

**The places represented in *Version Control* at first glance seem familiar, but spending more time with the paintings reveals locations more reminiscent of science fiction. This sense of the uncanny seems to capture something of the wariness many people have about the use of AI. What has using AI taught you about creating something ‘real’?**

Using AI has made me question what we really mean by “real” in an image - whether we mean evidence, believability, or felt experience. AI images are real in the sense that they exist, circulate, and have effects; they’re not simply “fake,” but a new form of image-making with different relationships to reference and authorship. What’s changed is the kind of uncertainty they introduce, which helps explain the uncanny atmosphere in *Version Control*: people’s caution is entirely sensible because so much of the engineering is opaque - training data, processes, and biases aren’t easily visible. Working with AI has therefore sharpened my attention to how images earn trust, and painting becomes a way to slow the image down and examine the reality it claims to offer.

**Burning data centres are a recurring motif throughout this exhibition. What was it that kept you returning to this image?**

I kept returning to burning data centres because they condensed the central tension I was trying to think through: the promise of progress alongside the costs it hides. During my research for the show, I came across Philip James de Loutherbourg’s 1801 painting of the birth of Industrial Revolution, *Coalbrookdale by Night*, and that image of industry lit up by fire - both awe-inspiring and ominous - stuck with me as a historical echo of the present. Data centres are often framed as clean, frictionless infrastructure, but the motif of them burning lets that friction show: it asks what is being damaged or destroyed along the way, what is consumed to keep the system running, and who or what pays for that forward motion.

**You compare using AI to moving through a landscape without a predetermined path, accumulating fragments along the way. This is not unlike Peter Doig’s use of photographs in his work, embracing physical marks or ‘damage’ and incorporating this into his paintings. How does translating AI imagery into painting, drawing or printmaking affect your work?**

To some extent, I’m probably still working that out, but translating AI imagery into painting, drawing, or printmaking has been a way of turning something fast and frictionless into something slower, more accountable, and more materially specific. It’s also shifted my focus onto the underlying processes that control how these systems produce images: in this project there was a push and pull where I kept testing the limits of the AI’s ability to generate coherent scenes, introducing increasingly disruptive inputs and seeing what broke, what repeated, and what it tried to “repair.” In that sense it became a kind of digital collaging process - accumulating fragments, glitches, and seams - which the studio processes then let me edit, emphasise, or physically “damage” further, so the work carries both the seduction of coherence and the evidence of how it was assembled.

**Have you found that using AI has influenced your approach to observational drawing or painting? Even in the way you teach?**

Yes, I think using AI has sharpened my commitment to observation, because while AI images can be clever and complex in how they’re generated, that complexity is as nothing compared to the infinite richness that comes from work grounded in lived experience, attention, and human feeling. In my own practice it’s made me value slowness, specificity, and the unpredictability of looking: the small shifts of judgement and sensation that happen when you draw or paint from the world rather than from an output. In teaching, it’s pushed me to emphasise process over polish - helping students build visual literacy, make purposeful choices, and ask *why* an image works, not just whether it looks convincing. Let’s face it AI isn’t going away so I think that it’s important that AI becomes something to interrogate and use critically, rather than something that replaces the embodied intelligence of making.