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Motivational Boundary-Setting in AI-Augmented Creativity: How Generative AI Shapes Intrinsic Motivation in Artistic Practice

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this dissertation, which is approximately 14,994 words in length, has been composed by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. This project was conducted by me at the University of St Andrews from June 2025 to August 2025, in fulfillment of the University of St Andrews' requirements for the degree of Master of Letters (MLitt) in Management, under the supervision of Dr. Anna Brown.

I am aware that the digital version of my dissertation may be made available online in the University's secure, password-protected intranet (the Virtual Learning Environment), where it will be read by staff and students authorised by the School of Management, and I do consent to this process.

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Abstract

This study examines how generative artificial intelligence (AI) influences intrinsic motivation in creative practice, posing the question: *How does AI integration impact intrinsic motivation, and in what ways do creators establish boundaries to safeguard authorship, autonomy, and emotional engagement?* Using an interpretivist approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight creative practitioners across visual arts, design, writing, and innovation. Thematic analysis identified five key patterns: (1) intrinsic motivation as a boundary to AI integration, (2) negotiating authorship and creative trust, (3) positioning AI within the creative process, (4) disruption to flow and cognitive immersion, and (5) emotional and ethical stakes of AI-enabled creativity. Participants typically welcomed AI for logistical or low-stakes tasks but resisted its use in work with deep personal or creative significance. The findings reframe intrinsic motivation in AI-augmented creativity as an active process of ethical and emotional negotiation, extending creativity theory and offering practical insights for creators, organizations, and AI developers on preserving creative agency as generative technologies advance.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualizing Generative AI in Creative Practice

Since 2022, access to artificial intelligence has grown rapidly due to the mainstream availability of models like DALL·E 2, Midjourney, and ChatGPT, which allow artists, authors, and designers to create images, text, audio, and designs based on their input because the model answers based on data learned from the internet (Hutson et al., 2024). Artists and designers are increasingly integrating these AI tools into their creative workflows. The most common applications of AI have been ideation, image generation, and content creation. Specifically, the use of Midjourney and DALL·E has increased tremendously in the fields of visual art, advertising, and design (Liao et al., 2023).

However, the use of AI in creative work also creates ethical, legal, and psychological uncertainties for creatives. Research indicates that artists working with AI often struggle due to issues such as style replication, authorship attribution, and feelings of marginalization (Lovato and Piper, 2023). Caporusso (2023) introduces the term “Creative Displacement Anxiety” to describe the feeling of alienation experienced by some creatives when presented with AI-generated content that matches or exceeds the quality of content created by humans.

1.2 Intrinsic Motivation as a Critical Factor in Creativity

These discussions converge on a central concern: the impact of AI on artists’ intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the internal drive to perform an activity for the enjoyment, significance, or personal satisfaction it provides (Amabile, 1983). This is an integral motivation for creative endeavors. As AI technology becomes increasingly involved in each step of the creative process, it impacts the internal motivation of the creator by altering the emotional, ethical, and cognitive conditions that sustain meaningful creative engagement.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) emphasizes that individuals are intrinsically motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work. Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) describes intrinsic motivation as a state of deep engagement and focus that emerges when the challenge is compatible with one's skill set

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). As generative AI tools become an integral part of creative workflows, concerns arise that automating tasks that require emotional involvement and mental engagement may diminish these psychological drivers (Latikka et al., 2023; Lovato et al., 2023). Some studies note that AI can help creators break through creative blockages and produce action plans (Fisher & Amabile, 2009), whereas other studies caution that creators may feel less like authors or participating in a rewarding process as they rely increasingly on automation (Mei et al., 2025; Caporusso, 2023).

Although existing studies have explored AI's technical capacities and its implications for creative outputs, there is limited research on how creators themselves experience motivation while working with generative AI. There is a gap in understanding how creators negotiate the boundaries of authorship, agency, and emotional engagement in response to AI's growing role in creative practice.

1.3 Research Aim and Research Question

The study examines the strategies creators employ to navigate the impact of AI on their motivation and creative autonomy, focusing on how boundary-setting serves as a protective mechanism for authorship, emotional engagement, and identity. The research examines how artists and creative practitioners navigate the emotional, ethical, and cognitive challenges presented by AI-augmented workflows, with a focus on how boundary-setting can serve as a strategy for safeguarding creative autonomy and identity.

The literature review synthesizes the current theoretical and empirical scholarship on the impact of generative AI on intrinsic motivation in creative practice. Methodologically, it draws on Snyder's (2019) semi-systematic review procedures to draw from multiple epistemological and disciplinary sources. The review synthesizes psychological theories of creativity, including Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity, Self-Determination Theory, and Flow Theory, as definitions of intrinsic motivation. It also draws on the emergent literature of human-AI co-creation to examine how generative AI tools impact creative processes, authorship, motivations, or sense of engagement. The review incorporates sociocultural perspectives to identify how external considerations such as platform structures, cultural narratives, or changing labour conditions impact intrinsic motivation in AI-mediated creative contexts. By synthesizing these perspectives, the literature review provides a conceptual framework for understanding how

creators negotiate the influence of AI on their motivation, authorship, and creative integrity. Creators use motivational boundary setting to protect authorship, autonomy, emotional connection, and distinctiveness when working with generative AI, which reframes intrinsic motivation as an ethical and emotional negotiation rather than a fixed trait.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

The overall structure of this dissertation consists of five main chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, provides context for intrinsic motivation in creative practice, and illustrates how generative AI is creating new barriers to creativity. It presents an overview of the research's aim and the research question that will follow. At the same time, the chapter highlights the importance of examining how creators establish boundaries or constraints in their creative practice when integrating generative AI into their workflows.

Chapter Two provides the literature background. This chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual background necessary for understanding intrinsic motivation and creativity, drawing on Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity, Self-Determination Theory, and Flow Theory. The second section of Chapter Two reviews selected scholarship that examines how generative AI tools are transforming the practice of creativity. These constructs examined elements of authorship, trust, agency, and emotional engagement, in addition to the literature, including sociocultural and ethical perspectives on how platform structures, activity dynamics, and labour processes intersect with motivation, with specific reference to participants' motivations in creative work. The literature review establishes research gaps that the dissertation aims to address, with the notable exception of research producing knowledge from creators' lived experiences and motivations to create when using AI.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology. This chapter provides an overview of the interpretivist approach and the qualitative design. The research sample consisted of semi-structured interviews with eight creative practitioners from various creative disciplines. This chapter describes the sampling process, data collection, and the framework used for analyzing the data through thematic analysis. In addition, reflexivity, positionality, and ethical considerations are outlined, which together enhance transparency for the reader in understanding the collection process.

Chapter Four presents the findings and analysis, organized around five themes: (1) Intrinsic motivation as a boundary to AI integration, (2) Negotiating authorship and creative trust, (3) Positioning AI within the creative process, (4) Disruption to flow and cognitive immersion, and (5) Emotional and ethical stakes of AI-enabled creativity. The chapter integrates descriptive accounts from participants with thematic interpretation.

Chapter five interprets the findings about the literature review, framing intrinsic motivation as a process of establishing and negotiating boundaries. Practical implications are provided for creators, organizations, educators, and designers of AI tools. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the research's limitations and implications for future research directions in creative practice, examining the nature of processes involved in working with AI, an observational study on creative workflows, and a longitudinal survey of the ongoing relationship between AI and motivation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theories of Creativity and Intrinsic Motivation

Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity

Teresa Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity (1996) posits that creativity derives from three components: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996). Domain-relevant skills refer to the knowledge, technical abilities, and expertise specific to a particular field. Creativity-relevant skills refer to cognitive styles and heuristics that incite flexible thinking, such as tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to suspend judgment. Of these three components, intrinsic motivation is most relevant to this study. It refers to a person's desire to engage in an activity for its inherent interest and enjoyment (Amabile, 1983). It promotes persistence, risk-taking, and a sense of ownership over the creative task(Amabile, 1985). Individuals driven by intrinsic motivation are also more apt to persevere through setbacks, which is a critical quality in the uncertain terrain of creative work. However, when motivation is extrinsic, meaning rewards, deadlines, or evaluation drive it, creative engagement may suffer, even when skill and strategy are present (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This view is consistent with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core psychological needs that support intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Amabile defined creative processes as dynamic and nonlinear, and thus added other variables to her theory, including emotional experience, recursive feedback loops, and environmental factors such as time pressure and social setting. She developed a new model in which creativity occurs in recursive loops. This development encompasses the motivational states at each stage of the creative process, ranging from problem definition and idea generation to validation and extension (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). For example, an individual can revisit the stage of ideation upon encountering failure in implementation. This is because emotional responses such as frustration or excitement have an impact on the perseverance and direction of a creator (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Amabile's revised theory can be applied to the creative process by understanding how AI applications can enhance specific phases of the creative process,

making them more effective and efficient. This includes outlining, topic discovery, and prototyping, which can expedite moments of insight within the creative process(Fisher & Amabile, 2009). AI might also rob the creator of feelings of autonomy, as it generates outputs in advance of human input, potentially eliminating intrinsic motivation. More recent work has supported this finding, as seen in Latikka et al. (2023). Additionally, when people feel dislocated by AI, their creative fulfillment decreases.

Amabile's Componential Theory has been applied in studies of technology and creativity, with intrinsic motivation serving as its core driver (Amabile, 1996). In this framework, extrinsic motivation interacts with inherent motivation, either enhancing or undermining it depending on contextual factors. Intrinsic motivation mediates the connection between an individual's domain-related skills, creative approaches, and situational context (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Recent research has shown that AI tools have a complex impact on motivation. Some studies propose that when AI systems are designed to support user autonomy, curiosity, and self-expression, they may enhance creative engagement (Fisher & Amabile, 2009; Lovato et al., 2023). However, if these systems instead promote passive prompting or narrow task completion, they may risk diminishing the sense of purpose that underpins intrinsically motivated creativity (Caporusso, 2023). Although research on the long-term effects of AI is limited, these debates highlight the importance of aligning tool design with motivational theory.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), differentiates intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when people experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to a sense of volition and self-direction in behaviour. Competence is feeling capable of achieving a desired outcome, and relatedness is feeling connected to others or connected to a shared, meaningful goal.

All three needs are vital for creative work. When autonomy, competence, and relatedness are present in a creative activity, it produces the framing of the experience. It increases the likelihood that the creator will experience psychological safety, thereby overcoming their resistance to taking risks in the creative process. Although an environmental imbalance can create resistance to creative engagement, for example, when the rigidity of structure and external

expectations, or the pressure of others to stay on task or not be disengaged, threaten either autonomy or relatedness. SDT provides a suitable framework for exploring the psychological conditions that support meaningful and ongoing engagement in creativity.

Flow Theory

Flow Theory, conceptualized by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975), refers to a state of immersion and engagement within an activity. Flow is often referred to as 'being in the zone' or as a state where someone's skills match or exceed the challenge they face. In flow, individuals generally characterise the experience with intense awareness and focus, losing their sense of self in the activity, wondering where the time has gone, all while enjoying the activity. Within creative work, when flow occurs, it is often linked to emotional satisfaction, a sense of meaning-making, and ultimately, intrinsic motivation. Flow complements a view presented in Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that competence is a primary psychological need, and is also consistent with Amabile's (1996) idea that engagement is intensified when creators feel a sense of control over their process.

Conversely, flow may not occur when AI certainly does assist in those mentioned above, as it oversimplifies an activity or intervenes in high-value stages of the creative process. Mei et al. (2025) describe this situation as "disengagement of cognitive engagement," which suggests that efficiencies surpass the struggle that connects emotional and cognitive engagement. AI, due to its ability to produce high volumes of content, often overwhelms creators, diminishing their sense of authorship and connection to the work (Lovato et al., 2024).

According to Moneta's (2012) nonlinear flow model, flow emerges from immersion after a degree of struggle, which helps creators adopt new strategies when obstacles arise. When AI intrudes too early and with too much emphasis on efficiency, friction-free moments are avoided during experimentation, thereby negating opportunities for deep absorption and engagement. Removing challenge or abundance undermines flow but may also diminish the intrinsic motivation of sustained practice.

In some situations, creators have been able to utilise AI without compromising immersion in flow. Latikka et al. (2023) illustrate cases where artists focused on AI as a

co-creative partner, rather than a shortcut tool, forming moments where AI prompted serendipitous rupture, which are welcomed unexpected results that reactivate engagement. In these instances, the creator still retained agency over their process, which is harmonious with the autonomy principle of SDT and Amabile's self-directed notion of creativity.

Ultimately, AI's impact on workflow is dependent on where the AI is positioned in the workflow design or process. When using low-stakes, logistical points of entry, AI can help adjust the cognitive load of the activity, thereby striking a balance between challenge and skill. However, when AI occupies the core of decision-making in the creative process, the creative process becomes less rigorous, which hinders emotional immersion and intrinsic motivation, thereby reducing the likelihood of flow episodes (Sawyer, 2012).

Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation in Creative Work

Alongside the psychological theories, it is essential to understand the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the context of creative work facilitated by AI. Evaluating intrinsic motivators as supported or undermined by AI is crucial for assessing the psychological impact of creating with AI tools.

Intrinsic motivation is described as a task an individual is participating in simply for the enjoyment or satisfaction of that task. Extrinsic motivation is an action done as a result of demands, deadlines, pressures, or other rewards or obligations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Amabile (1996) suggested that intrinsic motivation is “the most important” aspect because it entails perseverance and deep engagement, which contribute to creative activity. If there are stronger extrinsic motives than intrinsic motives in a creative activity, the creative potential of the activity may be significantly diminished (Deci et al., 1999).

Including AI in this motivation equation is a complex process. The AI may inspire creativity, help reduce mental blocks, and save time on unnecessary tasks and responsibilities. Therefore, AI may help to enhance intrinsic motivation (Latikka et al., 2023). Although much creativity is externalized and AI is eventually determining the creative work, thus motivating extrinsically. The motivation is now to satisfy a demand and benefit from those efficiencies and utilities rather than from meaningful and regulated activity.

Caporusso (2023) introduced Creative Displacement Anxiety (CDA) to signal the anxiety that AI might displace human imagination and authorship. This anxiety reveals the erosion of

intrinsic engagement, where creators feel they lack control over the ownership or identity that was traditionally associated with creative work. AI can also replace sections of the ideation process and eliminate the emotional baggage that creates the intrinsic rewards related to engaging in a creative task. A task that is simple due to the ease of completion does not offer the same cognitive or emotional gratification as completing an assignment on one's own.

Pairing an extrinsic reward with an already attractive activity may also lead to the overjustification effect (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). In the case of AI, those who work in an established practice may experience disengagement when AI tools render parts of the process. While the work of creators can be completed using AI, the engagement has been voided. Suppose the task is unable to create a level of completion that is “too easy”. In that case, it reduces an individual's overall commitment to resolving problems and improving their skills (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which is difficult for new artists to ignore as they may be at a greater risk of productivity by using AI at the expense of the intrinsic rewards that a struggle and difficulty to engage the work may contribute to (Shi et. al, 2023).

Based on this tension, an individual creator can sustain their intrinsic motivation by viewing outputs from different AI tools as prompts rather than answers. Allado-McDowell (2021) described using AI-generated text with students, where it was embraced as improvisational material. This reversed the initial thoughts of a product and allowed a deeper process of contemplation. In this case, AI was integrated into the creative process rather than as a standalone product with increased autonomy, enabling maximum emotional engagement while interacting with the tool.

The question of whether AI enhances or detracts from intrinsic motivation relates to how it is employed in the creative process. To ensure that motivation, engagement, and emotions remain primarily internally driven, creators must consciously identify the levels of agency that AI can facilitate.

Rhode’s 4 P’s(1961)

Rhodes (1961) proposed that there are four dimensions of creativity: Person, Process, Press, and Product. These frameworks are also commonly referred to as “the 4 Ps” of creativity and serve as a starting point for understanding creative projects that rely on both internal and external engagements.

The Person dimension comprises the intrinsic characteristics of the producer, including their motivations and cognitive strategies. In this dimension, AI can also enter the creative process through technological means, thus impacting a creator's perception of their agency and identity. For instance, openness to experimentation and fluency with technology influence how much an individual engages with the AI tool. Those who are not technologically competent may experience disengagement from the creative process altogether, resulting in a loss of creative ownership.

The Process dimension encompasses the creation of ideas and the practical aspects of implementing them. The AI takeover of the ideation aspects of the process allows the maker to concentrate on the technical aspects of making without the mental effort associated with ideating and exploring a challenge. While AI can support ideation and other technical tasks, relying solely on AI and forgetting about the human element of creativity means avoiding the process itself, which likely diminishes the excitement associated with creativity because the struggle and work that are intrinsic to the process are absent.

Press refers to the space in which people occupy and become influenced by outside material factors such as social, cultural, and technological pressures. The presence of AI in creative spaces becomes an influential force. It redefines previously understood material influences, pressing on the norms of speed, volume, and optimization, and how people inhabit a defined space of the creative practice.

Finally, a product refers to the outcome of a creative act. AI-augmented workflows contribute to the debate over an author's ownership of the innovative product. Regarding products created under AI-augmented workflows, creators must confront their authorship and ownership responsibilities as a means of reflecting on how they understand their position as creators and determining how it may affect their motivation, pride, and sense of ownership.

The complexity of Rhodes' 4 Ps offers a broad scope for examining creativity. In this study, the specificity of the Process and Person dimensions is most applicable, as these are the locations where negotiable processes happen about self-defined intrinsic motivations and boundary-making practices.

Improvisational Creativity (Fisher & Amabile)

Fisher and Amabile (2009) make a distinction between compositional creativity and improvisational creativity. Compositional creativity is a formal sequence of planning, ideation, evaluation, and execution. Improvisational creativity is spontaneous, responsive, and unfolds in the moment with little planning. It occurs in spaces where creators are willing to accept ambiguity and failure.

To facilitate improvisational creativity, creators exhibit high levels of intrinsic motivation, which leads to exploratory behavior and attentional flexibility. Creators who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to remain resilient and connected in uncertain, fluid creative contexts.

Having an AI-augmented practice means that working with generative AI may reflect improvisational creativity, as long as the creator does not treat the AI's outputs as fixed solutions. Instead, it thinks of working with the AI as a dynamic prompt. Accordingly, a creator must engage with AI in a way that allows them to continue interpreting and reframe any output of AI, thereby remaining personally involved and maintaining ownership of the work. If AI becomes too prescriptive or overly determined, it will eliminate the spontaneity and ownership that are central to improvisational creativity.

For this reason, boundary-setting becomes a critical practice. Creators have to negotiate how and when the contributions of AI are allowed to contribute to their work to maintain inherent motivation and improvisational practice.

2.2 Generative AI in Creative Practice

As generative systems like ChatGPT, DALL·E, and Midjourney become increasingly integrated into artists' workflows as tools, and artists create alongside intelligent systems, several questions emerge regarding autonomy, authorship, and emotional engagement. Many onlookers view this moment as an "AI Renaissance" for the arts, arguing that generative systems have the potential to lower or even eliminate technical barriers to entry, allowing many more people to experiment (Hutson et. al., 2024). Generative AI can provide ideation, prototyping, and

stylization, as well as accelerate aspects of the creative process that were once tedious and time-consuming.

However, efficiency does not come without caveats. The ability of AI to bypass modes of engagement in the creative process reduces opportunities for deeper exploration and risk-taking (Brundage, 2024). When AI reconciles aspects of creativity that are messy, iterative, or exploratory, the artist runs the risk of losing the emotional and cognitive experience that catalyzes intrinsic motivation.

The fundamental change that AI systems introduce is "prompt engineering," and the artist engaging with AI to not only canvas creative outcomes, but to now engage in similar creative processes, similar to how humans iteratively refine ideas and details to influence outputs (Shi et al., 2023). Many creators may find this intermediary level of process very stimulating in terms of intellectual engagement; however, a concern exists regarding the position of the creator, who transitions from originator to curator, and the authorship and ownership of creative outcomes (Habib et al., 2024).

For some artists and creators, AI can be useful in early ideation and decision-making. However, as AI shifts from serving as a logistical assistant to making aesthetic decisions, the agency of the creator may decline. Wu et al. (2025) found that while human–AI collaboration can enhance creative task performance, it can also reduce intrinsic motivation, particularly when the AI's role becomes more dominant in shaping the creative process. Similarly, Clarke & Joffe (2025) found that creative professionals actively reconfigure how AI tools fit into their workflows, setting boundaries and shaping AI's role to safeguard their sense of control and authorship over the creative output.

Ultimately, whether AI poses a threat or an enhancement to creative engagement remains unclear. However, shaping AI to fit the engagement that exists within the process is of utmost importance. If creators can remain strategic when adopting AI tools as supports, not collaborators, then intrinsic motivation can be protected. To establish these positions, it requires conscious boundary creation, working to keep AI within the constructs of the creator's emotional, ethical, and aesthetic values.

Intrinsic Motivation in AI workflows

Self-Determination Theory offers a crucial perspective on understanding how generative AI tools can foster intrinsic motivation in creative practices. As AI gains traction in the fine arts and design, recent literature has begun to assess the significance of the three basic psychological need types identified by SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the context of AI technologies.

Autonomy is how one's sense of volition in creativity can be both augmented and diminished by AI. AI can provide sources of generative partnership that foster freedom by assisting creators in breaking blocks and encouraging creators to explore. However, when AI systems generate visually polished outputs from minimal input, authors may feel reduced to curators or prompt engineers, thereby diminishing their sense of authorship and ownership. In their study, Latikka et al. (2023) found that excessive reliance on AI during the initial brainstorming stage led to a reduction in perceived ownership and emotional engagement with the completed product. Similarly, Lovato et al. (2024) provide an example of artists working with generative AI systems that aggregate the bulk of the creative processes, while also raising concerns about authorship, control, and meaning. These tensions not only influence how AI is perceived but also whether creators continue to feel intrinsically motivated to engage in the creative process.

Competence refers to the belief that one is capable of completing a task. AI tools can serve to amplify one's sense of competence by enhancing one's ability to explore and bypass technical hurdles and barriers. In both cases, AI can enhance creators' creative prospects and increase self-assurance, particularly when visualizing initial ideas or trying something outside their everyday stylistic practices. This is not always the case. Shi et al. (2023) recount instances in which less technologically fluent artists, especially older creators, actually felt their self-efficacy lessen as they used generative tools. When creators view their contributions as secondary to the machine, the motivational value of competence will diminish, potentially leading to disengagement, frustration, or reliance on the machine.

Relatedness, or feeling a meaningful connection to the work or others through it, may also manifest differently in AI-mediated creativity. Artists have described the outputs generated by AI as lacking emotional resonance or perceived connection to human intent. (Guljajeva et. al., 2022). This trend could be even stronger when someone relies on AI out of necessity. For

example, to meet deliverables or client expectations, rather than out of interest or alignment with personal values. In situations where the work feels more transactional than expressive, motivation can be further attenuated.

Several empirical investigations support the previous concerns. Mei et al. (2025) reported that students who used ChatGPT to produce outputs for a creative writing assignment achieved "better outcomes," but also reported lower enjoyment and a slight decrease in confidence in their creative abilities. The authors explained that when AI took over the "ideation" or "phrasings," it could displace the cognitive struggle and emotional attachment that provide satisfaction. The authors explained that this is an example of "cognitive offloading," which relates to SDT's position that the outcomes and active participation in the process inform motivation.

However, there are instances where the use of AI does not suppress intrinsic motivation. Some creators have found a way to incorporate AI while still retaining some agency and emotional connection to their creativity. For example, Allado-McDowell (2021) uses AI-generated texts as improvisational prompts for deeper reflection and additional creative shaping. In this regard, much of the tool acts as a prompt rather than a substitute, thereby retaining the conditions where autonomy and engagement are present. These examples illustrate that the motivational effects of working with AI can be influenced by the creator's mindset and the context in which the work is produced. When creators have control and meaning in their work, motivation can remain high, even in hybrid environments.

2.3 Sociocultural and Ownership Perspectives

The use of generative AI in the creative process is rooted in broader contextual systems of labor, authorship, and cultural production. Literature is increasingly framing AI as a sociotechnical actor that fundamentally alters how we think about creativity and how we value and distribute it. Thus, it is crucial to examine the role of AI in terms of authorship, labor equity, creative autonomy, motivation, and the emotional and psychological implications for human creators.

A common theme across the literature is rethinking authorship and originality from a temporal perspective. As Guljajeva et. al. (2022) note, AI systems are starting to obfuscate what the term "consumed" means. For example, authorship that privileges individual agency and

originality leads to confusion over creative ownership when AI outputs are trained on artists' work without their permission. Ultimately, these concerns have implications for how artists perceive their role in the process and whether they experience a sense of creative ownership or disconnection. Notably, such instances would detract from creators' intrinsic motivation, specifically the psychological need for autonomy, as defined in Self-Determination Theory, when they are not feeling a sense of authorship.

This disconnection is a theme that resonates from studies of creative labor. As Hesmondhalgh (2019) acknowledged, platform capitalism incentivizes creators to leverage AI based on speed, volume, or optimization. In such cases, AI serves as a productivity tool rather than a co-creative agent, and is less likely to reinforce intrinsic motivators, such as algorithmic visibility or financial capital. Amabile (1983, 1996) and Ryan and Deci have established that, when creators feel pressure from these extrinsic pressures (including the prescribed pressures of AI), intrinsic motivation is likely to decline. This raises important questions: Do AI-augmented workflows facilitate or hinder meaningful creative engagement? Is the creative process still immersive, expressive, and/or emotionally gratifying?

Recent research offers quantitative insight into these tensions. In a large-scale survey of 459 artists, Lovato et al. (2024) found that 96% had not given consent for their work to be used in AI training sets. Yet 80.17% expressed that developers should be required to disclose what artworks were used, out of concern for exploitation. Only 26.80% believed that developers should own the generated content, with many respondents arguing that derivative AI art should be credited either to the original artist (41.39%) or to the person who prompted the AI (39.22%). These findings reveal the discomfort over the erosion of authorship, recognition, and psychological ownership, all of which affect whether creators feel emotionally invested in their work.

Artists' emotional responses further underscore this motivational tension. While only 50.97% said they required financial compensation for use of their work, the most commonly voiced sentiment (22.80%) was: "I do not need to make a profit, but companies should not gain profit from my work." This captures a broader concern that the commercial use of AI in creative domains may erode the dignity and autonomy of human creators, particularly when their labor is

exploited without their consent or compensation. From the perspective of Flow Theory, this environment makes it more challenging to achieve a state of immersion. Emotional absorption and satisfaction require alignment between one's values and the task conditions that are harder to meet when creative labor is devalued.

Economic projections reinforce the scale and urgency of these issues. The global generative AI market for creative industries is expected to grow from $3.08 billion in 2024 to $12.6 billion by 2029 (Statista, 2024; Fortune Business Insights, 2024). In the visual arts alone, revenues are projected to increase from $430 million to $2.51 billion during the same period. These figures indicate the rapid commercialization of art, often without inclusive systems for artist participation, recognition, or reward. They threaten intrinsic motivation in the critical areas of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. If artists feel they are no longer active participants in their creative economies, but relatively passive providers of unpaid data, their motivation is likely to diminish.

Sociocultural theorists, such as Glăveanu (2014), argue that creativity is not an internal cognitive process. It is a distributed, relational, and socially situated phenomenon that occurs through systems of tools, norms, and environments. In this case, AI is not a passive tool; it is an active contributor in a networked creative space. This threatens relatedness because if creatives feel dislocated or alienated by AI-generated processes and outputs, it may disrupt their sense of authorship, community, and emotional presence. Relatedness, as defined by Ryan and Deci (2000), is the feeling of having a connection to others and a mutual need for shared cultural meaning. This concept is critical for supporting intrinsic motivation. When relatedness diminishes, it is unlikely that a creative will remain feeling connected to their work and will be more likely to disengage.

Some researchers identify alternate pathways. Ethical co-creation, as well as conceptualizations of slow creativity (Lovato et al., 2024), promote systems where AI is situated to augment human agency, rather than replace it. The pathways indicate a prioritization of autonomy, curiosity, and psychological ownership, which aligns with the foundational principles of Self-Determination Theory and Amabile's work. Initial research suggests that when AI is used to support creative decision-making, motivation is more likely to be maintained (Latikka et al.,

2023). If certainty of authorship is kept in ongoing processes as technical environments evolve, engagement will likely be preserved among creators.

This literature suggests that AI's impact on creative motivation is not fixed. Its effects depend on the affordances of the tools, use of the frameworks, and engagement with and by the creators. As the cultural and commercial importance of AI for creative generative art expands, human motivation will be a central aspect of designing ethical and meaningful creative ecosystems.

2.4 Synthesis and Research Gaps

Although there has been a rise in literature on generative AI and creativity, the field continues to lack a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these technologies on the motivational processes associated with creativity. Much of the work emphasized what AI tools can do or what they produce (Cremonesi & Casnici, 2024), but not the psychological, cognitive, and emotional implications of human–AI interaction. Emerging studies are beginning to draw attention to the topics of creativity, authorship, identity, and labor (Kong et al., 2024). Still, these topics are not always linked to the lived experience of intrinsic motivation, which is a critical driver of creativity as highlighted by Amabile (1996), Ryan & Deci (2000), and Csikszentmihalyi (1990). I have chosen these three theories to highlight different but intersecting notions of the motivational component when human beings engage in creative tasks. Amabile's theory outlines the dynamic, process aspects of creativity. Self-Determination Theory frames the psychological conditions that foster intrinsic motivation, and Flow Theory describes the phenomenological experience of being fully absorbed in creative activity. This reflects Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Flow Theory, in which total absorption and altered perception of time are core components of optimal creative engagement. With these theories, I aim to develop an understanding of how AI may impact artistic practices.

Although often overlooked, psychological theories of creativity are also employed in studies on AI. When theories, such as the Componential Theory of Creativity, Self-Determination Theory, or Flow Theory, are discussed, they are often presented as singular theories rather than integrated as a foundation to explaining how creators experience and sustain motivation in digital contexts (Cave et al., 2023). For instance, sociocultural theories

acknowledge that creativity is commonplace and socially situated (Glăveanu, 2014). Still, few studies consider how the different layers of AI interactions, between ideation, iteration, and evaluation, might alter an individual's emotional solidarity to the task, perceived autonomy, and self-expression (Cremonesi & Casnici, 2024).

These gaps are particularly pressing as AI becomes more embedded in everyday creative workflows. Without a clear understanding of how creators relate to these tools and how that relationship shapes their motivation, we risk flattening creativity into efficiency and output, neglecting the psychological and emotional dimensions that make creative work meaningful (Thompson, 2020).

While many studies raise valid concerns about the psychological effects of AI on motivation, the long-term impact remains uncertain. Much of the existing evidence is context-dependent or anecdotal in nature. Thus, understanding how creators experience motivation in hybrid workflows is needed. While this review primarily focuses on literature from the visual arts, design, and writing, the broader study incorporates interviews with creators from diverse disciplines. These perspectives will help expand and contextualize the findings presented in this section.

This study, therefore, asks: How does generative AI shape intrinsic motivation in creative practice, and in what ways do creators establish boundaries to maintain authorship and emotional engagement?

By combining psychological theories of motivation with recent sociocultural research on AI, this study aims to bridge the gap between individual and systemic perspectives. It contributes to ongoing debates about the role of human agency in digital creation, providing insight into how AI tools may reconfigure not only what is created but also why people create in the first place.

While existing research has explored the psychological implications of AI for professional creators, it has typically done so in isolation, either philosophically, sociotechnically, or through a process-oriented approach. The dissertation integrates these dimensions through a psychological lens, drawing on empirical studies. The resulting synthesis establishes that creators should not be viewed solely as users of AIs, but rather as meaning-makers who are influenced by the momentary emotional and motivational aspects of

their digital tools in either positive or negative ways. The above provides a context for the original qualitative research that follows.

2.5 Conclusion

This literature review revealed the theoretical, technological, and sociocultural dimensions of creativity in an environment saturated with generative AI. While new AI tools provide new avenues of experimentation and access to creative practice, they raise questions about authorship, motivations for creating, and the role of humans in innovative systems. The available literature does not sufficiently address the role of these technologies on intrinsic motivation, one of the core components necessary to engage creatively over an extended period in meaningful ways. This dissertation combines psychological theoretical frameworks, emerging scholarship regarding AI co-creation, and the role of creative labor to situate itself in a timely debate about the future of innovative practice. It is essential to understand how and why people remain motivated to create in AI-augmented environments, not only to support the creative sector itself but also to assist educators, organizations, and policymakers navigating the rapid cultural and technological changes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy and Design

This study employs a qualitative research design using the interpretivist paradigm. This posits that reality is socially constructed through human meaning-making and lived experience (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This research aims to understand how artists and creative practitioners use or avoid using AI in their work and how it impacts their intrinsic motivation. Ontologically, this research takes a social constructivist approach, which recognizes that creativity, identity, and technological engagement are shaped by evolving cultural contexts (Cunliffe, 2011). Epistemologically, I will take an interpretivist stance, meaning I will privilege subjectivity and co-constructed knowledge as generated through dialogic engagement with participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This study employs a qualitative design, as it enables in-depth exploration of subjective meaning and lived experience, particularly in creative contexts where emotional, social, and motivational dimensions are central (Silverman, 2021). Qualitative research is particularly well-suited to questions of "how" and "why," making it an appropriate choice for investigating the evolving relationship between artists and AI tools. The qualitative design is reflexive and iterative, allowing for an evolving understanding as data are collected and interpreted (Finlay, 2002).

The study employs semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth and flexible data collection. This enables me and the participants to shape the direction of the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I use semi-structured interviews because they are particularly effective in interpretive research, as they reveal layered meanings (Brinkmann, 2014). Interviews are conducted online via Microsoft Teams, allowing US-based participants to contribute to this UK-based study. However, this may result in limitations due to the lack of physical presence, which can hinder the ability to pick up on body language cues and comfort (Dancause et al., 2020; Salmons, 2015; Sohn, 2022). To mitigate these issues, I engage in pre-interview rapport building and utilize active listening techniques to maintain emotional depth and connection.

Using an interpretivist stance, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight creative practitioners and employed Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to address the research question. This design connects the question to the data by capturing lived experiences of motivation, developing five themes from the transcripts, and using those themes to build the study's theoretical contributions.

3.2 Research Question

This research aims to answer the question: How does generative AI shape intrinsic motivation in creative practice, and in what ways do creators establish boundaries to maintain authorship and emotional engagement?

3.3 Sampling and Participant Profile

Eight participants will be recruited for this study, spanning at least five creative disciplines: visual art, ceramics, writing, innovation, and design. Some participants use AI, while some do not, which allows for variability in perspectives and responses. This cross-disciplinary design enables the study to explore variations in how tactile, linguistic, and visual forms of creativity are influenced by AI.

Participants are identified through my personal and professional networks. Additionally, I will employ snowball sampling, a strategy that involves asking participants for their connections to speak to, thereby broadening the research scope (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Sampling aimed for maximum variation across disciplines and AI engagement levels to ensure a broad spectrum of perspectives relevant to the research question (Patton, 2002). As is typical in qualitative research, a non-probabilistic, purposive sampling strategy was employed to select information-rich cases that could illuminate diverse experiences of AI in creative practice (Silverman, 2021). Data collection will continue until thematic saturation is reached. This occurs when no new insights emerge from additional interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Refer to the end of the methodology section for a table that outlines participant pseudonyms and their corresponding creative disciplines.

3.4 Data Generation

The data will be generated through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews lasting 45-60 minutes. Interview questions will explore participants' workflows, experiences with AI tools, emotional and motivational shifts, and ethical or social concerns around co-creation. While the interview guide is informed by themes in the literature such as autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), and authorship (Amabile & Pratt, 2016), it is not designed to test these theories deductively. Instead, the structure allows participants to define their experiences in their own terms. All interviews are audio-recorded (with consent), transcribed verbatim, and pseudonymized. I will take post-interview field notes to document initial reflections, potential biases, and questions for follow-up.

3.5 Data Analysis

I will use Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework to analyze the data. Step one involves familiarization with the transcripts, step two involves generating initial codes, step three involves sorting the codes into themes, step four involves reviewing themes across the dataset, step five consists of defining and naming themes, and step six involves producing the final report with quotes and my comments. I will include a screenshot of the coding process in the appendix to illustrate my approach.

The coding process is inductive primarily. This means that the themes are developed from the data rather than imposed from theory. However, the approach is also abductive, in that once themes are identified, I interpret them in relation to relevant theories, such as Self-Determination Theory, Flow, or the Componential Theory of Creativity, where appropriate (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Using both methods preserves the openness of inductive analysis while enabling engagement with established frameworks.

To make the process transparent, initial coding was performed manually using open, line-by-line annotation of each transcript. Codes were created to capture emotional tone, motivational reasoning, the role of tools, and moments of ethical tension. These codes were then clustered thematically, with overlapping or conceptually adjacent codes merged into broader categories. For instance, "self-doubt," "emotional disconnect," and "loss of voice" were grouped into the larger theme of creative authorship. Theme development was iterative and reflexive; themes were revised and renamed as patterns emerged across the dataset. The process was

tracked in a manual matrix that allowed for comparison across participants. This interpretive, abductive approach enabled themes to reflect not only frequency but also depth, salience, and conceptual coherence about the research question and relevant theory.

3.6 Reflexivity and Positionality

In addition to being the sole researcher of this project, I identify as a creative person myself. I have an academic and professional background in creative writing, and I am also a young student entering the professional world in the coming months. I have noticed the significant impact that AI has on every aspect of the world around me. Therefore, I identify with the "insider" position within the artistic and creative community that I am studying. Approaching the research with this positionality allows me to build rapport and interpret creative language effectively. However, there is also a risk of bias. To manage this, I keep a reflexive journal throughout the research process, noting emotional reactions, assumptions, and interpretive decisions (Finlay, 2002). This approach aligns with Pillow's (2003) call to use reflexivity not simply as a methodological requirement, but as a critical tool for confronting the ethical, emotional, and political complexities of qualitative research. Literature on insider research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) also guides my ongoing effort to remain critically aware of how my background shapes the research encounter.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations must be taken into account in the study, including informed consent, confidentiality, and potential emotional risks. Before the interview, participants are informed of the study's purpose and their rights. Participants provide written permission before the start of interviews. To protect the participants' identities, the study will use pseudonyms. The data will be stored in encrypted files in the St Andrews University OneDrive. The University of St Andrews Ethics Committee has approved this project.

3.8 Limitations

This study does not aim for statistical generalization. Instead, it supports analytical generalization, in which the goal is to generate transferable insights and conceptual contributions based on rich, context-bound narratives (Eisenhardt, 1989). While the findings do not support

statistical significance, they may offer depth that confirms existing research or provides further insights.

Limitations include the small and heterogeneous sample size, which limits the scope of in-depth research. However, it also restricts broader applicability. There is also potential for self-selection bias, as participants who agree to be interviewed may have strong perspectives on AI or creative practice. Moreover, the rapid evolution of generative AI technologies creates new temporal limitations, including tools, creative norms, and perceptions that may shift significantly in the near future, which could render the findings confined to a specific period in time. Ultimately, my creative background as a researcher may influence the interpretation of the data, introducing potential bias inherent in qualitative inquiry.

3.9 Participant Chart

Pseudonym	Role	Primary Creative Discipline	AI Use Level
Hannah	Ceramicist	Visual Arts	Low
Sarah	Creative Writing Student	Creative Writing	Medium
Isabelle	Art Professor and Interdisciplinary Artist	Visual Arts	Medium
Thomas	Innovation Executive at Major Global Activewear Brand	Design/Innovation	Medium

Emily	Digital Artist and Video Game Designer	Digital Arts	High
Layla	Swimwear Designer and Founder of the Network for Women in Creative Industries	Fashion	Low
Julia	Published Nonfiction Author and Chief Marketing Author at Major Media Company	Media and Nonfiction Writing	Low
May	Globally Renowned Interdisciplinary Artist	Visual Art	Medium

4. Findings

4.1 Intrinsic Motivation as a Boundary to AI Integration in Creative Work

Across participants, a consistent pattern emerged: AI was acceptable for low-stakes, peripheral tasks such as organization, formatting, or moodboarding, but was excluded from emotionally significant stages like ideation, authorship, or final execution. This selective integration reflected an effort to protect what participants described as the "heart" of their creative process, where identity, emotional connection, and authorship were most present. The decision to keep AI at the margins was to ensure the maintenance of the psychological and emotional investment that sustains intrinsic motivation.

This draws a boundary against AI and demonstrates an explicit hierarchy. AI was only accepted when the emotional investment was limited. Hannah, a ceramicist, described this boundary: "I have to feel the clay in my hands. That's what drives me." Even the suggestion of using AI to prototype forms was dismissed with "That would flatten everything." Hannah did not outright reject the technology, but she attempted to protect the embodied relationship that constituted her meaningful creative practice.

Layla, a fashion designer, likewise assumed a protective position with her creativity. While stating that her place of creative motivation is an "inner current," she cannot rely on the same qualities as AI. She referred to the source point of innovative ideas as "mine". While she attempted to utilize AI to enhance commercial efficiency in her creative practice, she refused to sacrifice her creative autonomy, which was fundamental to her work.

Participants reported an apparent shift in their motivational expression when AI was introduced in their creative practice workflows. Initially, Sarah, a creative writing graduate student, wanted to use a generative AI to "speed it up," but later remarked, "it all felt empty". She explained that the writing produced by AI no longer felt like hers, and the emotional connection she needed to be creative was disrupted. Julia was more explicit about this tension through the idea of emotional truth. For Julia, "Even if I'm not being paid to do a task, I'm still making things. That's what informs my rationale of why, in reality, it doesn't matter if it's about the end product. It's the *doing*, and the act of creating means something to me."

In a few instances, there was an acceptance of AI, albeit emerging under the understanding that AI is being used to support the creative process. “If I care about it, I have to be the one to do it,” May said. Interestingly, she said she would use it for the technical aspects, but it would feel “icky” when it came to meaning and emotionality. Thomas described the efficiencies and intentionality of AI work as limiting the pride derived from positions. “In my job, you are expected to use AI tools. However, if I did something for personal purposes, I wouldn’t want it to be done by AI, because then it feels like cheating,”

These interviews suggest that intrinsic motivation is an actively established boundary that creators drew. Their choice whether or not to employ AI was never about what the tool can do. It was about the protection of the emotional and cognitive ownership that keeps them invested in their creations. Participants viewed AI as a potential intruder into a personal and emotional realm where meaning originates from the discomfort of effort, the space of failure, experimentation, and self-direction.

This idea aligns with Self-Determination Theory’s definition of autonomy as the basic motivation for intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, the participants’ experiences suggest that autonomy has a deep meaning to them, and is grounded in emotional authorship, the knowing that what you are producing is actualized from one's own identity and relationships. Denying AI, especially in the idea stage or for any emotionally charged project, was an act of retaining ownership or control.

Moreover, even when there were extrinsic motivators, participants still navigated through the experience of AI in a way that allowed them to maintain some sense of volitional engagement. Isabelle reflected on how her relationship to the work as a whole changed when there was any expectation of an audience or a deadline: “Because when there is a deadline, or some audience in my mind, it is not for me anymore, and my motivation shifts.” The participants’ intrinsic motivation was the constant harbinger between creativity and technology.

Rather than a complete dismissal of AI, participants were engaged in what can be termed motivational boundary work. They held a firm creative boundary with AI at the edge of the process, while still defining it as allowable without encroaching on the emotional or existential stakes of their practice. Boundary setting was seen as a re-demarcation of their creative identity.

4.2 Negotiating Authorship and Maintaining Creative Integrity in AI-Mediated Practice

For participants, authorship was about emotional engagement and identity. When AI emerged, that connection was disrupted. Creators were concerned not only about whom to credit, but also whether their work accurately reflected the intent and emotional labor they had invested in it, given the involvement of AI.

Julia illustrated that tension very well when she realized that AI models had been trained on her published work without her consent. For her, authorship was a trust relationship between the writer and reader, which was fundamentally compromised by the involvement of AI. She explained:

> "They took my work. They trained the algorithm on it, without asking. So if I put anything back into the system, I am just giving them more to take. For me, writing is a contract; it is about the person who is reading it and trusting that what they are reading is from me. If that trust is broken, the work has no meaning."

Julia's position illustrates how emotional ownership is bound to creative motivation. Writing was meaningful to her because it rested on personal authorship. The disruption of that relationship diminished her intrinsic motivation.

Layla expressed a similar discomfort but through a different lens. While at times she would attempt to use an AI tool for formatting documents or assisting in ideation, the idea that her input could be entered into a shared data pool was anxiety-provoking for her. "If I don't press 'private,' my stuff goes into a pool of stuff everyone else makes. Then is it mine anymore?" While Layla found the idea of making in concert with AI to be interesting, the very thing that made her creation a creation was an embodied act embedded with her personal choices. The possibility of AI homogenizing or anonymizing her work undermined her sense of authorship.

Hannah rejected AI tools entirely. As a ceramicist, creativity was an embodied activity, one that could not be done with an AI tool. "I am the one making the form. I don't want it to be a product of AI!" Hannah's declaration points to authorship not solely as an idea, but also as

indelibly linked to the experience of being in the moment of creation. AI's attempt was perhaps a deterrent for Hannah to the extent that it removed the human element from the creative process.

However, not every participant resisted AI altogether. One research participant, Emily, a digital designer, regularly uses AI for menial tasks in her work and often draws upon AI-generated fragments from a prompt as a generative brainstorming tool. Yet, she made a point to emphasize that she gives authorship back to the unfinished prompt as she actively recreates it. "I know it's not my voice, but once I shape it, it is mine." This negotiation of authorship is more complex, in which the creator reclaims their emotional voice and agency from partially AI-produced intermediate stages of the creative process of re-making.

These accounts provide evidence that authorship is an active, meaning-making process performed by these creators, rather than a static claim. Their processes of boundary negotiations are one form of boundary setting to maintain this authorship process with AI, ensuring it does not erode their emotional or social investment in the work.

From a motivational standpoint, these boundaries marked emotional investment to remain indicated, indicating that it persisted. For example, motivation that is directed intrinsically towards the work is likely to be supported when personal ownership, control, and enjoyment are present (Amabile, 1996). These motivations were eroding for many participants, as they questioned or lost the emotional claim to authorship. It is essential to note that resistance to having AI encroach on these emotionally connected aspects was an attempt to maintain their integrity, as their creation involved a mixture of authorship, agency, and emotional stake.

The participants focus on AI applied to Glăveanu's (2014) sociocultural dimension of creativity. AI's use was located within their creative identity networks, encompassing normative, tools, and ethical constraints. Therefore, it was closely monitored in the process, not to protect derivative authorship, but because of the emotional value that surrounded their connection to their creative engagement.

In summary, these creators did not assess AI simply on the output end product. They assessed AI through the lens of trust and authorship, based on the emotional authenticity of creativity. Their boundary-setting shaped a motivational labour action, an active action of

protecting, affirming, or qualifying the psychological conditions for their creation to be meaningful.

4.3 How Creators Position AI to Protect Autonomy and Emotional Engagement

As indicated in Section 4.1, participants typically treated AI as a supplement to their creative process. It was helpful for lower-stakes or logistical tasks, but they kept it away from stages tied to identity, emotional connection, and authorship. In the conversations that follow, they described how they maintained this boundary, linking these choices to broader concerns about agency, pride, and the protection of a creative voice.

Some found AI helpful in moments of uncertainty, especially at the start of a project. Emily, a digital artist, called it "a mood board that talks back" and liked how quickly it could generate starting points. Even so, she admitted that too much of it made her lose interest: "If I am not careful, I start to rely on it and then I do not love what I have made." For her, maintaining a sense of ownership meant limiting the AI's role so that the work still felt like her own.

Sarah, a creative writing graduate student, preferred the slower, more deliberate pace of working on the project herself. She was open to testing tools but chose to root her writing in lived experience:

> "I like to confine my creative writing to my own experiences, and I think that incorporating AI into it doesn't bring a lot of value for me… it becomes less of my language. Creative writing depends on the internal emotional reaction to the external action… It is about just that."

Her words align with Caporusso's (2023) concept of Creative Displacement Anxiety (CDA), the unease that arises when creators feel they are losing control over the ownership or identity in their work. For Sarah, the concern was not only technical authorship but also the loss of emotional labour that gave her writing meaning. CDA can also occur when AI replaces parts of the ideation stage, removing the effort and reflection that make creative work intrinsically rewarding.

For makers whose work depends on touch and physical materials, rejection was more decisive. Hannah said, “AI does not respond. It does not push back, it just gives.” She saw her process as a conversation with the medium, something a machine could not offer. May allowed AI into her practice only at the edges, using it to organise references or test lighting, but excluding it once she was fully engaged: “When I am in it, I don't want anything else external to me. No prompts, no code, just let me go quiet.” In both cases, uninterrupted focus and immersion mattered more than convenience.

In business contexts, AI was more common but still evaluated carefully. Thomas described it as “another team member, or sometimes a team of 10,” but questioned the trade-off:

> “I think it's helpful to remind people of how powerful the technology is, and not to let ourselves be turned into a vessel for our unique creatives to be squeezed out. It goes back to the question we've all asked ourselves: Would I have done this if I didn't have AI? If the answer is no, then maybe I'm just not feeling as proud.”

This link between pride, satisfaction, and overcoming difficulty connects to the overjustification effect described by Deci, Koestner, and Ryan. When an already rewarding activity is made too easy by an external agent, motivation can diminish. If AI removes the challenge, it can also remove the satisfaction gained from persistence, problem-solving, and working through difficulty.

For every participant, AI was a tool rather than a collaborator. This distinction preserved a sense of ownership and retained the most meaningful aspects of the work as human-led. Participants described managing AI’s involvement to protect authenticity, knowing that giving it more influence risked creative displacement, which occurs when the origin and execution no longer feel like their own.

These findings align with Fisher and Amabile’s (2009) account of improvisational creativity, where moment-to-moment decisions shape the integrity of a project. They also extend existing theory by showing how creators in AI-mediated contexts actively guard against both displacement and overjustification, keeping their thinking and emotions at the centre of the creative act.

4.4 AI's Impact on Flow: Managing Creative Tempo and Cognitive Immersion

The flow experience, a state of deep immersion and intrinsic enjoyment, was often highlighted by participants as an essential part of their creative process. However, AI frequently disrupts the precarious balance between skilled engagement and the associated challenge that maintains it. Participants noted that AI's efficiency had both positive and negative attributes. AI could facilitate the start of creative work by removing banal barriers, and it could simultaneously eliminate the cognitive friction required for meaningful engagement with the work.

Emily exemplified this tension. She noted the value of AI to generate ideas, then warned of AI's tendency to smooth over the surrounding elements of the creative process too well:

> "Sometimes it helps to get me into my work, but then if I use it for too long, I lose my sense of rhythm. It is too smooth, and I stop thinking. The struggle is where I start to not care about the work."

Emily positions flow as an embodied emotional and cognitive investment stimulated through challenge and repeated effort. When AI displaces that process, then the psychological engagement that authentically connotes meaning and worth takes precedence over work that is creatively produced.

Sarah also began to note a similar dissonance. AI prompts produced products, but habits of immediate outputs still disrupted her sense of narrative pacing. "It gives me a sentence, but I can't *feel* what it means. Then, I lose the pacing." The reflective periods and emotional immersion that Sarah engaged in while writing required a rhythm that it could not compete with, despite the speed of AI production.

May emphasized the need for uninterrupted, interior space: "Quiet time… that meditative state. I don't want anyone else to be invading my mind." She added that programmatic workflows "lack… the space," the "unknown, undefined" zone she sees as the human piece of creativity.

Isabelle framed her resistance to AI in terms of flow and authenticity. "For me, it was always also a solitary activity that I loved. I always liked hiding and doing some odd thing by

myself." Her description captures how flow is intertwined with personal rituals of making, where privacy and emotional presence are essential.

Layla occasionally used AI to break creative blocks but made it a point to disengage as soon as her ideas began to flow. "If I'm stuck, I will throw a few things into a generator to get out of my head. But when I start sketching, I close it." Layla's approach illustrates a form of boundary-setting where AI is permitted only as a catalyst, never as a sustained collaborator.

The experiences described by participants align with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Flow Theory. However, these findings suggest that AI's tendency to remove struggle can paradoxically undermine the flow experience. Moneta's (2012) nonlinear model of flow, which posits that flow often arises after moments of difficulty, is particularly relevant in this context. Participants valued the struggle as a necessary precursor to meaningful creative immersion. The existence of AI made them crave the struggle to maintain their connection with their work in a technologically advanced world. The act of boundary-setting around AI's involvement was, therefore, not just a technical decision but a motivational one. By limiting AI's role to preparatory stages or excluding it entirely from emotionally significant work, creators preserved the tempo and cognitive rhythm that allowed them to enter a state of flow. This intentional positioning of AI was essential for maintaining intrinsic motivation, as it safeguarded the psychological conditions that make creative work fulfilling.

4.5 Boundary-Setting as an Ethical and Emotional Safeguard in AI-Augmented Creative Work

Beyond technical processes, participants framed their boundary-setting around AI as an ethical and emotional imperative. Their decisions to adopt or reject AI tools were guided by a desire to preserve the emotional integrity of their creative work. For many, the act of creating was inherently tied to care, presence, and a sense of responsibility. These are conditions they believed AI could not replicate.

Julia, a nonfiction author and senior media executive, articulated this tension most explicitly. For her, writing was not merely about generating content but about maintaining a contract of trust with her audience. She explained:

> "If someone asked, did you use AI? I would wish to be able to say no. Writing is a relationship. The reader believes they're hearing from me, not a machine. If that trust is broken, the work loses its meaning, and so does the act of making it."

Julia's reflection illustrates how the emotional stakes of creative authorship extend beyond the product to the relational ethics of the creative process. AI's intervention was not simply a technical intrusion but a violation of the emotional labor that gave her work authenticity and purpose.

Other participants expressed similar concerns through different lenses. Hannah rejected AI's involvement entirely, framing her practice as a "transaction between hands and material." For her, AI's inability to respond relationally rendered its outputs irrelevant to meaningful creative work. "AI does not feel. So what is it doing here?" she asked. This perspective reframes creative labor as an act of care, where human touch and attentiveness are at the core.

May described her ethical boundaries as hierarchical. She used AI for technical documentation but excluded it from any process that reflected her expression. "I'll use it for organizing material, but never for anything that represents me." For May, the intentional exclusion of AI from emotionally significant tasks was a means of safeguarding the integrity of her voice and image.

Sarah articulated a different but related anxiety. Her discomfort was about ambiguity. "If I write something that started from a prompt, is it mine?" This uncertainty speaks to a broader pedagogical gap, where emerging artists lack frameworks for understanding the ethical implications of AI-mediated creation.

Layla voiced concerns about aesthetic homogenization. While she occasionally used AI for moodboarding, she was wary of how quickly AI could standardize creative outputs. "It spits something out. It is good, but it is generic. If I use it too much, I just sound like everybody else." For Layla, resisting AI became an act of preserving creative distinctiveness, a core element of her artistic identity.

These accounts reveal that ethical and emotional boundary-setting is deeply intertwined with motivation. The participants' refusals to integrate AI were not bitter artists afraid of

technological advancement. They were fierce declarations about the desire to preserve agency, integrity, and emotional authorship. By limiting AI's involvement, they maintained the psychological and moral conditions that sustain intrinsic motivation.

These results align with Amabile's (1996) emphasis on ownership and engagement as pillars of intrinsic motivation, while also extending the discussion into ethical authorship. The participants' practices resonate with Glăveanu's (2014) sociocultural model. Here, AI was seen not as a neutral tool but as a sociotechnical actor that demanded continuous ethical negotiation.

Overall, the emotional and ethical stakes of AI-augmented creativity prompted participants to establish boundaries that protected the authenticity of their work and the sincerity of their creative identity. This boundary-setting was a form of motivational resilience, ensuring that their creative practice remained an act of care, presence, and intentionality.

5. Discussion

The five themes that emerged from the data were motivational boundary work, authorship and creative trust, positioning of AI in the creative process, disruption of flow, and emotional and ethical stakes. These themes collectively illustrate how creatives negotiate the presence of generative AI in ways that protect their sense of identity, agency, and meaning. Participants saw AI as anything but a neutral tool, and made deliberate decisions about its place in their creative workflows. It became evident that these decisions were a result of ethical and personal boundaries. The following discussion section interprets these findings through the lens of creativity theories, such as Self-Determination Theory, Flow Theory, and the Componential Theory of Creativity. It evaluates the implications for understanding creative motivation, authorship, and human-machine collaboration in artistic practice.

5.1 Redefining Creativity as a Process of Motivational Boundary-Setting

Participants consistently fail to associate creative output with creative experience. They asserted that AI tools can be beneficial for brainstorming and menial tasks, but are rarely effective in work that requires depth of understanding and emotional engagement. This resonates with Amabile's (1996) position that intrinsic motivation, influenced by autonomy and personal investment, perpetuates creative quality.

Once AI removed the struggle, the work lacked a sense of resonance for the participants. Sarah even said that she felt “disconnected” from her fiction writing once she let the AI write “too much” of it. “The draft came together faster,” she recalled, “but it didn't feel like something I’d lived through.” This occurred for many, with a few others thinking that the AI was taking over the early ideation phase, also feeling discomfort. Layla said, “If I let it do too much, the seed of the idea doesn’t feel like it’s mine anymore.”

AI was not wholly rejected, as many participants engaged in motivational boundary work. For example, several participants utilized AI in ways that did not compromise emotional authenticity. “I’ll use it to test ideas, maybe mock up a sketch,” said May, “but then when the work begins to mean something, I step back in.” These behaviors are forms of discernment that

evinced a triage of meaning, in that AI's use was permitted when there was little at stake, and excluded when the creator's identity was at stake.

This also supports Amabile's (1996) theory, which emphasises that intrinsic motivation is based on the context and emotional significance of the act. In this study, selectively limiting AI's role, especially in emotionally significant stages of work, was a way for participants to protect the psychological space in which creativity could remain meaningful.

5.2 Flow and Friction: How AI Alters the Emotional Rhythm of Creation

As outlined in section 4.4, participants approached flow as a rhythm-building experience from sustained challenges and a sense of absorption. The existing evidence suggests the extent to which AI is likely to alter that rhythm. AI sometimes lowered the barriers to starting, but also removed the friction, producing a meaningful way to immerse oneself. Instead of examining distinct moments, a pattern becomes clear through case-by-case analysis. When AI began to run exploratory or problem-solving phases in a way that felt too smooth, the attachment to the work diminished.

This is also reconcilable with the skill–challenge balance of Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and Moneta's account of flow, which nonlinearly suggests that difficulty often precedes immersion (Moneta, 2012). From a motivational perspective, the difficulty is not a flaw of the act but perhaps part of the product. When the cognitive burden is offloaded onto the system, competence and authorship are diminished through experience and motivation declines, as argued through the view of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Participants responded by determining where AI should be integrated into their workflow. Tactile practitioners often exclude AI at high-value stages to maintain hands-on difficulty as part of their practice. Digital practitioners were more likely to use AI peripherally, sometimes for scaffolding or logistics, before withdrawing it when momentum began to build. Across disciplines, the issue was not whether to use AI, but rather about 'when', 'how much', and at what level of granularity. The boundaries that delineate these decisions operate here as a very deliberate calibration of the challenge–skill ratio that enables flow.

These decisions provide additional context with some theoretical implications. Flow, when working in practice augmented by AI, is a managerial act. Creators have accumulated and appropriated friction. Conference to scope AI in any manner to low-stakes or temporal decisions, then rehumanizing core stages again through embodied, reflective, or narratively significant work. Amabile's dynamic componential model suggests that tension and momentum are sustained by also placing autonomy at the center of work, preserving the recursive loops of engagement driven by activity and aspects of meaning (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Participants were curious about finding a workable tempo where efficiency does not extinguish effort. A key point of strategy is that maintaining flow in hybrid workflows relies on an awareness of motivation and the intentional placement of AI that creates friction meaningful enough to sustain absorption, authorship, and ultimately, intrinsic motivation over time.

5.3 Authorship as Moral Agency: Preserving Identity in AI-Driven Creative Spaces

As described in Section 4.2, participants viewed authorship as an ethical relationship in which ownership and emotional labor were inseparable. While previous research views authorship in legal terms, this study investigates its role in the relationship between the creator and the audience. This repositions authorship within Glăveanu's (2014) sociocultural framework, where creativity is both social and emotional in nature. Tactile practitioners expressed more rejections of AI's role in authorship, whereas digital practitioners engaged in active reclamation of AI-assisted outputs, suggesting discipline-specific strategies for preserving creative identity.

Julia refused to use AI in her writing after discovering that her published work had been used to train AI models without her consent. For her, authorship was a matter of trust, and writing was a promise to the reader that the words were entirely her own. Similarly, Hannah said, "I need to feel the material talk back. I don't get that from AI." Others, like Emily, allowed AI a peripheral role but insisted on reshaping its outputs until they felt authentically theirs: "It's a jumping-off point… but if I don't reshape it completely, it feels too much like I borrowed someone else's voice."

These accounts align with Amabile and Pratt's (2016) Componential Theory, which posits that emotional engagement and meaning-making are essential drivers of intrinsic

motivation. When an external force such as AI intervenes at the core of the creative process, that motivational loop is disrupted, and the sense of clarity and ownership that sustains engagement can erode.

5.4 Maintaining Distinctiveness: Resisting AI-Induced Homogenization

Many participants claimed that a motivational hazard was that AI content comes off as generic. They feared that leaning too heavily on AI would erode their distinctiveness. Layla noted this: “After a while, I couldn’t tell what was me and what was just a remix. I had to pull back because it started to blur.” Their observations resonate with Ryan and Deci’s (2000) Self-Determination Theory, but they also emphasize that autonomy is about distinctiveness. The erosion of a unique voice can be just as demotivating as a lack of freedom. This reframing suggests that theories of intrinsic motivation should account for both volition and the psychological need to feel unique.

5.5 Creative Integrity as an Act of Motivational Agency

As discussed in Section 4.5, participants used boundary-setting to protect the authenticity of their work. In the discussion, the focus is on what those boundaries reveal about the nature of creative integrity in AI-augmented practice.

Across disciplines, the act of limiting AI was a deliberate exercise of motivational agency, a way of preserving the conditions in which creativity felt meaningful. This distinction between low-stakes and high-stakes use of AI was evident. Participants weighed the various stakes of each project and positioned AI accordingly.

In SDT, this behaviour is understood as the maintenance of autonomy and relatedness. By keeping AI out of tasks that represented their voice, participants ensured that the work retained a sense of personal authorship and connection. In Amabile’s componential model, this is the protection of the motivational space in which the recursive loops of engagement can operate without disruption from an external agent. The restriction of AI from expressive stages also resonates with Glăveanu’s sociocultural account of creativity in which authorship is a socially situated act of meaning-making that cannot be outsourced without altering its significance.

Thus, boundary-setting emerges as a strategic practice that maintains the alignment between process and purpose. Creators in this study calibrated AI's role to ensure that the challenges, decisions, and emotional investments that give creative work its meaning remained under their control. In doing so, they preserved the integrity of the product and the motivational structures that enhance their enjoyment.

This suggests that in AI-integrated creative environments, integrity requires creators to assess the motivational implications of each use case. By determining where AI can and cannot contribute, participants reinforced the sense of agency and identity that underpins intrinsic motivation.

5.6 Extending Creativity Theories: Motivational Boundary-Setting in AI-Augmented Practice

The results of this study suggest that classical theories of creativity remain helpful in understanding the motivations behind creative work. However, they will need substantial revisions to account for the epistemic, ethical, and affective transformations brought about by generative AI. The componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1996), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) each provide essential aspects of motivation. However, they do not yet articulate how creators negotiate boundaries in the pursuit of authorship, emotional authenticity, and ethical clarity while collaborating with, or even alongside, AI.

Using the empirical data developed in this study, I propose a conceptual amendment to their models in terms of motivational boundary-setting notions. In this study, motivational boundary setting refers to the method by which creators intentionally manage the role of AI in their practice, allowing its inclusion in certain aspects of their creative work while deliberately excluding AI agents from aspects of their innovative work that they consider emotionally or existentially valuable. In doing so, they were able to negotiate the psychological conditions of ownership, integrity, and distinctiveness that foster intrinsic motivation.

The findings prompt my reconsideration of Amabile's componential theory. Whereas Amabile conceptualizes intrinsic motivation as enjoyment or meaningful engagement, the

participants in this study identified it with a clear emphasis on what could be identified as emotional authorship. Ownership was not simply an intellectual property issue or procedural authority, but ontological, linked explicitly to the self contained in the act of creation. The decisions to remove AI from ideation or other emotionally charged stages of work were taken to protect this authorship. In AI-mediated contexts, intrinsic motivation seems to be more of a condition that must be actively maintained, and less a constant personal trait.

Self-determination theory would undoubtedly benefit from developing too. While needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness were certainly present across participants' accounts, the data suggest a fourth need: distinctiveness. The ability to produce work with a recognizable personal voice was central to maintaining motivation. AI was often considered a homogenizing force, one that invoked pitiful or limiting individuality, and meaning in work always resided in singularity or uniqueness. Distinctiveness in this sense evokes an un-substitutable personal dimension of creative expression, the ability to see oneself in the work. As such, the effect or work's preservation was a determining factor in whether the participants chose to use AI at all.

Flow theory must also be revised to integrate more of Moneta's (2012) perspective about flow and challenge. Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) model of optimal experience represents an equilibrium between challenge and skill, and yet for many participants, AI removed too much difficulty from the creative process. While AI can assist with overcoming blocks, the seamlessness of AI's output often masks the cognitive and emotional difficulty that comes from examining problems, experimenting, and usually failing. For these participants, such difficulty was not something to be avoided; it was something to be faced. Instead, friction in the creative process was a key element that rendered their work meaningful. It seems as though with AI-assisted practice, the negotiation of "productive struggle" was another salient way for creators to maintain an emotional investment in flow and sustain the emotional connection with a project.

The findings align with sociocultural theories of creativity, with particular resonance in Glăveanu's (2014) vision of creativity as situated within social norms, tools, and values. Participants described the boundary construction of AI as part of a more significant negotiation: trust, authorship, and ethics. The language used framed AI not as a collaborator, but as a tool that

had to be reached and attended to in order not to compromise the social, moral, and emotional contracts of making. Acts of resistance were not an outright rejection of innovation, but rather an attempt to remain coherent with their values, identity, and work.

Collectively, this creates a perspective for post-human and technocultural debates on creativity. Suppose creativity is increasingly co-produced by human and non-human agents. In such cases, theories must grapple with asymmetric agency, such as when a machine becomes an actor within the process without exhibiting intentionality. Motivational boundary-setting is one way to imagine how creators can protect human authorship in this space. It re-conceptualises motivation as ethical, relational, and dynamic rather than fixed. By recognizing authorship, distinctiveness, and curating challenges and friction to traditional models of motivation, this research provides an enriched understanding of how creative practitioners navigate agency, identity, and involvement in an age where AI is upending expectations of humans and tools alike.

5.7 Practical Implications for Creative Industries and AI Integration

The findings of this study highlight a challenge for the creative industries: leveraging the efficiencies of generative AI while preserving the psychological and ethical conditions that motivate people to create. Integrating AI into creative practice cannot be a one-size-fits-all decision. It requires strategies that respect the human role in the process and are sensitive to the context in which they are applied.

For creative teams and organisations, the key takeaway is the importance of allowing practitioners genuine autonomy in determining where AI fits into their workflow. The concept of motivational boundary-setting, developed in this research, is particularly relevant in this context. Participants showed that when AI is positioned in low-stakes or logistical stages, it can support productivity without undermining the emotional and cognitive investment that sustains creativity. When it moves into the most meaningful stages, such as ideation or expressive execution, those motivational boundaries are crossed. Protecting against this means designing workflows that preserve the creator's agency and keep them in control of the stages that define the work's identity and value.

For AI developers, the priority should be to create systems that strengthen rather than replace human decision-making. Features that give users control, allow them to adjust the level of automation, and provide transparency in how outputs are generated can help maintain intrinsic motivation. This also helps avoid the overjustification effect (Deci, Koestner, and Ryan, 1999), where making a task too easy can reduce the satisfaction gained from personal effort. When creators can strike a balance between efficiency and challenge, they are more likely to sustain flow and reap the intrinsic rewards of persistence, problem-solving, and authorship.

Educational institutions also play a crucial role. Preparing emerging creatives for AI-augmented work means going beyond technical training. It requires space for discussion about what AI means for authorship, originality, and creative identity. Building this reflection into curricula helps students develop both the practical skills and the critical awareness needed to adapt without losing the principles and motivations that guide their work.

On an individual level, creators can benefit from thinking of AI as an assistant rather than a collaborator. Maintaining this distinction ensures that the most emotionally and creatively significant aspects of the process remain in human hands. Strategies observed in this study, such as limiting AI to technical support, stepping away from it during deep engagement, and reshaping its outputs to match one's voice, provide practical ways to uphold motivation and authorship in an AI-augmented environment.

Ultimately, the creative industries as a whole must take responsibility for setting and upholding ethical standards for the use of AI. This includes transparency in how training data is sourced, clear attribution, and protections that ensure creators retain ownership and recognition for their work. Without these safeguards, the industry risks weakening both individual motivation and the diversity of creative expression. Ethical standards must evolve in tandem with technology, ensuring that innovation enhances rather than erodes the integrity of creative work.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how creative professionals manage their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations within the confines of AI-augmented creative practice. These interviews with artists, writers, designers, and creative executives demonstrated that adopting AI into artistic workflows is a vital decision that influences a unique and innovative practice. Across all five thematic domains, participants articulated a consistent tension between the technological potential and their integrity. Through the interviews, while participants sometimes claimed to be using AI as an assistant or ideation tool, they also decidedly rejected it in instances where it threatened the emotional, identity, and ethical components of creativity. As these practitioners noted, creativity is about process, authorship, and relationships and relationality with the materials they work with.

A key observation emerging from this study is the use of intrinsic motivation as a mechanism to set boundaries. Participants often asserted that AI uses up their sense of ownership and authenticity, which infuses meaning into their creative labor. Autonomous choice surrounding when and how AI intervened in the creative process was non-negotiable for our participants; moving beyond this level of mediatorship was unacceptable. In doing so, participants characterized the evolution of motivation in how we define boundaries around motivation as both an internal impulse and a guardrail that defines the space of creative autonomy and sovereignty.

This inquiry also provides further interrogation of dominant theoretical modalities. We may need to incorporate both emotional resonance and the contextual nature of authorship as intrinsic motivation principles in the Componential Theory (Amabile, 1996). Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) may require modification to include a new dimension, distinctiveness, in addition to autonomy, competence, and relatedness, particularly when creative identity is threatened by algorithmic sameness. Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) must also incorporate the idea that excessive frictionless automation may not facilitate, but rather conflict with, immersive creative engagement. Participants relayed a contradiction: AI can assist in the initial step of a project, but often interferes with the very conditions that facilitate continued creative absorption.

The ethical implications of this study are significant. Creators articulated not as an intellectual act, but a moral act, a zone of care, presence, and human-to-human responsibility.

Rejecting the use of AI for work that is emotionally significant was a rejection of the possibility of blurring authorship, diluting the voice, or outsourcing vulnerability. Opposition to AI affords creators the means to embody their values, act to protect their agency, and honor the core affective facets of their practice.

This study has limitations, as it is an exploratory, rather than an outcome-oriented, generalizable study, and is dominated by a small group of Western samples. The pace at which AI tools are developing suggests that the relational dimensions observed in this study may change substantially shortly. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies will be necessary to learn how artists in various contexts evolve.

These findings encourage creative practitioners to reframe their understanding of their human-AI relations in the creative arts. In a climate of increased concern among many communities about the impending replacement of human capabilities by AI, such as creativity, the more pressing question may be how to utilize AI to maintain the emotional, ethical, and cognitive complexity that is integral to the human creative process. For the creators in this study, a resolution was not found in supporting or opposing AI, but instead consciously summoning it to their work when they deemed fit.

In the AI era, the future of creativity may increasingly involve individual moral and motivational boundaries that creators enforce. In establishing these boundaries, artists reflect wisely on their adaptations. Instead of rejecting the tool that threatens them, they reconstruct what it means to create with integrity in the face of profound technological change.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Ethics Approval Letter

University of St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413

School of Business School Ethics Committee

23 June 2025

Dear Siena Palese

Thank you for submitting an Ethics Application Form application for review by the Business School ethics committee. The committee reviewed this application and accompanying documents on 23 June 2025. The outcome of this review is given below:

Project Title How Generative AI Shapes Intrinsic Motivation in Artistic Creation
Researcher(s) Siena Palese
Supervisor(s)
Application Ref 0447 - BS-0447-745-2025
Decision Date 23 June 2025 **Decision Expiry Date** 23 June 2030
Review Outcome [Favourable opinion]
Specific Conditions *(optional)* [None]
Ethics committee comments *(optional)*

The following supporting documents are acknowledged:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Recruitment Document	Recruitment Materials Dissertation		
Recruitment Document	Social Media Advert Dissertation		
Recruitment Document	participant-advert		
PIS Document	Revised Participant Information Sheet		
Participant Consent Document	Revised participant-consent-form		
Default	Interview Schedule And Questions		
Debrief Document or Protocol	Revised participant-debrief		
Application Supporting Document	Interview Schedule And Questions (1)		

Favourable opinions

A favourable opinion is conditional upon any conditions set by the committee, if any, as described in the 'Specific conditions' section above.

A favourable opinion is valid for 5 years from the decision date, see the expiry date above.

If you wish for this opinion to apply to any subsequent changes made to the project, you must first submit an amendment request to the ethics committee, using the University's ethics amendment application form. Changes made to the research without the submission of such a request will invalidate this favourable opinion.

Ethics opinions must be renewed every 5 years by submission of a new application. If only a short extension is required, for example to finish writing up, you can request a discretionary extension of up to 6 months from the ethics committee.

You must report any serious adverse events, or significant changes not covered by this approval, related to this study immediately to the ethics committee.

A favourable opinion is given on the condition that:

- you abide by any specific conditions set by the ethics committee
- you conduct your research in line with:
  - the details provided in your ethical application.
  - relevant University policies and procedures, including the Principles of Good Research Conduct.
  - the conditions of any funding associated with your work.
  - any local legal or ethical requirements.
- all applicable approvals, permissions, or documents are obtained before research commences.

A favourable opinion by a University ethics committee does not confer any kind of approval for the research, be it governance, legal or

otherwise. However, a favourable opinion is necessary for the research to proceed.

You should retain this approval letter with your study paperwork.

Yours sincerely,

Business School

8.2 Semi-Structured Interview Guide:

Interview Schedule and Questionnaire

How Generative AI Shapes Intrinsic Motivation in Artistic Creation

Researcher: Siena Palese, MLitt in Management
Supervisor: Dr Anna Brown, University of St Andrews

Interview Format:
Semi-structured, 45–60 minutes, conducted via Microsoft Teams.
Participants will be asked open-ended questions about their creative practice, use of AI tools, and personal reflections on motivation, authorship, and creative experience. Questions will be used as a flexible guide, allowing room for follow-up and elaboration.

Sample Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your background as a creative professional and the kind of work you do?
2. When did you first become aware of generative AI tools, and what were your initial thoughts?
3. Have you used tools like ChatGPT, Midjourney, or DALL·E in your creative process? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. How do you feel the presence of AI has influenced the creative community or industry you work in?

4. How do you feel the presence of AI has influenced the creative community or industry you work in?
5. Do you think AI has changed how we define creativity or originality?
6. In your view, how does AI affect the emotional or motivational aspects of making art?
7. Have you noticed shifts in how artists talk about authorship, ownership, or process since the introduction of AI?
8. What conversations are happening in your circles (online or offline) about the use of AI in creative work?
9. Do you think there is a divide between artists who embrace AI and those who resist it? If so, how does that show up?

10. Has the role or value of the human creator changed in your field as AI tools become more accessible?

11. How do you feel about the future of your creative practice in a world where AI is becoming more integrated?

12. What do you think the creative community should be thinking about or doing in response to these changes?

13. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your relationship to AI or how you see it shaping the future of creativity?

8.3 Participant Table

Pseudonym	Role	Primary Creative Discipline	AI Use Level
Hannah	Ceramicist	Visual Arts	Low
Sarah	Creative Writing Student	Creative Writing	Medium
Isabelle	Art Professor and Interdisciplinary Artist	Visual Arts	Medium
Thomas	Innovation Executive at Major Global Activewear Brand	Design/Innovation	Medium

Emily	Digital Artist and Video Game Designer	Digital Arts	High
Layla	Swimwear Designer and Founder of the Network for Women in Creative Industries	Fashion	Low
Julia	Published Nonfiction Author and Chief Marketing Author at Major Media Company	Media and Nonfiction Writing	Low
May	Globally Renowned Interdisciplinary Artist	Visual Art	Medium