MANCHESTER ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Generative A.I Policy for Filmmakers

What we mean by Animation

Manchester Animation Festival is a film festival that exhibits animated films.
We believe animated films to be the result of movement created by the hands of an artist.

What we mean by Generative A.I

Final pixel, on screen work that has been produced using generative artificial intelligence such as generative audio, image or video models.

Generative A.I versus animation generated by use of a computer (Generated Animation)

Generated animation is how we refer to the process of using a computer to complete motion.
Examples are (but not limited to) using coding to generate crowd scenes or hair simulation. It might also refer to processes such as colouring multiple frames or motion tweeting to complete in-betweens and the movement between keyframes. Where a process is automated, it must be done where the artist is in control of the input and the outcome.

Generative A.I takes input (prompts, written or visual) from an operator and uses models to calculate an approximation of what has been requested in the prompt. MAF recognises that although motion is generated in both scenarios, with Generated Animation control of the motion is done at the hands of an artist with their decisions producing the final outcome.

When motion is calculated by Generative A.I the decisions typically made by an artist are relinquished by the user and so the generated outcome is not produced on the same terms as by an artist. As such films produced using Generative A.I have been done so using a methodology distinct from animation.

MAF recognises three forms of filmmaking Animation (the creation of movement) Live Action (Capturing movement) and Generative a.i (A calculation of movement)

Hybrid works

MAF welcomes live action and animation hybrid films, with our live action hybrid policy stating that over 50% of the film needs to be animated.
MAF would recognise a rotoscoped film as fully animated because the final work presented has been done using the artists hand, assisted by live action, we would recognise a film using Gen A.I as a render engine as fully Gen A.I as in both cases the final moving image has been produced using a distinct form of filmmaking.

By way of example, a rotoscoped film using frame by frame drawings to create motion using live action reference as the source of the movement is fully animated and is eligible because the final moving images consist of drawings, a film using Gen A.I to calculate motion using rotoscoping is fully generated, so the finished thing we see is fully generated and as such is ineligible.
If it has been put through a Gen A.I model, it is the product of a Gen A.I, if it has been made using artist hands it is the product of those hands.

Generative A.I Practice

At the time of writing, Generative A.I is being produced using questionable methods, with copyright issues and environmental impact being two prominent issues which are under international scrutiny and call into question the ethical nature of showing Gen A.I films.

Whilst these questions remain unanswered we will not exhibit Gen A.I film.

What this means for Gen A.I films

If any part of the final moving image has been generated or transformed by a generative audio, image or video model, it will be deemed ineligible for the festival. If you submit work to the festival that is Gen A.I we will not be obliged to watch it. You will not be entitled to a refund as per our terms.

Right to Reply

If you wish to clarify, contest or defend a particular method of filmmaking you can contact the festival team to discuss. The MAF team will require evidence that your film does not violate this policy which will be reviewed by the festival team and/or third parties.

Annual Review

Manchester Animation Festival will periodically review this policy in line with its other policies.