


The Destinies of Senses: Curating a Virtual Exhibition

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ABSTRACT

During the state of global emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, online cultural events have multiplied and gained space in our lives. However, this relationship between contemporary art and digital media has been developing for decades. In this paper, the authors cover the curatorial and preparation process for the virtual pavilion *The Destinies of Senses* that was part of the 4th edition of the digital art biennial *The Wrong*, which took place from November 2019 to March 2020, bringing to discussion the curation of online exhibitions, aesthetics post-digital, and the creation process of these artists. The authors approach in more detail one of the projects that integrated the exhibition and that combines fashion production, print media, and digital art.

KEYWORDS

Artistic Creation, Contemporary Art, Digital Culture, Digital Curation, Digital Media, Digital Media-Art, Exhibition Design, Post-Digital

INTRODUCTION

The Wrong biennial was one of these innovative projects, using the global accessibility of the internet to promote and disseminate digital media art. In this paper, we focus on the Portuguese online pavilion/exhibition *The destinies of senses* that was part of the 4th edition of *The Wrong New Digital Biennale*.

The 4th edition of the biennial *The Wrong* took place between 1 November 2019 and March 2020 (initially, the date scheduled to end was 1 March 2020, but the online exhibitions and events extended due to the pandemic situation of covid-19 that the world was going through). This edition of the biennial involved 2300 artists, 210 curators, 150 online pavilions, 320 events, and 20 offline physical exhibitions. *The Wrong* received the distinctions of *sois cultura 2019* and *ehrenerwähnung at starts 2020* (Guilló, 2021).

The destinies of senses, curated by Selma Pereira and Paulo Guerreiro, involved: artists from various geographic locations: from Portugal - artists Angela Saldanha, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Filipe Lopes, Orca, Pedro Veiga, and Valentim Quaresma, from Spain - Pilar Pérez, from Germany - Márcio Carvalho, from Sweden - Maria Pita Guerreiro; from Brazil - Isa Seppi and João Beira from the USA; and various artistic areas such as drawing, video, interactive cinema, digital media art, design, fashion, jewelry, performance, and sculpture.

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They invited three projects developed in an academic context to join, in this exhibition, renowned artists. These academic projects developed at: Esmad of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto; Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm; and ESART of the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco.

The creation of an online exhibition brings new and different challenges than exhibitions in physical galleries. In online exhibitions there are no limits on physical spaces, such as the rooms' dimensions or the height of the room, which allows the online exhibition to include more works and artists. Visitors do not have to travel to the gallery, nor do they have time limits to visit it. The public can allow the visit with any mobile device with internet access and the easy integration of interactive web-based works. It enables the integration of various functionalities, facilitates communication and sharing on social networks. However, this exhibition format has some problems and challenges. Not all artworks are suitable for viewing only on the screen, with the added that the screens of mobile devices could be considered small. The path of the public in the physical gallery is not similar to the virtual exhibition, even in the virtual space, it is crucial to maintain the exhibition's guiding thread- it is a component of storytelling, the immersion, and the quality of the artworks' exhibition to contemplate aesthetics.

For the exhibition to be accessible and responsive, it is necessary to take some options and concessions. In the case of *The destinies of senses*, we chose to base the entire exhibition on a website, complemented by pages on the most popular social networks. Furthermore, for works with more complex technical requirements, such as real-time performances in the Second Life virtual world, and given that this platform requires the download and installation of the application, and since it is not compatible with all mobile devices, we chose by simultaneous transmission through the YouTube platform.

The exhibition's main objective *The destinies of senses* were to show that digital media can be present in different ways and at different artistic production stages, both analog and digital works. They were bringing to discussion the post-digital aesthetic.

This article begins with a brief overview of the exhibition and the biennial, followed by a theoretical contextualization of digital media's impact on contemporary art and post-digital artistic production. An approach to constructing the pavilion / online exhibition, from the initial concept to the main phases of its development, then presents the invited artists and their connection to post-digital. Finally, in more detail, we present one of the exhibition projects, developed in an academic context, which combines fashion production, print media, and digital art. We finish with the final considerations and bibliographical references.

THE DESTINIES OF SENSES ONLINE EXHIBITION: GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The Destinies of Senses was an online exhibition curated by Selma Pereira and Paulo Guerreiro, who was part of the 4th edition of the international digital art biennial The Wrong. This exhibition sought to present the influence of digital media in contemporary artistic production, with its different narratives, sensations, expressions, means, and techniques for creating and experiencing art and the role of digital art in the production of contemporary thought.

The artists invited to this exhibition have important productions from various artistic areas and different geographical locations, with different digital connections. However, each one brings a different point of view to contemporary digital art and its discussion.

Different categories and artistic approaches were presented: the interactive digital work, by the generative works of Pedro Alves da Veiga, and the cinematographic work of Bruno Mendes da Silva; the video by JP Caldeano, Márcio Carvalho and Angela Saldanha; the performances of Pilar Pérez, João Beira, Isa Seppi, Filipe Lopes and Orca, and the design of ESART, Maria Pita Guerreiro, and Valentim Quaresma.

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