

AI on AI

The critic's central takeaway

AI will endure in the art world, but not in the way early hype suggested. Its long-term value will depend less on image generation and more on how artists weaponize it conceptually - as a medium, a foil, or even an adversary.

1. AI's initial explosion was a novelty phase

Critics often compare the early AI boom to:

- the arrival of photography in the 19th century
- the digital art wave of the 1990s
- the NFT surge of 2021

Each began with spectacle, speed, and shock value. But novelty always burns off. What remains is the work that has **intent**, **structure**, and **authorship**.

AI's novelty phase is already fading. Critics see this clearly: the flood of generative images has created a visual sameness, a kind of "algorithmic aesthetic fatigue."

2. Longevity depends on authorship - the Achilles' heel of AI

Critics repeatedly return to one question:

Who is the artist when the machine does the rendering?

This question is not going away. In fact, it's the primary reason critics believe AI will not dominate the art world long-term. Museums, collectors, and historians rely on:

- provenance
- authorship
- intentionality
- scarcity
- narrative

AI undermines all five unless an artist builds a rigorous conceptual framework around the tool.

This is why critics respond more favorably to artists who use AI against itself - exposing its biases, limitations, or mechanical nature rather than those who simply prompt it.

3. AI will survive as a *tool*, not a movement

Critics see AI as analogous to:

- the paintbrush
- the camera
- the printing press
- the synthesizer

Tools endure. Movements do not.

AI art as a *movement* is already losing steam because movements require:

- a shared philosophy
- a coherent aesthetic
- a unifying purpose

AI art has none of these. It is a technology, not a worldview.

But AI as a tool will persist indefinitely, because artists always absorb new technologies into their practice.

4. The future belongs to artists who resist AI, not those who rely on it

This is the part critics are increasingly vocal about.

The artists who will define the next era are those who:

- foreground human intention
- emphasize labor, craft, and time
- create work that AI *cannot* replicate
- build systems, languages, or methodologies outside machine logic

Critics are already gravitating toward artists whose work:

- exposes AI's blind spots
- challenges its assumptions
- uses it as a conceptual antagonist
- asserts human authorship as a radical act

In other words, the longevity of AI in art may be secured by artists who critique it, not by those who embrace it uncritically.

5. AI's long-term role will be archival, analytical, and infrastructural

Critics foresee AI becoming essential in:

- cataloging collections
- restoring damaged works
- analyzing provenance
- assisting curators
- supporting conservation science

These are areas where AI's precision and scale matter more than its aesthetics.

The future of AI in art may be behind the scenes, not on the gallery wall.

6. The critic's final position

AI will remain in the art world, but its cultural power will diminish as its limitations become more visible and its novelty evaporates. Its longevity will come from:

- integration
- critique
- infrastructure
- conceptual use

Not from the generative-image boom that defined its early years.