

# AI's Creative Frontier

Executive Summary  
Summer 2023

## INTRODUCTION

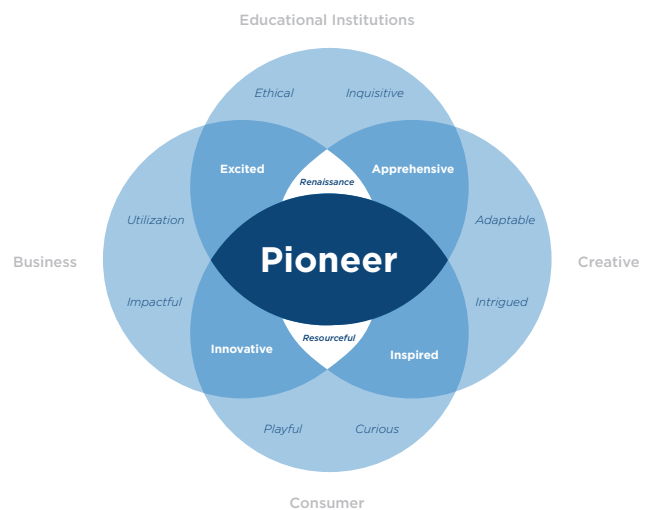
Gen Z possesses a remarkable opportunity to define AI's ability to engender positive change. SCAD students in a research-based industrial design course have identified five areas of opportunity to adopt this technology in an ethical and productive way – all to benefit creative freedom and power.

Over ten weeks Andrew Botkin (user experience design), Giovanni Lares

(advertising and branding), Fletcher Leese (user experience design), and Gunnar Schmehl (industrial design) conducted primary and secondary research on the possible impacts of AI on the creative industry and its future. They emphasized, "It is up to creatives to find how to implement [AI] into the culture in a positive way."

## METHODOLOGY

- 10+ weeks
- Collected 400+ data points via
  - Primary and secondary research on possible impacts
  - A cultural probe on current/developing AI
  - Seven one-hour interviews with artists, educators, national industry leaders
  - Other data e.g., U.S. legislation on AI
- Categorized data points into sections of interest
- Identified patterns of perception
- Mapped opportunities for positive adoption and impact
- Created guidance to ethically and productively interact with AI



*AI impacts four different groups in the creative industry. This graph highlights the main relationships, characteristics, and emotions of each group toward AI and each other, as discovered through student research.*

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND INSIGHTS

The initial research turned into pointed questions that allowed the students to hone their ideas for ways creative industries could interact with and develop AI and AI-driven applications.

### **How will AI, as a force multiplier, affect the scope of creative projects?**

AI can generate aesthetic images at an unprecedented pace, allowing smaller tech companies and freelancers to expand their range. This has the potential to massively restructure leadership and dynamics in creative spaces.

### **How does designer use of AI impact how they explore ideas and add value?**

AI helps designers explore a wider variety of ideas, which enhances their creative process, problem-solving skills, and cultural research.

### **How does individually catered content impact consumers?**

With AI evolving to seamlessly

imitate humans, the general public may not notice the impact.

### **How do designers choose what tools to adopt as AI revolutionizes problem-solving and boosts workflow through new insights and agencies?**

When properly integrated, AI blends with systems and technologies to compound returns. Creatives who track and harness AI development will stay ahead of the curve. For example, AI combined with additive manufacturing creates radical, hyper-efficient designs and manufacturing processes.

### **How can AI be regulated to best serve people?**

Without legal precedent in the U.S. regarding copyright law and AI-generated similarities to non-consenting artists' work, the landscape remains uncertain. For now, no one can claim copyright to AI-generated artwork.

## Creatives who track and harness AI development will stay ahead of the curve.

## RESULTS

By combining these questions with their research, the students, “uncovered opportunity spaces that people on all levels of the industry can take in order to adopt this technology in an ethical and productive way that will benefit creative freedom and power.” The findings cover a wide range of possibilities creatives have to employ or guide the direction of AI.

### **1: Educate Employers on the Value of Creatives**

AI cannot replace the human touch found in specialized craftsmanship. Although AI can generate aesthetic images at an unprecedented pace, the scope of creative works will expand to meet competition and allow tech-savvy creatives to produce more niche content, resulting in a more diverse and

dynamic art space. In large-scale industries, properly trained creative professionals will add value by applying proper aesthetic context to imbue objects with meaning, connecting with consumers on a deep level.

## 2: Redefine Creative Education

AI radically changes how creative education is defined and where value lies for prospective creative students. Most people expect fine arts to employ heavy physical craftsmanship that produces objects with elevated value and place in culture. Like the Arts and Crafts movement's response to the Industrial Revolution, a response to technology could drive more people to seek authenticity and human touch in artmaking. Outside of fine art, digital and professional creative education should lean into developing problem-solving, leadership, communication, and aesthetic mastery in order to effectively harness AI.

## 3: Democratize Artists

AI decentralizes and democratizes art aesthetics, impacting consumers of art and entertainment in two ways. It eliminates the barrier of learning an artistic skill to achieve aesthetic expression, which allows the artistically hesitant to create, adding diversity to creative narratives. People who consume entertainment will have access to wider choices and experiences uniquely catered to their personalities in ways that amplify their connection. AI expands the range of creators and creations.

## 4: Define Technological Literacy for Designers

AI creates a multiplicity of efficient solutions, from package delivery to engineering. In the creative sphere, AI-driven tools are being developed to minutely analyze the human experience, such as reactions to environments and behavior. Artists who understand meaning and emotion can marry these skills

with AI in positive directions for progress and humanity. It is vital for artists and designers to learn and understand scientific developments with AI to position themselves as leaders who can apply the technology where and how it is most meaningful.

## 5: Set Precedents

AI use has no legal precedent in terms of copyright in the U.S. This creates an opportunity to productively discuss and guide AI ethically, legally, and humanely. Creatives must unite to promote progress and human innovation in concert with justice in order to manage the implications of AI now and in the future.

.....

These AI insights were researched and created by Andrew Botkin (user experience design), Giovanni Lares (advertising and branding), Fletcher Leese (user experience design), and Gunnar Schmehl (industrial design).

.....

SCADask is an applied research unit of the Savannah College of Art and Design that generates timely research at the intersection of commerce, creativity, and culture. *To learn more, or to partner with SCADask, contact [research@scad.edu](mailto:research@scad.edu).*