

LO/ MOME735/ Thesis Draft

Thesis Statement

A discourse between designer and audience through generative typography and art- Explore unique possibilities of communicating that continuously evolve based on the audiences' role and participation.

Abstract

This thesis examines that through applying interactivity with generative methods, motion media can be more than a tool of communication but a tool of conversation that allows audiences to react and provide feedback and thereby become a living, evolving organism when people interact with it. Under the common ways that the author/artist/designer creates, and the reader/audience receives, the works are fixated and non-changeable once they are made. This is more than a shift between the interpretation right between author and reader as Barthes claimed, but rather a change in the hierarchy that includes the audience into the conversation of creation. By adding interactivity to the dimension of motion graphics, artworks can change with the audience intervention for the outcome is not controlled by the designers and the authorship is thus blurred.

Keywords: Authorship, Autonomous, Generative Typography, Interactivity, Reactivity

Introduction

'Generative art refers to any art practice where the artist **uses a system**. . .which is set into **motion** with **some** degree of **autonomy** contributing to or resulting in a completed work of art' (Galanter 2003).'

As defined by Galanter in 2003, generative art may not be as "digital" as we might think. Every artwork that fit into the category stated above could be counted as generative. Computer language is only one of the approaches to achieve generative works due to its nature of processing information in a short time. There are many other methods suggested by Brownie to be considered as generative, for example, the Oulipian poets Raymond Queneau's work *Cent mille milliards de poemes* (1961) has no digital components, however, the way readers interact

with the book makes this artwork generative. Generally, in this type of work, possibilities for the reader/audience are endless.

History and Context

Deconstruction and its relation to generative typography in motion: Gianpaolo Tucci's experiment AI typography project X-Ray in G

Looking back to the history and trend of graphic design we can see a huge push away from legibility in the 80s. Leading designers such as Katherine McCoy, David Carson, and Neville Brody all tried to break the grid (rule) of graphic design. David Carson, especially, took the advantage of breaking, reassembling, and recycling the typeface and artifacts to make new compositions and create mood to communicate, deliver the message to the audience/reader. We can find the similarity in today's text prompt generative art that shares the same spirit of breaking the rules and experimenting with new ways of creating meaning using existing elements.

This push away from legibility can be seen again in current typography work made with machine learning engines such as MidJourney, Processing, and different software and hardware. One of the ways to make generative typography is through image generating engine. Generative typography with prompt-based machine learning prototypes such as MidJourney use image database and categorized collected images with words to detect the text-based prompt from its user. Users or artists must type a set of words for the machine to grab images that has the "tag" of the words to "re-assemble" images. The users will then decide whether the outcome aligns

with their imagination. If the outcome is not desirable, the user has a choice to re-generate the images with a click. The machine will then pair the images again with a different outcome. Such a process will repeat until the (nearly) desired outcome appears. This type of AI generated image normally creates issues that can be recognized by the human eye, such as unbalanced human facial structure, or abrupt mixture of objects and textures. We can see this type of AI engine as a tool that understands the prompt and collages, permutes, blends the images without knowing what the final product means. However, the only control the artists have been the textual prompt provided to the machine. The artists can decide whether they like the picture generated, whether to upscale the picture or regenerate certain or started over again or make the existing version with a higher resolution and definition, but the outcome is not in control of the artists' hand.



[Need to Cite the artist work above]

The experimental typography works made by artist Gianpaolo Tucci using MidJourney showed different layers of meaning. Without seeing this set of pictures in sequence, or without reading the title of the work “X-RAY in G” only part of the images is readable. Visually, the “X-RAY in G” series showed five pictures consecutively with 1080x1080 pixel dimensions on Instagram. Each picture contains an English alphabet. The alphabet is somewhat legible at the first glance, however when examined deeper, they are all deformed in different ways. Take the X for example, there is a horizontal bar in the bottom of the X where the top of the X is pointy. With the translucent texture in the center of the X, it creates an illusion that this X has a hidden A in it. Same thing goes with the “R” image, at a glimpse we can conclude that it is an R, while we look closer, the shape looks like two different R overlapping and overlaying on top of each other with the X-Ray scanned-like object inside the letterform. We can also see some organism-like objects in the pictures, some of the X-ray picture tone with the greyscale appearance, and the organism overlapped, crossed, merged and stuck out of the letterform.

What is interesting here is the way image generator smudges and combines different assets in a way that humans might not do. As much as David Carson deconstructed the images, the edges and shapes are based on a legible form. Whereas in the machine learning engine, shapes are “born” deformed, creating a new visual sensation to the audience. The default assumption that the work present in front of us is meaningful is no longer valid. Because when we scrutinize the picture, we will see it’s just a combination of shapes, textures, and random mixtures. However, that doesn’t mean the work itself is not aesthetically pleasing. We are drawn to the images because it looks like something that we are familiar with.

Compared to other machine learning image generators, this way of deconstruction is unique in MidJourney platform especially, however, it’s not new in art history. Looking back at the oil

paintings we can see that all the objects were consisted of the strokes that formed a shape with colors to be interpreted as a certain object for the viewer.

This kind of output raises different issues. Firstly, how do we recognize the letterform? Secondly, what does it mean to designers in general? How does it affect the time we work and create art and design? Thirdly, do artists who make AI art still hold agency or ownership to their work?

Several aspects are uncontrollable in generating AI images. The image database and how the code decides to pick which images to present and reassemble are not in the artists' control, but rather, relied on the developer's design. Artists can only try multiple combination sets of words to understand how the machine interprets the input prompt. Tucci, for instance, figured out a way to communicate with the machine. As he states at the first InScript Festival (an experimental typography event held by Typography Direct Club in 2022), [Show screenshot of the conference] some of the texts must be in certain ways to be understood by MidJourney engine.

Theories of Deleuze and Guttarie