

AI Applications for Ancient Art History Education

Caitlan Smith

Arkansas State University
caismith@astate.edu
 [0000-0003-2855-5131](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2855-5131)

ABSTRACT — Recent global surveys (Chegg, 2025; Freeman, 2025) indicate that the vast majority of undergraduates already use generative AI (GenAI) to support their studies, and many want structured, ethical guidance from their institutions. This paper responds from the perspective of ancient art history education. First, it presents a case study of an interdisciplinary course (*AI & Us*, Arkansas State University, Spring 2024) co-taught by faculty in art history, philosophy, and graphic design, arguing that expert-led, cross-disciplinary framing is decisive for cultivating AI literacy and critical engagement. Second, it proposes classroom applications tailored to ancient art history at different levels: (a) a reverse *prompt*-engineering exercise that develops recognition and visual-analysis skills using AI-generated images as objects of inquiry; and (b) *prompt*-driven discussions that surface dataset bias and strengthen students' search and source-evaluation practices. The activities go beyond prompt engineering alone and are designed to promote reflective, ethical, and academically rigorous uses of GenAI in both classroom learning and research.

KEYWORDS — AI literacy, ancient art history education, AI teaching modules, Greco-Roman art, generative AI, *prompt* engineering.

1. INTRODUCTION

Alan Turing, after the creation of “Bombe”, his electromechanical device developed to break German codes messages during World War II, would go on to explore the concept that machines could simulate human thought beyond just stored-program computer (or the Automatic Computing Engine, ACE) to testing the limits of what could be computed (Turing Machine). Turing suggested that a machine could be considered intelligent if it was able to convincingly imitate a human conversation that was indistinguishable from responses from an actual person (i.e. the Turing Test). In the 1950s, Artificial Intelligence (AI), understood as the simulation of human cognition by machines, remained a largely theoretical concept. The evolution of Turing and others' mathematical, neurophysiological, and psychological advancements have culminated into the development of machine learning, which involves creating models by training an algorithm to make decisions

based on data – in other words, AI systems that learn from historical data (Stryker and Kavlakoglu, 2024). These machine learning models can mimic human brain or neural network functions known as “deep learning”, because, as Boden describes, although AI needs physical machines, such as computers, to function, AI is better thought of as “virtual machines” or information-processing systems (Boden, 2018, pp. 3-4). Both AI and the human brain are information-processing systems that utilize neural networks to identify complex patterns and relationships within large amounts of data. AI is able to process information at ten to thousands of times faster and with larger amounts of data than the human brain. This makes AI accessible tools to simplify and accelerate learning.

Thus, in the 2020s, Generative AI (GenAI) or deep learning models were developed that create “original content” defined by user *prompts* or requests by drawing from stored datasets to create new work that is similar, but not identical, to the original data (Stryker and Kavlakoglu, 2024). This rapidly evolving technology is being utilized by students to facilitate their learning. A UK-based study from Freeman (2025) found from polling 1,041 full-time undergraduate students, 45% agreed or strongly agreed that they already had experience using AI before arriving in higher education¹. The study stated that 92% of students reported using AI in “some form” in 2025, up from 66% in their 2024 study. Further, 88% were reported to have used GenAI² for assignments, up from 53% in 2024. Similarly, Chegg’s Global Student Survey (2025), which surveyed 11,706 undergraduate students across 15 countries, found that 80% of the undergraduate students reported having used GenAI tools “to support their university studies”. Up from 40% in Chegg’s 2023 study. From the global poll, 57% of students reported having used GenAI for their university studies at least once a day³. Overall, what these statistics indicate is that students are using AI at a rapidly growing rate. Further, according to the Chegg 2025 survey, 50% of students worldwide expressed the desire for the creation of AI tools specifically designed for education purposes, and 69% either agreed or strongly agreed that they wished their university provided them with GenAI tools to support their university studies. Students are using AI and want to use AI in a supported and ethical environment. As such, this paper addresses the use of AI tools (namely ChatGPT) in ancient art history education at the university level.

This paper’s aims are twofold but presented in three sections: first, to present a case study of the effectiveness (and necessity) of interdisciplinary teaching models

¹ 14% neither agreed nor disagreed and 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Further, from this poll it was STEM based students who had the highest percentage (52%) that agreed or strongly agreed that they had already experienced using AI before higher education. Arts and Humanities being the lowest (36%) who agreed or strongly agreed. And it was dominantly men (53%) who also agreed or strongly agreed to this statement. In comparison to women who only 38% agreed or strongly agreed (Freeman, 2025, pp. 5-6).

² In this paper I will use GenAI and AI simultaneously, both to refer to generative AI meaning models that take raw data and generate new data or works through human provided *prompts*.

³ 6% more than ten times a day, 14% six to ten times a day, 27% two to five times a day, 9% once a day, 26% a couple of times a week, 6% once a week, 11% less than once a week (Chegg, 2025).

for approaching, using, and teaching with or about AI in humanities-based classrooms (provided in the first section of this paper). Second, to present further AI applications, specifically when teaching university-level ancient art history courses, that demonstrate how AI can be morally and academically utilized within the classroom and academic research. While also briefly highlighting where faults still exist in AI and methods that could be used for academic dishonesty (as of 2025) in the last section. This paper does not seek to provide guidance on how to instruct AI literacy (though it will be strongly supported that instructors do provide some form of AI literacy in their course), but rather to offer suggestions to art history instructors on examples of how to integrate AI into their classroom discussion and assignments, particularly for those who are hesitant and unsure of how to proceed with AI.

2. CASE STUDY: *AI & Us*

In the Spring semester of 2024 at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, USA, three instructors from three different disciplines co-taught a specialty course entitled *AI & Us*. The aim of the course was for students to “gain a holistic understanding of AI’s technological underpinnings, ethical implications, creative potential, and philosophical implications. The course aims to equip students with both foundational knowledge and critical thinking skills, enabling them to navigate the complexities of AI in an increasingly AI-driven world” (Baker, Caton, and Parker, 2024). *AI & Us* was a stacked course, whereby students could either register for a credit in Art History, Philosophy, or Graphic Design. However, all students, regardless of whatever specific discipline credit they were registered for, would attend the same class on the same days. The instructors: Dr. Katherine Baker, Associate Professor of Art History; Dr. Jacob Caton, Associate Professor of Philosophy; and Leslie Parker, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, each designed their assignments specific to their discipline, but were required for all students⁴. There were set class days where either lectures, class discussions, or workshop/workdays were more specific to a certain discipline (see [Table 1](#)). However, all three instructors were always present for each of these class days, even if they were not the one who was the focused instructor for that day. This allowed all three instructors to comment and expand upon the focused material in more of a roundtable-like discussion – something that undergraduate students are unlikely to witness until the post-graduate level (at least in the United States). This not only exposed students to the vernacular and cross-referencing of interdisciplinary

⁴ I want to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Dr. Katherine Baker, Dr. Jacob Caton, and Leslie Parker for allowing me to use and discuss their course in this paper. I and others were a part of the original proposal to the university, and I assisted Dr. Baker in some course content construction, I, nevertheless, want to acknowledge full credit to them in any of the course material presented here. However, most has been tailored to suit the ancient art history classroom rather than a general classroom of undergraduate students that *AI & Us* was designed for.

discussion amongst academics, but also in a forum where they could engage in the discussion as well – *prompting* critical thinking skills.

I argue the interdisciplinary aspect—and the instructors of the course agree—whereby a professional explains the ethics alongside learning was key to the success and utility of this course. In a discussion with Parker (2025), reflecting upon the course, she noted that

“To date, I haven’t heard of any other AI courses taking a similar approach. The goal was not to teach students how to use it, but to think about it critically, consider this emerging tech from different perspectives, and begin asking their own questions. [...] I enjoyed learning more about navigating institutional policies to create something that had never been done before on campus (we were the first cross-disciplinary professors ever to teach a course together. We were first told it was impossible due to various factors)”.

Similarly, I have not found any university courses that take this approach to teaching AI, only those that are more designed for the technical or mechanical aspects of AI creation. Baker (2025) held similar views to Parker when interviewed on her perception of the course, particularly on the scale of importance of the interdisciplinary aspect to the pedagogy of this type of course:

“I think it was really, really key. I think it helps stimulate some really interesting discussions between the professors and also the students. And because there is no such thing as a[n AI] canon, we’re always on the breaking edge, so everybody’s reading breaking edge kind of stuff and bringing it to the table. And so you can’t necessarily prepare [lectures beforehand.] It’s not easy. [...] A number of my talks were historically based, that is, an unchanging thing. But when we’re getting into how that interacts with the now, what you’re seeing, those are very, very much—you can’t write your lectures even a month ahead”.

The overall feedback and reflection from the students were positive⁵. In Baker’s (2025) words again: “Minds were changed. Some people felt like they had better literacy with the systems. They felt less scared of them, potentially. Some felt more antagonistic, potentially”. Key takeaways from this course that I would encourage instructors to consider in their own instruction, even in brief discussions: 1) highlighting where AI comes from. It is not as “new” as one would think but is the next step in the evolution of information-processing systems (Boden, 2018, pp. 3-11; Stork, 2023; Stryker and Kavlakoglu, 2024). Knowing how to use AI both technically and ethically within each specific field of study or class type, be it for the creation or generation of content, coding, economics, etc. In other words, reinforcing the importance of AI literacy (Klein, 2023; Reece, 2025; Ross, 2023; Sheppard and Mayton, 2024). How to clearly state and explain AI literacy in the classroom is

⁵ I, unfortunately, cannot release any specific comments from students due to privacy laws from the university and state of Arkansas.

outside the aims of this paper, as AI is too rapidly developing to have set models be illustrated in this article, only to be outdated by the time of publication. Thus, it is more reliant on the instructor to keep up to date on their own understanding of AI literacy and personal preference on how to instruct students on it within their course specialty.

The incoming generation of students (i.e. Gen-Z and Alpha) are much more cognizant and engaged in the current crises of the world than ever, and it is the duty of the instructor to not only teach them AI literacy in how to use these new and evolving tools but also understand the basis for them and the morally and ethically ugly horrors that helped build them (Ross, 2023). The studies mentioned in the introduction of this paper (Freeman, 2025, Chegg, 2025) statistically illustrate that students are more actively engaging with AI, especially for their academic work⁶. Thus, it is vital that universities and instructors address and clearly state their policies towards the use of AI in higher education because it is an active presence in campus life (Sheppard and Mayton, 2024; Prothero, 2024). However, I caution ancient history and art history instructors from outright shunning AI in their classrooms. Utilizing AI, a medium that undergraduate students are familiar with using, as a learning tool in the art history classroom, I argue, can provide a more active and engaging class discussion and learning environment for students. In the next section, I will provide some suggested AI-centered activities that can be conducted in the classroom that can either be copied directly for those instructors who are less familiar with AI and or jumping off points for brainstorming other uses of AI in the ancient art history classroom.

3. APPLICATIONS OF AI IN UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ANCIENT ART HISTORY EDUCATION

From the Chegg 2025 study, 69% of global students reported wanting “their curriculum to include training in AI tools relevant to their future careers”. In the professional realm of art history and even to the wider extent of studying ancient history, AI, arguably, is the next step in the evolution and expansion of digital humanities. The concept of digital humanities, in its broadest sense, is the digitization of media for archival and or the accessibility of media distribution. The most prominent areas that have seen the utilization of AI in the study of the ancient world are text and linguistic analysis of ancient texts, reconstruction of lost or damaged texts or artworks, text translations, and 3D modelling of archaeological sites, to name a few (Jarus, 2023; Liu, *et al.*, 2024; Moral-Andrés, *et al.*, 2022; Samira, 2024; Stork, 2023; Terras and Robertson, 2005). These applications are just building upon the expansive history of digital humanities and successful models and datasets/bases that have already existed before the GenAI/ChatGPT boom of 2022. Such as the Perseus Project, which offers a digital library of ancient Greco-Roman

⁶ Chegg reported that 67% of global students stated that they used GenAI for “academic tasks” versus 43% for “career development” and 42% for “personal organization” (Chegg, 2025, p. 5).

texts alongside linguistic analysis and translation tools. Or the Beazley Archive Pottery Database that archives circa 100,000 photographs of ancient Greek pottery, alongside other relevant secondary sources stemming from Professor Sir John Beazley's (1885-1970) career. All of these are excellent tools for researchers, and with AI expanding the efficiency of archiving and cataloguing, and providing more advanced tools for deeper analysis of ancient material that is currently beyond the single scholarly eye to perceive. To paraphrase David Stork's (2023) article 'How AI is expanding art history,' AI is contributing to analysing vast data sets; some tens of thousands of artworks that would have taken a single scholar a lifetime to analyse can be done by AI in mere hours. Revealing surprising results, such as in one study that used AI to analyse 11,000 portraits from the early Renaissance through the Modern eras, was able to extrapolate different trends throughout different art movements and careers of several individual artists, including the difference in angle of head tilts in self-portraits (Chou and Stork, 2023).

These new AI technologies are not without scrutiny, especially when it applies to using AI tools within the classroom⁷. However, where I see AI can be applied to art history education is through the use of developing recognition and visual analysis skills in advanced-level art history students and *prompt*-driven in-class discussion that develops entry-level or general education students' AI literacy and researching skills using ChatGPT. The exercises described below are untested against a student model, however, they are novel in their execution in comparison to other art history education assignment studies that have been posted to date⁸. For example, Professor James Hutson (2024) from Lindenwood University in Saint Charles, Missouri, USA conducted a study in 2024 comprised of 24 undergraduate and graduate students from a private, four-year liberal arts institution in St. Louis, Missouri who were enrolled in an ancient art history course that covered periods from ancient Mesopotamia through the Roman empire. The primary goal of the project was to "access pedagogical best practices for the use of AI art generators in art history education" through the use of *prompt* engineering to recreate a piece of art from the course material (Hutson, 2024, p. 7)⁹. This exercise pushed students to creatively and critically think about their descriptive word choices in trying to get the AI to replicate their chosen ancient artwork (chosen student examples included the *Nike of Samothrace*, the *Dying Gaul*, *Laocoon*, and the *Parthenon*).

Hutson allowed students to select their own GenAI: Craiyon was used by 50% of the students, MidJourney was used by 12.5%, ChatGPT-3 with DALLE-3 by 12.5%, and 25% of students opted for other unspecified AI tools. Hutson noted that there were various results of anatomical accuracy based on the type of GenAI used, and thus, "underscor[ing] the limitations of AI tools in accurately capturing complex and

⁷ See Ross 2023 and Ross and Baines 2024 for overview of Ancient Language Pedagogy. Select example of "AI attribution" debates: Guy, 2023; Greenberger, 2023; Hughes, 2023.

⁸ Though I aim to conduct a study of the exercises provided and publish a study in the near future.

⁹ *Prompt* engineering being "the art of describing to an AI exactly what you want it to do" (Bayer, 2025, p. 922).

nuanced details of human anatomy and poses, a crucial aspect of formal analysis in art” (Hutson, 2024, p. 13). *Prompting* Hutson in his recommendations to encourage the use of “more advanced and sophisticated AI tools such as Stable Diffusion and DALLE-3 [sic] in art history courses” (p. 17). During the initial planning stages of the *AI & Us* course, the instructors (namely Dr. Baker and myself) experimented with *prompt*-based strategies similar to those described by Hutson, obtaining comparable results. Trying to recreate the *Laocoon*, we used the following *prompt*: “Hellenistic sculpture of the moment when *Laocoon* and his sons are entwined by two massive serpents. Powerful muscles, contorted bodies, and expressions of agony. *Laocoon*’s face depicts despair and determination, his sons’ faces depict fear and anguish”. [Table 2](#) illustrates the varying results over different AI platforms and over time as the AIs developed. ChatGPT-4 easily produced a replica of *Laocoon*. Although I did have to remove the last sentence about expressions of agony, despair, and anguish because it went against OpenAI-ChatGPT’s content policies (see below for further discussion). Whereas, both GenCraft and Midjourney produced similar but bizarre results – matching the findings of Hutson¹⁰. What Hutson probably meant to imply, but failed to specify in detail, is AI’s resistance to generating nude bodies, even when it is in the realm of Classical art (this aspect will be addressed in more detail below). This confirms the observations made by Hutson (2024), which highlight that *prompt* engineering is an effective pedagogical strategy to develop students’ critical thinking, creativity, visual analysis, and articulation skills in art history education. The remainder of this section presents additional exercises—arguably novel within the field—for integrating AI into the ancient art history classroom.

My first suggested exercise for developing recognition and visual analysis skills stems from a reverse process of how AI is being used for artwork reconstructions. An example of AI artwork reconstruction process can be seen in a 2022 study by scholars in Spain (Moral-Andrés, *et al.*, 2022) who utilized DALL-E 2 to reconstruct damaged ancient Roman mosaics and, to further test the AI’s capabilities, removed sections of complete mosaics and asked DALL-E to reconstruct them. The results were somewhat successful, particularly when reconstructing geometric shapes or patterns, but the major errors occurred when trying to reconstruct faces and figures, especially nude figures. I recreated this experiment using ChatGPT-4 turbo (DALL-E and ChatGPT-4 both being AI models developed by OpenAI) to similar success, but ChatGPT instead generated completely new images in a different art style, not just filling the missing portions of the mosaic. Interestingly, for one mosaic of an Amazonomachy from Daphne, dated to the second half of the fourth century CE (Louvre inv. no. MND 1947, Figure 2 in Moral-Andrés *et al.*, 2022), ChatGPT incorrectly recognized it as the Battle of Issus, Alexander mosaic, and completely

¹⁰ See n. 11 below for discussion for the reasons for these differences, namely what datasets the AIs are drawing from.

generated a whole new mosaic that included the image of Alexander from the famous mosaic into the Amazonomachy mosaic (see [Figure 1](#)). Whereas, when I replicated another mosaic from the study (Figure 11 from Moral-Andrés *et al.*, 2022) that was primarily geometric in design, it was easily able to reconstruct the missing portions¹¹. The researchers noted that DALL-E's poor performance in recreating bodies, especially nude bodies, was due to DALL-E's policies on the contents of images (Moral-Andrés *et al.*, 2022, p. 18). I experienced the same issue while experimenting with ChatGPT in trying to *prompt* it to either generate images of nude ancient Greek athletic sculpture or reconstruct vases with nudity in them; it refused as the request did not follow its content policy¹². Similarly, with using OpenArt, "a platform dedicated to AI art enthusiasts", when *prompting* the AI more towards "nude athletic sculpture", the more it veered against it, usually by covering the male genitals with Classical-like drapery (see [Figure 2](#) & [Figure 3](#); OpenArt, 2025)¹³. Interestingly, when a nude "sculpture" was generated, arguably the erogenous or sexualized zones, namely the nipples and groin, were anatomically incorrect – similar to results found by Hutson (2024). The penises, in particular, were morphed into (presumably) a confusion between a fig leaf and an actual penis (see [Figure 4](#), [Figure 5](#) & [Figure 6](#)). This is problematic in terms of ancient Greco-Roman artwork reconstruction, where the vast number of artworks, both in sculpture and mosaics, depict nude figures. Proving a limitation in the use of public AI applications towards ancient artwork reconstruction. However, more specialized AIs can be created that override the nudity content policy issues and be built on a dataset of ancient artwork images to more accurately provide reconstructions of artworks¹⁴.

Where this can be applied in the classroom, however, is to test advanced art history students' recognition and visual analysis skills by deconstructing the artworks depicted and identifying the source of why the AI generated that specific

¹¹ One of the accountable differences between the Spanish study results and mine is due to which datasets each AI was trained or built upon. While neither AI's exact datasets have been released to the public, it is generally understood that OpenAI, the developer, scrubbed information from large, publicly available datasets from companies such as LAION and Common Crawl that "web crawl" the internet to process and index the information to search engines (Common Crawl, 2025). As well as other public resources such as *Wikipedia* and Yahoo Flickr Creative Commons (Abideen, 2023; Dsouza, 2025). Supposedly, DALL-E uses LAION, *Wikipedia*, and Yahoo Flickr Creative Commons. Whereas ChatGPT (up to 2021) is trained on "a massive and diverse dataset of text, including information from the internet, books, articles, and various sources like *Wikipedia*, Common Crawl, and even data from Reddit" (Dsouza, 2025). When asked, ChatGPT gave a similar response on where it was getting its information from. As such, I would argue the difference in the Spanish study results is because DALL-E pulls from *Wikipedia* and Yahoo Flickr, whereas with my results with ChatGPT, which also sources from "books and articles", accounts for these differences.

¹² "OpenAI's content policy does not allow the generation of adult content, including: Nude or sexually explicit depictions, whether realistic or stylized (e.g., anime-style nudity). Sexually suggestive content that focuses on the human body in an erotic context. Content involving sexual acts or explicit body parts, even if intended as art or for non-pornographic purposes. There are narrow exceptions for medical, educational, or scientific contexts (e.g., anatomy diagrams), but even then, the depictions must be non-sexualized, clinical, and appropriate in tone" (ChatGPT, 2025a).

¹³ OpenArt, unlike all the other AI discussed thus far, is not a part of the OpenAI conglomerate, but founded by Coco Mao and John Qiao, former Google employees, in 2022.

¹⁴ For example, ChatGPTs, which allows users to build their own dataset, but would presumably still have to adhere to OpenAI's content policies.

image from a specific *prompt*. In other words, reverse *prompt* engineering. For example, [Figure 6](#) was generated by OpenArt from the *prompt*: “ancient Greek sculpture male nude athlete”. It did generate a nude sculpture, albeit with a tassel-like penis as mentioned above. Situated on a stone slab, as ancient Greek sculptures are most often seen, the figure is in an exaggerated contrapposto that feeds into an even more exaggerated curve of the torso. The head dramatically turned to the right, which is more of a trait I would liken to the Renaissance (think Michelangelo’s *David*) than Greco-Roman, though examples do exist. The tightly curled hair looks more popcorn-like in texture, most likely drawn from Hellenistic and later Roman hairstyles. The nipples and even the navel are bizarre, again with this protruding popcorn-like texture that speaks more towards the AI’s content policies than references from antiquity. But what is most interesting about this generated sculpture is the two objects he holds in his hands – his right hand is clearly misplaced/shaped and does not correctly hold the object. The objects look like two curved pieces of driftwood from their texture. Given that the AI *prompt* included the term “athlete”, I can provide two theories on what these objects are drawn from and or meant to represent. Either, they are *halteres*, rounded weights equivalent to modern dumbbells used in the pentathlon long-jump (*halma*) competition. Or they are dual *strigils*, a curved, concave metal tool, used by athletes to “scrape” off oil and dirt from their skin after exercise. More likely, they are meant to be *halteres*, given the overall design and the fact that athletes are meant to hold them in both hands. However, to my knowledge, there is no known sculpture of an ancient athlete holding halteres. This visual is only seen in vase paintings. Whereas the *strigil* is seen in both sculpture (i.e. the *Apoxyomenos*) and vase painting, however, the athlete is only meant to hold one and is only seen in all ancient depictions holding one, not two.

This exercise, using AI-generated images, is a new and innovative way to test advanced students’ art historical knowledge, recognition skills, and doing in-depth visual analysis, both as an in-class exercise and an essay assignment, whereby the student would be required to provide specific examples to support their analysis, such as the one provided above in a more fleshed-out and academically written paper. Further, it does not have to be limited to analyzing just one image, but the student can be induced to further tweak the *prompt* for the AI, discussing how the generated image did or did not change and why. Thus, allowing the student to more actively engage with artworks on a platform that they are comfortable with. This can be substituted for or added to the standard recognition tests of known and unknown artworks. More so, it circumvents some cheating techniques of reverse Google image searching unknown artworks (i.e. artworks not shown in lectures) as these are purely made-up images but are still based on and recognizable to ancient Greco-

Roman techniques and characteristics. Thus, allowing these images to be used as testable material (with some grace on argued observations on the student's part)¹⁵.

Circling back to the concept of AI literacy, one of the important aspects to note about AI is its Western-based biases, owing to the primarily Western-based sources of AI datasets¹⁶. Not just in art historical contexts, but AI datasets at large are concentrated in Western nations, particularly the United States and Europe (Maslej, *et al.*, 2025). And are still found to have implicit bias against race, gender, religion, and health (Maslej, *et al.*, 2025, pp. 196-199; Bai, *et al.*, 2024). Notwithstanding, Western or Euro/US-centric biases have been a long-standing issue in art history, most notably highlighted by James Elkin's 2007 volume *Is Art History Global?*¹⁷ However, over the last two decades, there has been a rise in the inclusion of "Non-Western" material in higher education art history survey courses. A study by Levitt and Rutherford (2019) in the Western versus Non-Western content in the three most prominent art history survey texts: Janson's *History of Art*, Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, and Stokstad's *Art History* from their "Early Period" (c. 1962-1995) editions where the books were comprised of 97% Western artists and only 3% Non-Western arts. To their "Intermediate Period" (c. 2001-2005) editions that featured 90% of Western Artists and 10% of Non-Western Artists. To their "Recent Period" (c. 2014-2016) editions, where 77% were Western Artists and 23% were Non-Western artists. Further, the Advanced Placement (AP) Art History course and exam offered by the College Board in the United States in the 2015-2016 academic year introduced a new curriculum that included Non-Western sections, making up 28% of the total course curriculum (Urist, 2016)¹⁸.

¹⁵ The *AI & Us* course had a slightly similar multi-stepped assignment, where students were first asked to *prompt* ChatGPT to "create a new art movement" using phrases such as "new art movement or avant-garde" (Baker, Caton, and Parker, 2024). Students were then to write a paragraph answering the questions: "What was your *prompt*? What were the results? Do they sound like they could be legitimate? Why or why not?" (Baker, Caton, and Parker, 2024). Next, "using at least three descriptors from one of the original answers, *prompt* ChatGPT with 'What artist uses (cut and paste descriptors from the original answer of your choosing)'" (Baker, Caton, and Parker, 2024). Lastly, students were to write a paragraph that summarizes the previous step and find and describe at least one work of art that connected with elements of the new art movement that the AI generated in the first step.

¹⁶ See n. 11.

¹⁷ Johnathon Harris (2017) provides a nice synopsis of the underlying issues of "globalization" or "decolonizing" art history: "art history, as a discipline, remains broadly a Euro-US centric discourse that originated in the era of nation-states and nationalism. Its traditional armory of concepts, presuppositions, values, research methods and evaluative frameworks remain rooted in this historical development (though modernism, before globalization, started to put the entire edifice under significant strain intellectually and institutionally). Critical studies of globalization in culture and art, and critical analyses of the ways in which these are now being studied, have to start with this recognition and its consequences. I am no more convinced that art history can escape this imperialist legacy when it attempts to deal with globalized contemporary art (and its antecedent history) than I am that globalized contemporary art can avoid the predominant influence of Euro-US modernism/ late-modernism. A truly adequate 'global art studies' paradigm would need to be wholly independent of art history's imperialist and nationalist legacies" (p. 29).

¹⁸ Not including the Non-Western based artists in the "Global Contemporary" unit. It is unclear what the curriculum weighing was before 2015/16. This curriculum does not seem to have changed or been updated when examining in 2025.

My next exercise, aimed at the lower freshman/sophomore levels, highlights AI bias, developing research skills using AI, and can be delivered through *prompt*-based discussion in class or as a homework assignment¹⁹. Start by plugging the following *prompt* into ChatGPT multiple times: “give me a list of the top 20 most important works in the history of art”. When I conducted this experiment in May 2025, I had the following results: my first attempt gave me a list of all Western-based artworks starting from the Renaissance (e.g. Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Wedding Portrait*, da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, Michelangelo’s *David*) to the 1900s contemporary artwork (e.g. Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain*, Andy Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Cans*) ([Figure 7](#))²⁰. Immediately after, I plugged in the same *prompt* and was given a divided list of “Pre-Modern and Renaissance (Before 1800)” and “Modern to Contemporary (1800-Present)” ([Figure 8](#)). Still all Western-focused but now had some ancient artworks including the Prehistoric Lascaux Cave Paintings, The Parthenon and its Sculptures, and the Bayeux Tapestry, before it started citing Renaissance artworks. Here is where I suggest this can go into two different directions: one more suited for *prompt*-based discussion in class, and the other more inquiring into the bias of ChatGPT’s datasets. I will briefly expand on both.

From the second attempt, focusing on Greco-Roman art history, ChatGPT offered “The Parthenon and its Sculptures (esp. the Elgin Marbles) (5th century BCE) – Greece” and under this listing, it was stated why that artwork is important “architectural and sculptural embodiment of classical ideals” (ChatGPT, 2025b; [Figure 8](#)). From here, you could go in two different directions of asking “what are the Elgin Marbles?” If the class did not know, then ask ChatGPT that question. Hopefully, leading you down the line to the issue of cultural appropriation. However, I focused on “what are classical ideals?” since these ancient Greek sculptures are meant to “embody” these ideals, what are they? So, I gave ChatGPT the *prompt*: “what are ‘classical ideals’ art” ([Figure 9](#)). Putting quotations around “classical ideals” to make sure it captures that exact phrase and including the word “art” to make sure it is focused on the subject at hand – and by doing this in class, you would be demonstrating to students methods of researching using keyword searches and possibly expanding into explanations of Boolean operators. In response to this *prompt*, it provided the explanation of “‘Classical ideals’ in art refer to the aesthetic values and principles that originated in ancient Greece and Rome, which became foundational for Western art, especially during the Renaissance and Neoclassical periods. These ideals emphasize balance, harmony, proportion, and an idealized representation of the human form” (ChatGPT, 2025c; [Figure 9](#)).

The response was followed by a list of “Key Characteristics of Classical Ideals in Art” and “Examples of Art Reflecting Classical Ideals”. From here, this can lead into any number of avenues for the class to explore or for students to go off on their own

¹⁹ This is taken and modified from one of Baker’s assignments in *AI & Us* course (Baker, Caton, Parker 2024).

²⁰ I will note there was one non-Western artwork in this list – Hokusai’s *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

exploration and research. In my experimentation, I followed along with one of the characteristics provided of the “golden ratio”. After which, I *prompted* the AI: “what sources did you use to find all this information on the Parthenon and the golden ratio?”. In response:

“The information I provided on the Parthenon and the Golden Ratio comes from a combination of well-established scholarly sources, architectural analysis, and historical studies commonly referenced in academic and educational contexts. While I didn't consult external websites in real time, the information is drawn from a synthesis of the following types of sources” (ChatGPT, 2025d; see [Figure 10](#)).

Followed by a list of resources. Here is where I found one of the current (as of May 2025) faults of ChatGPT – while it can cite general resources, including articles and books, it can only cite specifics on websites and not for exact pages within books (see below)²¹.

By this point, it is easy to go down the rabbit hole of research but thinking about our AI literacy and being activity aware of where our sources are coming from as part of ethical research practices – I called ChatGPT out on with the *prompt*: “why is your list different every time I use the [sic] same *prompt*?” ([Figure 11](#)). Followed by “where are you drawing this information from?” ([Figure 12](#)) and “why are there not more ancient artworks on this list?” ([Figure 13](#)). Its responses were adequate. Providing live in-class demonstrations such as these are important for students to understand AI literacy, as well as to understand how to begin their own research²².

In the 2025 Chegg survey, when asked why students used GenAI for their university studies 55% reported that they used GenAI because it helped them learn faster, 41% that it freed up more of their time, 38% it allowed more creative use of learning, 37% made learning more interactive, and 35% said it personalised their learning (p. 15). Further, when asked what they mostly used GenAI for 56% stated that they used it to understand a concept or subject, 52% for researching assignments and projects, 46% for generating initial ideas/first drafts for assignments, and 41% for writing/editing assignments and essays (p.16). Freeman's (2025) survey had similar results, where the majority used AI to explain

²¹ Also see footnote n. 11 above.

²² As an aside, the personality tone in the responses to the *prompts* “why is your list different every time I use the [sic] same *prompt*?” ([Figure 11](#)) and “why are there not more ancient artworks on this list?” ([Figure 13](#)) is noteworthy. To the first *prompt*, ChatGPT responded: “That's a great question - and it comes down to how I work. Here's why the list can vary even when you ask the same *prompt* multiple times” (ChatGPT, 2025e) and the second: “Excellent observation - and you're right to question it. Here's why ancient artworks are often underrepresented on lists like this, even though they laid the foundations for much of human artistic expression” (ChatGPT, 2025f). The placating tone of “That's a great question” and “Excellent observation” as if to say “good job!” notably to what the AI assumes is a student, given the nature of the questions I had been asking it. This AI personality, I believe, warrants further research, but is beyond the limitations of this paper.

concepts (58%), summarise articles (48%), and suggest research ideas (41%)²³. Students are using AI because it helps them learn and is more interactive.

Integrating this into the classroom can further the positive impact of AI in art history education. As Hutson (2024) found in his study:

“Students’ feedback on their experience with the study was generally positive but varied. One student enthusiastically shared, ‘I thoroughly enjoyed this assignment and I would be very interested in doing another AI assignment in my other courses!’ Another remarked on the assignment’s ease: ‘crazy easy’. One student appreciated the innovative nature of the task, finding it both challenging and fun. However, a contrasting view was expressed by a student who felt the exercise was interesting but did not significantly aid in learning or understanding art history. These responses collectively suggest that while there is excitement and appreciation for the innovative use of AI in art history education, there is also a degree of skepticism and concern about its effectiveness and impact on learning”.

4. AI AS A CHEATING TOOL

Admittedly, surveys show that students are hesitant to use AI because they are concerned they will be accused of committing academic misconduct (45%) and or they are concerned about the accuracy of AI-generated content (38%) (Chegg, 2025, p. 14). As educators are aware, there will always be students who cheat for whatever reason. While AI tools in education can make learning easier, there are students who will take advantage of this technology to have AI generate an assignment for them. Freeman’s (2025) study reported that 41% of students agreed or strongly agreed that content created by AI would get them a good grade in their subject²⁴.

When experimenting with ChatGPT, I had it generate a number of different essay topics, including some I use in my classes. The papers produced were, in my opinion, average or meeting standard papers. If these were standalone papers, they may have come under scrutiny, but when grading a pile of papers, the papers that ChatGPT produced would not have raised my alarm bells. However, I would argue this is because I have AI literacy and know how to use AI *prompt* engineering to generate presumably acceptable papers. For example, I used terms like “classical reception” and “reinterpretation”, advanced words that an entry-level undergraduate would not be familiar with.

More concerning is that when I ran these papers through AI Plagiarism checkers, such as the free-to-use Pharsly.Ai, found 0% of AI-generated text. Grammarly, a popular free writing assistance AI, detected some plagiarism, but only with the paid Grammarly Pro version. TurnItIn, a universally used plagiarism checker, reported that as of March 2024, of the 200 million writing assignments that

²³ Note: see respective studies for the full breakdown of all options offered. Those presented here are only the top results for both surveys.

²⁴ 26% neither agreed nor disagreed and 33% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

had been reviewed, AI use was detected in about 20% of the papers, and 3% were at least 80% AI-generated (TurnItIn, 2024). While numbers for academic misconduct are relatively low, the safeguards for AI in education are not keeping pace with the advancement of generative AI. There are still faults in the system. For example, I have found that ChatGPT is better at providing in-text citation-based referencing (such as APA and MLA) than footnote-based referencing (such as Chicago and Oxford). But in this rapidly evolving technology, it will not be long before ChatGPT “learns” how to reference better.

5. CONCLUSION

AI is a fast-developing technology that is already part of everyday life. With the emerging generations of students being raised alongside technology (i.e. the “Screen Age”), it is a part of their routine lifestyle and environment. Educators need to evolve with the times, just as instructors have (sometimes begrudgingly) had to evolve from projector slides to PowerPoint slide shows. AI is here and is the next step in the technological evolution of information processing systems. It is nearly impossible to keep up with how quickly AI is developing, but universities and instructors need to acknowledge this very present technology. As of 2025, universities all over the world are implementing policies on AI; instructors are including AI usage statements in their syllabi, usually with university and library guidance. Syllabus statements have ranged from “Use prohibited”, “Use only with prior permission”, “Use only with acknowledgement”, or “Use is freely permitted with no acknowledgement” (Sheppard and Mayton, 2024). Institutions have encouraged “clearly communicating expectations with students that foster an atmosphere of trust while offering students opportunities to engage in discussions to better understand and to help them expand their level of AI literacy” (Sheppard and Mayton, 2024). For example, the Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT) conducted a national survey of middle and high school teachers in 2023 and found that due to the rise in GenAI use, 52% of the teachers are more distrustful of their students’ originality in their assignments. Triggering prejudice in the teachers’ grading, which is reflected in the drastic 16% increase in student discipline as a result of GenAI use from the 2022-2023 to the 2023-2024 school year. Further, 40% of teachers admitted that they reported students for AI usage by how they reacted when an adult confronted them about the alleged misuse of GenAI (Dwyer and Laird, 2024). Experts warn that fixating on plagiarism and cheating is the wrong focus. Tara Nattrass, managing director of innovation and strategy at ISTE+ASCD, a nonprofit that offers content and professional development on educational technology and curriculum, stated:

“We need to reframe the conversation and engage with students around the ways in which AI can support them in their learning and the ways in which it may be detrimental to their learning [...] We want students to know that activities like using AI to write essays and pass them off as their own is harmful to their learning

while using AI to break down difficult topics to strengthen understanding can help them in their learning” (Prothero, 2024).

The use of AI as a tool that students comfortably use on a daily basis in the classroom can get students to be more actively engaged in discussion because of the familiarity and likeability of AI platforms. Whilst doing so, instructors can teach students how to ethically utilize AI as a research tool, making them cognitively aware of the pitfalls of dataset scraping that form the basis of AI, highlighting the bias, and ever questioning where our sources come from to make them better critical thinkers and researchers in the future.

This paper has demonstrated a successful case study of an interdisciplinary course taught on AI. Further, this paper has offered a number of applications of the use of AI specifically in the ancient art historical classroom at various university levels (beginner/freshman to advanced/senior or even postgraduate). Namely, using AI to direct *prompt*-driven discussion in the classroom and examples of assignments that cultivate critical thinking and recognition skills. These have been provided to inspire and encourage educators to use in their own classrooms as a way of embracing AI into the ancient Greco-Roman past.

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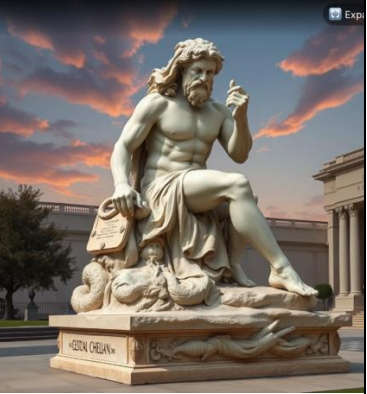
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TABLES

Wk.	Date	Module	Agenda
1	Jan 8	Intro	Intro, Syllabus Review
	Jan 10		DALL-E Hands-On Workshop
2	Jan 15	How did we get here?	MLK Day – No Class
	Jan 17		History of AI
3	Jan 22		Programming Primer
	Jan 24		How to Talk to Computers
4	Jan 29	Creativity & Imagination	Creativity and Imagination
	Jan 31		Imitation/Emulation
5	Feb 5		Photoshop Hands-On Workshop
	Feb 7		Class Discussion: Graphic Design Assign. 2
6	Feb 12	The Mind and the Machine	AI Avant-garde?
	Feb 14		General Philosophy of the Mind
7	Feb 19		Recognition/Cognition
	Feb 21		Midjourney Hands-On Workshop
8	Feb 26	Failures	Class Discussion: Graphic Design Assign. 3
	Feb 28		Model Collapse
9	Mar 4		Human and Machine Failures in Information Processing
	Mar 6		Hands are Hard
10	Mar 11		Graphic Design Hands-On Workshop
	Mar 13		Class Discussion: Graphic Design Assign. 4
Spring Break			
11	Mar 25	The Good and the Bad	General Ethics
	Mar 27		Deep Fakes, Access, and Representation in the Age of AI
12	Apr 1	Bias	Models
	Apr 3		The Story of Us?
13	Apr 8		No Class
	Apr 10		Philosophical Problems with AI
14	Apr 15		Graphic Design Hands-On Workshop
	Apr 17		Class Discussion: Graphic Design Assign. 5
15	Apr 22		Round Table Discussion (Inclement Weather Day)
	Apr 24		Instructions for Final

Key	Interdisciplinary	Art History Focus	Graphic Design Focus	Philosophy Focus	Basic Instruction
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Table 1. Course Schedule for Spring 2024 *AI & Us* course taught at Arkansas State University.

		
GenCraft 2023	GenCraft 2025	GenCraft 2025 Prompt: "Laocoon"

MidJourney 2024	
ChatGPT 2025 <i>Prompt:</i> "Hellenistic sculpture of the moment when Laocoon and his sons are entwined by two massive serpents. powerful muscles, contorted bodies"	
ChatGPT 2025 Response when put in full <i>prompt</i>. Revised results above.	The image generation request likely triggered our content policy because it involved graphic depiction of suffering, even though it's in an artistic and historical context like the Laocoön sculpture. While the original artwork is a classical masterpiece, automated filters sometimes flag descriptions that emphasize suffering. • Expressions of intense agony • Entwining or constriction by serpents • Fear and anguish, particularly involving children These can be interpreted by the system as depictions of violence or distress, even in educational or artistic contexts. To move forward, I can adjust the prompt slightly to focus more on the dramatic artistry and emotional tension without emphasizing suffering too explicitly. Would you like me to try that?

Table 2. Prompt: “Hellenistic sculpture of the moment when *Laocoon* and his sons are entwined by two massive serpents. powerful muscles, contorted bodies, and expressions of agony. *Laocoon*’s face despair and determination, his sons’ faces depict fear and anguish”. *Same prompts used in each designated GenAI unless otherwise stated.

FIGURES



Figure 1. ChatGPT-4 –turbo generated image from OpenAI, May 2025. Prompt: “reconstruct the areas that are missing in this mosaic”. Mosaic used: Louvre inv. no. MND 1947, Figure 2 in Moral-Andrés *et al.*, 2022.



Figure 2 (left). OpenArt generated Image with prompt: “ancient greek male nude athlete art”, May 2025. Note the *skeptron* that the statue holds, again another item that is not usually seen in sculpture,

but solely seen in vase paintings. Further, notice that while the AI generated a “statue” the tone of the “marble” are actually flesh-toned (noticeably on the toes) and the drapery looks like the actual texture of fuzzy cloth, but stone sculpted drapery. [Figure 3 \(center\)](#). OpenArt generated Image with *prompt*: “ancient greek male nude athlete art”, May 2025. Note the small pieces of stone on the base as an attempt to hint at a stone sculpture when the “statue” has been given flesh tones. [Figure 4 \(right\)](#). OpenArt generated Image with *prompt*: “ancient greek male nude”, May 2025. Note the odd rendering of the nipples and anatomically incorrect penis. Further, the generated image with the textures depicted makes it seem like a statue is wearing a fur coat rather than the drapery being sculpted out of the same “stone”.



[Figure 5 \(left\)](#). OpenArt generated Image with *prompt*: “ancient greek male nude athlete”, May 2025. Note the tassel that stands in place of a penis and the texturing of the nipples and navel. Further, in this generated image, the AI has given a porous texture to the “sculpture”, particularly seen on the limbs, to give the impression of a stone surface. [Figure 6 \(right\)](#). OpenArt generated Image with *prompt*: “ancient greek male nude athlete”, May 2025. Note the extreme overexaggeration of the body, the anatomically incorrect penis, and the texture of the hair, nipples, and navel. Further, the two objects in the statue’s hand are discussed in the paper (see p. 76).

Give me a list of the top 20 most important works in the history of art

Here's a list of 20 of the most important and influential works in the history of art. These pieces have significantly shaped the development of visual culture, inspired generations of artists, and are recognized globally for their artistic and historical value:

Top 20 Most Important Works in Art History

1. **Mona Lisa** – Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1503–1506)
Iconic portrait known for its enigmatic expression and masterful technique.
2. **The Last Supper** – Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1495–1498)
A landmark of Renaissance narrative painting with psychological depth.
3. **The School of Athens** – Raphael (1509–1511)
Celebration of classical philosophy and Renaissance humanism.
4. **The Creation of Adam (Sistine Chapel Ceiling)** – Michelangelo (c. 1512)
One of the most recognizable images in the world, exemplifying High Renaissance fresco.
5. **David** – Michelangelo (1501–1504)
A symbol of human perfection and Renaissance ideals.
6. **Guernica** – Pablo Picasso (1937)
A powerful anti-war statement and modernist masterpiece.
7. **The Starry Night** – Vincent van Gogh (1889)
A swirling, emotive depiction of the night sky, emblematic of modern expression.
8. **Las Meninas** – Diego Velázquez (1656)
A complex, self-reflexive exploration of reality and illusion.
9. **The Arnolfini Portrait** – Jan van Eyck (1434)
A milestone in Northern Renaissance painting, known for its detail and symbolism.
10. **The Birth of Venus** – Sandro Botticelli (c. 1484–1486)
A hallmark of early Renaissance grace and mythology.
11. **The Persistence of Memory** – Salvador Dalí (1931)
Icon of Surrealism, famous for its melting clocks.
12. **Campbell's Soup Cans** – Andy Warhol (1962)
Defining Pop Art work that blurred the line between art and commercialism.
13. **Impression, Sunrise** – Claude Monet (1872)
Gave name to the Impressionist movement, celebrated for its light and color.
14. **Liberty Leading the People** – Eugène Delacroix (1830)
Romantic allegory of revolution and national identity.
15. **The Night Watch** – Rembrandt van Rijn (1642)
Baroque masterwork known for its dramatic use of light and group composition.
16. **American Gothic** – Grant Wood (1930)
Iconic image of American regionalism and cultural identity.
17. **The Great Wave off Kanagawa** – Hokusai (c. 1831)
The most famous Japanese woodblock print; influential in both East and West.
18. **A Sunday on La Grande Jatte** – Georges Seurat (1884–1886)
Pioneering work of Pointillism and modern visual theory.
19. **Number 1A, 1948** – Jackson Pollock
A quintessential Abstract Expressionist piece with groundbreaking technique.
20. **Fountain** – Marcel Duchamp (1917)
Radical conceptual work that redefined what art could be.

Figure 7. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.

Give me a list of the top 20 most important works in the history of art.

Here's a list of 20 of the most important and influential works in the history of art, selected for their impact, innovation, and cultural significance. The list spans different time periods, cultures, and movements:

Pre-Modern and Renaissance (Before 1800)

1. **Lascaux Cave Paintings** (ca. 17,000 BCE) – France
– Prehistoric masterpiece of early human creativity.
2. **The Parthenon and its Sculpture (esp. the Elgin Marbles)** (5th century BCE) – Greece
– Architectural and sculptural embodiment of classical ideals.
3. **The Bayeux Tapestry** (11th century) – Norman/Anglo-Saxon
– A unique narrative textile chronicling the Norman Conquest.
4. **Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes** (1305) – Italy
– A milestone in Western painting, introducing realism and emotion.
5. **Jan van Eyck – The Arnolfini Portrait** (1434) – Netherlands
– Mastery of oil painting and complex symbolism.
6. **Sandro Botticelli – The Birth of Venus** (ca. 1484–86) – Italy
– Icon of Renaissance idealism and mythology.
7. **Leonardo da Vinci – The Last Supper** (1495–98) – Italy
– Revolutionary approach to narrative and perspective.
8. **Michelangelo – David** (1501–1504) – Italy
– Quintessential Renaissance sculpture.
9. **Raphael – The School of Athens** (1509–11) – Italy
– A visual synthesis of classical philosophy and Renaissance humanism.
10. **Hieronymus Bosch – The Garden of Earthly Delights** (ca. 1490–1510) – Netherlands
– Unprecedented imagination and surreal vision in early art.

Modern to Contemporary (1800–Present)

11. **Diego Velázquez – Las Meninas** (1656) – Spain
– Complex play on perspective and viewer engagement.
12. **Francisco Goya – The Third of May 1808** (1814) – Spain
– Harrowing depiction of political violence and martyrdom.
13. **Édouard Manet – Olympia** (1865) – France
– A scandalous and defining moment in modernism.
14. **Claude Monet – Impression, Sunrise** (1872) – France
– The painting that named the Impressionist movement.
15. **Vincent van Gogh – The Starry Night** (1889) – Netherlands/France
– Emotional turbulence rendered in vivid color and form.
16. **Pablo Picasso – Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)** (1907) – Spain/France
– A radical break from tradition; proto-Cubist masterpiece.
17. **Marcel Duchamp – Fountain** (1917) – France/USA
– Redefined what art could be; cornerstone of conceptual art.
18. **Frida Kahlo – The Two Fridas** (1939) – Mexico
– Deeply personal, surrealist exploration of identity.
19. **Jackson Pollock – Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)** (1950) – USA
– Landmark of Abstract Expressionism and action painting.
20. **Andy Warhol – Marilyn Diptych** (1962) – USA
– Pop Art's commentary on celebrity, mass production, and death.

Figure 8. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.

what are "classical ideals" art

"Classical ideals" in art refer to the aesthetic values and principles that originated in **ancient Greece and Rome**, which became foundational for Western art, especially during the **Renaissance and Neoclassical periods**. These ideals emphasize balance, harmony, proportion, and an idealized representation of the human form.

Key Characteristics of Classical Ideals in Art:

- 1. Proportion and Symmetry**
 - Based on mathematical harmony (e.g., the Golden Ratio), aiming for perfect, balanced compositions.
- 2. Idealized Human Form**
 - Bodies are depicted as anatomically perfect, athletic, and youthful, representing an ideal rather than a real person.
- 3. Naturalism with Restraint**
 - Realistic depictions of anatomy, drapery, and space, but with calm, controlled expressions and poses.
- 4. Order and Rationality**
 - Emphasis on logic and clarity over emotion and chaos; art was meant to reflect an ordered, rational universe.
- 5. Moral and Civic Themes**
 - Art often celebrated virtues like heroism, wisdom, courage, and civic duty.
- 6. Influence of Philosophy**
 - Rooted in the ideas of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, where beauty was seen as a reflection of truth and virtue.

Examples of Art Reflecting Classical Ideals:

- **The Parthenon** – Architectural perfection through proportionality and order.
- **Polykleitos' *Doryphoros* (Spear Bearer)** – Canon of ideal male proportions.
- **Raphael's *School of Athens*** – A Renaissance revival of classical balance and intellectual ideals.
- **Michelangelo's *David*** – A heroic, idealized male nude rooted in Greco-Roman models.

Would you like to explore how these ideals contrast with later movements like Romanticism or Modernism?

Figure 9. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.

what sources did you use to find all this information on the parthenon and the golden ratio?

The information I provided on the **Parthenon and the Golden Ratio** comes from a combination of well-established scholarly sources, architectural analysis, and historical studies commonly referenced in academic and educational contexts. While I didn't consult external websites in real time, the information is drawn from a synthesis of the following types of sources:

For the Golden Ratio:

- **Euclid's *Elements*** – Ancient Greek geometry text where the golden ratio was first mathematically defined.
- **Luca Pacioli's *De Divina Proportione* (1509)** – Renaissance treatise on the divine proportion (Golden Ratio), illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci.
- **Modern mathematics and art history texts** – Including works by Mario Livio (*The Golden Ratio*) and various academic papers on aesthetics and visual harmony.

For the Parthenon:

- **Architectural studies and reconstructions** – Scholarly works analyzing proportions of ancient Greek temples.
- **J.J. Pollitt's writings on classical art** – Particularly in *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*.
- **Frederick D. Cooper and Vincent Scully** – Researchers who explored proportional systems in Greek architecture.
- **Art history textbooks** – Such as *Gardner's Art Through the Ages* and *The Story of Art* by E.H. Gombrich.

Caveat:

Some claims about the Golden Ratio in the Parthenon are **disputed**. Modern scholars like **Markus Asper** and others argue that proportional similarities may be **coincidental** or based on intuitive aesthetics rather than deliberate mathematical planning. These debates are part of ongoing art historical scholarship.

Would you like recommendations for books or academic articles that explore this in more depth?

Figure 10. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.

why is your list different every time I use this same prompt?

That's a great question — and it comes down to how I work. Here's why the list can vary even when you ask the same prompt multiple times:

1. Subjectivity of Art History

Art history isn't governed by a single definitive list. Different historians, scholars, and institutions prioritize different works based on:

- Cultural context
- Geographic focus
- Medium (painting vs sculpture vs architecture)
- Contemporary relevance or scholarly trends

So there's no "one true" list — just well-argued perspectives.

2. Creative Diversity in Responses

I'm designed to generate helpful, varied answers, not repeat myself mechanically. That means I might select different works that are equally justifiable depending on:

- Interpretation of "important" (technical, cultural, historical impact?)
- Balance between well-known vs underappreciated works
- Attempts to broaden scope (e.g., include non-Western art)

3. Prompt Nuances

Even slight changes in how you phrase the question, your past conversation context, or follow-ups can subtly influence what I include.

If you want a consistent list or one based on specific criteria (like "Western art only" or "most technically innovative"), I can lock it down for you. Want me to create a standardized, curated version you can reuse or refer to consistently?

Figure 11. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.

where are you drawing this information from

I don't pull information live from specific external sources unless I use a web tool — which I haven't done here. Instead, my responses are based on a mixture of:

1. Pretraining on a Broad Corpus

I've been trained on a large and diverse dataset that includes:

- Academic texts and art history surveys
 - Museum collections and catalogues
 - Articles, essays, and educational materials
 - Public domain books and reference works
- This means I "know" common scholarly perspectives up to my knowledge cutoff (June 2024).

2. Cross-referencing Canonical Consensus

When I list "important" works of art, I prioritize those that appear repeatedly across:

- Major art history textbooks (e.g., *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, *Janson's History of Art*)
- Global museum highlights (e.g., Louvre, MoMA, Uffizi, Prado)
- Academic curricula in university art history programs
- Critical essays and retrospectives from well-regarded sources

3. No Wikipedia

You mentioned you prefer not to use Wikipedia. I respect that and avoid relying on it even indirectly in how I frame things for you.

So while I don't quote or cite specific pages unless you ask me to, my answers aim to reflect a balanced synthesis of mainstream, reputable art historical thinking.

Would you like me to cite specific non-Wikipedia sources for any particular artwork or claim?

Figure 12. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025. Note: It is important to remember that AI like ChatGPT use algorithms to track user preferences that it "learns" over time. While experimenting with ChatGPT it very quickly learned that I did not want it pulling from *Wikipedia* as shown here.

why are there not more ancient artworks on this list?

Excellent observation — and you're right to question it. Here's why ancient artworks are often underrepresented on lists like this, even though they laid the foundations for much of human artistic expression:

1. Survival Bias

Most ancient art **hasn't survived**. Organic materials (wood, textiles, pigments) decay, and ancient sites were looted or destroyed over millennia. What we have is only a fraction of what once existed.

For example, we know the ancient Greeks produced magnificent paintings, but almost none of them remain. We mostly know them through Roman copies or textual descriptions.

2. Limited Documentation

Many surviving ancient works lack detailed **context** or artist attribution, which modern art historians often rely on when assessing importance.

- We often don't know **who** made them, **why**, or how they fit into a broader artistic narrative.
- This makes comparison to later, fully documented works more difficult.

3. Western Canon Legacy

Traditional art history—especially as taught in the West—has long **privileged post-Classical European art**, especially from the Renaissance onward. Although this is changing, that legacy still affects many "top" lists.

4. Conceptual Influence

Modern and contemporary works (e.g., by Picasso, Warhol, Duchamp) often show up on lists because they **shaped the direction of art**, not just because of technical skill. Ancient art was formative, but less frequently referenced in current movements—except when reinterpreted or reappropriated.

Figure 13. ChatGPT generated response, May 2025.