


Art and Soul (for use by J. Duvall, not to be shared publicly yet, 1/28/22)
By Jacqueline Smilack



Maya Self Portraits, Created with Artbreeder, an AI GAN tool.

Media: The story is voiced by Simeon Smilack (Barry Johnson), Jacqueline Smilack (Maya), Daniel Moore (Cris), and Erica Caasi (Art Teacher). The art and video were created by Ben Walsh.

 You can listen to the whole story [here](#), or click on each episode below.

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Part 1: Honor Code Violation



December 2, 2021

From: Mountain Arts School Honor Code Council

To: Maya Holder

Subject: Honor Code Violation Charge

Dear Maya,

Based on information presented to the Honors Code Council of the Mountain Arts School, you are hereby charged with violating the School Honor Code while completing your Senior Art Portfolio. It is reported that you did:

use, receive, or provide unauthorized information, materials, or **technologies** during testing, academic assignments, scholarship, in the participation of oral, written, or practical reports, or in clinical or laboratory work that are a part of a student's academic program.

And you did:

represent the words, **works, or ideas of others** as your own.

Should you be found guilty of violating the Honor Code, disciplinary action, including probation, suspension, or dismissal, may be taken against you.

If you would like to contest these charges, you have a right to a hearing with the Council. If you choose a hearing, please notify me within five days of your receipt of this Notice.

Sincerely,
Barry Johnson
President, Mountain Arts School Honor Code Council

Part 2: Maya's Diary



12/3/21 1:58a.m.

Dear diary,

This year is cursed. First, a freak accident leaves me with a concussion and a tremor in my drawing hand, keeping me from creating art, the only thing that keeps me going.

Now, I'm accused of cheating. On my Senior Art Portfolio! I AM AN ARTIST. That's who I am, it's all I've ever wanted to be. I've won prizes for my art, going back to first grade. How could they think I would cheat at what I LOVE? For using technology??!! Don't they know some really famous artists use AI to create their work?

I'm used to pouring my soul and feelings into the canvas but my hand and brain don't communicate like they used to. They will someday (that's what the doctors and Mom and Dad say). But it is NOT EASY!

I finally found an AI tool to help me. Wait, it doesn't just help me – I can feel myself expanding into this new mega creative artist. I want to keep going with this; I HAVE to keep going. The Honor Code Council doesn't understand! What will I do if I can't make art? I need my art.

Part 3: Transcript from 12/4 Virtual Therapy Visit



Cris: Hi, Maya!

Maya: Hi. This Honor Code violation is really freaking me out! I don't know what I'd do if I get kicked out of MAS. If I can't go to MAS, all my art dreams are over.

Cris: You're really upset about this. Let's look at some of these catastrophizing statements. Remember our strategy to rethink statements that jump to the worst possible outcome?

Maya: Yeah.

Cris: You said your art dreams would be over if you couldn't go to MAS. You've decided that you're already expelled.

Maya: Ok, here's a rethinking of my statement. I have a hearing where I can explain the AI app that I'm using. I could show them how I create my work – they could see that AI is just letting me be me... They would have to dismiss the charges and decide that I haven't violated the Honor Code after all!

Cris: Great! That's a different outcome! This AI tool is not cheating – it's helping your brain and body connect in amazing ways to create the art you want to create.

Maya: Yeah, that makes sense. The only other thing I need to argue is that AI expands my artistic potential and I'm not presenting others' ideas as my own – that the AI isn't the artist with all the ideas, that's me. Maybe they would see that ALL students should be able to use AI!^[BMD6]

Cris: You're right, Maya! And, think about how you would respond to the reasons why people don't like AI in art.

Maya: Yeah, some people think AI can't express human emotion. Our teachers talk about how art comes from our emotions and souls. Even some of my friends think AI is a machine and machines can never feel. I heard a kid saying that the machine does all the work and it's like cheating when someone else writes your essay. Maybe they're jealous^[BMD7]. I need the council to see my creative process – maybe make a video of me using an AI tool? That might change their minds.

Cris: Showing and telling – that's a great strategy for your hearing! You've done well today breaking this down into more manageable steps and tackling those overwhelming emotions and what-ifs. I'm sorry you're needing to spend energy on this, but you're doing great.

Maya: Thanks so much, Cris. My hearing is this week. You know how you tell me to vision my success – well, I'm visioning a big celebration after the Honors Council drops all the charges. And, hey, maybe I'll earn the Senior Prize for Art Portfolio. Hopefully I'll have good news at our next appointment.

Cris: I love it! Keep visioning! We'll talk next week!

Part 4: Maya's Prep Notes for Honor Council Hearing



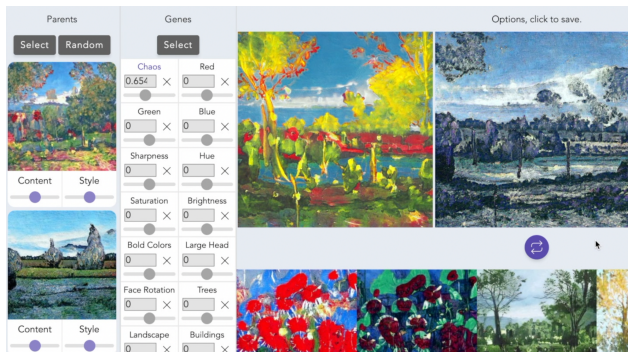
My Prep Notes and Video for the Honor Code Violation Hearing

- **First violation – I'm using unauthorized technology to create my Senior Art Portfolio**
 - I have a documented injury, which affects me physically and mentally, and this tool should be an approved accommodation.
 - My schoolwork is affected, particularly in 2-D art, where I need fine motor skills and concentration to sketch, draw, and paint.

- BUT AI Art tools are more than an accommodation – they are used in the real world, by real artists.
 - They are expanding what it means to be an artist - artists have always used tools – we just have new AI tools now
- All students at Mountain Arts should be able to use these tools if they want to
- I AM AN ARTIST - an ARTIST who creates with AI. My work counts as real art.
- **Second violation -- I'm "representing the words, works, or ideas of others as my own."**
 - It's true that the AI app has content, features, special effects, and structures that the artist uses to create their work, but each artist uses them in their own unique way — it is the artist creating!
 - The AI tool doesn't do all the work for me; I make a gazillion decisions and digitally manipulate the product that the AI helps me create, until it looks like what I want it to look like.
 - I'm the artist and the ultimate decider of what my final piece is; the AI is just the tool. I am not a cheater; I am an ARTIST creating with AI.
 - Present video to the council that helps them see how I use AI to create. They will see how my emotions and soul drive my creative process..

Part 5: Video of me using ARtBreeder AI tool to create my art:  Watch [here](#)

 [Part 5](#)



Video Transcript: I've been creating art with a type of AI called a GAN, which is short for generative adversarial network. GANs are a bit like human artists. They learn from examples and improve with practice and feedback. When I work with a GAN like ArtBreeder, I tell it what images to use for inspiration and it creates new ones for me. I use the ones I like and begin to manipulate their style, content, and color. It is true that anyone can create with a GAN, but this is no different

than paint and brushes. It takes obsessive attention to detail and the trained eye of a painter to create something enduring and beautiful. No one criticizes photographers for using the best available technology. Why should painters be stuck in the past? I choose not to limit myself. I choose to look to the future.

Part 6: Message from Art Teacher

 [Part 6](#)

December 5, 2021 7:48 p.m.

From: Jessie Gonzales (Art Department)

To: Maya Holder

Subject: RE. Review Materials for Hearing?

Dear Maya,

I think you've prepared well for your hearing tomorrow! You've done a great job explaining why Artbreeder is an important AI art tool for you. Your video showing how this tool is used to create had a big impact – it opened my eyes about how many decisions the artist makes and how much of their vision, emotions, and soul goes into creating their art.

I don't know what the outcome of your hearing will be, but I'm optimistic. I'm sending good vibes your way!

Best,

JG

p.s. Could you show me how to use Artbreeder some time? I want to try it out with my work!



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