

AIMADE

Celyn Bricker

Artist

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Arturo Muela

Architect

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Abstract

AIMADE is a series of artworks made by British artist Celyn Bricker in collaboration with Mexican architect Arturo Muela. In this series they explore the question “should robots pay tax?” along with broader concerns around AI, technological unemployment, the relationship between AI and creativity, as well as the idea of the 21st Century Readymade.

In Mexico it is possible to pay taxes with artwork (Foreign Policy, 2010). The artists decided to use this as an opportunity to explore the questions surrounding AI, and so worked with a “third artist”—an AI neural network—to create artwork that was then used to pay tax. In this case, the AI used was trained to generate images from textual sources, in either English or Spanish. The source code for the AI was based on the paper “AttnGAN: Fine-Grained Text to Image Generation with Attentional Generative Adversarial Networks” (Tao Xu *et al*, 2018; Github, 2018).

In the *AIMADE* series, the texts chosen range from possibly the earliest description of a robot found in the Chinese text *Liezi*, to statements from contemporary figures like Elon Musk and Gary Kasparov. These statements were fed into a text-to-image AI, which generated images in response to these statements.

These images were then given to the Mexican Government in lieu of tax. Each image is an edition of seven, and there is a total of twenty images in the *AIMADE* series. At the time of submitting to the Mexican Government, we linked the value of a full edition of each image as equal to one Bitcoin (meaning each individual image submitted valued at 1/7th of a Bitcoin). At the time of submission to the Government (20th June 2020) Bitcoin was valued at \$10,666 making each individual image worth approximately \$1523 at the time. The value has since changed considerably.



Fig. 1. *Harmful to Society (Elon Musk)*, 2020, Celyn Bricker and Arturo Muela, Neural Network Print, 45*45cm, Copyright Celyn Bricker/Arturo Muela 2021.

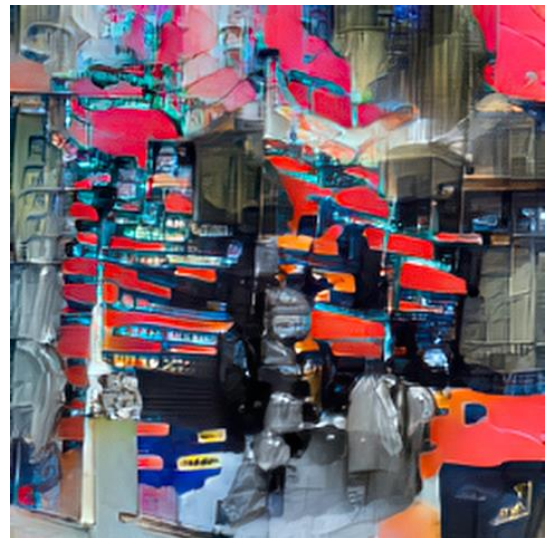


Fig. 2. *Achievements of General Ludd*, 2020, Celyn Bricker and Arturo Muela, Neural Network Print, 45*45cm, Copyright Celyn Bricker/ Arturo Muela 2021.

The *AIMADE* series was officially accepted into the Mexican National Collection in late 2020, representing the first time a National Government has confirmed images produced by AI can be legally defined as “art” ((Forbes, 2020; Arts Professional, 2020).

AIMADE is the lineage of the Duchampian Readymade—but the case of this project, we created a ‘readymade’ for the 21st Century, using AI technology.

Arturo Muela (Mexico City, 1986) is an Architect specialised in urban regeneration and planning. He seeks to develop a tight relationship between art and the public space, exploring role of art into city renewal and transformations.

References

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Biography

Celyn Bricker (Liverpool, 1989) is a British artist whose artworks explore technology, community and our relationship to nature. He has exhibited in museums and art contexts internationally, including the Royal Scottish Academy and UCCA in Beijing. He is co-founder of CELU studio, a multi-disciplinary studio with an environmental focus, that works across art, design and architecture. He is based in Liverpool, UK and Beijing, China.