



ARTISTS AREN'T AGAINST AI

They're against AI without rules



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Introduction

Run a survey among illustrators and you get a number that hits you like a truck: 99% say they're negative about the use of AI. For 92% of them, that's not mild hesitation – it's outright dislike. And 85% don't touch it in practice at all.

That's the number most pieces on AI and art open with – and where they also stop. *Artists hate AI*. End of discussion, on to the next headline.

Except it's not quite true. Or more precisely: it's accurate, but it doesn't tell the whole story.

The myth of the artist who hates AI

Actually talk to artists, not about AI in general but specific forms of it. The picture shifts, because nobody is fundamentally opposed to an algorithm that helps sketch ideas, test compositions, or speed up a process. Where the resistance actually lives is far more specific: they're against AI trained on their work without being asked. Against tools that won't show where their “inspiration” came from. Against a system that can imitate their style without them ever having had a say in it.

That's not a technology problem, but a control problem.

And that distinction changes everything. Because “artists are against AI” is a dead end. You can't build anything with that. Change the statement to “Artists are against the use of AI without rules” and you get yourself a design challenge. This challenge can be solved.

The real question isn't about the technology

Ask artists under what conditions they'd actually be open to AI, and you don't get a vague answer. You get a list. “Can I decide whether my work gets used to train a model? Can I see which sources a tool has drawn on? Does my own contribution stay visible in the final result, or do I disappear behind it?”

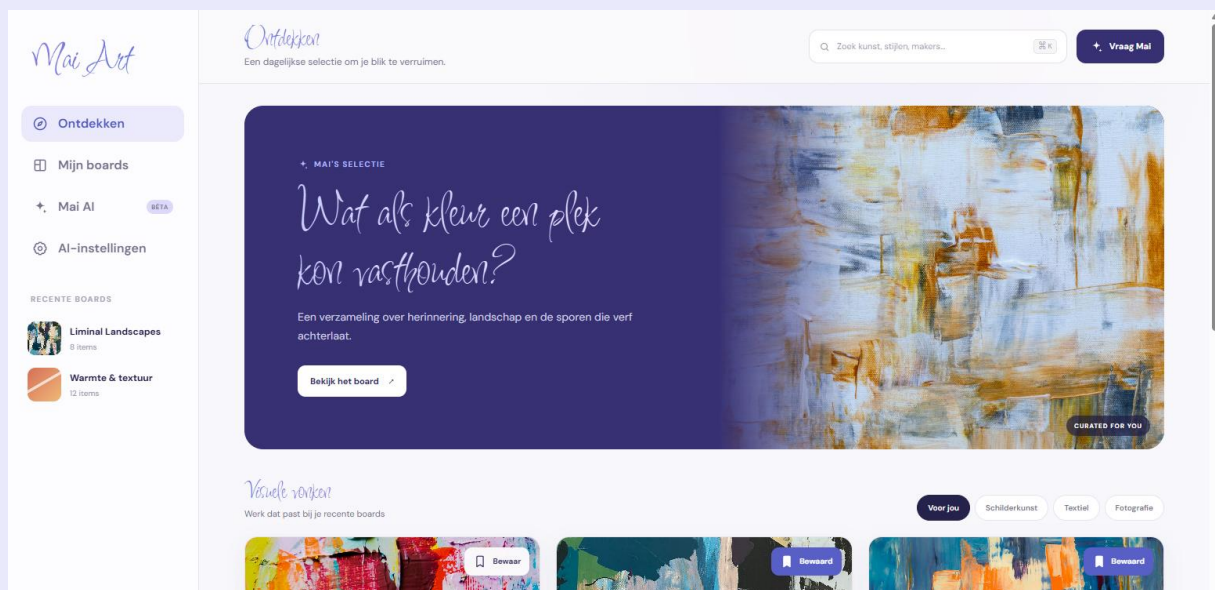
Those aren't impossible demands. They're conditions that are surprisingly designable, provided you're willing to stop treating artists as an afterthought end-user and start treating them as the party that's at the table from day one.

That's exactly where I think things go wrong. Not in the question of *whether* AI enters the art world, that's happening regardless, but in *who gets to write the rules*. Right now, that's almost always the tech industry. Rarely the artist.

My answer: let the artist set the rules

That's why I'm working on Mai Art. This is not another generator trying to make artists redundant, but a tool that literally puts the controls in their hands. Deciding for yourself whether, and how much, an AI system may pull information from the internet. Always being able to see where a source came from. No surprises about copyright after the fact, because the transparency is built in, not bolted on after the backlash.

Is that a guarantee every artist comes around? No. But it's a more honest question than the one the industry is currently asking, which is: *are you okay with us doing it anyway?*



1.1 Mai Art: A start of the visualisation

And in twenty, fifty years?

Say it works. Say that in ten to twenty-five years there's a generation of tools that takes these guidelines seriously, built *with* artists instead of over their heads. A nice prospect, but run the math further out and it might get uncomfortable.

Push the line fifty years forward and you hit a generation of artists who grew up with AI that “properly” handles sourcing. Precisely because of that, they may never stop to ask *why* it was necessary in the first place. If source attribution becomes just another invisible layer in the software, awareness of copyright can fade just as easily as it once emerged. The risk isn’t that AI takes over. The risk is that nobody thinks to ask anymore whether that’s a problem.

That’s not a reason to stop building tools like this. It’s a reason to start thinking now about what we’ll eventually have to explain to a generation of artists who never knew AI as anything other than a given part of the process.

So, the question isn’t whether AI is coming for the art world. That’s happening either way. The question is: **who ends up setting the rules, the artist or the platform?**