

New Ways of Seeing, New Ways of Acting

by Matjaz Vidmar and Drew Hemment



Image credit: 'How to Find the Soul of a Sailor' by Kasia Molga

This Edition Two of The New Real Magazine has traced an ambitious journey: from creating simple digital tools for environmental engagement to developing new ways for humans and AI to collaborate in understanding planetary change. Through The New Real Observatory and the artworks it enabled, we've seen how artificial intelligence might help us bridge the gap between environmental data and lived experience.

Yet the broader perspectives offered in our Reflections and Interjections sections remind us that technological innovation alone cannot

address our environmental challenges. These contributions highlight crucial questions about AI's environmental impact, its relationship to global inequalities, and its potential to either reinforce or challenge existing power structures.

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They suggest that meaningful engagement with environmental futures requires us to consider not just how AI might help us see our changing planet, but who gets to shape these new ways of seeing.

The Indigenous perspectives, artistic insights and critical analyses presented here point toward a more nuanced understanding of AI's role in environmental futures. They suggest that rather than seeing AI simply as a tool for processing environmental data, we might understand it as part of a broader conversation about how different forms of knowledge – technological, artistic, indigenous, embodied – might help us grasp and respond to environmental change.

As we close this edition, we're reminded that the real power of platforms like The New Real Observatory lies not just in their technical capabilities, but in how they help us imagine new relationships between technology, art, and environment. In bringing together diverse perspectives on these relationships, we hope to contribute to a richer understanding of how we might use AI not just to measure environmental change, but to help us create more equitable and sustainable futures.

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Our research explores how AI impacts on life at a profound level, often interacting with us in fascinating and unanticipated ways, and illuminates how emerging technology can become a creative, playful and deeply impactful part of everyday living.

We believe art and creativity can help to radically change how we think about AI design, moving beyond the current paradigm of learning patterns from large amounts of data, to embrace human traits such as bias, disagreement, and uncertainty as a signal with creative potential rather than noise that needs to be removed.

We devise imaginative ways to experiment with new experiences, practices, infrastructures and business models, and to empower people be agents of positive change.

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