

The Role of Art and Artificial Intelligence in Promoting Nigeria's Visual Arts Industry

By

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Abstract

The Role of Art and Artificial Intelligence in Promoting Nigeria's Visual Arts Industry is a paper that examines how Art and artificial intelligence promote Nigeria's visual arts industry. Art in Nigeria has not received the attention and support it deserves, which is disappointing. Nigeria is home to numerous talented artists and inspirational artworks that the world has yet to embrace. One major problem this paper seeks to address in Nigeria's Visual Arts Sector is the low level of interest in supporting Art and the limited understanding of how AI can be integrated into Art to produce artworks. This paper aims to inform the public about the roles of Art and AI and how they promote the visual arts in Nigeria. The significance of this paper is to educate the audience on the importance and role of Art and AI. Art in Nigeria is underappreciated due to limited public awareness. When the audience is adequately guided through what Art entails and how AI can be adopted in Art to produce artworks, thereby further promoting the Visual Art industry, the art sector of Nigeria will see positive changes and widespread adoption. The conclusion focuses on Visual Art, which is essential to every society and should be embraced. Art promotes culture and should be adequately protected. This paper recommends that art be adopted by all and integrated with AI to protect and promote Nigeria's visual arts industry.

Keywords: Art, AI, Culture, Visual Arts, Nigeria

Introduction

The Role of Art and Artificial Intelligence in Promoting Nigeria's Visual Arts Industry is the pilot of this study. Art has long been practised since the existence of humankind. In fact, basically everything around us is a form of Art. In today's world, with advances in technology, AI has been introduced to assist in nearly every aspect of our lives, including the creation of art. This paper will describe what Art and Artificial Intelligence are and the roles they play in promoting Art in Nigeria. To properly understand what art is, the term art must be defined. So, what is Art? Art lacks a definitive definition. Art is individualistic, reflecting the human subconscious; it is improper to limit Art to a single description. However, several definitions of art warrant consideration. One such definition of art is that it is a creative phenomenon that changes constantly, insofar as it is continually created (Zachary, 2017). Another definition of art is the conscious use of skill and creative imagination, especially in the creation of aesthetic objects (Merriam-Webster, 2025). In my own terms, art can be defined as the creative expression on any surface for public consumption, usually to convey a message or address specific issues. Art has been recognised over the years as a powerful tool for communication and for addressing societal issues. Art generally involves artworks, and no artwork exists without interpretation. The beauty of art is its diverse interpretations. An artwork may have numerous interpretations, depending on the individual examining it, which demonstrates that art does not have a finite definition. The earliest forms of art can be traced to the prehistoric era, when one of the earliest known artworks was a cave painting on cave walls. This demonstrates that art has existed as long as humans have lived. Due to technological development and human advancement, tools have been created to assist in performing such tasks. One of the technologies developed by man is Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is gradually finding its way into virtually every aspect of our lives, including the creation of art. The development of AI has made it easier to perform basic tasks. The integration of AI and Art has introduced a new dimension to creativity in the art world, enabling artists to explore uncharted territories and go beyond the boundaries of their imagination (Fortino, 2023). AI has proven to be a helpful tool for artists in creative work.

The Nigerian Art Industry and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Nigeria is home to a variety of unique works of art that have attracted the attention of countries worldwide over the years. There was a time when art in Nigeria was greatly underappreciated; it still is, but in recent years, there has been a gradual increase in its acceptance and value, albeit slowly and not comparable to a few years ago. Over the years, Nigeria has produced great artistic minds who have helped shape the art scene and inspire young and emerging artists across the nation. Works of art in the fields of ceramics, textiles, sculpture, pottery, metalwork, and painting predominate in Nigerian art. In recent years, artists such as Arinze have advanced realism. He specialises in drawing and now painting and is also a contemporary artist in Nigeria, offering hope and inspiration to younger artists. Nigeria has considerable promise in the arts sector.

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has permeated virtually all aspects of technology, including art. There have been controversies and arguments about AI taking over art, in a more polished sentence, replacing artists. The creation of AI was intended solely to assist with our daily tasks, not to replace us, as some argue. In the art world, AI has given room for more creative ideas and inspiration. Incorporating technology has given artists a wider range of ideas and greater creativity. As AI continues to advance, its impact on Nigeria's creative industry has likewise grown (Oluoje, 2025). Given Nigeria's history of undervaluing art in the sector, the advent of AI has introduced new ideas. It has begun to increase the value of art in Nigeria through its AI-generated ideas.

Contemporary Artists in Nigeria

There are brilliant minds within Nigeria's art sector who have given hope and inspiration to the sector and have also garnered international recognition.

Ben Enwonwu

Ben is a first-generation Nigerian artist, painter, and sculptor, who, being the first Nigerian artist to gain international recognition, is arguably one of Africa's most influential artists of the 20th century. He was born on the 14th of July 1917 and died on the 5th of February 1994. Having been taught art in the Western world, he, in turn, taught art at many post-independence schools in Nigeria and abroad.

Bruce Onobrakpeya

This is a well-known name in Nigeria, owing to his significant contributions to contemporary art. He was born in 1932 and still lives. He is a renowned painter and sculptor.

Abayomi Barber

Abayomi is a famous Nigerian painter, sculptor, graphic designer and teacher. He was born in Ile Ife on the 28th of October, 1928 and died on the 26th of December, 2021. In his time, he has created some of the most captivating landscapes in Nigeria.

Arinze Stanley Egbengwu

Arinze is a contemporary Nigerian artist who specialises in hyper-realism in drawing and painting. He was born in 1993. He is a visual artist, an activist, a photographer, an engineer and an entrepreneur. He is steadily gaining international recognition and has exhibited in notable galleries in Nigeria and beyond the Nigerian shores and the African continent.

Uche Okeke

Uche Okeke was an illustrator, sculptor, painter and teacher in Nigeria. He is a prominent figure in Nigeria's art sector. He was born on the 30th of April 1933 and died on the 5th of January 2016. He is known for the revolution which started the Visual Arts in Nigeria in the 1960s. He was one of the founding members of the Zaria Art Society.

Aina Onabolu

Aina Onabolu is a very prominent figure in the Nigerian Art sector. He was a pioneering figure in Nigeria's modern art world, a renowned teacher and painter. He promoted the arts within the curricula of secondary schools nationwide.

The Role of Art and AI in Promoting the Nigerian Art Industry

The role of art in any society is too numerous to mention. The combination of Art and AI has, over the years, demonstrated that the two can be used interchangeably to enhance creativity. Nigeria is gradually adopting AI in its arts sector. In recent years, AI's role in creating artworks has increased significantly, beginning with OpenAI's DALL·E in 2018, followed by prominent platforms such as Midjourney and ArtSmart (Shalwa, 2024). In

Nigeria, Art has not reached its peak due to a decline in interest in its value. This is not the case today, as artists have introduced new forms and styles in Nigeria's art world. The value of Art is slowly gaining ground nationally through Art Exhibitions in major galleries. Artists in Nigeria increasingly use AI in the creation of artworks, which has further enhanced creativity and broadened artists' horizons. Some of the roles Art and AI play in promoting the Nigerian Art Industry are as follows:

Enhanced Creativity

The coming together of Art and AI has helped enhance/boost the thought creativity process in the minds of artists. The rigidity of the art industry has thus been defeated. In today's digital environment, artists use the internet to post their works online, which can serve as a source of inspiration for other artists. AI can be used to sort these images or artworks to align with the artists' intentions. When creative thinking is enhanced in Nigeria's art industry, it gives the platform a well-reputed name and prestige.

Massive Increase IN Efficiency and Productivity

AI serves as a tool for artists to explore new ideas and experiment with different styles. With the rapid advancement of AI, artists have the opportunity to generate new ideas and forms in the creation of artworks. The AI algorithm uses the artist's description and preferences, then presents various concepts derived from those inputs to the artist. Efficiency and productivity increase, thereby reducing the workload and shortening the time required to create an artwork when used in the transitional approach to creating artworks.

Increased Accessibility OF Available Materials

Art in Nigeria has undergone significant changes and gained recognition both within and outside the country. Being a broad discipline, ideas can be made and shared online. This is made available online. By sharing artworks online, artists can make them accessible to all as a source of inspiration. This is not only for professional artists; those who wish to learn art also have access to these materials. Platforms such as online training on drawing and other aspects of art are available. The integration of Art and AI further makes searching these source materials accessible by entering keywords related to the field; this is where AI comes into play in Art. The

role is to facilitate the accessibility of materials for artists. This way, artists in Nigeria can upload their works for inspiration and for other artists to use with ease. This will also help engage young and emerging artists with the nation's artistic culture.

Conclusion

Art has evolved over the years, and the advent of AI has further enhanced the creative process. Artists in Nigeria now have greater creative freedom and greater accessibility through AI and search engines. This paper demonstrates that AI has supported Nigerian artists' creative processes and has also played an important role in Nigeria's art sector. These roles help young artists commit to the art course by inspiring AI and other artists online.

Recommendation

This article recommends that the roles of Art and AI are synonymous. AI is vast, new, and continues to develop over time. In this regard, new ideas, access to new materials, techniques, and creativity are made available to artists in Nigeria. In tandem with this, this paper recommends that Nigerian artists make use of the opportunities AI offers for art, creativity, and the creation of artworks. This will further help grow the Nigerian Art Industry to a world-class standard, one that people around the world will want to emulate and draw inspiration from.

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