Archipel: Journal of Indonesian Interdisciplinary Studies
E-ISSN : 3124-6621
Vol (2) No (2) October 2026
https://ojsap.com/index.php/archipel
DOI : https://doi.org/10.65739/archipel.v2i2.91

Legal and Ethical Analysis of the Use of Intellectual Property in Artworks Created by Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Article Information:
Received August 02, 2026
Revised September 22, 2026
Accepted October 21, 2026
Published October 29, 2026

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; copyright; AI-generated art; authorship; intellectual property ethics; Indonesian law*

Abstract

The rapid diffusion of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed the production of visual art, raising unresolved questions about who, if anyone, holds rights over AI-generated artworks and whether the use of protected works to train AI models is lawful and fair. This study examines the legal status of AI-generated artworks under Indonesian copyright law and analyses the ethical issues surrounding their creation and commercial use. Employing normative juridical research with statute, conceptual, comparative, and case approaches, the study analyses Law Number 28 of 2014 on Copyright, related Indonesian regulations, selected foreign legal regimes and court decisions, and 25 recent scholarly sources. The findings show that Indonesian copyright law remains anthropocentric: the definitions of creator and work presuppose human intellectual activity, so purely machine-generated artworks fall outside protection, while works involving substantial human creative control may qualify. Comparative analysis reveals divergent approaches across jurisdictions. Ethically, the most pressing concerns are the absence of consent, attribution, and compensation for artists whose works are used as training data, together with the lack of transparency about AI involvement. The study proposes a graduated human-contribution model combined with input-stage obligations of transparency, opt-out, and benefit sharing as a basis for reforming Indonesian copyright law

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has altered the way visual art is conceived, produced, and circulated. Text-to-image systems now allow users with no formal artistic training to produce paintings, illustrations, and digital compositions within seconds by entering short textual instructions. Epstein et al. (2023) describe generative AI not as the end of art but as a new medium with distinctive affordances that will reshape aesthetics, creative labour, and the media ecosystem. Yet the same technological capacity that democratises image-making also unsettles the foundations of intellectual property law, which for centuries has assumed that creative works originate in the mind of a human author. When an artwork is generated by a model trained on millions of existing images, the questions of who created it, who owns it, and whether its creation infringed the rights of

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others no longer have obvious answers.

These questions are not merely theoretical. Courts and copyright offices in several jurisdictions have been confronted with applications to register AI-generated images and with lawsuits brought by artists whose works were used without permission to train image-generation models. Samuelson (2023) observes that copyright litigation against developers of generative AI carries implications far beyond the parties involved, since a ruling in favour of rights holders could restrict lawful training to public-domain or licensed material. Chesterman (2024) similarly frames the training of generative models as a contest between the borrowing that has always characterised artistic practice and the large-scale appropriation that machine learning makes possible. At the output stage, scholars remain divided between those who insist that only humans can be authors (Daňko, 2025; Neubauer et al., 2026) and those who argue that copyright law can and should accommodate AI authorship or at least allocate rights in AI outputs to the humans and firms behind them (Saw & Lim, 2026; Wang, 2025).

Indonesia occupies a particular position in this debate. Its copyright regime, governed by Law Number 28 of 2014 on Copyright (hereinafter the Copyright Law), defines a creator as one or several persons who individually or jointly produce a work that is distinctive and personal, and defines a work as a creation in the field of science, art, and literature produced through inspiration, ability, thought, imagination, dexterity, skill, or expertise expressed in tangible form. These definitions were drafted before generative AI became widely available and implicitly presuppose a human creator. Mayana et al. (2024) identify this anthropocentric framing as the core challenge facing Indonesian copyright law in addressing AI-generated works, while Kristanti et al. (2025) and Wiwin et al. (2025) show that Indonesian legal scholarship has yet to reach consensus on whether AI outputs can be protected and, if so, in whose name. The government has issued Circular Letter of the Minister of Communication and Informatics Number 9 of 2023 on Artificial Intelligence Ethics, but this instrument is a non-binding ethical guideline and does not resolve questions of ownership or infringement.

The visual arts sector deserves particular attention. Unlike text, images can be generated in a recognisable style of a living artist, and many illustrators, concept artists, and designers in Indonesia earn their livelihoods through commissioned digital work that now competes directly with AI-generated alternatives. Cunningham (2025) characterises AI-generated art as a domain of legal and ethical grey zones, in which the boundaries between inspiration, imitation, and appropriation blur. Chen and He (2026) highlight that these ambiguities extend to the meaning of creativity itself, as the role of the human shifts from executing a work to selecting, prompting, and curating machine outputs. Sharma et al. (2025) further note that the management of intellectual property in AI-generated artworks requires new institutional arrangements, including licensing models and provenance tracking, which existing copyright administration was not designed to provide. In Indonesia, where the creative economy has been designated a national development priority and digital illustration is a growing source of income for young workers, the absence of clear rules threatens both the economic security of artists and the legal certainty required by firms that wish to use AI responsibly. The problem is therefore simultaneously legal, ethical, and socio-economic.

Beyond legal doctrine, the use of AI in art raises distinct ethical concerns. Afuwape (2025) identifies authorship, ownership, and responsibility as interlinked ethical questions: attributing a work to a human who contributed little misrepresents the creative process, while attributing it to no one leaves harmed parties without recourse. Geiger (2024) argues that any copyright framework for generative AI must be consistent with human rights, balancing the right of creators to the protection of their moral and material interests against the public's right to participate in cultural life and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress. Adeusi and Adebiyi (2025) emphasise that legal and ethical frameworks across creative

industries remain fragmented, leaving artists exposed to uncompensated use of their works. Karimullah et al. (2025) reach a similar conclusion in the Indonesian context with respect to AI-written texts, arguing that intellectual property ethics should guide the determination of ownership where the law is silent.

International developments illustrate the range of possible responses. In the United States, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in Thaler v. Perlmutter (2025) affirmed that the Copyright Act requires human authorship, while the Copyright Office has accepted registration of works in which human authors exercised sufficient creative control over AI-assisted material. The United Kingdom's Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 protects computer-generated works by vesting authorship in the person who made the arrangements necessary for their creation. The Beijing Internet Court in 2023 recognised copyright in an AI-generated image on the basis of the user's intellectual investment in prompts and parameters, and the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act imposes transparency and copyright-compliance obligations on providers of general-purpose AI models. Zhang et al. (2025) suggest that these divergent approaches can be understood by mapping contributions along the AI value chain, from dataset creators to model developers and end users, rather than by searching for a single author. Lucchi (2024) likewise argues that copyright regulation must be adapted to address both training data and the authorship of outputs if it is to remain coherent.

Existing Indonesian studies have made important contributions but remain limited in scope. Raevita et al. (2024) examine the regulation of intellectual property rights in artworks produced by robots and algorithms but focus primarily on the question of AI legal personhood. Kristanti et al. (2025) and Wiwin et al. (2025) analyse the legal position of AI works under the Copyright Law without systematically engaging with the input stage, namely the use of protected works as training data. Karimullah et al. (2025) integrate ethical analysis but concentrate on textual works. International scholarship, including Hutson (2024), Joshi (2024), Vebritha (2024), Deckker and Sumanasekara (2025), and Pakshin (2025), offers comparative doctrinal analysis and criteria for protection but does not address the specific normative structure and institutional context of Indonesian law.

The novelty of this study lies in three respects. First, it integrates legal and ethical analysis within a single framework, treating ethics not as an appendix to doctrinal analysis but as a normative source for legal reform. Second, it examines both stages of the AI art life cycle, the input stage (the use of protected artworks as training data) and the output stage (the authorship and ownership of generated artworks), whereas prior Indonesian studies concentrate almost exclusively on outputs. Third, it proposes a graduated human-contribution model tailored to the Indonesian Copyright Law, which calibrates protection to the degree of human creative control and couples it with input-stage obligations of transparency, opt-out, attribution, and benefit sharing. Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) how is the use of intellectual property in AI-generated artworks regulated under Indonesian law compared with selected foreign jurisdictions; and (2) what ethical principles should guide the protection and use of AI-generated artworks, and how can they be translated into a model for legal reform in Indonesia?

METHODS

This study employs normative juridical (doctrinal) research, which treats law as a system of norms and examines the coherence of legal rules, principles, and doctrines in addressing a legal problem. This type of research is appropriate because the central questions concern the interpretation of existing copyright norms and the formulation of normative recommendations, rather than the measurement of empirical behaviour. The research is descriptive-analytical and prescriptive: it describes and analyses the current legal position of AI-generated artworks and then prescribes a model for legal reform.

Four approaches are used. The statute approach examines Law Number 28 of 2014 on Copyright, particularly the provisions on creators, works, moral and economic rights,

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and limitations and exceptions; Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions as last amended by Law Number 1 of 2024; and Circular Letter of the Minister of Communication and Informatics Number 9 of 2023 on Artificial Intelligence Ethics. The conceptual approach analyses the concepts of authorship, originality, ownership, and creativity as developed in legal scholarship. The comparative approach examines the legal regimes of the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, China, and Japan, chosen because they represent distinct models for addressing AI-generated works and AI training. The case approach examines leading decisions and administrative determinations, including Thaler v. Perlmutter (2025), the United States Copyright Office's determination on Zarya of the Dawn (2023), and the Beijing Internet Court's decision in Li v. Liu (2023).

The legal materials consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary materials. Primary materials comprise the statutes, regulations, and judicial decisions listed above. Secondary materials comprise 25 scholarly articles published between 2023 and 2026, obtained through a bibliographic search in Consensus and Google Scholar using the keywords "AI-generated art", "copyright", "authorship", "intellectual property", and "ethics". Sources were included if they addressed the legal or ethical dimensions of AI-generated creative works, were published in peer-reviewed journals or recognised scholarly repositories, and possessed an active Digital Object Identifier (DOI). Tertiary materials, such as legal dictionaries, were used to clarify terminology.

The legal materials were analysed qualitatively. Legal norms were interpreted using grammatical, systematic, and teleological interpretation to determine whether and how they apply to AI-generated artworks. The ethical analysis evaluated legal positions against four principles drawn from the literature on AI and intellectual property ethics: transparency, fairness, accountability, and respect for creators' autonomy and consent. The results of both analyses were synthesised to formulate a prescriptive model. The research stages are summarised in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Stages and Analytical Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal Status of AI-Generated Artworks under Indonesian Law and Comparative Perspectives

The first finding concerns the subject of copyright. Under the Copyright Law, copyright arises automatically on the basis of the declarative principle once a work is realised in tangible form, and it vests in the creator. Grammatical interpretation of the definition of creator as one or several persons producing a work that is distinctive and personal indicates that the law presupposes a human being. Although the Copyright Law defines a person to include both natural persons and legal entities, legal entities may hold copyright only derivatively, as rights holders through employment, commission, or transfer,

and not as original creators. The requirement that a work be distinctive and personal, and that it arise from inspiration, imagination, and skill, reinforces this reading because these are attributes of human cognition. Systematic interpretation leads to the same conclusion: the moral rights granted to creators, such as the right to have one's name attached to a work and to object to its distortion, presuppose a personality that can be harmed.

Consequently, an artwork generated autonomously by an AI system, with minimal human input beyond a simple instruction, does not satisfy the requirements of a protected work under Indonesian law. This conclusion is consistent with Mayana et al. (2024), who argue that the Copyright Law cannot recognise AI as a creator without legislative amendment, and with Wiwin et al. (2025), who find that AI works occupy a legal vacuum in Indonesia. Kristanti et al. (2025) suggest that the person who operates the AI might be treated as the creator, but this proposal faces the difficulty that entering a prompt does not necessarily amount to the personal and distinctive expression the law requires. Raevita et al. (2024) note that treating such outputs as unprotected leaves them effectively in the public domain, which may discourage investment but also prevents the monopolisation of machine-produced content.

The comparative analysis, summarised in Table 1, demonstrates that this anthropocentric position is shared by most jurisdictions but is applied with varying degrees of flexibility. The United States adopts the strictest approach at the level of authorship, yet the Copyright Office has accepted that human selection, arrangement, and modification of AI material may be protected; in the Zarya of the Dawn determination, protection was granted for the text and the arrangement of a comic book but not for the individual images generated by Midjourney. The United Kingdom offers a statutory solution through the concept of computer-generated works, although Neubauer et al. (2026) question whether this provision, drafted in 1988, is compatible with the originality standard that requires human intellectual creation. China's Beijing Internet Court has taken the most expansive view, recognising the user's choices of prompts, parameters, and iterative refinement as sufficient intellectual investment. The European Union maintains a human-centred originality standard but focuses its regulatory energy on the input stage through the text and data mining opt-out and the transparency obligations of the AI Act.

Table 1. Comparative Legal Approaches to AI-Generated Artworks

Jurisdiction	Main Legal Basis	Status of AI-Generated Output	Rules on Training Data
Indonesia	Law No. 28/2014 on Copyright; MCI Circular No. 9/2023 on AI Ethics	Not expressly regulated; definitions of creator and work presuppose a human, so purely AI outputs are unprotected	No specific rule; general exceptions for education and research are narrow and require source attribution
United States	Copyright Act (17 U.S.C.); Thaler v. Perlmutter (D.C. Cir. 2025)	Human authorship required; human selection, arrangement, and modification may be protected	Assessed case by case under the fair use doctrine; litigation ongoing
United Kingdom	Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, s. 9(3)	Computer-generated works protected; author is the person who made the necessary arrangements	Text and data mining exception limited to non-commercial research
European Union	Directive (EU) 2019/790; Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (AI Act)	Originality requires the author's own intellectual creation, implying a human author	Text and data mining permitted subject to rights holders' opt-out; AI providers must

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			publish training-content summaries
China	Copyright Law of the PRC; Li v. Liu (Beijing Internet Court, 2023)	Protection possible where the user demonstrates intellectual investment through prompts and parameters	No specific exception; addressed through interim measures on generative AI services
Japan	Copyright Act, Art. 30-4	Human creative contribution required for protection	Broad exception for information analysis, unless use unreasonably prejudices rights holders

Source: Author's analysis of primary and secondary legal materials (2026).

The comparison yields two implications for Indonesia. First, a simple dichotomy between protected human works and unprotected AI works fails to reflect creative practice, in which artists increasingly combine AI generation with substantial manual editing, compositing, and painting. Pakshin (2025) and Deckker and Sumanasekara (2025) propose criteria that focus on the degree of human control over expressive elements, which offers a more workable standard than the identity of the tool. Second, the Indonesian framework is silent on the input stage. The limitations in the Copyright Law permit the use of works for education, research, and similar purposes only if the source is cited and the use does not unreasonably harm the creator's interests. Large-scale commercial training on scraped artworks, without attribution, is unlikely to fall within these exceptions, yet there is no specific rule, opt-out mechanism, or licensing system to govern it. Indonesian artists therefore have formal rights but few practical means of enforcing them.

Ethical Analysis: Consent, Attribution, Transparency, and Fair Distribution of Value

The ethical analysis reveals that the most serious concerns arise not at the output stage, where the doctrinal debate has concentrated, but at the input stage. Generative image models learn by extracting statistical patterns from very large collections of existing works, many of which are protected and were collected without the knowledge of their creators. Epstein et al. (2023) emphasise that, unlike earlier technological disruptions, generative AI depends directly on training data made by people. From the perspective of respect for creators' autonomy, the use of an artist's portfolio to train a model capable of reproducing that artist's style, without consent, treats the artist's labour as a free resource. Chesterman (2024) shows that this problem is not adequately captured by the traditional distinction between unprotected ideas and protected expression, because a model may appropriate a style cumulatively without copying any single work.

Fairness concerns follow from this asymmetry. The economic value created by generative models is captured largely by developers and platform operators, while the artists whose works made the models possible receive neither attribution nor remuneration. Geiger (2024) argues that a human-rights-consistent approach should secure fair remuneration for creators rather than simply prohibiting or permitting training, since the former could hinder access to culture while the latter would neglect the material interests of authors. Zhang et al. (2025) similarly argue that the allocation of rights and benefits should follow the contributions made at each point of the AI value chain. These positions suggest that the ethically preferable response is not to block AI development but to establish mechanisms for consent, opt-out, and benefit sharing.

Transparency is the second principal concern. Audiences, buyers, competition organisers, and clients commissioning artwork increasingly cannot distinguish AI-generated images from human-made ones. Chen and He (2026) and Cunningham (2025) observe that the undisclosed use of AI blurs creative boundaries and may mislead

consumers about the nature of the work and the skill it embodies. The failure to disclose AI involvement also has legal consequences: a person who registers an AI-generated image as a personal creation may obtain a copyright record to which the person is not entitled, and the declarative system of the Copyright Law, which does not examine originality at registration, offers little protection against such claims. Hutson (2024) and Vebritha (2024) argue that disclosure should become a standard condition for recognising rights in AI-assisted works.

Accountability is the third concern. Afuwape (2025) points out that when a generated artwork infringes another person's rights, by reproducing a protected character or closely imitating a specific work, it is unclear whether responsibility lies with the user, the developer, or the platform. Attributing authorship to the AI would not solve this problem, since an AI system cannot bear liability or enjoy moral rights. Daňko (2025) concludes that AI should be treated as a non-author precisely because authorship entails responsibility. Against this view, Saw and Lim (2026) contend that recognising a form of AI authorship, with rights vesting in a human or corporate owner, could provide legal certainty and encourage investment. This study finds the former position more persuasive for Indonesia: recognising AI as an author would require a fundamental departure from the personality-based foundations of the Copyright Law and would risk concentrating rights in technology firms at the expense of human artists. Table 2 maps these ethical principles onto their legal implications.

Table 2. Ethical Principles and Their Legal Implications for AI-Generated Artworks

Ethical Principle	Core Problem Identified	Stage	Proposed Legal Implication for Indonesia
Respect for autonomy and consent	Artists' works used to train models without knowledge or permission	Input	Machine-readable opt-out mechanism; licensing for commercial training
Fairness	Value captured by developers; no remuneration for source artists	Input	Collective licensing or remuneration scheme managed through collective management organisations
Transparency	AI involvement concealed from buyers, audiences, and registrars	Output	Mandatory disclosure of AI use in registration and commercial transactions; labelling of synthetic images
Attribution	Source artists unacknowledged; false claims of human authorship	Input and output	Training-data summaries; sanctions for false declarations in copyright registration
Accountability	Unclear liability for infringing outputs	Output	Liability allocated to users and providers according to control; AI not recognised as author

Source: Author's analysis of primary and secondary legal materials (2026).

A Graduated Human-Contribution Model for Indonesian Copyright Reform

Building on the legal and ethical findings, this study proposes a graduated human-contribution model. The model rejects both extremes: it neither denies protection to all works involving AI nor grants protection to any image produced by a prompt. Instead, protection is calibrated to the degree of human creative control over the expressive elements of the final work. At the first level, AI-assisted works, in which a human artist uses AI as a tool for specific tasks such as colour correction or background extension while determining the composition and expressive content, should be fully protected as works of the human artist. At the second level, AI-integrated works, in which a human selects,

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arranges, edits, and transforms AI outputs with substantial creative judgement, should be protected to the extent of the human contribution, consistent with the treatment of compilations and derivative works. At the third level, AI-generated works produced with minimal human intervention, such as a single prompt, should not receive copyright protection, although the law may consider a short related right for investment if policymakers judge it necessary.

The model must be coupled with input-stage obligations derived from the ethical analysis. These include a machine-readable opt-out allowing artists to exclude their works from commercial training, a requirement for providers offering generative services in Indonesia to publish summaries of the content used in training, and a remuneration scheme that may be administered through collective management organisations already recognised under the Copyright Law. In addition, persons registering works should be required to declare AI involvement, with false declarations constituting grounds for cancellation. Joshi (2024) and Sharma et al. (2025) support such disclosure and licensing mechanisms as practical tools for managing intellectual property in AI-generated artworks, and Lucchi (2024) stresses that safeguarding rights holders need not preclude technological progress.

This model offers three advantages. It preserves the personality-based foundation of the Copyright Law by keeping the human creator at the centre of protection. It reflects actual creative practice, in which AI is increasingly one tool among many. It also responds to the ethical deficits identified above by giving artists control and a share of value at the input stage. Its implementation would require amendments to the definitions in the Copyright Law, a new provision on AI-assisted works, and implementing regulations on disclosure and training data, ideally harmonised with the forthcoming national AI governance framework and with international instruments to avoid regulatory arbitrage.

Institutionally, the Directorate General of Intellectual Property would play a central role in operationalising the model. Because Indonesian copyright registration is declarative and does not examine originality, the registration form could be revised to require a statement of the nature and extent of AI involvement, accompanied where relevant by evidence of the human creative process, such as drafts, layered files, or editing records. Such evidence would not be a condition for the existence of copyright, which still arises automatically, but would strengthen the evidentiary value of registration in disputes. Collective management organisations could, in turn, administer opt-out registries and distribute remuneration collected from commercial AI providers, building on existing structures rather than creating new bureaucracies. This approach balances legal certainty, justice for creators, and the benefits of innovation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Indonesian copyright law, as reflected in Law Number 28 of 2014, remains anthropocentric. The definitions of creator and work presuppose human intellectual activity, so artworks generated autonomously by AI are not protected, whereas works in which humans exercise substantial creative control over expressive elements may qualify for protection. Comparative analysis shows that most jurisdictions share this human-centred premise but differ in how much human input is required and in whether they regulate the use of protected works as training data. Indonesia's principal gap lies at the input stage, where there is no specific rule on training, no opt-out mechanism, and no remuneration scheme for artists.

Ethically, the use of AI in art raises concerns of consent, fairness, transparency, attribution, and accountability, most of which arise from the uncompensated and undisclosed use of artists' works. To address these concerns, this study recommends a graduated human-contribution model that distinguishes AI-assisted, AI-integrated, and AI-generated works, combined with obligations of opt-out, training-data transparency, benefit sharing, and disclosure of AI involvement. Lawmakers should amend the Copyright Law

accordingly, and the government should strengthen the existing AI ethics guidance into binding regulation. Future research should examine empirically how Indonesian visual artists and creative industries are affected by generative AI, in order to calibrate these legal instruments to actual practice.

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