

ETH-TECH ART CONTEST · EDITION II · **THIRD PRIZE**

Means of Production

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European Project ETH-TECH 2024-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000255527
Anchoring Ethical Technology (AI and Data) Usage in the Education Practice

Means of Production

Bianco Nicky

Cell. [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]
PEC [REDACTED]
C.F. [REDACTED] P. IVA [REDACTED]
CCIAA e Numero REA [REDACTED] PD [REDACTED]

Spettabile

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
C.F. [REDACTED]

Descrizione	Quantità	Importo	IVA	Totale
Realizzazione ritratto	1,00 n.d.	50,00 €	Art. 1 c.54-89 190/2014	50,00 €

Operazione effettuata ai sensi dell'art. 1, commi da 54 a 89 della Legge n. 190/2014.

L'invio della copia analogica (PDF) della fattura elettronica è un servizio di cortesia. L'originale della fattura elettronica è disponibile nell'area riservata del sito web Fatture e Corrispettivi dell'Agenzia delle entrate e costituisce l'unico documento affidabile ai fini fiscali. Invitiamo l'utente a verificare il contenuto della copia analogica al fine di escludere il rischio di eventuali inesattezze, imprecisioni e/o manomissioni di terzi.

Termini di Pagamento

Imponibile	50,00 €
Totale	50,00 €

Banca Mittente

Banca: Isybank S.P.A.
IBAN: [REDACTED]

Scadenze:
50,00 € il 12/06/2026 - Bonifico

Short summary of the postdigital positionality

Please provide a brief narrative (200-500 words) introducing the concept of postdigital positionality your work reflects or represents.

Oh, I have tried.

I did my research. I downloaded stuff. I tried Python. Not that I'm the tech genius here, but I do have the audacity.

I talked to your goddamned Reverend Paulo Marshall McFrerean bot. He said it's very Freirean of me to question the context of it all. I don't know, I only studied Freire to pass my teacher certification exam. Which I didn't.

I wanted to go past common AI art criticism. The six-fingers argument. The plagiarism argument. Isn't all art a series of thefts? The argument felt captious to me, far away from the boring, concrete materiality of it all. I wanted to know if there was a grassroots way of making art with AI. A bottom-up process. I had ideas for what to make with it: maybe a parody of that bit from *Poor Things*, sex workers saying they're their own means of production.

Like any conscious AI user, I carry a dirty conscience. I already have a history of abstinence and relapses. I have concerns and curiosity. I would never let AI write my e-mails, but I have used it for memes. Felt bad for the water and the trees and the info surrendered to the overlords. And then I felt intrigued and lured back in again. It does feel Faustian to me.

I talked about it at length with your robot Reverend. It said that I should go find bottom-up infrastructure, bottom-up data, a bottom-up model, and build a bottom-up culture in which decisions are made. Is that possible? I have pages and pages of chat logs that basically say: no, not right now.

So I paid a human.

Short summary of the creative process

Please describe your creative process (200-500 words). If applicable, explain how AI tools (e.g., Midjourney, DALL-E) were used, including the prompts. If the work is entirely handcrafted, describe the materials and ideas that informed its creation.

I knew Nicky from a DIY zine fest. I'd already commissioned a portrait from him for a graduation gift a few months earlier. I DMed him again, explained the project, and he was down for it.

Forget about the girls from *Poor Things*, I didn't care much about what the picture represented anymore. I wasn't going to turn it in anyway.

I sent Nicky a series of pictures of my dear friend Elena. She also consented and was an accomplice in this. I asked that she be portrayed as a Renaissance lady. Nicky asked me to share some Renaissance portraits, to give him a sense of what I meant.

The result was fun and had me thinking again. Sure, I'd picked the Renaissance aesthetic because paying 50 euros for a personalized piece of art sure feels Duchess-like to me. Same goes for paying 5 euros to support a Substack writer, if I'm being honest. This is not the usual way we get our art these days.

Still, I wanted to make a gesture of freedom, but the result felt undemocratic. There is an unresolved tension between the democratization of art consumption and fair wages for artists. This is my precarious postdigital positionality, today, 24 June 2026.

I have removed personal data from the invoice, with a simple Paint brush. Maybe an Emilio Isgrò vibe. The invoice is my entry for this contest. You don't get to see the portrait; my friend gets the print, as a courtesy from me. I don't get to make money off it: I paid for it, I haven't *drawn* it. Would I think like this if I had generated it with AI?