

# girlTech Women in STEM

Nov 2024 • Vol. 3 Issue 1

## Caitlin Clark

By Skylar Hinton '26  
Pages 11 & 12

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## The Math Behind UVA's Swim Team

By Lauren Hsu '24  
& Kara Wang '24  
Pages 9 & 10

## The 2024 Total Eclipse

By Emma Wang '26  
Page 6

## The Study of Gender & Sleep

By Arushi Krishnan '27  
Page 5

# Welcoming Masthead

Letter from the Editors • Page 1  
Meet the Team • Pages 3 & 4

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# Sally Ride

First Woman in Space  
by Isabelle Jiao '26 • Pages 7-8



Dear lovely reader,

We are Ava Persaud '25 and Kay Lee '25, the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of the 2024-25 *GirlTech Magazine!*

As the new head executives, we want to extend heartfelt gratitude to our contributors. Your courage in telling personal stories gives us the opportunity to share them to the broader Choate audience. It's no secret that marginalized genders remain underrepresented in STEM fields, and our collective commitment to advocacy through the power of the writing remains unwavering.

We're thrilled to present this brief collection of articles and artwork, each

piece reflecting members of the vibrant Choate Rosemary Hall community! As an integral part of the GirlTech Club, our aim is to create content that resonates across diverse backgrounds, amplifying voices from marginalized genders and fostering empowerment.

We invite individuals of all backgrounds to join us in our mission for change, one article at a time. Our hope is that you can find solace in the pages of our issue during the fall term as the winter chilliness sets in.

Together, we empower, encourage, and educate.

Until next fall,

Ava Persaud '25, *Editor-in-Chief*



Kay Lee '25, *Managing Editor*



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# Table of Contents

## Redefining Rest: The Study of Gender and Sleep

Ann Song '25

**Page 5**

## A Quick Glance: The 2024 Total Eclipse

Emma Wang '26

**Page 6**



## Reaching For the Stars: Sally Ride's American Dream for Women in STEM

Isabelle Jiao '26

**Pages 7-8**

## The Math Behind UVA Women's Swim Team

Kara Wang '24 and

Lauren Hsu '24

**Pages 9-10**

## Caitlin Clark

Hannah Quan '26

**Pages 11-12**



## Movie Review: Thank You For Not Answering, an AI-Generated Film

Ada Tieworm '26

**Page 13**

Submit article ideas to  
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# Meet the Team

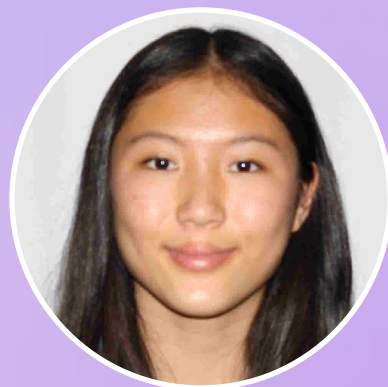
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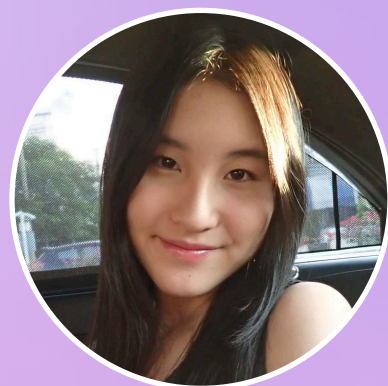
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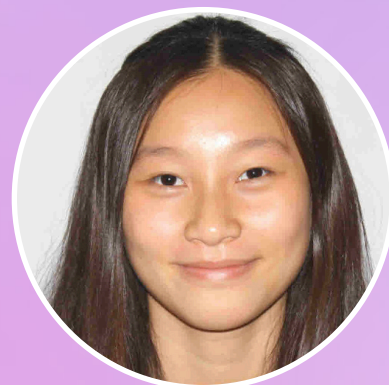
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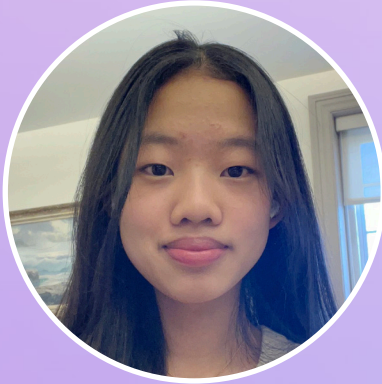
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## **OUR MISSION**

Empower women and other people of marginalized genders in STEM through recognition, education, and advocacy.



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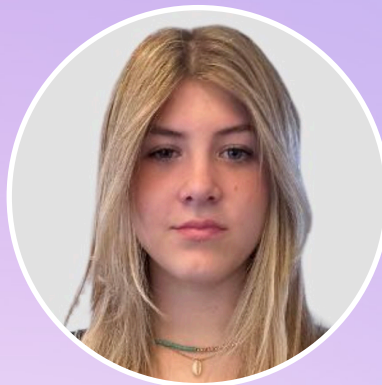
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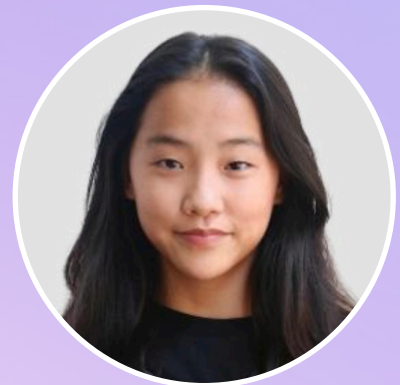
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# Redefining Rest: The Study of Gender & Sleep

By: Arushi Krishnan '27



Graphic by Leah Han '27

Sleep is a fundamental part of life, essential for physical well-being, emotional happiness, and cognitive growth. Yet, in today's dynamic society, the value of sleep is usually overlooked or misinterpreted. Previously, it was stated by experts that all adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night. However, new research shows that women require more sleep than men. The average woman gets 11 more minutes of sleep than the average man, but sleep is more effective when it is uninterrupted throughout the night, and the quality of women's sleep is poorer than men's. This occurs for several reasons; some are biological, and some result from societal pressures and standards.

Firstly, women often experience cramps or hot flashes at night due to menstruation or other hormonal changes. Women who are pregnant or recently were pregnant also go through much more discomfort while they sleep. Along with that, women are more likely to experience chronic pain, such as migraines, rheumatoid arthritis, and pelvic soreness, because of hormone shifts and menopause. Women are also twice as likely to develop Restless Leg Syndrome, a

disorder that causes a strong urge to move the legs, making it more difficult to fall asleep.

Another factor that affects women's sleep is their mental health; women are twice as likely as men to have depression and anxiety. Additionally, insomnia is an incredibly common sleep disorder in adults, especially women. It is sometimes caused by menstruation and hormones but is often a result of stress from home or job issues, contributing to depression and anxiety. Next, the roles that women play or are expected to play in society affect their ability to sleep well. Women are often deemed the caretakers for their families, and they may have to wake up in the middle of the night if their child is sick or needs help. This is especially true for breastfeeding mothers and mothers with newborn babies. Apart from childcare, women have been traditionally expected to cook for their families and tend to the household, adding pressure and labor to their lives.

Another important issue to address is the difference between the sleep needs of adults and adolescents. For children and teens, problems like chronic pain,

childcare, and menopause are not as prevalent, so the sleep disparity between young men and women is not very significant. However, studies have shown that kids ages six to twelve should sleep between nine and twelve hours per day, while kids ages twelve to eighteen need eight to ten hours of sleep to function well. In 2015, the CDC conducted a survey where they found that about 58% of elementary and middle schoolers do not get adequate sleep, while over 72% of high schoolers do not sleep sufficiently either. Unsurprisingly, they also discovered that low levels of sleep in children and adolescents result in decreased focus, intelligence, and mood. Those who are sleep-deprived also have a higher risk of disease, obesity, anxiety, and depression. Sleep is crucial to the success and well-being of humans. Although it may be difficult to sleep well for busy high school students, it is critical to master time management and maximize the amount of sleep possible. It is important to educate oneself on not only the sleep disparities between children and adults but also the more recent realization of sleep disparities between men and women.

# A Quick Glance: The 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

By: Emma Wang '26

Rarely do natural phenomena pique global interest as much as total solar eclipse. Spanning from Mexico all the way to Canada in a diagonal trajectory, passing Texas at 1:30pm, New York at 2pm, and Vermont at 3:30pm, the sun was completely blocked by the moon's shadow on April 8, 2024. Meanwhile, on Choate campus, a distance away from the path of totality, students gathered on the Great Lawn after school, grabbing a drink, a blanket, and friends, to experience the event. But, why does a solar eclipse happen? What does a total solar eclipse look like? And, most importantly, how can we enjoy it without going blind? Solar eclipses happen when the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun. The path of totality refers to the areas where the alignment is precise enough for complete obscuration, with the Sun entirely covered.

During a solar eclipse, the moon slowly pushes the sun to a crescent, dimming the sky around it until it is aligned. Right before alignment, we can observe Diamond Ring effects, which are circular glares from the sun that look like the shine of a gem. When total eclipse happens, the Sun will be fully dark, with a ring that reveals the Sun's corona, its outer atmosphere. This beautiful halo of plasma – soft, feathery tendrils

peeking out from the moon's shadow – is usually invisible, as it is hidden by the bright light emitted from the Sun's surface.

While the thought of witnessing a solar eclipse firsthand is irresistible, it's crucial to prioritize safety when observing such an event. Directly looking at the sun, even during an eclipse when it is dimmer, can have various adverse effects on our eyes, including solar retinopathy, which can cause permanent vision loss or blind spots, and photokeratitis, temporary but uncomfortable eye irritation from exposure to intense UV radiation. This is why we need special equipment. Watching from a camera or sunglasses is ineffective, as the sun will burn through to the eyes in a matter of seconds.



Graphic by Leah Han '27

The only fool proof method is by turning your back to the sun and watching the eclipse through a pinhole projection of light. The disadvantage is clear: the lack of direct visibility and “wow” factor. This is why special filters are put in viewing glasses that dim everything, to the point of complete darkness, but the sun. Thankfully, as the corona is revealed during the few moments of totality, you can remove the glasses and marvel at the eclipse's beauty.

At Choate, students were able to view a deep partial solar eclipse, with around 97% totality. However, many students, when prompted about their thoughts on the viewing, indicated that the experience was underwhelming. This contrasts the accounts of faculty who traveled to areas of totality. So, why does that 3% matter so much? Well, the fact is, even if the totality in an area is 99%, or even 99.9%, there are minimal environmental changes, such as brightness, and none of the striking visual effects like the corona or the appearance of bright stars. So, when the next total solar eclipse happens in the US, in 2044, grab a pair of eclipse viewing glasses and head to the path of totality to watch profound beauty that lies beyond our reach.

# Reaching for the Stars: Sally Ride's American Dream for Women in STEM

by Isabelle Jiao '26



Graphic by Teniola Obayomi '25

As the first American woman in space, Sally Ride has an extensive repertoire of accomplishments in STEM. By embarking on numerous space missions, establishing her own non-profit organization, and writing multiple books, Ride's impact on the science community lasts much longer than her career itself.

Sally Ride developed an early interest in science; however, throughout Sally Ride's early life, women in the field of science was still not common. Eventually pursuing her education in science at Swarthmore College and later Stanford University for her doctorate, her expertise in science quickly grew. At the start of her career, NASA recruited her, along with five other women, out of thirty-five people in hopes to have young scientists serve as mission specialists in the near future.

After a year of intensive training, Ride worked as flight engineer along with five others on the space shuttle Challenger STS-7, marking her first journey to space. She later was a part of the STS-41S space shuttle mission, and she played a role in investigating the Chal-





*Graphic Courtesy of Snopes*

lenger accident of 1986. Her career in aeronautics did not come without challenges, however. She recounts being interviewed with questions such as, “how space was going to affect her ability to reproduce, and what kind of makeup she was going to take on the mission.” Disappointed with the prevalence of conservative views about women in STEM, she launched many initiatives to normalize women in science.

Upon some of her prominent projects, Ride established her own company, Sally Ride Science, as a platform to inspire young girls and boys to pursue careers in science. Her company offers subjects spanning all the

way from environmental science to astrobiology. She encourages the youth to continue being passionate about math and science as she believes that “Science and math education is critical to our country’s future.” In addition, after her job at NASA, she continued her career in science education by becoming a professor at University of California San Diego. Ride also served on the President’s Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology and the Advisory Board of the National Women’s History Museum. To add onto her expansive list of accomplishments, she also authored seven children’s books that further inspire new generations in science.

Unfortunately, towards the end of Ride’s life, she battled pancreatic cancer for 17 months before passing away in July of 2012. Despite her death, her visions and legacy for a more equitable future in STEM persist. Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States, recognized Ride as an inspirational and influential role model for the younger generation in STEM for her career posthumously. After her death, Obama honored Ride with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Beyond her awards and honors, Sally Ride had a great impact on not only young girls and boys, but on the future of science exploration and innovation.

# Dive Into the Numbers:

## The Math Behind UVA's Women's Swim Team

by Kara Wang '24 & Lauren Hsu '24

The women's swim team at the University of Virginia (UVA) is making history. In the past, they were victorious three times in a row at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Championships.

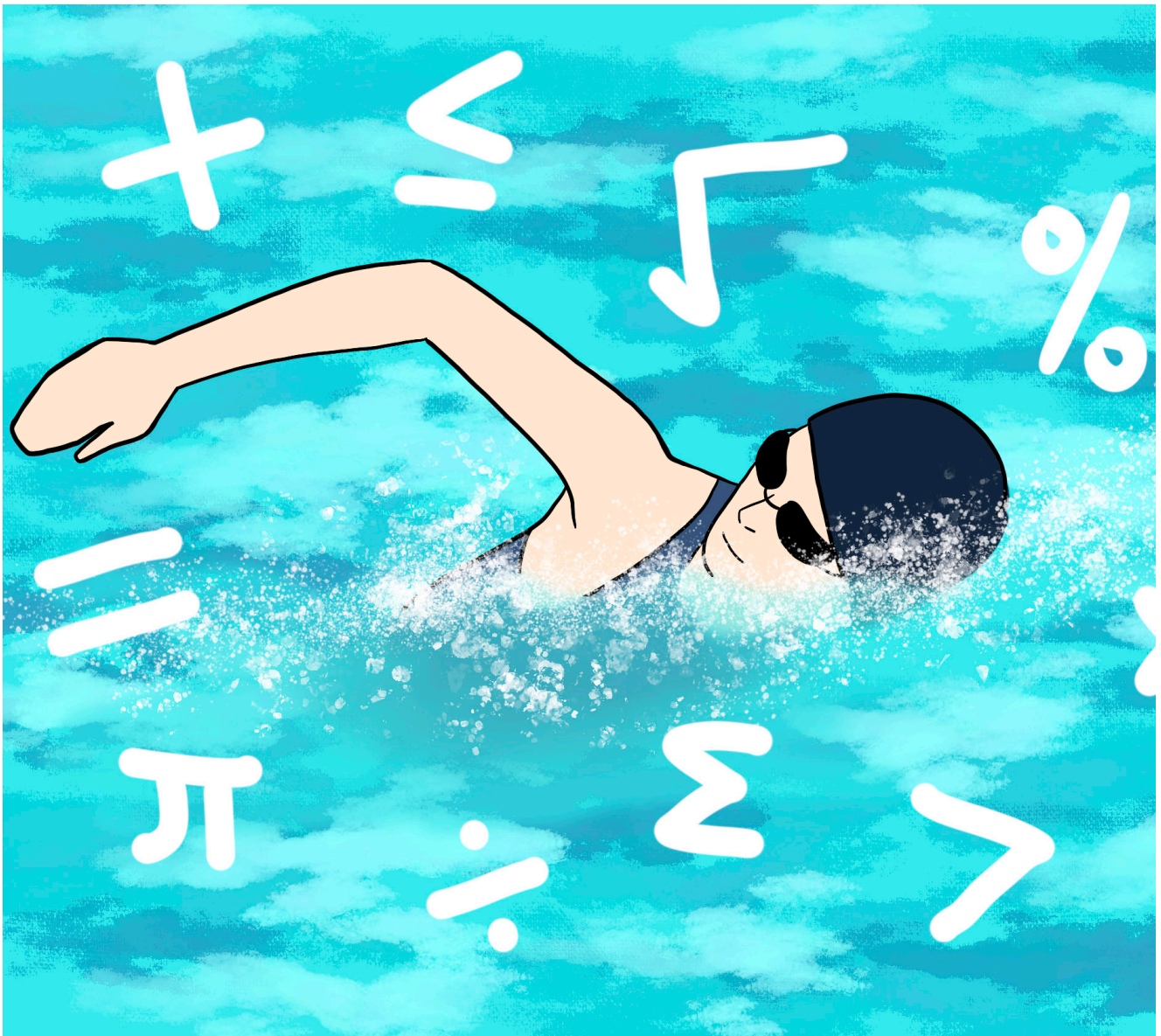
While the achievements of UVA's women swimmers may be astonishing, they are rooted in concrete mathematical calculations. The mastermind behind the math is Professor Ken Ono, a Japanese-American mathematician who arrived at UVA in 2019 and now serves as the STEM Advisor to the Provost. A previous international triathlete, Professor Ono has left his footprints all across the country as a teacher at the University of Georgia, the University of Illinois, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Wisconsin, and Emory University.

How can math be used to increase a swimmer's performance? Professor Ono's not-so-secret formula starts with data collection. As swimmers go through a variety of tests in the pool, video cameras capture the movements for the "breaking point." Meanwhile, batteries tailored to house accelerometers and other sensors are fitted to swimmers' backs with a belt, allowing detection of minuscule variations that are often too subtle and too fast for the eye to discern. These measurements can capture the exact depth of a dive, the angle with which a swimmer pushes off the wall, the distance traveled with each stroke, and the forces involved in each of these processes.

Eventually, mathematical optimization processes are applied to find the exact points in time and positioning in which the swimmer is able to obtain the maximum speed with the least drag and resistance. With the calculations down to decimal points, coaches no longer need to rely on trial-and-error or pattern recognition, and instead precisely identify points of refinement.

2021 Olympic silver medalist Alex Walsh first underwent Professor Ono's testing process upon her arrival to UVA in 2020. The collected data revealed that Walsh had the potential to improve from a 2:11 to a 2:07 in a 200-meter individual medley, an event composed of 50 meters of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. By driving her knees more forcefully during the butterfly, Walsh optimized her stroke efficiency and swam a 2:07.13, securing her a gold medal at the 2022 World Championships in Budapest. She also went on to win the 200 meter butterfly at NCAA D-I Championships in 2022.

Paige Madden, another Olympic silver medalist who joined the UVA team in 2017, planned to swim the 200-meter freestyle to qualify for the Olympic team. However, Professor Ono's optimization tests showed that Madden had the most potential in the 400-meter freestyle, where her time could drop from 4:09 to 4:03. Professor Ono also found that, unlike most swimmers, Madden's underwater kicks off the wall grew stronger with each one, so he advised her



Graphic by Carolyn Chen' 25

to take two extra kicks on the last lap of the race. Additionally, Madden was generating twice the acceleration on her right side than her left and was suggested to occasionally breathe to her right during warmups to help her adjust to the rotated position. Following the advice, she achieved a 4:04.86 in the 400 free during the U.S. Olympic Trials, securing her a position at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

Kate Douglass, arguably the most accomplished and versatile NCAA swimmer in history, also benefited from Professor Ono's calcula-

tions. A part of UVA's class of 2023, Douglass is an NCAA champion, world champion, and record-holder across three different strokes. Yet, Ono still found and corrected several inefficiencies in Douglass's signature event, the 200-yard breaststroke. Douglass currently holds the American record in this event.

Professor Ono's research has revolutionized the way swimmers are training. With so many accomplishments already under their belt, time will only tell what else UVA's women's swimming dynasty will do.

# Caitlin Clark

by Hannah Quan '26

Last month, Caitlin Clark was selected as the first overall pick at the WNBA Draft. More than 2.4 million people watched, breaking the WNBA Draft record set 20 years ago for 601,000 viewers. Throughout her college basketball career, she has broken many other records as well, including becoming the NCAA Division 1 all-time leading scorer. Caitlin Clark has proven herself a generational talent; her incredible skill helped her dominate the basketball court and draw attention from all sports fans. The impact she has had on women's basketball is tremendous and arguably greater than that of any other player.

This past winter, which was Clark's last collegiate season at the University of Iowa, ESPN saw a 37% increase in its average audience during the regular season, and the National Championship had 9.9 million viewers compared to 4.9 million the previous year. She has launched both herself and women's basketball as a whole into the spotlight, breaking dozens of records — both on the basketball court and beyond. Clark's last three games in Iowa brought unprec-

edented viewership, which was a main factor in breaking ESPN's April prime-time audience record from 1992. All but two of the University of Iowa's women's basketball games this past season have been sold out, home and away.



Graphic by Teniola Obayomi '25

In addition to that, the Iowa vs. UConn game peaked at 17 million viewers, becoming the most-watched women's game and beating its record set four days earlier for the Iowa vs. LSU game — a historical moment for not only women's basketball but also for mainstream sports. These numbers are higher than the most recent MLB World Series and most of the NBA Finals games. In a recent interview, South Carolina's basketball

coach Dawn Staley said, "Caitlin Clark is the sole reason why viewership has shot through the roof for our game — the sole reason." Clark's success has reached beyond people who care about basketball, or even those who watch sports in general, to the population who are not interested in viewing sports at all.

Despite not having played any regular-season games in the WNBA yet, Clark is one of the biggest names in the league. Anticipation for her debut has garnered much attention from viewers. For the first time in league history, WNBA games will be streamed on services such as ESPN and Disney+. Through Clark's impact, women's sports and female athletes have gained much more media coverage and attention from viewers. She has created a fan base and brought a new audience to not only herself as an athlete but also the sport as a whole. She and the next generation of WNBA rookies will create a transformational shift in the way that people view women's basketball. This marks a turning point for female athletes and is only the beginning of the continuous rise of women's sports.

Graphic courtesy of *The Ringer*



Graphic courtesy of *The Wall Street Journal*

# Film Review

## Thank You for Not Answering

by Ada Tieworn '26



Image Courtesy of Stash Magazine

The movie *Thank You For Not Answering*, an AI-generated film, stands as a groundbreaking example of the intersection between artificial intelligence and the arts. This film, created entirely with Runway's Gen 2 generative video technology, revolves around a voicemail left by a man, filled with fragmented memories and musings about a past lover. The film is accompanied by Clara Rockmore's haunting performance of George Gershwin's "Summertime." Through this, the film presents a narrative that is as captivating as it is innovative with its inclusion of artificial intelligence.

The opening scene features two feminine-looking feet hanging in the air, which sets a somber and eerie tone for the rest of the movie. As the story unfolds, AI-generated figures appear on the screen, resembling stop-motion animation but with a distinctly uncanny and unsettling quality. The movie progresses with an uneasy voice narrating in the background, adding to the film's haunting atmosphere. I was astounded by the glimpse into the future of the movie-making industry where AI is not only used as a tool, but as the creator.

This film raises questions about the nature of art and creativity when it is you incorporated with AI into it. In my experience, art has always been a reflection of humanity and what it means to be human. At its origins, art is a medium through which artists express their deepest emotions and thoughts. AI-generated art like the one presented in the film *Thank You For Not Answering* challenges this notion, blurring the lines between human and machine creativity. Especially with the narrative of this film surrounding very human memories and emotions, the AI creator of this film is devoid of human emotions and experiences, and yet, it manages to recreate artificial memories and emotions that were fed into the creation of this film that AI itself has never experienced.

The broader implications of AI in art are very interesting to me as they reflect AI's ability to analyze and process vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and create art that is similar yet uncannily different from human art. In doing so, it introduces a new form of creativity, one that is born from algorithms and data processing. This raises the question: can creativity be a product of arti-

cial intelligence, and if so, what does that mean for the future of art?

Talking about roles, AI-generated art also challenges our understanding of originality and credibility. In a world where machines can create art, the traditional roles of artist and creator become ambiguous. Is the programmer behind the AI the true artist, or is it the AI itself? This question leaves me puzzled as the inspiration for a piece of art has to come from the human artist, but the creation of the art is a product of AI programming. As a compromise, I think this ambiguity opens up new possibilities for collaboration between humans and AI which can take the world a step further into technological advancements.

*Thank You For Not Answering* represents a significant milestone in the evolution of art and technology. It showcases the potential of AI to create art that is not only technically impressive but also rich in narrative and emotion. As AI continues to advance and become more integrated into the creative process, we may see a new era of art emerging where the boundaries between human and machine creativity are blurred, and where the possibilities for artistic expression are limitless.

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# Word Search

GirlTech Scavenger Hunt!

by Kay Lee '25



Astronaut  
AI Films  
Caitlyn Clark  
Pivmecellinam

FDA  
Total Eclipse  
Insomnia  
Swimming

Math  
Sally Ride  
Diamond Ring  
Basketball

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Cover art by *Teniola Obayomi '25/GirlTech Magazine*