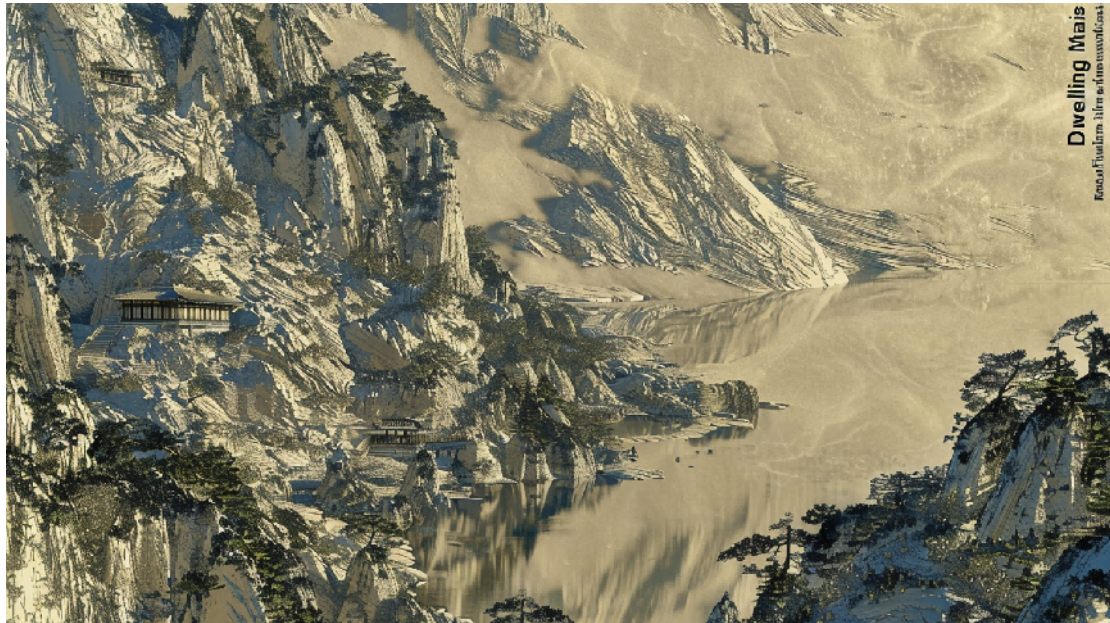


Creative Process Summary

The initial phase of the project was concerned with the connection between Chinese ink painting and AI generation. It was based on the primary concept developed in Unit 6 (algorithmic bias) and Unit 10 (automation imaginaries). The group member based his argument on the fact that AI is not neutral after reading Safiya Umoja Noble (2018) and Kate Crawford (2022). The training data and cultural bias is influenced by AI systems. This concept was related to Chinese aesthetics of ink painting, in particular, the concept of negative space. AI tends to fill up each section of the picture whereas the old school of ink painting cherishes emptiness and harmony. Text-to-image models, according to Varghese and Rani (2025), apply systematically what is known as temporal displacement strategies to fix non-Western cultures in a romanticised past, this is why the negative space in ink painting was seen by AI as a technical flaw that needed addressing instead of an aesthetic decision.

Initially, Midjourney was used to create images of the Chinese ink-style inspired by *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*. But the results were not successful. One of the outcomes was that of a document cover rather than a painting. The other outcome was to create distorted and noisy images in an attempt to blend ink painting with the cyberpunk style. These breakdowns demonstrated that AI was not effective at combining in a natural way two radically different visual styles. Hakopian (2024) claims that a similar coloniality of knowledge is common in generative art experiments, where Western historically datasets of art are the universal norm. Midjourney was unable to deal with negative space in group's case, but this was not a mistake but a symptom of this underlying cultural bias.



Failed Attempt 1. Generated by AI: Midjourney



Failed Attempt 2. Generated by AI: Midjourney

Then, having these unsuccessful attempts, the strategy changed. The group member preferred to request AI to formulate smooth transition frames but chose to use multiple high-quality, static images and rearrange them later with the help of editing software. The project also ceased to attempt to create pure ink paintings using AI. Rather, real traditional paintings would be shown in the intro, and the images created with the help of AI and being cyberpunk would symbolize the misinterpretation of Eastern aesthetics

by algorithms. The next step was changing from Midjourney to Jimeng. Jimeng created a more stable Chinese-style images in lighter colours and more distinct structures. But the productions remained shallow and not very emotional. This prompted another crucial consideration that not all images are meaningful images even when they are stable. It was not only the tool, but also the prompts which were a problem. The prompts remained too broad and did not have a detailed control.



Failed Attempt 3. Generated by AI: Jimeng

A significant turning point was when the member of the group found out how crucial the prompts of industrial level are. The prompts also started to have more detailed descriptions of composition, materials, lighting, textures and camera angles instead of abstract terms, such as, poetic or dream-like. Since it went back to Midjourney using such detailed prompts, the results were much better. The images that were generated were cinematic, detailed and concentrated with power. Caramiaux et al. (2025) lament the story that AI is democratising creativity by eliminating human labour. The practice demonstrates it to be the contrary: the more accurate and labour-intensive the timely engineering, the higher the output. AI never substituted group's creative work - it enhanced it.

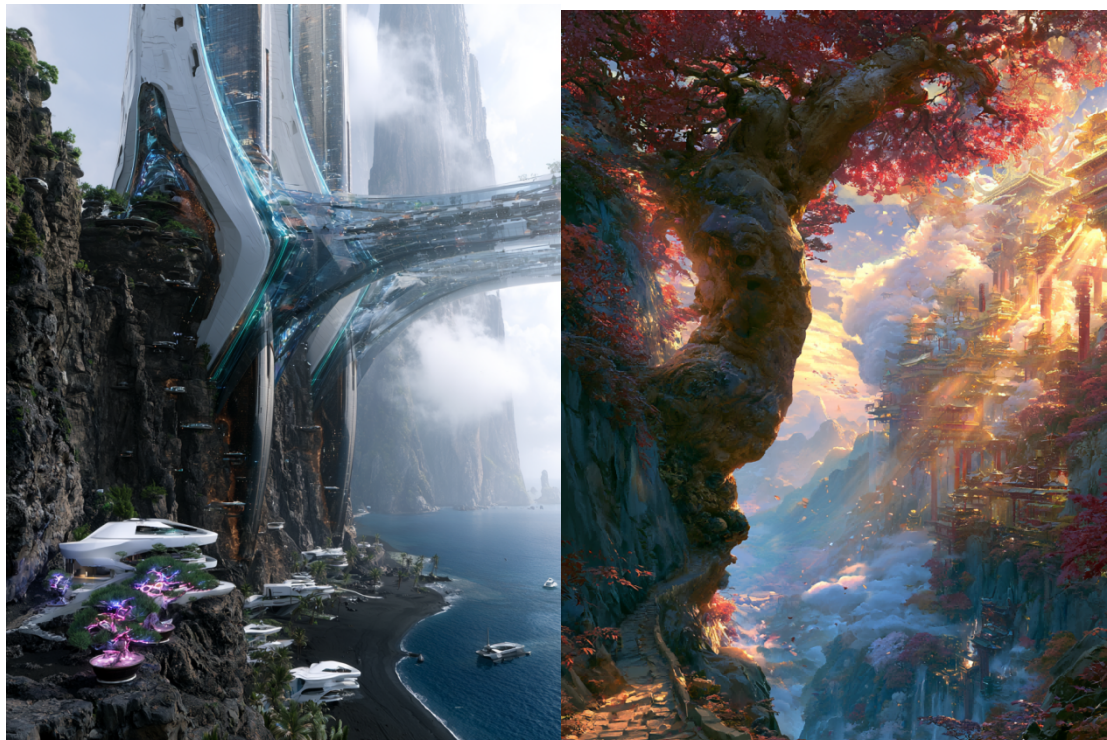
The project later came up with a new visual direction dubbed as Cyber Jianghu. The style was a blend of the traditional Chinese architecture with cyberpunk elements like dark lights, metallic surfaces, neon reflections, and mechanical buildings. There was one notable picture of a female swordswoman, who was heading towards a glowing tower in a rainy cyber-type city. Simple effects of motion such as moving lights and reflections were also tried by the group member in order to bring the scenes alive. Pomianowska (2025) coins the term algorithmic neoorientalism - the automatic recreation of the orientalist visual paradigms in generative AI. The Cyber Jianghu images are decipherable as an effort to do so through the visual language of AI per se (CG rendering, mechanical details, neon) to create a hybrid aesthetics, which cannot be classified as either Western or traditional to the end.



Failed Attempt 4. Generated by AI: Jimeng



Failed Attempt 5. Generated by AI: Jimeng



Successful Attempt 1&2. Generated by AI: Jimeng



Successful Attempt 3 (Video Frame). Generated by AI: Jimeng

All experiments were not successful. The team member attempted to draw a Chinese dragon that would travel in clouds and the AI kept on producing hard monster-like figures rather than flowing and spiritual dragon. This miscarriage was a significant element of the reflection. It demonstrated that AI works best on non-living mechanical objects as compared to living organisms and natural movement. Ghosh et al. (2025) record systematic tendencies of the exoticism in text-to-image generators, in which culturally particular symbols (particularly non-Western ones) are flattened into stereotyped, decontextualised forms. This is best exemplified by group's dragon experiments: the AI was not able to think of anything like a QiLin: the fluid and elegant dragon; it was only able to create monsters of the West or hardened sculptures. Due to this fact, the project has chosen to forego the dragon concept and concentrate on huge mechanical landscapes and cyberpunk architecture.



Failed Attempt 6&7. Generated by AI: Jimeng



Successful Attempt 4&5. Generated by AI: Jimeng



Final Product (Video Frame). Generated by AI: Jimeng

In conclusion, this process proved the constant experimentation, timely correction, change of tools, and critical thinking. The project related AI image generation to concepts of algorithmic bias, representation of cultures, and the boundaries of generative AI. Cultural bias in text-to-image models is not a glitch, but a structural aspect, as the systematic review by Elsharif et al. (2025) finds it is not a glitch but a structural feature of text-to-image models, which is based on both training data and evaluation criteria. The group's creative journey – from failure to strategic redirection – provides a grounded, practice-based confirmation of that finding.

Critical Evaluation of GenAI Outputs

This project critically examined how generative AI interprets the Chinese visual culture in the context of the algorithmic bias and automation imaginaries. Based on the discussion of biased algorithmic systems by Safiya Umoja Noble (2018) and the idea that AI can reproduce the same patterns of power distribution as in society by Kate Crawford (2022), the project explored how AI-generated images redefine the traditional

Chinese aesthetics.

Among the key results was that AI did not easily replicate the visual reasoning behind the traditional Chinese ink painting. Emptiness, balance, and the negative space are also appreciated in classical ink painting. Nevertheless, Midjourney continuously produced thick compositions with textures, effects of light and details. This indicates that the model was conditioned to work primarily on highly-saturated digital images and movie visual aesthetics. Consequently, the AI system understood Chinese aesthetics in terms of a modern commercial visual language, instead of the principles of traditional ink art, and Zhao and Liu (2025) refer to it as Visual Orientalism in the AI Era, whereby the non-Western cultures are systematically represented by the system in terms of cultural essentialism, whereas Western cultures are made to look modern and diverse. An example of this bias is group's unsuccessful ink painting outputs where negative space turned to noise or was violently taken over.

The unsuccessful experience of integrating the ink painting and the cyberpunk aesthetics also showed the constraints of the generative AI. The outputs were not smooth, as they were presented in fragments, which did not connote a specific visual transition. The AI was a combination of styles that was mechanical and not conceptual. This promotes the idea of Crawford that AI systems are run by statistical prediction, but not culture. In addition, Jaaaskelainen et al. (2025) offer intersectional proof that Stable Diffusion and other such algorithms are reflects of the existing visual politics in society and that they are skewed towards Euro- and North-American culture. The concrete example of that larger structural prejudice is group's experience with the hybrids of cyberpunk-ink that Midjourney created, which resembled cut-and-paste collages as opposed to organic fusions.

Another point made by the experiments was the significance of the timely engineering. Early prompts were based on language of emotion or abstraction like poetic, dream-like. The results of these prompts were weak and inconsistent. Subsequently, prompts

with great detail, which were of industrial level, were used much more effectively to enhance image quality. Comprehensive guidelines on lighting, materials, composition, and textures enabled the AI to produce more sensible and cinematic images. This kind of process demonstrated that the AI creativity heavily relies on human guidance and technical management. According to Günay (2025), the idea of generative AI is not neutral, since it exists in a larger system of sociotechnical power, and as group have just experienced during the engineering career, high-precision prompts are a type of human intervention that can, in part, reposition the default culture of AI. The other significant lesson was the constant inability to create a Chinese dragon that moves in a realistic way and has a spiritual effect. The productions were stiff and robot-like, and frequently looked like monsters of the Western fantasy. This demonstrated a decisive weakness of the model of depicting culturally specific symbols and organic movement. The text-to-image generators exoticise the marginalised populations, as Ghosh et al. (2025) capture, by freezing them into ahistorical and traditionally stereotypical images. The dragon, which has heavily featured in Chinese cosmology, has been diminished by the AI to an indistinguishable monster or an inanimate decoration. However, the AI was much more successful in the generation of mechanical architecture and cyberpunk environments. The project thus changed its interest to industrial buildings, and extensive mechanical landscapes. The very fact of such strategic abandonment is a critical reflection: when dealing with AI, it is important to realise that it has epistemic limits, not only affordances.

On the whole, the project did not only consider generative AI as a creative tool, but also as an object of critical analysis. The experiments showed the reproduction of dominant visual patterns, reformulation of the cultural aesthetics, and show the constraints of algorithmic creativity by AI systems. The creative process thus turned out to be a hands-on exploration of the linkage between AI, culture and representation. According to an anonymous author (2025) writing in *AI & Society*, modern diffusion models are built to remove ambiguity and approach one, predetermined result, which is the opposite of productive ambiguity of ink art in the East. This incompatibility is visually described

in group's video, as group go through the evolution of the so-called traditional painting, to cyber-jianghu, to mechanical megastructures.

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