ENSHITTIFICATIONS

The AI art engine DALL-E offers two ways of generating work. The main way is by using text prompts, which the app visualizes to the best of its code. Or you can upload a photo, and the engine will offer four "variations," with results ranging from "close" to "unnervingly wrong like a doppelgänger."

In this series I sourced photos of some of the world's worst people–billionaires, politicians, and social media stars–who are actively making society a terrible place (IMHO), and fed it thru the variation engine. Then I chose the "worst" of the four results, and had DALL-E produce variations on that variation. I kept going, until I got 20 variations deep, by which time the engine appeared to plateau. The results are fairly horrific, but then again, so is the world that Trump, Bezos, Musk, et al have helped bring forth.

DALL-E did the work, which is why each print is "signed" with its own multi-color watermark. My human input was in choosing the source photograph, and in the subjective choice of the worst of the four variations.

The word "Enshittification" comes from Cory Doctorow, who coined the term this year in *Wired Magazine* in an article called "The 'Enshittification' of TikTok: Or how, exactly, platforms die":

"Here is how platforms die: first, they are good to their users; then they abuse their users to make things better for their business customers; finally, they abuse those business customers to claw back all the value for themselves. Then, they die."

Doctorow describes the rot at the core of late capitalism and the lie of infinite growth. The way DALL-E produced worse and worse images as it fed on itself inspired me to feed it those who are doing the same thing to society. And the way the engine broke down as I did so became a metaphor for itself.

Here is a selection of the 10 Enshittifications I made. The number after their name represents the number of loops thru the engine.