"What's one global challenge AI can bring us closer to solving?" *The Atlantic*, December 20, 2023

The Atlantic

among communities and territories, and too much loneliness and isolation, I am most hopeful AI can serve as a bridge—a translator, educator, medium, and trigger for international consensus-building—to enable the cross-border collaboration, deeper community inclusion, and intelligent information-sharing necessary to respond to current and novel challenges as a global community.

David Salle
Artist

The way I use AI is more of an organizing tool. I wish I could use AI to speed things up in the studio, but it doesn't really work that way, at least not for me.

I'm interested in the "plasticity" of space, and in something I call the transformational grammar of picture building. AI, and algorithms generally, to the extent that I understand them, are keyed into those concepts. AI is adept at a kind of morphology of form; it deconstructs, and re-constructs form as well as composition. AI then applies the power of juxtaposition to a kind of 'morphed form'.

I don't think AI will 'replace' artists, for the simple reason that AI has no particular "reason" to do anything. It doesn't intend anything, has no narrative to convey. It creates an effect—but that's not the same thing as art that holds up to repeated scrutiny.

Lisa Joy
Screenwriter, director, producer; co-creator, *Westworld* (HBO)

One benefit I'm hoping AI has over humans derives from its ability to monitor and regulate complex systems of collective human behaviors in real time. This would give us transparency into major issues like climate change and help us optimize solutions. But it would also impact day-to-day events that have outsize ramifications

for society as a whole. For example, an AI regulating traffic flow via networked self-driving cars would increase speed and efficiency while reducing accidents. This centralized network would minimize the need for individuals to own private vehicles. As we posited in *Westworld*'s production design, this in turn would reduce the need for parking structures and parking spaces. These spaces could instead be used as communal green spaces—benefiting the environment and society as a whole. Though AI would no doubt be better than us at these things, we're still in a place where it hasn't been given even a sense of consequence or causality, so how can we trust its lead? There's a bit of the tragic here. It's better equipped to lead than us, but we can't—and shouldn't—trust it to do so. Not yet.

Megan Peters
Associate professor, cognitive sciences, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine

It's my hope that AI—as it becomes more capable of synthesizing new information, engaging in compositional, symbolic reasoning, and self-monitoring its own cognitive processes—may be able to help us toward the goal of understanding consciousness in ways we can't yet imagine. Testing for the presence versus absence of consciousness is not just an interesting thought experiment or worry for some future Skynet-like AI: It's a problem here and now.

Believing that any system, biological or artificial, has reached a threshold for consciousness should ideally obligate us to treat it humanely—from the laboratory to the hospital bed. What if we're keeping alive a loved one who's in a coma? If we cannot definitively say that their consciousness has abandoned them, we have quite different feelings and responsibilities when it comes to deciding whether to remove life support.

An ongoing discussion about laboratory ethics right now concerns higher cephalopods (octopuses, squid, cuttlefish, etc.). But if we could say unequivocally that octopuses feel pain, the implications for ethical treatment would go beyond the laboratory to farming practices and choices