ACTIVITY TITLE: AI as an Artist: Exploring Identity Through Code

Activity code: ncEHU02

⏳	DURATION	120 minutes
👤	AGE RANGE	15-16 y/o
⚛	TOPICS	AI Visual Arts Ethical Design Digital Exhibition

💬 Description of the project

Welcome to *AI as an Artist*! In this activity, you'll step into the role of digital creators and critical thinkers, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to explore how machines can mimic human creativity— and what that really means for society.

Your mission is to investigate how AI generates visual art through tools like DALL·E, RunwayML, or similar platforms. You'll learn how these tools interpret language, how they're trained on massive image datasets, and how their outputs reflect (or distort) the world we live in. You'll also discover the social, ethical, and gender-related implications hidden behind those AI-generated images—such as who is represented, who is left out, and what messages are reinforced.

Throughout the activity, you and your team will:

- Research women and gender-diverse innovators in AI and digital art, giving visibility to often-overlooked voices.
- Choose a topic—like identity, environmental justice, culture, or inclusion—and design your own AI-generated artworks to explore it.
- Curate your work into a visual or digital exhibition, complete with titles, captions, and a reflection on your design process and its societal impact.

Along the way, you'll dive into important concepts like:

- Generative AI and prompt engineering

- Bias in datasets and digital equity

- Cultural remixing through AI tools

- Gender visibility and inclusive storytelling

- Ethical and sustainable design in tech

By the end of the session, you'll have created a powerful visual piece that blends technology, creativity, and purpose—and you'll understand how AI can be used not just to create, but to critique, empower, and inspire change.

Objectives: What will I learn?

- **Explore how AI systems create visual content** by interacting with tools like DALL·E or RunwayML, so you can understand how machines interpret language to generate images.

- **Learn how datasets shape AI's imagination** by investigating bias in image generation and reflecting on which people, cultures, and aesthetics are (or are not) represented in AI outputs.

- **Practice critical thinking and ethical analysis** by questioning the fairness, accuracy, and social impact of AI-generated media—especially in relation to gender, race, and identity.

- **Use artistic thinking and digital creativity** to design an original artwork on a theme of your choice (e.g., inclusion, climate, identity), applying AI tools to tell a meaningful story visually.

- **Research and honor the contributions of women and gender-diverse figures in STEAM** by including them in your project inspiration and final exhibit, helping to promote visibility and equity in tech.

- **Colaborate with your team to curate and present your AI-generated art** in a mini- exhibition, using design, storytelling, and reflection to explain your choices and engage others in dialogue.

Materials: What do I need?

1. Provided by the teacher/institution

- Laptops or Chromebooks with internet access and pre-installed or bookmarked AI tools (e.g., DALL·E, RunwayML, Canva AI)

- Projector and screen for group demos and showcases

- Exhibition supplies: scissors, glue, markers, tape (optional for physical display)

- Printed handouts:

  - AI Prompt Writing Guide

  - "Her Side of AI" research template

  - Artwork Title Card template for exhibitions

o   Ethical AI and Sustainability Tipsheet

2. Provided by students

- Notebook or sketchpad for brainstorming and drafting ideas

- Pen or pencil

- Smartphone or tablet (optional, for digital capture or reference photos)

- Personal object or image that reflects their cultural identity (to be used in their artwork prompt)

3. Downloadable resources

- [Prompt Writing Guide: "How to Speak to the Machine"](#)

- [Bias tracker table](#)

- [Her Side of AI – Female Role Model Template](#)

- [List of Free AI Tools and Ethical Use Tipsheet](#)

Previous preparation

- Form student teams of 3–4 students, ensuring diversity and encouraging equitable participation and rotating leadership roles (e.g., creative lead, tech lead, researcher, presenter).

- Check and prepare AI tools (e.g., DALL·E, RunwayML, or Canva AI) on all student devices, making sure students don't need to sign up individually.

- Print materials:

  o   AI Prompt Writing Guides

  o   "Her Side of AI" templates

  o   Exhibition Title Card templates

- Prepare a short visual introduction (5–7 minutes) on:

  o   What is generative AI? https://youtu.be/rwF-X5STYks

  o   How datasets can be biased or incomplete: https://youtu.be/x2mRoFNm22g

- Set up an exhibition wall, bulletin board, or digital padlet for students to display their final artworks.

- Create a safe space agreement to promote respectful collaboration, creative freedom, and inclusive dialogue during sensitive discussions about identity, equity, and representation.

- Students should bring a personal image or object that reflects an aspect of their identity (used to inspire artwork).

- Research a woman or gender-diverse creator in the field of AI or digital.

- Come prepared to explore ideas related to identity, fairness, or sustainability in art.

🔍 RESEARCH

👁 Have a look at these resources

Can a machine be creative? Can it understand culture, identity, or emotion?

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence has entered the world of art—creating poems, portraits, and posters. AI models like DALL·E, Midjourney, and RunwayML generate visual content by interpreting written prompts. But what's behind this creativity? These tools are trained on massive datasets made by humans—and that means they often reflect human biases, exclusions, and assumptions. This activity invites you to become both a digital artist and a social investigator. You'll use AI to create images that speak to important issues like identity, gender, inclusion, and sustainability. But more importantly, you'll ask:

- Whose stories are being told?

- Who is missing from the AI's "imagination"?

- And how can we use technology to change that?

Real-World Examples

- "Portraits of Imaginary People" – An art project that uses AI to create faces that look real but don't exist, raising questions about ethics and truth.

- Sougwen Chung, a renowned artist, collaborates with robotic arms to paint in real time— exploring the relationship between human movement and machine learning.

- In 2022, an AI-generated artwork won a major art competition in Colorado, sparking global debates about what counts as art—and whether AI should compete with humans.

- Research has shown that some AI art tools generate fewer images of women or people of color when given neutral prompts like "CEO" or "scientist"—reflecting bias in their datasets.

Key Questions to Discuss and Explore

- How does an AI generate an image from a prompt?

- What does it mean for an AI to be "trained" on data—and where does that data come from?

- Are certain genders, races, or cultures more visible in AI-generated art? Why?

- What role can artists, activists, and students play in challenging bias in tech?

• Can we use AI art to make marginalized voices more visible instead of less?

CREATE

Some things you need before beginning

Warm-up & Brainstorm

Begin with a classroom discussion: *Can machines really be creative?*

Students observe examples of AI-generated art and analyze what they see.

- Who is portrayed? Who is missing?

- What styles dominate the images?

- What assumptions might the AI be making?

Tool Exploration

- Explore tools such as RunwayML, DALL·E, or Canva AI.

- Experiment with basic prompts and observe how changes in wording affect results.

Bias Scavenger Hunt

In groups, try prompts like to compare outcomes and identify any visible bias (gender, ethnicity, setting, etc.):

- "CEO in an office"

- "Scientist giving a talk"

- "Traditional dress in Europe vs. Africa"

Research a Role Model

Using the *"Her Side of AI"* template, each team researches a female or gender-diverse figure in

AI, art, or tech innovation, and prepare a short card or digital slide to highlight this person's story.

Now, follow these steps

Step 1. Choose a Theme

Select a social or personal topic you feel connected to to guide your creative work, such as:

- *Who gets to be seen?* (identity, visibility, beauty standards)

- *Voices of the Earth* (climate change and environmental justice)

- *Tech for good or harm?* (ethics in surveillance or automation)

- *Cultural remix* (how heritage and AI intersect)

- *Imagining futures* (hopeful or dystopian projections)

Tip: you may first create a "mind map" of your topic, collecting words, images, and questions that you want to explore through art. If your topic includes cultural elements, highlight terms related to your heritage or specific traditions to explore further.

Bear in mind: If you select "Cultural Remix", your team must include a short research step to link your imagery to a specific cultural tradition, symbol, or practice. You'll explore its origin, meaning, and significance, and reflect on how it can be respectfully reimagined through AI.

Step 2. Write, Refine, and Remix Your Prompts

- Begin with brainstormed ideas, then develop 2–4 full prompts using the AI Prompt Guide. After, test how small changes in wording shift the AI's output. Compare at least two AI tools if possible (e.g., RunwayML vs. DALL·E) to discuss how tools interpret prompts differently.

- While testing, use the Bias Tracker Table to collect data on how each AI tool responds:

    o Which identities, genders, or styles appear most often?

    o What patterns do you notice across tools or prompt versions?

    o Do certain tools reinforce stereotypes?

- Visualize your results: Each group creates a simple graph or visual summary (using digital or analog tools) to present their findings. This will support a more critical view of the AI's output.

Bonus: Try a "prompt swap" challenge—each team writes a prompt and gives it to another to see how it gets visualized differently.

Step 3. Hybrid Creation Challenge

After generating digital artworks, choose one to "remix by hand":

- Print and paint over it

- Use collage

- Trace it and reinterpret it with traditional media

This will help you compare machine-made vs. human-made design decisions and emotional effects. Why?: This activates the Art & Engineering dimensions—examining how expression, materials, and layers influence meaning.

Step 4. Create a Visual Storyboard or Micro-Narrative

- Create a short visual sequence (3–4 images) or a "before-and-after" transformation using AI

(e.g., "What if the world had more trees?" "How would cities look in 2100?").

- Include:

  o   A title

  o   A brief written or spoken story (optional audio recording)

  o   Color symbolism, emotional tone, cultural elements

  o   If your theme involved cultural elements, include a section titled "Link to Tradition"**:** Briefly explain the cultural reference or imagery used, its origin, and why it was meaningful to include in your artwork.

      o Optional: Use a free tool like Canva, StoryboardThat, or create on paper.

Step 5. Document the Creative Process

- Take photos/screenshots of your ideation, failures, and final works.

- Include a mini reflection slide or logbook:

  o   What was your original idea?

  o   What changed and why?

  o   What challenges did you encounter using AI tools?

  o   What would you do differently if starting again?

- Attach your Bias Tracker and data visualization. Reflect on:
  o   What patterns of representation or bias did you notice?
  o   How did these findings affect your creative choices?

💬 COMMUNICATE

Now that you've completed your creative exploration, it's time to present and reflect on your work—just like artists, engineers, and designers do when they launch real projects into the world.

In this final phase, you will present your artwork and process, engage in thoughtful reflection, and

connect your AI creations to real-world challenges or opportunities.

Yoy will share:

- Your selected AI-generated artwork(s)

- The title and theme (e.g., "Voices in the Code", "Future of Cities", "Rewriting Beauty")

- A description of the design choices you made, such as:

  o Why you had chosen their specific theme

  o How you had crafted and iterated prompts

- o How you had responded to issues of representation or bias

- o Why you had selected certain styles or colors

<u>Bonus:</u> If you did a "hybrid remix" with analog techniques (painting, collage), you should explain how that changed or added meaning to the final piece.

Then, analyze the relevance of your product by:

- Comparing your AI artwork to existing creative tools, campaigns, or initiatives, for example:

  - o Public awareness campaigns

  - o Digital activism posters

- Arguing how their piece could have real impact, such as:

  - o Raising awareness about identity, climate, or gender

  - o Promoting inclusive representation in tech and media

Guiding questions for comparison and reflection:

- How is your work similar to or different from existing examples?

- Could your creation be used in a real exhibit, awareness campaign, or educational tool?

- What kind of change or conversation could it spark?

- How did you think about sustainability when creating your artwork or choosing your tools?

⬈ It is time to share!

In this section different social media will be presented in order to upload your activity result.

#nameoftheactivity

- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/steambrace-project/posts/?feedView=all

- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/steambrace_eu/

- X: https://www.instagram.com/steambrace_eu/

💡 KEEP ON LEARNING

🧠 How can I make a similar project by myself?

Your investigation doesn't end here. The creative and critical skills you've practiced—prompt writing, analyzing bias, reflecting on representation, and building visual messages with AI—are tools you can use to understand the world and help shape it.

You've created art, but you've also questioned fairness, representation, and the role of technology in society. That's powerful. Now, take a moment to reflect and think ahead.

Reflection Questions

Discuss or write your responses to these prompts:

- What was the most surprising thing you learned about how AI sees people and cultures?

- What challenges did your team face when trying to guide the AI to reflect your vision?

- How did you apply gender-inclusive or culturally aware thinking in your artwork or process?

- What would you do differently if you had more time, more tools, or your own dataset?

- How did this experience change the way you think about art, fairness, or creativity?

- Can you imagine using AI and art to raise awareness about another issue? Which one?

- What role do you think young people should play in shaping the future of AI?

Ideas for continuing your learning or action

- Explore careers: Research creative paths where tech meets culture and ethics—like ethical design, computational arts, digital storytelling, or human-centered AI.

- Advocate for better tools: Write a blog or presentation proposing how AI art tools could become more inclusive, diverse, and empowering.

- Go digital: Create a short video or visuQuiero al campaign using your artwork and add captions that tell your story. Use Canva, Adobe Spark, or Instagram Reels to share your message.

⬤ Which are other connected projects?

Here are some connected initiatives that relate closely to what you've explored in this activity and that you could try to do:

Examples:

- Remixing History; "If They Were Seen…": Choose a historical or cultural figure who has been marginalized (e.g., a woman in science, an Indigenous leader, an LGBTQ+ artist) and use AI to: Generate portraits or symbolic scenes of that person, compare AI interpretations using different prompts and reflect on how datasets may or may not represent that identity

  Extension: Write a letter or story from the perspective of that figure using their AI-generated image.

- "Prompt Poet" Challenge: Create a digital poetry and art book using AI. Write poems or short stories about justice, identity, or hope. Use AI tools to generate matching or

contrasting images.

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Sougwen Chung's Human–Machine Collaborations**
  A world-renowned artist who paints alongside robotic arms trained on her gestures— exploring identity, memory, and co-creation. https://sougwen.com
- **Women in AI**
  A global nonprofit empowering women and minorities in AI through education, mentorship, and visibility campaigns—perfect for discovering role models and joining community projects. https://www.womeninai.co
- **Teens in AI**
  A global movement where young people use artificial intelligence to address social justice, mental health, and climate issues—often through creativity and ethical design. https://www.teensinai.com
- **Latent Space**
  A digital platform where artists and technologists share AI-generated media, often critiquing bias, surveillance, or exclusion in the tools they use. https://latent.space

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