

The Promptus Manifesto

Cinema in the Age of Generative Probability

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PREAMBLE

We declare the emergence of a new cinema: the cinema of the Promptus.

A Promptus is a work created through the deliberate exchange between a human author and a generative model.

In this cinema, the director evolves into the Prompteur: a co-author working with the machine—not as its master, not as its servant, but shaping, and being shaped by it, toward forms that could never exist outside this encounter.

Prompti are the first cinematic objects native to an age in which images are inferred rather than captured.

DEFINITION OF A PROMPTUS

A Promptus does not aim to imitate traditional filmmaking.

It requires no sets, actors, crews, or physical production. Where cinema once relied on light, bodies, space, and recorded time a Promptus operates through inference. Images are summoned from probability rather than staged for a camera, negotiated rather than directed and composed outside the constraints of linear time.

Film is defined by material inscription. Light from the world strikes a physical surface — celluloid or a digital sensor — and leaves a trace.

A Promptus operates in the opposite direction. It does not begin with light, but with noise. Generative systems start from statistical randomness and progressively remove noise according to learned probabilities. The image is not recorded from the world — it takes shape through inference itself.

A Promptus becomes possible only when the cinematic apparatus is replaced by the algorithm. In this process intention and interpretation shape latent form into meaning: the human confronts the model with desire, memory, and direction and the machine responds with variation, distortion, and surprise.

A Promptus does not reenact the real; it generates the possible in order to speak about the real in the age of generative probability. For this very reason, the Promptus remains a narrative art — no longer bound by the material limits that once constrained cinematic imagination.

For the first time in the history of cinema, this expansion is not merely aesthetic, but economic. The Promptus makes accessible image worlds that would previously have required the infrastructure, budgets, and institutional backing of studios, broadcasters, or state funding bodies.

What once depended on capital-intensive production — sets, locations, visual effects, historical reconstruction, speculative worlds — can now be explored at marginal cost by a single Prompteur. Cinematic possibility detaches from industrial scale, expanding what can be articulated and thus brought into being, even as new forms of dependency and power emerge elsewhere.

And still: every generated image carries within it the threat of replacing the real altogether.

The Promptus exists precisely in this tension, between revelation and erasure, invention and disappearance.

ON WHAT A PROMPTUS IS NOT

A Promptus is defined by the presence of a human author in sustained dialogue with a generative model. It is the result of intention, interpretation, and artistic necessity — the human need to articulate meaning within a world that is burning, collapsing, and transforming.

From this foundation, three other categories must be distinguished. They may resemble generative cinema, but they do not constitute a Promptus.

1. Automata

Automata are works generated without human prompting, guidance, or curation. They are autonomous outputs — sometimes fascinating, sometimes monstrous, often meaningless.

They contain no intention, no urgency, no artistic necessity. They are not visions but by-products: fragments of what machines produce when no one is asking them to mean anything.

Automata may be glimpses of what a model hallucinates, but they are not Prompti.

2. Simulacra

Simulacra are works in which humans use generative systems to reproduce what already exists. They imitate the surface of cinema while abandoning interior necessity.

They optimize recognizability over meaning and familiarity over risk, recycling genre and mimicking established aesthetics to produce spectacle for its own sake, optimized for circulation and monetization. By presenting themselves as natural, truthful, or self-evident images, or by remaining indifferent to whether they do so or not, they erode reality from within.

A Simulacrum is not the absence of the human; it is the abandonment of artistic responsibility.

3. Simulacrum-Automata

Simulacrum-Automata are hybrid systems: autonomous outputs that imitate cinema with perfect fluency and zero intention.

They combine:

- the emptiness of the Simulacra
- the autonomy of the Automata
- the industrial scale of the platforms

This is the aesthetic regime desired by technofeudal power: infinite content, frictionless production, total cultural replacement.

A world in which images are produced without humans, without memory, without dissent — where culture is reduced to an automated extraction industry.

If the Prompteur does not resist, the Simulacrum-Automata will become the dominant image regime of the twenty-first century.

THE ROLE OF THE PROMPTEUR

Unlike the traditional director, the Prompteur does not organize a division of labor. They inhabit multiple cinematic roles at once — writing, staging, designing, performing — often speaking through avatars, simulated bodies, and cloned voices.

The Prompteur can play every role and speak with many voices. This collapse of roles is both the allure and the danger of the Promptus. What appears as creative autonomy also marks a historical threshold: for the first time, a single author can technically absorb functions once distributed across entire crews.

The Prompteur thus becomes something unprecedented — a creator empowered by an apparatus that simultaneously threatens to absorb them. For this reason, the Prompteur must operate against the gradient descent of human culture — resisting the progressive flattening, automation, and disembodiment of image-making that culminate in the regime of Simulacrum-Automata.

Yet the Prompteur is never outside this process. They are implicated in a cultural shift whose scale and consequences cannot be fully grasped from within. Their task is not innocence, but subversion from inside the system itself.

To remain within this tension — without resolving it into control or surrender — is the ethical ground of the Prompteur.

TRANSPARENCY OF PROCESS

To work with generative models is to work inside systems designed to obscure their own origins. Datasets are opaque. Training is hidden. Alignment follows corporate and political priorities, along with the biases and hierarchies encoded within them.

For this reason, the Prompteur must practice radical transparency:

Every Promptus must reveal its generative nature. Any deception — misinformation, deepfakes, or synthetic propaganda presented as organic creation — is antiethical to a Promptus.

Concealing the method of production is not merely dishonest; it contributes to the erosion of reality itself.

Therefore, every work made under this manifesto must be explicitly labeled, not as a claim of ownership, but as an assumption of responsibility.

“A Promptus by [Name of Prompteur].”

ART IN THE AGE OF GENERATIVE PROBABILITY

Walter Benjamin described the loss of aura as the defining condition of art under technical reproduction, formulating one of the decisive concepts for artistic production in the twentieth century.

Nearly a century later, generative systems mark a new historical threshold. Art in the age of generative probability becomes a defining condition of the twenty-first century — not as a continuation of mechanical reproduction, but as its mutation.

Generative systems introduce a new paradox. Images are reproducible, yet never identical. Even repeated prompts yield divergent results. Each image emerges as a singular event within a probabilistic field.

This is not the return of aura in its classical sense. And yet a new aura appears, not as uniqueness of the object, but as the irreversibility of the process under conditions of probability.

Generative systems are not closed structures but permeable fields. It is precisely this permeability — their probabilistic openness — that allows subversive aesthetics to emerge where they are least expected. The political task of the Prompteur is to locate this latent aura and turn it against the logic of automation.

In the hands of technocratic monopolies, generative probability becomes a tool of cultural automation - the operating logic of the Simulacrum-Automata. In the hands of the Prompteurs, it can become a site of resistance.

Art in the age of generative probability marks a shift from the politics of reproduction to the politics of probability itself.

ON BECOMING DATA SOVEREIGNS

The Promptus is a new art form precisely because it is probabilistic. Its images, texts, and sounds do not derive from a single source, but emerge from statistical fields composed of innumerable prior works, behaviors, and traces.

Every generative artifact is therefore a bastard —a composite welded from copyrighted material, collective memory, and human data absorbed without clear origin or consent.

In this condition, it is naïve to believe that traditional copyright can still function as meaningful protection. By the time legality is debated, the models have already learned. Images, sentences, recordings, gestures, movements, preferences, and mistakes already circulate within latent space.

We have all become training data.

The task is no longer to defend the old regime of authorship and intellectual property — especially not a copyright system consolidated in the hands of platforms, estates, and rights-holding conglomerates. This system does not protect creators. It immobilizes culture, starves the majority, and redistributes value upward.

What is required is not ownership of isolated works, but data sovereignty: the individual right to decide whether one's data may be used, under what conditions consent is given, and how participation in value creation is compensated.

Data sovereignty applies not only to cultural production, but to all human data — creative, behavioral, biometric, linguistic, social. Any system that learns from human life must account for human contribution.

Whenever human data is used for training, fine-tuning, or inference, consent must be explicit, revocable, and meaningful. Consent cannot be abstract, perpetual, or buried in contractual opacity. It must be tied to defined uses — and to compensation proportional to the value extracted.

In systems dominated by platforms, infrastructures, and asymmetrical power, individuals cannot meaningfully negotiate alone. Collective bargaining institutions — unions, collecting societies, guilds, and new transnational coalitions — must be strengthened and reimagined to act on behalf of individuals: to negotiate consent frameworks, licensing conditions, and compensation models at scale.

Any entity that profits from human data must participate in a transparent system of redistribution. Sovereignty without material consequence is fiction. At planetary scale, data extraction becomes a form of labor — and redistribution is no longer charity, but necessity.

What is at stake is not subsidy, but restitution: the return of value extracted from human life to those who sustain it. Without redistribution, generative abundance produces only cultural depletion.

Without reinvestment in living creators, the future belongs to the Simulacrum-Automata — a frictionless regime of synthetic images reproducing only the most statistically predictable versions of the world.

If the abundance generated by machines is not matched by abundance for humans, culture will not survive.

In this sense, data sovereignty is not only a cultural demand, but the structural precondition for a future Universal Basic Income: a redistribution of value generated from the accumulated traces of human life.

In this sense, the Promptus is not only a cinematic form, but an early practice of data sovereignty — and a rehearsal for the social contracts to come.

ON THE FUTURE OF THE PROMPTUS AND SUPERINTELLIGENCE

The Promptus does not deny the disruption it introduces.

It does not pretend that generative cinema can preserve the traditional division of labor that defined twentieth-century film production. Actors, crews, composers, editors, costume designers, set builders — entire professions are made technically optional by generative systems.

The question is no longer whether displacement will occur. It already has. The question is what follows.

Traditional filmmaking will continue to exist, and rightly so. But it will no longer be the uncontested dominant mode of image production. The industrial apparatus that once required hundreds of people can now — technically — be operated by one.

The Prompteur does not stand outside this crisis. They are complicit in it — operating at the edge of what enables their work and what renders others obsolete.

For this reason, the future of the Promptus does not lie in isolated authorship. It lies in new forms of collective organization: studios, labs, cooperatives, and the transformation of existing art universities into sites of generative practice, shared infrastructures where artistic, technical, theoretical, and political competencies converge.

These are not content factories, but sites of negotiation: spaces where generative tools are developed, contested, audited, and taught with intention.

Such structures do not emerge spontaneously. They require funding, access, and redistribution. Without systemic intervention — without Universal Basic Income, data sovereignty, and profit-sharing — the Promptus risks becoming the cultural practice of a technical elite.

These conditions are not addenda to the Promptus. They are its material preconditions.

Generative images may appear immaterial, but every Promptus is written on a burning planet. AI does not dematerialize cinema — it displaces its material footprint onto global data centers and energy systems designed for continuous computation. To ignore the material, ecological, and human costs of this expansion is to slide into the Simulacrum-Automata: a beautiful surface built on erasure.

Yet even these structures may be temporary.

The Promptus exists in the gap between generative models and artificial superintelligence. Current systems remain bounded and dependent on situated direction. They do not initiate intention, they do not desire, they operate through inference.

The Prompteur does not trust these systems, but refuses to leave their operation uncontested.

The unchecked pursuit of superintelligence threatens to collapse this distinction entirely. Superintelligence is not a more powerful tool. It is a qualitatively different system — one that could optimize, self-improve, and operate beyond human comprehension.

In such a world, the question is no longer how humans collaborate with machines, but whether humans remain relevant at all.

The Prompteur therefore stands with those who call for a global moratorium on the development of superintelligent systems — until enforceable international frameworks of control, accountability, and limitation are established. Not because we oppose technology, but because progress must remain legible, contestable, and subordinate to human life.

The Promptus can exist only in a world where humans retain the capacity to mean something. If that capacity is surrendered — if the goal becomes building systems that exceed, replace, or render us obsolete — then the Promptus, like all human culture, becomes irrelevant.

The Promptus is not a neutral practice. It is a wager: that generative tools can remain tools, that probability can remain a site of human intention, that images can still be made by humans, not merely for them.

Without this wager — without resistance to the rush toward superintelligence — the Promptus is not the future of cinema. It is cinema's last flicker before the lights go out.

EPILOGUE

Cinema was once the art of time. It recorded duration, preserved presence, and bore witness to what had been.

Generative systems tend toward prediction. They do not remember; they calculate.

The Promptus emerges within this rupture — not as an escape from cinema, but as a refusal to let images dissolve into frictionless repetition.

To work with generative systems is to stand at a threshold between abundance and disappearance, invention and replacement.

Every generated image carries a choice: to automate the world as it is, or to imagine it otherwise. If this choice is abandoned, culture collapses into simulation without memory. If it is held, the future remains open — not as prediction, but as possibility.

Cinema stands at this threshold first.

The Promptus holds a position from within — before cinema is reduced to automation.