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From Muse to Machine: A Scoping Literature Review of AI in Cultural Production

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This paper is a scoping literature review of research on artificial intelligence (AI) in cultural production, a field that is being shaped by rapid technological change and unresolved debates. Results identified four areas of interest in the current literature on AI in cultural production: methodological challenges, creativity and aesthetics, copyright and policy, and ethics. AI appears in the reviewed papers both as collaborator and disruptor, challenging established notions of authorship, originality, and artistic integrity. While some studies emphasise increased efficiency and democratisation, others highlight risks of bias, opacity, and the extraction of cultural value through data colonialism and platformisation. A key finding is the dominance of conceptual and normative work over empirical evidence. With AI reshaping the cultural, ethical, and legal foundations of creativity, the field requires more empirically grounded research that remains attentive to the normative and ethical implications of AI in cultural production.

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly relevant to various sectors, and especially the creative sector, transforming not only artistic production but also the ways in which cultural content is curated, consumed, and understood. AI technologies are influencing artistic production in different areas of the cultural sector, ranging from music, to design, to performing arts. Beyond production, AI is also shaping content curation, distribution, personalisation, and audience participation (Anantrasirichai and Bull 2021). The emergence of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, DALL·E, or Midjourney has major implications for questions of authorship, originality, creativity, and aesthetic value.

Even though rapid technological developments normally outpace scholarly reflection, the scholarly response to the introduction of AI is enormous. Navigation through the field is challenging due to its interdisciplinary nature: academic papers are coming from computer science, art theory, media studies, cultural studies, museum studies, economics, management, law, and several other fields. The increasing interest of academic research in this field has stimulated an ongoing discussion that captures and shapes our understanding of AI's impact on the creative sector as the new advancements unfold.

This scoping literature review aims to contribute to the challenge of understanding AI's applications in cultural production by exploring and synthesising the current state of academic research. It focuses on both creative practices (e.g., authorship, performance, curation) and sectoral infrastructures (e.g., platforms, labour, and governance), examining the main themes and debates in the academic discourse. The review identifies areas of consensus and disagreement, isolates under-examined problems, and is organised around the following question: *what ethical, cultural, and methodological challenges does current academic research raise?* The goal is not to produce new knowledge on AI in the cultural sector, but to map the very recent literature from the past five years, providing a comprehensive overview of trends and gaps in the field.

The contribution of this review is twofold: first, it offers an insight into the themes and topics that have been the subject of academic study in this field, highlighting areas of particular interest and emerging trends. Second, by mapping the current academic landscape, it provides a foundation for future research, identifying under-explored areas and suggesting directions for further investigation.

Our approach to cultural production is situated in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) scholarship. Within this framework, cultural production is not only seen as the mere creation of cultural and artistic works, but as a more complex process that

is embedded in wider economic, legal and social conditions and frameworks (Becker 1982; Peterson and Anand 2004). As such, it involves a variety of actors (Giuffre 2015), an interplay between creativity and economy, and is shaped by both policy and market forces (O'Connor 2010). In that context, power, access and value are of paramount importance as vectors of decision-making and delineating its cultural, political and economic dimensions (Belfiore 2020). Our literature search came up with literature coming from the wider CCS domain also covering fields such as media studies and human-computer interaction. This showcases both the interdisciplinarity of CCS and the spillover effects of AI across a variety of areas.

2. Methodological Approach

As is the case with any literature review, the following elements played a crucial role in our methodological considerations: the literature search strategy; literature screening, inclusion and exclusion criteria; literature analysis and summary, and the appropriate method for this: thematic analysis, narrative summary, or mapping.

We conducted a scoping review using the methodological approach described by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) as a basis for our paper. Although this paper is considered the seminal work on the topic, scoping review literature as an area is enhanced by the work of other authors (Levac et al. 2010; Tricco et al. 2018; Westphaln et al. 2021). Following Arksey and O'Malley (2005), we chose the option of a scoping literature review as we aimed to investigate the extent, nature and range of research in this area, but also identify any research gaps or underexplored areas. Scoping reviews are particularly suited to dynamic and complex fields where knowledge is not yet consolidated, and the aim is to map a heterogeneous body of research (Pham et al. 2014). Arksey and O'Malley (2005) note that scoping reviews typically involve working with large volumes of data, setting boundaries for the depth of analysis, and presenting results in narrative form. These features also shaped our review and opened up valuable analytical perspectives.

Scoping literature reviews are well established in disciplines such as health policy, social work and gerontology (Logan et al. 2024) but are not common in the CCS. And although there is related research reviewing the integration of AI in the CCS (e.g. Anantrasirichai and Bull 2022), we have not been able to identify a scoping literature review in this domain which posed a specific methodological challenge.

To systematically explore the state of academic research on artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sector, we conducted a structured literature search in the Web of Science Core Collection. We deliberately used Web of Science Core Collection

for three reasons: (1) its journal-selection process guarantees a high-quality dataset, (2) beside the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) it provides the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), that pulls together journals specifically relevant to our topic, and (3) its discipline-specific categories let us sort out irrelevant fields easily.

The search strategy was developed to capture publications that discuss the application, implications, or discourse surrounding AI in various domains of cultural production, including the performing and visual arts, creative industries, museums, and arts management. The search employed a combination of keywords related to artificial intelligence ("AI", "artificial intelligence") and cultural domains (e.g., "cultural production", "arts management", "creative work", "performing arts", "music", "museum", "cultural policy"). We focused mainly on the performing arts, the visual arts and the museum sector. By including the term "creative industries", we ensured that other sub-sectors such as design, literature, and architecture were included in our general pool or material. Our decision not to include film and games was intentional and twofold: first, it was a pragmatic decision, because we expected that we would end up with too much material that would be unmanageable; second, we were interested to look at how AI is seen in sectors which are not as related to technology as film and games, for which there are already reviews on the impact on AI (e.g. Azzarelli et al. 2025, Zhang et al. 2025).

We refer to AI as a set of techniques, algorithms, and data-driven models that enable computer systems to emulate human-like behaviour and make decisions that mimic or even surpass human capabilities in specific tasks (Anantrasirichai and Bull 2021). As defined by Russell and Norvig (2020), AI encompasses a range of methods, from symbolic reasoning in earlier systems to data-driven approaches, such as machine learning (ML), which focuses on adapting algorithms based on large datasets.

We deliberately employ the generic terms "AI" and "artificial intelligence" as overarching designations. While more specific terminology such as LLM, machine learning, deep learning etc. might offer greater technical precision, we opted for the broader term based on three considerations: First, methodological: The broad term serves as a common vocabulary across diverse disciplines. By using this broader label, we ensure that our analysis captures perspectives and contributions beyond information technology research. The second consideration is of pragmatic nature: Focusing on the broader term prevents our analysis from becoming entangled in granular definitional debates regarding technical sub-categories. Such distinctions would have added significant complexity to the selection process without providing additional value for the specific research question of this paper. Our last consideration is field specific: we use AI as an

umbrella term when referring to the cultural sector because it goes beyond just learning from data; it also involves modelling decision-making processes, interpreting creative outputs, and integrating them into sectoral infrastructures. By using AI in a broader sense, we acknowledge its versatility in addressing a wide range of challenges within the creative industries. We acknowledge that there are articles in our sample that deal with virtual reality, industry 4.0 and Semantic Web (e.g. Jahromi and Ghazinoory 2023) but as they fulfilled our search criteria we have decided not to exclude them for methodological reasons.

To ensure relevance and disciplinary focus, a number of unrelated subject categories were excluded, such as those pertaining to clinical psychology, engineering, nursing, and the natural sciences, as well as non-scholarly documents such as editorial materials, book reviews, and art exhibit reviews. Only English-language sources published from 2020 onwards were considered both for research purposes (our search keywords were in one language only) but also because the identified literature would be accessible for all of us. To operationalize these considerations for our query, we translated them into a topic search string as follows:

TS=(

("artificial intelligence" OR "AI")

AND

("cultural production" OR "arts management" OR "creative industries" OR "performing arts" OR "theatre" OR "theater" OR "music" OR "arts" OR "creative work" OR "fine arts" OR "cultural institutions" OR "museum" OR "cultural policy")

) and Education Educational Research or Chemistry Analytical or Materials Science Multidisciplinary or Spectroscopy or Nursing or Geosciences Multidisciplinary or Public Environmental Occupational Health or Philosophy or Engineering Electrical Electronic or Ergonomics (Exclude – Web of Science Categories) and Environmental Studies or Linguistics or Environmental Sciences or Green Sustainable Science Technology or Language Linguistics or Psychology Educational or Engineering Industrial or Geography or Neurosciences or Health Care Sciences Services or Health Policy Services or Mathematics Interdisciplinary Applications or Political Science or Psychiatry or Psychology Social or Rehabilitation or Religion or Psychology or Psychology Clinical or Substance Abuse or Transportation or Women S Studies (Exclude – Web of Science Categories)

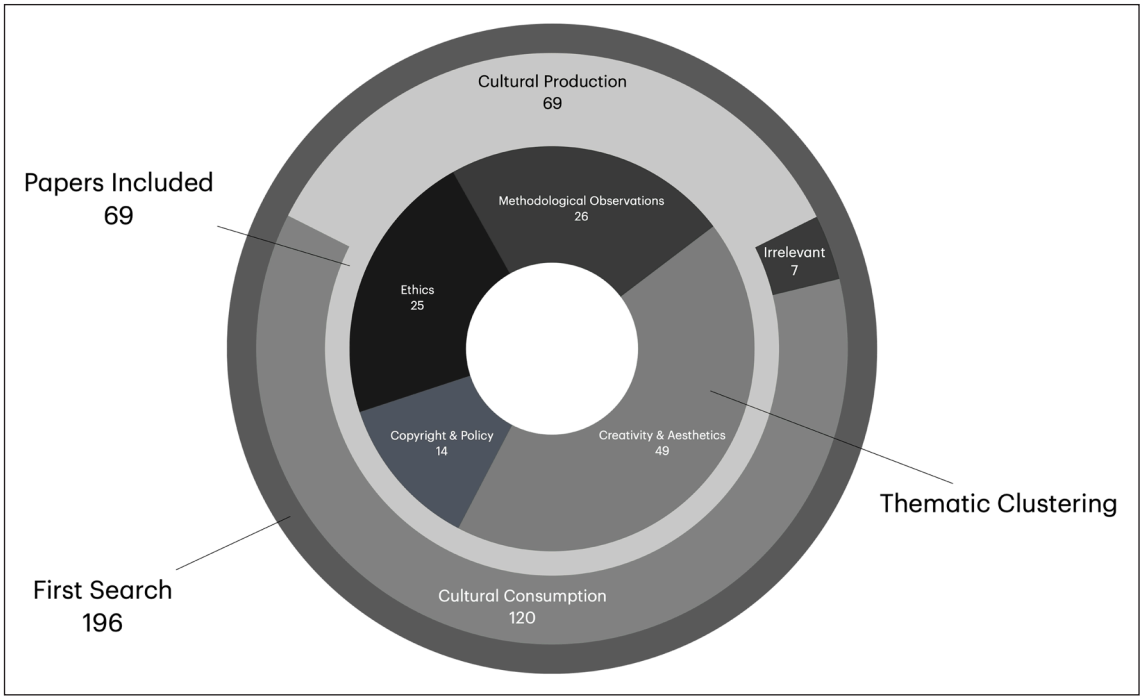

Figure 1: Stages of the analysis (Figure: authors' own).

According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005, 8), scoping studies demand focusing and prioritizing certain aspects of the literature during the process of developing a framework for summarizing the results of the study. Building on this approach, we utilised a multi-stage process (cf. **Figure 1**). A search conducted in May 2025 generated a total of 196 results. First, we examined the titles, abstracts, and keywords of all identified documents to assess thematic relevance. Only publications that explicitly engaged with the intersection of AI and cultural production were included. Papers exploring the relationship between AI and cultural consumption or that were simply irrelevant to the topic were excluded. This step reduced the dataset to 69 publications. Secondly, we read these papers in full and examined them with regard to recurring themes, the specific genre they focus on, and their methodological design. Throughout this process, we continuously compared and calibrated our observations and interpretations within the research team in order to arrive at a shared, consensual understanding of the material. Finally, we clustered the themes into four thematic categories, which we used to structure the findings section. These clusters illuminate the dominant areas of inquiry, methodological trends, and conceptual framings that shape current academic discourse on AI in the cultural field. Through the analysis of the identified papers, we were able to group our material in the following categories: methodological observations;

understandings of creativity and aesthetics; copyright, legal considerations and policy implications; and ethics. For a comprehensive breakdown of the identified themes and their associated categories, refer to **Table 1** below. In the findings section we explore the thematic categories further.

Themes	Categories
Datasets; ethical research; community-oriented research; interdisciplinarity; de-westernisation; qualitative and conceptual papers	Methodological observations
Originality (of content); tool vs creator; supporting vs. replacing (creativity); artistic identity/integrity; reputation; agency; aesthetic value; posthuman; distributed form of agency (and creativity); degree of control; paradigm shifts; techno-optimist: benefits for the industry; implications and challenges; commercialisation; access to the tools; new skills; new (less creative) tasks; increased competition vs democratisation	Creativity and aesthetics
Copyright; data colonialism; datasets scraping (datafication, data grab); exploitation; plagiarism; new procedures; frameworks; algorithmically curated content; algorithmic black box	Copyright and policy
Privacy; security; political misinformation; deepfakes; manipulation; bias; stereotypes; accountability; responsibility; human agency; transparency; fairness; inequality	Ethics

Table 1: Coding structure (Table: authors' own).

3. Findings

Methodological Observations and Challenges

The papers in our database use a range of qualitative methods including qualitative content or discourse analysis (1, 6, 13, 19, 20, 29, 67), interviews (15, 20, 59), case studies (16, 30, 32, 33, 46, 51), focus groups (56), various ethnographic approaches (11, 14, 17), practice-based artistic research (28, 41, 61) and policy or critical analysis (36, 37, 47, 49). There were few papers which also deployed large-scale quantitative methods (such as 68). (17) for example underlines the need for "urgent critical analyses", and the necessity "to formalize the novel kinds of research methods it both demands and facilitates" (De Seta et al. 2024, 2). On the one hand, the absence of training datasets, or the impossibility to access those, is highlighted; on the other hand, the available ones are impossible to study qualitatively due to their scale (17).

In addition to the high number of qualitatively oriented studies, a significant portion of our dataset consists of conceptual papers. These articles engage with the theoretical foundations of AI research by case-based reflection (30, 50) or proposing frameworks for investigation, like for instance posthumanism (8, 42), discourse analysis (13), critical theory (49), combinatorics (55), or Actor-Network-Theory (64). The importance of interdisciplinarity is also emphasised, with a call for researchers to collaborate across various fields to address the cultural, social, and technical complexities that AI presents (23, 34, 47). Essays and commentaries, on the other hand, are often characterised by fundamental philosophical (2), historical (8, 15), or legal considerations (7, 22, 33, 47, 53).

Table 2 shows the distribution of the methodological-conceptual orientation of the articles across the various genres represented in our dataset.

Genre	Qualitative paper	Conceptual paper	Essay/ commentary	Quantitative paper	Mixed-methods	Total
Music	15	11	4	2		32
Visual arts	2	3	2	1		8
Media/digital arts	3	1	3	1		8
Multigenre/general	3	2	2			7
Performing arts	1	3	2			6
Design	1	2				3
Cultural heritage	1	1			1	3
Literature			2			2
Total	26	23	15	4	1	69

Table 2: Distribution of methodological conceptual orientations by creative sector (Table: authors' own).

Understandings of Creativity and Aesthetics

A recurring theme is the contested notion of originality in AI-generated art. Several papers highlight that AI outputs are massive in scale (for example, AI composers are reported to be capable of generating 10,000 songs per day, 46) which also leads to de-evaluation of AI generated against human-created art work (3, 14, 19). AI-generated art can also provoke feelings of unease (13). Seen in this light, AI may assist in exploring and interpreting creative options (40, 55), thereby supporting but not truly replacing the creative process. However, many papers discuss that the very concept of authorship is contingent and subject to historical and social transformation (18, 52).

While some argue that the AI output is clearly bound to the training data and cannot be in this sense novel (5, 10) or subversive (19), others refer to society's obsession with originality and state that human-produced art never appears "ex nihilo or from nothing" (Berkowitz 2024, 407). Yet, the unique lived experiences are often regarded as a distinguishing factor to define the value of human created art (3, 59). Artistic identity and agency are central to these discussions (1, 18, 46) and the output of AI models is often evaluated in terms of its aesthetic value (46), novelty and originality (24, 46). The originality of mere AI output is questionable, as it tends toward stylistic uniformity based on algorithmically preferred conventions (12). AI-generated art is perceived as less creative, at least when it is transparent that the content was generated by AI (3). Conversely, AI-generated art is evaluated similarly when the context of its creation is obscured.

There are papers that see AI less as a creator, but more as a tool (33, 66), complementor (63), collaborator (1), or co-creator (18, 24, 51). AI can challenge artists' integrity and reputation (33), particularly when massive volumes of content are generated in the style of specific artists, potentially devaluing the original (53) or when it offers new machine-generated aesthetics (27). AI has contributed to the dehumanisation of creativity by framing it as a form of capital detached from human subjectivity (36). In this context, creativity emerges as neither fully human nor machinic but as a "networked and distributed form of agency" (Chow and Celis Bueno 2025, 2), hedged and formed by the platforms that are being used (51). Some papers showcase how AI's contribution can be framed, considering also human intentions and showcasing a view of creativity shared between human and non-human agents (18, 40, 49, 57), with others extending this perspective toward post-human aesthetics (46, 58, 60). In many papers the focus is less on whether AI replaces human creativity, and more on questions of human-AI co-creation (18, 45, 51, 52, 56, 57) as well as the integration of machine learning and human creativity (23, 62). So, new creative horizons are possible when human creativity is combined with AI creativity. AI is then more of a performative or creative partner than being granted sole authorship. However, it is more than just a tool; it can be conceived as an improvisational actor (51, 58). The degree of artistic control that is enabled (or not enabled) by interfaces and systems is a subject of consideration, as is the resulting change in the creative role of humans (10). Here it is also interesting to note how many of the papers are examining different implications of AI in the music sector (21, 26, 31, 35, 42, 54, 57, 61, 62, 64, 65, 69[1]).

Some papers provided historical overviews (4, 13, 37), tracing the development of AI and its influence on creative industries. We also identified papers that explored paradigm shifts in the cultural and creative sectors (20, 29, 53). One (58) even discusses

[1] This article (#69) has been retracted by the publisher (Springer). It was included in the initial database prior to the retraction; however, this does not affect the results or conclusions of the present study.

the aesthetic and ethical implications of sonic collaboration with animals and AI, suggesting that this could broaden aesthetic resources, and extend creative agency beyond the human. AI is giving rise to new aesthetic paradigms, such as the "disconnection" (connectionism) of neural networks as opposed to the linearity of earlier systems (2). The disconnect between what is shown, and its real-world counterpart is undermined by AI-generated images (Midjourney, DALL-E), which poses a challenge to traditional image reception and criticism (13). This undermines the ontology of the image and blurs the distinction between "real" and "virtual" (49).

Numerous potential benefits of AI for creative industries are emphasised, such as revolutionizing customer service, for example through democratisation of the music production (29), cutting costs (36), increasing efficiency, for instance, in screenwriting (59), enhancing creativity (63), providing new perspectives on the audience perception or by suggesting a new artistic approach (14), and reaching new, e.g. younger audiences (15). However, concerns are raised about the unchecked commercialisation of AI-generated music and its implications for the industry, which is seen as problematic in the long term (29). The commercial realities of the industry continue to dictate its direction (59), often at the expense of the creative labour force (5). AI automation tools have been credited with saving considerable time for practitioners, however, that time often has to be dedicated to less creative tasks, such as prompting, checking, and correcting the results of the automation (14). Technical competencies and their application is also an area that the papers covered, discussing how AI works and how it can be applied (see as for example 9, 43, 44, 45). Furthermore, the prevalence of generative AI and how it is here to stay is argued by authors of paper 17 (De Seta et al. 2024, 12), and various concerns about irreversible changes to the industry that AI would bring are vocalised in several papers (e.g., 7, 17, 34, 39, 59), especially in terms of increased competition for certain categories of creative workers (36). Despite these concerns, (48) notes that AI has not yet reached a level of genuinely "smart machine" that could replace humans in creative roles.

Copyright, Legal Considerations and Policy Implications

Copyright is one of the critical points that is discussed in several papers, as current laws were not designed to address AI's role in creativity, and the legal frameworks often fail to protect artists adequately. Authorship and ownership are also discussed in the papers from a legal perspective (8). The ownership of AI-generated works is questioned, and it is not clear if or how these works can be copyrighted at all (33, 47). EU AI Act (59), US Copyright Act and Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) (33) are also criticised for its westernised nature that dictates the individualised ownership. As laws are concentrated on the protection of the individual, they can leave communities vulnerable to exploitation through data-driven practices (33) or data colonialism

(34). The application of the copyright laws also cannot be universal, due to the different legal frameworks, judicial systems, and various factors involved (such as the nature of resulting work, "transformative" use of content, or parody, type of data in the training set, which is also hard to reverse-engineer, effect on potential market, 33). AI models work at the intersection of legal frameworks and economic value (69[2]) and often sidestep copyright by scraping training datasets without any consent (36). AI also allows for potential exploitation and plagiarism (63).

All this has led to calls for a reevaluation of copyright laws (22, 59), as well as discussions on the legal protection of data used to train these systems (33). The challenge posed by AI to the current copyright system is especially evident in music, where AI-generated covers and imitations of artists may raise legal concerns, for example, regarding deceased artists' voices (24). The appropriation of user data for training AI models, referred to as "data grab" or "datafication" (34) is closely linked to the concept of "surveillance capitalism", where data is extracted and monetised by large tech companies, often without compensating the individuals whose data is used (Zuboff 2020). These power asymmetries deepen inequalities, as large corporations disproportionately benefit from "free data", reinforcing existing societal divides (34).

A central aspect of the debate on AI in cultural production is legal regulations and policies for AI-generated content and where they fail. Authorship and originality must also be renegotiated in relation to legal issues, as IP rights have so far been based on human authorship, which can no longer be upheld in the case of AI (22). It is therefore clear that new technical procedures such as generative licensing must be found in order to renegotiate issues of contract design and remuneration (47). One problem here is that AI is handled differently internationally, and it is difficult to enforce uniform global standards due to differing interests and due to dynamic technological developments.

The abundance of algorithmically curated content and personalised delivery mechanisms shift the balance of power between creators, platforms, and audiences (59). This change is possibly showing a broader societal shift from a creator-centered approach to an audience-centered model (46), where the focus is on curated consumption rather than production. The platformisation (Nieborg, Poell and van Dijck 2023) of creative work in this context has further raised concerns about the erosion of autonomy for individual creators, with algorithms governing much of the visibility and distribution of their work. This challenge is further complicated by the persistence of algorithmic black box systems that obscure decision-making processes (16, 17, 27) and raising concerns about accountability and transparency.

[2] This article (#69) has been retracted by the publisher (Springer). It was included in the initial database prior to the retraction; however, this does not affect the results or conclusions of the present study.

Ethics

The ethical discussions on AI in the creative industries are not unique to this sector but reflect broader debates on the ethics of AI in society. Generally, the authors raise fundamental questions about authorship (24), accountability (18, 27), responsibility (5), ownership (59) and representation (25, 40) that have already been distilled in the literature on AI ethics.

Concerns about privacy and security are present, particularly regarding the risk of data breaches, misuse, and hacking (5), as well as the exploitation of large volumes of user data for personalisation of content (29). AI is also connected to the issues of political misinformation, deepfakes, and other harmful contents, as AI allows for the manipulation of public opinion (17). AI's societal impact is also tied to questions of bias, as machine learning models can reflect and reproduce racial, gender, and social stereotypes (27), deepening the systemic inequalities and polarisation (48). Representation of entire cultural groups is also an issue, as AI can marginalize or make invisible cultural groups just by excluding them from training data (25).

While the papers are quite diverse in theoretical and conceptual approach, basically all of them touch on ethical questions concerning the use of artificial intelligence in artistic and cultural contexts. One important area of reflection is the shifting notion of authorship and agency. Several contributions (e.g., papers 2, 10, 18, 47, 49, 55, 58) explore how AI challenges the idea of the individual, intentional human creator. The capability of AI to serve as a tool for collective creativity further challenges the boundaries of authorship, making it a shared process among machines, humans, and the public (24). Some papers adopt a posthumanist and post-anthropocene (1, 42, 46, 58, 60) perspective, considering how creative agency can be extended beyond humans also to AI actors. Some are also tackling the issue of the extent of human accountability and responsibility in the creative process (56) and the development of suitable ethical frameworks.

A second cluster of ethical concern revolves around aesthetic and moral judgement in relation to AI-generated artefacts. In particular, paper 3 demonstrates empirically how knowledge about a work's AI authorship influences moral evaluations and perceived artistic value, in most cases evaluating the AI content lower than human-made art works.

Interfaces and design are also the subject of ethical considerations (10), as the design of user interfaces influences the extent to which creative agency is either supported or restricted, and the extent to which decisions are taken or allowed. Accessibility and inclusion are also influenced by design and interfaces (38, 52). AI is not neutral, but a

tool that can favour certain practices or communities over others. Therefore, keeping control and ensuring human agency remains a central concern in the development and deployment of AI (59). There is a certain threat that important human decisions could be substituted by algorithms, which is seen as not only "ethically dubious but also technically premature" (Rindzevičiūtė 2022, 832). The notion of Human-in-the-Loop (59) or even Musician-in-the-Loop (34) describe the necessity of human oversight, creative judgement and centrality of human agency for the operation of AI systems.

There is also a call for responsibility among researchers and developers to engage with communities of practice, ensuring that the values of these communities are respected while introducing transformative technologies like AI (34). It is also crucial that research on AI not solely come from the Global North, as pointed out by (11, 17, 40), to ensure more diverse perspectives in AI development and application.

Overall, the authors call for greater responsibility in the development of AI technologies and emphasise the need for transparency, traceability, ethical dataset curation (53), and fairness (27). Companies are urged to consider the cultural implications of their AI tools, ensuring that these technologies do not misrepresent or harm the values of the communities they affect (34). There is also a growing demand for policies to mitigate the inequality of access to AI tools, particularly in the context of global disparities in technology access (48). The policy conversation must evolve to address these issues in ways that protect individuals, respect cultural contexts, and foster social inclusion while challenging existing power structures (34, 53).

4. Discussion

Our results indicate that research on AI in cultural production is marked by both thematic variety and conceptual fragmentation. Generally, we could identify two critical strands that emerge in the literature: one rooted in a *"techno-optimist worldview,"* as called by Chow and Celis Bueno (2025), and the other *critical of the neoliberal nature* of AI integration in creative work.

In the techno-optimist view, AI is widely celebrated in the creative industries for its capacity to reduce costs, boost efficiency, and expand creative possibilities, ranging from automating screenwriting to engaging new audiences. The neoliberal critique is expressed in the scholar's caution that these gains often reinforce existing power inequalities, as the productivity benefits primarily the capital owners while creative workers face new forms of labour displacement and their creative labour could be reduced to correcting automated outputs. Across these debates, the fear of AI replacing human creative labour persists, though some authors suggest that new hybrid roles

and synergies may emerge through performative AI, while others highlight the risks, particularly for artists and composers situated at the lower end of cultural production.

This tension is placed into a broader posthuman and post-anthropocene debate raising issues of who is the true author, who is credited, and how agency is distributed across human and non-human collaborators, the so-called "posthuman model of distributed agency" (Ashton and Patel 2024, 792), challenging the traditional dichotomy between creator and tool. These emerging models call for reconceptualisation of authorship, responsibility, and value in cultural production.

As indicated earlier, four thematic categories dominate the current debate: methodological challenges, questions of creativity and aesthetics, copyright and policy frameworks, and ethical concerns. The implications for theory building and future research will be discussed in the following section.

Methodological Reflexivity

Our methodological observations imply that researchers examine AI functions from different perspectives, considering not only *what it does* but also *how* it works and how it can be critically assessed. Our study reveals the topic of AI has led to the production of a lot of exploratory, qualitative and conceptual papers. AI is not examined in research just as a technical tool, but as a development that raises complex questions on creativity, authorship, and ethics, that are not easily addressed by a singular discipline. Papers are coming from a variety of different disciplines, showcasing the penetration of AI in different academic areas, and the consideration given by researchers on the role it already does and will play in the future.

Understanding early phenomena makes the use of perspectives from multiple fields, such as for example here cultural studies, heritage studies, media studies, or computer science inevitable. The diversity of themes highlights how this interdisciplinarity is necessary in the studying of AI to fully grasp its effects and implications. The reviewed papers reflect this, touching on both technical/methodological and philosophical/ethical considerations. Scholarship is thus not limited to questions of functionality, but also addresses the ways in which it transforms human values, practices, and institutions, signaling a consideration of balance between technical and humanistic concerns.

Authors are also engaging with a variety of theoretical frameworks and use different theoretical approaches. We see this as a finding per se, as it showcases how research in the area is still in an exploratory stage, signifying the start of a new domain for scholarship. There is not much empirical research conducted yet, and there are particularly few quantitative studies, but the topic of AI seems to gradually occupy more space in the scholarship of the CCS. The different methods used in the papers may be rich in

insight but may sometimes lack scalability and generalisability, which is not surprising given the research on the various implications of the introduction to AI is still new.

In our case, the fragmentation of the studied literature showcases on one hand the interest in the topic by many disciplines that do not necessarily belong to the same area (e.g. social sciences and humanities), and on the other hand the lack of a common conceptual framework or shared terminology that would allow for more dialogue across these fields. This disciplinary fragmentation results in parallel discourses that can overlook each other's insights, thereby limiting the potential for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of AI in cultural production. Publication of more research in the topic will probably eventually bridge these gaps and allow for even more synthetic research and interpretations.

Centrality of Creativity and Aesthetics

Across the papers, the profound re-imagination of creativity is a recurring theme. Different understandings of creativity and aesthetics in the pool of papers underline how research on AI questions traditional notions of creation, originality and artistic agency, showcasing a cultural shift in the definition and evaluation of creativity in cases where non-human agency is involved. New meanings of creativity including human and AI collaboration and how they affect and redefine the creative process are discussed, as well as new considerations on aesthetics that include non-human agency or even substitute human creativity. AI does not only serve a tool, but is increasingly positioned as a collaborator, a co-creator, and sometimes even as a disruptor of traditional artistic paradigms. However, this shift brings forward critical questions of authorship, legal frameworks, and the question of how existing research methodologies can capture the still fluid, interdisciplinary processes that AI comes hand-in-hand with.

Music is one of the sectors that is seen to be very much related with AI (see **Table 2**), for a set of different possible reasons. One is the association of the music sector with technology, which inevitably makes AI a significant factor that is expected to trigger change and developments in the way music is created. The other, associated with the first, is the implications of these technological advancements in music production. This is directly related to the fast speed and low costs of the integration of AI in key parts of the value chain in the music sector, and the financial advantages this is expected to have.

Legal and Policy Urgency

The introduction of AI in culture and the integration of non-human agency in the production of culture has implications on copyright, legal issues and working conditions,

and brings to surface policy considerations in the form of a growing urgency to address this integration regarding authorship and the rights of artists and users. In the cultural sector, and particularly in the music sector, issues regarding working conditions are constantly in the research agenda of scholars (Kolokytha et al. 2025). The introduction and application of AI makes the sector more vulnerable to uncertainty as creative and intellectual labour is highly affected by AI.

On the one hand, AI is seen as a democratising factor which allows for more public participation, active co-creation, and provides professional-level tools to those that could not otherwise afford them. In this sense, it continues the trajectory of digital tools in general (Shirky 2008, 55-80), but with a stronger impact: it does not merely facilitate creativity (e.g. Holst et al. 2025), it can, at least in parts, replace it. AI appears to be very promising, especially in terms of efficiency and cost-reduction particularly of human labour, although so far real-world applications are limited. On the other hand, its use can lead to increasing existing inequalities and can affect access to culture by those who do not have the education, training or competences to keep up with technological developments (Dada et al. 2025).

Particularly in the creative sector where the human experience, individuality, emotionality and the human agency are valued by the audiences and are shaping not only the experience but the economic worth of cultural goods, the use of AI highlights a scholarly problematic that revolves additionally around issues of authenticity, human creativity and artistic integrity. Despite its immense ability and potential to generate content, AI lacks the human/ lived experience that is part of the merit, value and meaning of cultural goods and experiences which ultimately makes them resonate with audiences and consumers. This, in turn, challenges long-established notions of authorship and poses questions of legitimacy of AI-generated works.

Ethical Complexity

Ethical concerns revolve around bias, accountability and power, and demonstrate how AI in culture is not about its mere use as a technical means, but as an element that has repercussions on values, inequalities and societal norms. AI sparks a lot of ethical discussions, especially when it comes to issues regarding authorship, copyright law, important decision-making and transparency. AI development often relies on vast amounts of data sourced from around the world, leading to issues of data colonialism (Kwet 2019; Pinto 2018) and raising the questions of fair representation of non-western perspectives in both the datasets used, and the narratives generated by AI systems.

There are papers that address a broader posthumanist and post-anthropocene debate reconsidering the role of the automation and non-human collaborators, and

distributed agency. The increased presence of AI puts human artists as well as marginalised voices in danger and may enable a concentration of creative and even economic power to those who control technology or are digitally literate and raise precarity for those who are not.

Some pressing ethical issues are not being discussed in the literature, although they occur in the public debate. In particular, concerns about the copyrighted and creative materials for training AI systems are hardly raised in the papers. The same is true with regard to labour markets, legal protection of artists intellectual property rights and their remuneration. In this respect, the literature reviewed is mostly focused on symbolic and design-oriented concerns, while broader systemic issues that look at the cultural economic aspects such as data ethics and platform regulation are not brought up.

Across our identified areas of research, scholars reflect both optimism and concern. On one hand, AI is seen as an enabler of new forms of creativity, access, and participation; on the other, scholars warn of biases in training data, opaque algorithmic decision-making, and the risk of diminishing human agency. Importantly, many studies highlight the need for more inclusive, critical, and context-sensitive approaches to AI adoption in creative environments.

5. Limitations

We acknowledge the limitation of relying on a single database and the focus on the generic term of AI instead of using relevant terms that also belong to the same area such as LLM, Deep Learning, machine learning, etc. This decision may have narrowed the disciplinary range of sources, particularly in fields such as media studies, Human-computer interaction, and cultural studies, where relevant scholarship might be indexed more comprehensively elsewhere. In terms of database search, a pilot search in Scopus turned up more hits but did not add studies that were relevant for our query. The extra bulk would have made the screening steps a lot less transparent.

However, the primary goal of this paper was to concentrate specifically on AI in the performing arts, visual arts and museums, areas where, to our knowledge, no such comprehensive review had previously existed. As such, we intentionally focused on research directly related to these fields, rather than more technical papers.

Focusing solely on English-language publications is another limitation of this research. Although the reasons behind this decision have been discussed earlier in the text, this linguistic focus has potential implications as it hinders highlighting issues such as data colonialism and representational inequities in non-English and global contexts, rendering other research agendas and epistemologies less visible.

Despite these limitations, after completing this study we acknowledge the value of scoping reviews for the CCS: they enable researchers to acquire an overview of a dispersed literature in a particular field, understand what has been studied and with which methods, and identify key areas and directions for future research.

6. Conclusions and a Future Research Agenda

In terms of creative production, many studies focus on how AI enables new forms of collaboration in live performance and improvisation, particularly in the performing arts. In music, AI supports the development of new instruments, composition tools, and interactive systems. Theoretical debates explore human–AI co-creativity, challenging traditional notions of authorship and originality. Technical research addresses AI-generated music and voice, emphasising dataset quality and model control. Museums and cultural institutions are using AI for curating, enhancing visitor interaction, and preserving heritage, often as part of broader digital transformation strategies. Finally, legal and ethical concerns such as copyright, authorship, and data use are increasingly discussed, highlighting the need for regulatory clarity. At the same time, educational and therapeutic applications of AI are emerging in music, language learning, and performance training, expanding the field's practical relevance.

The reviewed literature underlines a shift in the way creativity and authorship are understood: AI does not seem to replace human creativity (yet), but rather reshape it, complicating the existing cultural and legal frameworks, and as such, new methodological tools to research it are necessary. These approaches emerge from a body of literature that is, however, fragmented in two main respects: in terms of interdisciplinary interest in AI and cultural production, as well as regarding a deeper epistemological uncertainty. Many studies rely on classical theoretical frameworks such as critical theory, poststructuralism, or actor-network theory to conceptualize AI. While these traditions provide valuable critical tools, they were developed to interpret human-centered cultural processes, not forms of machine-mediated generativity or algorithmic agency. As a result, AI is often framed either as an extension of existing digital logics (e.g., platform capitalism, data colonialism) or as a threat to human creativity, rather than as a phenomenon that fundamentally transforms the ontological and epistemological conditions of cultural production.

This raises the question of what kind of theoretical architecture is needed to integrate these emerging perspectives. One possible direction, already explored in some of the reviewed papers, is to adopt a (critical) posthumanist epistemology that reconceptualizes creativity, authorship, and agency as relational processes distributed across human and non-human actors (Simon 2003). Rather than focusing on intentionality

or subjectivity, such an approach foregrounds relationality, materiality, and the co-constitution of meaning through socio-technical assemblages.

At the same time, however, the current field may not yet be mature enough to settle on a shared metatheory. What seems urgently required is a stronger empirical foundation that can reveal how AI is actually integrated into artistic, organizational, and policy practices. Such empirical work would help to test whether existing theories from cultural sociology, cultural theory or media studies are adequate to explain the new configurations of agency and creativity brought about by AI. It might also serve as conceptual building blocks for a more synthetic theoretical framework in the future.

In this light, the task ahead is twofold: to remain empirically attentive to the situated practices of AI in culture, and to allow new epistemologies to emerge from the frictions between established and novel ways of knowing. In the medium term, this may help bridge disciplinary divides and foster a more integrated understanding of the evolving entanglement of human inspiration, cultural embeddedness, and technological agency.

While this outlines the broader, long-term perspective, an equally important question concerns the concrete next steps: Future research agendas should look more closely into the technological, creative and ethical questions arising from the increasing use of AI in different areas of cultural production. It appears that particular emphasis would be given to issues of bias, value and power, which shape and are shaped by the balance between the human and non-human element. Additional areas of interest would include the implications on the cultural labour market, but also ethical concerns such as biases and issues of cultural expression. As the integration of AI in culture becomes more complex, interdisciplinary approaches would gradually become even more important as tools to produce critical research that can provide an insight into the relationships and effects of this integration, and shape policy and regulation.

AI Declaration Statement

The authors confirm that no AI tools were used during the research or writing phases of this paper. However, ChatGPT 5.2 was used for proofreading and refining certain sections of the text to improve clarity and quality. All content and analysis presented in this paper are the result of the authors' original work.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Author Contributions

The authors declare they have contributed equally to the conception, research, analysis and drafting of the paper. They are therefore listed in alphabetical order.

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