

18/07/2025

Argumentation for 'The Heritage of Human Creativity'

Designers are integral part of every industrial sector in the European Union – as industry for example in designing medical equipment or metal forming machines up to the role as enabler for innovation and strategy.

Currently we are at a crossroads in creative skills and technology, which lead to a loss of competencies in critical thinking, skilling and re-skilling, resilience and creative capacities. Hence, this defines a risk to Europe's innovation capacity, distinctiveness and competitiveness. This de-skilling can be observed not only in critical thinking and 'classical' creative culture, but also in the foundation and backbone of every industrial and manufacturing production, which includes the development and production of tools. Tools, from machines to code scripts in the industry have a timespan of up to nearly 80 years – once the knowledge how to engineer/repair and mend those machines is lost, resilience is harder, if not impossible to achieve.

So, while AI increases the output of the Creative Cultural Industry, the downside is described by Zhou et. al (Zhou, 2025) as follows:

'Our results hint that the widespread adoption of generative AI technologies in creative fields could lead to a long-run equilibrium where, in aggregate, many artefacts converge to the same types of content or visual features. Creative domains may be inundated with generic content as exploration of the creative space diminishes. Without establishing new frontiers for creative exploration, AI systems trained on outdated knowledge banks run the risk of perpetuating the generation of generic content at a mass scale in a self-reinforcing cycle.'

This point is also stressed by the JRC 'Generative AI Outlook Report' (Abendroth et al., 2025, p48) which points not only to the needed upskilling but also to the potential loss of skills in critical thinking and problem solving (Abendroth et al., 2025, p12) – both central aspects of Design and Human Creativity.

To secure a desirable and prosperous future, we must invest in nurturing human creative skills – there can be no meaningful innovation without a foundation of heritage and knowledge. BEDA and its members are already observing a worrying

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decline in both industrial and creativity-relevant competencies. This includes technical know-how, such as expertise in materials and manufacturing processes, as well as human- and planet-centred skills that are vital to the cultural and creative industries. Increasingly, creation is being replaced by curation, contributing to a troubling normalisation of mediocrity. This erosion of creative capacity and knowledge poses a serious risk of long-term economic and societal harm.

As the Newsletter from 31. March – 3. April of the European Parliament stated: ‘MEPs are also set to argue that ensuring citizens can access culture and cultural education, which stimulates creativity and critical thinking, will enhance the EU’s resilience and competitiveness.’ (ECC Newsletter 31 March – 3 April)

We (BEDA) ask to consider, that ‘The Heritage of Human Creativity’ is integrated into the Cultural Compass

As Design and industry are intervened, as described above, the Cultural Compass should integrate the need for a ‘Heritage of Human Creativity’ as an initiative to

- Sustain existing knowledge for resilience, future orientated development and high-quality creative competitiveness
- Grow and support the foundation for an European Competitive advantage through Design, Design Methods and Design Engineering. There is a distinct differentiation of European Design versus American, Indian or Asian Design Language – starting with the approach for ‘Design for All’ (intergenerational Justice and Low Barrier Design) up to ‘Democratic Design’, where process and goods are shaped to foster democratic reachability and sustainability. This provides Europe a stronger position on the global market as European Design is a differentiator and market success e.g. compared to Indian or Russian Design.
- Secure the resilience of the European Industry through the excellence in creative human skills
- Create a ‘Heritage of Human Creativity’ to achieve competitiveness, critical thinking and creative excellence – to foster a resilient and thriving industrial European Ecosystem

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Sources

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"European Cultural Compass: MEPs to Outline Their Priorities | 31-03-2025 | News | European Parliament." March 27, 2025. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2025-03-31/20/european-cultural-compass-meps-to-outline-their-priorities>.

Zhou, Eric, and Dokyun Lee. "Generative Artificial Intelligence, Human Creativity, and Art." *PNAS Nexus* 3, no. 3 (2024): pgae052. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae052>.

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