Topic Research & References:

A lot of creative people don't actually "hate technology" in general—but many *do* feel threatened, angry, or betrayed by the way **AI and generative AI** are being rolled out right now. To see why, it helps to zoom out: this isn't the first time a new tool has shaken a creative field.

Below is a structured analysis that mixes **current AI conflicts** with **historic examples of new tech disrupting art**.

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1. The short version: it's *not* just fear of change

Most creators' objections to AI fall into a few big buckets:

1. **Economic survival** – fear of being replaced or undercut, or having fees slashed.
2. **Consent and copyright** – their work was used to train models without permission or payment.
3. **Erosion of authorship and identity** – fear that "style" and "voice" become cheap, copy-paste commodities.
4. **Power imbalance** – tech/platform companies gain; individual creators bear the risk.
5. **Cultural anxiety** – fear that "mass-produced AI content" will flood the world with generic, low-effort work.

Some of that *does* rhyme with classic "resistance to new technology," but a lot of it is quite rational when you look at the details.

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2. What creators are actually saying right now

2.1 Surveys: excitement *and* fear

Recent surveys of creators show a very mixed picture:

https://techlifewell.com

https://etrmcloud.com

- Adobe's "Creative Frontier" research (2023–24) found **most creative pros expect to use generative AI** and see it as helpful for brainstorming and menial tasks.Adobe Blog+1
- But in the same research, **over half** worried that AI could harm creators—especially because models are trained on their work without consent.Adobe Blog
- A newer Adobe-linked survey reported that **86–90% of creators already use AI tools**, but ~**69% are concerned** about their content being used for training without permission.TechRadar

So: most creators are *not* boycotting AI. Many are using it **while simultaneously feeling exploited by the way it has been built and monetized**.

2.2 Strikes, lawsuits, and policy fights

Some of the most visible resistance:

- **Hollywood writers (WGA) strike, 2023**
  AI was a central issue. Writers feared studios would use generative AI to draft scripts, then hire humans just to "polish" them for a fraction of the pay.
  The final 2023 contract put **guardrails**: AI can't be used to replace credited writers, AI-generated material can't be treated as "source material" that undermines a writer's rights, and the Guild continues to oppose misuse of writers' work in training datasets.Vanguard Think Tank+3Brookings+3Writers Guild of America+3
- **Artists, photographers, and illustrators suing AI companies**
  Lawsuits by artists (e.g., *Andersen v. Stability AI*) argue that models were trained on their copyrighted work without permission, infringing copyright and misusing their names and styles.Columbia Undergraduate Law Review+1
  Getty Images is suing Stability AI in the UK for allegedly training on millions of their licensed images and even outputting images with Getty watermarks.The Guardian+1
  French publishers and authors are suing Meta for using their books and texts without authorization in AI training.AP News
- **Policy moves**
  Governments are starting to acknowledge these concerns; for example, the UK government has recently signaled that **artists and photographers should be paid when their work is used to train AI models**, a shift from earlier pro-innovation positions.PetaPixel

So when creatives say they "hate AI," often they really mean: *"I hate that my work has been used, at scale, without my permission to build tools that could compete with me."*

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3. Deep reasons behind the backlash

3.1 Economic precarity + substitution risk

Many creative fields were already precarious (low pay, gig work, shrinking budgets). Generative AI arrives as a **cost-cutting tool**:

- A global study of the creative industries estimated that **24% of music revenues and 21% of audiovisual creators' revenues could be at risk** by 2028 due to generative AI substitution—about **€22 billion** over five years.CISAC

That doesn't feel like "new tool" energy; it feels like **automation of your job**.

Compare with history:

- **19th-century Luddites** weren't just angry at machines; they were skilled textile workers whose livelihoods were undercut when mechanized looms allowed cheaper, less-skilled labor to replace them. They smashed machines to protest wage cuts and deteriorating working conditions, not because they were anti-technology in principle.Smithsonian Magazine+2Wikipedia+2

Similarly, creatives today aren't mad that "software got better." They're angry that:

"My work was used to train a system that helps my client say, 'We don't need you anymore.'"

That's a structural economic problem, not a personality flaw.

3.2 Consent, ownership, and "style theft"

Generative models are often trained on billions of images, songs, texts, and videos scraped from the internet. Many creators:

- Never consented.
- Never got paid.
- See outputs that **imitate their style or even their signatures and watermarks**.

Cases like Getty vs. Stability AI, Andersen vs. Stability AI, and similar suits by illustrators and photographers all revolve around this idea: training on copyrighted work without permission is not just "fair use," it's **appropriation at massive scale**.AP News+3West London Studio+3Columbia Undergraduate Law Review+3

Historic analogy:

- **Photography vs. portrait painters (19th century)** – early photographers were accused of "stealing" reality and undermining the artistry (and business) of painters. Over time, photography became its own art form—but it also *did* wipe out most of the traditional portrait-painting market.
- **Sampling in music** – producers sampling older records were often sued by labels and artists for reusing their work without proper clearance. Today we have complex licensing regimes—but it took decades (and many lawsuits) to get there.

With generative AI, we're at the **chaotic early stage** of that legal/cultural negotiation.

3.3 Identity and authorship: "What is *my* art if a model can mimic me?"

For many artists, their **style** is the product of years of practice, cultural background, and personal experience. When prompts like "in the style of [living artist]" generate close imitations in seconds, it feels like:

- Identity theft: "You're selling a cheap clone of *me*."
- Devaluation: "My style is now a preset, not a unique voice."

Historically, we've seen similar reactions:

- When **synthesizers and drum machines** appeared, many musicians insisted that "real" music had to be played on acoustic instruments. Bands like Queen even printed "No Synthesizers!" on album sleeves in the 1970s to distance themselves from electronic sounds.Medium+2FSU News+2
- When **Auto-Tune** became widespread, many singers and critics saw it as cheating or as destroying the authenticity of vocal performance.FSU News

Over time, synths and Auto-Tune became accepted artistic tools—but they didn't fully erase the anxiety about what counts as "real" or "authentic" performance. With AI, that tension is amplified, because the model can mimic *anyone's* style, not just create a new one.

3.4 Flood of “slop”: fear for cultural quality

Another complaint is not just “AI might take my job,” but:

“AI might flood the world with cheap, derivative content so that audiences, clients, and algorithms can’t find or value real craft.”

From SEO spam to AI-generated stock images, there is a visible rise in:

- Ultra-fast, low-effort content created to fill feeds, search results, and ad slots.
- “Good enough” designs/writing that satisfy clients who don’t care about originality.

Historically:

- The **printing press** led to an explosion in pamphlets, cheap books, and what elites called “trash literature.” Many scholars and religious authorities feared a collapse in intellectual quality.
- The **camera** and later **stock photography** were blamed for cheapening commercial imagery, making it harder for unique photographic voices to stand out.

Generative AI is the latest chapter in this recurring story: new tech makes content *abundant*; the struggle shifts from *producing* it to *filtering* and *valuing* it.

3.5 Power asymmetry: who benefits?

Another reason creatives are upset: they see a familiar pattern where:

- Individuals upload work to platforms.
- Platforms or big AI companies harvest it at scale.
- Models are built, investors gain, platforms sell AI tools back to users.

Recent examples:

- Lawsuits allege companies like Stability AI, Meta, and others relied heavily on scraped artist content to build their models without compensation.DUTCH UNCLE+3West London Studio+3Columbia Undergraduate Law Review+3
- Even design tools such as Figma are now being sued over alleged misuse of customer data to train generative AI features without explicit consent.Reuters

So resentment is partly about **who captures value**. It's less "I hate algorithms" and more:

"This feels like enclosure of the creative commons by a few large firms."

Historically, this echoes:

- **Industrial revolution factories**—where inventors and capital owners captured profits while skilled craftspeople lost bargaining power.
- **Record labels vs. musicians**—where early recording contracts gave companies enormous control over master recordings and royalties.

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4. How this mirrors older tech revolutions

To see AI's backlash in context, consider a few earlier eras.

4.1 Luddites and industrial textile machines

- **Who:** 19th-century English textile workers (Luddites).
- **Tech:** Power looms and stocking frames.
- **Reaction:** Machine-breaking, riots, government crackdowns.Wikipedia+1
- **Core issue:** Machines allowed employers to replace skilled artisans with cheaper, less skilled workers and slash wages.

Parallel to AI:

- Generative AI lets companies replace specialized creatives with cheaper "prompt operators" or smaller teams.
- Just as Luddites weren't anti-all-technology, many creatives today aren't anti-software; they're literally fighting for **fair pay and control**.

4.2 Photography vs. painting

- Early photographers were dismissed as technicians, not artists.
- Portrait painters saw photo studios drastically undercut their livelihoods.
- Over time, society recognized photography as an art form—but the **commercial market** for painted portraiture shrank dramatically.

Parallel to AI:

- Many illustrators and stock photographers fear AI image tools might become the default for a large chunk of commercial work (ads, concept art, stock imagery).
- Even if “fine art” survives, **bread-and-butter jobs** can disappear or pay far less.

4.3 Synthesizers, drum machines, and Auto-Tune

- Synths and drum machines were once seen as threats to session musicians; unions worried that one keyboardist/programmer could replace an entire band.Tedium
- Auto-Tune was condemned for “ruining music,” making it too perfect or artificial.FSU News

Parallel to AI:

- AI can now “play” in many artistic mediums—text, image, audio, video—intensifying fears that **one person plus a model** can replace whole teams.

The pattern:

New tech → resistance from professionals → partial adoption → new norms/laws → some jobs vanish, new ones appear, inequalities shift.

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5. Is it *just* fear of change?

No. Some of the hostility is classic human behavior (“I learned the old way; I don’t want to re-learn”). But several concerns are **very reasonable**:

1. **Training data ethics** – using people’s work without consent or pay is not a timeless inevitability; it’s a choice. Lawsuits and policy debates are actively challenging it.
2. **Market concentration** – a small number of well-funded AI companies are shaping creative tools and rules.
3. **Information asymmetry** – creators often don’t know when, how, or whether their work is being used to train models.
4. **Lack of safety nets** – unlike past industrial revolutions, many modern economies offer weak protections for gig workers and freelancers; disruption hits them harder.

So while there *is* some Luddite-style anxiety, there’s also **serious structural critique**.

6. How attitudes might evolve (based on history)

If we extrapolate from previous tech shifts:

- **Regulation & compensation mechanisms will likely emerge**
  Just like music sampling now has licensing frameworks, AI training might move toward opt-in/opt-out systems, creator licensing schemes, and mandatory transparency about training data. Early hints: EU's AI Act, UK discussions about paying artists for training, and ongoing copyright cases.PetaPixel+2AP News+2
- **AI will become "just another tool" for many creators**
  Surveys already show a majority of creatives using AI in some way—especially to automate boring tasks or for idea generation—while still valuing human originality.Adobe Blog+1
- **The definition of "real art" will keep shifting**
  Just as we learned to accept photography, sampling, digital painting, and Auto-Tune, cultural gatekeepers may eventually adjust to AI-involved works—though there will always be niches that value strictly human, handmade processes.
- **But distribution of income and power may radically change**
  Many mid-tier commercial jobs (stock photography, basic design, SEO copy, simple video editing) could shrink, while new hybrid roles (AI art direction, narrative design with AI systems, dataset curation, "prompt architecture") grow.

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7. Bringing it together

So, **why is the creative community "hating" AI and generative AI?**

Because, from their perspective:

- A small number of companies scraped decades of human culture to build profitable tools **without clear consent or compensation**.
- Clients are tempted to replace or underpay them using those tools.
- Their personal style and authorship can now be imitated on demand, raising existential questions about *what* their unique value is.
- They've seen this movie before—industrialization, photography, digital tools—and know that "disruption" often means **their** jobs and incomes, not the investors', are at risk.

Historically, new technologies in art have **always** sparked conflict. What's different now is the **speed, scale, and opacity** of AI change. Whether the current hostility will mellow into acceptance (as with photography and synths) depends less on artists' "openness to change" and more on **how fairly this technology is integrated into creative ecosystems**: Who gets paid? Who decides? Who has control?