

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE AGE OF AI?

So I have been having insane amounts of fun with ChatGPT, DALL-E, DALL-E 3, ChatGPT 4 (only available on the plus edition, only \$20 a month!). To me, my thought is that it is the ultimate new creative tool in our creative tool kit as visual artists.

One of the great epiphanies that I had while in Kyoto was this notion of visual artist; that we photographers are not simply photographers, but we are visual artists. Which means that our approach and goal to things is not just photos or not just photos for the sake of photos, but instead... using photography and our camera as a tool to produce and create new visual artwork.

Until the Tesla AI humanoid bot can walk around as quickly and nimbly as you and take photos, you're fine.

Something that people don't understand and don't get; no no no, robots and AI and these bots won't take your job. My personal prediction is that even within 30 years, humanoid AI bots will still be quite mediocre; only good for doing boring tedious tasks like automation line work producing cars or Tesla cars, but for the most part, let us consider and think about how nimble and agile even a two-year, nine month year-old child is.

For example, Seneca. He is only two years, nine months old, and it is insane how coordinated he is, how agile he is, and how acrobatic he is. I have been teaching him funny things like jumping backwards, jumping sideways, doing downward up dogs etc.

I think it is insane that even late at night before he sleeps, he could still run around and prance around, with so much vivacity and pure energy. And also a very interesting thing that I've observed; whenever he wants to put something down or pick something up from the floor, he always squats! Full sumo squat, ass to grass. Always. He never bends over like adults. **Maybe if we adults mimic the physical activity of children more, we will become better.**

So what should we do?

Very simple. First, download the official ChatGPT app to your phone or iPad, and immediately subscribe to the \$20 a month paid model. Personally speaking, I quit using Adobe Lightroom about three years ago, ever since they switched to the subscription model. But this openAI stuff... This new ChatGPT4, and DALL-E 3... this is effing insane. Contrary to popular belief, **I think AI and ChatGPT is insanely underrated**. This literally might be the best \$20 you spend in your life.

For example, simple things you could do: once you have upgrade to the paid model, the paid subscription, you could select an image from your iPhone photo roll cameraroll, and you could ask ChatGPT to help analyze your photo, and give you a critique on your photo. This is insanely great; this was actually my first initial vision of arsbeta.com — creating some sort of automated, app that could actually give you instantaneous feedback on your photos, without the need of slow human intermediaries.

Ultimately we still prefer the feedback and applause of other human beings. This is where I still think that [Arsbeta.com](https://arsbeta.com) is so phenomenal — you can still get real feedback from real human beings!

But still, the big issue with ChatGPT is mostly a UI-UX one. A lot of the insanely great features are hidden, maybe I need to do some sort of consulting with open AI; shoot me an email at eric@erickim.com and I'll give you some suggestions.

And also, still my insane vision; I think ultimately... it has to be free! Open source, permissionless, and insanely easy to use. It should not be any more complicated than putting in a quarter and shooting aliens like space invaders. Or how simple it was to enter our cartridge in a super Nintendo, turn on the power and start playing! Also, it needs to simply be plug and play; even in today's world, figuring out how to use Bluetooth such a pain in the butt. That is why I still prefer wires.

We already have AI in our cameras

One of the things that we forget is that we already have artificial intelligence in our cameras. For example on my Lumix G9 camera, there is a subject detect, face detect algorithm which makes photography much better! This is especially useful when you're doing auto focus and video.

The centaur approach

Who or what is the best chess player? Not man versus man, not computer versus computer, but a synthesis of both man *and* computer. For example, the most formidable chess player would be a human being plus computer. I would actually think that the most interesting type of chess match would be two nerds, both with a laptop, duking it out together.

I also even remember funny things like when I was a kid playing StarCraft, or playing counterstrike 1.6– I would always suspect, or think that maybe, a lot of these guys were cheating by using an aim bot, or map hacking. Even my best friend Aaron... who was by far the best StarCraft player that I knew, he was so good that he was thinking about going professional... I recall once when I was trying to do a secret drop on him, with my Goliaths and drop ships, he somehow knew beforehand; after watching the footage, I soon discovered that actually yes, he really was using a map hack.

Then the really funny idea is that what if... people were permitted and actually *encouraged* to use all of these bots and hacks? Like I'm curious... If you had two professional StarCraft players, both with map hack on, how would the game end up? That there was no fog of war?

Also another idea; what if teachers actually permitted their kids to always use ChatGPT, Google or whatever during class and on their homework and on tests etc.... and in fact, the grading wouldn't be based on if they're right or wrong, but *the criticality of their thinking?*

Or, two nerds both with auto aim, aim bots playing counterstrike versus one another. Who would win? Or be superior? Or with any of these competitive video games, the professional gamers would be permitted to use all of these hacks and cheats? Who would win?

This is also where I think things get interesting; a lot of people falsely believe that because of AI, there is no more reason to play chess anymore. But my creative thought is that actually... **If AI can help us create new innovative strategies in chess, human, then it is a great idea.**

For example, just watch the LEE SEDOL GO documentary in which Dennis, the head of deep blue or deep mind, I forget whatever it was called, in which they created the early playing AI... LEE SEDOL was shocked and amazed by all of the “creative“ and in a bit of strategies that ALPHAGO did. As a consequence, the new innovations that AlphaGo did were integrated as part of new GO strategies.

Which makes me wonder; *what new chess strategies have yet been discovered, and AI can help us uncover?*

AI ART

Therefore my suggestion is that I personally believe that all artists should be given free rein to all sorts of AI. Why? **AI is just a tool for creative ideation, and at the end of the day, you do the final edits.**

For example, you could get AI to easily write a screenplay, but yet, you as the artist might think that it is either cheesy or generic. And that is the thing... AI cannot really do anything totally carte blanche or totally brand new. Can you imagine AI inventing Blockchain or bitcoin? No. Or can you imagine AI having the genius of Steve Jobs and getting rid of the keyboard on a phone? No. Or the genius of Steve Jobs, getting rid of all the USB hubs on the iPad or even the original Mac computer?

Or the genius of a Kanye West and how he designed the Yeezy 350 shoes?

AI can only repeat and iterate on the past, it cannot create a new future.

So the question is, what is your role as a modern-day photographer?

Obviously there are simple ones. People are still going to get married, and people will still want pretty photos of their wedding. It seems that actually, **the most useful app here would be some sort of image sorting app.**

For example let us say that you're a wedding photographer and you shoot 10,000 photos of a wedding. To have to review and trudge through all those images will take you a short lifetime. What if instead, you just shot all the photos, and the image sorting AI thing could help you quickly sort and filter all 10,000 images, and quickly get down to the best 50?

If you're interested in building this with me, send me your résumé at eric@erickim.com

Creativity

Ultimately, we make photos not because there is some sort of inherent economic valley behind it, we do it because it is fun!

Even Seneca at two years, nine months old. He just did the cutest thing; while taking a bath, he figured out how to take the bucket, and put it on top of his head, making it look like a baseball cap, the same one that I wear at home. Then he asked Cindy to call me over to shoot some pictures of him; doing this cute shutter button icon hand gesture that I taught him how to do.

Then afterwards, he wanted to press the playback button to review the photos; and when he saw the photos he laughed so insanely hard and wanted me to keep shooting photos!

Having more fun in photography!

Moving forward, my desire is to create and craft more workshops which are just plain fun! The idea is reawakening your own creative spirit, in photography.

Now what?

My personal suggestion is once again, download the ChatGPT app to your iPhone or iPad, subscribe to the 20 bucks model, upgrade to the period version by clicking the ChatGPT 4 icon in the top right corner.

My suggestion is just experiment with it, have fun, and figure it out as you go! It doesn't seem there is a right or wrong way to do things; radical experimentation is interesting here.

Once you have upgraded to the subscription paid model, experiment on clicking the Camera icon and photographing stuff in the real world, and asking ChatGPT some questions like "what is going on here?"

Or, click the picture gallery icon, and select up to three images of your art photos and ask ChatGPT to give you feedback.

Of course, if you want real human feedback, upload your photos to arsbeta.com

And also, simpler than ChatGPT; give the why app, Zen of ERIC chat bot a shot. It is designed to relentlessly ask you *why?* When judging your life goals or decisions. The simple thing:

If you ask yourself the question "why", at least five times, you gain a deeper truth about things.

Now what?

Think AI, think art, think hybrid and fusion. **It is not zero sum; it is additive.**

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