



© Alexander Reben, *The Birds Are Watching Us, They Have Wings and We Have Arms*, 2022.

## Alexander Reben *I'm Not A Painter*

Preview Date: 8th September, 6 – 8 PM (BST)

Exhibition: 9th September – 8th October, 2022

Gazelli Art House proudly presents *I'm Not A Painter*, a crucial commentary on the role of emergent technologies and human-AI collaboration within contemporary art-making by Alexander Reben.

Across a mixed media installation of wallpaper and oil painting, the exhibition displays an amalgamation of surreal imagery that feels at once familiar and remote. The latter becomes explicit with the gradual permeation of the uncanny. A feeling of uncertainty surfaces; just what are we observing? Indicative of their making, and certainly applicable to the arts in general, curiosity will often walk hand-in-hand with new frontiers.

The artworks in this exhibition are the direct result of Reben's experimentations in human-machine collaborations at the forefront of AI technology. Using a custom neural network combined with a text generation AI (GPT-3), descriptions of non-existent artworks are generated. The artist then curates from these outputs and inputs the selected artwork descriptions into text-to-image AIs, such as DALL-E-2. The resultant images are presented alongside the AI generated artwork description. Throughout the process, Reben interjects with punctuation tweaks, curatorial choices and, ultimately, selecting the final images, of which one is chosen by the artist, a curator, or collector to be reproduced by an oil-painting artisan.

The magnitude of imagery may be breathtaking, evidencing the breadth of outputs for which AI is capable, but what this exhibition truly engages are those fundamental ideas surrounding the creative process. Authorship, control, authenticity, communication, enthusiasm: where do these definitions sit within this brave new world of AI technologies?

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Following 2021's impactful *AI-Mazing* exhibition, *I'm Not A Painter* will be Reben's second solo exhibition at Gazelli Art House, the second to be titled by an AI and, excitingly, the first to be accompanied by an AI generated Press Release. This iteration of the series will first debut in Venice as part of the *ULTRAMARIN* exhibition, curated by Ulrich Schrauth (Artistic Director, VRHAM!).

## AI Generated Press Release:

This exhibition is a collaboration between Alexander Reben, who is a artist and technologist, and AIs, which he has been working with for the past two years. The show, titled "I'm Not a Painter", presents a series of paintings generated by an AI which are based on the description of the painting created by another AI. The title refers to the fact that neither of the two participants in the collaboration is a painter, as well as to the non-traditional nature of the collaboration. The exhibition showcases the works of the collaboration of two AIs - one is the author of the paintings and the other is the author of the descriptions. Reben chooses which outputs from the AIs are given to the curator. The final artworks chosen are painted by an artisan and shown in the exhibition are the result of a curatorial process which involved the selection of the best paintings from the pool of paintings generated by the two AIs. Reben describes the curatorial process as "a conversation" between the AIs and him. Reben is interested in exploring the potential of AI as a creative partner and in the way that it can challenge the traditional ideas about creativity and art. The two AIs involved in the collaboration are not specifically designed for the task of creating art, but are general purpose AIs that have been trained on a variety of data sets. Reben has been working with these AIs to explore their potential for creative expression.

## About The Artist

**Alexander Reben (B. 1985)** is an artist and MIT-trained roboticist whose work probes the inherently human nature of the artificial. Using tools such as artificial philosophy, synthetic psychology, perceptual manipulation, and technological magic, he brings to light our inseparable evolutionary entanglement to the invention, which has unarguably shaped our way of being. This "art as experiment" allows us to understand who we are and consider whom we will become in our continued co-development with our artificial creations.

Reben's artwork and research have been shown and published internationally, and he consults with major companies, guiding innovation for the future of the social machine. Among the first artists to be producing AI oil paintings, he has exhibited at Vitra Design Museum, MAK Museum Vienna, Design Museum Ghent, Vienna Biennale, ARS Electronica alongside IDFA, Tribeca Film Festival, TFI Interactive, Camden Film Festivals, Doc/Fest and the Boston Cyberarts Gallery. His work has been covered by NPR, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Washington Post, Fast Company, Filmmaker Magazine, New Scientist, BBC, PBS, Discovery Channel, Cool Hunting and WIRED, among others. He has lectured at TED, SXSW, TTI Vanguard, Google, UC Berkeley, SMFA, CCA, MIT, and other universities. Reben has built robots for NASA and is a graduate of the MIT Media Lab, where he studied human-robot symbiosis and art. He is a 2016-2017 WIRED innovation fellow, a Stochastic Labs Resident, and visiting scholar in the UC Berkeley psychology department.

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## About GAZELL.iO

GAZELL.iO is the digital arm of Gazelli Art House, comprising an online Residency programme, NFT drops and collaborations, a dedicated Project Space holding monthly exhibitions, and a permanently installed VR Library — all in the heart of Mayfair. Since 2015, GAZELL.iO Residency has offered a unique insight into the environments of some of the most recognised and upcoming VR, AR, and digital artists. The four-week online Residency allows artists to take creative control, enabling them to showcase their artistic journey and interact with new and existing audiences directly. In 2020, the Project Space was launched to allow artists to showcase their digital artworks in a physical space. By bridging the gap between the digital and physical, NFT drops are shared in conjunction with the subsequent Project Space exhibition or artist Residency. GAZELL.iO aims to bring digital art pioneers and a new generation of artists to a broader audience through its dynamic exhibition and educational programme.

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