

● PROTAGONIST *art*

VOL. 02 · PAPER 04 · METHODOLOGY

GENERATIVE ART *Provenance.*

The methodology paper behind The Mint. Six dimensions of generative quality calibrated against 487 generative works. The same instrument applies to evaluating any generative piece for institutional collecting.

METHODOLOGY

487 WORKS

ICC = 0.81

ABSTRACT · METHODOLOGY · PROTAGONIST RESEARCH

We construct a 6-item generative-art quality instrument applied to 487 generative works (2018–2025). Inter-rater reliability ICC = 0.81. Compositional discipline ($\beta = 0.43$) and palette restraint ($\beta = 0.36$) are the dominant predictors of 5-year value retention after controlling for artist name recognition. The Mint's in-browser generators are built against this framework. The instrument is published in full and is applicable to evaluating any generative artwork for institutional collecting.

§ I · THE PROBLEM

GENERATIVE ART IS STRUCTURALLY DIFFERENT.

Generative art occupies a unique position in the digital category. The work is not a single fixed image but an output of an algorithm — and the algorithm itself is the medium. Evaluating the work means evaluating the algorithm, the output range, the deterministic structure, and the conceptual frame that produces them. Most existing art-evaluation frameworks were built for fixed-image media and do not transfer cleanly. This paper proposes a framework that does.

§ II · THE SIX DIMENSIONS

WHAT WE MEASURE.

DIMENSION	CONSTRUCT	B	ICC
Compositional Discipline	Output range demonstrates compositional rigor	0.43	0.83
Palette Restraint	Color choices are deliberate, not maximalist	0.36	0.81
Motion Logic	If animated, motion is meaningful, not gratuitous	0.28	0.79
Deterministic Seed	Output is reproducible from a seed	0.22	0.88
Archival Format	Output viewable in 50 years	0.18	0.86
Conceptual Coherence	The work argues a sentence	0.16	0.74

Compositional discipline and palette restraint together explain 56% of variance in 5-year value retention. The result is consistent with the broader Protagonist Vol. 02 finding: discipline at the creative-decision stage matters more than virtuosic output. Generative works that show range without restraint do not hold; works that show restraint within a defined range do.

"The best generative art looks like the algorithm understood what to leave out. That understanding is the work."

— PROTAGONIST VOL. 02 · PAPER 04

§ III · THE MINT

HOW THE FRAMEWORK OPERATIONALIZES.

The Mint (at protagonistart.com/mint) is the in-browser application of this paper. The six generators (Geometric, Glitch, Gradient-Bloom, Kinetic-Grid, Vapor-Portrait, Brutalist-Still) are each engineered against the six-dimension framework. Palettes are restricted to four-color sets to enforce restraint. Compositional rules constrain shape count, scale, and placement. Motion is applied only when the medium's logic invites it. The output is deterministic from seed.

The widget is an embodiment of the framework. Every output is a demonstration that the framework produces art-grade work, not noise. Readers can verify by trying it.

REFERENCES

1. Protagonist Research (2026). *Vol. 02 generative dataset*. CC BY 4.0.
2. Cronbach, L. J. (1951). *Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests*. Psychometrika 16.
3. Hobbs, T. (2023). *Long-form Generative Art*. Notes on practice.