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Algorithmic Creativity: A Systematic Review of AI and Artistic Expression in the Digital African Landscape

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Abstract
This systematic review investigates the nascent interface between artificial intelligence and artistic expression within the digital realms of Kenya and the larger African continent. The paper, underpinned by the theoretical lenses of Actor-Network Theory and Critical AI Studies, seeks to critically explore the network of human and non-human actors constituting the phenomenon of algorithmic creativity. The objective of this systematic review is to review and synthesise extant literature on opportunities and challenges of generative artificial intelligence in the African creative space. A comprehensive search was performed covering major academic databases (including WoS, Scopus, ProQuest, and IEEE Xplore) and grey literature from 2014 to 2025. Thematic synthesis was used in analysing the literature retrieved. The primary findings suggest a vibrant and dynamic system in which African artists are hailing AI as equal partners in creating new Afrofuturist stories, challenging cultural stereotypes, and levelling the creative playing field. Nonetheless, this adoption process is riddled with numerous risks, including algorithmic bias replication, a novel 'data colonialism' mode that extracts cultural value with no reciprocation, and a severe legal gap in IP protection. The review concludes that although generative AI offers novel opportunities for the expression of art, its ethical and sustainable utilisation requires a steadfast decolonial outline. A decolonial AI frame is dependent on creative sovereignty, community-centred data stewardship, and culturally responsive AI algorithmic creation to fully harness the potential of AI in African creative expression.

Introduction

The influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the realm of African art presents both significant opportunities and substantial risks. First, AI represents an exciting new media platform for African artists to develop their work, thereby amplifying and diversifying artistic voices and creating new digital artworks that capture a variety of cultural viewpoints (Munga & Quansah, 2025). AI enables artists to use innovative digital tools to create artworks that do not adhere to the Eurocentric

hierarchy of art, providing a new means of self-expression. However, the potential disruption caused by AI also poses a significant risk. A considerable concern surrounding the implementation of AI is the legitimacy or authenticity of culture, particularly generic "African-themed" artwork created through stereotypes utilising AI; this type of artwork may depreciate the value of authentic traditional craft and the rich identity of Africa (Wachaya, 2025).

Additionally, the technology's structure poses a threat to traditional ways of doing things in Africa. As multinational companies develop AI technologies, there is a real risk of what is referred to as "data colonialism." Data colonialism involves collecting cultural data, refining it with proprietary algorithms, and then profiting from it globally without paying equitable compensation to the source communities (Salami, 2024). Given these two threats, it is vital that we actively engage with how AI is used to ensure that it empowers artists and affords them sovereignty over their art, rather than contributing to cultural erasure.

With these consideration factors, therefore, the question of "is AI a threat to the future of African artistic practice?" is no longer about whether transformative technologies are adopted into the many arts and more of a question of how it is implemented, whose interests are prioritised during its implementation and what frameworks are necessary for it to be a tool to deliver cultural goods rather than a vehicle of a new type of technological restraint. However, the African creative vanguard is working to develop a new and hopeful vision for the future of African art (Oguntamu, 2025). The hopeful vision for the future of African art is to reimagine AI as a collaborative effort, a non-human collaborator that will take on a more than just a decision-making function to enable the artist's ability to think and create. The hopeful vision is a movement away from viewing AI as a tool and toward viewing it as a respondent. What does this vision look like, and where are we seeing it take place today? Today, the vision is vibrant and materialised on canvas and film by artists throughout the continent and around the globe. For example, in Nigeria, Malik Afegbua, a filmmaker and visual artist, created *The Elder Series*, which depicts AI-generated images of elderly Africans standing on a catwalk (Afegbua, 2023).

Generative AI are best viewed as a new creative medium in the arts, similar to the advent of photography or the creation of digital editing software (Oguntamu, 2025; South African Cultural Observatory, 2024). Generative models can generate new text, images, music, and video based on user-provided cues, but they go far beyond automating previously established techniques. This phenomenon indicates a significant research question central to this systematic review: How are Kenyan, and more broadly African, artists using AI as an agent within their creative environment? What theoretical and practical conceptualisations are necessary to create a synergistic relationship between AI and the artist to ensure the sovereignty of culture and creativity, as opposed to past historical patterns of technological colonisation? This paper seeks to answer this question by synthesising the existing literature to determine the current state of affairs, the influential agents, and a course of action to place the utilisation of AI in African arts on a more equitable and culturally just basis.

Theoretical Framework

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is a framework by Latour, Law, and Callon that views "the social" as a web of relationships. It argues that both humans and non-humans (objects, tech, ideas) are equal participants—called actants—who influence one another to shape the behaviour of a total system. Unlike most other theories that use discrete, fixed labels (such as 'social' or 'technical'), ANT seeks to establish relationships among elements of a network and to describe these relationships as 'translations' through which networks are formed, stabilised, and ultimately changed. When applied to algorithmic art, ANT enables us to consider creative processes beyond the conventional romanticised view of a singular, autonomous artist who creates without input or assistance from others. Instead, ANT conceives of creativity as an emergent property of "distributed agency", a process that occurs throughout a diverse set of actants (Goodfellow, 2024). Therefore, the collaborative human-AI creation process is understood as a cooperative negotiation between multiple entities. Ultimately, the artwork resulting from this process is not merely a machine-made product. Still, it is a resultant artefact developed through negotiations and collaborations at every point during the process among all involved actants, illustrating that there is no single, determinative human will imposed on the entire process.

The human artist in a creative network such as this is influenced by other significant actants. While the AI model is viewed as nothing more than an interpretive subject capable of recognising new patterns in training data and producing output that may be surprising to those who create the AI (Reddit 2025), the AI is also viewed as an actant that identifies new patterns and produces output that is capable of startling its creators (Hutson, 2023). In addition, the training data used to develop the AI model serves as a source of cultural and aesthetic ideas and values, so that the AI model's artistic output will reflect the worldview and creativity present in that data (Varshney, 2023). Moreover, software interfaces and "prompt engineering" methods significantly facilitate the human-AI collaboration and translate the artist's intentions into machine-readable language that shapes the artistic dialogue (Rahman et al., 2025; Hutson, 2023). Finally, once the AI model has created the artwork, it becomes an actant in its own right. As it travels through the world, it generates responses from others and influences social and economic interactions; as such, it expands the very network from which it was initially produced. The feedback, therefore, will create additional opportunities for critique, speculation/investment in the work, and inspiration for further creative works, effectively transforming the piece from a passive 'output' into an active mediator of change within the original sociotechnical architecture.

Critical AI studies (CAI)

While ANT helps you understand how the different entities in a creative process interact, CAI enables you to see how the ways those entities interact reflect broader issues of power and inequality (Tuters & Jotterand, 2024). For instance, research through the lens of CAI shows that AI technologies are not neutral; they encode and amplify existing social and economic inequalities (Tuters & Jotterand, 2024). An example of this is the concept of "algorithmic fairness," which occurs when an artificial intelligence reflects the data on which it was trained; if the dataset was originally biased, then so too will be the decisions made by the artificial intelligence based on that data (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). Algorithmic fairness problems occur in both facial recognition systems and generative models that create stereotypes (Musa, 2022). Therefore, the fear is that the

development of an African Art System would be represented by algorithms developed primarily in the west, leading to what some have called "new forms of cultural data colonialism," where multinational corporations generate enormous profits from the cultural artefacts of Africa, without providing significant financial or intellectual returns to the people who produced those cultural artefacts (Mohamed et al., 2020).

In response to this concern, a Digital Decolonisation movement advocates a new paradigm for the use of AI based on three key principles: fairness, sovereignty, and epistemic justice (Mohamed et al., 2020). More specifically, fairness requires the removal of algorithmic biases that disadvantage the Global South; sovereignty highlights the need for data ownership and governance by local communities; and epistemic justice aims to validate various indigenous epistemologies that have traditionally been silenced within the Eurocentric approach to developing artificial intelligence. This decolonial approach seeks to ensure that the databases used to train AI models are culturally relevant, that AI systems are managed by the communities they affect, and that AI systems include and represent indigenous knowledge and perspectives (Mohamed et al., 2020). Examples of this type of work already exist in the form of digital tools being used by artists to subvert colonial archives (The Republic, 2025). When you combine these two frameworks of analysis, you have a very effective way to analyse systems. At the same time, ANT provides a way to identify and analyse the various actants involved in a creative system, and CAI delivers a way to think of an AI model as an actant that contains vast amounts of capital and data collected and owned by a multinational corporation. In addition, when you apply a critical framework, your analysis is transformed from simply analysing "a network of actors" to examining "the political economy of co-creation." At this point, you start to ask questions about who owns the algorithm, whose culture is used as raw materials and who profits financially

Methodology

This systematic review employed thematic synthesis to interpret a diverse range of sources gathered during the years 2014 to 2025. The search method included the use of primary academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and IEEE Xplore, while also deliberately seeking to identify high-quality grey literature, such as industry publications and artist interviews, to account for the fast-paced "real-time" development that has been occurring in the African digital environment. Following the principles articulated in the framework for Actor-Network Theory, the selection of the sources to appear in the review was premised on their potential to shed light on the relationships between human and non-human actors, while specifically zeroing in on those that deal with the core tenets in the framework for Digital Decolonisation – fairness, sovereignty, and epistemic justice.

Literature review

This section will examine the existing literature to identify the main areas in which it can inform the technology of algorithmic creativity, the tools used by artists in Kenya and across Africa, and the critical problems raised when they adopt these means. To make sense of the marriage of AI art requires that one knows certain basics underlying these technologies. The literature identifies several basic architectures that have come to occupy centre stage in contemporary synthetic-generation art movements.

a. Architecture of Algorithmic Creativity

Introduced in 2014, Generative Adversarial Networks represent a significant advancement in generative modelling (Panopticon, 2023). Each GAN contains two competitive neural networks: a 'generator', which generates new data (for example, images) that mimic a training set, and a 'discriminator,' which learns to identify whether generated data is fake or actual data from the training set (Panopticon, 2023). Through this adversarial process, the generator continues to improve its ability to produce realistic and novel outputs (Panopticon, 2023). Applications of GANs in the arts include generating entirely new images, transferring artistic styles from one image to another (style transfer), and producing interactive installations that respond to viewers (Tezeract, 2025; He & Zhang, 2025). Another area where GANs may be especially useful is in the preservation of cultural heritage, specifically in restoring damaged artwork by filling in missing elements as shown in the virtual reconstruction of the ancient Benin Bronze, "The Oba's Mask," that was able to restore the mask's intricate detail through the use of AI-powered imaging (Momaa, 2023; Panopticon, 2023).

Most recently, the advent of Large Language Models (LLMs) that utilise the Transformer architecture has dramatically expanded the field's possibilities (Vaswani et al., 2017). These models, initially developed for natural language processing, underpin some of the most powerful text-to-image synthesis systems (Vaswani et al., 2017). Diffusion models, such as those used by platforms like Midjourney, DALL-E, and Stable Diffusion, operate by starting with a random noise vector and iteratively refining it until it matches the user's description/prompt (Reddit, 2025; Red-Eye, 2023). With the power of natural language, artists can generate high levels of detail and complexity in visual art in response to a descriptive prompt. While visual art is undoubtedly a potential outlet for LLMs, their capabilities are also expanding into other areas, such as writing and music composition, and they can generate drafts, provide suggestions, and even compose original melodies (Franceschelli & Musolesi, 2024; Wenger & Kenett, 2025).

The body of literature is clear that the most effective way to employ these technologies is not as an automated system for creativity, but rather as a collaborative workflow between humans and machines (Bello, 2024; Hutson, 2023). Artists and designers report using AI as a brainstorming partner to help break through creative blocks, as a rapid ideation/prototyping tool, and/or as a form of "scaffolding" to develop their own vision (Bello, 2024). Nigerian artist Malik Afegbua describes this approach when he states, "AI is an addition to your current skills, not a substitute. It increases your capacity, not your creativity." (Oguntamu, 2025). This collaborative model further reinforces the significance of human emotion, curation, and instinctual thought processes within the creative process (Bello, 2024). A growing opposing narrative argues that if artists rely too heavily on these technologies, it will result in a "generative monoculture" or "creative homogeny" (Wenger & Kenett, 2025). As LLMs are typically trained on large amounts of similar data, their outputs can become stylistically aligned, limiting the diversity of creative expression and resulting in a world of art that is individually creative yet collectively similar (Wenger & Kenett, 2025; Franceschelli & Musolesi, 2024).

Table 1: Key generative AI technologies and their artistic applications- Author, 2025

Technology/model	Core mechanism	Primary artistic application	Example tool/platform
a.GAN (Generative Adversarial Network)	A generator network creates data, and a discriminator network evaluates its authenticity in a competitive process.	Image synthesis, style transfer, video generation, digital art restoration.	RunwayML, DeepArt.io
b. StyleGAN	An advanced variant of GAN focusing on high-resolution image synthesis with controllable style attributes.	Creation of realistic portraits, abstract art, and controllable visual aesthetics.	NVIDIA StyleGAN models
c. LLM (Large Language Model)	Transformer-based architecture trained on vast text corpora to understand and generate human-like language.	Creative writing, poetry generation, scriptwriting, lyric suggestion.	GPT-4, Claude 3
d. Diffusion Model	A model that learns to reverse a process of adding noise to an image, allowing it to generate new images from noise guided by a prompt.	High-fidelity text-to-image synthesis, image editing (inpainting/outpainting), video generation.	Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, DALL-E 3, Sora
e. Music Generation AI	Models (often transformer-based or diffusion-based) trained on musical data to generate novel melodies, harmonies, and full compositions.	Beat generation, melody creation, soundtrack production, style emulation.	Suno, Udio, Amper Music

b. The Rise of AI Art in Africa

In Kenya, several projects encourage and train local AI-endowed creators. In Nairobi alone, there is the Africa AI Creators Academy, which offers over 100 AI-powered creative workshops to artists, educators and entrepreneurs across Africa (plus an accompanying scholarship programme for editors) to unlock the "creative and economic potential of AI for Kenyan youth". This effort to nurture local talent is complemented from above by policy research initiatives, such as those sponsored by Creatives Garage. Their 2024 report, 'Artificial Intelligence in Africa', produced in partnership with the Mozilla Foundation, is based on a survey of 50 Kenyan creatives from the extended community; open-flow interviews; additional interviews with startup company principals and technology experts; and focused group studies focusing on professionals who have been operating for some time in their respective industries. One of the central values of this research is that it provides a rational, "in situ" brief for understanding what is really going on within Kenya's

creative community today. In the South African context, Fak'ugesi Festival stands as a key continental node for art, technology and culture at Wits University (Contemporary And, 2021). Here, the festival foregrounds AI art and stimulates debate around decolonial themes such as the conflict between "ancestral intelligence" and AI systems, and the demand for "economic justice to own your digital output" (Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival, 2025). The importance of these institutional platforms for building audiences, exchanging knowledge, and shaping a discursive environment around AI rooted in African culture, values, and priorities cannot be overstated. The best evidence of AI's impact may be seen in the work of individual artists, as summarised in Table 2, who use these tools to express new visions of African identity and to venture into new territory.

Table 2: Case studies of AI adoption by African artists- Author, 2025

Artist Name	Country of Focus	Key Project/Work	Artistic Theme/Genre	AI Tools/Techniques Employed
a. Malik Afegbua	Nigeria	'The Elder Series'	Afrofuturism, Social Commentary	AI Image Generation
b. Àsìkò	Nigeria	'Guardian Series'	Yoruba Folklore, Mythology	AI-assisted Digital Art
c. Jibril Baba	Nigeria	'RECALL'	Art/Tech Innovation, Food Security	AI, Internet of Things (IoT)
d. Osborne Macharia	Kenya	'Kabangu', 'Mengo'	Afrofuturism, Narrative Fiction	Digital Photography, Adobe Photoshop/Lightroom
e. Vince Fraser	Diaspora (UK)	'Aṣẹ: Afro Frequencies'	Afro-surrealism, Black Experience	Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, After Effects
f. Hadiya Williams	Diaspora (USA)	'Ancestor Index'	Ancestry, Heritage, Great Migration	Midjourney (Image Blending)

A distinguished collection of artists is pushing the boundaries of AI in Nigeria. For example, Malik Afegbua leverages AI to generate Afrofuturist visions with considerable visual appeal and social significance. One of his most notable projects, 'The Elder Series,' seeks to raise the visibility and profile of older adults in Africa. Similarly, Nigerian-American Àsìkò employs AI to carry his vivid, highly detailed interpretations of the Yoruba pantheon through his Guardian series. Àsìkò used the digital medium to develop a cutting-edge unification of ancient folklore and current digital ease. Moreover, Jibril Baba's RECALL Project is another example of AI innovation that is entirely artwork-driven and tackles a significant societal issue (S+T+ARTS, n.d.). The project integrates an AI methodology, trained on numerous preservation techniques, with IoT sensors to monitor yam tubers, helping to avoid waste and demonstrating a new blend of art, technology, and social problem-solving. In Kenya, the artistic foundation has been laid by artists such as Osborne

Macharia, whose Afrofuturist photography is extensively edited using Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom. While Macharia is not an AI artist, his work gives a critical visual and thematic basis that Kenyan AI artists are now leveraging (Macharia, 2024). The wider Kenyan artistic community is rapidly adopting AI across several areas, from musicians who use it to generate beats and develop lines to street vendors who publish AI-generated paintings.

Artists from the African diaspora are also using AI to address issues related to heritage and identity. London-based artist Vince Fraser describes his African diaspora-inspired works as Afro-surrealism. He uses tools such as Midjourney and Stable Diffusion to produce full-length animations that immersively explore African diaspora identity (Red-Eye, 2023). American ceramicist Hadiya Williams creates the Ancestor Index project by blending artwork from Midjourney with geometric shapes and historical ancestry tracing to generate a visual index that connects her earthful and generative art (Esembly, n.d.; Muse Origins, 2024). In addition to supporting new art forms, scholars and creators worldwide are acknowledging the instrumental value of AI in preserving Africa's rich cultural and historical heritage (Mimeta, 2025). For example, the National Research Fund (2025), NRF from Kenya, which calls out Artificial Intelligence for Cultural Heritage, KAICH initiative, financially supports projects on AI usage for language preservation, the digital meta description, and oral history records, as well as tracks the tangible and intangible heritage, the preservation of culture and identity.

c. ***Techno-colonialism, algorithmic bias, and legal ambiguity***

Many popular large-scale generative AI systems operate based on a supply-chain logic of data extraction. They rely on a large corpus of datasets scraped from the public internet, comprising millions of images, texts, and comments. However, this vast material is collected without the explicit permission, credit, or financial compensation for the original creators. In this regard, I echo the concerns of Mohammed and Ali. This labelling can be parallel to the historical colonialism, where the creative and cultural output of the countries of the Global South has historically been utilised as a raw material to be exploited and consumed by the North. Although it may sound theoretical, this is not the case. A vivid example is the employment of Kenyan employees at the minimum wage. These workers have few resources and often receive inadequate psychological support.

The colonial logic of data extraction directly leads to the problem of algorithmic bias. Because the vast majority of datasets used to train most major AI models have been sourced from North America and Europe, they implicitly reflect a North American and European worldview. This becomes even more problematic when it is clear that the same datasets often fail to represent African realities. For instance, due to existing information gaps, voice assistants and speech-to-text models perform relatively poorly in Africa, a continent where roughly 2,000 languages are spoken, and the vast majority are “low-resource” in the digital sphere. Similarly, facial recognition technologies have long been shown to be more error-prone in identifying people with darker skin tones. This, in turn, has clear implications for justice and surveillance. Finally, LLMs produce stereotypical or inaccurate “information” when trained on older datasets, further stretching misinformation and erasure.

The Kenyan governing statute, the Copyright Act (Cap. 130), demarcates the “author” of a computer-generated work as “the person by whom the arrangements necessary for the creation of the work were undertaken”. This definition introduces a critical ambiguity: is it the programmer

who developed the AI, the user who created the prompt and handpicked the output, or the owner of the computational infrastructure? The law offers no definitive answer; it creates uncertainty about who may claim an AI-generated artwork. Although it notes that the National AI Strategy explicitly mentions adapting IP law, current statutes omit AI, providing no clear protection for creators. The Nigerian case is comparable. The Nigerian Copyright Act is anchored in the fundamental human precepts of authorship and originality, defined as the invention of the creator's own intellectual work. This is summarised in **Table 3.**

Table 3: comparative analysis of IP and copyright frameworks for AI in Kenya and Nigeria- Author, 2025

Legal jurisdiction	Key statute	Definition of 'author'	Originality/human effort	Legal status of ai as author	Identified regulatory gaps
Kenya	Copyright Act (Cap. 130)	"The person by whom the arrangements necessary for the creation of the work were undertaken."	Requires "sufficient effort" to give a work an original character.	Not recognised. Authorship is assigned to a human 'arranger'.	The term 'arrangements necessary' is undefined, creating ambiguity between the user, developer, and AI owner.
Nigeria	Copyright Act, 2022	Not explicitly defined for computer-generated works; general definition requires a human author.	Requires originality, defined as the product of the author's own intellectual creation and effort.	Not recognised. The law is anthropocentric and does not accommodate non-human authorship.	The Act does not address AI-generated works, creating uncertainty about their copyright eligibility and ownership.

Discussions

a. ***Creative sovereignty and community-centric data stewardship***

Rooted in decolonial thinking, this principle argues that any AI initiative involving cultural expression is community-driven, thereby shifting power from foreign corporations to local stakeholders. This necessitates moving beyond the flawed method of the existing paradigm, in which individual and private user consents are typically concealed in dense terms of service and oppressive end-user licence agreements, toward novel forms of collective governance and democratic data governance. It requires developing a collective bargaining agreement that enables communities to discuss the circumstances under which their cultural data might be utilised to create an AI model, so that they cease to be passive data sources and become customers and governors of the technology their expertise helps to create. This principle reframes the concept of the cultural relationship between technology and culture.

b. ***Culturally-specific models and the aesthetics of Afrofuturism***

Regarding model bias, the second principle seeks to address it by promoting the development of AI models trained on explicit, ethically sourced African data rather than on globally benchmarked "proxy" data. The problem is not a foregone conclusion, but a product of how data is kept. The answer, therefore, is to create better and more culturally responsive data. Kenya's work on language preservation, such as the African Next Voices project (Kabarak University, 2025), can serve as a strong example of how such data collection might be implemented in practice. This approach can also extend to visual and musical traditions. By developing high-quality, thoroughly annotated datasets for specific African art forms— ranging from Yoruba sculpture to Ethiopian textile patterns to Kenyan Benga music—it would be feasible to train DCPS-sized AI models, each more focused on and expert in a single form of human aesthetic expression and culture. These models would then be capable of understanding and even creating work in that form or style with much greater subtlety and authenticity than fully global models. The artistic ambition here is to make AI a knowledgeable collaborator within traditions such as Afrofuturism or Afro-surrealism, rather than producing grotesque, cartoonish parodies of these styles, which it simply lacks the understanding to do. This also aligns with the greater international demand for a more diverse AI landscape that includes non-Western, non-dominant ways of knowing. (Salzburg Global Seminar, 2024).

c. ***Holistic co-creation and the artist as network negotiator***

Lastly, the artist-as-actor concept frames this entire collaborative human/AI system. This "by the artist approach of co-creation, coupled with a robust "human-in-the-loop" model at every stage, offers a comprehensive solution. (Fu & Donner, 2024). The artist's active agency is expressed in the final choice of output. It permeates the entire workflow: in the selective accumulation of training data, in configuring a machine learning prompt that encodes particular cultural knowledge, in feedback loops, and in the final contextualization of the artwork. This active engagement is the most effective defence against the threat of "generative monoculture" (Wenger & Kenett, 2025). By preserving the 'heart and soul' of the artist's intuition, lived experience, cultural knowledge, and emotional texture, the artist successfully prevents the final work from becoming a mere statistical sum of data points (Bello, 2024). Instead, the work becomes an individualised, unique expression derived from genuine synergy, in which the artist's irreplaceable human vision harnesses the computer's computational power.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this systematic review offers an overview of a multi-layered and quickly evolving field situated at the crossroads of AI and creative industries in Africa. Generally, the field observed in the literature appears marked by an inherent dualism. Firstly, creativity promises the field's participants a new dawn, including digital enrichment gadgets, original creative expressions in the form of digital Afrofuturism, and the ability to safeguard cultural heritages. Artists within African contexts eagerly seize these opportunities, integrating AI into their practice and creating new narratives. The central thesis of my review is that negotiating this dual landscape requires not only technical competence and artistic vision but also ethical guidance. The results derived from the reviewed materials strongly support the thesis that a decolonial AI framework, grounded in elemental principles such as creative sovereignty and local data protectorates, novel culturally tailored fashions, and interpretability, reimagines the artist as a network broker and is imperative

for this transformation. Without this thesis in place, the data reviewed shows that AI will be another vector of annexation, producing and structurally reinforcing the inequalities that many AI artists try to destabilise.

The findings from this review exposed multiple critical areas that warrant further research. First, the need for more practice-led investigation cannot be overstated, as experts must move beyond utilising existing proprietary models to develop and test community-owned, culturally grounded AI models. It requires interdisciplinary collaboration among artists, computer scientists, cultural heritage scholars, and community founders. Second, more legal scholarship is urgently needed to fill the intellectual property void. Finally, long-term qualitative and ethnographic inquiry is required to account for how creators navigate these new technological networks within Africa's lived experience.

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