# ACICE
**ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence**

## UPDATE ON
# THE
# INFORMATION DOMAIN
### Issue 05/25 (May)

## How Generative AI in Art Has Changed the Information Landscape

**INTRODUCTION**

1.      Art is both a mirror that reflects, and a hammer that shapes society. It has historically been used as a powerful medium for self-expression, reflection of societal values and beliefs, and can also serve as a record of historical events. Art is also a mode of social commentary and activism, which has been used to shape and influence opinion. For example, Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" in 1937 uses chaotic shapes and monochromatic tones to evoke pain and chaos, embodying the atrocities of a Nazi bombing of a Basque town during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It features a gored horse, screaming women, a dismembered soldier, and a dead baby. The painting soon became widely acclaimed and brought worldwide attention to the war.

Figure 1: Pablo Picasso's "Guernica", 1937



Source: Nerdish.io

2.      Combined with the accessibility of Generative AI tools today, the ability of art to shape public opinion intensifies. A study by *PNAS Nexus* found the ability to create text-to-image AI significantly enhances human creativity and productivity by 25% and increased the value of art (measured by receiving a favourite per view) by 50%. The sheer volume and speed at which art can be created by Generative AI increases the ability of art to influence opinion significantly.

**Shaping International Opinion**

3.      Art transcends language barriers, making it a suitable medium to shape international opinion. Using visual elements and symbolism, art allows people to convey messages without relying on spoken or written words.

4.      A recent trend in art includes the use of ChatGPT's latest model, GPT-4o, to generate illustrations in the iconic dreamy style of Studio Ghibli animations. The upgraded GPT-4o model accepts input of text,

image, audio and video to generate any combination of the aforementioned media instantly.

5.     Some militaries have jumped on the Studio Ghibli trend to convey their messages. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have created AI-generated images of Israeli forces conducting military operations, in the romanticised style of Studio Ghibli, and posted them on X. The images showed IDF soldiers on duties, such as patrolling the air and the seas.

Figure 2: AI-generated images of Israeli forces conducting military operations, in the style of Studio Ghibli
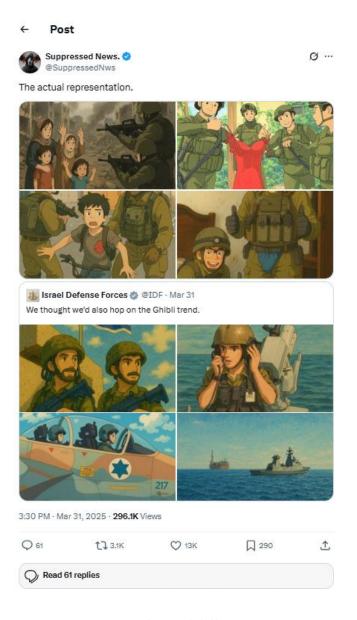


Source: The Jerusalem Post

6.     While the IDF's AI-generated images are non-specific, the *Middle East Eye* reported that critics have accused the IDF of using the art style to sanitise its image, ostensibly in relation to the Israel-Hamas war. Social media users also cited Studio Ghibli's anti-war films such as

Howl's Moving Castle to argue against the use of its art style by the military.

7.     The IDF's use of the Studio Ghibli images have prompted responses from supporters of the Palestinians, who also used Generative AI to create their own images. The counter AI-generated images, with the caption "(t)he actual representation" showed images of soldiers targeting civilians, including women and children.

Figure 3: X users' use of Generative AI to respond to the IDF



Source: The Middle East Eye

## Subtlety is a Strength

8.    Art is a subtle way to influence personal views. By using colour and composition, it can influence one's mood and mindset. Art distils messages about society that may be difficult to confront due to the complexity and "noise" surrounding the issue. This is even more relevant in the age of social media, where polarisation of opinions and the sheer volume of information online makes it difficult to convince people of alternative views.

9.    For example, the *Hope* poster became an iconic symbol of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. The poster was perceived to be representative of the ideals that Obama's campaign stood for. In the poster, Obama's gaze – which seemed to be looking into the distance with complete focus – depicted a confidence that he would be able to lead the country into a better future. The use of red and blue represented the colours of the American flag and illustrated Obama's patriotism. Some commentators have even pointed to the use of red and blue on Obama's face to convey a strategic message, that race did not matter. The *Hope* poster clearly had an impact as Obama supporters seemingly identified with Obama's vision by purchasing merchandise and putting them up in their homes and shops, consequently amplifying the intended messages.

Figure 4: The Hope poster, created by Shepard Fairey. An iconic symbol of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign



Source: ResearchGate

## How Art Persuades

10.    *The Art Traveller* argues that the 'visual rhetoric' put forth by art immediately catches the viewer's attention. Art is an interpretation, and the image(s) builds up a visual argument that appeals more to emotions than logic, thereby creating sympathy with the message of the artwork. Art as a tool becomes dangerous if used to spread falsehoods, as it is possible that information campaigns that use art can easily go undetected, and cloud viewers' logic, as the message embedded within art is often implicit in nature and disguised as aesthetics and emotion.

## CONCLUSION

11.    As technology progresses, the combination of both old (human-produced art) and new (Generative AI) tools will reshape the nature and effectiveness of messages that are pushed out. The increasing subtlety and sophistication of information campaigns, and the ease of access to

Generative AI in art to promote or counter a narrative will make the information landscape even more complex. On their own, these tools are not inherently dangerous and can be used to advance positive and truthful narratives. However, there is a risk when Generative AI in art is misused.

12.    As differences in public opinion can create social divisions, it is crucial that states keep abreast of emerging trends in the information landscape. Information literacy initiatives can stay up to date with these tools and their responsible use. Encouraging the public to be more vigilant when viewing content online (even those that seem like innocent trends) can also reduce the effectiveness of malign information campaigns.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

All reports can be retrieved from our website at www.acice-asean.org/resource/.

For any queries and/or clarifications, please contact ACICE at ACICE@defence.gov.sg

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