



Review Article

The New Southbound Aesthetic: Artistic Collaboration and Talent Cultivation Between Taiwan and India

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Abstract

Contemporary Asian painting is experiencing a significant ontological transformation, shifting from exclusively physical media to digital-hybrid practices. In Taiwan and India, artists increasingly combine traditional media, including gouache, ink, and folk motifs, with digital tools, E-Ink displays, and generative processes. This technological integration functions as a form of postcolonial resistance to geopolitical instability and essentialist identities. This study examines how digital-hybrid painting serves as a mechanism for envisioning resilient, non-essentialist futures, with particular attention to the concepts of "precarious intelligence" in Taiwan and "diasporic flux" within the Indian diaspora. The research also evaluates the significance of artistic collaboration between these two nations within the framework of the New Southbound Policy. Employing a qualitative, comparative analytical framework based exclusively on secondary data, the study conducts a thematic synthesis of exhibition catalogs (including the 2025 Venice Biennale Pavilion), museum records from the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, artist statements, and scholarly articles published between 2024 and 2026. The findings indicate that, despite differing sources of instability cross-strait tensions and environmental uncertainty in Taiwan, and fractured belonging in the Indian diaspora both contexts utilize digital hybrids to reclaim cultural agency. Taiwanese artists employ these mediums to articulate a democratically paradoxical identity and resist authoritarian narratives. In contrast, Indian diaspora artists reconfigure historical elements, such as Mughal miniatures, to challenge colonial visual regimes and ethnic commodification. The study concludes that digital-hybrid painting creates a critical "third space" that dismantles traditional boundaries and establishes essential pathways for technological and artistic collaboration between Taiwan and India, thereby resisting global hegemonies in a precarious international context.

Keywords

Digital Hybridity, Postcolonial Resistance, Taiwanese Precarity, Indian Diaspora, Contemporary Asian Painting, Cross-cultural Identity

1. Introduction

Contemporary Asian painting is undergoing a significant ontological transformation, shifting from exclusively physical media to digital hybrid practices. Recent reports [10] indicate that Taiwan has designated 2026 as the 'Year of Symbiosis of Art and Technology,' utilising its 'Technology Island' status to

redefine artistic production. By integrating traditional techniques such as gouache, ink, and folk motifs with generative digital tools, artists in Taiwan and India are developing new visual languages to address instability in their respective countries [10, 18, 21].

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1.1. The Taiwanese Context

Precarity as "Intelligence" In Taiwan, the intersection of art and technology is situated within the nation's distinctive geopolitical and technological ecosystem. The curatorial framework of the 2025 Venice Biennale Taiwan Pavilion, 'Non-Belief: Taiwan Intelligence of Precarity,' redefines 'precarity' not solely as vulnerability but, as recent studies note [9], as 'embodied intelligence,' representing a resilient and adaptive response to cross-strait tensions and environmental uncertainty.

Literature [7] demonstrates that hybrid gouache-and-ink works serve as a 'frontline in planetary resistance' against authoritarian narratives. Taiwanese artists use E-Ink displays and circuit board installations alongside traditional paper to create 'contact zones' that embody a democratically paradoxical identity. Furthermore, analyses [21] conclude that these layered digital-physical boundaries enable audiences to reimagine the 'horizon of boundless possibilities' for a nation experiencing ongoing geopolitical flux.

1.2. The Indian Context

Diasporic Flux and Reconfigured Traditions. While Taiwan addresses geopolitical precarity, the Indian artistic context, particularly within the diaspora, challenges 'essentialist' identities through the concept of 'diasporic flux.' Research [4] observes that contemporary South Asian art increasingly seeks to dismantle 'default whiteness' and colonial visual regimes by emphasising practices of liberation and hybridity [3-5].

Studies [18] indicate that Indian artists primarily use digital manipulation to reconfigure traditional forms, including Mughal miniatures and folk motifs, thereby reclaiming sacred and national iconography. Literature [14] notes that these artists employ 'transient media' to resist commodification and canonisation, transforming the canvas into a 'crucible' for actively forging identity. Further research [17] explores how this 'digital physique' enables second- and third-generation diaspora members to navigate fractured belonging, using digital collage to connect their ancestral past with a globalised future.

1.3. Technological Synthesis and Postcolonial Agency

The integration of tradition and technology in Taiwan and India reflects a broader trend in Asian art toward adopting 'AIGC' (Artificial Intelligence-Generated Content). Research [22] asserts that digital transformation in traditional painting transcends simple medium substitution, signifying a shift in 'viewing logic and meaning construction.'

Political frameworks facilitate collaboration between the Taiwanese and Indian art scenes. Reports [11] highlight initiatives to promote 'people-to-people exchanges' and 'talent cultivation.' The 2026 'Are You Human?' symposium in New Delhi is a significant event in which Taiwanese technology art groups collaborate with Indian curators to examine the impact

of AI on human subjectivity [1, 20]. Evidence [8] suggests that this cross-cultural dialogue lays the groundwork for a shared 'diure' that resists global hegemonies.

1.4. Research Objectives and Scope

This paper argues that digital-hybrid painting is a crucial medium for envisioning resilient, non-essentialist futures. Utilising secondary data, including exhibition catalogues from the 2025 Venice Biennale, museum records from the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, and scholarly articles from 2024–2026, the study aims to:

- Analyse the role of "precarious intelligences" in Taiwanese hybrid ink painting.

- Examine the digital reconfiguration of traditional motifs in Indian diaspora art.

- Assess the significance of Taiwan-India artistic collaboration within the framework of the New South.

3. Research Methodology

The study employs a qualitative, comparative analytical framework to investigate the intersection of traditional aesthetics and digital innovation. Due to the evolving nature of 'precarious intelligences' and 'diasporic flux,' a non-empirical, secondary data-driven approach is adopted to map the shifting boundaries of Asian painting.

3.1. Research Design: Comparative Qualitative Analysis

A comparative design is employed to identify shared uses of postcolonial resistance in Taiwan and India. This approach facilitates the exploration of 'digital hybridity' as both a technical and socio-political response to instability. The research juxtaposes geopolitical precarity in Taiwan with migratory flux in the Indian diaspora to examine how digital-physical synthesis is used to reclaim cultural agency.

3.2. Data Collection and Sources

The study relies exclusively on secondary data to provide a comprehensive overview of the current artistic landscape. The methodology prioritises the following sources:

- Exhibition Catalogues: Critical analysis is applied to catalogues such as the 2025 Venice Biennale Pavilion "NON-Belief: Taiwan Intelligence of Precarity".

- Museum records and curatorial essays: These sources offer theoretical grounding for concepts such as 'precarious intelligences' and 'essentialist identities.'

- Artist statements: Primary reflections are obtained from published interviews and official statements to elucidate the intent behind reconfiguring Mughal miniatures and gouache works.

Published scholarly articles: Recent research papers are reviewed to contextualise the 'post-democratisation era' and the 'New Southbound Policy.'

3.3. Analytical Framework: Postcolonial and Technological Synthesis

As mentioned in the abstract, the analysis is conducted through a postcolonial lens, focusing on how digital manipulation functions as a tool for 'resistance.' A 'thematic synthesis' technique is employed to categorise artistic responses: digital counterparts (generative processes, digital collage).

Thematic Mapping of Instability: Data is coded for themes of "environmental uncertainty," "cross-strait tensions," and "fractured belonging".

Pathway Projection: In accordance with the New Southbound Policy, the methodology includes a prospective analysis of "cross-cultural identity" and collaborative pathways for Taiwan-India arts.

3.4. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

As the research relies exclusively on publicly available secondary data, it adheres to ethical standards of academic citation and intellectual property. Although primary field interviews are absent, the depth of curatorial essays and museum records offers a robust foundation for envisioning 'resilient, non-essentialist futures.'

4. Results and Discussion

The synthesis of collected secondary data, spanning the 2025 Venice Biennale archives to recent South Asian digital art symposia, reveals a significant transformation in the ontological status of contemporary painting. Analyses [12] assert that the shift toward digital hybridity constitutes a deliberate strategic response to geopolitical and cultural instability. In the Taiwanese context, "precarity" is no longer a passive state of vulnerability but has become an active intellectual and artistic tool. Research [13] identifies the 2025 Pavilion "NON-Belief: Taiwan Intelligentsia of Precarity" as definitive evidence of this shift.

4.1. Hybridisation of Gouache and Generative AI

The results indicate that artists systematically integrate traditional Eastern gouache and ink techniques with generative AI and E-ink technologies. Evidence [2] suggests that the 'fluidity' of digital ink parallels Taiwan's political fluidity. By employing AI to simulate the 'bleeding' of ink on virtual rice paper, artists create a visual metaphor for a nation that resists rigid borders.

4.2. The Technological Ecosystem and Post-Democratization Agency

The analysis underscores how Taiwan's semiconductor and hardware legacy shapes its art [9, 13, 15]. Observations [15] indicate that Taiwanese artists operate within a 'technological ecosystem' where high-tech components are regarded as 'organic' materials. In the post-democratisation era, digital tools are employed as a form of 'sovereign expression.' By adapting constitutive art forms with modern code, artists assert a cultural subjectivity that is simultaneously ancient and futuristic.

4.3. The Indian Result: "Diasporic Flux" and the Digital Reclamation of Identity

Within the Indian diaspora, the results highlight a movement toward 'de-essentializing' South Asian identity. Research [5] asserts that the digital medium functions as a 'decolonial tool,' enabling artists to circumvent the 'tourist gaze' commonly associated with traditional Indian motifs.

4.3.1. Reconfiguring Mughal Miniatures and Folk Motifs

The research identifies the reconfiguration of Mughal miniatures through digital collage as a prevailing trend. Research [18] notes that these digital interventions enable diaspora artists to 'fracture' historical narratives. By incorporating modern, often 'glitched' imagery into classical Mughal compositions, artists articulate the 'fractured sense of belonging' characteristic of the migrant experience. This process of 'fracture and fusion' keeps tradition dynamic rather than static.

4.3.2. Resisting Essentialism Through Transient Media

Evidence [16] indicates that digital tools enable Indian artists to explore 'hybridity' while avoiding 'ethnic commodification.' The results show that digital manipulation enables artists to inhabit multiple geographies simultaneously, a phenomenon described as 'diasporic flux.' This facilitates a 'non-essentialist' future in which Indian identity is characterised by continual transformation rather than fixed symbols.

4.4. A Comparative Framework of Resistance

The findings reveal a notable convergence between Taiwan and India. Although the sources of instability in Taiwan's geopolitical precarity and India's migratory flux differ, both regions share a common 'method of resistance' and agency. Literature [3] describes both contexts as having developed a 'digital physique,' a mode of artistic production in which the artist's physical presence and the work's digital form are closely intertwined. The study concludes that this physique is a primary source of agency: in Taiwan, it serves as a 'digital

shield' against geopolitical erasure, while in the Indian diaspora, it functions as a 'digital bridge' to a homeland that is no longer physically accessible.

Policy Implications and the New Southbound Policy (NSP)

A crucial aspect of the discussion concerns institutional support for hybrid practices. Research [6] emphasises that artistic collaboration between Taiwan and India is a strategic priority. The study finds that the NSP is establishing a 'talent recruitment' pipeline, enabling Indian digital artists and Taiwanese tech-art groups to participate in shared residencies. As a result, 'digital-hybrid painting' is emerging as the 'lingua franca' of a new, technology-driven Asian alliance. According to [19], the ultimate goal of these hybrid practices is to create "resilient futures." The discussion underscores that by refusing to choose between the "purely traditional" and the "purely digital," these artists are creating a third space. It is concluded that this third space is the only environment where a truly "non-essentialist" identity can survive in a precarious global landscape. The "barriers" between mediums are being dismantled, much like the barriers between cultures are being renegotiated through digital flux.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive investigation into the role of digital-hybrid painting as a cornerstone of contemporary postcolonial resistance. Comparative analysis of Taiwan and India yields several key conclusions: Taiwan's digital hybridity constitutes a sophisticated response to "geopolitical precarity." The concept of "precarious intelligences" effectively transforms national vulnerability into a creative asset, enabling Taiwanese art to maintain global visibility despite political exclusion.

Abbreviations

AIGC	Artificial Intelligence-Generated Content
NSP	New Southbound Policy
AI	Artificial Intelligence

Author Contributions

Rachana Kailas Ahire: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The author declare no conflicts of interest.

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