

Hybrid Aesthetics and Cultural Sustainability in the Context of Glocalization: Reshaping Strategies in Art

Ayşegül Aracı¹

Abstract

This study focuses on the processes through which local culture asserts itself within the global context via the concept of globalization, and examines the effects of intercultural interaction, which emerge from these processes, on local culture and its reflections in art. The spread of globalization has sparked fears of cultural homogenization, causing local cultures to retreat within their own boundaries. However, the concept of glocalization explains that in the interactions between cultures, no single culture can truly dominate. The synthesis of local culture with global elements and its presence on a global scale, along with the mutual interaction of cultures reshaping themselves through local cultural elements, demonstrates that cultural sustainability is possible through art. In this process, the position of the arts manager and the curatorial processes are addressed from multiple perspectives. Using a qualitative research approach, the works of Alper Aydın, Murat Palta, and Hakan Yılmaz are analyzed from an arts manager's perspective focusing on glocalization and cultural sustainability. Hybrid aesthetics that emerge through the transmission and interaction of cultural values also contribute to the formation of cultural representations. The accurate transmission of a culture additionally influences its ability to establish representation. Therefore, during the production process, the artist must consider details such as the transmission of meaning, the choice of exhibition platform, and the contextual framework of the artwork. The focus of the study is on the transfer of cultural representations, ensuring sustainability and managing curatorial processes. Studies that treat glocalization as a bridge between the global and the local examine how artworks represent their own cultures, how global and local elements are used, and how sustainability is achieved.

1 Faculty of Art and Design, Yildiz Technical University, Turkiye, aysegul.araci@std.yildiz.edu.tr

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the blurring of the boundaries between the global and the local, it has become difficult to describe something as solely global or local. By the late 20th century, the fading distinctions between the global and the local increased cultural interactions; however, this also raised concerns about the potential disappearance of the local in the face of the global, drawing attention to the homogenizing effects of globalization. Instead of the notion that cultural homogenization leads to the dominance of a single culture and the emergence of similar cultures, globalization fosters the development of societies that mutually enrich one another and facilitate cultural exchange. Intercultural homogenization has led to the resistance of the local against globalization; however, as globalization speeds up, the local inevitably becomes visible worldwide. In this process, cultural identities have reshaped themselves through universal norms while preserving their locality; they have become similar to different cultures yet strived to maintain their own local characteristics. The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (Appadurai, 1996). Based on this, it can be said that cultural identities are not homogeneous or singular structures; rather, they are multilayered. The complex nature of cultural flow makes it difficult to make a clear distinction between the global and the local.

The blurring of boundaries enables the local to present itself on a global scale, or conversely, allows the global to establish its presence locally. Roland Robertson provides an opportunity to understand this relationship by using the concept of glocalization (Robertson, 1995). According to the Oxford Dictionary of New Words (1991: 134), the term “glocal” and the process called “glocalization” were created through the intertwining and blending of the global and the local. This concept originally refers to the adaptation of modern farming techniques to local conditions and has been used in business marketing strategies, where it continues to be applied today. The intertwined relationship between the global and the local characterizes glocalization as a process where the global does not dominate the local, but rather the local reshapes itself in response to the global. The fact that this reshaping is an externally driven process and that the local culture transforms into a new form of representation under global influences enables the transmission of culture. Thus, glocalization becomes a tool for achieving cultural sustainability. In this context, culture is not fixed but rather a hybridizing structure. Mutually changing and transforming environments offer opportunities for

reproduction in terms of cultural sustainability. One of the most notable examples of these transformative processes is glocalization.

Within this scope, the artwork titled “Source of Life” featured in Alper Aydın’s *Fata Morgana* exhibition will be interpreted as a case study through the concept of glocalization, focusing on the role of the arts manager. The relationship between cultural sustainability and art management will be interpreted not only in terms of the local being transferred or preserved globally, but also regarding its reframing through hybrid aesthetics. In the process of representing and transforming culture, the role of the arts manager will be examined through the identities of curator, strategist, ethically responsible actor, and decision-maker.

2. Hybrid Aesthetics: Reproduction of Cultural Codes

Glocalization, rather than being a one-way movement, refers not only to the transmission of a local element belonging to a culture but also to how this element is represented, within what kind of visual narrative aesthetics it is presented, and through which medium or platform it is circulated globally — emphasizing how the global is reshaped within the local. At this point, arts management is at the center of the process. While ensuring the preservation and sustainability of the cultural element, the arts manager also makes aesthetic and strategic decisions regarding how the cultural element will appear on a global scale. Curators, as key actors in art management, focus on the success of this cultural transmission process while simultaneously serving as the interface between the artist, institution, and audience (Vargün, 2015). The increase in intercultural interaction due to modernization and globalization has paved the way for cultural hybridization.

These influences manifest themselves in art as well as in many other fields. Hybridization in art is directly connected to the process of modernization (industrialization). Hybrid (heterogeneous) approaches that emerge with the combination of different techniques, materials and disciplines in the contemporary art environment have enabled the formation of new works of art. Culturally hybrid experiences have accelerated and become easier through mutual exchanges and interactions. This situation is naturally reflected in the works of the artists (Akyol, 2011). As a direct result of these reflections closely linked to glocalization, hybrid aesthetics arise. The reflection of cultural hybridization in art can be seen in Alper Aydın’s sculpture “Source of Life” in Figure 1.

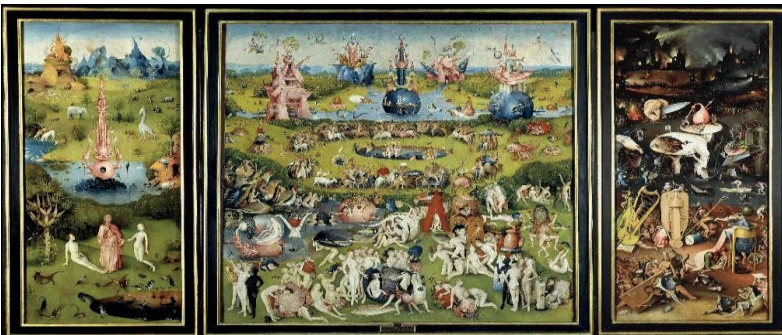
Figure 1. Alper Aydın's artwork "The Source of Life." (Semercioglu, 2023)



The sculpture "The Source of Life", featured in Alper Aydın's exhibition *Fata Morgana*, is a three-dimensional interpretation of the fountain located at the center of the paradise depiction in the first triptych of Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights." By researching the geography he inhabits and producing works adapted to its characteristics, Aydın has also sought to address ecological issues through his art. The fountain positioned at the center of the paradise depiction in Bosch's painting is designed as a life-giving form for ecology. When we look at Sülü in Cape Jason, Ordu, it bears a resemblance to the location of the fountain depicted in the painting. Therefore, the sculpture was requested to be reinstalled at Cape Sülü.

Aydın reproduced the fountain in its original dimensions, remaining faithful to the original design. During the construction process, plastic waste dragged from the sea to Cape Jason was ground into powder using machines, mixed with resin, and used in the making of the sculpture. In this way, Aydın's reinterpretation of the sculpture deepened its narrative by incorporating elements from the site in which it was exhibited.

Figure 2. "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch. (Museo Del Prado, n.d.)



Hieronymus Bosch's work (Figure 2) is named after the scene shown in the central panel. This triptych, known for its depictions of heaven and hell, is rich in terms of its recognition, its reflection of Flemish culture, and its incorporation of the religious teachings of the period. The painting contains numerous details, each offering different insights into the period and its culture. The work conveys various cultural elements, including the era's perception of sin, the story of Adam and Eve, the forbidden fruit, and fantastical creatures inspired by religious and folk narratives. The "Source of Life" sculpture (Figure 1) allows for a three-dimensional view of Bosch's fountain, while also enabling indirect access to all the information available from the painting. In his work, Aydın synthesizes the global with the local, incorporating elements from his local environment to both address the ecological issues of his region and present us with a contemporary example of glocalization. When looking at the exhibition of the work from an arts management perspective, the transformation of content and cultural strategy stand out. Aydın stayed faithful to the sculpture's original design maintained its representation and redefined it by integrating elements from the local environment.

3. The Strategic Role of the Arts Manager in Preserving Local Memory

In the process of the local expressing itself globally, or conversely, the global being reshaped locally, the planning of transmission is a crucial step. The arts manager plays an active role in this process, making decisions to ensure the accurate representation of memory. The decisions made aim to eliminate the notion that memory will be erased due to globalization, rather than merely focusing on its preservation.

Glocalization alleviates the fears of those concerned that globalization will erase all differences. Numerous books and articles about globalization suggest that it is a force that produces a homogenized world, breaks down barriers, and leads to a chaotic blending of cultures worldwide. Tensions between cultures are nothing but problems of the transition process. Ironically, this transition process has been going on for quite some time. Although we are well into the third millennium, conflicts between cultures and religions persist (Khondker & Tükel, 2013). The increasing pace of intercultural interaction facilitates the transmission and sustainability of local memory. For effective transmission and sustainability, the fidelity of representation holds great significance. The arts manager enables both hybrid and direct forms of transmission, and in Alper Aydın's work (Figure 1), the transmission appears to be partially direct. As shown in Figure 2,

Aydin stays faithful to Bosch's overall design while including local elements in the reinterpretation of the work.

Showcasing cultural representations that are redefined in the local context is part of the curatorial process—an essential element of art management. In this process, determining the context, medium, and platform through which the representation will be conveyed is a critical decision. The resemblance between the site where "The Source of Life" (Figure 1) is exhibited and the setting depicted in Bosch's painting (Figure 2) is an important factor influencing the artist's choice of location. The creation of the triptych's atmosphere through the fountain depicted in the painting contributes to the success of the transmission. Details such as the location of the exhibition space, the ability of visitors to interact with the work, and the specific problem of the exhibited space are the points that are taken into consideration for transfer during the curatorial process. In curatorial terms, details such as presenting the artist's work within the appropriate context, the manner of its exhibition, and the narrative constructed around it directly influence cultural transmission. Artists often take on a curatorial role themselves by envisioning and constructing all of these details during the creative process.

4. The Convergence of Artist and Curator Roles

Curators, who are involved in every stage of exhibition development in today's art field, occupy a central position as a branch of arts management in this process. Until the 18th and 19th centuries, the connection between curators and art differed from that of today. Originally it was a term used for those who took care of minors or lunatics (George, akt. Hansson, 2016). Over time, curators became associated with museums. During the 18th and the 19th century huge collections of objects arose in the museums of the western world and the different roles of the museum director, the keeper and the curator were blurred and interwoven. From that time on, the term "curator" has been connected to the management of art in some form (George, akt. Hansson, 2016). At the core of this relationship are various factors such as selecting the artist's work, establishing its context, and choosing the exhibition venue.

The fact that the artist only produces the work and the work is exhibited through the curator, and that the curator is the party that handles all these factors has also become blurred over time. While creating their works, artists have begun to engage with curatorial strategies such as considering the context, making decisions about the exhibition venue, and determining the manner of presentation. Today, many artists adopt a curatorial mindset

and take charge of presenting their own work, giving rise to the term “artist-curator.” The term “artist-curator”, which one simply referred to exhibitions curated by artists, is applied by Wade to those practitioners using exhibition design, architectural structures, and curatorial strategies as a way of presenting themselves, alongside other artists, to create composite public outcomes. In this way, the work of the artist-curator may include the display of autonomous objects, the exhibition design, or the provision of an overall curatorial structure as part of his or her expanded artistic practice. Exhibitions by artist-curators are now a distinctive model of curating, with the group exhibition being employed as the main mode of artistic production (O’neill, 2012). The term artist-curator has also changed and developed over time. Artists, who previously focused solely on producing their work and relied on curators for its exhibition, have gradually begun to organize exhibitions themselves. Today, many artists not only incorporate curatorial strategies into the creation of their work but also take on responsibilities such as constructing the entire exhibition framework and even selecting other participating artists. Similarly, Alper Aydın, with his sculpture *The Source of Life*, has considered numerous factors from the production phase onward, including the work’s context, mode of display, and selection of the exhibition venue. The use of elements from the exhibition site in the creation of the work, along with its placement and context within the space, has been designed from a curatorial perspective.

5. Sustaining Local Culture in Contemporary Art Through Glocalization: Examples from Turkey

The inclusion of local culture in art has become a significant source of inspiration for many artists. Interpreting images that reflect culture, artists’ works and certain styles and integrating them into other works can be a source of inspiration for artists. The circulation of these works solely within the local culture, without reaching a global audience, can hinder the transmission of culture. Contemporary artists, while drawing inspiration from local culture and adapting to contemporary trends, have enabled the transmission of local culture to a global context. This, in turn, has increased intercultural interaction. This process can be executed in a variety of ways, including the transfer of traditional elements into digital formats, the integration of contemporary technologies with the artistic work, or the incorporation of contemporary themes into the artistic expression. Rather than transferring local culture to the global stage, artists like Alper Aydın adopt an alternative approach to glocalization by integrating global elements into the local context and reshaping them with influences from the local.

The bidirectional nature of glocalization enhances intercultural interaction and ensures sustainability. This is exemplified by Hakan Yılmaz's Levni's Dream collection and Murat Palta's artwork Smurfs.

5.1. Hakan Yılmaz "Levni's Dream"

Art historian and digital artist Hakan Yılmaz produces original works by integrating traditional Ottoman art with contemporary technologies. Remixing the colorful works of Ottoman miniaturist Levni with digital tools, Yılmaz first separates and enlarges static paintings from their location using artificial intelligence and then animates them within a scene. In this way, Levni's dancing female figures become truly dynamic figures. By bridging the traditional and the contemporary, these works exemplify a modern form of globalization while simultaneously recontextualizing Ottoman miniature painters and Ottoman art through a renewed visual language.

Figure 3. Hakan Yılmaz's "Levni's Dream". (Kreaktivist, 2024)



Thanks to the tools employed, Levni's female figures (Figure 3) gain movement and dimension, transforming into a new form. Yılmaz particularly expands boundaries in this collection by integrating digital art with traditional Ottoman art. The fear that globalization may lead to cultural homogenization and intercultural uniformity can be reconsidered through a new perspective offered by Yılmaz's works.

The accurate transmission of the selected cultural representation is also one of the key points here. The figures' original structure and Levni's stylistic integrity have been preserved throughout the process of creating movement.

The artwork representing traditional Ottoman art has been preserved in contemporary art without compromising its representation, through the artist's interpretation and the use of digital tools.

5.2. Murat Palta “Barbie I”

Although Murat Palta, who specializes in miniature and illumination art, produces works resembling Ottoman period miniaturists in style, the content and subject matter of his works are fundamentally different. He creates works in the miniature style by tackling contemporary subjects with a humorous approach. In his subjects, he draws upon literature, cinema, and popular culture, using them as tools to depict his work through miniature and illumination art. At first glance, the works appear to have been created by an Ottoman miniaturist and stylistically represent Ottoman art. Ottoman period art directly conveys many details such as its craftsmanship, fine workmanship, and use of colors; upon careful examination, it also attains a global dimension by embodying themes recognized worldwide.

Figure 4. Murat Palta's “Barbie I”. (Artist, n.d.)



The work, which is the first piece in the six-part Barbie series focusing on the figure of Barbie as an icon of popular culture (Figure 4), at first glance, evokes miniatures belonging to classical Ottoman art. Though it appears like a miniature due to its fine craftsmanship, gold leaf details, and style of expression, it features a figure that is not characteristic of the period in terms

of subject matter. Barbie, the most iconic figure of Western popular culture, is merged with Eastern aesthetics. With his work, Palta not only synthesizes Eastern and Western cultures to create a hybrid figure but also reveals the differences between the depiction of women in the East, alongside Barbie's representation as the ideal woman. Through his works, Palta produces cultural hybrid aesthetics, reflecting the bidirectional dynamics of globalization.

It also highlights the accuracy of representation and the significance of the mode of transmission. Producing works as if created by a miniaturist inspires the same impression in viewers, owing to the meticulous care taken in expressing Ottoman art. Upon close examination of the work initially considered an Ottoman piece, it incorporates elements from Western culture, thereby generating a figure recognized globally while simultaneously being perceived as a locally familiar style. In addition to combining the traditional with the global, he produces his works digitally and consistently selects subjects from contemporary popular topics, literature, and cinema, expressing them through a humorous language. In this respect, it serves as a contemporary example of globalization.

6. Conclusion

As technologies change and advance, it becomes inevitable for cultures to adapt to these technological developments, leading to the blurring of boundaries between cultures. The constant emergence of new digital tools encountered daily is eliminating access barriers. As a result, concerns arise about cultural homogenization and the potential loss of distinct cultural identities. In contrast to the idea of a single dominant culture, the increasing pace of intercultural interaction has given rise to the notion that it can ensure cultural sustainability and lead to the emergence of cultural hybrids. Roland Robertson explains this phenomenon through the concept of glocalization.

Studies examined within the context of globalization indicate that the accelerated pace of globalization has increased cultural diversity rather than creating homogenization. Cultural representations that have remained confined locally or failed to extend beyond their local context gain the opportunity to reach wider audiences and become globally visible through the tools and platforms employed by artists. Similarly, in works that demonstrate the dual nature of globalization, it is possible to observe global cultural images within the local context. Drawing from the analyzed works, in addition to the tools used and exhibition spaces, the subjects addressed also play a significant role. Cultural hybrids that emerge through globalization's bridge between the local and the global contain elements belonging to both

cultures. This condition, which lays the foundation for cultural sustainability, has ensured the transmission of existing culture, as observed in the works examined. For the accuracy of this transmission and the success of the process, the art curator must make strategic decisions regarding numerous details such as the accurate representation of the cultural element, its context, venue selection, and the mode of exhibition. In conclusion, globalization has been shown to support cultural sustainability, and as demonstrated in the examples, intercultural interaction reinforces this process, highlighting the significance of globalization for cultural transmission.

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Extended Abstract

This study examines the representation of local culture within the global context through the lens of globalization and investigates the impact of intercultural interaction on local culture and its artistic manifestations. The expansion of globalization has generated concerns about cultural homogenization, leading local cultures to retreat within their own boundaries. However, the concept of “glocalization” explains that within such interactions, the dominance of a single culture is unlikely. The interwoven relationship between the global and the local illustrates that glocalization does not entail the global’s domination over the local, but rather the local’s adaptation and transformation in response to global influences. This reshaping is an external process whereby local culture transforms into new forms of representation through global influences, thereby facilitating cultural transmission. In this regard, glocalization serves as a mechanism for cultural sustainability. Therefore, culture is not static but hybrid in nature. These continuously evolving and transforming environments offer opportunities for cultural reproduction and sustainability. Glocalization stands as one of the most prominent examples of these transformation processes.

The interaction between cultures demonstrates that cultural sustainability can be effectively fostered through art. Within this process, the role of the art manager and curatorial practices are examined from multiple perspectives. From a curatorial standpoint, the accurate presentation of artworks, their modes of exhibition, and the narratives they construct directly impact cultural transmission. Hybrid aesthetics arising from cultural interactions and the transmission of cultural values play a significant role in shaping cultural representations. The precise transmission of a culture significantly influences its representation. Therefore, artists must take into account the transmission process, the exhibition platform, and the contextual framework of the work during the production stage. When artists engage in these processes, they also acquire a curatorial identity. Today, many artists adopt a curatorial mindset and manage their own art, giving rise to the term “artist-curator.” Whereas artists traditionally depended on curators to exhibit their works, over time they have increasingly taken on the responsibility of organizing exhibitions themselves. They now incorporate curatorial strategies into their creative process and actively participate in selecting other artists for exhibitions.

Examining the works of Alper Aydın, Murat Palta, and Hakan Yılmaz within the framework of glocalization reveals that these locally recognized artists draw upon local culture while adapting to contemporary trends, thereby promoting the transmission of local culture to the global sphere. The success

of this transmission and the reciprocal interaction of cultures underscore the significance of glocalization, not only for local culture but also for fostering global understanding. Today, rapid technological advancements have accelerated and simplified interactions. To counteract cultural uniformity, the concept of glocalization has assumed greater significance. A society that shields itself from uniformity yet fails to transmit its local culture beyond its borders risks experiencing a decline in cultural sustainability and recognition. Murat Palta, whose works resemble those of Ottoman miniature artists, integrates elements of Western popular culture into his art. By promoting Ottoman miniature art on a global scale, he contributes to its continued recognition among wider audiences today, exemplifying the positive effects of glocalization. Similarly, Alper Aydın's work, which reinterprets a globally recognized statue within a local context, demonstrates the reciprocal nature of this process. Therefore, adapting to new technologies and projecting one's own culture on a global scale encourages cultural sustainability rather than resulting in cultural homogenization.