# How much is this cover worth?
## *Quanto vale essa capa?*

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The oldest of new debates is represented in the cover of this issue of *Diálogo com a Economia Criativa*. However, it is impossible to be oblivious to this debate when artificial intelligence (AI) permeates all sectors of production and communication, and can particularly reflect on creative industries. Considering that, in synthesis, creative economy includes the original production and intellectual property of goods with high symbolic value, it is worth to reflect on value. The data of 2020 for the culture economics and creative industries in Brazil point out that it mobilized about 230.14 billion reais, amount that represented 3.11% of the Brazilian GDP (Almeida, 2024), being one of the economies that grew the most in a world where production moves to the services and intangible products' sector, which generate symbolic capital. Here, we ask: how can AI have an impact on this industry?

We intend to formulate an answer through analyzing the cover image. Considering its universal concept, aspects of its composition and its quality, how much is this cover worth? Knowing that this image was developed within minutes through a generative AI platform, such as Midjourney or DALL-E, how does it impact its value? Also, taking that this image has gone through a hybrid process in which, after being generated by a prompt – a series of descriptive instructions – in an AI platform, it was digitally finalized by software operated by humans, such as Photoshop, how much is this relevant for its value? How many layers of technology were overlapped in this process? All these provocations are pertinent and current.

According to the World Economic Forum (2020), in a 2020 report, the workforce will have become automatized and displaced 85 million jobs by 2025. On the other hand, the robotic revolution will create 97 million jobs. Among other positions, examples such as prompt engineers, AI researcher, expert in natural language processing, expert in robotic process automation (RPA), expert in ethics and law with knowledge in AI and algorithm auditor, to name a few, are highly required and provide high paychecks.

It is not only the first and second sector labor that feels the impact of the post-industrial revolution. With the most recent chapter being written by generative AI, the matter regarding the value of the creative professional in the industry hangs in the air. A number of articles announce the end of some creative professions in the next 10 years, and those that will perish in up to 25 years, being replaced by technologies that are able to generate reflective texts, ultra-realistic images, editions and other creative productions. The concern about the topic has recently generated manifestations from the Screen Actors Guild and Writers Guild in the United States of America, which led to the renegotiation with studios and added more concern to the current agenda, in an attempt of protection against the threat brought out by AI technology.

Specifically reflecting about the illustration of this cover, it is possible to come up with some insights about this scenario. We understand that, for this cover, generative AI was able to produce an analogous version for the work made immortal by Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa. However, we understand that this new version only has a meaning as a parody, once its symbolic reading can only exist and be

understood when compared to the work of art it refers to. Looking at this image out of context, for example, as would be the case of someone who does not have the reference of the original oil painting on wood from the early XVI century, the image is empty in meaning, it becomes hollow. Even though it is convincing for presenting a character of realistic image, it does not convince as a fine painting using the *sfumato* technique (because it is not), nor as a representation of the noble lady from the XVI century. This new Mona Lisa is a woman whose image is adapted to the beauty and attitude parameters of the XXI century, being challenging and sexy, very different from the introspective and shy lady reported by Leonardo; therefore, its essence is lost. All about it is a copy – the light, the color palette, the composition –, without, however, being able to sketch the enigmatic smile that made the original painting so famous around the world.

When we understand the visual narrative of the cover, we can appease ourselves and breathe. Generative AI's ability to create such an analogous image has not affected the value of the original piece at all – maybe it even brought it up, once its brilliance was not present. The work generated by AI has symbolic value and meaning only when juxtaposed with the original, without which it would not survive. Thus, we conclude, for our peace of mind, that considering art and creation, it has always been this way: artists create based on their references and repertoire. While this repertoire is developed and elaborated by people, AI will be more artificial than intelligent.

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