

Creativity and the rise of artificial intelligence

Gregor Strachotta

'If you don't know where you are going ... you might not get there.' – Yogi Berra

Harriet awoke and picked up the phone. 'Harriet, where are you?', Sean said. 'I called a few times, don't tell me you slept in? I'll see you at the presentation to the board. If you don't make it, make sure you upload the plug-in code.'

She was running late for the presentation of the new plug-in, the script they were working on for months. It took her some time to convince the system architect to let her secretly test it on the government's AI database. She was convinced that this was going to be a breakthrough in enabling the AI machine learning in creative 'thinking' and negate the creative issues that existed with the existing platform, which transformed the industry in 2025. In the last test run the new script had created 89 buildable facade options, which were released on the Amazon Construction page.

Sean was a talented design manager at a large architectural firm, back in the days when they still built mostly in concrete. While the 2020 recession created a slowdown, the industry was unprepared and taken by surprise when a large corporation released the initial artificial intelligence platform, producing concepts and design solutions for the construction industry.

The following years saw AI permeating the industry, radically disrupting and transforming it. Technology enabled the full integration of industry codes, standards and wifi-

recognised human movement patterns into an AI based system. While the few large data based corporations profited on those drivers of change, the demand for traditional architects dramatically waned. AI technology had changed the future of the construction industry.

The dynamic AI platform was able to offer multiple options for each stage of a project within minutes, predicting human movement patterns and even suggesting sustainable construction methods and vertically integrating the industry. However, the AI platform struggled with creative based decisioning. After all, creativity proved hard to be rationalised. Sean was one of those whose career shifted through this new future and he became a creative system assistant to the AI.

Sean assisted the AI by providing creative design solutions where it faltered, such as resolving aesthetic misalignments of facades, balcony placements and human centered design. After manually correcting the issues, Sean then would release it back to the AI platform for industry code and standards checks and then the project was sent to the AR department and robotics centre for prototyping.

Most clients and project managers relished the speed and efficiency of the AI platform. Without an architect present, they fed in their requirements directly and much like Squarespace back in 2018, they could now swipe their way through solution templates to envision entire projects from concept, costing, compliance, standards and value management to suggested construction and buildability options. Like in a gameplay, complete augmented cities could be recreated with a swipe of a finger.



A drawing by Gregor Strachotta inspired by William Gibson's dystopian novel *The Peripheral*, in which nano robots build/deconstruct complete buildings

Sean has witnessed the morphing of the role of the architect. He had went from being creative to assisting creative processes, to today when he is merely viewing the many options being dynamically created in front of his eyes. The system only prompts him occasionally these days to accept, reject or manually alter a design on the real-time platform.

Later today, his daughter Harriet will present the new 'creative' plug-in, which will further transfer the role of the architect to that of the AI. Sean will be looking for a new role, perhaps on the smaller, but striving P2P market, such as AirtaskerPro and the like, offering work on a few bespoke luxury houses for clients with an eccentric appetite.

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The above scenario is placed in the sweet spot of being neither here nor quite in the future yet.

The transformation of Sean from being a creative to assisting a system that creates is not trying to be a utopian or dystopian revelation of our industry. It rather offers a discourse and invites a sense of ownership of the future to our industry. Many sectors have already seen fast changing transformation with the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, while the construction and architectural industry, like an oil tanker, is moving at a slower pace. So slow that one might get the impression that apps like Revit, BIM and Lumion represent the maximum range of innovation in our industry.

With the fourth industrialisation further emerging, could another industry step into the construction sector and transform it from the outside, beyond our current mission statements and what we envision? No single person can predict the future, but I do believe that the architect, a traditionally visionary leader, is well placed to be part of informing it. To use William Gibson words, 'The future is already here. It's just not evenly distributed yet.'

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