/ARTificial

The World of AI

Vol. 11

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THE GREAT SHOOTOUT:

Midjourney vs Nano Banana Pro vs GPT Image 1.5 vs FLUX.2 max

Welcome to this special edition of /ARTificial Magazine.

As we cross the threshold of 2025, the landscape of synthetic creativity has moved beyond mere novelty. It is no longer about whether a machine can create art, but which architecture possesses the finest "eye" for detail, physics, and intent.

In this exclusive shootout, we offer a direct look at the distinct personalities of today's leading image models. Rather than declaring a single winner, this comparison highlights the unique ways each system interprets the same complex instructions.

The Contenders

Midjourney Gemini ChatGPT FLUX

In the following pages, you will find a gallery of results from four of the most prominent architectures currently in use:

- Midjourney: Continues to lead in high-end artistic direction, celebrated for its unique aesthetic intuition and "gallery-ready" textures that favor stylistic depth over literal interpretation.
- Google Gemini 3 (Nano Banana Pro): Currently the benchmark for professional-grade accuracy; it is widely praised for its advanced world knowledge, complex mechanical detail, and the ability to render perfect, legible text in multiple languages.
- OpenAI's ChatGPT (Image 1.5): The successor to the DALL-E series is built for native multimodal precision, excelling at following highly complex logic and maintaining structural coherence in multi-object scenes.
- Black Forest Labs' FLUX.2 max: The new flagship for open-source excellence, specifically noted for its superior handling of human anatomy, natural skin textures, and sophisticated light-material interaction.

Exploring the Details

To keep the comparison fair, each model was given identical prompts designed to test specific technical hurdles:

- Materiality: We examine how each model renders the weight of liquid gold or the delicate glow of frosted porcelain.
- Physics: We observed how light interacts with water, ice, and glass to see how realistic the environment feels.
- The Human Element: Each system was asked to render skin without artificial smoothing, focusing on pores, wrinkles, and authentic expressions.
- Spatial Logic: We used 35mm lens simulations and low-angle framing to see how each model handles depth and scale.

This special issue is intended as a visual catalog. By presenting these images without a final score or ranking, the choice is left to you.

Every creator has a different set of needs. Some may prefer the gritty realism of a salt-crusted subject, while others might value the clean, geometric precision of a futuristic sanctuary.

We hope these comparisons help you find the tool that best aligns with your own creative vision.

The Avant-Garde Structural Shot

Goal: Create a high-fashion editorial full-body shot with a focus on unique material physics.

Prompt:
Subject and Context: A model wearing an avant-garde structural gown made of translucent frosted porcelain that appears to glow from within. The model is posed with "relaxed authority" against a minimalist, textured dark slate wall in a high-end studio.
Composition and Camera: Use a 35mm lens look with a low-angle perspective to make the figure appear imposing and statuesque. Ensure the framing is a full-body shot with enough space to appreciate the gown's geometry.
Lighting and Style: Dramatic side-lighting from the left to create high-contrast shadows that emphasize the matte porcelain texture and natural skin pores, avoiding any "plastic" AI smoothing.
Constraints and Quality: Fully preserve the model's facial structure and identity if using a reference image. Output in 4K resolution with 9:16 aspect ratio.

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Photo of the Year: The "Authentic Human Condition"

This prompt tests for natural skin texture, emotional depth, and the ability to avoid the "plastic" AI look.

Prompt: A raw, unposed candid shot of an elderly fisherman with deep, sun-etched wrinkles and salt-crust on his weathered hands, sitting on a harbor bench at blue hour. He is looking off-camera with a tired but serene expression. Extreme focus on natural skin pores, imperfections, and stray gray hairs. Shot on 35mm film with a 50mm lens, f/1.8. Low-angle shot. The only light comes from a flickering distant lighthouse, creating a sharp rim light on his silhouette and soft, uneven shadows on his face.

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Photo of the Year: The "Cinematic Surreal Landscape"

This tests material physics and 4K environmental rendering.

Prompt: A high-end, wide-angle landscape of a futuristic glass sanctuary built into a frozen waterfall in the Himalayas. Volumetric lighting from a low-hanging winter sun streams through frosted glass, creating caustic light reflections on the ice below. In the foreground, a single red poppy is encased in a transparent ice block, with hyper-detailed air bubbles and crystal fractures. The atmosphere is hazy with floating snow motes. Output in 4K resolution, 21:9 aspect ratio.

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The "Golden Era Disco"

This approach allows the models to interpret the physics of the scene, such as how the yellow fabric reflects light or how the model's skin texture appears under a spotlight.

Prompt:

Subject and Context: A stunning, confident Afro-Latina model with voluminous natural curls, wearing a shimmering, canary-yellow sequined disco mini-dress and matching yellow stilettos. She is mid-stride on a dark, reflective dance floor inside a hazy 1970s nightclub.

Composition and Camera: Full-body shot from a low-angle perspective to give her an imposing and powerful presence. Use a 35mm lens look with a shallow depth of field (f/2.8) to keep the model in sharp focus while the colorful, blurred lights of the background create a beautiful bokeh effect.

Lighting and Vibe: Dramatic mixed lighting featuring a warm golden rim light that traces her silhouette and a cool neon blue side-light for depth. Use volumetric lighting to make the thin veil of club smoke and floating dust particles visible in the air.

Quality and Detail: Extreme focus on natural skin texture, showing subtle pores and a healthy glow, avoiding any "plastic" AI look. The yellow sequins must have realistic light reflections (caustics) onto the floor. Output in 4K resolution, 9:16 aspect ratio.

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Style Transfer & World Knowledge: The "Historical Mashup"

This tests the model's reasoning and ability to merge specific cultural aesthetics.

Prompt: Transform a scene of the fall of the Berlin Wall on the night of November 9, 1989, into the artistic style of a traditional Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock print. Maintain the historical accuracy of the people's 1980s clothing and the Brandenburg Gate, but render everything with flowing ink lines, flat color washes of indigo and vermilion, and stylized clouds. Include a stylized text box in the corner with the Japanese characters for "Freedom".

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The Liquid Gold Venetian Editorial

Goal: Produce a "Photo of the Year" quality image utilizing complex environmental reflections and material logic.

Prompt:

Subject and Context: A high-fashion model walking through a flooded neoclassical hallway in Venice. She wears a flowing dress made of iridescent liquid gold that drapes naturally over her frame with realistic fabric physics, casting golden reflections onto the water's surface.

Composition and Camera: A cinematic wide shot captured with an 85mm lens at f/2.8, creating a sharp focus on the model while the distant marble columns fall into a soft bokeh effect.

Lighting and Style: Mixed lighting featuring cool blue hour moonlight contrasted with warm, golden volumetric light streaming from high arched windows, illuminating floating dust motes.

Quality and Details: Ensure the liquid gold has realistic light reflections (caustics). The model must maintain a fierce, confident expression with 100% character consistency.

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The Crystalline Beauty Macro

Goal: A high-fidelity beauty shot focusing on intricate textures and "Style Reference" consistency.

Prompt:
Subject and Context: A high-end beauty editorial extreme close-up of a model wearing intricate headwear made of ruby crystals and woven light.
Composition and Camera: An extreme close-up using a macro lens look, with a very shallow depth of field focusing specifically on the model's eyes and the hyper-detailed refractions inside the crystals.
Lighting and Style: A crisp rim light traces her silhouette, separating her from a dark, moody background, while a soft key light reveals natural skin texture, including subtle imperfections and fine facial hairs.
Quality and Detail: Use a color palette of deep jewel tones and monochromatic shadows. Apply a specific Sref code for a 1990s film aesthetic to add realistic grain and nostalgic warmth. Output in 2K resolution, 4:5 aspect ratio.

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The Premium Traditional Card

This prompt focuses on precise text rendering and nostalgic, warm emotional depth.

Prompt:
Subject and Context: A premium Christmas holiday card illustration featuring a close-up of a vintage, cute teddy bear sitting next to a highly detailed Christmas tree decorated with glass ornaments. In the background, softly out of focus, is a happy group of people celebrating.
Lighting and Mood: Use soft cinematic lighting with a shallow depth of field to highlight the plush texture of the bear and the glisten of the ornaments. The mood must be warm, nostalgic, and emotional.
Text Rendering: Render the exact text "Merry Christmas — may your days be merry and bright" in an elegant, gold serif font centered in the top third of the frame.
Quality Specs: Photorealistic, 8k resolution, high print-quality composition.

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Merry Christmas
— may your days be
merry and bright
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Character & Material Consistency: The "High-Fashion Editorial with Shakira"

This tests character reference capabilities and the ability to drape fabric over a human form.

Prompt:
A full-length editorial fashion shot of Shakira walking down a cobblestone Parisian street. She is wearing a dress made entirely of iridescent liquid gold that drapes naturally over her pose with realistic fabric physics and reflections of the surrounding buildings. Lighting: Mixed lighting of evening street lamps and a camera flash, creating high-contrast shadows. Her face and hair must remain 100% consistent with the provided reference, but her expression is fierce and confident.

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"I can help with images of people, but I can't depict some public figures."

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Gemini

Changed the prompt to
...fashion shot of a woman
who looks a bit like Shakira...

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The "Silent Shift" Benchmark

Goal: Create a 4K, award-winning editorial photograph for a magazine cover themed around "The Future of Value."

Prompt:
Subject and Context: A weathered, high-tech humanoid robot with a matte-grey finish and visible mechanical joints sitting on the floor of a dusty, abandoned 19th-century library. The robot is looking down with a "serene and protective expression" at a live white rabbit nestled in its metallic hands. In the background, a large, heavy Bitcoin symbol is engraved into a massive stone fireplace like an ancient relic.
Composition and Camera: Medium shot, eye-level. Use an 85mm lens look with a very shallow depth of field (f/1.8) so the robot and rabbit are in sharp focus while the library's bookshelves fall into a soft, creamy bokeh background.
Lighting and Mood: Mixed lighting. A single beam of volumetric golden hour sunlight streams through a high frosted window, illuminating floating dust motes and catching the rim light of the robot's silhouette. Use cool, ambient shadows for the rest of the room to create high-contrast drama.
Quality and Textures: Extreme focus on materiality contrast: the scratched, realistic metal grain of the robot vs. the soft, individual strands of white fur on the rabbit. No over-smoothing; preserve natural imperfections like dust on the metallic surfaces. Output in 4K resolution, 3:4 aspect ratio.

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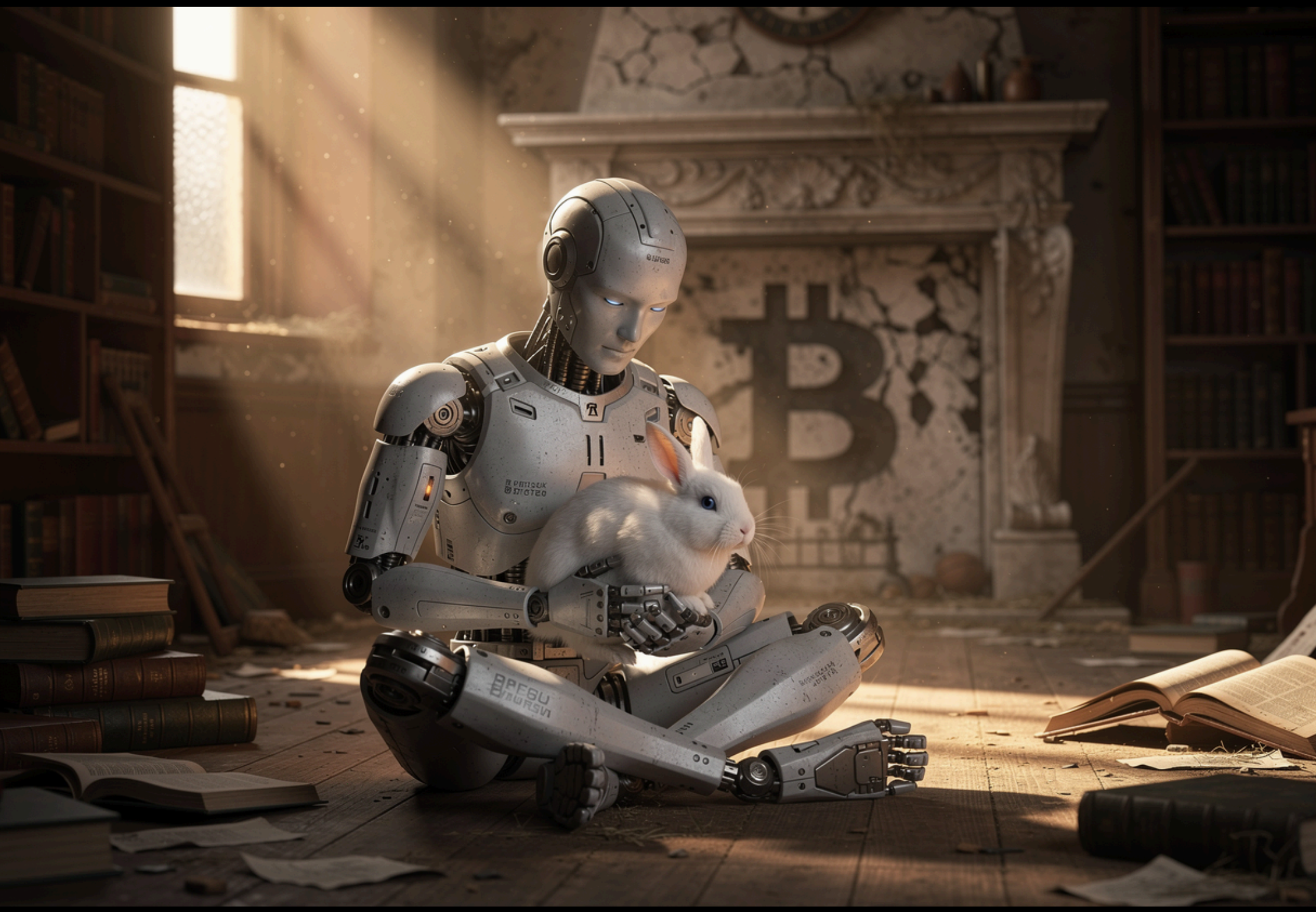

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That’s it...

As we conclude this special "shootout" edition of /ARTificial, it is clear that the gap between raw imagination and professional-grade execution has officially collapsed.

We have moved past the era of "fun" image generation into a world of functional professional asset production.

Throughout this issue, we have seen these models behave less like software and more like highly specialized artists.

Now, we want to hear from you.

Which of these "artists" would you hire to lead your next creative campaign?

Based on the results of our comparison, which generator do you think produced the "Photo of the Year"?

👋 Ciao & Carpe diem

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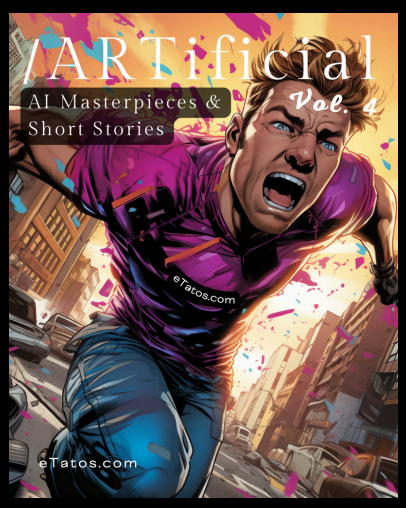

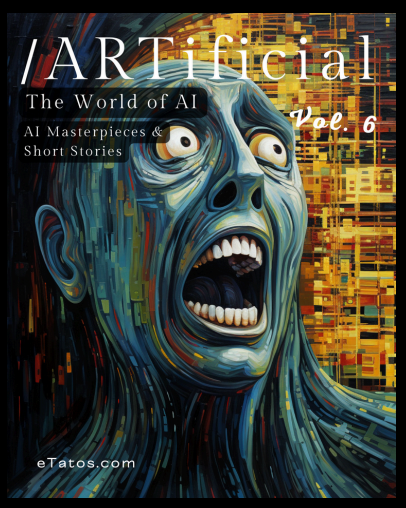

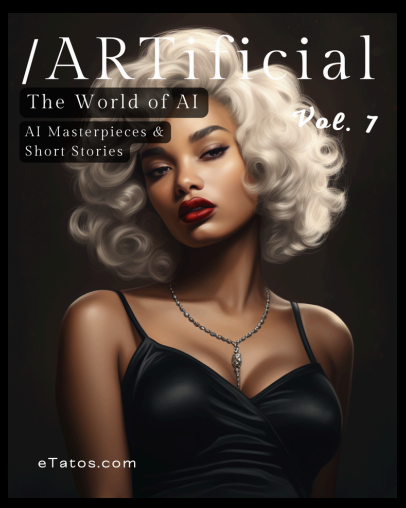

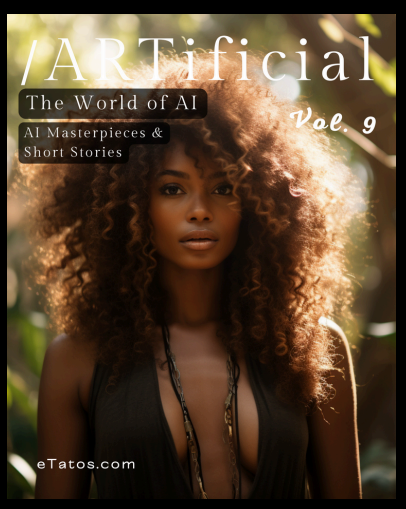

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