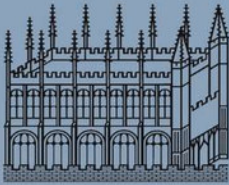




*Artificial Intelligence
and Photography*

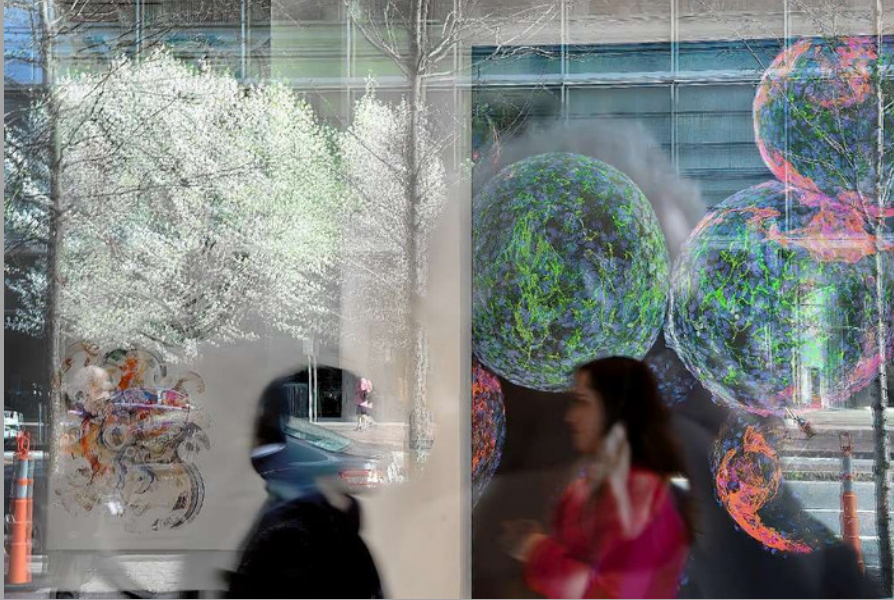
Francis Olschafskie



Cover Photograph by Francis Olschafskie
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Tunnel under the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, Oxford UK

Artificial Intelligence and Photography



Women in Red at MIT 2023 – Francis Olschafskie

My urban series photographs are not manipulated using multiple images or merging techniques. The pictures are a single in-camera capture of place, time, and what is in front of me, through and behind.

For me, much of it is making “pictures of pictures” this is what is the sameness with the following AI portrait work as well, ... it is the making pictures of pictures.

What interests me in this AI Portrait series is the “particular moment” of the AI image creation technology development.

When using the prompt creation process it became very clear to me that the data set lacked a great deal of information, which then significantly displayed a lack of fidelity in the edifice of the image. This particular aspect of the AI image generation tools I felt exhibited the falsehood of the fear mongering of the social and culture surrounding the claims that AI will define the end to photography as we know it. This reference sounds very familiar to the specific moments in photographic history where the processes themselves only lacked data to create an image, and people then as they do now, referred to this phenomenon as hallucination. If we want to use this phrasing “hallucination” there are multiple events within the runway leading up to yet another tool for the photographer to use.

One of the primary impacts of AI hallucinations on generative AI can be thought of as the potential for increased creativity and originality in AI-generated content. By pressing AI models to generate

content that is transited based on existing data, hallucinations can result in the creation of unexpected and wonderment outputs.

In truth, AI systems "hallucinate" all the time.

The goal of any Artist /Photographer is to generate glorious, esthetic content, not to validate, but to assert the artist's truth. A dilemma which has always been a part of photography and is now bleeding into the pieces generated from this new tool.

When referring to AI, where did the term hallucination originate from. The word "Hallucination" appears to me is a fabrication promoted by the technology community to fashion and induce a false construct of sophistication into the deficiency of the process.

The introduction of the photographic tool is radically different than what had been seen previously in the creation of art. The relationship of the tool with the artist is again how much of the tool is related to the creation of an art piece.

The tool of the camera changed the concept of time on how the art is made. Using the tools of photography may seem effortless at times but in the end, it is extremely sophisticated. The use of AI has brought back all of those earlier and philosophic questions. It's an exhilarating moment because the nature of the process can be thought of as a hallmark.

The first reactions to the use of AI imaging have had the same characteristics as the beginning of each major iteration of the photographic medium. This lack of capability at this early moment of a new technology is the thing I am interested in making these portraits. Historically, the first projected images themselves must have a hallucinatory effect on the viewer, upside down on a wall. The mind must have experienced a hallucination encounter.



Hands on walls of the Chauvet cave, Ardèche, France. c. 30,000 B.C. © Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel Deschamps, and Christian Hillaire.

There are multiple moments like this within the evolution of photography. The First Image, View from the Window at Le Gras by Niepce traditionally thought to be eight hours, but now believed to be many days. If this picture is not a hallucination, I don't know what is.



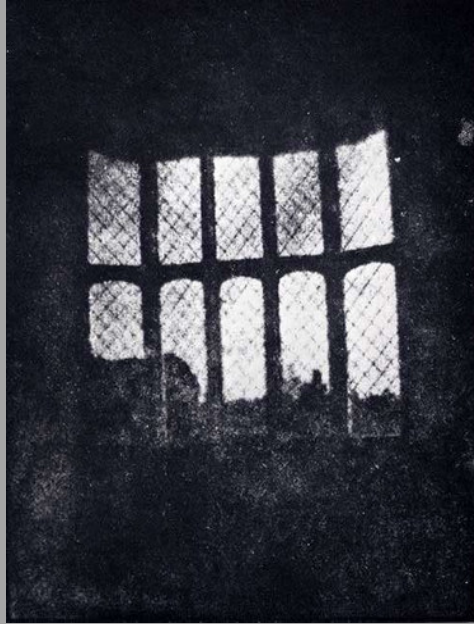
View from the Window at Le Gras - Niepce 1826 - Gernsheim's enhanced version.

Daguerre's, Boulevard du Temple, a daguerreotype often referred to as "black boot man" and the first photograph of a human. It is a view of a busy street, but because the exposure lasted for several minutes the moving traffic left no trace. Only the man in the bottom left, apparently having his boot polished stood still long enough to be captured. This, when developed, must have been a mind-bending experience.



Boulevard du Temple - Daguerre

Henry Fox Talbot Negative to positive system. Talbot's early experiments required camera exposures of an hour or more. Paper with a coating of silver iodide was exposed in the camera and developed into a translucent “negative” image. Unlike a daguerreotype, the Talbotype negative could be used to make a large number of positive prints by contact printing. Big time mind blower.



Talbot Latticed window at Iacock abbey 1835

The Tintype coated with a dark lacquer, Portraits made with a neck brace to hold the subject still can be thought of a lack of “data” or ability of the process to create a full rendering of the subject, resulted in an image that lacked naturalism.



Billy the Kid tintype Fort Sumner 1879-80

Analog to digital - In 1973 – Fairchild Semiconductor releases the first image-capturing CCD chip. The early work done by photographers at the beginning as early as 1980, pre photoshop, worked hard to mask the failure of the process of lacking data by enhancing the images through a “paint System” that allowed the images to have a pictorial effect that Margaret Cameron employed so well. This is a perfect example of how artists worked around the lack of data to become an aesthetic, and at that time the pixel became a superstar of the design culture.



Vietnam Veteran series – © Francis Olschafskie – 1984

There are inherent limitations of AI technology AI systems, which do not have the ability to think or form beliefs, the human stroke remains irreplaceable. AI can not make connectivity the way humans can, it cannot go out of the “box”. Going out of the box and delving into an individual’s connectivity makes for a human and may never will be available to a machine.

“Artificial Intelligence hallucination” should be called “confabulation”, fabricated data attempting to be authentic. A dataset can also be thought of as the visible spectrum, or the collection of massive amounts of photographic material on the web. There has been much discussion about what is to be done with this monumental collection of images, and AI maybe the answer or at least for the moment the obvious resolution.

The moment has the aesthetic capacity to curate the data set and its lack of connectivity to create something unique and, bewildering and beautiful.

The knowledge base used to generate my portraits often transmutes the substance of gender, beauty, and identity and that shifts and elevates the portraits into a world of wonder. These AI portraits are about a moment in time. AI generates different options all the time. What is generated today will be different tomorrow.



With -Fan



Above-a-Chair



On-sofa-with-Roses



Man-with-Birds-2



Carry-Rope



Elevated-Pyrus



Women-w-Gavel



Women-with-Flowers



Holding-Camera



With-Feather



Arms-up



Many-Candles



Studio-Wishing



With-Flower



Bird-Medallion



Man-with-Birds



Man-with-Candel



On-Beach



Soldier



With-Rope



Man-in-Water



Bird-on-Hand



Head-on-Bird



Brid-in-Head



With Fan 2

Francis Olschafskie – 2023

AI Generated Photographs

Printed on archival paper with archival pigment

Image: 10 X 10 inches

Paper: 11X 14 inches

Edition of 8 with 2 AP's

Signed by the artist on label, verso

FWOAI. 23.06

Magazine printed 03|01|2025

Additional information can be found at www.olschafskie.com

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Flowers - London UK



Golden Birds - London UK



Saint Sulpice- Paris Fr



Red Swirl - London UK

Francis Olschafskie is known for in-camera capture; that means the layers, reflections, projections and ghostly appearances in the images reflect real-world occurrences not darkroom or digital tricks, they are single images of place and time. His in-camera single image pictures echo how life swarms with multiple realities. The black and white portraits in this book are made with AI. Since AI generates different options all the time, they are in common with the in-camera pictures, combining intention and chance opportunities of a fleeting moment.

Cate McQuaid - Boston Globe

Olschafskie.com

"Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Photography" appeared in the 2024 Provincetown Arts Magazine

