



AI vs. Art: Is There a Creative Resistance Coming?

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies continue to mature alongside sometimes overt, sometimes subtle, influence across the creative sectors. This influence is increasingly woven into processes long regarded as uniquely human: ideation, interpretation, and expression. For artists, designers, and creative entrepreneurs, this poses fundamental questions about authenticity, authorship, and the future of their craft.

Within the context—and history—of cyclical artistic tensions and developments based on the advancement of human taste, a question emerges: is resistance the appropriate creative response to AI?

Croatia, with its own rich history of artistic resistance and innovation, finds itself once again at such a crossroads. At the turn of the 20th century, Croatian artists and designers rejected the homogeneity of industrial mass production, blending traditional craftsmanship with the avant-garde currents of the Vienna Secession, Art Nouveau, and Jugendstil. Today, navigating an intelligence age, Croatian creatives are confronting a similar challenge.

This article presents key insights from a multi-stakeholder panel led by Saviesa, a Think Tank, and hosted at the House of Cartoons, in Zagreb. The panel understands that Croatia is witnessing the beginnings of a new creative movement; they asked, however, whether this movement bears the stroke of resistance or the colour of AI collaboration.

Panel participants:

- Marko Reisinger, Curator and Owner of Kuća Karikature Oto Reisinger/House of Cartoons
- Tomislav Krajačić, Owner and CEO of Kofein
- Consuelo Palma, Artist
- Damir Firšt, Entrepreneur, Venture Builder and Strategic Advisory
- Igor Kolar, Multidisciplinary Designer
- Peter Stojanovic, Saviesa AI Policy Advisor and Moderator

AI and Creativity: Collaborative or Competitive?

AI is often misunderstood as an autonomous creative force, when in reality it functions best as an amplifier of human intent. Far from replacing creativity, AI is reshaping the conditions under which it unfolds. At its best AI is a well-designed tool—a powerful assistant that excels in variation, formatting, pattern generation, and augmentation. When deployed thoughtfully it can enhance the ideation process, helping creators move swiftly from concept to execution.

Many of the panel’s participants spoke of AI as a catalyst for unlocking flow states, particularly during the early stages of creative work. Whether through text-based dialogue that clarifies a theme, or through the rapid production of visual prototypes for further refinement, AI offers feedback loops that support momentum and help overcome mental blocks. In this sense, it provides not answers, but possibilities, expanding the field of vision for human creators without imposing preconceived ideas.

Yet the collaboration is not without its limitations. The current generation of models, for all their speed and versatility, still produce outputs that betray their machine authorship: bias, inconsistencies, uncanny details, or a lack of emotional nuance that remind us of the distance between imitation and true expression. That said, the audience heard that this represents “the worst AI will ever be”—progress is exponential, and the gap between machine output and human authorship is narrowing rapidly.

Authenticity in the Age of Machine-Made Art

Authenticity remains central to how we perceive and assign value to creative work. Yet in an era of machine-made art, its meaning has become more complex and contested. Art is not merely a product or an output. It is a process—a journey shaped by memory, emotion, intuition, and lived experience. These dimensions, which are deeply personal and often culturally specific, are beyond the reach of an artificial (or non-human) intelligence, however sophisticated its technical fluency may become.

Across the panel's discussion points participants emphasised that the process of creation matters as much, if not more, than the finished work. The physical, manual, and emotional labour invested in artistic practice—from ceramics and painting to storytelling and design—imbues the final artefact with significance. Creative work is often autobiographical: it reflects not only individual histories but also collective memory, cultural heritage, and social values. In a nation with as colourful a history as Croatia, this has even more significance. And for many creators the very act of making is therapeutic, exploratory, and meaning-generating in its own right. Currently no machine can replicate this.

This is particularly evident in how authenticity expresses itself across different societies.

Whether in game design, product development, or the applied arts, tradition influences both aesthetic choices and usability expectations. A first-person shooter might mirror militaristic narratives in one cultural context, while a survival-based, emotionally charged game emerges from a society shaped by war and austerity. Similarly, in product design, what feels intuitive or meaningful in one region may fall flat in another. These differences remind us that art is rooted in context—and so too must be the AI systems that support it.

AI looks set to play a meaningful role in the creative economy; the value of this partnership will lie in its ability to enhance rather than supplant the deeply human aspects of creation. Tools must be configurable, respectful of artistic autonomy, and sensitive to cultural specificity. AI can assist with thinking, formatting, and presentation, but it should not attempt to replace the journey. Authenticity is not found in technical

polish alone; it lives in the process, in the maker's intent, and in the cultural and emotional layers that give art its enduring power.

Economic Opportunity and the Democratisation of Access

One pertinent but asinine angle of creativity is in its economic potential. Does resistance sell?

In this debate, no. There was clear optimism in this panel that AI will enable small businesses and emerging markets to participate in creative economies previously inaccessible due to cost and complexity. Generative design tools, video production algorithms, and ideation assistants can drastically reduce the time and capital needed to generate high-quality content.

This democratisation is especially significant in smaller markets, where marketing budgets cannot accommodate large-scale agency work. AI levels the playing field—but only for those who understand how to direct it effectively. It should also be acknowledged that while AI reduces barriers, it does not automatically create value. A badly written prompt does not produce brilliance. Expertise, judgment, and human creativity remain essential to transforming technical output into compelling cultural products.

This panel acknowledges that for many artists art itself is a creative act of resistance or truth seeking. From the ironic symbolism of Banksy's graffiti to the anti-war paintings of Picasso, such as Guernica, to the protest art that emerged out of the AIDS epidemic, this discussion sits within a wider, global debate on the nuanced response of human creatives to the machine-led ability to create.

Human Art Direction Becomes the New Creative Skill

An interesting point was raised regarding emerging skills. As AI handles more of the execution art direction becomes a core creative function. The future of creativity may depend less on technical production and more on the ability to guide systems, define constraints, and curate outputs.

This would require a shift in training. Rather than focusing solely on craft techniques, educational systems would help emerging creatives develop strategic thinking,

conceptual clarity, and critical literacy in AI systems. An individual who understands how to generate meaningful prompts, iterate responsibly, and assess quality becomes arguably more vital than one who can merely operate software in settings such a game design, advertising, or architectural design.

This conversation naturally segued into one an undercurrent within all debates: the role of human values. Throughout the debate, one truth emerged consistently: AI reflects us. It mirrors our biases, our preferences, our blind spots. The question is not simply what AI will do—it is what we ask of it, and how we shape it.

Art in the Post-Accuracy Era

Finally, AI introduces a new kind of epistemological challenge. In traditional systems, processes were traceable and deterministic. With AI, particularly generative models, outputs are probabilistic. A small change in input can produce dramatically different results. The same prompt used twice may yield divergent responses.

This has profound implications for how we verify, assess, and trust information. In domains that rely on accuracy—journalism, education, public communication—the ambiguity can be dangerous. In creative fields this creates aesthetic variation, which may be desirable, or may encourage a new way not just what we create, but how and where we consume art, with whom, and why. As art and the creative process has stretched to accommodate more and more of our social zeitgeist, the opportunity to accelerate into digital fields with non-human layers of interpretation seems to be too interesting to resist.

In this regard at least, artistic resistance to AI looks to be muted, non-conforming, and impractical. This is particularly true within more corporate settings and sectors that see huge potential of the technology within both artistic value and productivity. Its impact on individual artists is likely to be far more nuanced, but no less important to track. As is the case of the paradox of artistic resistance: whether the article is to be resisted or celebrated, it remains central to the creative narrative of the time. AI certainly fits that brief.

Saviesa's Further Questions for Policy Makers, Creators and Leaders

- 1. How can we ensure that AI systems embed and respect human values, particularly cultural and artistic diversity?**
- 2. What frameworks are needed to protect creators' rights in the age of machine learning and generative AI?**
- 3. How do we prepare the next generation of creatives for a world in which direction and curation matter more than production?**
- 4. In what ways can AI be deployed to expand — rather than erode — authenticity, meaning, and storytelling?**
- 5. How do we balance speed and scale with discernment and ethical responsibility in creative AI development?**

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