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Attachments:

Council for Culture - Artistic over Artificial.pdf

U ontvangt niet vaak e-mail van secretariaat@cultuur.nl. [Ontdek waarom dit belangrijk is](#)

Beste relatie,

In juni deelden we met jullie ons advies *Kunstzinnig boven kunstmatig. Naar een waardengedreven toepassing van AI in de culturele en creatieve sector*. We hebben hierop veel mooie reacties ontvangen en zien dat het gesprek over AI en de culturele en creatieve sector volop gaande is.

Nu is er ook een Engelstalige versie van het rapport beschikbaar, omdat dit een onderwerp is dat zich niet beperkt tot de Nederlandse grenzen. Overal in Europa en daarbuiten is de impact van AI op de culturele en creatieve sector een veelbesproken onderwerp.

[Artistic over artificial. Towards a value-driven approach to AI for the cultural and creative sector](#) is nu te downloaden. We stellen het op prijs als u het advies deelt met internationale collega's of zusterorganisaties.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Pieter Bots en Ronald Nijboer
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ARTISTIC OVER ARTIFICIAL

Towards a value-driven approach to AI
for the cultural and creative sector



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Summary

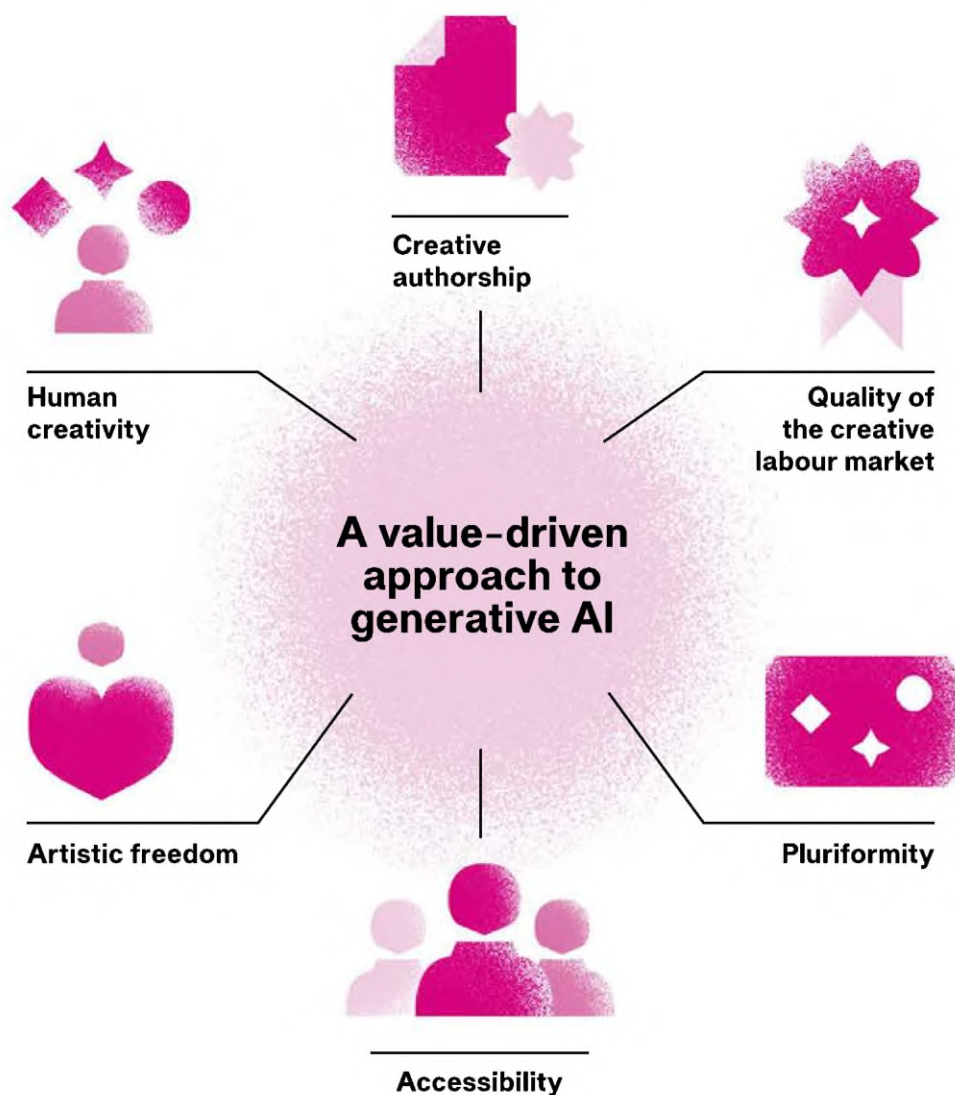
Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is profoundly influencing our lives because it permeates the way we work, receive our information and perceive reality. It impinges on the foundations of our existence and our coexistence. It deeply affects our culture. As such, generative AI is a social and cultural technology.

Moreover, AI is having a significant impact on the creative and cultural sector. It is already being used on a massive scale to write texts, compose and perform music and create images and videos. However, AI can only perform the role it plays in the creative process because the AI models have been trained using cultural data. That is all the creative content that has been produced over the centuries by writers, painters, designers, photographers and other makers. Our valuable, human art and culture are being used as fuel. This means that the companies behind the development of generative AI are using our culture for their own disruptive production process and business model, at the cost of what makes our society beautiful, strong and special, namely our culture.

The council believes that the impact of AI on the creative sector is of such a magnitude that it has decided to issue this own-initiative advisory report. The urgency is real. On the one hand, makers see opportunities: AI is frequently used at every stage of the creative process, for example as a sparring partner, as an artistic co-creator, through self-designed AI systems, in film post-production and book editing, in support of museum presentations, and as a way of actively engaging the audience and facilitating access to the archives.

On the other hand, there are serious concerns. AI technology is in the hands of a small group of heavily capitalised, primarily American, firms whose values are at odds with European values and whose only goals are to increase their own power and wealth. For them, AI is an engine for unbridled capital growth and absolute dominance, for which culture and art provide a useful and unprotected source of data. If we zoom in on the cultural and creative sector, we see that AI models have typically been trained using cultural data for which makers and rights-holders have not given their permission or been compensated. Additionally, those working in the creative sector are seeing the nature of their creative work changing and their professional practice being negatively impacted, with AI even taking over the work of some professional groups entirely. There are also serious concerns about bias, lack of cultural diversity and the environmental impact of the data centres needed to run the AI models.

The council believes that the government, the cultural and creative sector and society must make sure that AI is used in a responsible manner. As far as the council is concerned, that means a value-driven approach to generative AI:



AI can be used in a meaningful way in the creation of cultural and creative productions, but in doing so, the essential values must always be assured. The council has formulated six fundamental values of cultural and creative practice that should be central to the active protection of our art and culture against the influence of AI:

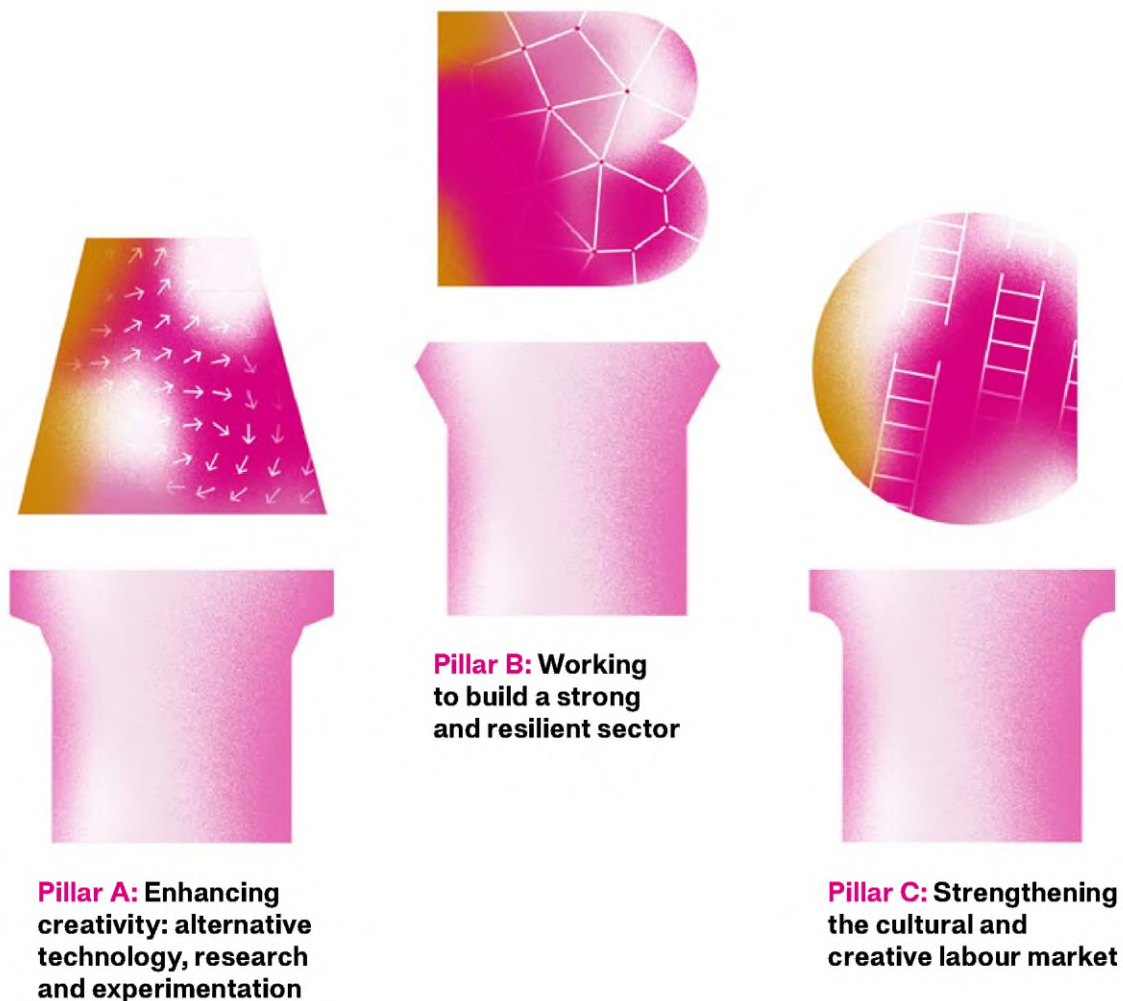
- **Human creativity:** AI respects, assures and stimulates human creativity;
- **Creative authorship:** AI respects, assures and protects the creative authorship of artists;
- **Quality of the creative labour market:** AI respects, protects and stimulates an equitable labour market for artists;
- **Pluriformity:** AI stimulates, protects and contributes to artistic pluriformity;
- **Accessibility:** AI respects, assures and stimulates free, broad and convenient access to art and culture;
- **Artistic freedom:** AI respects and contributes to the existence of complete artistic freedom.

AI must contribute to each value in a positive way. AI's influence on creative and cultural practice should be positive rather than negative. Technology should contribute to a strong cultural and creative sector, and rich and diverse arts and culture, rather than undermining them.

The council believes that it is possible to harness the power of culture and creativity for a value-driven approach to AI. For this reason, it advocates actively helping shape the development of AI, with the creative sector playing a key role. It has the exact innovative capacity needed to actively contribute to the development and improvement of AI.

That calls for protecting and utilising – protecting fundamental values of culture and creativity and utilising the power of creativity. The cultural and creative sector must make a significant contribution towards guiding this development within society and the design of alternatives. But it can only do so if it receives protection against the malignant growth of the current AI industry. Moreover, the sector must be given room to utilise the technology in the right way, which requires knowledge-building and space for experimentation.

The council has formulated recommendations for an approach to AI that protects fundamental values and exploits the opportunities of AI, which are summarised in three pillars.



Pillar A: Enhancing creativity: alternative technology, research and experimentation

AI should be at the service of creativity and the sector must therefore be enabled to make AI work for it. This requires space to experiment with new technology and explore new alternatives, as creative makers are already busy doing. Moreover, the cultural and creative sector is a flywheel for innovation in the whole economy. Creativity is essential to the innovative strength and earning capacity of the Netherlands. The sector should be an active element of government-wide and economic AI policy.

1. Stand up for the power of human creativity

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, other departments, provincial and municipal authorities:

1.1 *Public authorities should set an example by unequivocally choosing human creativity and continuing to invest in this sector and in the rapid and strict adoption of the laws, rules, codes and provisions we agree for the defence of our cultural values and human creativity.*

1.2 *Schools should stimulate the creativity of pupils and continually emphasise how human creativity distinguishes itself from AI; cultural institutions make a big contribution in this regard with their educational offering.*

To the sector:

1.3 *Emphasise the power of human creativity and make a case for it. Keep on putting the importance of human creativity on the agenda: in your own networks, in communication with politicians, policy makers and in public debates. This no longer goes without saying, and therefore warrants additional emphasis. Organisations in many sectors now work with principles or guidelines focused on human creativity.*

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the cultural funds, sector bodies, unions and the business community:

1.4 *Make arrangements about chain responsibility.*

Push for joint undertakings with business regarding the use of AI. For example, conclude a 'Value of creativity agreement', containing a commitment not to simply replace human creativity with 'AI slop'.

2. Promote and develop public AI alternatives and public AI infrastructure and start a new incentive programme, 'Towards a European AI culture'

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Economic Affairs and Climate Policy:

2.1 *In order to utilise the strengths of the creative industry to maximum effect and enable it to make an enduring contribution to the major societal transition that AI represents, and hence to future prosperity, the council is calling for an incentive programme, 'Towards a European AI culture', in line with the Dutch Groeifonds*

(Growth Fund) projects. A programme of this kind would enable the creative industry to work with business, government and market participants on public AI alternatives and public AI infrastructure.

To public authorities, business, science and the sector:

2.2 Continue to make room for and encourage new collaborations between artists, scientists and entrepreneurs.

2.3 Use the sector's strength in design to build alternatives with public values as design principles.

2.4 Work with datasets and models trained with a focus on literary and artistic traditions in Europe.

2.5 Link in with networks and economic and innovation agendas, including at the regional level.

Pillar B: Work on a strong and resilient sector

A strong cultural and creative sector has an essential role to play in the way we deal with generative AI as a society. In order to take on that role, the council makes the following urgent recommendations:

3. Introduce a content levy for AI suppliers

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, and Justice and Security:

3.1 Introduce an alternative compensation system via a levy on content for AI suppliers, with the proceeds going to the cultural and creative sector.

The European Parliament insists that the use of copyright-protected material by generative AI should be fairly compensated in order to protect the EU's creative sector. The council considers it a positive development that AI companies and rights-holders are making licence agreements, but observes that this often remains limited to rights-holders with large bodies of work. For this reason, the council calls for an alternative compensation system: a levy on the generation of content for AI providers. The proceeds of such a levy would go to the cultural and creative sector. This would mean every maker receiving an AI compensation.

4. Ensure robust and rapid implementation of European directives and regulations, including enforcement

To central government, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in particular:

4.1 The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science should keep a close eye on the interests of the cultural and creative sector, and should raise those interests with the supervising authority and other important parties. In doing so, it should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude but should actively take the lead, within the Netherlands and on behalf of the Netherlands in Europe.

5. Build interdisciplinary coalitions

To central government, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in particular:

5.1 *Appoint a government AI commissioner to ensure integrated policy.*

AI calls for government-wide policy. This is already happening through government-wide visions and numerous collaborations between the departments. Nevertheless, AI calls even more expressly for interdepartmental policy. It requires administrative responsibility and coordination at a high level between ministers chosen for their specific areas of expertise. A newly appointed government commissioner would be an excellent way of delivering this. The commissioner could make sure government – broadly defined – remains alert, operating from an independent, powerfully mandated position.

5.2 *The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science needs to stand up for the interests of creative makers and artists within central government.*

To date, little account has been taken of the interests of creative makers when developing AI models. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is in a position to identify specific issues within the cultural and creative sector more quickly than other departments and also to actively draw the attention of departments – for example, those of Justice and Security, Economic Affairs and Climate, Interior and Kingdom Relations, and Social Affairs and Employment – to those issues. In an EU context, there is an obvious role for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to play in championing the value of creativity and leading the way in preparing and furthering legislation and regulations to protect the Dutch and European creative sectors.

To the sector:

5.3 *Pursue collaborations with other sectors – such as journalism and education – with the goal of co-creating AI.*

When it comes to AI, it is essential to choose an approach that encompasses the whole of society. AI and human creativity are societal issues. Therefore, set up partnerships between the creative sector and other domains, such as education, science and civil society organisations. Also aim to collaborate with economic agendas, business and the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO/NCW). In doing so, learn from other sectors that are developing societal strategies to ensure that AI lands positively.

6. Build knowledge and expertise and work on AI policy within the sector

To makers, cultural institutions, sector bodies, culture funds and supra-sectoral institutions:

6.1 *Develop knowledge and expertise, as individual makers, as organisations and as a sector. The entire sector has a responsibility in this regard, from individuals and organisations to sector bodies and supra-sectoral institutions. Again, collaboration and knowledge-sharing are crucial.*

6.2 *Take a lead in the debate about the role of AI and contribute to the AI-literacy of society.*

6.3 *Work to develop organisation-wide policy and establish an ongoing conversation about how to deal with AI within the sector.*

To arts education:

6.4 *Continue to develop and assure competencies that transcend individual technologies.*

Lecturers must be empowered to conduct a dialogue with students about AI, explore alternative AI technologies and consciously build on the long traditions of creative technology and generative arts in arts education.

7. Enable agility by setting up a societal ‘AI and culture’ taskforce

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the sector:

7.1 *Set up a societal ‘AI and culture’ taskforce. This should be a shared initiative by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the sector, with the sector taking the lead, supported by the ministry.*

A societal taskforce will help the sector and the ministry to be agile and enable them to continually reflect and intervene. This taskforce could be made up of representatives from across the sector, so that policy can respond flexibly to the rapid pace of developments.

Pillar C: Strengthen the cultural and creative labour market

The council urges a strengthening of the creative dialogue and calls on cultural and creative advocacy groups to work together as far as possible. It is important that the sector speaks with one voice and is able to position itself effectively. In addition, makers and organisations must be given opportunities for retraining or further training.

8. Continue to build a robust shared labour market infrastructure for the whole sector

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Social Affairs and Employment, unions and the sector:

8.1 *Drawing on the expertise of the Centre for Labour Relations in the Public Sector (CAOP), investigate what forms of collective advocacy can give makers a more enduring and stronger position in the representation of collective interests (including labour market interests) around AI.*

9. Establish a training, development and transition fund

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Social Affairs and Employment:

9.1 Expand *Werktuig PPO*.

The sector needs AI-related learning opportunities, on the one hand in order to keep up, on the other to combat inequality. It is inevitable that jobs will change, partly under the influence of generative AI, but that also gives rise to a shared responsibility. For this reason, the council is calling for an expansion of the *Werktuig PPO* (permanent professional development tools) as an instrument for training, retraining and further training.

10. Assure career opportunities and new growth paths in the sector

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science:

10.1 Investigate what the use of AI means for career opportunities and growth paths, specifically for young talent.

Explore ways of ensuring that new makers are able to gain experience and develop the skills they will later need for key roles in the sector.

To provincial and municipal authorities, cultural funds, the sector and education.

10.2 Continue to invest in providing room and budget for talent development and growth. Make sure that young makers are able to develop, including after their courses have finished or outside of education, to give them strength and resilience amid the major changes being brought about by AI.

Loss of learning opportunities is a realistic risk in an already vulnerable field. Start a conversation about future learning opportunities within the sector and arts education, and focus on entrepreneurship education, in which students learn to negotiate with clients and make explicit the value of art made by human hands.

In conclusion

In previous advisory reports, the council noted that the central government cultural budget is inadequate. An increase of €250 million in the annual budget is already needed in order to enable the sector to function properly. This advisory report supports the necessity of additional funding. The sector has a very important role to play in enabling society to deal with AI in a desirable manner, and it needs to be given the capacity to do so, in order that it can adapt to a changing world, has space to experiment and is able to develop alternatives.



1.

Introduction

1.1 A value-driven approach to AI in the creative and cultural sector

Generative AI is an inherently cultural technology. AI models have been trained using books, photos, videos and other cultural expressions. They exist by the grace of cultural data. Although AI is generally viewed from a technological or economic perspective, it is in its essence a cultural and social technology.¹

Our valuable culture is being used as fuel, and it risks being burned up by AI: melted down into an amorphous average, without identity or uniqueness, degenerating into so-called 'AI slop'. As such, AI threatens the foundation of our society, our culture – sometimes unconsciously, often consciously. Companies that develop generative AI are using our culture as a cheap – because not paid-for – raw material for their own disruptive production process and business model, at the cost of what makes our society beautiful, strong and special, namely our culture.

Generative AI uses our culture as fuel, but conversely it also deeply influences our culture: how we speak, how we think, how we work, what we make and who receives what information. It affects our education, our journalism, our language, how and what culture we experience, our safety and our democracy.

There is nothing new about technology influencing our society and culture. However, the speed and brute force with which it is taking place is. Never before has a technology developed and been adopted so quickly. What is even more concerning than the speed is the fact that this technology is being developed by just a handful of players, mostly from the United States. They stand for the unbridled accumulation of power and for nothing more than profit and strengthening their own position. The development of AI is largely in the hands of a small group of heavily capitalised, primarily American, firms whose values are at odds with European values and law. Their products, services and systems massively impact our society and our culture. The Council for Culture regards this as a threatening development and believes the time is ripe to intervene and correct course. According to the council, AI ought to be in service of our arts and our creativity, but also of democracy, journalism, education and the other pillars that support our society. Looking to the future, we therefore need to steel ourselves to defend the basis of our society – our culture – and make it resilient. And, as part of that, to retake the initiative and co-create AI based on *our* values and cultural traditions and contribute to a technology that strengthens and enriches our society and community. It is possible. But a lot has to be done. And soon.

The council therefore believes that the government, the creative sector and society must ensure that AI is used in a responsible manner. It considers the situation to be so urgent that it has decided to issue this own-initiative advisory report. In this report, we analyse the issues and identify measures that will contribute to a solution.

¹ Keller 2025.

In preparation for this report, the council has spent the past year and a half on a wide-ranging exploration of the consequences of AI for the cultural and creative sector. Those consequences are revealed to be far-reaching in many areas: makers see their work being used to train AI models without their permission; they see their creative work changing, along with employment relationships; and the cultural diversity of the entire cultural sector is at risk. A change of direction will require external intervention: from government, the sector, civil society organisations and the new market participants that will be given an opportunity in the new and regulated space.

The council sees many opportunities for promoting the accessibility of culture and experimenting with all kinds of new possibilities. But the current way in which the AI industry is organised takes no account of the interests of creative makers, nor of society as a whole. For this reason, we face an important choice: do we in government and in the sector want to passively undergo the developments, or do we want to be actively involved in shaping them? The council unequivocally opts for the latter. Now is the time for a course correction. Nothing less than our culture and our cultural sector are at stake. Action is called for.

As far as the council is concerned, the direction of that action is a *value-driven approach* to generative AI. In other words, not profit-driven, but value-driven. AI can be used in a meaningful way for culture and creativity, but the essential values of culture and creativity must always be assured.

The recommendations in this advisory report are based on six values which are fundamental to the production and reception of creative expressions.² They are intrinsic values, which is to say that they are inextricably linked with art, culture and creativity. The values are:

- **human creativity**, in which a meaningful imagination that is rooted in experience is expressed and the unique authorship of the maker is visible;
- **creative authorship of the maker**, whose intellectual property must be protected;
- **quality of the creative labour market**, which is accessible to all and where fair payment is the norm;
- **pluriformity of the cultural offering**, in which the existing is cherished, cultural diversity is safeguarded and promoted, and the new is embraced;
- **accessibility of the cultural offering**, with the lowest possible barriers to the public;
- **artistic freedom**, so that makers are free to make and present their work without interference.

Starting from these values, we can work towards a future in which AI is in the service of our culture and our creativity. For this reason, in its recommendations, the council will make sure that these values are guaranteed as far as possible.

² These values are an elaboration of the four objectives for cultural policy which the council formulated previously, focused on the way in which AI acts upon cultural and creative practice. Those objectives are: 1. Creative and artistic talent in all genres and disciplines receive sufficient opportunities and possibilities to develop artistically; 2. Everyone in the Netherlands, regardless of age, cultural background, income and place of residence, has access to culture; 3. The government ensures a pluriform cultural offering, in which the existing is cherished and the new is embraced; 4. There is a reciprocal relationship between culture and society. Culture functions as a safe haven for critical reflection on society and its citizens. Conversely, the cultural sector is accountable for its place in society. See: Council for Culture 2017 and Council for Culture 2024.

1.2 Delineation

Definition of AI

Since the arrival of generative AI, millions of people have used generative AI applications to create new texts, images, music and videos. This has an impact on society as a whole and specifically on the cultural and creative sector, which exists thanks to the act of creation, from literature and music to films and buildings.

Before we examine the consequences, it is important to define AI and differentiate the different forms of AI. After all, using AI to optimise work scheduling or the accounts in an organisation is very different from generating a video. Nevertheless, both applications fall under AI. As has already been pointed out by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), defining AI is not straightforward. No unambiguous definition can be given, and definitions are also constantly being updated. A commonly used definition is from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This definition is also used by the government and provided the basis for the European AI regulation. It is as follows:

AI system: a machine-based system that is designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy and that may exhibit adaptiveness after deployment, and that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments.³

Focus on generative AI and the impact on the creative process

An important distinction is that between task-specific AI and generative AI. Task-specific AI is designed for a single, defined application, for example spam filters, facial recognition or the recommendation algorithms used by Netflix and Spotify. Although these forms of AI also have an influence on the cultural and creative sector, the focus of this advisory report is on generative AI. This is because the latter type raises the most direct and urgent questions for the sector. Familiar applications are models that generate language, such as ChatGPT and Copilot; ones that generate images, such as DALL-E, Midjourney and Nano Banana; ones that generate videos, such as Sora and Veo; and ones that generate music, such as Suno and Udio.

In contrast to task-specific AI, generative AI is capable of producing content such as text, image, audio and video based on simple prompts, and it can also ‘write code’ and perform analyses. In the *Government-wide Vision on Generative AI*, generative AI is defined as follows:

A form of AI featuring the use of complex algorithms to generate new content, such as text, images, computer code or videos.⁴

Two types of models are most commonly used for generative AI applications. Large Language Models (LLMs) are trained using huge volumes of text and provide the basis for applications such as ChatGPT and Copilot. Diffusion models learn by removing noise from images step by step and often underlie image generators and video generators. Both types of models are trained using large volumes of existing content (text, images, audio) to generate new content.

³ OECD 2023.

⁴ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2024.

Our focus is primarily on the impact of generative AI on the creative process, on what differentiates creative work from other work. This means that this advisory report is mostly concerned with the *maker's perspective*. Under the broad term 'makers', we understand professionals working in the cultural and creative sector who are involved in the creation, production and execution of cultural and creative productions. This is a large and diverse group: writers, translators, photographers, choreographers, directors, composers, visual artists, illustrators, dancers, actors, musicians, designers, graphic designers, animators, fashion designers, architects, game designers, set and lighting designers and editors all fall under the term 'makers'. With this focus on the professional makers of cultural and creative productions, we are necessarily limiting ourselves. One of the important characteristics of generative AI is precisely that it also makes it easier for amateurs to produce images, songs, video clips and texts. That is to say that matters such as artistic ownership relate to a much bigger target group. However, within the scope of this advisory report, we will not go deeply into the fundamental questions that such issues raise.

In line with Statistics Netherlands⁵, we understand the creative and cultural sector to mean the sectors that focus on the creation, production, execution, distribution, presentation and archiving of cultural and creative products and activities: these include the domain of arts, heritage and creative industry, with the associated sectors of performing arts, visual arts, literature, film, design and architecture.

According to this delineation, journalism also belongs to the creative sector. We observe that generative AI throws up all kinds of specific issues within journalism concerning disinformation and the way we consume information. For this reason, the council is currently working on an advisory report about journalistic freedom, in which the impact of generative AI on journalism is explicitly addressed. For this reason, we do not consider this sector in this advisory report.

1.3 Structure

WHAT DO WE SEE IN PRACTICE?	WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR?	WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES?
2. How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector?	4. Which fundamental values are being influenced?	5. Recommendations for policy
3. What are the most important issues?		

The above table presents the structure of this advisory report. First of all, we describe current practice. In chapter 2, we outline how AI manifests in the cultural sector. Using examples, we show how artists and makers are using AI in their creative practice. In chapter 3, we then describe the most important issues, taken from the literature and conversations held by the council. In turn, we discuss issues around copyright and ownership, the influence of AI on the labour market, concentration

5 In delineating the sector, we follow the distinction made by Statistics Netherlands based on 'SBI codes' (codes for standard company classification – *Standaard Bedrijfsindeling* in Dutch), focusing on the cultural and creative sector. Statistics Netherlands divides the sector into three subsectors: 1) arts, 2) media & entertainment, and 3) creative business services. This classification is also used by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Culture Monitor. See www.cbs.nl.

of power among the companies that develop and operate AI models, the bias of AI models and the ecological footprint of AI models. In this chapter, we also address the question of how the creative sector can help shape the future with AI. In chapter 4, we translate that practice into the question of what this means for the cultural and creative sector: which fundamental values are being influenced? Finally, in chapter 5, we put forward recommendations for policy, in order to assure those fundamental values.

1.4 Working method

This advisory report has been prepared by a committee of experts. The council composed the committee from members who have different perspectives on and specific expertise in the cultural and creative sector and generative AI. The committee consisted of Martijn van der Steen (committee chair, professor by special appointment of strategy & futures, Erasmus University), Danielle Arets (member of the Council for Culture and professor of Designing Journalism, Fontys University of Applied Sciences), Abdelhadi Baaddi (interdisciplinary maker and joint founder of Innovation:Lab), Wike Been (university lecturer in Labour Sociology, University of Groningen), Martin Senftleben (professor of Intellectual Property Law, University of Amsterdam) and Tom van de Wetering (project leader for generative AI, HKU University of the Arts Utrecht). Pieter Bots and Ronald Nijboer acted as secretaries to the committee. The advisory report was prepared by the committee and approved by the Council for Culture, which has final responsibility for the content.

In 2025 and 2026, the committee spoke to over eighty individuals and institutions: individual makers, cultural organisations, sector bodies, performing rights organisations, public authorities, scientists and AI developers and experts. The committee also conducted literature research. A list of interviewees and sources is included as an appendix to this report.

Because this is an advisory report by the Council for Culture, in the rest of the report we refer to ‘the council’.

In documenting the conversations and meetings, the committee made use of AI tools. The text of the advisory report was entirely written by humans



2.

AI in the creative ecosystem

WHAT DO WE SEE IN PRACTICE?	WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR?	WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES?
2. How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector?	4. Which fundamental values are being influenced?	5. Recommendations for policy
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2.1 Introduction of the subject matter

How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector? In this chapter, we describe how AI is currently being used in the creative process. First of all, we explore the subject matter and share insights from the conversations with interviewees.

It is important to state that AI is not a new phenomenon. People have been thinking about artificial forms of life and intelligence for centuries. The term AI dates back to 1956, when the American computer scientist John McCarthy coined the term *Artificial Intelligence*. For decades, AI remained the domain of scientists (and pioneering artists: see text box), but since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, it has really taken off. Since then, generative AI systems have come within reach of the masses, and AI is also omnipresent in the creative sector: as a tool, but also as a source of complete images, songs, texts and videos.

Tradition of generative art

Within media art and computational art, there has been a rich tradition of generative art since the 1960s, with artists writing algorithms and control systems that produce work autonomously, for example the computer works by Peter Struycken in the 1960s and later the algorithmic installations by Driessens & Verstappen. In this classic generative art, coincidence – deliberately – plays a role, but control over the mathematical logic lies with the artist.

Contemporary generative AI differentiates itself from this because the models are often not programmed by the maker, but are trained using enormous quantities of existing material, created by people, such as texts, images, music, video and programming code (although there are now also artists who are programming and training models based on their own material). The models learn statistical patterns using that material and generate new output based on them. The ‘logic’ of the system therefore arises not from the intention of a maker, but from the structure of what has already been made. This raises

fundamental questions about authorship, originality and the relationship with existing work.

The rapid rise of generative AI quickly led to debates within the arts about the question of whether AI can be creative⁶ – a discussion that is actually much older. As long ago as 1843, the scientist Ada Lovelace predicted that machines would never be able to generate anything original. The cognitive scientist and philosopher Margaret Boden, who recently passed away, also discussed the question of whether AI can be creative at length. She did regard AI as an instrument for better understanding the abstract term ‘creativity’, and defined a creative idea as something that is new, surprising and valuable, which AI is capable of.⁷ However, according to Boden, creativity is about more than merely generating new ideas, but also about motivation, emotion and intention. Creativity is focused not only on the result but on the process, which makes creativity a fundamental hallmark of human intelligence.

At the same time, whether AI can be creative may not be the most interesting question.⁸ The consequences of AI for the cultural and creative sector are already so manifest that for makers, another, existential question is more relevant: how will human creativity change under the influence of AI, and what practical consequences will the rise of AI have in the creative sector? For this reason, it is important in this advisory report to focus on the way in which AI is changing the creative processes and sectors and how we can approach AI in a way that assures, protects and strengthens human creativity within the cultural and creative sector.

How ubiquitous AI already is in the cultural and creative sector is revealed by a recent survey by Creatieve Coalitie and the Boekman Foundation⁹. Those working in the sector were asked about the impact of generative AI on work and income. 42.8 percent of respondents said they use AI for their work daily or weekly, with text generation and editing being the most popular (83 percent of respondents), followed by image generation and processing (37 percent of respondents). In the design sector, AI is used even more intensively, as demonstrated by recent research by the Association of Dutch Designers (BNO)¹⁰: 52 percent of respondents use AI daily or weekly in their design practice. Idea development in the concept phase, generating visuals and copywriting are the most common applications.

The significant impact of AI on the cultural and creative sector was also shown by the interviews held by the council in preparation for this advisory report. The view of the majority of those interviewed is that the developments cannot be halted. The creative sector has to find some way of relating to them. The pace of those developments differs markedly per sector. In film, video games and architecture, digitalisation is the order of the day, and some makers regard working with AI as a logical next step in a process that is already digitalised to a large extent. Interviewees in this sector describe AI as an addition to the digital tools already available that can accelerate and enrich steps in the creative process. Generally speaking, it is relatively easy to integrate AI into work processes, although doing so does require a lot of know-how and experience. However, it does confront architects and designers with the question of how AI can best be used, and especially how effective human control can be exerted over the systems. For instance, AI is very

⁶ Moruzzi 2025.

⁷ Boden 1998.

⁸ Moruzzi 2025; Celis Bueno et al. 2024.

⁹ Boekman Foundation 2025a.

¹⁰ Association of Dutch Designers 2026.

well suited to performing calculations for the built environment, but human control is crucial. In other sectors, such as theatre and dance, the possibilities of AI represent a new area that is currently only being explored by a few pioneers.

In addition, AI offers the possibility of generating complete works, such as songs, books and images. It can also take over entire parts of the creative process, such as voice-overs and translations. The fact that much work is being taken from certain professional groups, such as voice actors and translators, is leading to serious concerns among those groups. Currently, 20 percent of the respondents in the Boekman Foundation study cited say that orders and incomes are currently falling as a result of AI; 65 percent of those who are self-employed say they fear their paid work will decrease in the future.

Most of the interviewees see the added value of AI in supporting the creative process, but they do believe a computer should never replace human creativity. It is primarily useful as a tool to take over specific, sometimes time-consuming tasks. As such, makers want to see a role for AI that adds something fundamental to the creative process. As the fantasy author Joanna Maciejewska has commented: “I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so that I can do art and writing, not for AI to do my art and writing so that I can do my laundry and dishes.” For most of the interviewees, that is the crux of the matter: thinking carefully about what you use AI for. What is it giving you, what are you losing as a result, and how much better off are you?

According to the respondents, the reactions of the public to the various AI applications are also very mixed. Interviewees report that in some sectors, such as parts of the gaming world, resistance is very strong. Academic research shows that the fact that AI offers many possibilities does not automatically mean that it will be widely accepted by makers and the public. So on the one hand, respondents may consider AI poems to be more beautiful than poems written by humans¹¹ and are not always able to differentiate between music made by AI and music made by humans¹². But on the other hand, when people are told that a work of art is AI-generated, their judgements are immediately a good deal more negative.¹³

Virtually all those interviewed emphasised the pleasure of making. They want to use AI where it supports and strengthens their creative process, but are careful not to outsource their creative process. In 2025, Mikey Shulman, CEO of AI music company Suno, claimed that the majority of people derive little pleasure from making music. “It takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of practice, you need to get really good at an instrument or really good at a piece of production software. I think the majority of people don’t enjoy the majority of the time they spend making music.”¹⁴ His comments attracted heavy criticism from musicians all over the world. A number of those the council spoke to also criticised this statement because it subordinates the process of creation to the end result. “The creative process takes effort, but that’s also what makes it worth the effort”, in the words of one interviewee. In this connection, interviewees also described the risk of ‘creative offloading’: by making frequent use of AI in performing particular tasks, artists lose certain skills that are important for innovating the creative process.

¹¹ Porter and Machery, 2024.

¹² Figueiredo et al., 2025.

¹³ Du Sautoy, 2020.

¹⁴ <https://futurism.com/suno-ai-ceo-making-music>

Demystification

Respondents emphasise that the creative contribution of AI should not be overestimated. While it is true that AI has massively lowered the barriers to making complete texts, pieces of music, images and films, which are no longer necessarily distinguishable from works of art made by humans, those interviewed believe that intuition, context and experience are essential, and that they cannot be replaced by AI in a good design – at least not yet. On the one hand, respondents observe that, in some sectors, there is a belief that AI will profoundly change the creative sector, and that fully utilising the potential of AI is unavoidable. On the other, a number of those consulted cite the so-called Gartner Hype Cycle, which shows how the popularity of hypes develops over time. According to them, the sector is currently in the trough of disillusionment of AI: the results that can be achieved by AI are not so earth-shattering. AI turns out to be less suitable than hoped for in terms of the goals that artists want to achieve and how easily you can create truly high-quality art with it.

In order to get the hype back into perspective, a number of interviewees stress the importance of demystifying AI. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) has previously advocated doing so, because all kinds of myths can easily grow up around AI – for instance, on the one hand, unrealistically high expectations that it will provide answers to all kinds of societal issues and, on the other, extreme pessimism and doom scenarios about the impact of the new technology.¹⁵ Several respondents observe that artists can in fact play a role in this regard. By reflecting critically on technology and portraying alternative futures, art is in fact perfectly placed to contribute to the demystification of AI.

2.2 AI applications in the creative process

How is AI currently being used in the creative sector in practice? In the remainder of this chapter, we provide a broad but anything but comprehensive overview of the applications of AI in the cultural and creative sector, drawing on some recent examples. In line with the focus of this advisory report, most of the examples are about generative AI, although several also relate to task-specific AI. The overview provides an impression of the current possibilities, and how they are finding their way into creative use. We have ordered them according to different phases of the creative process. We differentiate the following phases: creation, production, post-production, distribution, reception and archiving. These phases can succeed one another in a linear fashion, but in parallel with how ecosystems work,¹⁶ they can also relate to one another in other ways. Sometimes these phases overlap, coincide or change order.¹⁷ For example, AI can help make the audience (which is the actor in the receptive phase) a co-creator.

Creation

The interviews we held by way of preparation for our advisory report reveal that AI is often already being used in the first phase of the creation process: as a ‘partner’ to brainstorm with, which can help in the process of creative research. In doing so, AI may facilitate a tendency for working processes to become increasingly individualistic. Makers test their own artistic ideas against a Large Language Model, ask AI to generate different design sketches and so on. For design sectors (such as design, graphic design, architecture, set design, fashion), AI offers the

¹⁵ WRR 2021.

¹⁶ Holden 2015.

¹⁷ DEN, the knowledge institute for culture & digital transformation, has placed a number of these phases in a diagram with four quadrants, ordered along the axes of maker-audience and product-company (DEN 2024).

possibility of generating different variants and adjusting them according to the maker's taste, because AI models draw on an extensive corpus of text, music and images which are used to enrich inspiration, so an original concept can be blended with other sources.

Rapidly visualising different concept designs not only serves the inspiration of the maker, it is also practical for presenting a concept design or mood board to a client. In architecture, so-called 'digital twins' of urban areas are being generated, allowing the user to explore how different variants of a future building relate to the surrounding environment. Another way of visualising ideas takes place in the film sector, with AI being used to generate storyboards based on a script.

AI-generated prototypes are also used in the music sector: for example, producers can already add an AI-generated voice to their compositions, choosing between different types of voices (for example, male or female). Only later is the actual vocal track recorded, featuring a human voice.

At the same time, the use of AI in the creative phase prompts questions about the creative process itself. When a designer adds variation to AI-generated sketches or a composer builds on an AI-generated prototype, the creative input and the role of the maker change, and that can also influence how copyright, remuneration and artistic responsibility are determined. Moreover, there is a risk that the enormous catalogue which AI draws from will result in repetition of what already exists, rather than actual innovation: the average of what is already there becomes easier to achieve, but what truly deviates from the norm is not necessarily stimulated.

Production

In the production process, AI is used in various ways. In the first place, makers use AI as a tool to speed up production and make it easier. Writers or screenwriters use AI to quickly search through their novels or screenplays and remove incongruities from them. They also ask for focused tips to improve sentence structure. For example, in his weblog, novelist Walter van den Berg relates how he had AI read his manuscript when he was wondering whether a character would or would not do or say something. "Claude came up with surprisingly good literary insights, and was genuinely able to work as a motivating editor", writes Van den Berg¹⁸. AI tools allow composers to isolate and reuse individual instrument parts, master and mix tracks or arrange compositions differently. In 2023, this made it possible to issue a previously unreleased song by The Beatles, 'Now and Then'. John Lennon's voice had been isolated from an old demo using AI and added to a new arrangement. In the performing arts, AI is used to help make light designs, for example to make sure that spotlights automatically follow the actors and light them precisely.

AI can also produce parts of the work of art itself. For example, in the film sector, AI is used to generate scenes or elements which are complicated in production terms, such as film sets or action scenes. A first step in this direction was showcased by the Netflix film *iHostage*, about the hostage-taking inside the Amsterdam Apple Store, for which the streetscape outside the recreated store interior was digitally reconstructed. More and more voice actors are also being replaced by AI-generated voices. And the voices of singers can be cloned for new recordings. In some cases, this takes place without the permission of the artists themselves. For instance,

¹⁸ https://vandenb.substack.com/p/hoe-ik-ai-heb-gebruikt-bij-het-schrijven?r=nclm&utm_medium=ios&triedRedirect=true.

in 2023 AI was used to produce ‘Heart on My Sleeve’, a fictitious collaboration between Drake and The Weeknd. The track was a big hit on social media, but was quickly removed under pressure from the artists’ record company.

In 2025, a production company developed the first AI actress, Tilly Norwood, resulting in great disquiet in the film industry: the actors’ union Sag-Aftra described the artificial actress as devaluing ‘human artistry’¹⁹. It is therefore open to doubt whether such artificial actors will become commonplace in the film world in the future – although we do anticipate so-called ‘digital humans’ making their debut in the advertising world in the near future. Film studios are already asking actors whether their likeness and voice may be digitally scanned.²⁰ This makes it possible to use an AI double in specific scenes. AI can also bring dead actors back to life. For instance, in 2025, the late Val Kilmer was cast in the film *As Deep as the Grave* (2026) with the permission of his family. AI is frequently employed in the gaming sector, too: for the creation of backgrounds, for the development of ‘placeholders’, which temporarily replace elements in a game design, or for easier simulation of natural movement (for example, of people or animals). Images derived from games that have been shared online can also be used to train AI bots.

In the above examples, AI is only a co-creator, or handles parts of the production process. But AI can also, in response to more or less complex prompts, generate complete creative products based on existing textual, musical or visual data. Books and images are being generated on a large scale in this way. For example, in the book sector, AI-generated text has boomed in a short space of time. By 2024, one in every 25 books sold by bol.com was AI-generated.²¹ AI also represents a threat to film and television screenwriters, because it can generate new scripts within a particular series or genre format with existing characters. Generative AI models and companies like Suno, Udio and Sora make it possible to create music and film that are no longer easily recognisable as AI products and now compete on equal terms with content made by humans. In 2025, the first AI-generated song, by ‘singer’ Xania Monet, made the US Billboard chart.

Because the barriers to making a complete song, artistic image or video have been lowered to such an extent by AI, attractive results can easily be achieved even by non-professional artists. In this way, AI is feeding a do-it-yourself mentality, similar to that stimulated by previous technological developments such as the introduction of computers, Photoshop, video cameras, synthesizers and samplers. Thanks to social media and online platforms, these creative expressions are then widely shared.

Alongside AI products which are presented (and sold) as creative works as if made by humans, AI is also used explicitly as a visible co-creator: an artist creates a prompt, based on an artistic concept, in a creative way such that it contributes to the work of art. In such cases, AI can be more than a tool, also providing artistic material: in the work of art, the contribution of AI is emphasised, explored and sometimes also criticised. Vivid examples may be cited from various art forms: for instance, theatre collective Urland had AI write the script for the play *Formerly known*, which was performed by the company’s actors while their voices were dubbed by AI. *About a Hero* is a pseudo-documentary by Piotr Winiewicz, entirely in the style of the work of Werner Herzog. The Dutch National Ballet, in collaboration with Innovation:Lab,

19 <https://www.sagaftra.org/sag-aftra-statement-synthetic-performer>

20 <https://www.npr.org/2023/08/02/1190605685/movie-extras-worry-theyll-be-replaced-by-ai-hollywood-is-already-doing-body-scan>

21 Hofman and Veerbeek 2024.

made the dance experiment *Pulse*, in which live performers and the audience co-created with AI based on choreography by Peter Leung. In the music sector, Thunderboom initiates innovative projects with AI, such as WAIVE, which uses recordings from public archives (such as the clanking of an old tram) as material to train AI and make new music.²²

In the visual arts, and digital art in particular, artists are using AI as creative material. For example, *Meta Folklore Vo.5* is a sculpture which the Polish artist Janek Simon generated with the help of AI, based on thousands of humanoid images from art, religion, history and pop culture from all over the world, so creating a new, quasi-universal human form. What differentiates this type of 'AI art' from the creation of images of sculptures in commercial AI tools such as Midjourney, is that Simon makes artistic choices at every step of the creative process. He trained a neural network himself, based on self-collected data sources, and then translated the images generated to physical objects. It is one of many examples showing that artists are able to set themselves apart from amateurs in working with AI, too, and that the artistic value of AI art lies primarily in the creative process.

Many visual and media artists reflect on the function and effect of AI in their AI-generated work, critically or otherwise. For example, such works of art may investigate the issue of strong bias. The extent to which AI chooses stereotypical images is highlighted by the installation 'The Archive of Grigoris Antoniou' by Cypriot artist duo Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert and Alexia Achilleos. The installation is based on images from an archaeological project on Cyprus. Because there were no images of Antoniou, one of the Cypriot assistants (whereas there were of the British archaeologists) the artists enlisted the help of AI to construct a portrait of him. Compared to actual photos of other local workers, in the AI portrait, Antoniou looks like the stereotype of the western archaeologist, à la Indiana Jones. In this way, the installation points out the cultural prejudice with which the AI training data is saturated. AI-critical AI artworks show how AI has been programmed to sanitise unwanted images. This is revealed, for example, by the installation *Une Histoire Parallèle* by the artist duo Brodbeck & De Barbuat. In this installation, images from the history of photography are re-generated by AI. Often those images look like the originals, but the differences provide an insight into the way the AI model has been trained. For instance, the famous double portrait of John Lennon and Yoko Ono by Annie Leibovitz is reproduced with a clothed Lennon, whereas he was naked in the original. This is a result of the filtering out of male nudity with which this AI has been programmed.

There are also visual artists who, instead of creating works of art based on existing AI systems and the associated datasets, design LLMs and collect data themselves. For example, for her art project *The Murmur of the Dying*, Femke Herregraven developed her own AI, Elaine, which has been trained with human sounds that are not considered to be language, such as sighs, stutters and the babbling of babies.

In the work sold by Amsterdam's Dead End Gallery, human input has been reduced to a minimum. The gallery sells work by virtual artists who were themselves created with the help of AI. Their works of art arise in an interaction between the AI that generates the artists (who also gradually develop into individual personalities with their own biographies), a curator also generated by AI, who provides commentary on the works of art as they are made and gives the virtual artist new inspiration, and

²² <https://www.hub-c.org/kennisbank/max-tiel-wij-bouwen-verantwoorde-ai-en-ar-tools-voor-makers>

the gallery owner, who is flesh and blood and who directs the artist and curator with prompts.

Post-production

Post-production can be supported by AI in every creative discipline in its own way. In the audiovisual sector, AI is used to help simplify such elements as editing and post-editing (for example, colour correction and restoring archive images). Voices, too, can be enhanced: for instance, AI was used to refine the Hungarian accent of actor Adrien Brody in the film *The Brutalist*. AI is also used for the translation of subtitles, and for translations of lower-quality literary output and non-fiction. In the literature sector, AI can also support or even replace the work of an editor.

At the same time, with the automation of post-production, aspects of craftsmanship that are difficult to quantify are also lost: the editorial eye, the substantive choices made by the editor or the interpretation of a translator. The fact that this work is less visible and can be done more cheaply with the assistance of AI does not make it less valuable. There is a risk that a great deal of knowledge, experience and craftsmanship will disappear from the chain and the sector, ultimately at the expense of quality.

Distribution

When it comes to the distribution of creative products, platforms like Spotify and Netflix have for some time been making extensive use of task-specific AI to offer products in a personalised manner. Based on algorithms, content providers can present users with personal choices that match their preferences. Streaming platforms, music platforms and online bookshops are examples of commercial providers that provide personalised tips based on previous choices. In the Netherlands, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra combines the possibilities of personalisation with generative AI. It offers the 'Wondercast': if you buy tickets for a specific concert and set some preferences, you get a personalised AI-generated podcast about the concert in question to help you prepare for your visit.

However, in the distribution of culture, task-specific and generative AI do not automatically result in the most desirable recommendations. There may be prejudices in the training material, and the tips generated by such algorithm-steered systems are more likely to lead to more-of-the-same than to surprising recommendations that are of help to the user. For example, when asked which are the best museums to visit in Amsterdam, the answers given by an AI tool are influenced by the museums that are highly active on social media.

Presentation

The presentation of art and culture can be supported by AI applications in different ways. In particular, they enable greater customisation to be offered to the audience. For instance, Het Nationale Theater in The Hague has developed 'smart AI glasses' that allow you to view theatre productions with subtitles in 223 languages. AI is also helpful for the presentation of exhibitions, for example by giving customised explanations of works of art, or it can curate works of art from a museum collection in accordance with the visitor's taste. It can also provide support for museum presentations in another way. For example, the *La ligne de vie* exhibition in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp was based on a lecture which René Magritte delivered to the Antwerp museum in 1938. The original recording of the lecture had been lost, but visitors were able to listen to an AI-generated reproduction based on

other sound recordings of his voice. In Utrecht's Centraal Museum, the involvement of AI goes a step further in supporting the presentation, with the help of *archive dweller* from artist collective Telemagic: AI searches for another work of art to go with a work chosen by a visitor, and generates a new, unique work of art based on the original two.

Reception

Just as AI personalises the distribution of creative products, it can also steer the offering itself through the contribution of the recipient (the reader, listener, viewer). In the past, there have been many artists who gave the audience an active role in the creation of an art project,²³ and AI offers makers new possibilities to turn the audience into a co-creator. For instance, instead of just makers formulating the prompt that causes AI to generate parts of the product, the audience can provide prompts as well. This results in art that is more tailored to – and sometimes made in partnership with – the audience: for example, the viewer can give instructions for the setting they find themselves in (such as in the VR opera *From Dust* by Michel van der Aa). In this way, the boundary between production and reception blurs. But even in the most participatory art forms, the artist remains the one who designs the space within which the audience moves. This is also what the audience expects and appreciates in accordance with the conventions, so it is open to question whether the number of participatory AI art projects will increase explosively.

Archiving

The final phase, after the audience has attended to the creative product, is the archiving of that product. Depending on the art form, archiving is more or less institutionalised and takes place more or less systematically. Items that belong to a museum collection are usually registered, literature is found in libraries, and there are collection centres for the archiving of other art forms. AI can contribute to searching and classifying those collections and archives. AI is also suited to performing research into objects and collections in all kinds of different ways, for example, by establishing the provenance or the maker with the help of signature recognition, image recognition and facial recognition, or ascertaining who is depicted in a photo or film. Another possibility is to investigate the early use of archaeological objects, for example the correct use of a Roman stone as a board game²⁴. AI is also utilised to restore film footage, for example. In the archive sector, AI is used to help convert printed and handwritten texts into texts that can be read by machines. This enables better research to be conducted into historical documents. In the Netherlands, universities, archives, libraries, museums and heritage organisations are united in an interdisciplinary network around the HAICu project, which uses AI to unlock digital heritage collections. It develops methods and tools to furnish the available collections with a meaningful context.²⁵

At the same time, the archiving of AI-generated works presents such institutions with new questions: which work is kept, whose work is kept, and how? AI-generated works very often do not have a clear authorship and are practically not reproducible – the same prompt will produce a different result tomorrow. Moreover, these works, like all other 'digital born' art, often exist as the output of systems that may age or disappear over time. As a result, culture archives are faced with the paradox that, on the one hand, AI offers new archiving opportunities and, on the other, it is itself difficult to archive. This calls for specialist expertise. LI-MA (Living Media Art) is

23 Bourriaud 2002; Trienekens 2020.

24 <https://nos.nl/artikel/2601837-ai-onthult-romeinse-steen-in-museum-heerlen-is-bordspel>

25 www.haicu.science

dedicated to preserving, conserving and distributing media art. This institution has recently also been using AI for the conservation of ‘digital born’ art, and it has also focused on conserving AI-generated art.

2.3 Other applications

Within the creative sector, AI is not only being used in the creative phases we have described above. It also plays a major role in other processes, as we see in other sectors. Examples are financial and administrative activities, marketing and communication and buildings security.

The use of AI to assist in grant award processes warrants particular attention. The national culture funds note that makers and organisations are increasingly using AI when writing grant proposals. Early this year, the Creative Industries Fund NL drew up guidelines for the responsible use of AI in grant award processes.²⁶ Applicants are permitted to use AI, but responsibility for the content of the application always lies with the applicant. Applicants must be transparent about the use of AI. In assessing grant applications, employees of the fund are not permitted to use AI, because that would infringe the confidentiality of the applications. This also applies to advisers of the fund. Alongside the reasons cited, this is primarily because the reliability of the assessment would be less certain, and the fund would be unable to verify that the judgement had been reached in a diligent manner. The Netherlands Film Fund has since also adopted similar guidelines.²⁷

²⁶ <https://www.stimuleringsfonds.nl/nieuws/richtlijn-gebruik-generatieve-artificial-intelligence-gai>

²⁷ https://www.filmfonds.nl/actueel/richtlijnen-rondom-het-gebruik-van-artifici%C3%A4le-intelligentie?utm_source=Kunstloc+Brabant&utm_campaign=485b054490-26_05_13+T%26O&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_135982c3b1-485b054490-573280539



3.

The most important issues around AI and the cultural and creative sector

WHAT DO WE SEE IN PRACTICE?	WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR?	WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES?
2. How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector?	4. Which fundamental values are being influenced?	5. Recommendations for policy
3. What are the most important issues?		

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the ways in which generative AI is utilised within the cultural and creative sector. Many interviewees are curious about the technology and are experimenting with it themselves. In some cases they are not so much critical of AI itself but rather are highly critical of the way in which the AI models have been designed and the AI systems are managed, and of the negative consequences this has for the cultural and creative sector, and for makers within it. This chapter addresses the most important issues, as identified by interviewees and described in the literature.

3.2 Copyright and ownership

AI models have mostly been trained using data from copyright-protected work. That data has often been collected without first asking the permission of the owner or maker. For instance, in 2025 it was revealed that Meta had trained its AI-model Llama 3 with millions of books without having been given permission to do so by writers or publishers. Dutch authors, too, have discovered their work in this illegal database on a massive scale. This development prompted the author's association Auteursbond to launch the 'AI=Jatwerk' ('AI=Theft') campaign to draw attention to the large-scale infringement of copyright by the AI companies and emphasise the value of work written and translated by humans.²⁸

Apart from the training of AI models, a debate is also raging about the question of whether the output of AI infringes the copyright on existing work. This has already led to considerable outrage and various court cases. For example, ChatGPT enabled users to edit photos in the style of Studio Ghibli, even though founder Hayao Miyazaki has long been a vocal opponent of AI-generated animation (he called it an "insult to life itself"). Some artists take a different standpoint: for example, having discussed the matter with the artist before his death in 2023, Studio Erwin Olaf

²⁸ <https://auteursbond.nl/ai-jatwerk/>

consciously opted to make his work available for AI training. The studio sees it as an opportunity to keep Olaf's ideas alive and draw attention to his art globally.²⁹ In many cases, AI models have been trained without the permission of makers. When doing so, legally accessible sources are used, such as literary and artistic content that is freely available on the internet. According to the applicable European rules, this does not automatically represent copyright infringement – even if makers and rights-holders have not explicitly given the green light. In practice, this can mean that no compensation is paid for AI training. Against this background, the Cultural Intellectual Property Rights Initiative® has developed the so-called '3C rule': Consent, Credit and Compensation.³⁰ This provides a framework for how to handle creative work and creative makers in the context of generative AI. Creative makers must give permission for the use of their work in training generative AI models, their work must be acknowledged as being the result of creative labour and they must be compensated for it.

The performing rights organisations in the Netherlands and the EU are also increasingly speaking out against the use of work produced by humans without prior permission and compensation. BumaStemra set up a Taskforce AI and endorsed an international statement calling for fair and transparent regulations around AI. In Germany, GEMA, the German performing rights organisation for music rights, instituted legal proceedings against OpenAI. The court endorsed GEMA's interpretation that infringement of copyright can occur in cases of so-called 'memorisation', in which protected fragments of work remain available in the trained AI model. According to the German court, as a result of memorisation, ChatGPT and other models are capable of literally reproducing song lyrics.³¹

Large companies in the film and music industries, among others, have already filed lawsuits against AI companies due to the alleged illegal use of copyright-protected work. For instance, Sony Music, Universal Music and Warner Records sued the AI music companies Udio and Suno on account of their use of work by professional musicians. Disney has accused the AI company Midjourney of illegally using its animations. Remarkably enough, these companies are now actually entering into partnerships with AI companies and concluding licensing deals for the use of their data. Disney even invested half a billion euros in OpenAI, in order gain access to tools developed by the company, such as ChatGPT, while OpenAI in turn was able to add characters like Mickey Mouse and Darth Vader to its video generator Sora. Illustrative of the speed of developments is that a few months later, OpenAI announced that it would be discontinuing Sora because the company is focusing on other departments. This also meant the termination of the deal with Disney

Lack of compensation

Copyright gives control over the exploitation of creative work and makes it possible to prohibit use without prior permission.³² In some cases – such as home copying³³ – this right of prohibition has been watered down to a right of 'fair compensation'³⁴, or use is permitted in principle but a system of levies ensures that compensation is paid for that use.³⁵ Exactly what form such compensation should take in the case of AI

²⁹ <https://www.den.nl/kennis-en-inspiratie/waarom-erwin-olaf-koos-voor-openstelling-van-zijn-werk-aan-ai>

³⁰ <https://www.culturalintellectualproperty.com/the-3cs#:~:text=THE%203C%20Rule%3A&text=The%203Cs%20stand%20for%3A%20Consent,a%20combination%20of%20the%20two>

³¹ Munich Regional Court, 11 November 2025, case 42 O 14139/24, GEMA/OpenAI

³² Section 1, Dutch Copyright Act.

³³ <https://www.thuiskopie.nl/nl>

³⁴ Section 7(1), Copyright and Related Rights Act. See <https://sena.nl/over-sena/wat-doet-sena/wet-op-de-naburige-rechten>.

³⁵ Section 16(c)(2) Copyright Act. See <https://www.thuiskopie.nl/nl>.

models is very much up for debate. Some interviewees call for fair compensation that could be provided by a statutory levy, comparable to the levies for home copying and photocopying, which would require deciding who should pay the levy, how it should be calculated and who should benefit from it. Internationally, Arthur Mensch, CEO of the French AI company Mistral, has already called for a levy³⁶, as has the Open Future Foundation³⁷. Others favour individual rights of prohibition and voluntary or compulsory licences, which might generate higher revenues for makers and rights-holders if licence agreements were successfully concluded. An example is the agreement that publishers in the Netherlands reached with TNO, the developer of the Dutch language model GPT-NL, according to which they make their content available in exchange for a fee.³⁸

AI Act

Various steps have been taken around AI at EU level. The EU has previously adopted several laws relating to digitalisation, such as the Digital Services Act (2022) and the Digital Markets Act (2022). Specifically for AI, the most important legislative framework is the AI Act. The goal of the AI Act is to promote safe and reliable AI systems, with safeguards for the protection of health and fundamental rights. The regulation divides AI systems into different risk levels. AI systems that represent a clear threat to the safety, rights and freedoms of people are completely prohibited. AI systems associated with high risks are subject to strict requirements. A number of such systems have been prohibited since February 2025. Furthermore, organisations that develop or use AI systems must ensure that their employees are AI-literate. The regulation is being introduced in a step-by-step fashion and will come into force in full in August 2027.

Copyright within the AI Act

With regard to the training of generative AI, the AI Act explicitly refers to the copyright rules for text and data mining, as laid down in the 'Directive (...) on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market' that was adopted in 2019.³⁹ For commercial AI development, this means that in principle, AI trainers may make use of lawfully accessible works produced by humans, such as material that is made freely available on the internet by a maker or another rights-holder.⁴⁰ However, the Directive gives copyright holders the possibility of explicitly excluding the use of their works for text and data mining – and hence also for AI training – by withholding rights (a so-called 'opt-out').⁴¹ As such, the AI Act stipulates that all providers of AI models in the EU must respect opt-outs. It makes no difference where the AI development took place. AI providers from the United States and China must therefore also be able to demonstrate that opt-outs by Dutch and other rights-holders have been observed when training their AI models.⁴² In order to make this verifiable, the AI Act contains a

36 <https://www.ft.com/content/d63d6291-687f-4e05-8b23-4d545d78c64a>

37 Keller 2025.

38 <https://gpt-nl.nl/samenwerken/content-board/>

39 Directive 2019/790 of 17 April 2019, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/790/oj/eng>.

40 Section 4, Directive 2019/790; section 150, Copyright Act.

41 Section 4, Directive 2019/790; section 150, Copyright Act. Cf. Senftleben 2025; Engelfriet and Visser 2024. With regard to technical opt-out requirements, see Hamburg Higher Regional Court, 10 December 2025, case 5 U 104/24, Kneschke v. LAION.

42 Section 53 and Recital 106, AI Act.

transparency requirement: AI providers must draw up and publish a 'sufficiently detailed summary' of the content used to train their AI models.⁴³

3.3 Labour market

AI is already having a major impact on work in general. The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) concludes that AI has the potential to change work significantly, both in terms of labour productivity and the quality of work and of employment and income.⁴⁴ At the same time, the precise impact of AI is hard to predict, certainly when it comes to taking over and/or transforming jobs and hence employment. Many jobs are difficult to replace on a one-to-one basis, because they comprise all kinds of different tasks, some of which may be easy to replace and others difficult or impossible. In addition, new tasks and occupations are being created, both in the labour market as a whole and in the cultural and creative sector in particular.⁴⁵ This may mean that, overall, AI will result more in transformation than in the disappearance of work. However, the effects will differ substantially between different occupations. It is therefore important to distinguish between macro-economic effects and the changes experienced by individual workers and specific occupational groups. At the macro level, the labour market may appear resilient, but for particular occupational groups the arrival of AI may nevertheless be highly impactful, for example due to the loss of work or orders, reductions in rates or changes in the content of the work. The latter can also lead to a loss of a sense of meaning in the work.

The cultural and creative sector has several specific characteristics that may result in AI having a greater than average effect on the work in this sector; it may also increase existing vulnerabilities:⁴⁶

- Many occupations are made up of a mix of tasks, while in the cultural and creative sector there are also many occupational groups that have a single, defined specialism – for example, voice actors, translators and graphic designers. These kinds of jobs are especially vulnerable to being taken over by AI.
- The sector includes many self-employed people who enjoy little collective protection.⁴⁷ They often work on temporary assignments on a project basis. This means that these workers are particularly at risk from rapid changes. If clients start making greater use of AI, that can lead directly to a reduction in work, with the self-employed person bearing the entire risk of the fall in orders.
- Many workers have a very strong intrinsic motivation for working in this sector and are less likely to switch to other sectors in the face of negative market developments. This influences their negotiating position and income position, whereas in many cases they are already working for relatively low pay.

Many creative jobs will change or have already changed significantly in recent years. First of all, there are professional groups whose work is under severe pressure, such as

⁴³ Section 53, AI Act. See also the form developed for this purpose: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/explanatory-notice-and-template-public-summary-training-content-general-purpose-ai-models>.

⁴⁴ SER 2025.

⁴⁵ Erickson 2024.

⁴⁶ As noted in 2017 by the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) and the Council for Culture, but this observation is still relevant (SER 2017).

⁴⁷ In the period from 2010 to 2022, the proportion of those working in the cultural and creative sector who are self-employed rose by 67 percent, from 92,820 to 154,830. The Netherlands has the highest percentage of self-employed persons working in the sector compared to other European countries (Boekman: <https://www.cultuurmonitor.nl/thema/beroepspraktijk/>).

translators, voice actors, animators, copywriters, graphic designers, screenwriters and composers. It is likely that not all jobs will be replaced completely, but the fact of work and assignments disappearing in these sectors is already visible. Nearly 1 in 5 self-employed persons questioned in the Boekman Foundation survey reported seeing the number of assignments and income they receive fall as a result of generative AI. For translators, the figure is 1 in 3.⁴⁸

Secondly, we see the content of work activities in the sector changing as a result of AI. AI can be an enrichment for creative work, but it can also detract from the quality of the work. A UK study found that nearly a quarter of British creative professionals are seeing the quality of work changing as a result of generative AI, in both a negative and a positive sense.⁴⁹ Generative AI strongly affects the creative process. The new tools can be enriching if they lead to new creative possibilities, but for others this can actually be a threat. For example, correcting an AI-generated translation or screenplay naturally provides much less satisfaction than producing it yourself. In such cases, makers become less involved in the creative process and are more likely to find themselves doing operational rather than creative tasks.

Thirdly, multiple conversations held by the council revealed that the negotiating position of makers is coming under pressure. AI is sometimes used as an argument to cut rates. Moreover, clients sometimes have rather high expectations of AI, which cannot always be delivered in practice. Clients may use AI to generate material themselves and then ask an illustrator or architect to elaborate on it. As a result, the role of the creative professional is seriously compromised. Some clients are under the impression that AI can take care of a design completely. As a result, they are willing to pay less, because they believe the work can be done in less time. Makers and organisations emphasise the limitations of AI in a creative process. The output sometimes looks astonishing, but AI tools often lack the context of a design process, have no intuition, are unable to take responsibility and make no ethical judgements, unlike flesh-and-blood designers.

A number of interviewees reported that clients sometimes underestimate the value of human creativity. They view AI output as equal to work performed by humans, whereas the added value of the creative thought process by the human being remains invisible to them. For makers, this means it is becoming more important to reflect on their added value⁵⁰. Greater awareness needs to be cultivated on the part of clients about the differences between AI output and human output.

Finally, many makers are concerned about the loss of commercial assignments as a result of AI. The professional practice of many makers in the sector often consists of different income-generating activities. If some assignments are lost, that can have a major impact on their entire professional practice. The study by the Boekman Foundation cited the loss of assignments from the business market and the shift to lower-paid 'post-editing': checking and processing AI output, as described above. This has major implications for individuals and for the sector as a whole.

For individual makers, it means that their income falls and, additionally, they have fewer opportunities to develop. After all, assignments give them the opportunity to gain relevant experience for their professional practice. This potentially also affects learning opportunities for young makers: it makes it harder to learn the profession in

48 Boekman 2025a. See also: Boekman 2025b.

49 <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/centre-creative-collaboration/projects/creaatif/survey/survey-key-findings/perceptions/>

50 Anantrasirichai and Bull 2022.

practice. What remains is a profession that involves artistic productions, but earning a full income from it is often only achievable for a select group. If incomes can no longer be supplemented by commercial assignments utilising the makers' professional skills, they will have to earn that additional income elsewhere. This limits the hours they can devote to their own creative profession.

There is thus a direct relationship between the loss of all kinds of creative commercial assignments and the opportunities for autonomous creative activities. A reduction in one has an inherent impact on the other. Multiple interviewees reported concerns about the impoverishment and hollowing out of the creative sector. They predict a dichotomy with, on the one hand, a commercial, data-driven industry and, on the other, an ever smaller, artistically-driven sector.

3.4 Concentration of power and counteracting forces

The AI market is dominated by a small number of primarily American companies. The market share of Google as a search engine has been fluctuating around 90 percent for ten years, the cloud market is dominated by Microsoft and Amazon, and the most commonly used AI tools are largely in the hands of the same group of companies. OpenAI, Google, Meta and Microsoft decide which models reach the wider public, what cultural content is shown and how it is filtered. There are serious concerns about this concentration and about the resulting influence of Big Tech on democracies, education, media and the public sector. The UN rapporteur for cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, pointed out that the market for cultural content risks being dominated by a small number of platforms, with commercial interests counting for more than public values.⁵¹

That concentration of power is self-reinforcing. The more people use the tools provided by Big Tech, the more data those firms gather, the better their models become, and the harder it becomes for alternative AI producers to keep up. This is not an ordinary market dynamic but a structural mechanism: the raw material of AI (data) is largely supplied by the users themselves, often without their being aware of it. At the same time, the cultural products that served as training data (books, music, images, texts written by writers, journalists and artists worldwide) are used without their permission to build systems that now compete with those same makers. It is no accident that the term 'data colonialism' is increasingly being used: a small group of companies are appropriating the cultural production of the world as a raw material for their own profitable infrastructure, while the makers and the societies from which that culture originates get next to nothing in return.

Nevertheless, the picture may not be as uniformly sombre as in the case of other dominant technologies. A search engine like Google, or a social media platform like TikTok, is by definition centralised: you cannot download it and run it yourself. Technically, AI models work in a fundamentally different way: you can download language models, image models and other AI systems and run them locally, on your own computer or on European servers. Moreover, the processing power required to do so is falling exponentially: within a few years, what requires a powerful machine today will run on a smartphone or a cheap laptop. This opens up the realistic possibility of a distributed, publicly accessible AI infrastructure outside of the big platforms.

That possibility is already being exploited. The French company Mistral has developed open models as a European alternative to American providers. Germany's Black Forest Labs are bringing out open source image-generation models. Internationally, there is a growing, broadly-based community of open source AI developers who make models freely available, also for use on European infrastructure. The cultural sector can benefit from this directly: open models can be trained with in-house collections, can be adapted to specific languages and contexts and can be hosted without dependence on US platforms or other institutions. As such, open source contributes to the democratisation of knowledge.

The problem is that most makers and the overwhelming majority of the public are barely aware of these alternatives. The communication power and reach of Big Tech is so great that open source models and European alternatives remain systematically overlooked. There is a task for government, cultural institutions and public broadcasters not only to facilitate the use of open alternatives, but also to actively publicise them. Dutch values, the Dutch language and a diverse cultural offering are not automatically represented in commercial models, but they can make up the core of a European AI infrastructure, if we invest in it now.

Striving for strategic autonomy, but regulation under pressure

The EU and, by extension, the Netherlands are highly dependent on digital technology from the US and China, and hence also on their AI technology. Various advisory councils⁵² have previously concluded that Europe has a major technological deficit. In *The Dutch Digitalisation Strategy*, the government notes that the existing AI infrastructure is still too dependent on non-European AI developments.⁵³ The pursuit of strategic autonomy in a Dutch and European context has since moved higher up the agenda.⁵⁴ With the AI Continent Action Plan, Europe aims to become a global leader in the field of AI. Among other things, the plan envisages the construction of infrastructure, such as 'AI giga factories', and investment in AI skills and talent.⁵⁵

On paper, the EU and the Netherlands are striving for AI that puts human welfare first, is reliable and is developed and used in a responsible manner. In 2024, the Council of Europe adopted the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. This is the very first legally binding international convention designed to ensure that the use of AI systems is completely in accord with human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

At the same time, there is constant pressure to simplify regulations. The big tech companies spend huge sums lobbying to influence European regulations. There is strong pressure to relax regulations from the US government, and for some time there have been calls to re-examine the established regulatory framework from within Europe, too. In late 2025, the European Commission made a proposal for a digital Omnibus Regulation on AI to simplify provisions of the AI Act. European business is also calling for deregulation – partly in response to the report by Mario Draghi⁵⁶ – and for a weakening of the European rules for the digital internal

52 Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy 2025; Advisory Council on International Affairs 2025.

53 Dutch government 2025.

54 In a letter to parliament, the government defines open strategic autonomy as follows: 'the capacity on the part of the EU to assure public interests and be more resilient in an interconnected world, based on its own insights and choices.' <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/downloads/document?id=2025D35367>

55 digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence#ecl-inpage-important-milestones

56 https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en#paragraph_47059

market. This also has implications for the cultural and creative sector and the rights of makers, for instance because it may lead to a dilution of copyright protection.

3.5 Bias of the AI models, cultural diversity

One of the big negatives of AI models is bias. Companies decide what AI models do or do not accept as content and which content is promoted. Additionally, the AI models feature strong bias arising from the data used to train them and the way in which the models are designed. This has major negative consequences, because it results in a strengthening of discriminatory dynamics. Moreover, AI technologies have a growing influence on cultural content. Algorithms guide cultural experience. They curate and decide what is and is not visible, and in doing so influence our culture. UNESCO has already cited safeguarding cultural diversity in relation to AI as a central ethical principle.⁵⁷ That calls for transparency and accountability on the part of AI companies and for protection of cultural data.

The aforementioned UN rapporteur Xanthaki asserted that the rights of the creative and cultural sector have largely been ignored in the development of AI: “It addresses the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on cultural rights, in particular the freedom indispensable for creative activity, the right to artistic freedom and the right to enjoy the arts, as well as the right to the protection of the moral and material interests of authors. These are all important elements of the right to participate in cultural life, which States have undertaken to respect and protect in accordance with article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.”⁵⁸

3.6 Sustainability

Generative AI models require enormous quantities of energy for their training and use. It is estimated that in 2024, 15 to 20 percent of the global electricity consumption of data centres was used for AI applications. This requirement is growing at breakneck speed.⁵⁹ Because many tech companies do not publish their data, the true environmental impact currently remains unclear.

The race to achieve the most powerful model systematically reinforces this problem. Companies are building bigger and bigger data centres, powered by gas turbines and fossil energy, to be a few milliseconds faster or achieve a better benchmark score than their competitors. This development is not meeting with any resistance from government: under the current US administration, sustainability has largely been eliminated as a brake on technological expansion. This is compounded by the fact that the chips that facilitate AI and the factories that produce them themselves have a huge ecological footprint: from resource extraction to production processes that require large quantities of water and chemicals.

There is also a displacement effect. The energy hunger of AI infrastructure competes directly with other societal needs: who has access to the power grid, who bears the cost of new data centres, which regions provide water and space? In the Netherlands,

⁵⁷ UNESCO 2021.

⁵⁸ www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a80278-artificial-intelligence-and-creativity-report-special-rapporteur.

⁵⁹ De Vries-Gao 2025.

fierce debates have already raged about the construction of large data centres and the pressure they place on the power grid.

This weighs heavily on the cultural and creative sector. Our analysis shows that sustainability is high on the agenda for many makers and cultural organisations, and that the ecological costs of AI represent a real obstacle to responsible use. The Dutch cultural and creative sector cannot uphold ambitious sustainability goals whilst at the same time making indiscriminate use of infrastructure whose impact is unknown or irresponsible.

At the same time, the cultural sector can play a modelling role as a laboratory for more sustainable practices. Individual makers and organisations can develop alternatives and make alternative futures tangible. For instance, open source models require less processing power than the biggest commercial systems and can be hosted on the user's own equipment or European servers that run on renewable energy. As in the fashion industry, alternatives are challenging, but they are possible.

3.7 Culture for AI

The influence of generative AI extends much further than the cultural and creative sector. As a system technology, it affects the whole of society: how we work and how we live together. It influences our language, our culture, our democracy. For AI to become embedded in society in a beneficial way, it is important that the whole of society is involved. WRR previously wrote that with new system technologies, it is primarily companies and governments that have the resources and interests to be early adopters of innovations, whereas civil society actors generally only become involved at a later stage. In the main, issues around AI are discussed by a group of technical specialists (monologue), whereas this ought to also be a matter for other individuals and organisations (dialogue). The potential to fundamentally change society is enormous, but the power to influence the course taken is in the hands of a small number of dominant technology companies.

The cultural and creative sector has an important role to play here. As long ago as 2021, the Dutch AI Coalition drew a distinction between *AI for culture* and *Culture for AI*, in order to make clear that AI does not merely result in all kinds of applications within the cultural sector, but that the cultural sector itself must also be involved in deciding how society deals with AI.⁶⁰ Art and culture lend meaning and interpretation to the way in which new technology manifests. Creative makers are not only influenced by AI, they also direct and influence AI, make their own models and develop public alternatives.

Influencing of technology by culture

In addition, AI technology itself is saturated with culture. It is not a neutral technology, but a system that embodies cultural choices from the outset: which languages are used, which content is made visible, which images are regarded as 'normal', which moral boundaries are drawn, which metaphors the system uses to collate data. Science fiction has always guided the imagination of technologists – from the robot laws of Isaac Asimov to the dystopias of George Orwell and Aldous Huxley. Many believe that the film *Her* (2013) was taken all too literally as a source of inspiration by OpenAI when it introduced the speech mode of ChatGPT, including

⁶⁰ NLAI Coalitie 2021. This position paper was drawn up by the Culture and Media working group. NL AIC has since merged with AiNed to become AIC4NL.

the voice of actress Scarlett Johansson, cloned without permission. Thanks to its capacity to imagine near and distant futures, culture makes it possible to discuss them and shape alternatives.

The AI systems now being rolled out worldwide are not blank-slate technologies: they have been formed by the culture in which they were made. Which languages are understood accurately and which are not, which images count as normal, which subjects are filtered, which moral intuitions are treated as universal – these are all cultural choices, embedded in training data, design decisions and safety protocols. Those choices are largely American. As such, who decides what an AI does and does not say also defines the contours of a globally distributed cultural system. AI technology represents cultural politics in which Europe currently does not have a hand on the tiller or a voice but instead is condemned to consume.

In the Government-wide Vision, the Dutch government cites the importance of awareness and of conducting a debate about the potential impact of generative AI.⁶¹ One example is the Dutch AI-Parade, which until 2023 toured 35 libraries and where debates, workshops and exhibitions took place to establish a dialogue with citizens about AI. Artists are already reflecting on the technology, holding up a mirror to society. Art can expose shortcomings and draw attention to them.

AI within design and artistic research

AI is a design issue *par excellence*. Within design and artistic research, there is a strong focus on developments around ‘responsible AI’, a term that is frequently used for AI services and systems that are aligned with European public values. For instance, the Visual Methodologies Collective of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and the Research Group on Algorithmic Cultures of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam are exploring how an anti-colonial approach to AI may be developed through a deliberate effort to train AI systems using different data. The Responsible Applied Artificial Intelligence (RAAIT) programme, a collaboration between three universities of applied sciences (Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam), is looking into how AI can be employed in a way that serves people, society and planet. The Slow AI project challenges the existing features of AI, such as extraction, fast consumption, efficiency and instant gratification. The concept of ‘slowness’ is consciously applied in order to design AI in an alternative, more equitable and sustainable way.⁶² The design and artistic research that is the focus of these initiatives is primarily aimed at knowledge development, by making prototypes or developing artistic interventions and subjecting them to systematic critical interrogation. This combination, in which making and thinking take place simultaneously, lends itself well to research into a technology that is developing at lightning speed; precisely by being based in AI practice and testing its limits, state-of-the-art knowledge emerges.

Waag Futurelab is exploring alternatives to the current AI industry through various projects. The HAMLET (Human-centred generative Ai fraMework for culturaL industriEs’ digital Transition) project is working to develop tools for the cultural and creative sector, focusing on such questions as: “How can generative AI make a meaningful contribution to the creative work of professionals without replacing human creativity?”⁶³ The RenAIssance project offers creative professionals knowledge and tools to effectively use artificial intelligence in their professional

⁶¹ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2024.

⁶² <https://coeci.nl/projecten/slow-ai/>

⁶³ <https://waag.org/nl/project/hamlet/>

practice, with the larger goal of a European creative sector that is future-proof and retains its global reputation and competitiveness.⁶⁴

Such research can also contribute to the broader debate about AI. For instance, the artist Julia Janssen makes interactive installations to make people aware of privacy issues.⁶⁵ The Better Images of AI initiative found existing perceptions about AI to be clichéd, futuristic and abstract, which is problematic for understanding the technology. In response, it created an image bank containing alternative images that help demystify the technology of AI and so influence perceptions around AI.⁶⁶ Medialab SETUP makes provocative prototypes to stimulate the debate about AI, such as the AI disco, which experimented with hyperlocal AI models.⁶⁷ Studio Cream on Chrome developed a fitness workout to make people aware of the energy consumption of AI.⁶⁸

64 <https://waag.org/nl/project/renaissance/>

65 <https://studiojulijanssen.com/>

66 <https://blog.betterimagesofai.org/>

67 <https://www.setup.nl/artikelen/wc-maakten-ccn-ai-van-de-disco-uit-mijn-jcugd/>

68 <https://cream-on-chrome.com/media-gym/>



A value-driven AI policy

WHAT DO WE SEE IN PRACTICE?	WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR?	WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES?
2. How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector?	4. Which fundamental values are being influenced?	5. Recommendations for policy
3. What are the most important issues?		

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, we saw how AI is applied in practice in the creative sector and what impact it has on different aspects of the creative ecosystem. In this chapter, we look at the consequences of AI for the creative and cultural sector at a deeper level. In the next section, we will describe a number of values which, in the council's eyes, are fundamental to the production and reception of art and culture. They are so-called intrinsic values. That is to say, they are inextricably bound up with creative practice. With the new technology of AI impacting so profoundly on that creative practice, the council wants to ensure that these values are still fully actualised.

These intrinsic values complement more general values drawn up in recent years as part of broader policy-making around AI in the Netherlands. AI has featured in various policy documents, for example the *Strategic Action Plan for Artificial Intelligence*⁶⁹, the *Digital Economy Strategy*⁷⁰ and the *Dutch Digitalisation Strategy*.⁷¹ An important pillar for AI is the *Government-wide Vision on Generative AI of 2024*.⁷² In it, the Dutch government identifies AI as a key technology in which to achieve European leadership. With regard to the development, application and embedding of generative AI in society, the Dutch government works with four principles:

1. Generative AI is developed and applied in a safe manner.
2. Generative AI is developed and applied in an equitable manner.
3. Generative AI serves human welfare and assures human autonomy.
4. Generative AI contributes to sustainability and to our welfare.

According to the Dutch government, these four principles are essential for the responsible use of AI.

Alongside these value-driven principles around generative AI in the government-wide vision, various governmental and other public organisations have formulated values designed to guarantee a responsible approach to AI. Among other things,

69 Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate 2019.

70 Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate 2022.

71 Dutch government 2025.

72 Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2024.

these call for reliable knowledge⁷³ that will assure democratic principles⁷⁴, a pluriform offering⁷⁵ and the retention of nuances of human language and cultural expression.⁷⁶

Objectives of cultural policy

In 2017, the Council for Culture formulated four objectives that must be fulfilled for Dutch cultural policy to function optimally. These four objectives are:

1. Creative and artistic talent in all genres and disciplines receive sufficient opportunities and possibilities to develop artistically;
2. Everyone in the Netherlands, regardless of age, cultural background, income and place of residence, has access to culture;
3. The government ensures a pluriform cultural offering, in which the existing is cherished and the new is embraced;
4. There is a reciprocal relationship between culture and society. Culture functions as a safe haven for critical reflection on society and its citizens. Conversely, the cultural sector is accountable for its place in society.⁷⁷

4.2 Values of culture and creativity

As a supplement to the values of the Dutch government and the public organisations referred to above, the Council for Culture has formulated a number of more specific values designed to guarantee that the essential aspects of cultural creative practice are assured. These values are an elaboration of the four objectives for cultural policy previously drawn up by the council (see text box). In the council's view, they touch on precisely the challenges that AI presents the cultural and creative sector with.

External factors like AI deeply influence cultural and creative practice and, as such, also act on the fundamental values of culture and creativity. In order to apply AI in the cultural and creative sector in a responsible way, a **value-driven approach to AI** is needed. For every value we list below, measures need to be actively taken to protect that value. We will detail the specifics of those measures in our recommendations in the next chapter.

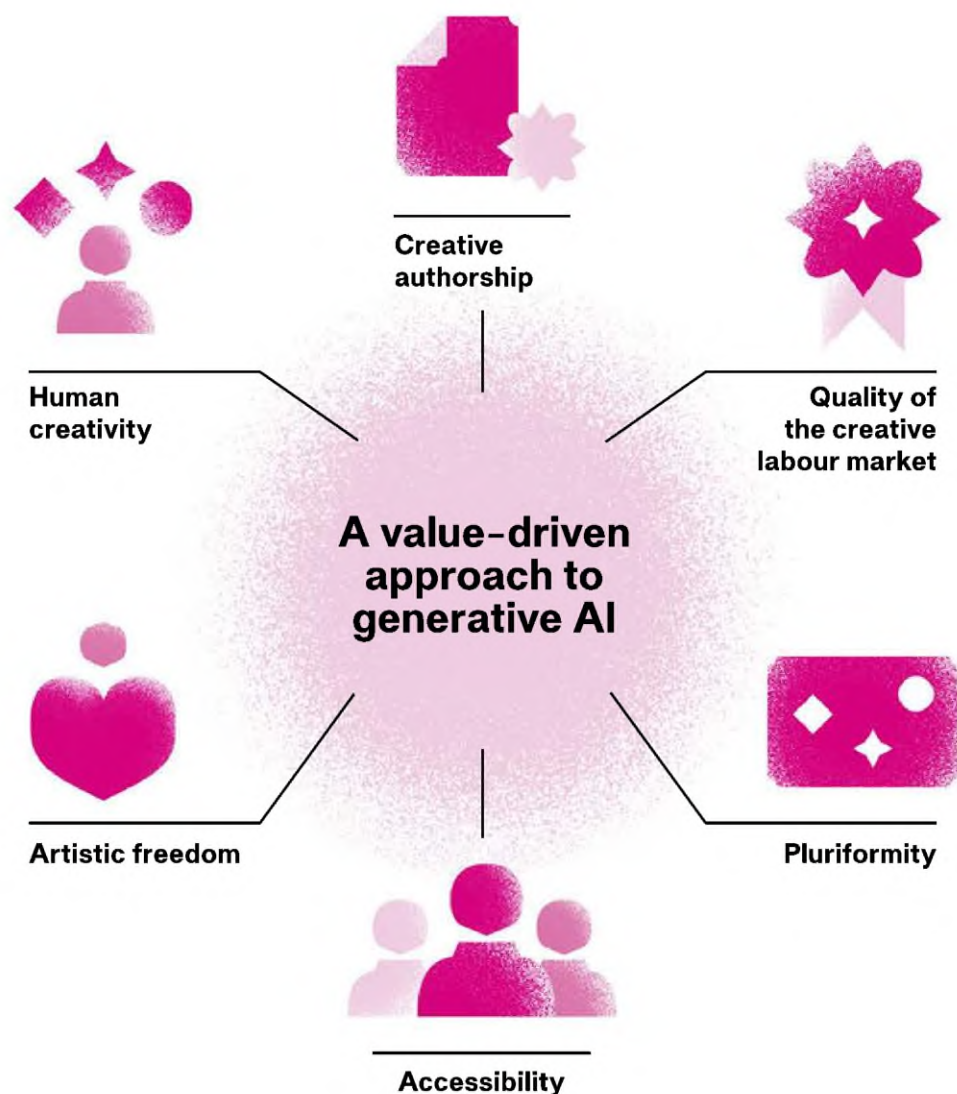
⁷³ Dutch Media Authority 2024.

⁷⁴ Rathenau Institute 2023; Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens 2026.

⁷⁵ Dutch Media Authority 2024; UNESCO 2021.

⁷⁶ UNESCO 2021.

⁷⁷ Council for Culture 2017. See also Council for Culture 2024.



Human creativity: AI respects, assures and stimulates human creativity

Art and creativity are indispensable to any society. The Council for Culture stands for the essential, intrinsic value of art and creativity. It is valuable to be engaged in creative pursuits, to create and to be able to express yourself. Art and creative expressions arise from human inspiration and imagination and have the capacity to evoke an aesthetic experience. With their creations, makers give meaning to the world around us. In their work, an individual artistic signature is visible that gives expression to an artistic vision of human beings and the world that is rooted in experience.

People also draw great satisfaction from artistic creation. It is no coincidence that 68 percent of Dutch people have a cultural hobby, such as playing an instrument, dancing or painting.⁷⁸ Practising art is not only an enjoyable activity, it is also a very healthy one. Numerous studies have shown that it contributes to mental and physical health.⁷⁹ For these reasons, the council considers it important that everyone in the Netherlands has access to culture and has the opportunity to flourish creatively. Creativity is a deeply human need and therefore worth protecting.

⁷⁸ Boekman Foundation 2026.

⁷⁹ Gielen, Elkhuizen, Van den Hoogen et al. 2014.

However AI is used in the creative process, the human component in that process should be cherished and the government must continue to stimulate it. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the opportunities and possibilities that AI offers, particularly when combined with the creativity of makers: it has the capacity to enrich the creative process and contribute to artistic and social innovations. This can be achieved by investing in research and experimentation.

Creative authorship: AI respects, assures and protects the creative authorship of artists

Every creative product has one or more makers. They have the creative authorship of this work. The intellectual property belongs to the makers, which is to say that they are inextricably linked to the work in legal terms, too. The copyright of that work must be protected and compensation paid for its use by third parties. In addition, it is imperative that the provenance of a creative work is stated.

In order to assure creative authorship, the copyright of makers must be properly protected, and fair compensation paid for use by others. To this end, it is important that European directives are implemented. Moreover, the Dutch government must act at the national level to introduce a tailored compensation system.

Quality of the creative labour market: AI respects, protects and stimulates an equitable labour market for artists

Everyone who has talent should have the opportunity to enter the creative labour market, in which ‘decent work’ is the norm.⁸⁰ That is to say: under good employment conditions established in law, as enshrined in the Fair Practice Code⁸¹, such as fair compensation and social protection. Moreover, there must be no inequality of remuneration on grounds of gender, age or social or cultural background.

The sector will benefit from a robust shared labour infrastructure, which can strengthen the position of creative makers and offer them the opportunity to respond to the changes in their work activities resulting from AI (for example by means of retraining and further training).

Pluriformity: AI stimulates, protects and contributes to artistic pluriformity

The council stands for a multi-faceted and diverse cultural offering. The creative sector should ideally be accessible to a wide range of makers, genres and art forms from different cultural and artistic traditions. The classical arts, artistic traditions and heritage must be cherished: they have been delighting people for centuries and they represent an important shared foundation for the cultural identity of different communities. But it is equally important to encourage new art forms and artistic and cultural developments. They maintain the vitality of culture and are a creative manifestation of emerging communities. Creative experimentation keeps art and culture vibrant; indeed, it keeps it alive.

In order to assure the pluriformity of the creative offering, it is essential to invest in our own AI systems, which are not dictated by commercial, foreign technologies. The Netherlands and the EU must work to build an alternative, public infrastructure that is based on democratic values and whose offering is not determined by limiting algorithms. Experiments in the creative sector that contribute to that deserve to be encouraged.

⁸⁰ Based on the International Labour Organization’s definition of ‘decent work’, see: www.ilo.org.

⁸¹ www.fairpracticecode.nl

Accessibility: AI respects, assures and stimulates free, broad and easy access to art and culture

The public must have free access to the cultural offering. Access to that offering must be convenient for all who want to experience and enjoy art and culture, regardless of their cultural background, where they live, their age, their gender or their physical or mental condition.

An alternative, public infrastructure of this kind is also important for encouraging the accessibility of culture and creativity under the influence of AI. A public infrastructure must guarantee cultural diversity, with a place being reserved for other less dominant cultural expressions (such as the Dutch language). It is important that the public is aware of the ways in which AI limits our choices and directs our gaze by means of algorithms. In order to make the public fully aware of this, greater AI literacy is needed.

Artistic freedom: AI respects and contributes to the existence of complete artistic freedom

The arts are one of the foundations of a democratic society, and makers must be free from interference by anyone or anything in making, doing or presenting their work.⁸² Because art and culture provide that sanctuary, they can also deliver criticism of society free from impediment.

There needs to be plenty of room for the debate about AI technology itself. Developments in this field will benefit from the critical reflection of artists and other creative makers. The council calls for the creation of sufficient space for the creative sector to contribute ideas and help build a responsible, value-driven approach to AI.



5.

Conclusions and recommendations

WHAT DO WE SEE IN PRACTICE?	WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR?	WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ASSURE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES?
2. How does AI manifest in the cultural and creative sector?	4. Which fundamental values are being influenced?	5. Recommendations for policy
3. What are the most important issues?		

5.1 Conclusions

Generative AI is a social and cultural technology. It exists by the grace of cultural data and deeply influences our culture: how we speak, how we think, how we work, what we make and who receives what information. The council has serious concerns about the way in which this fundamental technology is currently being designed and developed. The development of AI is largely in the hands of a small group of heavily capitalised American firms whose values are at odds with European values and the democratic order. **That is a threat to the whole of society**, and affects education, journalism, our safety, our democracy, our language and how and what culture we experience.

In this advisory report, we highlight the **impact of AI on the cultural and creative sector**. Creative makers are experimenting with the technology, in some cases building it themselves and integrating it into their professional practice. Makers want to retain control over the creative process and emphasise the enjoyment of making. AI can be and is deployed at every stage of the creative process, from creation to reception and archiving, for example for brainstorming or to visualise ideas, to improve songs or even to bring dead actors back to life.

It provides new inspiration, but it also comes with serious concerns, particularly about the way in which AI is designed, how the industry is organised and the way in which AI companies operate. AI companies take little or no account of the copyright of makers when training their models, makers receive no compensation for it, they see their professional practice being negatively impacted and there are serious concerns about bias, lack of cultural diversity and the environmental impact of the AI models.

At the same time, culture and creativity have **the power to positively influence AI**. How we deal with AI is a matter for the whole of our society and calls for a broad approach and dialogue. The cultural and creative sector has an important role to

play here. Art and culture supply meaning to and help interpret the way in which new technology manifests. Creative makers are not only influenced by AI, they also direct and influence AI, make their own models and develop public alternatives.

We stand at an important crossroads. Developments around AI are moving at breathtaking speed and are accompanied by huge uncertainties, yet they call for real-time adjustments. Government and the cultural and creative sector face an important choice: will we passively undergo the developments, as spectators, or will we be active co-makers who set the direction for and help shape the process? In short, do we opt for **passive following** or **active co-creation**? The council unequivocally opts to co-create this development, because we are strongly in favour of AI that is in service to society and a strong and vibrant cultural and creative sector.

The good news is that these aspirations are achievable, because opportunities to exert influence do exist, and there are concrete interventions that can protect our values and take advantage of the opportunities. On the one hand, that involves legislation or enforcement, on the other, makers must be given room to experiment. In all cases, the interventions in question lie within the realm of the possible. They are achievable – provided we have the will.

5.2 Recommendations

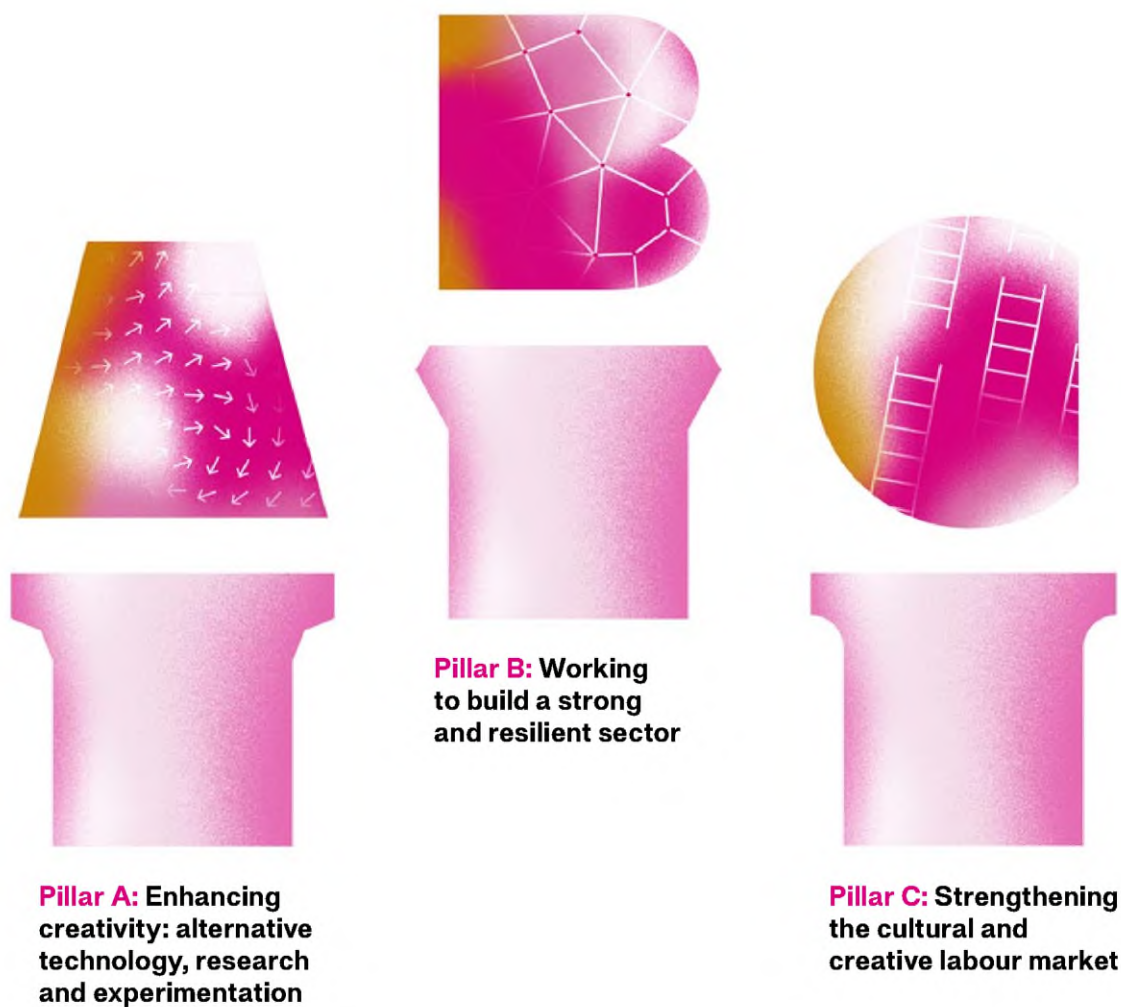
AI can be used in a meaningful way for the benefit of culture and creativity, but the essential values set out in the previous chapter must always be assured. AI should be in the service of the society and culture that we want to bring about together.

That means, on the one hand, not blindly embracing the technology, because the council recognises the danger that AI represents to values such as creativity, the ownership of makers and pluriformity. On the other hand, the sector cannot close its eyes to the transformative power of AI and the opportunities it has to offer. For this reason, the council advocates a value-driven approach to generative AI, with technology contributing to a strong cultural and creative sector instead of undermining it, and creative makers helping shape the future with AI.

In order to steer the use of generative AI in the right direction, it is important to take action at different levels and in different ways. That calls for protecting and utilising – protecting fundamental values of culture and creativity and utilising the power of creativity. The cultural and creative sector must make a significant contribution towards guiding this development within society and the design of alternatives. But it can only do so if the sector receives protection against the malignant growth of the current AI industry. Moreover, the sector must be given room to utilise the technology in the right way, which requires knowledge-building and space for experimentation.

These recommendations are summarised in the following three connected pillars:

- A.** Enhancing creativity: alternative technology, research and experimentation
- B.** Working to build a strong and resilient sector
- C.** Strengthening the cultural and creative labour market





Pillar A: Enhancing creativity: alternative technology, research and experimentation

AI should be at the service of creativity and the sector must therefore be enabled to make AI work for it. This requires space to experiment with new technology and explore new alternatives, as creative makers are already busy doing. Moreover, the cultural and creative sector is a flywheel for innovation in the whole economy. Creativity is essential to the innovative strength and earning capacity of the Netherlands. The sector should therefore be an active element of government-wide and economic AI policy.

1. Stand up for the power of human creativity

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, other departments, provincial and municipal authorities:

1.1 *Public authorities should set an example by unequivocally opting for human creativity and continuing to invest in this sector and in the rapid and strict adoption of the laws, rules, codes and provisions we agree for the defence of our cultural values and human creativity.*

Creativity is indispensable to any society. The Council for Culture stands for the intrinsic value of creativity and art. The government must continue to stand up for culture, creativity and the power of the imagination. For this reason, the council also welcomes the call by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science for investment in knowledge, skills, creativity and critical thinking.⁸³

In this advisory report, the council shows that AI technology is an inherently cultural and social technology. This means that it touches on education, culture and science, our capacity for critical thought and our creativity. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science therefore has an important responsibility in how we deal with AI as a society, how it influences our culture, and how we can influence AI from the domains of education, culture and science.

1.2 *Schools should stimulate the creativity of pupils and continually emphasise how human creativity distinguishes itself from AI; cultural institutions make a big contribution in this regard with their educational offering.*

The power of human creativity in education warrants specific attention. This is an essential skill for all children and young people, which deserves an important place in primary and secondary education. There is a crucial role here for cultural education. Schools should stimulate the creativity of pupils and continually emphasise how human creativity differentiates itself from AI; cultural institutions have a big contribution to make in this regard with their educational offering.

To the sector:

1.3 *Emphasise the power of human creativity and make a case for it.*

Keep on putting the importance of human creativity on the agenda: in your own networks, but also in The Hague, in communication with politicians and in public debates. This no longer goes without saying, and therefore warrants additional emphasis. The sector can continue to communicate where the value of human creativity lies and can underline this by, for example, hiring human designers rather than moving to replace them by AI. It is important that human makers are visible and findable. A good example of that visibility is the campaign to add translators' names to the covers of books.⁸⁴

A lot is already being done. Intensify and build on that. Organisations in many sectors now work with principles or guidelines focused on human creativity. The Dutch Designers Association (BNO) has published a mission statement stressing the added value of human creativity.⁸⁵ A broad network of organisations in the music industry has launched the Human Artistry Campaign, with core principles such as

⁸³ Ministry of Education, Culture and Science 2026.

⁸⁴ <https://literairvertalen.org/nieuws/open-brief-aan-uitgevers-vertalers-op-het-omslag>; <https://www.letterenfonds.nl/ontdek/de-vertaler-vertelt>

⁸⁵ <https://www.bno.nl/blog/nieuws-11/bno-lanceert-mission-statement-ai-2369>

transparency, ethical use of technology and fair compensation.⁸⁶ AI versions of actors or AI-written scripts are no longer considered when the Oscars are awarded.⁸⁷ Organisations are thus explicitly advocating human creativity.

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, cultural funds, sector bodies, unions and the business community:

1.4 Make arrangements about chain responsibility.

Push for joint undertakings with business regarding the use of AI. For example, conclude a ‘value of creativity agreement’, containing a commitment not to simply replace human creativity with ‘AI slop’.

2. Promote and develop public AI alternatives and public AI infrastructure and start a new incentive programme, ‘Towards a European AI culture’

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Economic Affairs and Climate Policy:

2.1 *In order to utilise the strengths of the creative industry to maximum effect and enable it to make a lasting contribution to the major societal transition that AI represents, and hence to future prosperity, the council is calling for an incentive programme, ‘Towards a European AI culture’, in line with the Dutch Groeifonds (Growth Fund) projects.⁸⁸ A programme of this kind would enable the creative industry to work with business, government and market participants on public AI alternatives and public AI infrastructure.*

The government intends to phase out the *Groeifonds* as we currently know it, or at least not to add any new programmes. At the same time, something of this kind would be a very good instrument for the creative sector. For this reason, money should be invested in a similar investment programme in partnership with the field, the government and market players, the details of which would need to be worked out.

The creative industry is a crucial part of innovation policy. “Real change originates where technology and social innovations come together, and design, ideas and technology meld”, in the words of the policy letter on Industrial Policy by the Ministry of Economic Affairs.⁸⁹ The design strength of the creative industry is a fundamental condition for the Netherlands’ earning capacity and innovative power. The cultural and creative sector is not only a thriving economic sector that accounted for 3.3 percent of GDP in 2022⁹⁰, it also generates innovation through crossovers with other sectors and so strengthens the competitiveness of the entire economy.

The cultural and creative sector is not only a user of AI, it also develops the technology itself. Indeed, the cultural and creative sector is an important source of applications. Due to the sector’s smallness of scale and its diversity, it is capable of innovating quickly. It is of the greatest possible importance that alternative, reliable and responsible alternatives to the existing applications and the companies behind them become available quickly. The task of how we as a society deal with AI in a beneficial way, working towards a Dutch and European AI based on public values, is exactly the kind of territory in which the design strengths and creative capacity

⁸⁶ <https://www.humanartistrycampaign.com/>

⁸⁷ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2612716-oscarregels-aangescherpt-voor-ai-gebruik-mens-komt-op-de-eerste-plek>

⁸⁸ <https://www.nationaalgroeifonds.nl/>

⁸⁹ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate 2025. This policy letter was issued by Vincent Karremans, then the outgoing Minister of Economic Affairs in the Schoof government.

⁹⁰ CBS 2025.

of this sector come into their own. An incentive programme on the model of the *Groeifonds* will have a doubly reinforcing effect in this regard: it will contribute to a stronger Dutch market position in a responsible way and strengthen the economically important creative sector.

To public authorities, business, science and the sector:

2.2 *Continue to make room for and encourage innovation and collaboration between artists, scientists and entrepreneurs.*

In recent years, innovation and collaboration between artists, scientists and business have been encouraged in many different ways. Programmes for artistic research were established by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) ('Route Kunst'), while the Taskforce for Applied Research SIA provides opportunities to conduct practice-based research. Cultuurloket DigitALL and the Innovatielabs helped the sector to experiment with digital technology and the CIIIC growth funds programme has opened up opportunities for immersive industry. In addition, innovation through art, media, science and technology is already taking place at many places in the Netherlands. Continue to make space for such innovation and encourage these collaborations.

2.3 *Use the sector's strength in design to build alternatives with public values as design principles.*

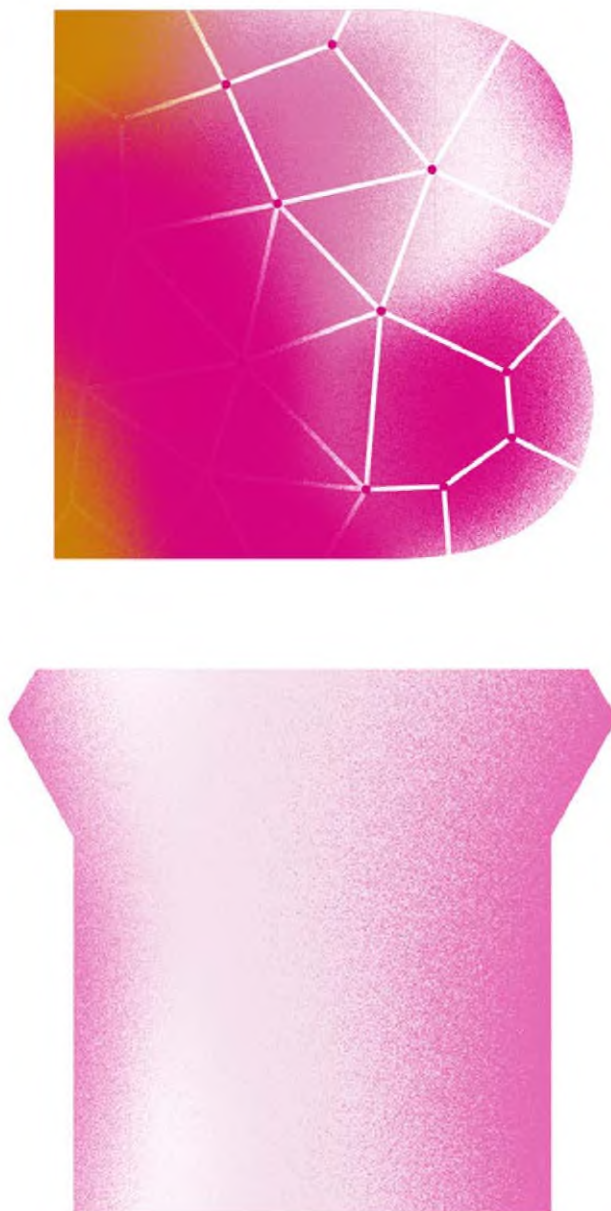
Artists are building their own language models based on their own data. For instance, the organisation Thunderboom is developing alternatives within the music sector. Blender is an open source program for 3D animations that has been in existence for some time and has proven its worth, reaching a wide audience. GPT-NL is an example of an AI provider that has been working with the sector as a supplier of data from the outset and is informed by public values. These examples demonstrate that the creative sector can contribute to responsible alternatives to the most common AI systems.

2.4 *Work with datasets and models trained with a focus on literary and artistic traditions in Europe.*

The collections of cultural heritage institutions can play an important role here. Pan-European collaboration is desirable in order to prevent the 'public AI' offering flourishing only in individual national contexts and investment fragmenting (diminishing the chances of offering genuine alternatives to the mainstream generative AI from the other regions).

2.5 *Link in with networks and economic and innovation agendas, including at the regional level.*

For the sector, it is important to be involved in deciding how we deal with AI as a society. There are already various innovation ecosystems, such as the so-called ELSA Labs, collaborations between knowledge institutes, public authorities, businesses and civil society organisations to develop knowledge about the responsible use of AI together in a targeted way.



Pillar B: Work on a strong and resilient sector

A strong cultural and creative sector has an essential role to play in how we, as a society, deal with generative AI. The sector can only do so if it is protected from the excesses of the AI industry and receives fair compensation for the use of cultural data in AI models. Powerful, interdisciplinary coalitions are needed to positively influence these developments, as are sufficient knowledge, expertise, and agility.

3. Introduce a content levy for AI suppliers

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science, Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and Justice and Security:

3.1 *Introduce an alternative compensation system via a levy on content for AI suppliers, with the proceeds going to the cultural and creative sector.*

The European Parliament insists that the use of copyright-protected material by generative AI should be fairly compensated in order to protect the EU's creative sector.⁹¹ In a recent policy letter, the government warned against the use of content for AI without appropriate compensation and stated its commitment to a fair digital market.⁹² There is much debate about how this should be done (see also section 3.2). The council considers it a positive development that AI companies and rights-holders are making licence agreements, but observes that this often remains limited to rights-holders with large bodies of work. In many cases, individual makers and smaller organisations are not in a position to attract the attention of AI companies and agree licences. Moreover, the deals are often not transparent. For this reason, the council calls for an alternative compensation system: a levy on the generation of content for AI providers. The proceeds of such a levy would go to the cultural and creative sector. (Internationally, Arthur Mensch, CEO of the French AI company Mistral, has already called for a content levy of this kind⁹³, as has the Open Future Foundation⁹⁴; other member states are currently weighing the options for a levy.)

In terms of AI output, Dutch legislators have the power to develop tailored solutions and explore the scope for the national and European implementation of those solutions – for example, a system is conceivable in which makers and rights-holders automatically qualify for collective compensation for the use of their works for AI training. This general compensation could be funded from output-based levies. The levy would be charged at the moment that an AI system generates content or output. In reality, this is a compensation (payable retrospectively) for the use of human works for AI training that is payable as soon as a fully developed AI system uses the “insights” from the training phase to produce content. Makers and rights-holders who prefer to make individual licence agreements can use the existing opt-out mechanism and so remove their works from the AI training process. With this type of regulation, Dutch legislators could assume a leadership position in the EU and develop a model for future harmonisation steps at the European level.

In practice, an AI content levy could take the form of a legal requirement for providers of generative AI to pay a reasonable compensation for generating creative content. The payment could be made to an umbrella performing rights organisation that acts as a central collection point for the AI levy and then makes it available to constituent performing rights organisations, such as BumaStemra, Pictoright, LIRA, VEVAM and NORMA, which operate as distribution bodies.⁹⁵ The individual distribution body would then ensure that its affiliated makers, artists and rights-holding receive the compensation. To this end, the distribution bodies would develop a distribution formula. The council believes such a formula could use prompt data that provides insight into the categories of work, genres, styles, etc. that users of AI systems have mentioned in their prompts. It could also

⁹¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/nl/press-room/20260306IPR37511/bescherming-van-auteursrechtelijk-beschermd-werk-en-de-creatieve-sector-van-eu>

⁹² https://www.eerstekamer.nl/brief_in/20260424/beleidsbrief_onderwijs_cultuur_en/f=/vmx2imj5knqw.pdf

⁹³ <https://www.ft.com/content/d63d6291-687f-4e05-8b23-4d545d78c64a>

⁹⁴ Keller (2025).

⁹⁵ See the distribution bodies for the private copying levy in the Netherlands: https://www.thuiskopie.nl/nl/thuiskopie_2/verdeling-rechthebbenden

use distribution parameters that are already familiar from other levies, such as the home copying levy.⁹⁶

Alternative models are of course also possible. For example, the AI levy could be collected by an AI culture fund that then uses the revenue to support concrete projects by makers and artists. In this variant, the culture fund in question would have to develop a governance model in which committees of human makers and artists decide which projects and initiatives are eligible for financial support.⁹⁷

4. Ensure robust and rapid implementation of European directives and regulations, including enforcement

To central government, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in particular:

4.1 *The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science should keep a close eye on the interests of the cultural and creative sector, and should raise those interests with the supervising authority and other important parties. In doing so, it should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude but should actively take the lead, within the Netherlands and on behalf of the Netherlands in Europe.*

In recent years, the EU has adopted various laws relating to digitalisation, such as the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act and the AI Act (AI regulation). The government is now working on national oversight of the European AI Act. It is very important that regulators are adequately equipped to do their job, in order to ensure strict enforcement of the rules.

5. Build interdisciplinary coalitions

It is virtually impossible for an individual organisation or even a single department to steer this development in the direction of the desired future. Building partnerships is therefore crucial in order to gain control over AI and decide for ourselves what kind of AI we want in our society.

To central government, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in particular:

5.1 *Appoint a government AI commissioner to ensure integrated policy.*

AI calls for government-wide policy. This is already happening through the development of government-wide visions and various collaborations between departments. Nevertheless, AI calls even more expressly for interdepartmental policy. The council believes this is a matter of great urgency. This is a social and cultural technology that will deeply influence society and culture; moreover, developments are taking place at lightning speed. This calls for administrative responsibility and coordination at a high level between ministers with specific areas of expertise. A newly appointed government commissioner would be an excellent way of delivering this. The commissioner could make sure government – broadly defined – remains alert, operating from an independent, powerfully mandated position.

⁹⁶ https://www.thuiskopie.nl/nl/thuiskopie_2/verdeling-rechthebbenden

⁹⁷ Jacques and Flynn 2024.

5.2 *The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science needs to stand up for the interests of creative makers and artists within central government.*

Although subjects like copyright fall more under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Security, and the labour market more under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the council nevertheless believes it is of the utmost importance that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science also adopts a robust position on those subjects. To date, little account has been taken of the interests of creative makers when developing AI models. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is in a position to identify specific issues within the cultural and creative sector more quickly than other departments and also to actively draw the attention of departments – for example, those of Justice and Security, Economic Affairs and Climate, Interior and Kingdom Relations, and Social Affairs and Employment – to those issues. At the European level, too, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science can play an active role in drawing up policy. There is an extremely strong tech lobby at the EU level. In an EU context, there is a obvious role for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to play in championing the value of creativity and leading the way in preparing and furthering legislation and regulations to protect the Dutch and European creative sectors against actors from outside – and of course also from inside.

To the sector:

5.3 *Pursue collaborations with other sectors – such as journalism and education – with the goal of co-creating AI.*

Similar concerns about the way in which AI is designed and organised exist in other domains of society. There is a lively debate going on in the education sector about how to deal with AI. Scientists, experts and civil society organisations have united in the Zorgvuldig & Zorgzaam Digitaal ('Careful & Considerate Digital') coalition.⁹⁸ In a joint letter, Dutch news media have previously called for the media sector to be involved in developments and investments in AI.⁹⁹ All around, similar concerns and calls for a broader approach to AI are being expressed. AI and human creativity are societal issues, so set up partnerships between the domains. Collaboration with unions and human rights organisations would be helpful with regard to working conditions and the accessibility of AI. Also aim to collaborate with economic agendas, business and the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO/NCW). Learn from other sectors that are developing societal strategies to ensure that AI lands positively. In higher education and business, learning communities have been established, for example: accessible forums for knowledge-sharing, discussion and exchange between students, lecturers and professionals from the business community.

Many organisations, including performing rights organisations and sector bodies, are expressly seeking to collaborate with European organisations. For instance, various cultural organisations are united in Culture Action Europe, which has actively sought to influence the implementation of the AI Act in favour of the cultural and creative sector.

⁹⁸ <https://openletter.earth/nl/zorgvuldig-and-zorgzaam-digitaal-f559037e>

⁹⁹ <https://sdm.nl/brief-aan-de-informateur-namens-de-nederlandse-mediasector/>

6. Build knowledge and expertise and work on AI policy within the sector

To makers, cultural institutions, sector bodies, culture funds and supra-sectoral institutions:

6.1 *Develop knowledge and expertise, as individual makers, as organisations and as a sector. The entire sector has a responsibility here, from individuals and organisations to sector bodies and supra-sectoral institutions. Again, collaboration and knowledge-sharing are crucial. A great deal of strategic and legal knowledge is already present in different sectors. Some sector bodies offer members legal support.*

It is important to continue to develop knowledge and expertise of digital skills in line with AI. For instance, a core task of DEN, as a supra-sectoral support institution, is to support the sector in the digital transformation. Other organisations are working hard in the realm of digital sovereignty. For instance, Commons Network developed a roadmap ‘Op naar een soeverein en weerbaar digitaal ecosysteem’ (‘Towards a sovereign and resilient digital ecosystem’).¹⁰⁰ Roadmaps can be developed within the cultural and creative sector, too, in order to identify which steps are needed for digital sovereignty.

6.2 *Take the lead in the debate about the role of AI and contribute to the AI-literacy of society.*

AI has the potential to fundamentally change society, but the power to influence its course is in the hands of a small number of dominant technology companies. Deciding what place AI should occupy in our society is something the whole of society ought to be involved in. The cultural and creative sector has an important role to play here. Art and culture supply meaning, critical reflection and interpretation on how new technology manifests. The sector can be a leader in the debate and contribute to the AI literacy of society. To that end, knowledge and expertise in the sector are essential.

AI literacy is becoming ever more important; indeed, it is a requirement for organisations that work with AI systems under the AI Act. AI literacy is decidedly not just about skills, knowledge and understanding of the technical operation of AI systems, but also about its social, ethical and practical aspects.

6.3 *Work to develop organisation-wide policy and establish an ongoing conversation about how to deal with AI within the sector. .*

A lot of thought is being given by those in the sector to how to deal with AI in their own organisations or subsectors. As part of their network agenda, the libraries are already working to promote critical reflection on, and critical use of, technology such as AI.¹⁰¹ Professional bodies, funds, broadcasters and other organisations have also developed guidelines, protocols and vision documents. Due to the speed with which AI is developing, policy will also have to be flexible and be continually adapted to changing circumstances. Conduct an ongoing conversation about how to deal with AI within the sector and engage in exchange with other sectors.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.commonsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Routekaart-Op-naar-een-Soeverein-en-Weerbaar-Digitaal-Ecosysteem-1.pdf>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.bibliotheeknetwerk.nl/het-bibliotheeknetwerk/netwerkagenda>

To arts education:

6.4 *Continue to develop and assure competencies that transcend individual technologies.*

This requires clearly communicating the enduring value of human creative making processes and artistic research to students and prospective students, in ongoing dialogue with the sector and professional fields. In addition, the council calls for students to learn to relate to AI technology from three different perspectives: as a human being, as a maker and as a creative professional. Lecturers must be empowered to conduct a dialogue with students about AI, explore alternative AI technologies and consciously build on the long traditions of creative technology and generative arts in arts education.

7. Enable agility by setting up a societal 'AI and culture' taskforce

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the sector:

7.1 *Set up a societal 'AI and culture' taskforce. This should be a shared initiative by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the sector, with the sector taking the lead, supported by the ministry.*

The speed of the introduction of AI and its disruptiveness mean that thinking and action need to take place more or less simultaneously. Active policy by definition requires rapid and ongoing action: in real time. A debate about AI is needed, but there is barely any time for deliberation (or the time is simply not taken). A societal taskforce will help the sector and the ministry to be agile and enable them to continually reflect and intervene. The taskforce could be made up of representatives from across the sector, to enable policy to respond flexibly to the rapid pace of developments. The taskforce would bring together up-to-date data, including on the labour market, AI adoption and the level of knowledge in the sector (for example, in partnership with the Boekman Foundation, which can shed light on developments as a collector and interpreter of data on the sector). The societal taskforce could potentially be linked to the new government commissioner. In this way, we would be combining the strengths of government, the sector and society around the fundamental and disruptive theme of AI.



Pillar C: Strengthen the cultural and creative labour market

The council calls on cultural and creative advocacy groups to work together as much as possible in order to strengthen artistic dialogue. It is important that the sector speaks with one voice and is able to position itself effectively. In addition, makers and organisations must be given opportunities for retraining or further training.

8. Continue to build a robust shared labour market infrastructure for the whole sector.

AI impacts deeply on the activities in the cultural and creative sector and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities. The sector stands to gain from a robust shared labour infrastructure. The sector has been working to strengthen dialogue for some time. Interest groups are joining forces and the Fair Practice Code plays an important role in creating fair working conditions. The current developments reinforce the demand for a robust infrastructure for joint advocacy concerning the labour market infrastructure, so that the sector is in a position to respond adequately to changing circumstances and speak with a strong voice.

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Social Affairs and Employment, unions and the sector:

8.1 *Drawing on the expertise of the Centre for Labour Relations in the Public Sector (CAOP), investigate which forms of collective advocacy can give makers a more enduring and stronger position in the representation of collective interests (including labour market interests) around AI.*

Work to improve collective organisation. The cultural and creative sector has traditionally been weakly organised around conditions of employment and working conditions, and for all kinds of reasons there is little appetite for greater organisation among makers themselves. Nevertheless, these times seem to call for, in any event, a form of collective organisation around labour market and other interests, such as financial preconditions and work.

9. Establish a training, development and transition fund

To the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Social Affairs and Employment:

9.1 *Expand Werktuig PPD.*

The sector has developed 'Werktuig PPO' (Permanent Professional Development tools) as an instrument for training, retraining and further training. Today's world calls for an expansion of those educational options. An obvious way to achieve this is to expand this instrument, which can help meet the need for training within the sector in the area of AI, on the one hand in order to keep up and on the other to give everyone in the sector access to education and training and so counteract inequality. The Social and Economic Council has warned of increasing inequality.¹⁰² It is inevitable that jobs will change and some may disappear, partly under the influence of generative AI, but that also gives rise to a shared responsibility to offer workers labour market prospects and training/retraining opportunities to support their long-term employability.

¹⁰² SER 2025.

10. Assure career opportunities and new growth paths in the sector

To the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science:

10.1 *Investigate what the use of AI means for career opportunities and growth paths, specifically for young talent. .*

Human talent is experiencing strong competition around simple tasks, which young people would traditionally learn in the early stages of their careers by performing them. As a result, their development may stall, or be one-sided. Young makers deserve protection and must be given the opportunity to develop new growth paths that are appropriate to this new era and technology. Determining which instruments are most suitable for this purpose calls for further research. Explore ways of ensuring that new makers are able to gain experience and develop the skills they will later need for the key roles in the sector. Everyone must have space to learn the craft, grow, gain experience and develop as a maker, even as existing revenue models are coming under pressure from AI, especially in the early and relatively 'simple' phase of a career.

To provincial and municipal authorities, cultural funds, the sector and education.

10.2 *Continue to invest in providing room and budget for talent development and growth. Make sure that young makers are able to develop, including after their courses have finished or outside of education, to give them strength and resilience amid the major changes being brought about by AI.*

Loss of learning opportunities is a realistic risk in an already vulnerable field. Start a conversation about future learning opportunities within the sector and arts education, and focus on entrepreneurship education, in which students learn to negotiate with clients and make explicit the value of art. Take care that the focus is not limited to retaining what already exists, but also extends to developing the growth paths and new perspectives that are appropriate to the new times and technology.

In conclusion

In previous advisory reports, the council noted that the central government cultural budget is inadequate.¹⁰³ An increase of €250 million in the annual budget is already needed in order to enable the sector to function properly. This advisory report supports the necessity of additional funding. The cultural and creative sector assists society as a whole in learning how to deal with AI, and its capacity to do so needs to be enhanced, in order that it can adapt to a changing world, has space to experiment and is able to develop alternatives.

¹⁰³ Council for Culture 2021; Council for Culture 2024; Council for Culture 2025.

appendices

Appendix 1.

Dialogue partners

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Appendix 2.

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Colophon

The Council for Culture is a body established by law to advise the Dutch Government and Parliament on the arts, culture and media. The Council provides recommendations regarding the cultural policy in the Netherlands, whether it is requested of them or not.

Artistic over artificial. Towards a value-driven approach to AI for the cultural and creative sector is a publication of the Council for Culture.

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The cover design combines an authentic photo of Partybus (Piratbyrå, 2008) with a digital artwork by Yasha Kolomiets that incorporates AI.

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