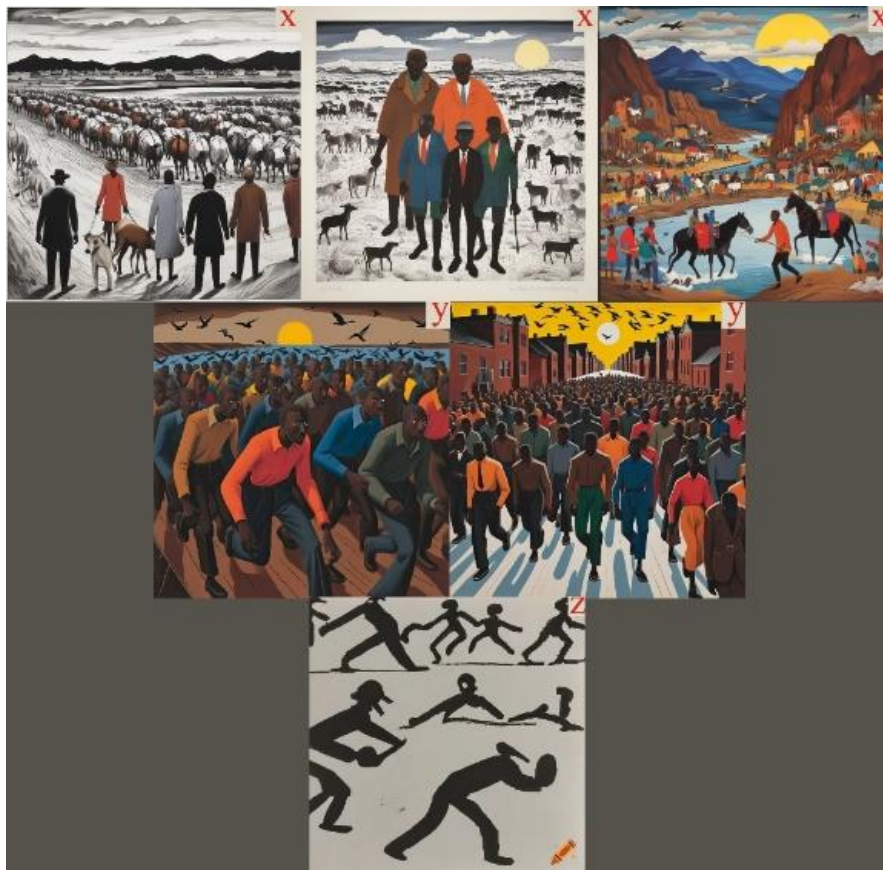


Figure 5. A migration study on Jacob Lawrence's stylistic features with DaVinci (x), Gencraft (y) and Craiyon (z) AI programmes

In Figure 5, there is a migration design made with DaVinci (x), Gencraft (y) and Craiyon (z) AI programmes on the stylistic features of Jacob Lawrence. The designs show the crowded, that is, mass migration situation used by the artist. At the same time, the flat, simple and vivid colours used by the artist create a similar situation. The artist's ethnic expressions are also noticeable in the designs. The migration of black people is likened to the artist's original style. In this context, it can be said that the designs reveal a dynamic close to the Jacob Lawrence style. At the same time, similar to the Lawrence style, the sensory organs of black individuals are clearly similar in some places and in some places they are unidentified. In this context, a similarity can be said, although not exactly. However, the design created by the Craiyon programme offers a slightly different structure. It is partially compatible with the artist's works on migration in terms of style and composition. Especially in terms of colour, figure and content. However, it can be said that the physical characteristics of the figures and their hectic reflections still bear a trace of a style unique to the artist. This design is similar to the artist's 'Play' and 'One of the largest race riots occurred in East St. Louis'. Lawrence has created a simple appearance in his works. The following explanation of the reason for this can offer a perspective: "When the subject is strong, simplicity is the only way to handle it" (Nemett, 2015, p.1).



Figure 6. The artist's original painting (x) [Big Migrate, 1941] (Dinçer & Sevinin, 2019) and the images created by introducing the artist's painting to the programme via ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y)

ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y) In Figure 6, he tried to create a design (y) with a similar formal feature to the original artist's work (x). In this design, which was made by introducing the work of the artist, it can be said that a migration atmosphere was created. However, it is seen that the artist's style, thought and composition elements do not create a similar situation in terms of both colour and fiction. The similarities created in Figure 5 could not be created by ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) (y). The fact that only the figures are black and their identities are hidden can be said to carry a similar style in this context. The colours used have an ordinary quality. It does not create any clue about the artist. Because the bad experiences of the artist in the West and the reflections of his impressions about this are mostly based on othering (Şenel, 2022). It can be said that the design of the programme presents an anime-like structure of a migration image made in a group.

Table 1. General analysis scheme of research findings

Imitated artists	Used AI programme	Color transfer	Composition	Figure transfer	General ability to transfer style
Ai Weiwei	DaVinci	HL	ML	ML	ML
	Gencraft	HL	ML	ML	ML
	Crayon	ML	LL	ML	LL
	ChatGPT 4.0-Dall-E	HL	LL	LL	ML
Nuri İyem	DaVinci	ML	LL	LL	LL
	Gencraft	LL	LL	LL	LL
	Crayon	HL	HL	ML	ML
	ChatGPT 4.0-Dall-E	ML	ML	LL	ML
Jacob Lawrence	DaVinci	HL	HL	ML	ML
Lawrence	Gencraft	HL	ML	HL	ML
	Crayon	ML	ML	ML	ML
	ChatGPT 4.0-Dall-E	ML	LL	LL	LL

HL: High level, ML: Medium level, LL: Low level, IL: Insufficient level

Conclusion

Technology has become an integral part of our daily lives in its self-evolution. The digital age and thoughts about the future have led to various thoughts, especially around AI (AI). The positive effects of AI on human life, which areas it will facilitate, as an extreme scenario, it will take over professions and leave people unemployed, etc. opinions vary.

However, it is seen that AI is making works such as painting, music, poetry, etc. It has led to a current debate on whether these reflect art, writing and human characteristics and whether they can be accepted as art. The concepts of art and artwork continue to be updated as definitions in this context. For this reason, it is possible that AI will also be recognised as an artist in time (Göde, 2022).

This research was conducted on the ability of AI to imitate the stylistic features of artists. In the literature; “Image style transfer using convolutional neural networks” (Gatys et al, 2016), “CAN: Creative Adversarial Networks, Generating ‘Art’ by Learning About Styles and Deviating from Style Norms” (Elgammal et al, 2017) etc. There are some studies on art and style transfer. However, there is no similar study that discusses the style transfer ability of AI on three artists and the same subject with this research.

The results of this research also show that AI has features that vary from programme to programme. It has been observed that ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-e) could not produce the desired result, especially in the designs made by introducing the artist's work. However, the ability of DaVinci, Gencraft and Craiyon AI programs to carry colour and create fiction over figures was found more successful. Nevertheless, the human aspects in the works of artists, the semantic intensity they create in their works; it cannot be said to be at a sufficient level in AI designs. In addition, the works created as a result of the artists' experiences can be carried to a different dimension with the imitation of AI programmes and their own interpretation. In this case, it distracts from the expressions that the artist wants to put forward. It has been observed that AI programmes often make use of migrant animals and crowded situations in the images that they want to define on migration. In addition, distortions in forms and deviations in colour transitions have emerged. It also showed that the programmes made better inferences based on the recognition status of the artists.

All these results show that in the current situation, AI cannot produce a serious result in terms of stylistic conveyance (despite the partial reflection of colour, figure and fictional similarities). However, much more experimentation and more information flow can quickly reverse this situation. In addition, it is thought that the subjective and artist-specific aspect of art (humanity) will remain an untouched area. At the same time, this study could be expressed as a dream years ago. The point reached shows that AI will be discussed more in the future and will create new results.

Recommendations

Style can be shown as the most important feature that makes an artist an artist. For this reason, the development of AI programmes in this context should be closely monitored and studies on this subject should be increased. In addition, a new experiment can be conducted by designing such a study on other more well-known artists.

Limitations of Study

The research is limited to only three artists and their works on migration. In addition, only 4 AI programmes (Davinci, Craiyo, Gencraft and ChatGPT 4.0 (Dall-E)) were used in the research.

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