

SETH PRICE

PORTALS

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Those first generative AI images, back in 2021 and 2022, felt like strange, beautiful ruins. But how many commercial tools scramble your message into something strange and beautiful? No way this can last, I thought. I wanted a record of it. I generated a group of pictures and put them aside for later.

I took them out last summer, and they looked prehistoric. These days we can make all kinds of odd and broken images, we're drowning in them, but they're odd in new ways, they're broken differently.

I can't remember why, but I'd asked the machines to dream up a series of tasteful, decorated rooms. Spaces of interiority, for culture and contemplation. Each result led to the next, like points on an equation: bedroom, living room, drawing room, drawing table. Places to make art, and places to live with it. Portraits of our world, without us, made by a thing that does not want and does not care.

People do want, and do care—that's where art comes from. The paintings in this show were made by a person, using a camera, brushes, paints, hands. A human printed a picture on a plastic sheet, pressed it into a pool of liquid plastic on a metal plate, and ripped it off, leaving a scarred after-image. Dragged fingers through the wet print, then tilted it to make it drip. Took a photo of that, and fed it into software. Created mirrored lenses and portals to unite, in reflection, the machine-made and the human-made. Only a person comes in at the end and muddles everything, paints out areas, adds lines, acts on a whim—what if I just... I love it that I can have a picture that wasn't made by a body, it's one of the best things we've done recently, but it takes a body to make art. A machine picture is a result, and art is an offering.

— Seth Price, 2025