

# 4. Hybrid Art Space

Building on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3, this chapter moves from a general understanding of Hybrid Space as a socio-spatial condition toward its specific manifestations in the field of art.

## 4.1 From Hybrid Space to Hybrid Art Space, Place, Venues and Site

In the previous chapter, I proposed that hybrid space is a relational mode of spatial production in which social processes staged in digital and material environments are inseparably intertwined. Here, I extend that argument into the domain of cultural production, asking how art, curation, and audience participation shape these hybrid conditions.

Hybrid Art Space refers to the production of space through artistic, curatorial, and mediatic practices that shape the making, display, and circulation of art under hybrid conditions. It describes a relational process, a field in which the spatial experience of art is co-produced by artists, institutions, audiences, and algorithms. Hybrid art spaces emerge wherever acts of artistic creation, exhibition, and participation intersect with digital mediation, producing environments that are simultaneously material and communicative. In this sense,

Hybrid Art Space encompasses both the production and the experience of art. Within this formation, the boundaries between presence and mediation, between viewing, creating, and sharing, are no longer stable. Audiences do not merely visit exhibitions; they extend, annotate, and redistribute them through digital acts of participation. The publics of hybrid art spaces, therefore, multiply and stratify, meaning is negotiated as much on platforms as on-site, across overlapping contexts of spectatorship, authorship, and data exchange.

At the same time, Hybrid Art Space redefines cultural value and visibility. Worth no longer stems solely from institutional authority or curatorial framing but from the interplay between audience practices, algorithmic amplification, and institutional mediation.

In short, Hybrid Art Space is the condition of cultural production and experience under hybrid circumstances, where visibility itself becomes a spatial practice, continuously shaped by the co-action of humans, media, and infrastructures.

**From Hybrid Art Space to Hybrid Art Place.** Suppose Hybrid Art Space describes the general condition of artistically related spatial production under hybrid circumstances. In that case, **Hybrid Art Place** refers to its situated manifestation; the identifiable venues where these dynamics acquire material form, social density, and symbolic meaning. Following Martina Löw's relational sociology of space (2016), *place* arises when a configuration of relations becomes nameable, memorable, and affectively charged. When a museum, installation, or festival becomes a recognizable node within digital culture, then it is a Hybrid Place. Their spatial identity is composed as much through images, hashtags, and metrics as through walls, programs, and audiences. I use the term **Hybrid Art Venues** to describe those instances in which Hybrid Art Places become empirically observable—when the fluid dynamics of hybrid production condense into concrete configurations of architecture, mediation, and participation.

**From Hybrid Art Place to Hybrid Art Site.** Finally, the concept of **Hybrid Art Site** moves from the condition to the operational field. Here, the term site is drawn from architectural and urban theory, particularly from Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn's (2005) definition of *site* as a relational construct, spatially elastic, and temporally provisional. Rather than denoting a bounded location, the site describes what a place does within a wider network of relations: its zones of influence, control, and effect. Applied to the hybrid

condition, Hybrid Art Site designates the arena in which the dynamics of hybrid space become operative—where curators and planners engage in acts of spatial mediation, reflection, and negotiation, the points where conceptual understanding becomes spatial action. In this book, such sites return in later chapters as the operational environments of cultural work mapping hybrid territories, tracing emergent clusters, and developing curatorial and planning tools.

## 4.2 Historical Lineages of Hybrid Art Space

While the term Hybrid Space emerged in media theory in the early 2000s, the entanglement of art, media, and spatial imagination has a much longer genealogy. Understanding Hybrid Art Space and Place requires tracing these interconnections across media forms that have continually redefined how art and its locations are experienced, shared, and spatialized.

Early mediations, such as postcards and photography, allowed art spaces to travel. At the turn of the twentieth century, picture postcards of the Louvre or the Venice Biennale circulated images of museums and monuments far beyond their physical locations, transforming them into global imaginaries. Photography similarly detached the artwork from its site, creating what we might call mediated co-presence—a sense of being with art across distance.

Cinema extended this logic into an immersive collective experience. Films set in museums, from Alain Resnais's *Toute la mémoire du monde* (1956) (Wikipedia 2025) to Jem Cohen's *Museum Hours* (2012) (Wikipedia 2025a), did not simply document exhibitions; they re-narrated them. Through montage, lighting, and sound, cinema re-staged museums and libraries as sites of affect, politics, and spectatorship, thus prefiguring the experiential dramaturgy of later digital installations.

In the 1990s, digital and net art translated this dispersed spectatorship into interactive form. Artists such as Jeffrey Shaw (*Legible City*, 1989) (Shaw 1989) or Char Davies (*Osmose*, 1995) (Char Davies 1995), experimented with virtual environments that turned viewers into participants. These projects reconfigured both the gallery and the screen: they were not only seen but also navigated, anticipating later forms of networked immersion even as they mediated cities (New York in the case of the legible city) or nature (in the case of *Osmose*), reconfiguring spatial and media identities.

The early 2000s saw the emergence of locative media art, which explicitly fused mobility, data, and place. Works like Blast Theory's *Uncle Roy All Around You* (2003) (Blast 2003) or Christian Nold's *Bio Mapping* (2004–ongoing) (Nold 2009) connected urban movement to digital overlays, generating hybrid spatial narratives that unfolded through GPS tracking, text messages, and real-time mapping. These practices transformed the city into a responsive interface—a distributed museum where spatial experience and data intertwined.

Today, museums integrate these logics through the use of augmented and virtual reality. Augmented Reality applications such as the *AR Rembrandt Reality app* (2019) (Capitola 2003) allow visitors to view paintings as living interfaces—works that react to bodily position, gesture, or mobile perspective. VR installations, such as Marina Abramović's *Rising* (2018) (Acute Art 2019) or the *Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass* experience at the Louvre (2019) (Dominique de Font-Réaulx 2019), extend this hybridization into fully immersive environments, where the visitor inhabits a simulation rather than merely observing an object. These technologies blur distinctions between on-site and online spectatorship: the museum becomes a dynamic system of sensors, databases, and projections, in which art is simultaneously experienced, recorded, and augmented.

Social media consolidates this shift by transforming these experiences into algorithmic archives. Platforms such as Instagram or TikTok operate as extensions of the exhibition space: images of immersive installations—like teamLab’s *Borderless* (2024) (teamlab 2024) or Refik Anadol’s *Unsupervised* at MoMA (2024) (Refik Anadol 2024), circulate globally, shaping not only the reception but also the production of art.

Taken together, these lineages reveal that Hybrid Art Space is not a product of the smartphone era alone but the crystallization of a century-long evolution, from postcards to AR filters, from cinema to VR installations. Hybrid Art Space, in this sense, is both a continuation and an acceleration of art’s long-standing dialogue with technological mediation.

### 4.3 Hybrid Art Place: Concept and Example

Hybrid Art Places, as I propose here, names the condition in which art venues are simultaneously experienced, produced, and circulated across physical, digital, and algorithmic registers. A gallery or installation is a relational environment in which on-site encounters, mediated representations, and algorithmically structured circulations interact and co-produce one another. The logics of social media, virality, feedback loops, and identity work are not external to these spaces but woven into their very spatial production. The socio-spatial dynamics of Hybrid Space, multiplying arrangements, hybrid negotiations, stratified access, platform rules, and algorithmic acceleration, manifest acutely in art contexts, where visibility, value, and participation depend simultaneously on cultural authority and digital circulation, as exemplified in the example below.

A notable example is teamLab’s long-running exhibition, *Future World: Where Art Meets Science*, at Singapore’s ArtScience Museum (teamlab 2016). Since 2016, the collective has staged

a series of immersive environments where waterfalls cascade across walls, flowers bloom and decay on visitors' bodies, and glowing orbs respond to touch. Visitors inhabit the installation physically—walking, touching, and waiting in line—while simultaneously engaging with digital interfaces that document and circulate the exhibition. The space is thus produced through multiple, interdependent arrangements: the embodied encounter with projections and sensors, the camera interface that frames experience, and the algorithmic stage of Instagram or TikTok where those images acquire new meanings.

Within this ecology, spatial meaning becomes a matter of hybrid negotiation. Curators frame Future World as an exploration of the relationship between art and science; visitors, in turn, reframe it through acts of self-curation. The waterfall becomes a selfie backdrop, the lantern room a stage for group choreography, and the glowing orbs props for playful TikToks. These user-generated interpretations do not simply document the exhibition—they reshape it. The museum's own marketing incorporates such content, acknowledging that publics on digital platforms co-author the exhibition's meaning. Interactivity thus operates not only in the responsive artwork but also in the recursive loop of reproduction, circulation, and re-mediation. The rhetoric of interactivity thus conceals an asymmetry: participation becomes data, and affective engagement translates into algorithmic visibility. Access to this hybrid dimension, however, is uneven. Those with high-quality devices, social visibility, or digital fluency dominate Future World's online presence, while others remain peripheral. This stratified access mirrors broader divides in hybrid environments, where infrastructure, literacy, and algorithmic privilege determine who can shape collective narratives. Platform rules further structure both design and reception: saturated colors, symmetrical compositions, and immersive scales align with the visual grammars that circulate best on social media. The exhibition itself seems to anticipate these grammars—producing photogenic, shareable scenes that reinforce its algorithmic visibility.

As these visual routines stabilize, they accelerate. A particular selfie angle in the lantern room, now globally recognizable, exemplifies algorithmic acceleration: a spatial motif replicated endlessly across feeds, turning a single installation into a worldwide visual shorthand. The cultural logics of social media—feedback loops between online visibility and physical attendance, self-curation through posting, and the pursuit of virality—intensify the hybrid condition. The platform becomes not an afterimage of the exhibition but a constitutive site of it: as central to its existence as the museum’s galleries.

**Mobile territories.** These overlapping layers give rise to what I define as mobile territories—affective, algorithmically mediated formations that emerge through the circulation of digital attention. While they do not correspond to fixed locations, they exhibit recognizable spatial coherence: clusters of posts, hashtags, and images that repeatedly assemble around specific exhibitions, venues, or aesthetic conventions. In contrast to the openness of networks, mobile territories represent the territorialization of visibility—zones of temporary stabilization within the flux of hybrid space. They are dynamic but bounded, sustained through repetition and collective recognition rather than administrative boundaries.

**Hyper Hybrid Art Places** At the extreme of this process lie what I term Hyper Hybrid Art Places—venues where physical attendance and digital circulation reinforce each other in recursive cycles of attention. These sites are not simply popular; they are algorithmically amplified, producing visibility far beyond what their visitor numbers alone would predict. In them, the dynamics of the hybrid condition reach a self-reinforcing acceleration, in which visibility becomes both the product and driver of spatial experience. Later chapters return to this concept empirically, examining how such amplification can be observed through data correlations between visitor numbers and media production.

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