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RPS statement on AI and the Society

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The RPS Interim AI principles

The RPS recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers photographers enhanced opportunities to support their practice through automated image processing, and for the creation of new photography. It also provides other creatives an opportunity to create non-photographic artwork, based on photographers' images.

RPS position on AI

- AI image processing and manipulation has been part of camera and post-processing software for several years.
- The recent development of advanced *generative* AI tools, where entirely new images or image elements are built at a pixel level using non-photographic processes, moves image-creation from photography to illustration.
- The RPS believes images generated *solely* via AI are not photography as defined in its Royal Charter.
- The RPS considers AI-enabled *algorithmic* automation of basic imaging processing (including exposure optimisation in-camera, the cloning of a background, or removal of subject elements), as being under the control of the photographer and represents an on-going evolution of long-standing capabilities.
- The RPS does not endorse the way some AI tools have been trained with datasets of photography without the permission of the rights owner. As part of a vibrant creative community, the RPS will continue to support the artistic, commercial and moral rights of all photographers, artists and creators.
- Establishing exactly what is and isn't the product of AI will become increasingly hard to discern and will require ongoing consideration, transparency and discussion when reviewing work for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions.

RPS guidelines on the use of AI for members

1. The RPS remains committed to the principle that photographs should be the original work of the creator(s), so entirely generative images, or images with material elements entirely generated by AI will **not** be permitted for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions. What constitutes *material* in this context is a grey area, and something the RPS will continue to explore with its creative community.

2. The RPS **will** accept the use of *algorithmic* processing in-camera or in post-processing software, which supports digital photography for Distinction submissions, exhibitions and competitions, on the condition that photographers are clear and open where such tools have been used. The RPS will trust in the integrity of its community but in certain circumstances may request further evidence in the form of RAW files or EXIF data, accepting that such evidence may itself not be definitive.

3. These principles and guidelines are effective for the remainder of 2023 only and do not constitute a final, fixed position; they will evolve as AI capabilities change and understating increases.

Dan Jones
CEO
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