

Archiving Digital Heritage: Pioneers of *Fin-De-Siecle* Latin America

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Introduction

This panel tries to open a discussion on the history of the hybridization of art and technology in the last five or six decades, with reference to any specific country, in the Latina American region. It consists of 33 countries of all sizes, from the extensive Brazil to the small islands of the Caribbean.

The idea and main purpose of the panel is to address the under-representation of this new form of art in the global discourse of the art – something that arises out of neglect and assumptions about the world order. Panelists focus their attention on the sunrise of an experimental art that began to embrace more and more of the new technology since the 50s; at times we witness the incipient promises of the art technology hybrid as early as in the 40s just as much as the phenomenon energy oriented art were visible in labs established in other regions of the developed world.

From Argentina, Ricardo Dal Farra, speaks of his experience of rediscovering, in a junkyard of the past, some of the most innovative electroacoustic music composers and creators of new forms and the new aesthetics of sounds and music. Dal Farra who has been closely working with the Langlois Foundation in Montreal has put together perhaps the most important archive on electroacoustic music of Latin American. Our other panelist from Argentina Andrea Sosa complements this history with a discussion of the visual art of light effects from the same period, namely in the works of Julio Le Parc, active from the same era as when the *Torcuato Di Tella Institute* began functioning as the most important supporter of these emerging trends in art world.

The beginnings of art and technology in Brazil, the largest country in size and population of the region, are represented in the presentation of Andres Burbano who analyzes its artistic scenario. He finds the seed for

electronic art and digital photography in the works of Geraldo de Barros who used punched card to modulate abstract photography and whose photography now remains as Burbano shows a pioneering landmark in computational art. Representing the same geographical context, our other panelist Rejane Spitz brings into the discussion the work of three pioneers in Kinetic and electronic art, namely, Waldemar Cordeiro the precursor of electronic art in Brazil, Abraham Palatnik a precursor of kinetic art, and Otávio Donasci known for his theatrical video performances in the psychological dimensions of social relations. No doubt on about Spitz argument that *electronic art in Brazil has found a fertile ground to grow and flourish*.

Another important perspective in the evolution of kinetic, electronic or digital arts, as well as in evolution of a critical turn in art in Latin America, is valorized by Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda's presentation. Her objective is to highlight on women artists from Mexico. Aceves anticipates the importance of *Telematic Art* of the seventies, Lorraine Pinto (born in New York and working in Mexico since 1959) working with sound and light during the 60s, and Pola Weiss a pioneer of video art.

From Peru we have Jose-Carlos Mariátegui who studies the contribution of the Swiss born pioneer electronic artist Francesco Mariotti who is an established artist now in both, Switzerland and Peru. In his analysis, Mariátegui focuses attention on two works: the *Project Geldmacher-Mariotti* presented at the *Documenta* in 1968 and the *Circular Movement of Light* shown at the *X Sao Paolo Biennial* in 1994 representing Switzerland together with other three artists.

Speaking of recent developments in the new media arts, Jose Manuel Ruiz-Martin analyzes the evolution not of the work of any specific artist from Ecuador, but of the laboratories of digital experimentation, the

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first one of them being inaugurated in 2012. With that context in mind, it is meaningful to start documenting the history of those media labs that will most likely reap the harvest of the new art for the generations to come. Thus the panel stands unique in its diverse range of interest and analysis of art and technology through the entire span of our geographical region and of our cultural identity in the new world.

Author Biography

Reynaldo Thompson is a Mexican scholar working at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico. At present, he is planning to launch a database on the evolution of Digital Art in Latin America (DALA) together with a team of international experts.