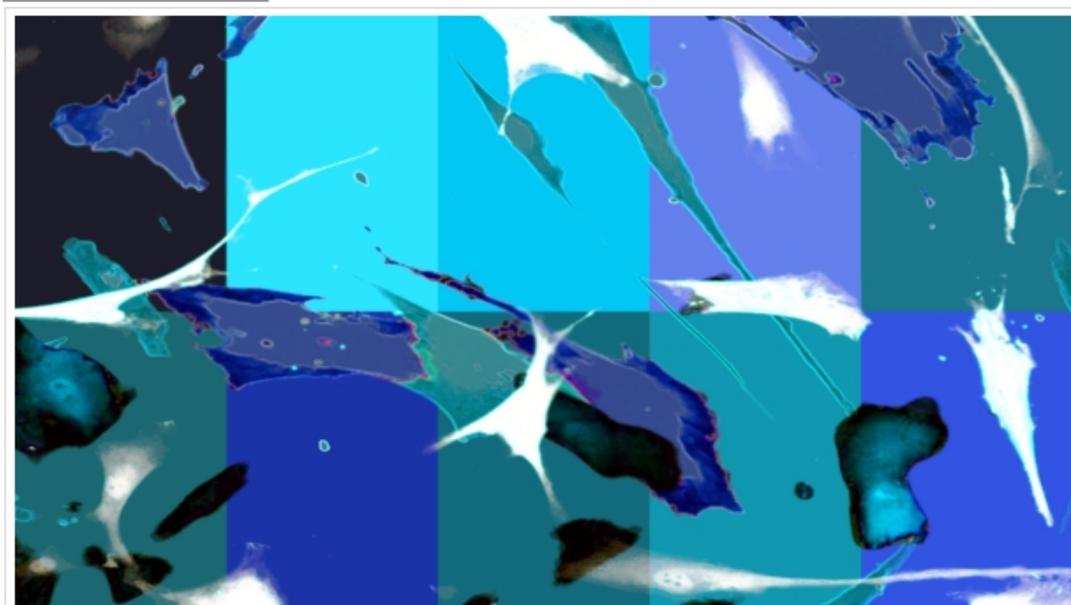




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CLAUDIO CASTILLO: GENERATIVE ARTIST

LEYLA SHARABI AUG, 2017 0



screen still from "Stem Cell Variations" by Claudio Castillo

Though the term Generative Art has, over the years, sometimes been used interchangeably with digital and computer art, it is the stricter category, here defined by [Robert Spahr](#) to which Europe-raised, Cuban-American artist [Claudio Castillo](#) adheres: "any art practice that incorporates instruction-based, mechanical, organic, computer-controlled and/or other external, random or semi-random processes and/or apparatuses directly into the creative process, which is then set to motion with some degree of autonomy contributing to or resulting in a work of art."

Generative art, according to Spahr's definition above, has arguably been around forever. In its modern context, Marcel Duchamp is often cited as one of Generative Art's first forebears. In his 1913 piece "[3 Standard Stoppages](#)," Duchamp dropped three threads, each a meter long, onto a canvas. Though he set the strings in motion in his capacity as conceptual artist/actor, he did not control the [result](#) each string would and did land differently from one another and from their original form in space and time.

Castillo's generative pieces, which he began making in 2005 based off the tropical, earthy dreamscape [watercolors](#) he had been painting since his youth, create new forms, colors and

compositions for hundreds of thousands to trillions of years before encountering the possibility of repetition, and, in his more recent work, go on creating infinitely. His motion pictures are often confused with video art since they are seen on computer or TV monitors, however, unlike the linear art form, every moment on the screen of Castillo's work is a new, never-before arrived at image, generated by an app compositing video artwork layers.

Castillo's pieces depict impermanence in ever shifting scenes. His works are non-linear, random and generative, and many incorporate real-time moon and tide cycles, weather, time and news and stock market realities via the internet and RSS feeds. In "[GTMO Landscape](#)," an interactive tropical picture reflects real-time weather conditions in the location chosen by the viewer; "[Bonza!](#)" marks different times of day using symbolic visual events; Castillo's most recent work incorporates a clock into the image and function of the piece; and in "[Proof of Life](#)," the articles of now-defunct newspapers are updated with RSS newsfeed items mixed with text written by the artist.

Some work contains non-generative visual elements that are activated by movement detected by a motion sensor, such as sunflowers that rotate to greet people arriving to view "Banco Taino," his most recent piece about conquistadors' arrival to the Americas. All of Castillo's oeuvre is touch-enabled, allowing viewers to separately freeze the flow of various elements to create a composition that can be saved and printed.

A retrospective of Castillo's oeuvre will be showing for one month beginning November 16th at the [Miami Hispanic Cultural Arts Center](#), and video selections from Castillo's generative work will be on display at [Miami's Intercontinental Hotel](#) from September 8 – 10, including "[Stem Cell Variations](#)" based on paramedic stem cells, a departure from Castillo's predominantly earth based themes. Stem cell aficionado and advocate Alan Fernandez teamed Castillo with Dr. Heather Steward and Dr. Jan Nolte of U.C. Davis who provided microscopic footage of the cells, which travel to organs to regenerate dead tissue. As Castillo points out: "I am interested in stem cells because they are generative so the match is perfect."

Though his watercolors sold in exhibits in Malaga and Miami when he was a teen, Castillo chose to study at London International Film School and went on to found companies in video and computer animation in London, Madrid and New York. He currently lives and works in Miami as an artist, animator, cameraman and television editor. He has exhibited his generative and interactive work in international art fairs and museums in the United States, Europe and China and his pieces reside in the permanent collection of the Museum of the Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA and in private collections.