

Jelena Guga

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Marginalized Code: Feminist Interventions in AI Art¹

Abstract: What does it mean to critically engage with the AI art through a feminist lens – and how can such engagement help reveal and resist the power structures encoded in its systems? This paper argues that AI systems are not only a cultural product but also a symptom of broader sociotechnical infrastructures marked by gendered exclusion, epistemic injustice, and hidden labor. The central thesis is that feminist critique is essential to unpacking how AI systems reproduce marginalization under the guise of objectivity and innovation. Drawing on feminist scholarship and critical media history, the paper situates the AI art within a broader lineage of feminist engagement with technology, from cyberfeminist net art to contemporary AI art, and within the emerging scholarly discourse on feminist AI. Methodologically, it combines historical analysis, theoretical synthesis, and qualitative case study interpretation. The analysis frames selected feminist AI artworks through both media-historical context and the perspectives articulated by the artists themselves. Through the analysis of selected feminist AI artworks, it demonstrates how these practices challenge dominant narratives of neutrality and progress. Rather than seeking inclusion within flawed systems, the feminist AI art reimagines technological infrastructures around care, accountability, and alternative ways of knowing. These interventions resist the abstraction and erasure that characterize much of mainstream AI, offering epistemological and aesthetic strategies that confront and reconfigure power relations in digital culture.

Keywords: feminist AI art; cyberfeminism; data feminism; sociotechnical systems; algorithmic marginalization; technological power structures.

Introduction

The rise of the AI-generated art has catalyzed new conversations around creativity, authorship, and aesthetics. Yet, much of this discourse has either centered on technological novelty or aesthetic innovation, often leaving unexamined the existing power structures embedded in the systems that generate these images. As the AI is deeply entangled with the cultural sphere, feminist perspectives are essential to the interrogation of how generative models perpetuate systemic inequalities and reinforce dominant techno-patriarchal narratives.

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This paper argues that the AI art, as both a product and a symptom of broader sociotechnical systems, reproduces forms of marginalization that have long structured technological development and cultural production. By foregrounding feminist critique, the paper examines the historical exclusion of women and marginalized groups from technological domains, the gendered nature of algorithmic design, and the political economy behind AI-generated images. At the same time, it highlights critical feminist art practices that resist these logics and propose alternative modes of engagement with the AI. Through this dual approach, the paper positions the feminist AI art within both the historical lineage of cyberfeminism and the emerging scholarly discourse on the feminist AI, emphasizing care, accountability, and justice as central to reshaping the cultural politics of artificial intelligence. The title *Marginalized Code* encapsulates this dual critique. On one level, it refers to the marginalization of women and underrepresented groups in technological development and cultural production. On another, it points to the algorithmic “code” itself – where exclusionary values are written, executed, and normalized. Feminist interventions in the AI art thus not only call out these encoded biases but also propose new modes of imagining, designing, and deploying technology that center embodied knowledge, relationality, and justice.

Methodologically, the paper combines historical analysis, theoretical synthesis, and qualitative case study interpretation. It draws on feminist theory, critical media studies, and AI scholarship to frame a selection of contemporary feminist AI artworks. Works were identified for their explicit or implicit engagement with questions of gender, power, and AI systems, using both primary sources (artist statements, project documentation, interviews) and secondary sources (critical reviews, scholarly analysis) to establish relevance. These works are situated within both the historical lineage of cyberfeminism and the emerging discourse on feminist AI. A media-historical and theoretical lens is then applied to interpret these artworks in relation to earlier feminist media interventions, highlighting continuities and innovations. This approach recognizes that some artists explicitly position their practice in relation to the feminist AI, while others employ strategies that align with its principles without adopting the label. By combining historical contextualization with the perspectives articulated by the artists themselves, the study balances interpretative analysis with attention to practitioner-defined aims. In doing so, it presents the feminist AI art as both a continuation and a transformation of earlier feminist strategies, adapted to the sociotechnical conditions of contemporary AI. Drawing on a wide range of feminist scholarship – including Judy Wajcman’s analysis of gender and technology,² Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren Klein’s work on data feminism,³ Caroline Criado Perez’s research on gender data gaps,⁴ Sasha Costanza-Chock’s framework of design justice,⁵ and Donna Haraway’s theories

² Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

³ Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein, *Data Feminism* (The MIT Press, 2020).

⁴ Caroline Criado Perez, *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (Abrams Press, 2019).

⁵ Sasha Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need* (The MIT Press, 2020).

of situated knowledges⁶ and cyborg feminism⁷ – alongside theoretical contributions by Joanna Zylinska⁸ and Dejan Grba⁹ on critical approach to the AI art, the paper develops a framework for understanding the AI art as a site where epistemic, aesthetic, and political struggles intersect. In doing so, it also builds on a lineage of feminist engagement with media technologies.

Through selected examples of feminist-driven artworks, the paper shows how these practices both diagnose and resist the structural inequalities embedded in AI systems. A growing body of feminist AI artworks offers critical responses to the power structures encoded in algorithmic systems. These works expose gaps, distortions, and systemic biases in the way data is collected, analyzed, and deployed. For instance, projects that build counter-archives or speculative interfaces, like Caroline Sindere's *Feminist Data Set*,¹⁰ not only challenge the neutrality of machine learning but actively propose alternate epistemologies. Such artistic interventions illuminate the emotional and embodied dimensions of existing under pervasive surveillance. Rather than depicting users as mere data points, they emphasize the complex entanglement within unequal technological infrastructures. For example, Lauren Lee McCarthy's *Someone*¹¹ simulates an AI-powered assistant managing a user's social life, underscoring both the intimacy and absurdity of algorithmic mediation. Mimi Onuoha's *The Library of Missing Datasets*¹² visualizes what's omitted from data collection, stressing how absence and invisibility can be forms of algorithmic violence. By foregrounding lived experience and absence alike, these practices challenge dominant techno-optimist narratives and position feminist artistic practice as a space for ethical inquiry and sociotechnical critique.

Feminist histories of resistance in media art

Feminist engagement with technology did not begin with AI. Long before the current wave of interest in generative models, feminist artists and theorists critically responded to the ways in which emerging media technologies shaped identity, knowledge, and power. From the 1970s, feminist artists and collectives across photography, video, and computer and media art, responded to socio-political currents, such as the women's liberation movement, post-1968 countercultural critique, and the rise of

⁶ Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99.

⁷ Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge, 1991), 149–81.

⁸ Joanna Zylinska, *AI Art: Machine Visions and Warped Dreams* (Open Humanities Press, 2020).

⁹ Dejan Grba, "Art Notions in the Age of (Mis)anthropic AI," *Arts* 13, no. 5 (2024): 137.

¹⁰ Caroline Sindere, *Feminist Data Set* (2017–ongoing), <https://carolinesindere.com/projects/feminist-data-set/>, accessed June 4, 2025.

¹¹ Lauren Lee McCarthy, *Someone* (2019), <https://lauren-mccarthy.com/Someone>, accessed June 4, 2025.

¹² Mimi Onuoha, *The Library of Missing Datasets* (2016), <https://mimionuoha.com/the-library-of-missing-datasets>, accessed June 4, 2025.

identity politics. Against this backdrop, feminist interventions in media art emerged as both critique and praxis: addressing how technological systems reinforce gender norms while experimenting with ways to subvert them. These practices formed part of a broader movement to question dominant narratives within both art institutions and technological discourse, advocating for more inclusive, participatory, and politically engaged approaches to media production.

The feminist media art of the 1990s and early 2000s was deeply influenced by Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto,"¹³ which envisioned the cyborg as a hybrid figure transcending binaries such as nature/culture, human/machine, and male/female. Haraway introduced the cyborg as "an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, and materialism,"¹⁴ framing the cyborg as our ontology – a hybrid entity in a post-gender world with "no origin story in the Western sense."¹⁵ This became a powerful metaphor for resisting fixed identities and exposing embedded power structures. This paradigm catalyzed cyberfeminism, reclaiming digital space by disrupting hegemonic narratives. Haraway's related notion of "situated knowledges," defined as knowledge grounded in partial, locatable, and embodied perspectives, challenged the "god trick" of seeing everything from nowhere. As she writes, "Situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a ground or a resource."¹⁶ Haraway's foundational insights inspired feminist theorists and artists to foreground power and positionality in the production of both knowledge and images, and to interrogate the sociotechnical systems through which these are mediated.

A generation of cyberfeminist thinkers that addressed similar concerns as Haraway emerged in the 1990s – they were particularly interested in the issues of gender, embodiment, and power through the lens of emerging forms of technological mediation and digital environments. In *Zeros + Ones*,¹⁷ Sadie Plant recovered the hidden history of women's involvement in digital culture, reframing the origins of computing through a feminist lens. Allucquère Rosanne Stone¹⁸ interrogated the assumption that digital environments enable disembodied freedom, arguing instead that the body remains a central, though often repressed, actor in virtual identity performance. Her work exposed how even in supposedly fluid digital spaces, identity remains tethered to normative cultural frameworks, particularly around gender. Radhika Gajjala¹⁹ introduced postcolonial critique into cyberfeminism to examine how digital technologies mediate identity, power, and agency for South Asian women, challenging Western-centric narratives of cyberfeminism and digital liberation.

¹³ Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 149–81.

¹⁴ Ibid., 149.

¹⁵ Ibid., 150.

¹⁶ Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 592.

¹⁷ Sadie Plant, *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + the New Technoculture* (Doubleday, 1997).

¹⁸ Allucquère Rosanne Stone, "Will the Real Body Please Stand Up? Boundary Stories About Virtual Cultures," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (Routledge, 2000), 504–28.

¹⁹ Radhika Gajjala, *Cyber Selves: Feminist Ethnographies of South Asian Women* (AltaMira Press, 2004).

Verena Kuni²⁰ contributed theoretical and curatorial insights on the entanglement of gender and media aesthetics. Collectively, these and other scholars articulated cyberfeminism as a project of both critique and reimagination.

Artists also intervened to contest the supposedly utopian promise of the early internet. Pioneering works, such as Shu Lea Cheang's *Brandon*,²¹ the first web-based commission by the Guggenheim Museum, examined issues of gender fluidity, queer identity, and institutional surveillance. Similarly, the collective subRosa's interactive installation *Sex and Gender in the Biotech*²² critically explored intersections of gender, biotechnology, and capitalist ideology, using multimedia tactics to demystify scientific narratives and provoke reflection on bodily autonomy. Prema Murthy's *Bindigirl*²³ employed digital performance to confront racialized and sexualized representations of South Asian women in online environments. Olia Lialina's *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War*²⁴ used hypertext and fragmented storytelling to explore themes of communication breakdown, trauma, and the emotional effects of militarized masculinity, implicitly critiquing dominant gendered narratives in technology and media. These works not only challenged dominant techno-utopian discourses but also exemplified what Mary Flanagan later theorized as *critical play*: forms of play that function as strategies of cultural and political intervention. By creating interactive, performative, and often ironic engagements with digital media, such practices “create or occupy play environments and activities that represent one or more questions about aspects of human life.”²⁵ As the concept suggests, these artistic practices were more than aesthetic gestures; they were experimental tactics that challenged dominant logics and opened imaginative alternatives. Rather than simply illustrating feminist theory, these works enacted it through various forms, laying the groundwork for later feminist critique of algorithmic culture.

By experimenting with identity, embodiment, and interactivity, feminist artists exposed the sociopolitical dimensions of emerging media and highlighted who was included, excluded, or misrepresented in digital culture. The cyberfeminist art thus provided fertile ground for rethinking power relations, strategically employing both traditional and digital forms to challenge dominant technological narratives and to inscribe female subjectivity into masculine-coded domains of digital culture.²⁶ This legacy carries forward into contemporary feminist approaches to the AI art, where

²⁰ Verena Kuni, “Cyberfeminism – Index and Archive,” in *Women, Art & Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (MIT Press, 2003), 285–300.

²¹ Shu Lea Cheang, *Brandon* (1998–1999), <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/15337>, accessed September 16, 2025.

²² subRosa, *Sex and Gender in the Biotech Century* (2002), <http://www.cyberfeminism.net>, accessed June 6, 2025.

²³ Prema Murthy, *Bindigirl* (1999), <https://artbase.rhizome.org/wiki/Q4304>, accessed September 16, 2025.

²⁴ Olia Lialina, *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War* (1996), <http://www.teleportacia.org/war/>, accessed June 6, 2025.

²⁵ Mary Flanagan, *Critical Play: Radical Game Design* (MIT Press, 2009), 7.

²⁶ Jelena Guga, *Digital Self: How We Became Binary* (University of West Bohemia, 2015), 27–8.

similar questions around agency, representation, and technological power are rearticulated in relation to algorithmic systems and data infrastructures. Sophie Toupin extends this genealogy by proposing a six-part typology of the feminist AI that encompasses model, design, policy, culture, discourse, and science.²⁷ Her framework shows how feminist interventions can operate across infrastructures, institutional practices, and epistemic systems, linking earlier feminist struggles in media and technology to current debates on artificial intelligence. In this way, Toupin resonates with Haraway's insistence on situated knowledges and partial perspectives, showing how the cyborg's challenge to fixed categories evolves into contemporary strategies for rethinking AI's conditions of possibility. As the tools and terrains of digital production evolve, so too do the strategies of feminist resistance and critique.

Feminist critique of AI: Knowledge, labor, and power

As artificial intelligence systems increasingly shape cultural, political, and economic life, feminist critique offers essential tools to interrogate their foundations and impact. However, the feminist analyses of AI predate current debates. In the 1980s and 1990s, scholars such as Alison Adam,²⁸ Sue Jansen,²⁹ Lucy Suchman,³⁰ and Sherry Turkle³¹ identified how computational systems reproduce gendered assumptions about knowledge, agency, and labor. Their work establishes that the AI is never a neutral tool but a sociotechnical apparatus that embeds and perpetuates existing hierarchies of gender, race, class, and geography.

AI technologies are built on patterns of exclusion and marginalization that mirror broader structures of inequality. Ruha Benjamin captures this dynamic in her concept of the 'New Jim Code,' where technologies "reflect and reproduce existing inequities but are promoted and perceived as more objective and progressive than the discriminatory systems of a previous era."³² This insight resonates with Simone Browne's analysis of the afterlives of racial surveillance, where practices of monitoring continue to govern Black bodies and spaces.³³ Judy Wajcman likewise argues that technological systems reflect the values of male-dominated cultures, from the masculinist framing of what counts as "technology" to design choices that reinforce gendered divisions of labor,³⁴ thereby shaping both who designs technology and for

²⁷ Sophie Toupin, "Shaping Feminist Artificial Intelligence," *New Media & Society* 26, no. 1 (2023): 580–95, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221150776>.

²⁸ Alison Adam, *Artificial Knowing: Gender and the Thinking Machine* (Routledge, 1998).

²⁹ Sue Curry Jansen, *Critical Communication Theory: Power, Media, Gender, and Technology* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

³⁰ Lucy Suchman, *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-Machine Communication* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³¹ Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (Simon & Schuster, 1984).

³² Ruha Benjamin, *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (Polity Press, 2019), 5–6.

³³ Simone, Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Duke University Press, 2015).

³⁴ Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology*, 100.

whom it is made.³⁵ This legacy persists in the AI, where systems continue to marginalize alternative perspectives and reinforce existing social hierarchies.

The supposed neutrality of AI masks the political decisions embedded in system design: what counts as “data,” whose knowledge is included or excluded, and who is made visible or invisible. As Kate Crawford argues in *Atlas of AI*,³⁶ the AI production relies on extractive processes ranging from mining rare earth minerals to harvesting social data, each marked by environmental and epistemic exploitation. She warns of a persistent failure to address how the instruments of knowledge in AI serve the logics of an extractive economy. The result is a structural asymmetry of power, where technical infrastructures sustain inequality regardless of designers’ intentions.³⁷ Her collaborative project with Vladan Joler, *Anatomy of an AI System*,³⁸ visualizes the hidden labor and planetary resources behind devices like Amazon Echo, revealing the global networks of exploitation sustaining seamless technologies. Their most recent work, *Calculating Empires*,³⁹ extends this critique by mapping five centuries of entangled technological and political power, illustrating how contemporary AI inherits logics of colonialism, militarization, and industrial control. These works demonstrate that AI systems are not immaterial or objective; they are infrastructures of power that determine who is seen, heard, and valued.

Labor exploitation is a central component of this infrastructure. Much of the labor that supports AI – such as data labeling, moderation, and maintenance – remains hidden, precarious, and outsourced, often to underpaid workers in the Global South.⁴⁰ This labor is gendered and racialized yet rendered invisible in dominant narratives. Shoshana Zuboff’s theory of surveillance capitalism shows how AI commodifies personal experience, extracting behavioral data in ways that echo older forms of dispossession. This not only dehumanizes users but also conceals the structural exploitation at the AI’s core, reinforcing the asymmetries of power embedded in technological systems.⁴¹ These dynamics further underscore the necessity of feminist epistemologies, which reject the myth of apolitical data. Scholars like Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren Klein call for data feminism – rethinking data science through

³⁵ Ibid., 155–9.

³⁶ Kate Crawford, *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence* (Yale University Press, 2021).

³⁷ Ibid., 135.

³⁸ Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, *Anatomy of an AI System: The Amazon Echo as an Anatomical Map of Human Labor, Data and Planetary Resources* (2018), <https://anatomyof.ai>, accessed June 6, 2025.

³⁹ Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, *Calculating Empires: A Genealogy of Technology and Power Since 1500* (2023), <https://calculatingempires.net>, accessed June 6, 2025.

⁴⁰ Sarah T. Roberts, *Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media* (Yale University Press, 2019); Paola Tubaro, Antonio A. Casilli, and Marion Coville, “The Trainer, the Verifier, the Imitator: Three Ways in which Human Platform Workers Support Artificial Intelligence,” *Big Data & Society* 7, no. 1 (2020): 1–12; Mary L. Gray and Siddharth Suri, *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019).

⁴¹ Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (PublicAffairs, 2019), 457–61.

principles of equity, transparency, and situated knowledge. As they argue, designing datasets and data systems that dismantle oppression and work toward justice, equity, and co-liberation requires tools that go beyond technical optimization. It is not enough to build more understandable algorithms; we must also examine and account for the histories, cultures, and contexts that produce discriminatory outcomes in the first place.⁴² Meredith Broussard similarly critiques “technochauvinism,” describing it as “the belief that tech is always the solution,”⁴³ and noting its hallmarks as “blind optimism about technology and an abundant lack of caution about how new technologies will be used.”⁴⁴ Her critique emphasizes how uncritical faith in technology often masks and perpetuates systemic inequality rather than resolving it.

By contrast, techno-optimist perspectives frame the AI as a democratizing force that broadens access to creative tools and enables new forms of cultural production. Lev Manovich, for instance, highlights that “artificial neural networks can generate fresh texts and visuals on the level of highly competent professional writers, artists, photographers, or illustrators.”⁴⁵ Similarly, projects like Ahmed Elgammal’s AICAN,⁴⁶ celebrated for its ability to autonomously generate novel artworks, are often held up as proof of the AI’s creative agency. While such accounts foreground the AI’s creative potential, they risk obscuring the systemic inequities and exploitative infrastructures that the feminist critique insists must remain central. Aesthetics, too, play a crucial role in shaping how the AI is perceived and legitimized. Prevailing aesthetic forms in AI art often reproduce hegemonic norms and technocentric fantasies, masking the exploitative systems underlying their creation. Dejan Grba critiques how generative AI’s “regurgitative learning inflation promotes and amplifies clichés and biases, reinforces stereotypes, and widens cultural gaps, possibly leading to narrow, entropic, or homogeneous new models.”⁴⁷ He argues that such systems “cannot facilitate the intentions, actions, and accountabilities available to other artistic media; crucially, they do not invent, name, and further develop new concepts.”⁴⁸ Instead, they often prioritize machinic spectacle over critical engagement. “Foregrounding the creative uses of currently vogue technologies, such AI art vocabularies reduce the space for the appreciation of a complex art field with strong scholarship and deep historical foundations to marketing labels and promotes its uncritical appreciation.”⁴⁹ This concern is also present in Joanna Zylińska’s media-philosophical critique of technocentric narratives in AI art. She argues that artists must tell better stories about AI that move beyond

⁴² D’Ignazio and Klein. *Data Feminism*, 64–5.

⁴³ Meredith Broussard, *Artificial Unintelligence: How Computers Misunderstand the World* (Press, 2018), 7–8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁵ Lev Manovich, “The AI Brain in the Cultural Archive,” *Medium*, August 12, 2023, <https://medium.com/@manovich/the-ai-brain-in-the-cultural-archive-414fefcd72f>, accessed August 10, 2025.

⁴⁶ Ahmed Elgammal, “Meet AICAN, a Machine That Operates as an Autonomous Artist,” *Interalia Magazine*, September 2019, <https://www.interaliamag.org/articles/ahmed-elgammal/>, accessed August 10, 2025.

⁴⁷ Grba, “Art Notions in the Age of (Mis)anthropic AI,” 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

superficial novelty to address the cultural, ethical, and ecological entanglements of intelligent systems:

[...] one of the most creative – and most needed – ways in which artists can use AI is by *telling better stories about AI*, while also *imagining better ways of living with AI*. Reflecting on the nature of this double ‘better’ would be the crux of such artistic endeavors. Mobilizing the tools of imagination, visualization, narrative, metaphor, parable and irony, artists can perhaps begin by blowing some much-needed cool air on the heat and hype around AI currently emitting from tech companies.⁵⁰

She thus situates AI art within broader reflections on creativity and human-machine relations, challenging the spectacle-driven aesthetics favored by corporate and institutional actors.

Though not all of these thinkers are explicitly feminist, their critiques converge with feminist concerns by foregrounding exploitation, bias, labor erasure, aesthetic spectacularization, and systemic inequality in AI. They underscore how marginalization is built into the very architecture of these technologies. Feminist AI art practices extend these perspectives by interrogating the structural conditions of AI and reimagining its possibilities. Through their interventions, artists expose hidden infrastructures, challenge dominant aesthetics, and center marginalized experiences, thus opening space for alternative imaginaries that resist and reconfigure the status quo.

Feminist AI art: Tactics of resistance and reimagination

Before turning to the feminist AI art specifically, it is essential to acknowledge the broader field of critical and tactical AI art that interrogates algorithmic systems. These works expose the ideological, economic, and political dimensions of AI while experimenting with modes of critique and resistance. Trevor Paglen and Kate Crawford’s *ImageNet Roulette*⁵¹ highlights the biases in AI image classification systems, revealing how training data reflects and reinforces racial and gendered stereotypes. Zach Blas’s *Facial Weaponization Suite*⁵² uses performance and mask-making to protest biometric facial recognition and its enforcement of normative identity categories. Rather than celebrating technological novelty, such projects confront algorithmic authority and open space for subversive tactics in digital art.

Other artists, including Stephanie Dinkins, Anna Ridler, Egor Kraft, Vladan Joler, Jake Elwes, Ben Snell, and Heather Dewey-Hagborg, employ visual strategies to

⁵⁰ Zylinska, *AI Art*, 31.

⁵¹ Trevor Paglen and Kate Crawford, *ImageNet Roulette* (2019), <https://paglen.studio/2020/04/29/imagenet-roulette/>, accessed September 16, 2025

⁵² Zach Blas, *Facial Weaponization Suite* (2011–2014), <https://www.zachblas.info/works/facial-weaponization-suite/>, accessed June 6, 2025.

critique surveillance, bias, and hidden labor. These practitioners resist the commodification of AI art through methods such as counter-surveillance, algorithmic mimicry, and speculative design to expose the hidden infrastructures, exploitative labor, and structural asymmetries embedded in these technologies.⁵³ While not always explicitly feminist, such practices resonate with feminist concerns about power, agency, and the invisibility of labor. They also mark a historical shift from the autonomy of the early net art – which used hacking and experimentation to resist corporate systems – toward the AI art that must operate within a digital sphere already shaped by commodification and platform-driven aesthetics.⁵⁴ Feminist AI art directly challenges these constraints by addressing not only the AI's technical flaws and social harms but also the structural inequalities embedded in its design and deployment. Unlike the mainstream AI art, often aligned with corporate aesthetics of spectacle and efficiency, the feminist AI art foregrounds relationality, embodiment, inclusion, and care. Drawing from feminist traditions of critique, activism, and speculative world-building, these artistic practices resist the invisibilization of labor, the extraction of data, and the reinforcement of hierarchies within AI systems.

Caroline Sindere's *Feminist Data Set*⁵⁵ builds a dataset from feminist principles, using participatory workshops and human-curated content to rethink what counts as “good data.” The project resists the automated scraping methods used in most AI systems, highlighting the political nature of data collection and emphasizing context, consent, and care. Anna Ridler's *Myriad (Tulips)*⁵⁶ similarly rejects extractive data practices: she hand-photographed and annotated over 10,000 tulips to create both dataset and artwork, making the labor, subjectivity, and craft often erased by conventional AI training methods visible. These projects echo Caroline Criado Perez's critique of data systems often defaulting to male-centric norms that exclude women's experiences and reinforce real-world inequalities.⁵⁷ Mimi Qnūḡha's *The Library of Missing Datasets*⁵⁸ continues the thread by compiling datasets that institutions omit, such as records of police violence, housing discrimination, or labor conditions, revealing systemic invisibility and challenging AI's epistemic violence.

Lauren Lee McCarthy's *Someone*⁵⁹ explores surveillance and intimacy by turning the artist's home into a controllable smart environment. Volunteers remotely

⁵³ Jelena Novaković and Jelena Guga, “Art after AI: The Impact of Generative AI on the Artworld,” in *Navigating the Digital Age: An In-Depth Exploration into the Intersection of Modern Technologies and Societal Transformation*, eds. L. Bojić, S. Žikić, J. Matthes, and D. Trilling (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade and Department of Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Vienna, 2024), 584–604.

⁵⁴ Vera Mevorah and Jelena Guga, “From Net Art to AI Art: Questioning the Post-Internet/Post-Digital and New Aesthetic Art Discourse,” in *Culture, Innovation and the Green Economy: Towards a Sustainable Future in Europe*, ed. B. Mickov (Routledge, 2025), 127.

⁵⁵ Sindere, *Feminist Data Set* (2017–ongoing).

⁵⁶ Anna Ridler, *Myriad (Tulips)* (2018), <https://annaridler.com/myriad-tulips>, accessed August 10, 2025.

⁵⁷ Criado Perez, *Invisible Women*, 136–145.

⁵⁸ Mimi Qnūḡha, *The Library of Missing Datasets* (2016).

⁵⁹ Lauren Lee McCarthy, *Someone* (2019).

manage McCarthy's daily life, prompting reflection on agency, consent, and the entanglement of human relationships with AI systems. Similarly, Stephanie Dinkins's *Not the Only One*⁶⁰ centers Black familial histories through a multigenerational AI trained on oral narratives. Unlike mainstream datasets, this project privileges lived experience and community memory over technocratic abstraction.

Other artists take on the mythologies surrounding AI and the aesthetics of power. Morehshin Allahyari's *She Who Sees the Unknown*⁶¹ resurrects mythical female jinn from the Middle Eastern folklore using AI-generated text and 3D modeling. In reclaiming these suppressed narratives, Allahyari critiques techno-colonial erasure and articulates feminist posthuman agency. Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's *I Can't Remember a Time I Didn't Need You*⁶² constructs interactive archives centering Black trans lives, using game logic and speculative design to challenge dominant data regimes and invite more inclusive interactions with machine logic. Similarly, Sofia Crespo's bio-inspired neural artworks like *Artificial Natural History*,⁶³ examine how AI renders nonhuman life, inviting reflection on ecological entanglements, multispecies imaginaries, and machinic vision.

Together, these diverse practices exemplify how feminist artists critically interrogate the AI's extractive and exclusionary logics while proposing alternative modalities of interaction and knowing. They cultivate counter-narratives and infrastructures that center lived experience, ethical interdependence, and feminist epistemologies. Their approach aligns with Sasha Costanza-Chock's framework of design justice, which calls for technologies shaped by those most affected by them, centering marginalized voices and challenging dominant, top-down design models.⁶⁴ By bridging critique with speculation, these works create spaces for affective engagement and community-driven design. In doing so, they resist existing structures and imagine new techno-social possibilities rooted in justice and co-liberation.

⁶⁰ Stephanie Dinkins, *Not the Only One* (2018–ongoing), <https://www.stephaniedinkins.com/ntoo.html>, accessed June 6, 2025.

⁶¹ Morehshin Allahyari, *She Who Sees the Unknown* (2017–2020), <https://www.morehshin.com/she-who-sees-the-unknown>, accessed June 6, 2025.

⁶² Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, *I Can't Remember a Time I Didn't Need You* (2021), <https://www.daniellebrathwaiteshirley.com/i-cant-remember-a-time-i-didnt-need>, accessed September 16, 2025.

⁶³ Sofia Crespo, *Artificial Natural History* (2019), <https://sofiacrespo.com/Artificial-Natural-History>, accessed June 6, 2025.

⁶⁴ Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice*, 85–8.

Conclusion: Coding otherwise

This paper has argued that AI art cannot be disentangled from the sociotechnical systems that shape it – systems marked by histories of gendered exclusion, epistemic violence, and hidden labor. Far from neutral or autonomous, generative models often aestheticize inequality under the guise of innovation, reproducing the very power structures they claim to transcend. Aligned uncritically with the logic of techno-capitalism, AI art risks aestheticizing systemic inequality while obscuring the extractive infrastructures and human costs that sustain it. Feminist critique confronts this complicity head-on. It does not seek to simply correct bias within the existing systems, but to interrogate the foundations on which these systems are built. Feminist artists and theorists expose how exclusion becomes normalized and how visibility is granted only on unequal terms. In doing so, they reclaim AI as a site of critical intervention, where narrative, aesthetics, and political agency intersect.

Importantly, these interventions do not simply seek inclusion within existing technological paradigms; they call for a fundamental rethinking of what AI is, what it does, and for whom it functions. Drawing on genealogies from cyberfeminism to current feminist AI scholarship, these practices operationalize care, accountability, and justice through alternative datasets, counter-archives, and community-centered design. This strand of practice unsettles the assumption that technological progress is inherently liberatory, asking who benefits, who is burdened, and what alternative futures might be possible if lived experience and collective responsibility replace efficiency and scale as guiding principles. By tracing both the structural inequalities embedded in AI and the feminist practices that resist them, this paper positions the feminist AI art as a contested cultural site shaped by ongoing political struggle.

Against techno-optimist narratives that frame the AI as democratizing or inherently creative, the feminist AI demonstrates that resistance and reimagination are equally central to shaping technological culture. As the AI continues to permeate cultural life, the question is not only how we use these systems, but whether we are willing to challenge and reconfigure the power structures they encode. Feminist interventions remind us that another way is not only possible – it is necessary. To code otherwise is not simply to revise technical systems, but to reimagine the cultural logic and epistemologies they carry. Feminist interventions insist that re-coding – of both infrastructures and values – is not just possible, but essential for building more just and accountable futures.

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