

BBC video (Tech Now series), 5.09 min, 03.10.25, <https://www.bbc.com/reel/video/p0m5sv1p/world-renowned-wildlife-photographer-against-the-algorithm>

Tim Flach is a world famous wildlife photographer known for his striking portraits **capturing** the character and emotion of animals. BBC Tech Now's Nick Kwek visits his studio to see the work that **goes on behind the scenes** to capture his images, and to chat about the new **challenges he's facing against AI**.



This video is from Tech Now, the BBC's **flagship technology** programme.

1. A: **Over the years**, I've done **quite a few** (= quite a lot of!) different subject matters,
2. tracked down endangered animals
3. and here **I find myself with** one of the most difficult of them all. That is the cats.
4. 'Can I **persuade** you with a **chin rub** or not?'
5. B: Today, **I'm witnessing** the creative process of behind Tim's latest book 'Feline'
- **PRON**: feline /'fi:.lam/.
6. What's all this?
7. A: For all these fancy **lures** we have to try to get some interest.
8. It's actually the **humble** feather that—for the most part—is the most effective.
9. Let's see. **Hold on**. I don't know if this is going to be.
10. **There you go**. You see?

11. Dogs have masters and cats have staff.

12. Honestly, the more you try, the more they think, 'Well, **hold on** a moment! What's in it for me?'
13. **Shoot 18** because that'll give us depth. Because the cat may go anywhere.
14. B: But look at that **pose**! Look at the shape! Look at this form there!
15. A: Killing machine!
16. I've been working **collaboratively** with scientists.
17. and we're finding—the images that are put against **a plain background**
18. tend to be .. **evoke** more empathy than traditional wildlife imagery.
19. B: Look at these images! **These are unreal!** Look at that one!
20. A: Yeah, it looks like **he's punching** the air, doesn't it?
21. And so he looks a bit like he's got shorts on.
22. B: And that one doesn't look like he has even got a tail!
23. A: So, what I'm interested to do is
24. to explore what kind of images make us really care—truly care and want to act.
25. B: That's not real.
26. A: That is. It's nuts, isn't it? It's like someone's taking a Photoshop and done half one cat and half the other.

27. B: Wow. Tim's **distinct style** has earned him a global acclaim,

28. but recently, he says there's some rather unwelcome attention from generative artificial intelligence.

29. A: So, that's the **prompt**.—B: Ah, yes I see.

- **DIRECT**: to **prompt** = make sth happen: *What prompted you to say that?*

- TERM in AI: **prompt** = an instruction given to an artificial intelligence by a human using natural language rather than computer language:
30. A: The prompt 'Eagle by Tim Flach'—that's all the prompt is. And then **the next shot** is that.
31. So **all we are asking is** to do an image by me of a bird.
32. So it picks one—the bird that was actually in my book 'Birds'—that came out in 2021—and that came from that image.
33. So **essentially**, that was my image, and that's **effectively** what it created.
34. And if you think about the prompt saying just—'Eagle by Tim Flach'.
35. We haven't asked it to be on the black background.
36. We haven't asked it to **look straight forward**.
37. We haven't **specified the breed**.
38. B: Pretty shocking, isn't it?

39. A: We're at this point where the **genius** has been let out of the bottle. And it's not going back in.

40. B: And what did you think when you saw that for the first time?

41. A: I was surprised.

42. **I mean**, I think—for the viewer—they would say, well, I can tell the difference.

43. Yes, you can. But **keep it in mind**—it's all... **We're embryonic** at this stage.

44. It's going to get better, and better and better.

45. I've got a snow leopard here, and if you look at the spots—the spots of my actual cat are the same spots.

46. The spots at my actual cat are the same spots.

47. They borrowed my work. They've stolen it. They've not **renumerated**.

48. They **haven't credited me**. This is not good.

49. Just go wherever you feel. Feel comfortable.

50. B: This is an effort **to future proof** his work.

51. Tim is **placing cat shaped QR-codes in his book**, which—when scanned by a viewer's phone or tablet—will link to **footage** from the **photo shoots**

- **footage** = film or videotape that shows a single event or place:
- **photo shoot** = it is when a photographer takes a series of photographs, usually of the same person or people in the same place (in a studio or elsewhere):
- **get/take a shot** = get/take a photo

52. to show that he really did **snap** the cats.

53. B: Now, Tim's trying to **curtail copycats** by making his images look more realistic.

- **NOUN 1**: someone who is influenced by someone else and does or says exactly the same as them (*You're just a **copycat!***)
- **NOUN 2**: something that is intentionally done or made to be very similar to something else (*Many of the drugs are **copycats** of already existing medicines.*)
- **ADJECTIVE**: Copycat behaviour, often bad or criminal behaviour, is influenced by other, similar behaviour (*I don't believe that these cartoons lead to **copycat** violence and murders.*)

54. A: We've **put evidence back** into the picture.

55. I wouldn't [put back in] so much **imperfections** but a few **spare hairs** floating around

56. and the intention there is to, in a sense, **give evidence that it's real**.

57. All these hairs have been put in by me.
58. B: But **hold on**. So you've added hairs that weren't actually there in this image?
59. **In an effort to prove** that ... that's a r e a l image?
60. A: Eeh, yes.
61. But but I've added a lot that were taken out and been put in that w e r e o r i g i n a l l y there.
62. B: I can't. I can't.
63. A: The thing for us to do is—at this point in time—to **have a good go at**, in a sense, **future proofing**.
64. B: You could **be out of a job** soon!
65. A: Well, it could be. But the job will change.
66. I mean, maybe it will be a different type of imagery.
67. I might be out of a job. In fact, we all ... the job market is going to change.
68. What would those **skill sets** be? I wonder—will it be
- critical thinking
 - collaboration
 - communication
 - creativity?

69. Will imagination be even more valuable?

70. Look at that. Can you see **that last shot**?

- **DIRECT: a shot** = the action of **firing a gun** or another weapon (*He fired four shots at the car as it drove off. I didn't know you were such a good shot!*)
- **TERM in sports: a shot** = **a kick**, hit, or throw of the ball that is intended to score points in a sport such as cricket, football, tennis, or golf (*Murray drove a forehand shot to win the match.*)
- **TERM in photography: a shot** = a photograph or a particular sequence of pictures in a film.
- **TERM in medicine: a shot** = A **shot of** a drug is an injection of it.
- **METAPHORIC 1: a shot** = an attempt to do sth, incl guessing (**My first shot is** that it is a bear.)
- **METAPHORIC 2: a shot** = A **shot of** a strong alcoholic drink is a small glass of it.

71. B: They say imitation is the sincerest form of **flattery**.

72. And whilst Tom **is rising to the challenge**,

73. I can't help but wonder

74. if this issue of artist versus AI is all just a game of cat and mouse.

