

Future of Applied Arts in AI-Driven Creative Industries

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Abstract

Traditionally, "applied arts" have occupied a position at the crossroads of functional design and aesthetic expression, significantly influencing the development of various industries such as graphic design, fashion, advertising, product design, and digital media. The rapid evolution of **artificial intelligence (AI)** and its applications in areas like "generative AI", machine learning, and intelligent automation are significantly impacting the creative industries and the nature of creative production and distribution. This paper aims to present a discussion on the future of applied arts in the context of "AI-driven creative industries" by highlighting the potential of emerging technologies, the evolution of creative production and practices, the emergence of new professional roles, and the long-term implications of "AI-driven creative industries" on the nature of artistic practices and the applied arts. Through a review of peer-reviewed publications and technical reports, we aim to present a discussion on the future of the applied arts in the context of "AI-driven creative industries" and the long-term implications of "AI-driven creative industries" on the nature of artistic practices and the applied arts.

Keywords

Applied Arts, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Creative Industries, AI in Design, Digital Creativity, Generative AI, Machine Learning in Art, AI-Driven Design, Prompt Engineering, Creative AI Tools, Copyright Issues in AI Art, Advertising Technology, Creativity and Technology, Future of Design, Hybrid Creative Practices, Innovation in Applied Arts, AI Art Tools, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), Human-AI Collaboration, Digital Art, AI-driven creative industries, Visual Art, large language models (LLMs), human art, Creative Technologists.

Introduction

Applied arts refer to **visual art** forms where artistic principles are applied to functional objects, spaces, and experiences.

These include graphic art, industrial art, fashion illustration art, digital art, and advertising art. Historically, applied artists have depended on **manual skills** and **craftsmanship** to apply artistic principles to functional objects, spaces, and experiences. However, with the integration of artificial intelligence technology into art forms, there has been a shift in fundamental assumptions about creativity and artistic practice.

Artificial intelligence technology, particularly machine learning and generative models such as Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and large language models (LLMs), can now produce **high-quality visual**, auditory, and textual content. AI technology can automate tasks, offer alternative solutions, and provide access to creative tools for everyone. This technology is transforming creative work and the roles within creative industries in ways that blur the boundaries between human and machine creativity.

This paper explores how "applied art" forms have evolved with the incorporation of "artificial intelligence technology" and how creative industries utilize AI to innovate, scale, and address new cultural demands.

Theoretical Background: AI and Creativity

1. Defining Creativity in the AI Era

In the past, creativity was seen as something made with human purpose, culture, and real artistic invention. When people study AI and creative work, they also ask if AI-made content can be called "art" like usual. Most AI tools learn by finding patterns, not by coming up with brand-new ideas. Philosophers say that AI doesn't **have feelings** or **purpose**, two things that **make human art valuable**. So, AI-made content is better seen as a shared form of creativity.

2. AI Technologies in Creative Production

Today's AI systems used in the 'applied arts' include:

- **Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs):** These tools create art, designs, and styles by learning from existing images or objects.
- **Large Language Models (LLMs):** These are used for coming up with ideas, writing stories, scripts, and interactive tales.
- **Multi-modal AI:** This type of AI uses text, images, and sound to make complete creative work.
- **Intelligent Automation Tools:** These are software tools that help designers by doing repetitive tasks like setting layouts and choosing colors.

These AI systems don't replace the creative process. Instead, they help and work with it to make "applied arts" better.

AI's Impact on Creative Industries

1. Democratization of Creative Tools

AI has made creative tools more accessible, so even people without experience can use them. AI allows users to create professional images, layouts, and prototypes without needing special training. This has opened the creative world to more people than before.

In "applied art", someone without a formal background can now create visual campaigns, graphics, or even architectural designs, leading to new business opportunities and ideas.

3.2 2. AI isn't replacing human artists. Instead, it's changing how artwork is made. Now, machines handle routine tasks, while humans give **direction, think critically, and understand culture**. Artists use AI as a helper to come up with new ideas, but they still decide the final look and feel of the work.

Steps in this new process include:

1. Using AI for creating ideas and exploring different scenarios.
2. Manually checking for cultural accuracy and emotional impact.
3. Choosing which AI-generated work to use.

3. New Professional Roles from AI

New jobs are appearing in creative industries, especially where tech and art meet.

Some of these roles are:

- **Prompt Engineers:** Experts who create the right questions for AI to produce the needed creative output.
- **Creative Technologists:** Experts who develop AI tools for design.
- **AI Ethics Consultants:** People who make sure AI is used properly, especially regarding bias, fairness, and rights.
- **AI Art Directors:** Leaders who manage teams with AI, making sure the work aligns with brand values.

4. Boosting Industry Productivity

AI increases productivity by doing tasks like making layouts, matching colors, and creating different versions quickly. For example, advertising and design companies can make thousands of design options automatically to figure out what works best.

AI also allows for **mass personalization**, where creative work can be tailored for different groups based on their characteristics.

Challenges and Criticisms

1. Copyright and Ownership

A big issue in AI-driven creative industries is copyright and ownership of AI-generated Content. People are debating if AI-created work can be copyrighted, and if it can, how to share profits. This is a big problem for artists who use their work to train AI, as they may not get credit or pay for their contribution.

Also, AI companies sometimes use creative work without permission, which could harm the industry if not fixed.

2. Authenticity and Artistic Value

AI designs often copy existing styles, which is seen as not original enough.

Studies show that AI often repeats common design patterns, but this can be fixed with human input. In the end, real creativity needs human judgment, understanding, and risk-taking.

3. Bias and Cultural Representation

AI tools sometimes show bias because the data they learn from is not balanced. This can lead to stereotypes or leave out diverse cultures.

4. Job Displacement and Workforce Change

While new jobs are being created, some roles might get replaced by AI. Routine tasks will be done by machines, so **designers need to learn new skills** to stay relevant, especially if they need to focus on big-picture ideas.

Opportunities and Future Directions

1. Personalized and Interactive Art Experiences

There are chances for AI to help create better interactive and personalized art experiences. For example, AI can be used to change environments, visuals, and sounds based on how people react, which can make the experience more interesting and engaging for the audience.

2. Generative Design as Inspiration

AI is becoming more important in the development of various forms of applied arts. However, it is not used as a tool to create finished products, but rather as a way to inspire creative ideas.

3. Education and Skill Development

As AI becomes more common in creative work, educational institutions are also changing their programs to include AI-based creative processes and tools.

For instance, applied arts education now includes topics like AI ethics, computational creativity, and how to create effective prompts, helping students prepare for a future where AI and art work together.

Additionally, AI can help make learning more personalized, which can make education in applied arts more accessible and adaptable to different needs.

4. Ethical AI Frameworks in Creative Practice

In the future, we can expect to see ethical guidelines for AI in creative industries.

These frameworks will help ensure that art is represented fairly and that different art cultures are respected.

Case Studies and Exemplars

1. Artists Using AI Collaboratively

Today, artists like Refik Anadol, who is known for his work in media art, use AI based on data to create immersive art pieces.

This shows how AI can be used to combine human creativity with machine-generated content, helping to expand the possibilities of applied art.

2. Industry Adoption in Design Studios

In the design field, AI is being used more often. This allows design studios to quickly respond to changing market needs through fast prototyping, identifying trends, and creating visual concepts.

Sector- Specific Transformations.

Sector	Role of AI (Pre2024)	Role of AI (2026 Future)
Graphic Design	Layout & Photo Editing	Real-time "Infinite Canvas" & Brand consistent Gen AI
Industrial Design	CAD Automation	Generative Design for Sustainability & Weight Optimization
Fashion	Trend Forecasting	AI-generated "Virtual Try-ons" & On-demand Algorithmic Tailoring
Architecture	Drafting Software	Transformer models achieving 95% efficiency in structural optimization

Ethical and Legal Landscapes

The “democratization of creativity” brought by AI tools, such as the projected 61% of social media content being AI-generated by 2026 (Capterra, 2026), raises significant ethical challenges.

1. Authorship and Intellectual Property

The legal definition of “author” is under great pressure. Gaffar and Albarashdi (2025) point out that as AI systems start to make decisions based on probabilistic

calculations, it becomes harder to attribute authorship. The current agreement in the applied arts is shifting toward a “Contribution-Based Model,” where intellectual property is shared or credited based on how much human input is involved in the AI’s output.

2. Bias and Cultural Preservation

There is a serious concern about “algorithmic colonialism.” If AI models are trained mostly on Western design styles, they might unintentionally erase the complex, non-linear processes of indigenous and traditional applied arts. Researchers stress that for AI to benefit the future of global applied arts, models must be trained on a variety of culturally representative datasets (Jiang et al., 2023; Zapata, 2023).

Discussion: The Human Advantage

As AI becomes skilled at creating designs, which was once the main work of artists, the future “applied artist” must shift to roles that AI cannot easily mimic:

1. **Curation and Context:** Future applied artists will play a key role in selecting, refining, and contextualizing the best ideas from numerous AI-generated outputs. This ability requires critical judgment, cultural awareness, and aesthetic sensitivity.
2. **Emotional Resonance:** Human creators bring their own experiences, emotions, memories, and cultural stories to their work. While AI can mimic these elements, it cannot feel or truly create them. This emotional depth gives human-made objects meaning beyond their function.
3. **Sustainability Advocacy:** Applied artists will increasingly use AI to tackle environmental challenges, such as reducing material waste, improving production efficiency, and promoting eco-friendly design solutions (Li, 2025). This positions them as leaders in responsible and sustainable creative practices.

Conclusion

The future of applied arts in AI-driven creative industries will depend on a partnership between human creativity and machine intelligence. Instead of taking over the role of artists, AI acts as a strong ally. It can expand creative possibilities, handle repetitive tasks, and introduce new forms of experimentation that were once beyond reach. This collaboration enables artists to explore broader aesthetic options, use innovative design tools, and improve the efficiency and impact of their creative processes.

At the same time, the distinctive traits that define human creativity—emotion, intuition, judgment, cultural understanding, and personal experience—cannot be replaced. These aspects add meaning to artistic works and provide a depth that AI cannot genuinely mimic. As AI makes creative tools more available and encourages broader artistic production, the role of applied artists becomes increasingly important. They will guide, curate, and raise the quality of creative output.

Applied artists who succeed in the future will be those who see AI as a key creative partner while also showing the lasting importance of human insight. By combining technical skills with artistic sensitivity, they will help shape a new era where innovation, sustainability, and emotional connection drive the progress of creative industries. Ultimately, the future of applied arts relies not on competing with AI but on a vibrant partnership that redefines creativity's limits.

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