

Depth vs Surface Audit

Run this audit quarterly to check whether your work is moving from a real center or borrowing a surface that was never yours.

1. Map the Direction of Your Work

- ☐ I have taken one recent piece and asked: did it move outward from a lived center, or inward from a surface I recognised?
- ☐ I can name the internal center my best current work grew from in one sentence.
- ☐ I have identified at least one piece that was centripetal — started from a look, not a world — and noted what was missing.
- ☐ I have asked: where in my current practice am I rewarding polish over direction?

2. Trace Style Back to Source

- ☐ I have named one style or aesthetic I admire and written the philosophy or lived conditions underneath it.
- ☐ I have asked whether I am copying the residue or building outward from the source philosophy.
- ☐ I have identified a constraint in my practice and asked whether it is a ceiling or a recipe waiting to be written.
- ☐ I have noted where I am reaching for the nearest surface instead of building from a center.

3. Audit Your AI Outputs

- ☐ I have taken one AI output and listed what it captured: tone, style, format.
- ☐ I have listed what that output failed to hold: relation, intention, internal logic.
- ☐ I have asked: how much of my prompting is me supplying the structure the system cannot?
- ☐ I have identified where I have accepted coherence as a substitute for depth.

4. Find Where the Original Has Gone Optional

- ☐ I have identified one place where good-enough copy has quietly replaced an original relation in my work.
- ☐ I have described what the internal center used to be in that place.
- ☐ I have decided whether it still needs the original — and if so, written what restoring that center would look like.
- ☐ I have asked: if the original is optional, what makes mine worth keeping?

5. Commit to Direction

- ☐ I can state in one sentence what internal world my current body of work is moving outward from.
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- ☐ I have named the specific constraint that is most mine — the one a generative system cannot access.
 - ☐ I have identified one centripetal habit in my practice that I will interrupt before the next audit.
 - ☐ I have set one specific piece of work to begin from a center rather than a surface.
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Rule of thumb: direction is what AI cannot reproduce. Build from the center that is yours alone.