

ART-IFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: NEW EXHIBITION LAUNCHING AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF THE FAROE ISLANDS - IMAGINE THE FAROE ISLANDS PAINTED BY THE WORLD'S GREATEST ARTISTS



In the North Atlantic are 18 remote islands – the Faroe Islands. The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, in the capital, Tórshavn, will - from 1600 hours on Thursday 29th September, 2022 - open a world-first exhibition: the first time ever that a National Gallery has featured on its walls images created solely by artificial intelligence.

The technology at the heart of the exhibition, in the form of Midjourney's brand-new AI platform, was posed a simple question: *“What if the greatest artists ever living had painted the Faroe Islands...?”*

Due to the islands' extremely remote location, 200 miles north of Scotland, to the west of Norway and to the east of Iceland, most of the greatest artists throughout the ages, understandably, simply never had the opportunity to visit the Faroes for themselves. That means, of course, that we will never know how the breath-taking beauty and the dramatic landscapes of the Faroe Islands could have inspired artists such as Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Monet...

However, artificial intelligence can now, for the first time, give us an idea of how the greatest artists over the past century or more *might* have painted the Faroe Islands.

By analysing many billions of brush strokes across a huge range of paintings and pictures, a computer can learn to understand shapes, techniques, colours, moods and objects – and also the personal style adopted by some of the greatest artists. A computer can, therefore, be asked to create **new** pictures of the Faroe Islands just as individual artists might have done, in those artists' own, very recognisable, style.

Says Karina Lykke Grand, Director of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands: “When I first heard of AI and MidJourney, and how it was possible to create new pictures just as individual artists might themselves have done, I was immediately intrigued. It was fascinating to see how, by giving prompts to the system, you can gain an idea about how, perhaps, Van Gogh or Picasso, having seen the Faroes for themselves, might have recreated the islands on canvas in their own style.

“Normally our exhibitions feature very talented local Faroese artists. But we think that these new possibilities have led to an interesting crossover between technology and art, that we wanted to explore, and which our guests can take part in whether they are artists or not. This is an exhibition that will attract the attention of many people who perhaps wouldn't normally head for an Art Gallery; I think we'll see a mix of science and technology experts, artists who can't quite believe what can be created by a machine, and a lot of people who find the concept exciting and who wish to see it in action – and perhaps to try it for themselves.”

“We therefore warmly invite all to visit this technological exhibition to try the Midjourney software for themselves - see the short explanatory film here: <https://vimeo.com/752870177/f6bb9f20cc>. It is simply fascinating to see what such immense computing power can create.

The exhibition, /Imagine the Faroe Islands, which features images inspired by some of the world’s greatest artists, will open on Thursday, 29 September, 2022, at 1600 hours, and runs until 30th October, 2022. See www.art.fo for more information.

It raises interesting questions about what art is, what computers may do in the future, and how the greats of the art world over the centuries might have represented the Faroe Islands had they been able to travel to see the archipelago for themselves.

In addition to the exciting Artificial Intelligence pictures, the art museum has a beautiful collection of art by the greatest Faroese artists. In an art-historical sense, Faroese visual art did not develop much before the early part of the 20th century. Despite the size of the country – just 54,000 inhabitants - and the fact that Faroese art history is comparatively young, the quality of Faroese art is remarkably high.

Faroese visual art has hardly ever been as widely expressed as it is today. In the work of the younger generation of Faroese artists, the traditional interest in the Faroese landscape as subject matter seems to have declined, while interest in the human mind, existential or philosophical questions, or internal-facing landscapes, seems to have increased. Faroese art is enriched via its many gifted artists, some of whom are represented on the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands’ homepage - see www.art.fo

Ends

Press: For further info on the opening hours of The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands please see www.art.fo, This new art exhibition is being held in the capital city of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn, (Gundadalsvegur 9).

Commissioned media are welcome to attend a Preview of this new exhibition on Wednesday, 28 September before 16.00. (Please contact Travel PR to discuss possible options – Jane Collyer (07753 762 306) or Sue Ockwell (07831 126 356).

Flights to the Faroes from Edinburgh leave on Mondays and Thursdays and return on the same days from £350 (return).

For information on a wide range of accommodation, and activities including walking, hiking, sailing, kayaking, James Bond tours, knitting, traditional dancing and painting, alongside many other options, including dining at restaurants with a distinct Faroese flavour and tasting locally-produced beers, gins and whiskies, please visit www.visitfaroeislands.com.

Footnote:

The Faroe Islands are a cluster of 18 islands located in the middle of the vast North Atlantic Ocean, 200 miles north of Scotland, to the west of Norway and to the east of Iceland. The population of the Faroes is around 54,000 people, alongside around 80,000 sheep; the sheep can be seen in some surprising locations, including grazing on the grass-roofed traditional properties, a legacy of Viking times, and on rocky ledges covered by grass that offer wide ocean views from a great height.