

SELECTED RESULTS 2023

Criteria	Contribution to knowledge
Output name	AI: All Idiots
Author	MgA. Barbora Trnková, Ph.D

Description of the output and justification of its significance

TRNKOVÁ, Barbora. AI: All Idiots.

In: HORÁKOVÁ, Jana—KUPKOVÁ, Marika—SZÚCSOVÁ, Monika et al. *The Black Box Book. Archives and Curatorship in the Age of Transformation of Art Institutions*, pp. 342–387. Brno: Masaryk University Press — TIC, 2022. 398 p. ISBN: 978-80-280-0225-1.

<https://munispace.muni.cz/library/catalog/view/2217/6616/4289-1/0#preview>

The presented article offers a theoretical analysis and reflection on the collective, participatory exhibition project *AI: All Idiots*, which was showcased at the MeetFactory gallery in Prague in 2021. This project, a significant outcome of the research project *Decentralized Collection, Analysis, Visualization, and Interpretation of Large Data Sets in Artistic Practice* (supported by TAČR), involved the participation of the author as a co-investigator. The exhibition critically examined the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and art, using a collective and participatory approach to engage both artists and audiences in the conversation. By gathering a dataset of images from the websites of Czech artists and training an AI system, the project invited several artists to take on production roles typically assigned to machines. This approach ignited a discussion about the relationship between artificial intelligence and human creativity, exploring deeper questions about ethics, creativity, and the evolving role of art in a digitally dominated era.

The AI: All Idiots exhibition is one of the earliest and most comprehensive critical reflections on the application of generative algorithms to art, not only in the Czech Republic but also internationally. The exhibition garnered substantial media attention and was later presented in Reykjavik in 2022. The theoretical analysis, as published in *Black Box Book*, provides invaluable insight into the process of artistic research, offering a thorough reflection on the role of generative AI within the creative process. The article illustrates that while AI tools may appear visually creative, they often function within predefined metaprograms, reinforcing cultural stereotypes and normative patterns that are statistically reproduced and amplified. This reflection emphasizes the potential risks of relying on AI in creative fields, as it tends to replicate societal biases rather than foster original creativity.

The article's significance is demonstrated by its acceptance and positive reception at major conferences, including Humain in Brno, *The Future of Living with AI* in Brussels, and the *Re-connect Art* symposium in Prague. Additionally, it has been widely circulated on the Academia.edu platform and featured in educational publications such as *Kultura neuronových sítí: Syntetická literatura a umění (nejen) v českém a slovenském prostředí* and *Navigátor — Úvod do umění nových médií*. These platforms have expanded the article's reach and helped situate the research within broader academic and public discourses on art and technology.

In an era where AI-driven creative tools are rapidly expanding, this article presents a necessary and timely critical reflection, urging a reassessment of the harmful narratives and biases that AI may perpetuate. It offers significant contributions not only to the field of art but also to broader societal discussions about the ethical implications of AI technologies in our daily lives. Through this in-depth analysis, the article engages with the pressing need to reexamine how we define creativity and the role humans play in a technologically mediated cultural landscape.

Exhibition Team of AI: All Idiots

Curators	ScreenSaverGallery (Barbora Trnková, Tomáš Javůrek, Marie Meixner)
Execution	Jana Bernartová, Vilém Duha, Andreas Gajdošík, Aimee Zia Hasan, Vladimír Havlík, Tomáš Javůrek, Marie Meixnerová, Petr Racek, Matěj Smetana, Petra Ševců, Michal Škapa, Barbora Trnková
Technical Solutions	Tomáš Javůrek, Kamil Jeřábek, Jaromír Pražák
Exhibition Architecture	Jan Tomšů
Production	Jan Vítek
Cooperation	Eva Bláhová, Tereza Jindrová
Opening	September 14, 2021

Media Reach of the Exhibition — Catalog, Press Releases, Interviews, Reviews, Presentations, Citations

- catalog for the exhibition: <https://galleryreader.com/exhibition/ai-all-idiots/>
- Review: Artalk: How Artificial is Artificial Intelligence?
- Review: Lukáš Pilka, Art & Antiques: How Algorithms Think, Create, and Lie <https://www.artantiques.cz/jak-algoritmy-mysli-tvori-a-lzou>
- Photo report: Artalk: AI: All Idiots at MeetFactory Gallery
- Press release: <https://artalk.cz/2021/09/14/tz-ai-all-idiots-v-galerii-meetfactory/>
- Virtual tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nspCdDpIThY>
- Presentation at the international symposium Curating Online-Kultural Heritage, Creativity and the Summer of Artificial Intelligence: <https://www.dum-umeni.cz/en/curating-online-cultural-heritage-creativity-and-the-summer-of-artificial-intelligence/t8986>
- Chapter in Lukáš Pilka's dissertation: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bIFjaWXvsRleSBSBGwtUjeANgOoTEW8D/view?fbclid=IwAR0u-pJg4S8K7-qsAL_06OKJuXA5q3tMBk3XgpQNhHVem-QTFiAQDWHIxeA
- Mention of the exhibition in the book: FRANCOVÁ, Jana. Navigator: An Introduction to New Media Art. Brno: Masaryk University, 2021. ISBN 978-80-210-9887-9, p. 171
- Review: Deník N / Matěj Forejt: <https://denikn.cz/729248/mezi-umenim-a-umelou-inteligenci-v-meetfactory-potkate-ceske-umeni-i-roboticky-vysavac/>
- Audio interview for UMA Audioguide (in czech): <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6yFN95WueYUteLTg2nlfTb>

- Audio interview Tovární hlášení (in czech): <https://podcasts.apple.com/cz/podcast/barbora-trnkov%C3%A1-tom%C3%A1%C5%A1-jav%C5%AFrek-o-um%C4%9BI%C3%A9-nebo-um%C4%9Bleck%C3%A9/id1539177240?i=1000538683693>
- Presentation of the AI All Idiots App in ScreenSaverGallery, 2022: <https://screensaver.gallery/metazoa-org-all-idiots-hit>

References Mentioning the Text, Reviews, Citations, Conferences, and Public Presentations

- PIORECKÝ, Karel and HUSÁROVÁ, Zuzana. The Culture of Neural Networks. Synthetic Literature and Art (Not Only) in the Czech and Slovak Context. Prague: Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences, 2024.
- Husárová, Z. (2023). JANA HORÁKOVÁ — MARIKA KUPKOVÁ — MONIKA SZÜCSOVÁ (eds.): The Black Box Book: Archives and Curatorship in the Age of Transformation of Art Institutions. World Literature Studies, 15(4), 144—148. ISSN 1337-9275. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2023.15.4.13>
- Barbora TRNKOVÁ, "AI: All Idiots," MF Gallery Reader, MeetFactory, o. p. s., 2022, online catalog: galleryreader.com/exhibition/ai-all-idiots
- Symposium: RE-CONNECT ART, Revealing, Prague, 2024
- Conference: THE FUTURE OF LIVING WITH AI, AI: All Idiots, iMall Brussels, 2023 <https://www.thefutureofliving.eu/programme>
- Conference video: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/261782436790618>
- Conference: Emorob, Masaryk University Brno, 2023 <https://emorob.fss.muni.cz/conferences/2023-computing-the-human>
- Symposium: RE-CONNECT ART, Artificial Intelligence and Creativity, Divadlo X10, Prague, 2023
- Conference: AI: All Idiots, CURATING ONLINE: Cultural Heritage, Creativity and the Summer of Artificial Intelligence, Media Art Live Archive, House of Arts Brno, 2021
- AI: All Idiots, Humain (with Marie Meixnerová and Tomáš Javůrek), 2020
- ArtZóna TV program, Czech Television (mention of the exhibition by Prof. Jana Horáková) + Barbora Trnková, June 25, 2023 <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/12072033166-artzona/324294340010009/>
- 118 views of the Black Box Book on Academia.edu

Examples of the text in the publication

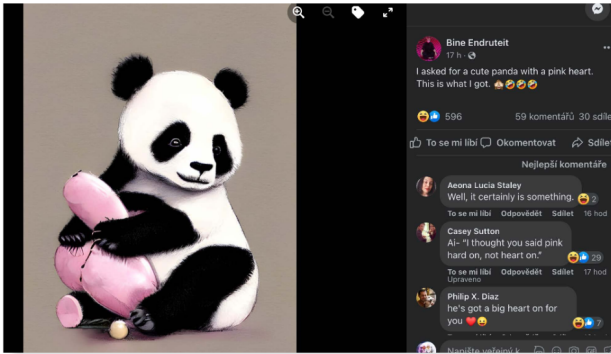


Figure 3: An example of a generated image using the Midjourney engine, shared on Facebook, screenshot, Barbora Trnková, 2022

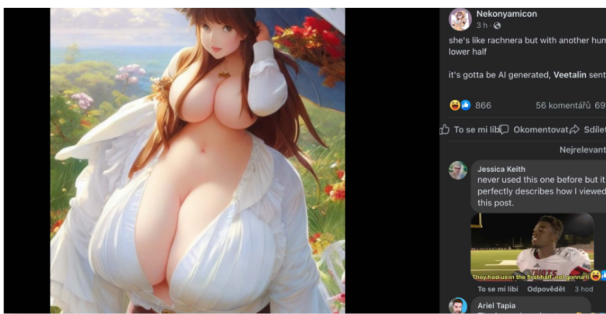


Figure 4: An example of a generated image using the Midjourney engine, shared on Facebook, screenshot, Barbora Trnková, 2022

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A NIGHTMARE OF IMAGINATION

Artificial intelligence is being experimented with in all areas of culture, by artists, developers, designers, scientists, and everyday users. Frequently, the objective is to produce content that is equivalent to or even more compelling than that of a talented human author. Individual models of specialized learning algorithms also combine and are interlinked. In a fraction of the time and with the appearance of autonomy, content is generated in staggering amounts. However, these algorithms still require a great deal of human aid in the form of decisions, and should therefore be viewed more as another type of synthetic paintbrush or a more sophisticated camera. What potential does learning algorithm technology provide for the growth of artistic imagination?

Developers and enthusiasts claim that the Midjourney synthetic generator transforms imagination and dreams into breathtaking works of art without limitations. All the user has to do is enter a text command in the form of a string of words and the program will generate an infinite number of image variations based on the input. After some time of experimentation, it is not difficult to understand how to use this synthetic brush to create digital images. Thus, A suitable selection of keywords can be used to take advantage of the system's limitations and circumvent the rules established by programmers and taggers. (Figure 3).

Nevertheless, I have come across images of sexualized female bodies in abundance on social media fan communities dedicated to this tool (Figure 4), with users expressing great satisfaction with their quality. Given that the learnt network can best mimic the scenes that were prevalent in the dataset, it is evident that it contains a significant amount of sexualized female bodies. However, it also turns out to be a syncretic tool that can be used by designers for sketching and designing. Indeed, the speed of algorithms allows them to experiment quickly, which can contribute to the development of these fields, simplifying their work, but also putting many designers out of work.

In 2020, Vladan Joler and Matteo Pasquinelli (Joler, V. & Pasquinelli, M., 2020) summarized the biases and limitations of learning algorithms in order to break the unfulfillable promises we associate with this technology. They pointed out that data collection itself is neither technically nor socially neutral. Input data is already biased at the collection stage where old and conservative taxonomies can cause a distorted world view, reduce social diversity, and exacerbate social hierarchies. In addition, they identified machine-algorithmic bias, often known as statistical or model bias. During this process, the dataset is contorted by information compression, dimensionality reduction, and statistical diffractions, resulting in the loss of a substantial amount of variety that is useless to these algorithms. However, the reduction also occurs when the algorithm is trained on the data - pattern extraction based on classification occurs. It can be said that in the process of machine learning, the world is compressed into a statistical model, in Dan McQuillan's words,

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rhythms. We determined that we would be able to capture visual representations of modern Czech art in our digital dataset. Having a presence on the internet is a necessity for a contemporary artist. The artist's website includes samples of their work, a description of their focus, a structured biography, and a list of their accomplishments. Numerous gallery open calls and contests require an online portfolio already. There is an emphasis on professional aesthetics and succinct descriptions in documentary photography. The choice of keywords and proper search engine optimization are also important. However, this presentation carries the risks associated with putting any content on the internet, as well as risks in relation to the works. Regardless of how well-considered the description or photo evidence is, it does not correspond to the artwork. Presentation in varying proportions distorts by translating a work created in one medium into another medium (Figure 5). This practice can retrospectively affect the form of the art.

We obtained the list of Czech artists and their websites from the Artist database, a non-profit project of the Center for Contemporary Arts Prague, which presents a representative sample of artists involved in the development of contemporary Czech visual art since the second half of the 20th century, with an emphasis on the post-1989 period.

"The initial source for the exhibition AI: All Idiots is therefore an image dataset containing material that Czech artists originally presented on their own publicly accessible websites or blogs. Together, these portfolios provide the curious AI with over half a million digital photographs and images. Is this enough for AI to form a picture of contemporary Czech art and be able to replicate its output?" (Javůrek, T. & Meixnerová, M. & Trnková, B., 2022)

F I L M

Jana Bernartová, one of the exhibiting artists, recognized that by sequentially presenting individual photos from the dataset in a human-perceivable amount of time, a distinctive animation with artistic elements is formed that, at first appearance, mimics cinematic experimentation. The removal of images from their original context and their presentation in new constellations is one of the common means of artistic expression already established by the historical avant-garde. However, in relation to the original material, it is also a significant authorial intervention. Animating the collected material may appear to be a straightforward method for introducing the audience to the dataset's content. However, this piece highlights the significance of a creative contribution that only removes the work from its original context (Figure 6).

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Figure 5: An example of a photograph from the vernissage, Jan Mlčoch, <http://www.mlcoch.net/>, dataset AI: All Idiots, 2021



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Examples of the text in the publication

Figure 10: Example of a visualization detail of the statistics of the AI: All Idiots dataset on the wall, comparing male and female artists in relation to the number of active pages and images on them.

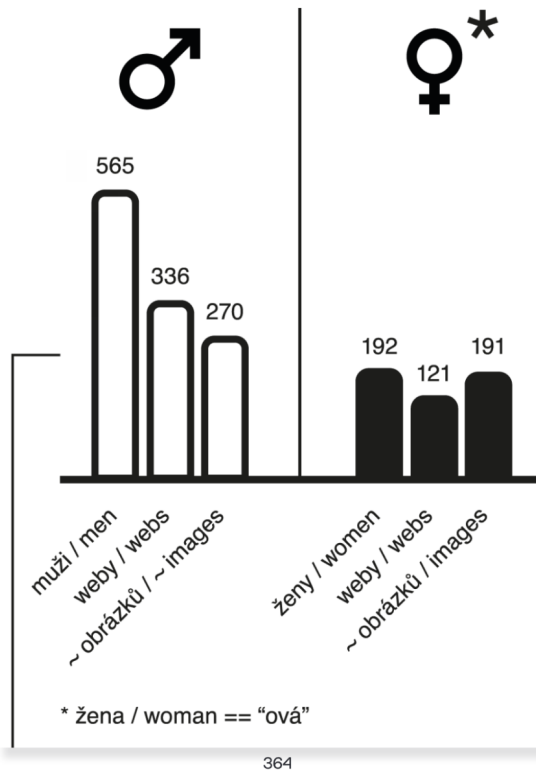


Figure 11: Example of a visualization detail of the statistics of the AI: All Idiots dataset on the wall, comparing the number of images that artists have on their websites that we could download using our method.



A CROSS SECTION ACROSS ARTISTIC AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This article provides the conceptual basis and examples of the implementation of the group exhibition project AI: All Idiots, which was part of the Other Knowledge exhibition series at the MeetFactory Gallery in Prague in 2021. (for a view of the exhibition, see [Figures 1 and 2](#)). The purpose of the project was to bring the subject of modern artificial intelligence to the attention of the general public while still being artistically stimulating. In lieu of the conventional strategy of curating a selection of artworks created by artists working with AI, we opted to start from scratch by gathering online digital copies of selected artworks by Czech artists, which served as a training dataset for our original AI software. The artists were also involved in the data's interpretation. The experiment addressed the widespread use of AI for web content analysis, artists, curators, and the art community as a whole, as well as the question of whether AI operates as a source of information to generate stereotypical products that cannot do more than statistically confirm and continuously repeat what is already known.

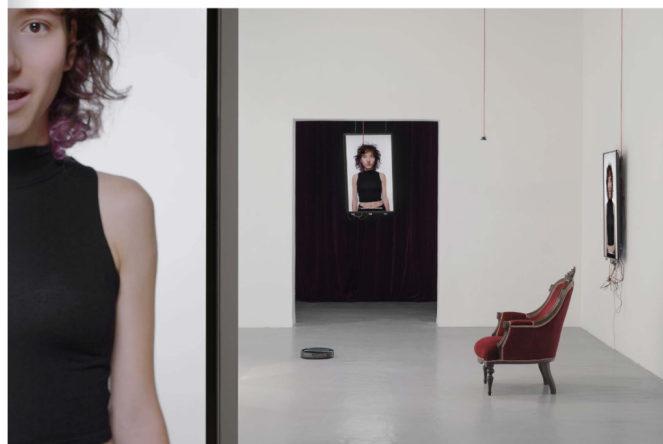
"The language of the algorithms of machine learning is uncompromising and vulgar. It is the language of unscrupulous statistics with the cynical goal of extracting value (information) wherever possible. The conception of AI: All Idiots appropriates this vulgar language and lays bare the degradation of human beings into statistically more or less important objects; spectacular sources of data. To referents of stereotypes that are to be statistically confirmed and forever repeated. The AI: All Idiots exhibition project represents a cross section across "artistic" and "artificial" intelligence on a sample group of Czech artists. This engenders an attentional shift from the individual artistic products to the fact that art also exists within the context of digital technologies where artificial intelligence encounters them." (Javůrek, T. & Meixnerová, M. & Trnková, B., 2022)

The cultural environment today is fundamentally determined by the operation of digital technologies and learning algorithms. A fast-paced, self-interested interactive dialogue between prosumers and technology developers about the tools for creating content and the formats of its consumption has replaced the traditional role of visual professionals as the ones responsible for creation. We are still exploring potential avenues for the art world to participate in this creative dialogue, not only in terms of formal inspiration and the use of pre-built AI tools, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in terms of generating novel perspectives and agendas that complement critical art practice.



Figure 1: View of the exhibition, AI: All Idiots, the MeetFactory Gallery, Prague, 2021, photo: Katarína Hudačínová

Figure 2: Aimee, a digital girl, AI: All Idiots, the MeetFactory Gallery, Prague, 2021, photo: Katarína Hudačínová



AI: All Idiots

Kurátoři: ScreenSaverGallery
Architektura výstavy: Jan Tomšů

MeetFactory (Gallery)

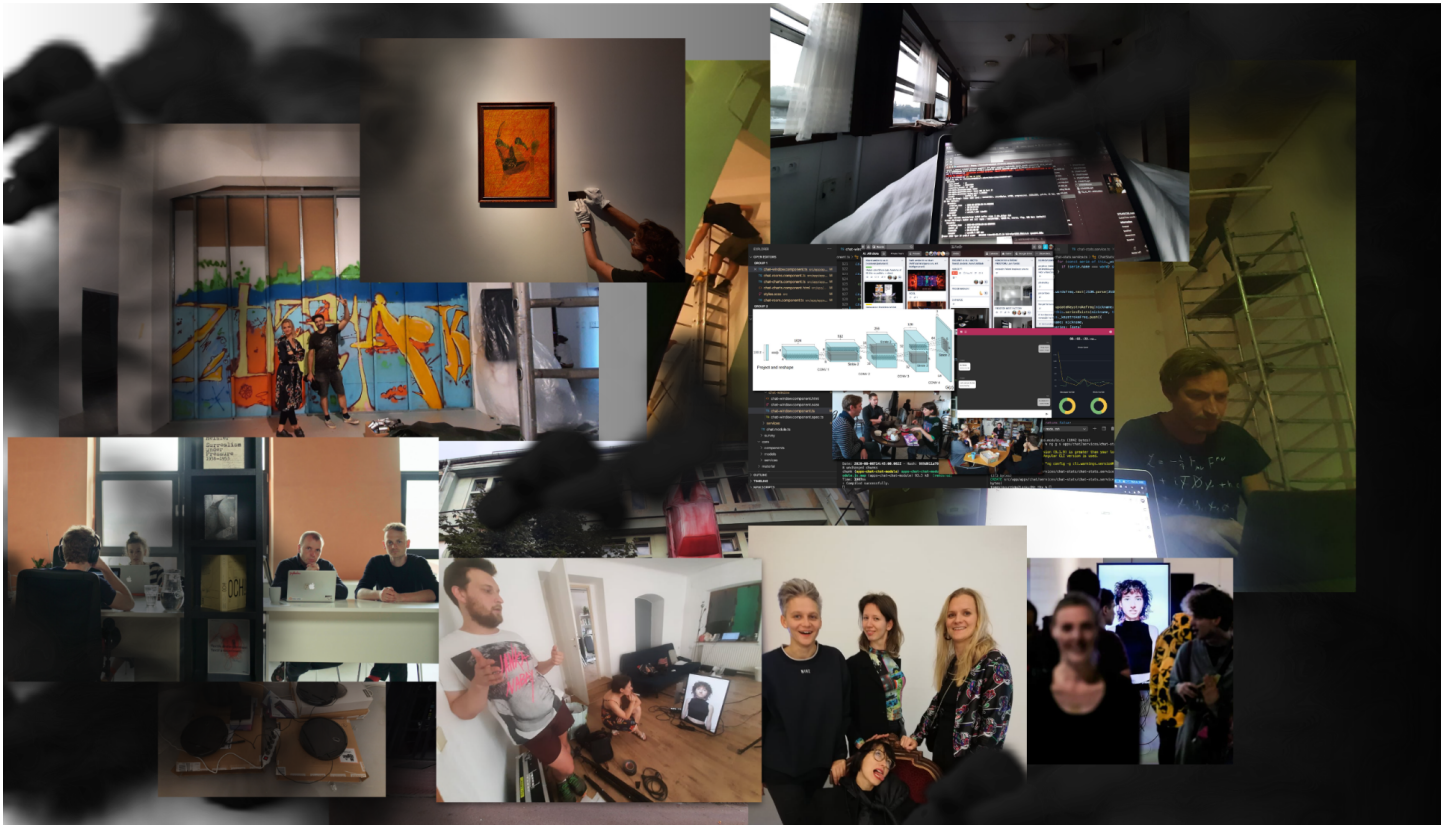
15. 9.-17. 10. 2021

Technické řešení: Tomáš Javůrek,
Kamil Jeřábek, Jaromír Pražák

Realizace: Jana Bernartová, Vilém Duha,
Andreas Gajdošík, Aimee Zia Hasan, Vladimír
Havlik, Tomáš Javůrek, Marie Meixnerová, Matěj
Smetana, Petra Ševců, Barbora Trnková



Preparation of the show, work in progress, backstage with the team



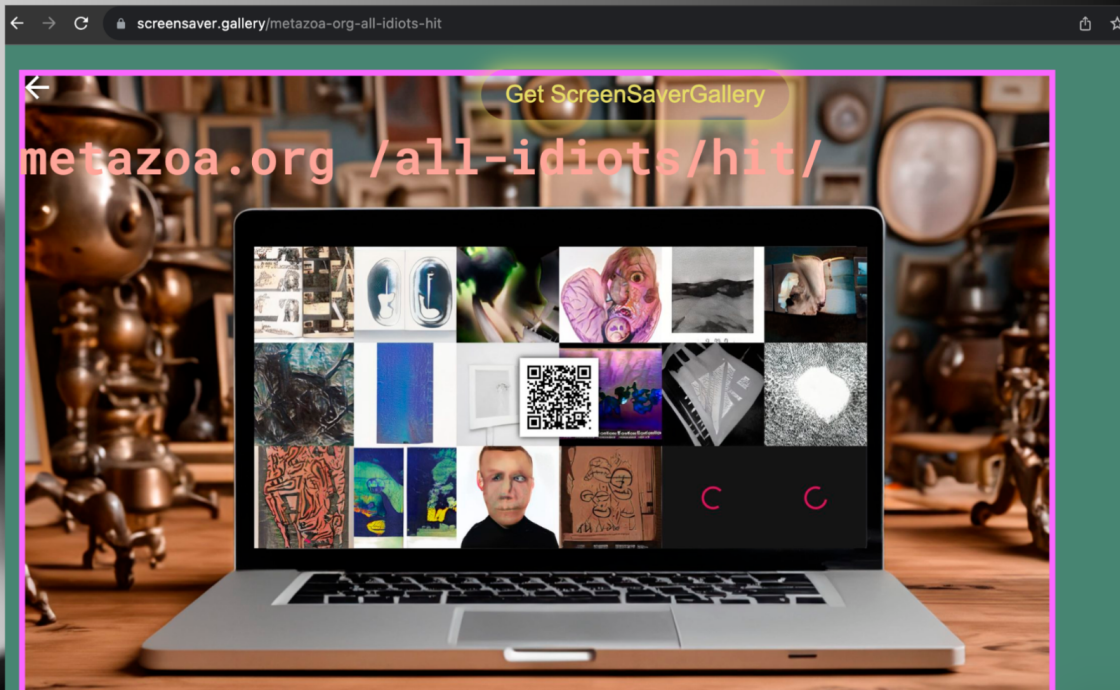
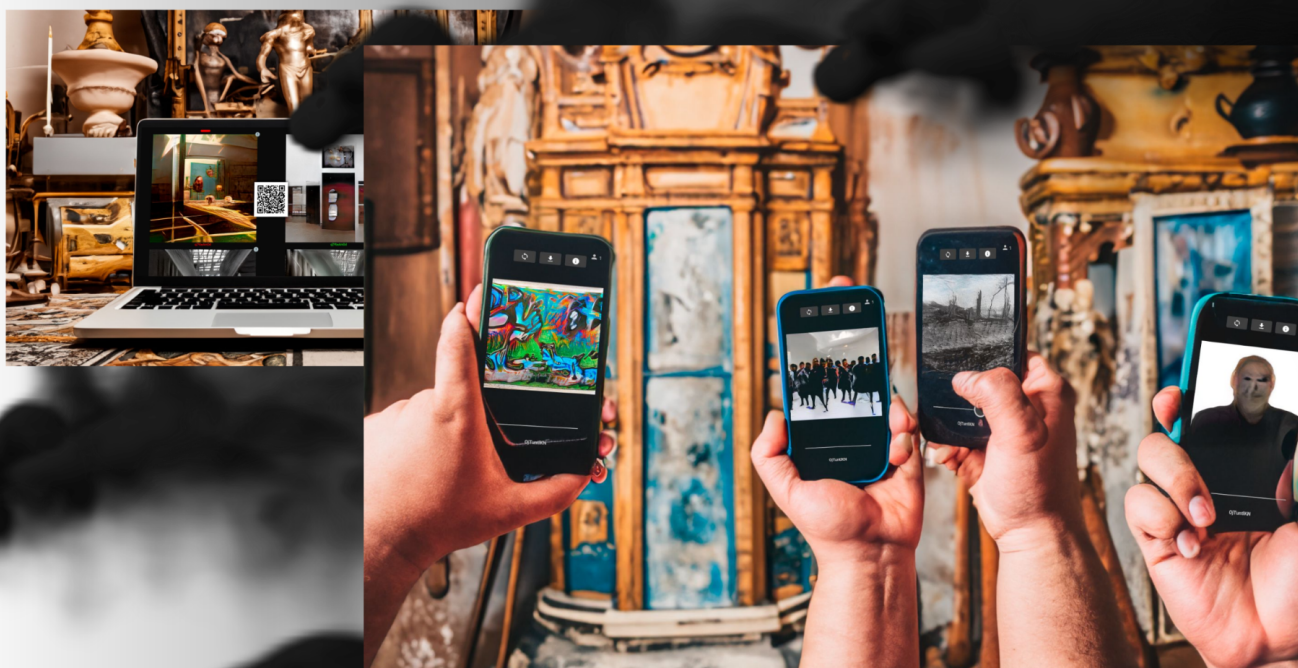
Examples of Output Generated by AI: All Idiots



Exhibition Photo Documentation (Photographer: Katarýna Hudačínová)

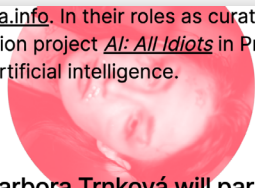


Photodocumentation of the exhibition of an application AI:All Idiots in ScreenSaverGallery 2022
(<https://screensaver.gallery/metazoa-org-all-idiots-hit>)



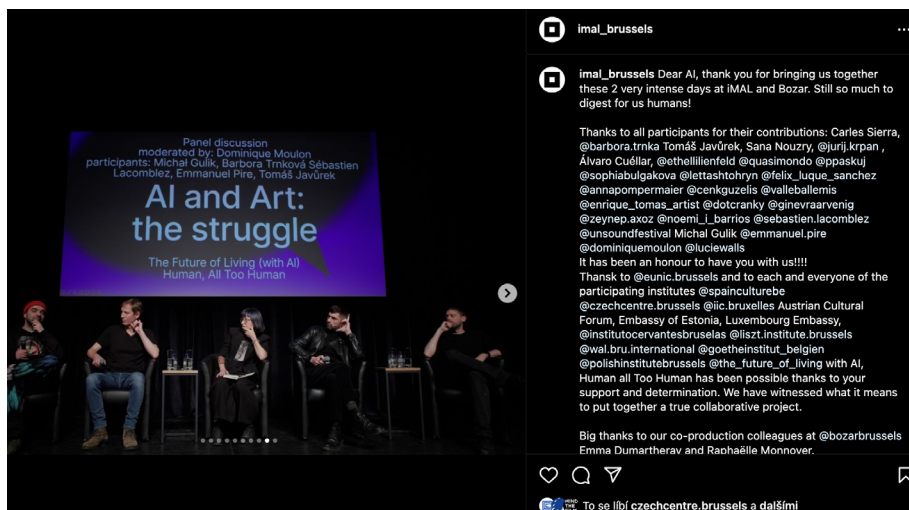
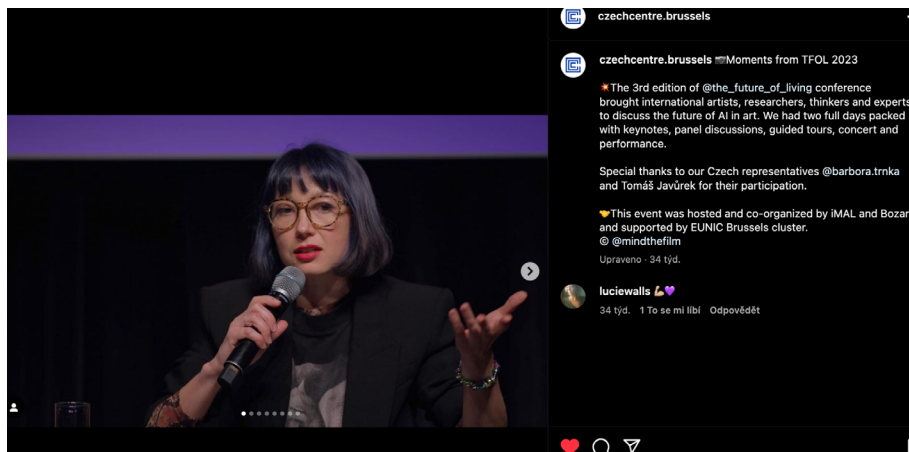
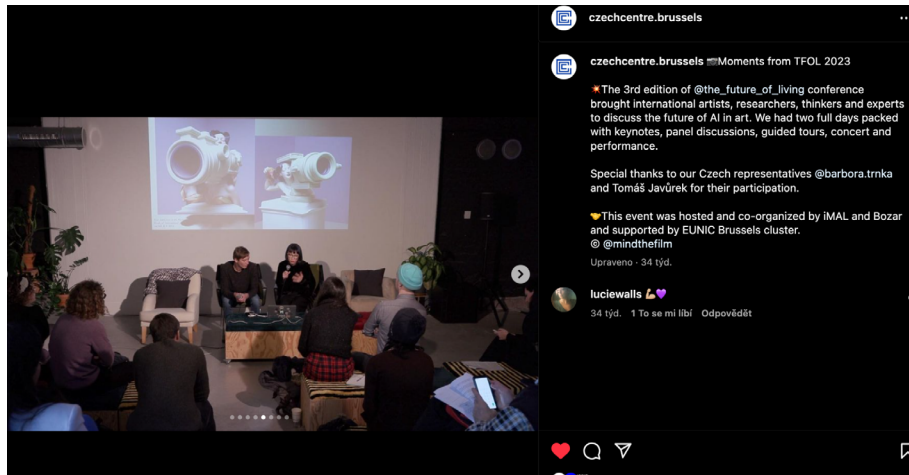
Screenshots from the Organizer's Website and Social Media Documenting Participation in the Conference „The Future of Living with AI“ in Brussels 2023: Presentation of the Exhibition and its Foundations Summarized in the Black Box Book, Discussion

related to big data and visual datatata.info. In their roles as curators at *ScreenSaverGallery*, they co-authored the participatory exhibition project *AI: All Idiots* in Prague's MeetFactory, which explores the intersection of art and artificial intelligence.

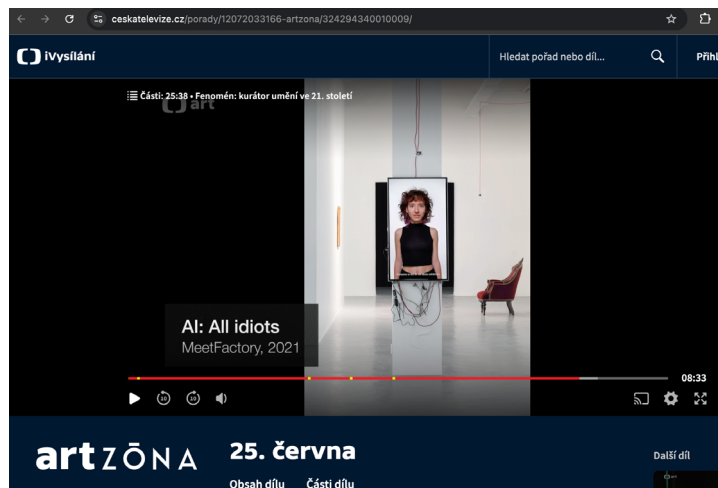
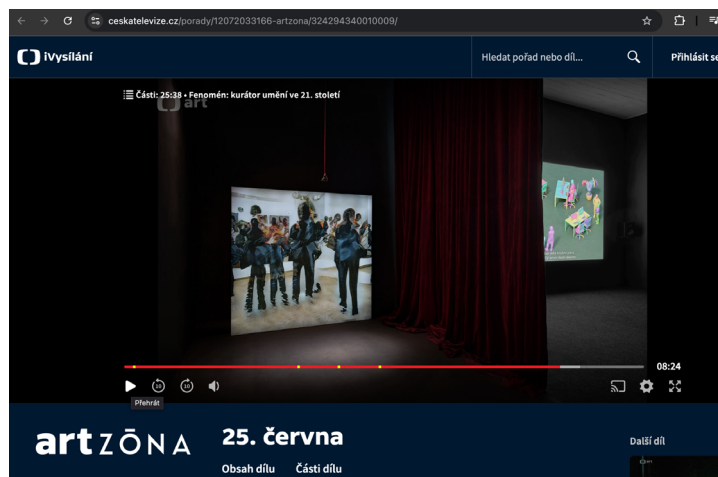
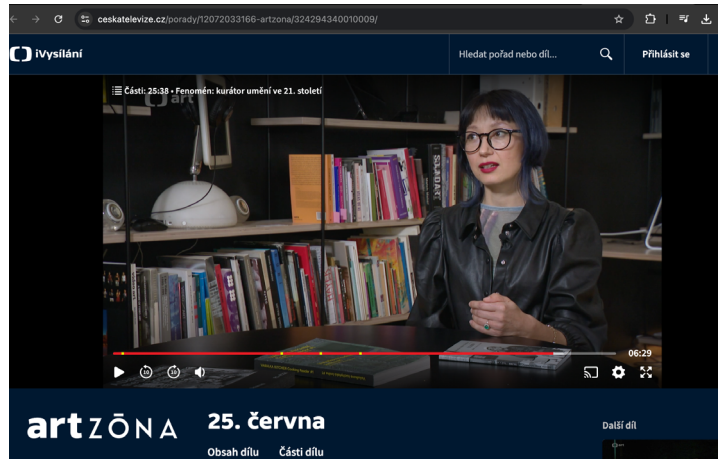


At The Future of Living 2023 [Barbora Trnková](#) will participate with a keynote: [AI: All Idiots](#). See more in the [Conference Programme](#).

At The Future of Living 2023 [Barbora Trnková](#) will participate with a panel discussion: [AI and Art: the struggle](#). See more in the [Conference Programme](#).



Visual Presentation of the AI: All Idiots Project and Discussion on the Impact of AI on the Art World and the Role of Curatorship on Artzóna, iVysílání, Czech Television, June 25, 2024



Presentation of the Exhibition, Discussed Theses in the Article, and Related Projects at Re-connect Art Prague Biennale 2024

