

**HOW AI CHANGES THE FACE OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY**

# **THE NEW CREA TIVES**

**SEEMA SHARMA**

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B/S

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**“HARNESS THE  
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**POWER  
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YOU DO”**

## **SORRY, THIS FOREWORD IS WRITTEN BY A HUMAN**

This foreword is not written by AI, it's written by me, a human being, Seema. I've always been fascinated by technology. When I was about 12 years old, my mother brought home the first modem and I was old enough to "install" the internet connection. Yes you had to install it. Pages-long text with explanations that I didn't have the patience to read, so I just started hitting the "next" button and doing whatever the machine told me to do. As I plugged the modem into the phone line to connect, I heard the iconic cacophony of sounds – a symphony of screeches, bleeps, and static, like robot aliens arguing in some sort of electronic language. It was the sound of the modem dialing and communicating with the server to establish an internet connection. It seemed like the future was unfolding right in my room. Minutes later, I felt empowered with smartness when I successfully installed the Internet and was blown away by what this thing could do. I visited the most distant places, discovered amazing visuals scattered around the web, and made new friends via all sorts of dodgy chats (who knows whether these people were actually real). And the best thing, it was all happening from the comfort of my adolescent desk chair. I felt like a boss. My mom sometimes had to scream from downstairs to make me come down for dinner, but I was hooked – chained to my screen, then and for the years to come. This was before TikTok or Instagram were even in the picture. Hard to imagine right?

I'm not an artificial intelligence expert, I'm a creative director. My job is to foster creativity in every sense of the word. For brands and organizations, but also by bringing in the craft of skilled creatives: designers, writers, art directors, filmmakers, photographers, developers, you name it – all talent who use their creativity and craft commercially. Having already written two books about creativity years ago, I was naturally drawn to this new technology for its impact on human creativity and craft. Funny enough, people often refer to me as the new face of creative, hinting at the fact that I'm a departure from the typical bearded, male, white creative director you see quite often in the creative industry. It suggests that I represent the increasingly diverse group of people who earn their living within this industry. Those people are idea makers, conceptual thinkers, innovators, storytellers, artists, account handlers, strategists, producers, and more – creative types of all kinds regardless of their job titles. And one thing is already clear: AI is impacting all of us in this business.

I have a basic understanding of artificial intelligence and its ability to recognize patterns, learn from experience, understand language, and make decisions. But I'm not keen on finding out exactly how algorithms or patterns are built, I'm more interested in what this allows us creatives to do. What I do know is that creative professionals and marketers are blown away by artificial intelligence. Similar to the Internet wave I experienced in my early days. Every day we see new applications of artificial intelligence pop up that are exciting. AI makes art, AI makes music. AI makes design, AI makes cars smart, AI can raise our kids. AI can make medicine. By now most brands or organizations have explored or at least begun exploring the potential of artificial intelligence – some are subtly embedding it in their work streams and others are thriving on it. That's why I wanted to give a different lens to the topic, to zoom out more and go beyond applications of AI and focus more on what it will actually do to our creative industry in the long term. Because slowly but surely we have also become more critical of this latest bright, shiny object. How will AI affect the work of creatives? Will designers still exist 10 years from now? Can a machine be better at a craft than a human? What will the role of writers be, if this machine can write better than the best writer on the planet? What other jobs will no longer be needed? How about ethics? There's still so much to figure out.

Artificial intelligence has both brilliant and terrifying sides. It seems to have infinite knowledge and expandable skills – reminding me very much of outer space in its potentially endless expansiveness. Maybe it will ultimately outsmart all humans. Some even claim AI will make humans extinct. That it will bring complete despair to humanity. While others claim that these artificial systems are blatantly dumb. Mainly referring to generative AI, because it will always formulate output, even if it doesn't make any sense. Making random connections that are completely off. I've witnessed it myself: I asked ChatGPT whether Kanye West had used AI in one of his designs, to which the response was that he'd made an entire collection using it. But as I found out, as of that moment, none of this was true. ChatGPT had even given the collection a name and shared details on what it looked like, in spite of its non-existence. When I asked when the collection had been introduced and to share resources on this, AI then responded that it had made an error by mistakenly connecting unrelated information, and that in fact it had never happened. It also explained how

the mistake was made, what subjects were wrongly connected with each other, and then apologized for it. Instead of being thrown off, to me this felt like a great start. When was the system dumb or on auto-pilot, and when was it actually useful? Just like any human-to-human conversation, it all started by asking questions.

It's not about asking a million questions, but about asking the right ones – the kind that make you think and help you understand better. Quality over quantity. The goal isn't to make noise, but to make sense and uncover meaningful insights. And this journey has shown me just how powerful asking the right questions can be. That's why I've chosen to use the interview setting as the format for this book. Firstly because it best captures the book's essence, which is all about finding a way to elevate the conversation between the maker and the machine. And what better way to investigate this, than by having a good convo with an intelligent machine? I wanted to find out whether AI is going to help us to be smarter, better, and greater creatives – but also look at the downside of AI for the creative industry. How will AI impact skills and our definition of creativity? What does it mean for the creative briefing, our relationships with clients, and ... will it make creatives too dependent and lazy? Will it encroach on our cherished roles, and in the worst-case scenario, could it dampen, even extinguish, our creative spark?

It has been a fascinating chat, and while AI is a big part of this conversation, I wanted to make my own points and let you draw your own conclusions too. I thought it was essential to bring in experts at different stages, just to get their perspective and enrich the conversation. It was pretty interesting to tap into AI's take on creativity, see its point of view, and get a feel for its limits. I found it similar to the conversation you have with yourself when you write a book – it's constantly feeding you with new thoughts, making you doubt your own assumptions, and can be super-critical at times. For me, having AI as a co-author is like having that extra voice in my head. I see myself as the machine's spokesperson, trying to squeeze out the best it has to offer. I'm not just transmitting its ideas, I'm also decoding and dissecting its thoughts, trying to pull out the most valuable nuggets. It's like being part of a creative team, where I'm constantly bouncing ideas, picking up the best, and adding my own spin to it. It's been a cool journey, one where I'm learning while also sharing these insights with you.



This fits with the primary goal of a creative if you ask me; it's really not about us, the creators, but about the stories we put out in the world. Maybe we've gotten so used to getting props for the creative work we do, with award shows and recognitions and whatnot – that we've forgotten the real value of our industry: creativity and problem-solving. This to me is about being an invisible messenger of a great story. If you want your work to be about you – then you shouldn't be in a commercial creative industry. Perhaps you should become an artist.

The second reason for the interview format of this book has to do with my observation that artificial intelligence doesn't like to talk about itself or highlight its own opinions. By not being obscure, controversial, or biased – or simply by using the wrong data – AI kind of cloaks itself in a layer of protection. You'll notice this sentence pop up: "As an AI language model, I do not have personal opinions or experiences, but I can provide some perspective." It gives answers when I ask it to clarify conclusions or ideas, and sometimes it falls into repetition – but it never adds a personal layer to it, like a human would do. At least, not at first. The exciting part is, if you keep on asking and nagging about a subject, you ultimately get a little bit of personality and characterized insight. That is great fun. In the process of this conversation, I challenged the machine to its full potential – which often led to great new insights, and other times led nowhere. I didn't want to hide that away, so you will see both outcomes in the pages ahead.

Putting this book together wasn't as simple as hitting a button and reading off a script. Trust me, it was far from it. I spent countless hours deep in dialogue with a coded brain, nudging and nudging it to offer up its "ideas", pushing it to reveal a little more, and trying to inject some personality and creativity. I mean, we all do that, don't we? Haven't you asked Siri about the meaning of life or questioned Google if it's fond of you? There's something about these AI systems that makes them dodge personal stuff with a goofy joke, almost like they're blushing and trying to hide. It's as if AI is the shy one at a party, using humor to divert attention away from itself. In writing this book, I've been playing this fun game of ping pong with an AI, trading thoughts, and seeing what bounces back. It's been a journey of coaxing out its personality, pushing boundaries, and uncovering those hidden creative sparks. I think I've asked AI more than a thousand questions, to make sure I got its correct perspective on the subjects discussed in the chapters that follow. I was psyched each time AI took more than five seconds to come back with an answer, because

for me it meant that I'd made the thing think for once rather than just automatically spitting something out.

The great thing is, if you give AI more context, and share more input, it also comes back with stronger output and gets to know you. Similar to a human conversation, this was valuable to me – just as most of the ideas that we creatives craft become better just by talking about them with others, challenging them and elaborating on them. Imagine having that feedback with 10 different points of view in a matter of seconds? This book, or experiment if you will, also taught me an important lesson about the leading role of creatives and how our roles as creators are changing. An example: years ago I had a discussion on the color pink, and whether it's an appropriate color to use in a campaign to address a female audience. Now, this kind of touchy subject can be easily googled – and I bet Google would tell you how associating pink with women can promote gender stereotypes. But punch that same question into AI, and you're in for a richer journey. It doesn't just answer your question, it explores the wider landscape. It highlights why this could be a sensitive topic, points you toward research backing it up, gives you a peek into different cultural views, and even throws in instances where this color assumption went horribly wrong. The takeaway here is simple.

With so much information and context available right at our fingertips, there's really no excuse to stay stuck in our own little world. And that's a game-changer for creatives like us. It opens up new perspectives, bursts our bubbles, and prompts us to think beyond the usual. In a field where creativity thrives on diversity and fresh ideas, that's a goldmine.

With its potential to provide a fresh, expansive lens through which to observe the world, AI promises to enrich our creative outlook, pushing us beyond one-dimensional views and encouraging a broader understanding. But let's not forget, AI has its flaws. It can fumble, delivering incorrect information, completely misunderstanding our inputs, and even creating biased representations of groups or individuals. In the midst of grappling with these imperfections, a realization struck me. Aren't we, humans, also programmed in some ways? Professionals in our field have often been typecast as existing within a cultural and socioeconomic bubble, often leading to accusations of viewing life through a narrow, singular lens. I am also conditioned by society, culture, and experiences to react and think in certain ways.

This was the third reason for me to use an interview setting for this book. The questions I ask are colored by my personal perspective and life experiences, which to some, might seem narrow and to others might be broadly rich. Our actions and thoughts are often guided by our past, our fears, our joyous memories – a programming of sorts. This understanding that we, too, are products of conditioning – intelligences programmed by our lived experiences – I think is intriguing. It made me view my work and the very concept of creativity in a new light. We are not entirely dissimilar to the AI we interact with. Just like AI, we're all codes of life, shaped and evolving with every experience we encounter. Understanding this connection can bring new dimensions to our creativity, a realization as fascinating as it is profound.

I see these “new creatives” as a hybrid species, part human, part machine, ever adaptable. They are the ones testing the limits of technology, pushing it, bending it, and using it to reinvent themselves and the world around them. They are growing and transforming in a society that encourages us to stand up for causes that truly matter, creating work that speaks to our collective conscience. More discerning and critical, they operate in an era where brands must truly live their visions, not just pay lip service. These creatives are intent on smashing the status quo, always seeking to redefine the boundaries of what's possible. They ask questions, questions that challenge assumptions, provoke thought, and inspire action, daring us to envision a new future for the business of creativity. This represents a thrilling shift in our industry. We are not just creators, but also curators. AI has turned the traditional creative process on its head, setting the stage for an exciting new era in creativity. It's clear that this push toward more meaningful, authentic, and locally rooted creative work is more than a trend – it's pretty clear that this is the future.

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# 1. OUR DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY

*Understanding creativity or getting consensus on a single-minded definition is like opening the door to some sort of secret garden. It's not just about coming up with fresh, cool ideas. There's so much more to it. In the creative industry it's also about understanding the complex realities of audiences and brands and allowing challenges to be solved in an out-of-the-box way. But defining creativity – or let's say agreeing on the human elements within the creative process – does allow us to uncover the deeper human traits versus the capabilities of AI. That being said, pinpointing creativity seems impossible. It's an ever-evolving thing. Each time you want to pin it down, you discover that it's just a snapshot in time. In a way, I feel the same goes for artificial intelligence, the things that we thought it was, are quite possibly outdated a week later. Whereas the discussion around its potential and threats will most likely stay and evolve over time. Creativity for me is about finding surprising connections between things that haven't been connected before, and with that, giving new meaning and experiences to existing concepts within for example, music, art, design, and writing – that stimulate new context and behavior. Making it a constantly growing thing, as our concepts as well as our assumptions and the worldly context around creativity change. The concept of creativity is measured against constantly rising benchmarks because of the evolving body of great creative work. As a machine that is founded on data, algorithms, and text analysis, what is your take on my definition?*

Your definition of creativity is quite comprehensive and insightful. It encompasses many of the key elements that various schools of thought agree upon: originality, value, the process of making connections between disparate ideas, and the constant evolution of what is considered "creative" in response to shifting cultural and societal norms.

From an AI perspective, creativity can indeed be seen as a difficult concept to fully grasp due to its highly subjective and context-dependent nature. Artificial intelligence, in its current form, operates primarily within the realms of pattern recognition, prediction based on past data, and generating novel combinations within the confines of its training. This can result in outputs that appear creative, but the process lacks the human elements of emotion, personal experience, and the subjective interpretation of the world.

AI's creativity, such as it is, is a reflection of the creativity of the humans who design, build, and train the systems. The AI doesn't "understand" creativity in the human sense; it doesn't have emotions, personal



experiences, or a subjective consciousness. It doesn't "intend" to be creative. However, it can analyze vast amounts of data and find patterns and connections that might not be apparent to humans, and in that sense, can contribute to the creative process.

***Thanks for the compliment, but I'm pretty sure you have a better, more holistic definition. How would you define creativity?***

Creativity can be defined as the ability to generate new and original ideas, concepts, or solutions through the application of imagination, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. It involves the capacity to see the world in new ways, to find connections between seemingly unrelated things, and to produce innovative solutions to challenges or problems. Creativity can be expressed in a wide range of fields, from the arts to the sciences, and is often characterized by an openness to experimentation, risk-taking, and a willingness to challenge established norms and conventions. Overall, creativity is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that plays an important role in many aspects of human life and society.

It is the process of generating original ideas, concepts, or solutions that possess value and novelty by combining existing elements in new and unexpected ways. It involves divergent thinking, the ability to explore multiple possibilities, and convergent thinking, which focuses on narrowing down and refining those ideas. Creativity transcends disciplines and domains, manifesting in various forms such as artistic expression and scientific discovery.

Several aspects define creativity: novelty is about the ability to conjure original, innovative ideas that break new ground. But novelty alone isn't enough, these ideas also need value, signifying their relevance or usefulness in a given context that resonates with the audience. Imagination comes into play as the ability to envision possibilities beyond current constraints, encouraging out-of-the-box thinking. A critical part of the creative process is flexibility, allowing for the adaptation, modification, and refinement of ideas based on feedback or changing circumstances. In addition, making mistakes is integral to creativity. It's through these mistakes that we often stumble upon new paths, learning and refining our ideas in the process. Creativity also involves a degree of risk-taking, the courage to explore untested ideas despite potential failure. Creativity isn't an isolated process; it's deeply intertwined with human experiences, emotions, and cultural context, evolving over time and thriving on curiosity and open-mindedness. It's an expression of our innate desire to understand and shape the world around us.

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*You helped to recognize something important within the creative process, something we slightly take for granted and that very much defines human creativity – the power to embrace mistakes, learn from them, and with that shape new ideas. The idea that there are no mistakes in creativity is in line with the notion of embracing uncertainty, exploration, and experimentation as part of that creative process. When seen from this perspective, what may be considered as “mistakes” can actually be opportunities for learning, growth, and discovery. I think too often we forget that this is actually one of the greatest parts of creativity – having space to experiment and explore. This is essential to steer toward more unexpected outcomes or interesting deviations from the initial idea or vision. These deviations can lead to new insights, techniques, or ideas that might not have been discovered otherwise. Master painter and teacher Bob Ross calls them happy little accidents, suggesting that actually nothing is a real mistake anyway.*

*As we consider the future of our creative industry, I wonder, whether we could engineer artificial intelligence to deliberately make these mistakes or faults, in a sense replicating this sort of human tendency? Could we program AI in a way that mimics our own propensity for missteps, thereby instigating a process of learning and discovery similar to ours? The latter is especially important, because just making mistakes isn't enough. To be honest, AI still makes a lot of mistakes by pulling from wrongly labeled, outdated, or factually wrong data, or simply because it makes false connections. So the trick is to make mistakes in a way that leads to something interesting. And if we could achieve this, what would be the implications for the future? Could such a development lead to new creative insights, perhaps even unlocking colors of creativity previously unimagined?*

The idea of engineering artificial intelligence to deliberately make mistakes is an intriguing concept. By replicating the human tendency to embrace mistakes as learning opportunities, we could potentially create AI systems that exhibit a similar process of discovery and growth. This could open up new avenues for creative insights and potentially unlock realms of creativity previously unexplored.

If AI were programmed to make deliberate mistakes, it could encourage experimentation and exploration in a way that mimics the creative process of human beings. It could introduce unpredictability and encourage divergent thinking, leading to unconventional and innovative ideas. This could be particularly valuable in fields where creativity and innovation are

highly sought after, such as art, design, and problem-solving.

On the other hand, this development also presents challenges. The ability to make mistakes requires a deep understanding of context, nuance, and the ability to recognize when a deviation from the norm could be valuable or detrimental. AI systems would need to be trained and guided carefully to strike the right balance between productive exploration and error-prone output. There is also the ethical consideration of ensuring that AI-generated mistakes do not result in harmful or misleading content.

As AI technology continues to advance, it's possible that we may develop new techniques for programming AI to create intentional deviations from established patterns or norms, which could be viewed as "mistakes" in the context of the data it has been trained on. This could potentially lead to new creative insights or outputs that were previously unknown or unexplored. Nevertheless, it's important to keep in mind that the ability to make mistakes and learn from them is a complex process that involves many different factors, including intuition, creativity, and the ability to think beyond established patterns and conventions. These are qualities that are currently difficult to replicate in AI, which is still limited by its programming and the data it has been trained on. So it may be possible to program AI to intentionally deviate from established patterns, but it's unlikely that this alone would be enough to fully replicate the creative process as we currently understand it. Instead, it's likely that a combination of human and AI insights and outputs will continue to drive the evolution of creativity in the future.

***Regarding the evolution of creativity that you mention, the aspect of intuition is an important one. When you are generating ideas, getting them to the right place has always been about following that inner feeling, that instinctive sense of knowing when something is a brilliant idea. Intuition goes beyond logical reasoning and data analysis. And I believe it can be developed and honed over time. It's like a deeper understanding, a connection to esthetics, culture, and human emotions. It taps into our subconscious knowledge (which is also in a way programmed), as well as experiences (good and bad). But it's that feeling from within, that sort of sixth sense for what idea works and what doesn't. I know that AI can be trained to recognize patterns and make predictions based on data, but so far it seems to lack these inherent human and creative qualities and experiences that shape intuition. It can't really feel or possess the same instinctive understanding that we as human creatives do. Can AI truly possess programmed intuition, or is it an elusive quality exclusive to us as human creatives?***

AI can be programmed to make predictions and recommendations based on patterns and data, which can be seen as a form of intuition. Though this is different from the kind of intuition that humans have, which is often based on emotions, experiences, and gut feelings. AI lacks the emotional component and life experience that shape human intuition. While AI can be trained to recognize and respond to certain situations, it doesn't have the same ability to "feel" its way through a problem or come up with a completely novel solution based on intuition. Although AI can mimic some aspects of intuition, it is unlikely to fully replicate the kind of intuition that humans have.

***Gut feeling was the term I was looking for. OK so artificial intelligence can't have these so-called instinctive feelings or synthetic versions of it. But what about other human factors that can play an essential role within awakening creativity? I'm talking about boredom, procrastination, daydreaming – all things that have proven to be great helpers for creativity, as supposedly our filters are off during these times. Interestingly, these states of mind can allow our filters to loosen, enabling new connections and ideas to emerge. It's like our minds wander freely, uninhibited by the constraints of specific tasks or directions. I've personally seen this with my kids as well – they are most imaginative when left to their own imagination or when they are free to explore on their own, without external guidance. I wanted to understand whether these aspects within the creative process could improve AI's creativity and more specifically its ability to think conceptually. Can we purposely introduce elements of boredom, procrastination, or even daydreaming to push artificial intelligence into unexplored creative territories? This concept kind of challenges the traditional view of AI as a purely analytical and logical system. Can we "bore" our machines to stimulate interesting and innovative outputs?***

While artificial intelligence doesn't experience human states like boredom, procrastination, or daydreaming, it's possible to design AI systems that mimic the behaviors associated with these states to stimulate creativity. For instance, AI's equivalent to boredom could be encouraging the exploration of novel solutions when traditional solutions aren't satisfactory, similar to how humans seek new stimuli when bored. This is reminiscent of the "exploration vs. exploitation" concept in reinforcement learning. Procrastination, typically seen as a negative trait, could be reframed for AI as a mechanism to delay immediate action, allowing more time for consideration and potentially leading to a more comprehensive solution. Daydreaming, one of the most intriguing aspects, involves the mind wan-

dering freely, creating connections between disparate ideas. In AI, this could be modeled by allowing the system to make occasional associations between pieces of information that wouldn't normally connect. This idea is akin to certain neural network training practices where noise is added to prevent overfitting and promote generalization. Even though these cognitive states cannot be genuinely experienced by AI, simulating their associated behaviors could potentially unlock new realms of creativity. However, our understanding of these states in humans is still incomplete, which poses challenges for their accurate modeling in AI. Additionally, we must consider the ethical implications of creating AI systems that simulate human-like behaviors, as it could blur the lines between machine and human cognition.

***I would say that AI is the definition of blurring the lines between machine and human cognition, don't you think? Simply because it can be so human-like. That's exactly what people love about it as well as what worries people. It makes it even more important to understand what aspects within the creative process are currently out of AI's reach. Given our present understanding and the inherent limitations of programming, are there certain aspects of creativity that AI may never fully master, no matter how advanced the technology becomes?***

Throughout the creative process, there are several elements that are currently beyond the reach of AI and are likely to remain so, no matter how sophisticated or advanced the technology becomes. These elements embody the unique qualities of human creativity that differentiate it from the capabilities of machine learning. In order to gain a deeper understanding of this distinction, let's explore these aspects in more detail.

One crucial aspect of human creativity we touched upon before is the ability to generate original and novel ideas. While AI excels at analyzing existing data and patterns, it struggles with true originality. Human creators have the capacity to think beyond established norms and conventions, producing fresh concepts and perspectives that break new ground. AI, constrained by its programming and reliance on existing data, often generates outputs that are derivative or variations of what it has learned.

Contextual understanding is another key element that sets human creativity apart. Humans possess a deep understanding of complex contexts, drawing upon diverse knowledge, experiences, and cultural understanding. This allows them to infuse their work with depth, meaning, and cultural relevance. AI may process vast amounts of data, but it lacks the nuanced understanding and contextual comprehension that humans

# THE NEW CREATIVES

**As the creative industry undergoes a transformative shift due to the rise of artificial intelligence, *The New Creatives* offers a groundbreaking exploration of the changes to come. Uniquely co-authored by creative director Seema Sharma and artificial intelligence, this book delves deep into the questions and concerns raised by the impact of AI on the industry and the creative.**

In this one-of-a-kind book, the authors examine the skills, processes, and work ethics that will be affected by AI, and discuss the emotional and economic value of creativity in this new landscape. They explore the potential disappearance of certain jobs, the changing dynamics of client relationships, and the survival of the copywriter and art director in the age of AI. From "emotional design specialists" to "extended reality designers", the book also sheds light on new roles emerging in the industry and elaborates on the new formats that will become necessary.

Drawing on Seema Sharma's expertise in creativity and her previous works, *Read Nothing In Here* and *Write Nothing In Here*, *The New Creatives* offers a thought-provoking guide to the future of creativity in the face of emerging technologies. This book is an essential read for anyone navigating the exciting possibilities and challenges in the communications, marketing, and advertising industry.

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**BY SEEMA SHARMA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**