

Curating Across Borders: Post-Digital Art Ecologies and the Reconfiguration of Cultural Identity

Curadoria Além-Fronteiras: Ecologias Artísticas Pós-Digitais e a Reconfiguração da Identidade Cultural

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how transnational curatorial practice, developed within post-digital art ecologies, contributes to the reconfiguration of cultural identity in cross-border collaborative contexts. It proceeds from the premise that the post-digital condition does not merely denote the presence of technology, but rather its structural integration into contemporary cultural practices. The study investigates three distinct contexts: the online pavilion “Transient Info”, integrated into The Wrong Biennale; the simultaneous exhibitions organised by Art on Loop – HollyArt Gallery across multiple cities and countries; and the international programming of Cista Arts. Adopting a qualitative practice-based approach grounded in artistic and curatorial research, the study combines curatorial discourse analysis, multimodal analysis of artworks, and situated critical reflection. These cases configure distributed art ecologies in which curatorship operates as a form of intercultural mediation and where cultural identity emerges as a dynamic, relational, and negotiated process. The findings demonstrate that, by curating and producing art across borders, post-digital platforms reconfigure geographical centralities, challenge hegemonic cultural narratives, and foster hybrid spaces of belonging and dialogue. Cultural identity is no longer articulated as a fixed or territorially bounded entity, but as a performative construction within transnational networks of artistic creation and circulation. The article contributes to intercultural studies by proposing a critical reading of

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contemporary curatorship as a practice capable of reshaping cultural imaginaries under post-digital conditions.

KEYWORDS: Transnational Curatorship, Cultural Identity, Post-Digital Art Ecologies, Interculturality, Collaborative Art, Cultural Mediation, Practice-Based Research, Digital Platforms

RESUMO: Este artigo analisa de que forma a prática curatorial transnacional, desenvolvida em ecologias artísticas pós-digitais, contribui para a reconfiguração da identidade cultural em contextos colaborativos além-fronteiras. Parte-se do pressuposto de que a condição pós-digital não designa apenas a presença da tecnologia, mas antes a sua integração estrutural nas práticas culturais contemporâneas. O estudo investiga três contextos distintos: o pavilhão online “Transient Info”, integrado na The Wrong Biennale; as exposições simultâneas organizadas pela Art on Loop – HollyArt Gallery em múltiplas cidades e países; e a programação internacional da Cista Arts. Adotando uma abordagem qualitativa baseada na prática, ancorada na investigação artística e curatorial, o estudo combina análise discursiva curatorial, análise multimodal das obras e reflexão crítica situada. Estes casos configuram ecologias artísticas distribuídas nas quais a curadoria opera como forma de mediação intercultural e onde a identidade cultural emerge como processo dinâmico, relacional e negociado. Os resultados demonstram que, ao curar e produzir arte além-fronteiras, as plataformas pós-digitais reconfiguram centralidades geográficas, desafiam narrativas culturais hegemônicas e promovem espaços híbridos de pertença e diálogo. A identidade cultural deixa de ser articulada como entidade fixa ou territorialmente delimitada, passando a constituir-se como construção performativa em redes transnacionais de criação e circulação artística. O artigo contribui para os estudos interculturais ao propor uma leitura crítica da curadoria contemporânea enquanto prática capaz de reconfigurar imaginários culturais na condição pós-digital.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Curadoria Transnacional, Identidade Cultural, Ecologias Artísticas Pós-Digitais, Interculturalidade, Arte Colaborativa, Mediação Cultural, Investigação Baseada na Prática, Plataformas Digitais

Introduction

The expansion of digital infrastructures and the consolidation of transnational artistic networks have structurally transformed the contemporary art system, altering not only the modes of production and circulation of artworks but also the ways in which cultural identity is constructed and negotiated. The growing interconnection between online platforms, hybrid exhibitions, and distributed curatorial

networks has progressively displaced historically dominant geographical centres, configuring art ecologies in which physical space is no longer the sole organising axis of aesthetic experience. In this scenario, cultural identity can no longer be understood as a fixed category associated with stable territories or homogeneous narratives, but rather as a relational, dynamic, and performative process, continuously reconfigured within technologically mediated contexts.

The post-digital condition constitutes one of the structuring elements of this transformation. Rather than simply designating the presence of digital technologies in cultural practices, the post-digital refers to their ubiquitous and structural integration into processes of artistic creation, curatorship, and circulation. Digital platforms operate as infrastructures that shape exhibition architectures, curatorial temporalities, and forms of intercultural interaction, producing new spatialities and new regimes of visibility. Transnational curatorial practices therefore assume a central role in organising distributed art ecosystems in which technological mediation actively participates in the construction of cultural meaning.

In this context, curating across borders extends beyond the logistical coordination of artists from different geographical contexts. It constitutes a practice of symbolic mediation that structures narratives, selects voices, and configures spaces of intercultural encounter. By operating within digital networks and hybrid platforms, curatorship contributes to defining the conditions of cultural circulation and legitimation, influencing the ways in which identities are represented, translated, and negotiated. The analysis of these practices becomes particularly relevant at a moment when cultural globalisation coexists with geopolitical tensions, asymmetries of visibility, and struggles for symbolic recognition.

This study examines three distinct configurations of post-digital art ecologies that exemplify different models of organisation and intercultural mediation. The first concerns an online pavilion integrated into a decentralised international biennial structured as a globally accessible distributed digital platform. The second refers to a model of simultaneous exhibitions held across multiple cities and articulated through digital documentation and dissemination devices. The third analyses the programming of a gallery with international projection that promotes transcultural practices and interdisciplinary collaborations. Although differing in institutional and technological configuration, these three contexts share a fundamental characteristic: the articulation between transnationality, digital mediation, and identity construction.

The decentralised digital biennial under analysis operates through independently curated virtual pavilions, accessible online and conceived to function beyond the traditional logics of the museum or physical gallery. This model enables the participation of artists from diverse geographical contexts within a shared digital space, fostering a distributed and potentially more horizontal art ecology. The

absence of a central physical location and the continuous accessibility of the platform introduce new exhibition temporalities and spatialities, reconfiguring audience experience and the circulation of artworks.

By contrast, the model of simultaneous exhibitions promoted by an international gallery combines physical presence with digital mediation, organising parallel shows across different cities. Global simultaneity operates as a strategy of cultural amplification, allowing artists from diverse backgrounds to be presented in multiple urban contexts within the same temporal frame. Digital documentation and online dissemination complement the on-site experience, extending the reach of the artworks and reinforcing the transnational dimension of the initiative.

Finally, the gallery with intercultural programming analysed here functions as a hybrid platform combining physical exhibitions, online initiatives, and international collaborations. Its strategic orientation privileges emerging artistic practices and transcultural approaches, fostering networks of circulation that traverse geographical and symbolic borders. Within this context, curatorship assumes a structuring role in articulating diverse cultural discourses and constructing shared spaces of visibility.

The selection of these three cases enables a comparative analysis of different modalities of post-digital art ecologies and their implications for the reconfiguration of cultural identity. Rather than approaching the internationalisation of art as a mere market expansion or global diffusion, the study interrogates the curatorial and technological dispositifs that make such circulation possible and that shape modes of cultural representation. The analytical focus thus shifts from the physical mobility of artworks to the relational architecture that sustains their circulation.

Methodologically, the article adopts a qualitative practice-based approach grounded in artistic and curatorial research. The author's position as curator in one of the contexts analysed and artist in the remaining ones constitutes an epistemological starting point that enables the articulation of situated experience and critical analysis. The study integrates curatorial discourse analysis, multimodal reading of artworks, and critical reflection on the digital infrastructures involved. This approach recognises curatorship and artistic practice as forms of knowledge production capable of generating insights into interculturality and identity under post-digital conditions.

Two research questions guide the investigation: how do digitally mediated transnational art ecologies contribute to the reconfiguration of cultural identity? And how do curatorial practices structure spaces of intercultural dialogue across borders within a post-digital landscape? By addressing these questions, the study seeks to contribute to contemporary intercultural studies by proposing a reading of transnational curatorship as a critical practice that reorganises cultural imaginaries,

redistributes geographical centralities, and redefines the conditions of symbolic belonging in contemporary art.

The structure of the article unfolds in six parts. Following this introduction, the theoretical framework discusses the concepts of cultural identity, intercultural hybridity, and the post-digital condition. The subsequent section outlines the practice-based methodology and analytical strategy adopted. The fourth section presents a detailed analysis of the three case studies. The fifth section offers a comparative analysis of the different art ecologies observed. Finally, the conclusion synthesises the theoretical and empirical contributions of the study, highlighting the role of transnational curatorship in the reconfiguration of cultural identity under post-digital conditions.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Cultural Identity as Process and Negotiation

Contemporary understandings of cultural identity have progressively shifted from an essentialist conception to a relational, processual, and discursive perspective. Rather than representing a stable expression of homogeneous belonging, identity is now conceptualised as a situated construction that is continuously produced and negotiated. Hall (1990, 1996) argues that cultural identity does not correspond to a fixed essence shared by a group, but to a process of identification that emerges through representation, memory, and difference. This perspective enables identity to be understood as a historical and cultural production, permanently rearticulated in relation to social, political, and media contexts.

Bhabha (1994) further develops this view through the concept of the *third space*, emphasising that intercultural interaction generates hybrid zones where meanings are translated, negotiated, and transformed. Hybridity does not imply the mere combination of pre-existing cultural elements, but rather a reconfiguration of the symbolic structures themselves. Within this framework, interculturality must be understood as a productive process rather than simply the coexistence of differences.

The intensification of global flows of people, images, and information has further complexified these dynamics. Appadurai (1996) demonstrates that contemporary globalisation operates through multiple flows – media, financial, technological, and ideological – that reshape collective imaginaries and expand possibilities for transnational identification. Cultural identity thus becomes traversed by global networks and mediated by technological infrastructures that influence its construction, circulation, and visibility.

In the artistic field, these transformations are reflected in the increasing mobility of artists, the international circulation of exhibitions, and the consolidation of distributed curatorial networks. Cultural identity is frequently articulated through practices that negotiate local belonging and global

insertion simultaneously, positioning contemporary art as a privileged site for interrogating tensions between tradition, innovation, memory, and transformation.

This processual understanding of identity constitutes the conceptual foundation of the present study. In analysing transnational art ecologies, it is assumed that cultural identity emerges within the relationships established between artists, curators, platforms, and audiences, and is continuously reconfigured through mediating dispositifs and structurally embedded technological contexts.

1.2 Post-Digital Condition and Art Ecologies

The concept of the post-digital emerged as a critical response to narratives that presented the digital as an autonomous phase or radical rupture separate from material and social culture. Cramer (2014) argues that the post-digital does not signify the “end” of the digital, but rather its normalisation and structural integration into everyday life. The digital ceases to be perceived as disruptive innovation and instead becomes an invisible infrastructure shaping cultural practices, social relations, and institutions.

In the artistic field, this condition manifests in the dissolution of boundaries between online and offline, physical and virtual, analogue and digital. Alexenberg (2011) describes the post-digital as a hybrid environment in which art, science, and technology converge within an expanded ecology of cultural production. The artwork is no longer confined to a specific medium, but operates across transmedial and interconnected environments.

Fernandes-Marcos and Pereira (2022) further develop this conceptualisation by identifying two structuring dimensions of the post-digital condition: technological ubiquity and the emergence of a new materiality termed digital re-materialisation. This re-materialisation does not represent a nostalgic return to the analogue, but rather a dialectical reconfiguration of the relationship between the tangible and the digital, in which materiality is expanded and intensified through technological dispositifs.

Pereira and Fernandes-Marcos (2025) demonstrate that the integration of immersive technologies in the reinterpretation of textile traditions produces a sensory and symbolic intensification of the object, evidencing that digital mediation can reinforce – rather than replace – the cultural presence of the artefact. In this context, cultural identity is reconfigured not only at the representational level but within expanded aesthetic experience itself.

Digital platforms play a central role in this transformation. Srnicek (2017) observes that platforms function as infrastructures organising economic and cultural interactions, creating ecosystems in which producers and audiences encounter one another. Within art ecologies, such platforms enable the formation of global collaborative networks, the organisation of virtual exhibitions, and the expansion of transnational visibility.

The post-digital creation cycle proposed by Fernandes-Marcos (2017) highlights that contemporary artistic processes are circular, iterative, and relational, integrating conceptual conception, hybrid experimentation, expanded materialisation, and networked dissemination. Reception is no longer a final stage but becomes integrated into the creative process itself, mediated by digital platforms that amplify participation and circulation.

The notion of artistic ecology thus proves particularly pertinent. Rather than conceiving the art system as a linear hierarchical structure, the ecological metaphor suggests a network of interdependent relationships between artists, curators, galleries, digital platforms, and audiences. These relationships are shaped by technological infrastructures that influence modes of production, exhibition temporalities, and strategies of circulation.

Post-digital art ecologies can therefore be understood as distributed environments in which technological mediation actively participates in the constitution of cultural meaning. Their analysis requires simultaneous consideration of the material, institutional, technological, and relational dimensions of contemporary artistic practice.

1.3 Curatorship as Intercultural Mediation

Contemporary curatorship has consolidated itself as a discursive and critical practice that extends beyond the traditional functions of collection management and exhibition organisation. As O'Neill (2012) argues, curating has come to operate as an active intervention in the production of meaning, structuring narratives and interpretative frameworks. The exhibition ceases to be a mere device of presentation and becomes a discursive construction articulating relationships between artworks, institutional contexts, and audiences, thereby configuring specific modes of interpretation and reception.

Within a transnational context, this discursive dimension acquires particular relevance. The selection of artists from different geographical contexts and the construction of narratives that traverse cultural borders entail processes of symbolic translation and intercultural negotiation. Curatorial practice thus participates in the creation of spaces where cultural differences are not only represented but framed and rearticulated. As Obrist (2014) emphasises, contemporary curating operates in networks, articulating international dialogues and collaborative platforms that challenge consolidated geographical centralities and promote new cultural cartographies.

Intercultural mediation involves complex processes of negotiation, framing, and recontextualisation that shape how cultural identities are presented, recognised, and interpreted. Within post-digital ecologies, these processes are intensified by technological infrastructures that expand audiences, alter regimes of visibility, and introduce more fluid and distributed exhibition temporalities.

Curatorial practice is therefore situated at the intersection of culture, technology, and politics, functioning as a *dispositif* that organises both the circulation of artworks and the circulation of meanings.

Although the redistribution of visibility promoted by transnational networks and digital platforms does not eliminate structural asymmetries, it creates expanded spaces of cultural agency and symbolic experimentation. Analysing curatorship as intercultural mediation thus enables an understanding of how cultural identities are framed, translated, and reconfigured within post-digital environments, where artistic circulation intersects with technological infrastructures and global power dynamics.

2. Methodology: Practice-Based and Situated Research

The present study adopts a qualitative interpretative approach grounded in practice-based artistic and curatorial research. This methodological choice derives from the very nature of the object of study, as the post-digital art ecologies analysed involve curatorial and creative processes that cannot be fully understood through external observation alone. Practice-based research recognises that artistic and curatorial production may constitute a legitimate form of knowledge generation, provided it is accompanied by critical systematisation and rigorous theoretical framing (Candy, 2006; Borgdorff, 2012).

Within this framework, practice is not mobilised as experiential testimony, but as a structured empirical field open to conceptual analysis. The author's position as curator in one of the contexts analysed and artist in the remaining ones is assumed as a central methodological element, articulated through an exercise of critical reflexivity. As Schön (1983) argues, professional knowledge can emerge through reflection-in-action, provided that such reflection is subsequently problematised and formalised. Complementarily, the notion of *a/r/tography* proposed by Irwin (2004) highlights that the positions of artist, researcher, and curator are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but may constitute hybrid spaces of knowledge production.

The research design is based on a multiple case study approach with a comparative logic, suitable for contexts in which the aim is to deepen the understanding of complex and situated phenomena (Yin, 2018). Case selection was guided by analytical criteria: the presence of transnational practices, the structural integration of digital infrastructures, explicit intercultural mediation, and institutional differentiation among the models analysed. The objective is not to achieve statistical generalisation, but rather to develop analytical generalisation, contributing to the theoretical understanding of post-digital art ecologies as *dispositifs* of identity reconfiguration (Yin, 2018).

The empirical corpus includes curatorial texts, institutional communications, digital architectures of the platforms, exhibition documentation, and artworks presented within the contexts analysed. The analysis articulates three complementary dimensions. First, a curatorial discourse analysis, inspired by the understanding of the exhibition as a device that produces meaning (O’Neill, 2012), focusing on the identification of cultural framings, mobilised categories, and narrative strategies. Second, a multimodal analysis that considers the articulation between text, image, digital interface, and spatial configuration, recognising that meaning-making in post-digital contexts results from the interaction of multiple semiotic regimes (Kress, 2010). Third, a dimension of situated critical reflexivity is integrated, systematically articulated with the theoretical framework, avoiding autobiographical drift and privileging conceptual analysis.

The comparison between the three cases is structured around four analytical axes: institutional configuration and curatorial model; degree of technological integration; strategies of representation and identity negotiation; and regimes of visibility and transnational circulation. This analytical grid enables an examination of how different curatorial architectures and digital infrastructures produce differentiated modes of intercultural mediation and cultural reconfiguration.

3. Case Studies

3.1 The Wrong Biennale – Pavilion “Transient Info”



Figure 1. *Transient Info* – Virtual Pavilion at The Wrong – International Digital Art Biennale (2025–2026). View of the three-dimensional exhibition environment of the online pavilion, highlighting the immersive digital architecture and curatorial spatial configuration. Screenshot from the virtual exhibition.

The pavilion “Transient Info” (fig.1), integrated into *The Wrong Biennale*, constitutes a paradigmatic example of a post-digital art ecology structured entirely within a virtual environment.

The biennial is organised as a decentralised international platform for digital art, composed of independently curated pavilions accessible online, functioning as a distributed ecosystem that does not depend on a central physical location. This institutional architecture shifts the traditional logic of the museum exhibition towards a continuous, open, and transnational digital infrastructure.

The pavilion was co-curated by two curators located in distinct geographical contexts: one in Portugal and the other in Macau. This transcontinental configuration inscribes the project within an intercultural logic from its very inception. The articulation between a European context and an Asian Lusophone context is not merely circumstantial; it constitutes a structuring element of the curatorial process. Conceptual negotiation, thematic definition, and artistic selection were developed through cross-border dialogue, demonstrating that curatorial practice itself operates as an exercise in intercultural mediation.

Institutional configuration and curatorial model

The selection process involved 96 proposals and 285 artworks submitted by artists from 36 countries, from which 31 artists were selected. This structured process evidences curatorial rigour and significant geographical breadth.

The selected artists represent a diverse range of countries: Portugal, Germany, China, Australia, the United States of America, Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Liechtenstein, France, Croatia, Russia, Colombia, Sweden, and Hong Kong. The distribution reveals a strong European presence, but also significant participation from Asia, Oceania, North America, and South America, configuring a genuinely transcontinental field.

This diversity is not merely statistical; it structures the symbolic ecology of the pavilion itself. The coexistence of multiple cultural matrices within a shared digital architecture produces a relational space in which identities are not presented as fixed, but as negotiated within a common curatorial framework.

The conceptual axis of the exhibition centres on the notion of informational transience, exploring the tension between the ephemeral and the enduring, the virtual and the tangible, the archive and obsolescence. This thematic focus directly engages with the post-digital condition, interrogating intensified information flows and the instability of contemporary regimes of memory.

Degree of technological integration and digital mediation

The pavilion presents the highest degree of technological integration, as the exhibition experience occurs exclusively within a digital environment. The exhibition unfolds across two complementary platforms:

- a) A curatorial website offering linear and contextualised navigation, enabling conceptual framing of the artworks and structured discursive construction.
- b) Immersive metaverse environments that enable three-dimensional interaction and expanded spatial experience.

This dual structure introduces two distinct modes of engagement: an interpretative and contextual mode centred on reading and narrative articulation, and an experiential and immersive mode centred on spatial navigation and interaction. The technological architecture does not function merely as support, but as a constitutive element of aesthetic experience, shaping temporality (continuous and global access), spatiality (absence of physical centrality), and visibility (transnational circulation).

Strategies of representation and identity negotiation

The geographical diversity of the selected artists produces a hybrid symbolic space that approaches the notion of a relational intercultural space. Cultural identity does not emerge as an essential attribute associated with a specific territory, but as a dimension that takes shape through the dialogue between artworks, curatorial discourse, and technological interface.

The articulation of artists from Portugal, Germany, China, Australia, the United States of America, Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Liechtenstein, France, Croatia, Russia, Colombia, Sweden, and Hong Kong creates a field of symbolic negotiation in which different visual and cultural references coexist under a shared thematic framework. Curatorship organises these differences not as fragmentation, but as a structured relational field.

The very concept of transience reinforces the displacement of identity from territorial fixity towards informational fluidity. Cultural identity emerges as a processual construction traversed by digital flows, articulated within an environment where technological mediation shapes modes of visibility and interpretation.

Regimes of visibility and transnational circulation

The exclusively digital nature of the pavilion removes physical barriers to access and enables a potentially global audience. The circulation of artworks does not depend on material displacement, but on distributed technological infrastructure. This condition reinforces the idea of post-digital art ecology as a decentralised system of production and reception.

However, this expansion of visibility does not eliminate structural inequalities associated with technological access, digital literacy, or symbolic capital. Nevertheless, the decentralised model introduces possibilities for symbolic redistribution by enabling artists from multiple geographical

contexts to share a common digital exhibition space, reducing dependence on traditional institutional centres.

3.2 Art on Loop – HollyArt Gallery



Figure 2. *Art on Loop – The Holy Art Gallery.* Promotional image for a simultaneous international exhibition held in Athens (Greece) and London (United Kingdom). Case Study 2.

The Art on Loop exhibition model, developed by HollyArt Gallery, constitutes a distinct configuration of post-digital art ecology, characterised by the articulation between distributed physical presence and structuring digital mediation. By organising simultaneous exhibitions across multiple international cities, this model operates through the temporal synchronisation of physical shows held in different urban contexts, often integrated into major European and global cultural capitals.

Unlike the previous case, which operates exclusively within a virtual environment, Art on Loop is structured according to a hybrid logic: the materiality of the physical exhibition is preserved, yet integrated into a transnational network articulated through digital communication, documentation, and circulation devices. This geographical and temporal simultaneity constitutes a defining feature of the ecology under analysis.

Institutional configuration and curatorial model

Art on Loop presents an institutional model centralised in the promoting gallery, yet operationally distributed across space. Curatorship organises a selected group of artists who are presented in different cities during the same time period, creating a synchronised exhibition constellation. This strategy produces an effect of expanded circulation, whereby a single curatorial narrative traverses multiple urban contexts simultaneously.

Curatorship thus assumes a dual function: ensuring conceptual coherence across different locations while adapting to the specificities of each exhibition context. Temporal synchronisation reinforces the idea of shared global presence, while local materiality preserves the singularity of experience in each city.

This model demonstrates how curatorship can operate as a transnational coordination device, creating symbolic networks that connect distinct physical spaces under a common framework.

Degree of technological integration and digital mediation

Although the exhibitions take place physically, digital infrastructure plays a structuring role. Online documentation, dissemination through digital platforms, the circulation of images and records via social media, and the integration of digital media within the exhibitions themselves significantly amplify transnational visibility.

Digital mediation does not replace physical experience but expands it. The artwork is experienced locally, yet circulates globally through images, videos, and shared content. This articulation between the tangible and the virtual materialises the post-digital logic as an integrated coexistence of different regimes of materiality.

The Art on Loop model demonstrates that post-digital ecology is not confined to virtual space, but may manifest as a hybrid network in which the physical and the digital mutually reinforce one another.

Strategies of representation and identity negotiation

The simultaneous presentation of artists from diverse backgrounds across multiple cities creates a complex field of identity negotiation. Each city situates the exhibition within a specific cultural context, while the curatorial narrative seeks to maintain transnational coherence.

The cultural identity of the artists is therefore framed at two levels: local and global. Locally, the artwork engages with a specific urban context; globally, it becomes part of a synchronised narrative that transcends geographical borders. This tension between local insertion and global circulation generates a relational dynamic that reconfigures modes of symbolic belonging.

Temporal simultaneity also introduces a performative dimension: the exhibition is not an isolated event but part of an active network unfolding across multiple territories at the same moment. This condition reinforces the perception of interconnectedness and intercultural exchange.

Regimes of visibility and transnational circulation

The model of simultaneous exhibitions amplifies visibility by enabling artists to participate in multiple urban circuits through a single curatorial framework. Circulation no longer depends solely on individual physical mobility, but becomes structured through organisational and digital networks.

However, unlike the exclusively virtual pavilion, this model remains dependent on local physical infrastructures – galleries, exhibition spaces, and on-site audiences. Symbolic redistribution thus occurs within a hybrid regime in which urban hierarchies and cultural centralities persist.

Nevertheless, global synchronisation and digital mediation significantly expand the reach of the artworks, creating an art ecology that combines localised materiality with networked transnational circulation.

3.3 Cista Arts



Figure 3. *Fragments of Reality: Art in the Digital Age*. Exhibition poster for a group show organised by CISTA ARTS (3–28 February 2025). Case Study 3.

CISTA ARTS constitutes a distinct configuration of post-digital art ecology, characterised by a hybrid institutional platform that combines physical exhibitions, online dissemination, international representation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Founded in 2018 by Dr Fatemeh Takht-Keshian – artist and curator – CISTA ARTS was conceived as a conduit for promoting artists who address contemporary societal issues and global concerns through their practice. The name “ČISTĀ” derives from the Avestan verb *Cit*, meaning “to notice” or “to understand”, and denotes “intuition” and “idea”. Avestan, the ancient Persian language of Zoroastrian scripture, introduces from the outset a cultural and historical dimension that aligns the organisation with questions of knowledge, interpretation, and intercultural dialogue.

Institutionally based in London and Paris, CISTA ARTS operates within recognised cultural capitals while simultaneously positioning itself as a transnational and transcultural platform. It

represents artists whose work transcends geographic borders, with particular attention to artists from the Middle East and beyond. This positioning foregrounds intercultural mediation not as a secondary function, but as a core institutional orientation.

Institutional configuration and curatorial model

Unlike the event-based structure of The Wrong Biennale or the synchronised exhibition model of Art on Loop, CISTA ARTS functions through sustained programmatic continuity. It develops thematic exhibitions, international open calls, festival and fair participation, publishing initiatives, and advisory services. Its activity extends beyond exhibition-making into publishing art books and catalogues, presenting artists at art fairs and auctions, facilitating acquisitions of Middle Eastern artworks, and advising collectors, interior designers, landscape designers, and architects.

Curatorship operates here as a structuring and mediating force across multiple domains: exhibition, publication, consultancy, and education. The organisation works interdisciplinarily with artists, architects, choreographers, art historians, anthropologists, critics, and other cultural practitioners. It actively supports art students, including showcasing their work, thereby contributing to emerging artistic networks and generational continuity.

This expanded institutional model positions curatorship not only as an exhibition practice but as a cultural infrastructure that sustains circulation, knowledge production, and intercultural engagement over time.

Degree of technological integration and digital mediation

CISTA ARTS combines stable physical presence with robust digital infrastructure. Its online platform functions as a marketing, documentation, and dissemination tool, enabling artists to present and commercialise their work internationally. Digital visibility is integrated into the organisation's strategy, extending the reach of exhibitions beyond the physical space in London or Paris.

Technological mediation operates as a mechanism of amplification and continuity. It allows artworks exhibited locally to circulate transnationally through digital platforms, catalogues, and online promotion. At the same time, physical exhibition spaces maintain the material and experiential dimensions of artistic encounter. This articulation exemplifies the post-digital condition as an integrated coexistence of material and virtual infrastructures rather than a substitution of one by the other.

Strategies of representation and identity negotiation

CISTA ARTS foregrounds intercultural representation as a central curatorial commitment. By representing artists whose practices address global concerns and by facilitating access to Middle Eastern artworks for international audiences, the organisation creates a structured space for cultural translation and symbolic negotiation. Cultural identity is framed neither as essentialist nor territorially confined, but as dialogical and transnational.

The etymological and conceptual grounding of the organisation's name reinforces this orientation toward knowledge, interpretation, and intuition. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and thematic programming, identity is articulated relationally – between heritage and contemporaneity, regional specificity and global circulation.

Unlike the temporally bounded simultaneity of Art on Loop or the fully virtual environment of The Wrong Biennale, identity negotiation within CISTA ARTS unfolds through sustained institutional engagement. The continuity of programming enables deeper discursive maturation and consolidation of intercultural networks.

Regimes of visibility and transnational circulation

CISTA ARTS operates at the intersection of traditional gallery circuits and expanded digital dissemination. Artists gain visibility through physical exhibitions in major European cities, participation in art fairs and festivals, publishing initiatives, and continuous online presence. Circulation occurs simultaneously through institutional legitimacy and digital amplification.

Although this model remains partially embedded within established urban and market structures, its transnational orientation – particularly its engagement with Middle Eastern artistic production – contributes to the diversification of symbolic centralities. The organisation's advisory and publishing roles further extend its influence beyond exhibition into broader cultural ecosystems.

CISTA ARTS thus exemplifies a post-digital art ecology in which institutional stability, digital mediation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and intercultural representation converge. It demonstrates how hybrid infrastructures can sustain long-term transnational networks while fostering spaces of cultural translation and expanded visibility.

4. Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of the three cases – the pavilion “Transient Info” within The Wrong Biennale, the Art on Loop exhibition model developed by HollyArt Gallery, and the hybrid programming of CISTA ARTS – makes it possible to identify different configurations of post-digital art ecologies and distinct modes of intercultural mediation. Although they share characteristics such

as transnationality and technological integration, they differ significantly in their institutional architecture, degree of virtualisation, and the regimes of visibility they produce.

Institutional configuration and curatorial model

The three cases represent distinct institutional models. The pavilion “Transient Info” is situated within a decentralised digital biennial, where curatorship operates in an exclusively virtual and distributed environment. The collaboration between curators located in Portugal and Macau introduces a transcontinental dimension at the organisational level, reinforcing the intercultural character of the project from its conception.

The Art on Loop model is structured through the synchronisation of physical exhibitions across multiple cities, articulated through central coordination and digital mediation. Here, curatorship functions as a connecting device between distinct urban contexts, creating a simultaneous exhibition constellation that combines local presence with a global narrative.

CISTA ARTS presents a continuous and expanded institutional structure that combines physical exhibitions, a digital platform, publishing initiatives, participation in art fairs, advisory services, and educational workshops. Operating from London and Paris while representing artists from diverse regions – particularly from the Middle East and beyond – it functions as a sustained intercultural infrastructure rather than as an event-based platform. Intercultural mediation develops over time through regular programming, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the progressive consolidation of transnational networks.

These three models reveal different ways of operating “across borders”: decentralised virtual, synchronised hybrid, and continuous institutional hybrid.

Degree of technological integration and digital mediation

The degree of technological integration varies significantly. “Transient Info” represents the highest level of virtualisation, being entirely structured within a digital environment, with a contextual curatorial website and immersive three-dimensional environments. Technology here constitutes the infrastructure of aesthetic experience.

Art on Loop presents a hybrid model in which the materiality of the physical exhibition is expanded through digital documentation and circulation devices. Technology extends the experience but does not replace it.

CISTA ARTS combines stable physical presence with an integrated digital platform that sustains visibility, documentation, archiving, and international dissemination. Digital mediation

supports not only exhibition visibility but also long-term institutional continuity, market circulation, and intercultural outreach.

This gradation evidences three modes of the post-digital condition: fully virtual, synchronised hybrid, and programmatic hybrid.

Strategies of representation and identity negotiation

In all three cases, cultural identity emerges as a relational construction, though under distinct dynamics.

In “Transient Info”, the geographical diversity of artists – originating from countries such as Portugal, Germany, China, Australia, the United States of America, Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Liechtenstein, France, Croatia, Russia, Colombia, Sweden, and Hong Kong – is framed within a shared digital architecture that relativises fixed territorialities. Cultural identity is mediated through technological interface and curatorial discourse, approaching a hybrid intercultural space.

In Art on Loop, identity is negotiated between local insertion and global circulation. Each exhibition takes place within a specific urban context, yet forms part of a synchronised transnational narrative. Cultural identity oscillates between territoriality and connectivity.

In CISTA ARTS, identity negotiation unfolds within a sustained institutional and programmatic framework. Through thematic exhibitions, publishing, advisory roles, and transnational representation – particularly involving Middle Eastern artistic production – cultural identities are translated, reframed, and circulated across symbolic and geographical boundaries. Identity here is shaped not only through exhibition, but through broader infrastructures of mediation and cultural brokerage.

Regimes of visibility and transnational circulation

The three models generate differentiated regimes of visibility.

“Transient Info” removes physical barriers and potentially expands global audiences, although it remains dependent on technological infrastructure and digital literacy.

Art on Loop amplifies visibility through simultaneous geographical multiplication, combining urban circuits with digital circulation.

CISTA ARTS integrates traditional institutional visibility with digital expansion, maintaining a degree of urban centrality while extending transnational reach.

In all cases, a partial reconfiguration of symbolic centralities can be observed. None of the models eliminates structural asymmetries, yet all introduce alternative forms of circulation that relativise traditional geographical hegemonies.

Technological mediation as a structuring variable

In all three cases, technology does not function as a peripheral instrument but as a variable that structures the very mode of existence of the exhibition and the conditions of meaning production. In “Transient Info”, technological mediation is total: both curatorship and reception occur entirely within the digital environment, and experience is configured through two complementary layers – a contextual curatorial website and immersive three-dimensional environments. In this model, the interface simultaneously constitutes exhibition architecture, curatorial narrative, and condition of access, rendering technology a constitutive component of the art ecology.

In Art on Loop, technology operates as an amplifier and articulator of distributed physical simultaneity. The exhibition retains local materiality, yet its reach, continuity, and symbolic circulation are produced through digital documentation and dissemination mechanisms. Technological mediation here is structuring because it connects distinct urban spatialities within a single curatorial temporality, transforming a sequence of local exhibitions into a unified transnational event.

In CISTA ARTS, technology assumes a role of stabilisation and continuity. The digital platform extends and amplifies programming, structuring archiving, visibility, and accessibility beyond the physical event. Technological mediation thus operates as a programmatic extension mechanism that sustains a hybrid ecology over time.

The comparison demonstrates that technological mediation configures regimes of experience, visibility, and circulation, assuming the status of a structuring variable for understanding how these ecologies produce intercultural meanings.

Tension between the local, the global, and the post-digital

A second transversal dimension concerns the tension between the local and the global, reconfigured by the post-digital condition. In “Transient Info”, the absence of physical centrality intensifies the global logic: the pavilion exists within a shared digital territory where belonging is less territorial and more relational. Yet the global is not neutral; it is mediated by infrastructures, literacies, and technological inequalities, revealing that digital globality will always coexist with asymmetries of access.

In Art on Loop, the tension is more explicit, as the exhibition takes place locally in specific cities while simultaneously forming part of a synchronised global event. The local remains decisive

for sensory and institutional experience, while the global operates as curatorial narrative and mediated circulation. The post-digital manifests precisely in this coexistence: the experience is anchored in physical space, yet its symbolic inscription and projection depend on digital mediation.

In CISTA ARTS, the tension between local and global unfolds within a continuous regime. The gallery operates from a territorially situated institutional base, yet its programming and reach are structured through international networks and digital presence. Here, the post-digital translates into a model of hybrid continuity: the local provides institutional stability and legitimacy, while the global is constructed through digital circulation and transnational collaboration.

Taken together, the cases demonstrate that the post-digital condition does not dissolve the local nor replace the global; rather, it reorganises their relationship, producing ecologies in which territoriality is negotiated and reconfigured through technological infrastructures.

Cultural identity as relational and performative process

A third transversal dimension concerns the manner in which cultural identity emerges not as a fixed attribute but as a relational and performative process. In “Transient Info”, cultural identity is produced within a shared digital architecture that brings into coexistence artists from multiple countries and cultural matrices. Identity emerges through the relationship between artworks, curatorial discourse, and technological interface, and is continuously recontextualised within an environment in which informational transience becomes a conceptual axis. The co-developed curatorship between Portugal and Macau further reinforces this relational identity, grounded in cross-border articulation.

In Art on Loop, cultural identity is performative because it is produced in the tension between local presence and synchronised global circulation. The artwork is experienced within a specific urban context, yet simultaneously inscribed within a transnational narrative. The same artist comes to “exist” across multiple geographies within the same curatorial temporality, performing belonging and visibility in networked form.

In CISTA ARTS, cultural identity is relational insofar as it is constructed through programmatic accumulation and sustained collaborative networks. Identity is framed by curatorial narratives that articulate tradition, contemporaneity, and technological mediation, allowing cultural belongings to be translated and reconfigured over time.

Thus, across all three models, cultural identity emerges as a negotiated process: it is performed through circulation, technological mediation, and the curatorial narratives that structure intercultural encounter.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the three cases demonstrates that post-digital art ecologies do not merely constitute innovative exhibition formats, but rather structuring dispositifs of cultural mediation within the contemporary global context. Transnational curatorship, articulated through digital infrastructures, emerges as a practice operating simultaneously on symbolic, technological, and political levels, reconfiguring regimes of visibility and modes of identity production.

Firstly, the cases analysed enable an understanding of curatorship and art as forms of informal cultural diplomacy. The collaboration between curators based in Portugal and Macau in the pavilion “Transient Info”, the synchronisation of exhibitions across multiple cities in the Art on Loop model, and the continuous intercultural programming of Cista Arts demonstrate that artistic mediation can function as a space of symbolic negotiation beyond formal state diplomatic structures. The cultural diplomacy observed here is not organised through governmental policies, but through curatorial networks, digital platforms, and transnational artistic circulation. The selection of artists from multiple countries and continents creates spaces of encounter in which cultural identities are presented, translated, and recontextualised. Art thus operates not merely as cultural representation, but as an active field of intercultural dialogue in which differences are framed within a relational regime that fosters symbolic negotiation.

Secondly, digital infrastructures emerge as a structuring variable in the redistribution – albeit partial – of geographical centralities. The exclusively virtual model of “Transient Info” reduces dependence on traditional museum centres and enables artists from diverse contexts to participate within a shared global platform. Art on Loop expands urban circuits through synchronisation and digital mediation, while Cista Arts combines localised institutional presence with expanded digital circulation. Technological mediation shapes temporality, spatiality, and visibility, reorganising the symbolic cartographies of the art system. However, this redistribution does not entail the elimination of hierarchies. Visibility remains dependent on symbolic capital, established institutional networks, and access to technological infrastructures. Digital platforms expand circulation, yet they operate within global systems already marked by structural inequalities.

This observation leads to a third dimension of the discussion: the persistence of cultural asymmetries and power relations within global art networks. The strong European presence in certain contexts evidences the continuity of historical centralities, even within decentralised digital platforms. Access to technological literacy, curatorial networks, and production infrastructures conditions the capacity for participation and visibility. Post-digital ecologies introduce the potential for symbolic redistribution, yet remain traversed by power dynamics that shape selection, circulation, and recognition. In this context, curatorship assumes an ambivalent role: it may reproduce existing

hierarchies or function as a mechanism for more inclusive reconfiguration, depending on the strategies adopted and the networks mobilised.

Finally, the three cases confirm that the post-digital should be understood not as a mere technological phase, but as an ontological condition of contemporary cultural production. Technology does not constitute an external element to artistic practice; rather, it forms part of the very infrastructure that shapes creative processes, curatorial mediation, and aesthetic experience. In “Transient Info”, the exhibition exists entirely as digital architecture; in *Art on Loop*, global simultaneity depends upon technological mediation; in *Cista Arts*, programmatic continuity is sustained through hybrid articulation between physical space and digital platform. Contemporary cultural production thus unfolds within a regime in which materiality and virtuality coexist in structurally integrated form.

Within this framework, cultural identity emerges as a relational and performative process, produced within hybrid ecologies where technological mediation, transnational circulation, and intercultural negotiation are inseparable. Curating “across borders” does not merely involve organising exhibitions beyond national frontiers; it actively participates in the reconfiguration of symbolic belonging, the organisation of regimes of visibility, and the construction of technologically mediated intercultural spaces. The post-digital art ecologies analysed therefore reveal structural transformations in the very ontology of cultural production, demonstrating that the articulation between technology, power, and identity constitutes a central axis for understanding contemporary networked art.

6. Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate that post-digital art ecologies constitute privileged spaces for observing the contemporary reconfiguration of cultural identity. Through the comparative analysis of three distinct configurations – an exclusively virtual pavilion integrated within a decentralised biennial, a model of simultaneous physical exhibitions digitally articulated, and a gallery with continuous hybrid programming – it has been possible to evidence that transnational curatorship operates as an active practice of intercultural mediation within technologically structured environments.

The findings indicate that technological mediation does not function as a supplementary element, but as a structuring variable shaping the conditions of artistic production, circulation, and reception. Technology moulds regimes of visibility, temporality, and spatiality, reorganising the relationship between the local and the global and producing new symbolic cartographies. In this context, the post-digital condition manifests as a structural reorganisation of cultural production, in which materiality and virtuality coexist in integrated and inseparable form.

The analysis has further demonstrated that cultural identity does not present itself as a static or territorially bounded category. Rather, it emerges as a relational and performative process produced at the intersection of curatorial discourse, geographical diversity, digital infrastructures, and transnational circulation. Curating “across borders” thus reveals itself as a practice that does not merely represent cultures, but organises encounters, negotiates differences, and structures symbolic belonging within networked environments.

However, the redistribution of geographical centralities promoted by post-digital ecologies does not eliminate structural asymmetries. Digital platforms expand possibilities for participation and visibility, yet they continue to operate within global systems marked by inequalities of access, symbolic capital, and institutional power. Curatorship therefore assumes a critical responsibility in the ways it frames, selects, and articulates intercultural narratives.

By positioning curatorship and art as practices that traverse physical, symbolic, and technological boundaries, this study contributes to an expanded understanding of contemporary cultural production. It has demonstrated that post-digital art ecologies are not merely technical environments, but relational systems in which identity, power, and technology intertwine. To comprehend these configurations requires recognising the post-digital as an ontological condition of contemporary culture and transnational curatorship as a central dispositif in the negotiation of intercultural meanings.

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