

Data Baroque

Will the impact of artificial intelligence on human life become a pressing issue within the realm of artistic creation, too? Already, AI is capable of generating imitations based on catalogues of humanmade art. These AI-produced works are increasingly regarded as art, with AI even substituting for specific steps of existing production processes. Yet, looking at these AI creations, there is an undeniable sense that something is lacking. Is AI inherently deficient in the concept of art, or are we merely awaiting a technological breakthrough?

Let's consider the connection between AI and board games. Games like chess, go, and shogi have defined rules, finite states, and clear outcomes. Machines trained on vast datasets of past games are purportedly capable of predicting the best possible move at every turn, forecasting several hundred million plays. Undoubtedly, professional players who train with such machines possess a different understanding of the game than in the past. Expert players are said to intuitively grasp the state of a game as a two-dimensional "shape." Combining this human instinct with the immense volume of AI's predictive calculations, the timescale of a player's cognitive ability expands exponentially. But what exactly is data when it comes to the production of art?

For simplicity, let's break down the categories of artistic data into the production process, the artwork itself, and the critical context. Among these, data on individual production processes is glaringly lacking. Artists themselves are often to blame for concealing this information until the waves of history wash it away. Yet without insight into the production process, which embodies the individual artist's perspective, AI is limited to perceiving art only as something to observe. It is akin to playing a game of go or shogi without memory of previous games. Art is not only about looking—it is also about creation, which means that data on the various individual production processes is, in fact, essential.

Unlike games, art has no explicit rules, no finite states, or obvious wins and losses. Then, what kinds of production processes should be recorded? In this series, I employ what I consider a rudimentary method of drawing, wherein a pattern is composed through the repetition of two recursive strokes. Each drawing adheres to a consistent format, with every stroke meticulously recorded as a photograph. Since machine learning achieves greater accuracy with larger datasets, I aimed to create 1,000 drawings. It was a monumental task, and the order of the production process itself changed. Unlike AI, which relies on a single algorithm to generate each drawing, my process inscribes the emergence and gradual development of patterns. Mapped through this repetition is the progression from visual expression to natural language.

Indeed, the pivotal moment of the AI age is already upon us. But rather than simply utilizing AI within our existing framework, humans are actively forging new forms of data to more authentically reflect reality and, in so doing, delving into a new domain of realness. Perhaps we can call this moment the "Age of Data Baroque."

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