

BIG NEWS

WOULD YOU BUY THIS PAINTING?



Christie's / Obvious

By the way, the artist isn't human...

CHRISTIE'S in New York is set to become the first auction house to sell a portrait painted by AI (artificial intelligence).

The portrait of a fictional character was designed by an algorithm (think of it as a fancy to-do list for a computer), then printed. It is expected to fetch up to £7,700 at auction in October.

When the painting – called *The Portrait of Edmond Belamy* – sells, it will be the first in history to be painted by a robot and then sold at auction. Auction house Christie's says that the sale "will signal the arrival of AI art on the world auction stage".

The artists behind the algorithm call themselves Obvious and are a Paris-based group of three super-smart 25-year-olds. The trio fed the AI a data set of 15,000 portraits painted between the 14th century and the 20th century.

The Generator (the name they've given to their AI program) makes a new image based on the set," they explain. The AI then keeps producing paintings until it fools another computer program designed to distinguish between human and computer design. Pretty cool, huh?

Is this just the beginning for AI art? Would you buy art made by AI?

CRAZY BUT TRUE

COFFEE CARD ART



WHO knew a simple coffee card could create such an artistic masterpiece?!

Four years ago, Steve Bewsher ditched his brushes and decided to test his skills using a plastic coffee shop card – and the results are pretty impressive!

Steve has now painted over 200 colourful city scenes using his unusual tool and said he regularly stops off at his local Costa branch in Cheshire to stock up on cards. Some of his artworks sell for up to £2,000!

Steve explained to us how he came across his coffee card trick: "I was painting demolition scenes in Macclesfield and became frustrated with my palette knife, as the blade wasn't long enough to create the effect I wanted. Searching through my bag for an alternative, I happened upon an expired gift card and to my surprise, it did the trick, helping me to apply and move around the thick, angular layers of paint that I like to work with."

He's tried out a range of cards, but believes Costa's version is the perfect one for him.

HOME NEWS

LONDON Banksy on show

A Banksy 'fake' artwork is going back on display at the British Museum. In 2005, the street artist pulled off the ultimate prank when he placed the pretend piece of cave art in the UK's famous museum – and nobody noticed! Banksy pretended to be a member of staff and stuck the fake art on the wall of the museum, along with its own official notice. 'Peckham Rock' wasn't spotted for three days, until the street artist challenged people to find it. He has now loaned the artwork back to the museum as part of a new exhibition called *I Object*.



'Would you buy this painting?', 'Coffee card art' and 'Banksy 'fake' back on show'



GLOSSARY

Artificial intelligence (AI) – 'clever' computer systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. For example, an AI system might use language, interpret pictures, solve problems or be able to learn. AI can give the appearance that the computer has a brain, but scientists haven't developed anything that rivals the full range of human responses or behaviours – yet!

Palette knife – a tool used by artists to mix and apply paint. It has a wide non-sharp blade, which is often angled and tapers towards the tip.

Banksy – a mysterious British street artist who is most famous for creating art on city walls. No one has ever seen the art being created and no one knows who Banksy is.

■ Look at the article 'Coffee card art'.

1. What subject matter does Steve Bewsher like to paint?
2. Find and copy the words that explain the style of painting the plastic card helps him to create.

■ Look at the article 'Banksy 'fake' back on show'.

3. Is this a new work by Banksy or not? Explain your answer.
4. Banksy's actions in 2005 are described as the "ultimate prank". What does this mean?
 - a) Why do you think people took so long to spot this wasn't a real exhibit?
 - b) What do you think gave it away?
- 5.. Is this artwork a fake or not? Give one reason for and one reason against.

Is Peckham Rock a fake?

FOR	
AGAINST	

■ Look at the article 'Would you buy this painting?'

The artists behind the algorithm call themselves Obvious and are a Paris-based group of three super-smart 25-year-olds.

- 6.. The sentence below contains six facts about the group behind the art. Find three of them (or, for a challenge, find all six!)
 7. The sentences below explain how this picture was created. Can you put them in the correct order?
 - One image fools the computer and is named The Portrait of Edmond Belamy.
 - They feed 15,000 portraits into the system.
 - It is printed and put on sale at Christie's.
 - Each new image is tested to see if a computer can work out if it's made by a human or a computer.
 - A group writes code to create a system with artificial intelligence (AI).
 - Based on all this information, the system creates new portrait images.
 9. Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art, or not? Give one reason **for** and one reason **against**.

■ Consider all the articles.

- 10a) What theme links these three articles? (Art, yes, but can you be more specific?)
- 10b) Which artwork would you most like to own, and why?

'Would you buy this painting?', 'Coffee card art' and 'Banksy 'fake' back on show'



GLOSSARY

Artificial intelligence (AI) – 'clever' computer systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. For example, an AI system might use language, interpret pictures, solve problems or be able to learn. AI can give the appearance that the computer has a brain, but scientists haven't developed anything that rivals the full range of human responses or behaviours – yet!

Palette knife – a tool used by artists to mix and apply paint. It has a wide non-sharp blade, which is often angled and tapers towards the tip.

Banksy – a mysterious British street artist who is most famous for creating art on city walls. No one has ever seen the art being created and no one knows who Banksy is.

■ Look at the article 'Coffee card art'.

1. What subject matter does Steve Bewsher like to paint?

.....

2. Find and copy the words that explain the style of painting the plastic card helps him to create.

.....

■ Look at the article 'Banksy 'fake' back on show'.

.....

.....

3. Is this a new work by Banksy or not? Explain your answer.

.....

.....

4. Banksy's actions in 2005 are described as the "ultimate prank". What does this mean?

a) Why do you think people took so long to spot this wasn't a real exhibit?

.....

.....

b) What do you think gave it away?

.....

.....

5. Is this artwork a fake or not? Give one reason for and one reason against.

Is Peckham Rock a fake?

FOR	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
AGAINST	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

■ Look at the article 'Would you buy this painting?'

7. The sentence below contains six facts about the group behind the art. Find three of them (or, for a challenge, find all six!)

The artists behind the algorithm call themselves Obvious and are a Paris-based group of three super-smart 25-year-olds.

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. The sentences below explain how this picture was created. Can you put them in the correct order?

- One image fools the computer and is named The Portrait of Edmond Belamy.
- They feed 15,000 portraits into the system.
- It is printed and put on sale at Christie's.
- Each new image is tested to see if a computer can work out if it's made by a human or a computer.
- A group writes code to create a system with artificial intelligence (AI).
- Based on all this information, the system creates new portrait images.

9. Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art, or not? Give one reason for and one reason against.

Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art?	
FOR
AGAINST

■ Consider all the articles.

10a) What theme links these three articles? (Art, yes, but can you be more specific?)

.....
.....

10b) Which artwork would you most like to own, and why?

.....
.....

Teacher Answers

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a guide to the reading skill each question is practising. Suggestions are given for a starting point for responses that students would be expected to give at the start of KS3. Further suggestions then give fuller, more developed responses that students will work towards by the end of KS3, in preparation for the non-fiction elements of GCSE English language.

LOOK AT THE ARTICLE 'COFFEE CARD ART'.

1. What subject matter does Steve Bewsher like to paint?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- Buildings or cities

2. Find and copy the words that explain the style of painting the plastic card helps him to create.

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- "thick, angular layers of paint"

LOOK AT THE ARTICLE 'BANKSY 'FAKE' BACK ON SHOW'.

3. Is this a new work by Banksy or not? Explain your answer.

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- No. It was put on display by Banksy (and probably made) back in 2005 as part of a prank. He has just loaned the item back to the museum and it is now on display again.

4. Banksy's actions in 2005 are described as the "ultimate prank". What does this mean?

READING SKILL – Understand vocabulary in context

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- the best-ever, or the most original, trick

5a) Why do you think people took so long to spot this wasn't a real exhibit?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence

(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- It had an official label.
- It's quite small.

Development

- Nobody saw Banksy put the item on display and it is very small, with an official label.
- It would have been very hard to spot unless you looked closely.

b. What do you think gave it away?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence

(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- It has a shopping trolley on it!

Development

- If you look closely you can see that the 'cave art' includes a shopping trolley!
- Banksy did tell people he'd put something in the museum, so after that people were hunting for it.

6. Is this artwork a fake or not?

Give one reason for and one reason against.

READING SKILL – Develop opinions and provide justifications for viewpoints

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Expected response

Is Peckham Rock a fake?

FOR Yes, it's not really made by cavemen.**AGAINST** No, it's made by Banksy.**Development**

Is Peckham Rock a fake?

FOR Yes. Banksy made it to look like a cave painting and it isn't.**AGAINST** It may be a fake cave painting but it's a genuine Banksy art work.**LOOK AT THE ARTICLE 'WOULD YOU BUY THIS PAINTING?'****7. The sentence below contains six facts about the group behind the art. Find three of them (or, for a challenge, find all six!)**

The artists behind the algorithm call themselves Obvious and are a Paris-based group of three super-smart 25-year-olds.

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response – any of

- The group is made of artists.
- The group is called Obvious.
- They live in Paris.
- There are three people in the group.
- The people in the group are very clever.
- The people are aged 25.

8. The sentences below explain how this picture was created. Can you put them in the correct order?

READING SKILL – Summarise information from more than one paragraph

(NC 2e)

1. A group writes code to create a system with artificial intelligence (AI).
2. They feed 15,000 portraits into the system.
3. Based on all this information, the system creates new portrait images.
4. Each new image is tested to see if a computer can work out if it's made by a human or a computer.
5. One image fools the computer and is named The Portrait of Edmond Belamy.
6. It is printed and put on sale at Christie's.

9. Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art, or not?

Give one reason for and one reason against.

READING SKILL – Develop opinions and provide justifications for viewpoints

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Expected response

Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art?

FOR Yes, it looks just like a painting and you would never guess a computer has made it.

AGAINST No, it's printed

Development

Is The Portrait of Edmond Belamy art?

FOR Yes. It is completely unique and someone's – or rather something's – idea for a new picture. Who says computers can't make art?

AGAINST No. It is printed and art should be made by hand. No thoughts or feelings have gone in to making it. Art can't be made by code.

CONSIDER ALL THE ARTICLES.**10a) What theme links these three articles? (Art, yes, but can you be more specific?)**

READING SKILL – Make comparisons between texts

(NC 1e & 1f)

Expected response

- Unusual art

Development

- Art that is made in an unusual way, or art that isn't what it seems:

The 'painting' is actually made by a computer.

The cityscape has been made using a plastic card, rather than a paintbrush.

The Banksy artwork was a fake, but is now an important artefact in its own right, and is part of a display at the British Museum.

10b) Which artwork would you most like to own, and why?

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Child's own opinion.