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This presentation discusses the ongoing production of *Le Cose Che Non Esistono* (The Things That Don't Exist), a practice-based PhD project that employs allegorical animation to explore identity loss and self-discovery in relation to encounters with Artificial Intelligence (AI). The project combines human-created and machine-generated imagery to construct a fictional environment in which human and artificial intelligence coexist.

The creative component follows Art, a fragile, paper-like figure whose journey through a technologically mediated world examines the consequences of diminished artistic agency. Living in a society dominated by colourless, machine-generated forms, Art encounters forces that challenge, fragment, and ultimately reshape his sense of self. Through a process of resistance and creative renewal, the narrative investigates how identity might be reclaimed through acts of human making, positioning artistic expression as a pathway toward self-discovery and self-actualisation.

The research operates as an artistic provocation, questioning how the adoption of AI reshapes authorship, agency, and creative identity. This tension is intensified by the cultural humanisation of GenAI, where generative systems are increasingly framed as processes of creative synthesis (Jiang et al., 2023). As production progresses, the work examines hybrid analogue–digital, 2D/3D, performative, and generative AI workflows as sites of negotiated authorship, where visual and embodied forms of expression emerge through interactions between artist, performer, software, and AI systems.

Within these workflows, the study identifies a metacognitive paradox (Westover, 2026), whereby technologies designed to enhance creativity and efficiency may simultaneously diminish artistic signature, as agency is redistributed into automated processes. Framed through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), the project positions creativity as a pathway to self-actualisation and explores how artistic practice may function as a means of preserving and reclaiming a creative identity.

Keywords

Animation, Artificial Intelligence, Autoethnography, Authorship, Identity

References

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