DECOLONIAL ATLAS: MAPPING ARTISTS THAT CHALLENGE DIGITAL COLONIALISM

Victor T. Murari, PhD.
victortmurari@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The Decolonial Atlas project proposes the creation of an interactive map aimed at identifying and critically analyzing artistic productions that problematize the structures of digital colonialism. This initiative is situated within a field of research that intersects art, technology, and postcolonial critique, emphasizing how domination and exploitation—characteristics of historical colonialism—persist and transform in the contemporary digital context. The interactive map thus seeks to organize and geographically visualize these artistic manifestations, offering a tool for reflection and resistance against power dynamics.

Digital colonialism can be understood as the extension of colonial logics into the digital realm, characterized by the appropriation of data, technological infrastructures, and epistemologies by large corporations and hegemonic states. This contemporary form of domination involves not only the massive extraction of data and algorithmic surveillance but also the exclusion and marginalization of non-Western knowledge systems, perpetuating structural inequalities in access to and production of knowledge. For this reason, understanding and mapping the forms of resistance to these dynamics becomes an essential task in decolonizing the digital and fostering greater aesthetic and epistemological diversity in cyberspace.

The relevance of this theme lies in its centrality to contemporary cultural and political debates. Digital colonialism directly impacts the informational and artistic sovereignty of Global South countries, reproducing technological and economic dependency relationships. Furthermore, the concentration of power in digital platforms exacerbates social and racial inequalities, creating an ecosystem of exclusion that restricts access to opportunities and limits the autonomy of historically subalternized communities. Understanding the artistic manifestations that question these structures is a crucial aspect of making visible and strengthening critical discourses that challenge the colonial logic of the digital.

Given this scenario, the Decolonial Atlas project aims to address a series of fundamental questions: How does digital colonialism manifest in contemporary artistic practices? What are the strategies of resistance and subversion adopted by artists in constructing new narratives? How can technology be used as a tool for counter-hegemony and cultural reappropriation? By tackling these questions, the project seeks to systematize and organize a collection that enables a deeper understanding of the intersection between art, coloniality, and technology, consolidating itself as a critical repository accessible to diverse audiences.

The primary goal of the interactive map is to develop a digital platform that allows for the visualization and analysis of artistic productions that address digital colonialism, enabling researchers, artists, and the general public to access geographically organized information on these practices. Beyond mere cataloging, the project aims to foster interdisciplinary debates and promote knowledge construction in a decentralized manner, recognizing and valuing voices historically excluded from hegemonic circuits of art and

technology. The interactivity of the map is justified by its ability to expand the reach of these discussions, providing a dynamic and accessible resource for critical reflection on the subject.

The curatorial aspect of the Decolonial Atlas project is fundamental in articulating a critical narrative that goes beyond simple cataloging, functioning as a tool for reflection on the dynamics of digital colonialism. The selection and organization of artistic productions are not limited to a descriptive survey but seek to highlight resistance strategies that question data extraction, algorithmic surveillance, and the exclusion of non-Western epistemologies. Thus, curation operates as an epistemological device that legitimizes marginalized artistic discourses, expanding their circulation and contributing to the deconstruction of colonial paradigms in art and technology. Additionally, by structuring an interactive map, the curatorial approach not only organizes a repository of resistance but also proposes a dynamic and accessible experience, enabling multiple readings and interactions that challenge traditional hierarchies of knowledge and artistic production.

Methodologically, the project adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining theoretical research with digital curation methodologies and interactive interface design. The selection of works and artists will be guided by criteria that consider not only the aesthetic quality of the productions but also their ability to problematize and challenge the structures of digital colonialism. The critical analysis of the works will be grounded in postcolonial studies, digital culture critique, and contemporary debates on resistance and counter-narratives in the field of art.

OBJECTIVES

The "Decolonial Atlas" project has as its main objective the development of an interactive map that identifies, analyzes, and presents artistic productions that address and resist the dynamics of digital colonialism. Through critical cartography, which deconstructs the idea of neutrality while considering socio-cultural contexts, the platform seeks to create a space for reflection and engagement for researchers, artists, and the general public, providing a broader understanding of the intersections between art, technology, and power.

The project aims to survey and map a diverse group of artists whose works problematize and challenge the structures of digital colonialism. To achieve this, rigorous curatorial criteria will be established for the selection of artists, taking into account aesthetic, political, narrative, and theoretical aspects. In addition to identifying and cataloging these productions, a critical and intertextual analysis of the selected works will be conducted, seeking to understand how each one reflects and confronts the dynamics of digital domination. This analysis will integrate perspectives from decolonial studies, digital criticism, and cultural studies, expanding the theoretical framework of the research and contributing to a deeper understanding of artistic manifestations in the digital context.

To ensure the dissemination of this knowledge, an interactive digital platform will be developed, bringing together the artistic productions and their respective critical analyses. This platform should allow for intuitive and accessible navigation, ensuring broad participation from academics, artists, and interested members of the public. Furthermore, the project seeks to stimulate academic and cultural debate on digital colonialism and new forms of resistance, using the platform as a dynamic space for the exchange of ideas. The project also aims to promote events, seminars, and publications that disseminate the

analyses and results obtained, encouraging ongoing discussion about art, technology, and power.

In addition to mapping and critical analysis, the project aims to document the curatorial process and the analyses conducted, consolidating a critical repository that can serve as a reference for future research. The construction of this database will enable interested researchers and artists to deepen their studies on digital colonialism and artistic resistance. In this way, the project's objectives are integrated, not only to map and analyze artistic production related to digital colonialism but also to foster a critical understanding of the persistence of colonial structures in the digital age and to encourage interdisciplinary debates on resistance and subversion in the fields of art and technology.

JUSTIFICATION

The relevance of the "Decolonial Atlas" project is anchored in the urgent need to critically examine the perpetuation of colonial dynamics in the digital environment. As information technologies become essential tools for contemporary life, the inequality in the production and circulation of knowledge becomes increasingly evident. Digital colonialism manifests itself through the control of technological infrastructures, data exploitation, and the marginalization of peripheral epistemologies—phenomena that demand new analytical approaches and practices of resistance. This project is justified, therefore, by the need to create a space that enables the mapping and critical analysis of artistic productions that challenge this hegemonic logic, expanding the debate on the intersections between art, technology, and power.

Digital technologies, often perceived as neutral tools, reproduce and intensify historical asymmetries of domination. Postcolonial studies, drawing on contributions from authors such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Walter Mignolo, demonstrate that the coloniality of power persists in the digital age through mechanisms of exclusion and control. The development of an interactive atlas that systematizes works and artistic discourses critical of digital colonialism enables the deconstruction of these dominant narratives while promoting the recognition and valorization of historically marginalized voices.

In a scenario of mass information production, access to critical knowledge becomes a fundamental challenge. The project addresses this issue by creating an interactive platform that democratizes access to content that problematizes digital colonialism. The georeferenced visualization of the works and their analyses facilitates connections between different theoretical perspectives and artistic practices, enabling a broad and integrated understanding of the phenomenon. As a result, the atlas not only documents but also provides a space for reflection and engagement, stimulating new forms of resistance and technological appropriation.

The intersection of art, technology, and curatorship constitutes a fundamental field of experimentation for the development of alternative narratives. By mapping and analyzing productions that question digital colonial structures, the project fosters an interdisciplinary dialogue between cultural studies, critical theory of technology, and contemporary artistic practices. This approach supports the construction of new epistemologies, expanding the possibilities for contesting the narrative monopolies imposed by large corporations and hegemonic states.

The valorization of cultural diversity and marginalized voices is one of the central pillars of the project. The Decolonial Atlas seeks not only to highlight artists and works that resist digital colonial structures but also to propose a reconfiguration of perspectives on the digital. By bringing together productions from historically subalternized contexts, the project challenges established canons and promotes a critical cartography that highlights disputes around knowledge and representation in the digital age.

Finally, the social impact of the project lies in the creation of an interactive space that enables a reflective and critical experience of the relationships between art, technology, and digital colonialism. In a context of increasing polarization and deepening digital inequalities, the atlas emerges as a tool for awareness and empowerment, offering users the means to understand and question the power dynamics that shape the contemporary digital space.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: CURATION AS A CRITICAL AND DECOLONIAL PROCESS

The methodology adopted in the "Decolonial Atlas" project is grounded in curation as a critical and decolonial research process, which goes beyond the selection of works, functioning as an epistemological device that organizes, interprets, and connects artistic productions to theoretical debates and social contexts. This method is based on the perspective that curation is a form of knowledge production and, therefore, capable of contributing to a broader discussion of the theme. The curatorial process is structured in interconnected stages that include research, selection, analysis, organization, and dissemination, always with the aim of challenging the hegemonic logics of digital colonialism and amplifying marginalized voices.

The first stage involves the research and mapping of artists and works that engage with digital colonialism. This phase includes a bibliographic and documentary review on digital colonialism, decolonization, and the critique of technology, as well as the exploration of digital archives, art festivals, and specialized publications. Interviews with curators, artists, and researchers will also be conducted to expand the database and identify emerging practices. Curatorial criteria are established based on thematic relevance, critical impact, geographical diversity, and cultural representation.

The second stage consists of the selection and critical analysis of the works. The curation employs content analysis methods to examine how each artistic production reflects or problematizes the structures of digital domination. This analysis is integrated into a theoretical framework composed of perspectives from postcolonial studies, digital criticism, and cultural studies, allowing for a deeper interpretation of the works. The organization of the productions into thematic axes strengthens the construction of a critical narrative about digital colonialism and its artistic counter-narratives.

The third stage involves the development of the interactive map, conceived as a dynamic visualization tool for the relationships between artists, their works, and the historical and political contexts in which they are situated. Information design is carefully considered to ensure accessibility and usability, utilizing technologies such as Google Maps API, Leaflet, or QGIS for georeferencing the works. The map's interactivity will allow the public to explore connections between artists, promoting multiple readings and interpretations of the mapped artistic practices.

Curation, as an epistemological device, seeks to make visible artistic practices critical of digital colonialism by establishing theoretical and critical connections between

these productions and concepts such as decolonization, creative resistance, and digital surveillance. Thus, the platform is configured as a space for political and cultural engagement, fostering debates on technological inequalities and their social implications. Dissemination and engagement constitute the fourth stage of the project, with the publication of the interactive map and the organization of academic and cultural events, such as webinars, virtual exhibitions, and workshops. Additionally, complementary materials, such as texts and videos, will be produced to deepen the analysis of the selected works and artists, encouraging ongoing discussion about art, technology, and digital colonialism.

Finally, the methodology includes a phase of evaluation and critical reflection, involving the collection of feedback from users and experts, the analysis of the project's impacts, and the documentation of the curatorial process. This record will serve as a reference for future research and initiatives seeking to expand the critical approach to digital colonialism and artistic resistance. In this way, the project proposes an innovative methodology in which curation not only selects works but also actively contributes to the construction of new epistemologies and forms of contestation in the digital environment.

CURATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA FOR ARTISTS

The curation of artists is a central element for the success of the project, as it defines the scope and depth of the narratives that will be presented in the interactive map. The selection of artists is not arbitrary but grounded in theoretical, aesthetic, and political criteria that align with the theme of digital colonialism. The selection follows guidelines that ensure the conceptual coherence of the project and the representativeness of the voices involved.

Theoretical foundation and contextualization are essential aspects in the selection of artists. Each chosen artist explicitly or implicitly presents a critical reflection on the dynamics of power, exploitation, and domination that are reproduced in the digital environment. The project seeks to highlight how the mechanisms of historical colonialism transform and manifest in contemporary practices and discourses, offering a critical reading of the relationships between technology, culture, and power. The selection of artists is supported by theoretical references from postcolonial and critical studies, integrating debates that address the intersection of art, politics, and technology in the digital environment.

In addition to theoretical grounding, the curation considers aesthetic and narrative criteria, prioritizing artists whose work is innovative and experimental. The project values works that challenge hegemonic narratives and promote new forms of representation through aesthetic experimentation, produced or disseminated through virtual platforms. The selected works must demonstrate significant narrative capacity, telling stories of resistance and denouncing the mechanisms of domination and strategies of subversion present in the digital context. Performances, installations, videos, and interactive works are prioritized, as they allow the audience to critically immerse themselves in the proposed debate.

Political relevance and social impact are determining factors in the selection of artists. Political engagement and critique are considered essential, with priority given to works that problematize power structures in digital society and propose reflective alternatives. The project also seeks to promote inclusion and diversity, ensuring the

representation of artists from different regions and historically marginalized communities. By including multiple perspectives, the project expands the debate on digital colonialism and its global implications.

The first stage of artist selection involves bibliographic and documentary research, including a survey of academic articles, art critiques, catalogs, and specialized publications. This initial mapping allows for the identification of artists already engaged in debates on digital colonialism and those presenting innovative approaches. When necessary, consultations and collaborations with other experts, including curators, researchers, and artists, are conducted to validate the relevance of the works and deepen the critical analysis. The selection undergoes a continuous process of feedback and revision, allowing adjustments to ensure the suitability of the choices in relation to the project's objectives.

Each artist included in the interactive map is accompanied by a detailed justification, highlighting their thematic relevance, transformative potential, and aesthetic and narrative impact. The goal is to build a critical cartography of the contemporary digital universe, presenting a broad panorama of artistic practices that resist the dynamics of digital colonialism.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

The "Decolonial Atlas" project is an innovative initiative whose contributions extend beyond strictly academic boundaries, unfolding into cultural and technological impacts. The proposal is grounded in the intersection of art, technology, and critical theory, promoting a dynamic and reflective mapping of artistic productions that question the hegemonic structures of digital colonialism. Therefore, the project aims to consolidate a tool for research and resistance, expanding debates and fostering new forms of critical engagement in the digital environment.

In the academic field, the project's primary contribution lies in expanding discussions on digital colonialism by incorporating contemporary artistic production as a fundamental vector of resistance and critical interpretation. The curatorial systematization of the works and their integration into an interactive map enable new connections between postcolonial studies, digital culture studies, and theories of art and technology. By providing a solid methodological and theoretical framework, the project establishes an empirical reference for future investigations, encouraging interdisciplinary approaches and fostering new research in fields such as digital humanities, visual studies, and technology critique.

From a cultural perspective, the project plays an essential role in valuing artists whose productions challenge the logics of exploitation and domination in the digital environment. By offering visibility to often marginalized discourses, the "Decolonial Atlas" contributes to the redefinition of artistic practices as forms of insurgency against algorithmic power and the epistemic monopoly of large technology corporations. The proposed curation does not limit itself to documenting these productions but integrates them into a critical framework that amplifies their impact, reshaping the perception of the role of art in contemporary society and highlighting its potential to question hegemonic discourses.

In technological terms, the design and development of an interactive map enable the experimentation of new models of representation and knowledge dissemination. The

project proposes an accessible and interactive digital interface that not only provides information about the artists and their works but also encourages active user participation in the construction of new connections and narratives. The adoption of digital accessibility practices broadens the project's reach, consolidating it as a dynamic and expandable platform capable of serving as a methodological reference for other initiatives aiming to combine technology, art, and critical activism.

In this way, the "Decolonial Atlas" stands as a significant contribution to contemporary critical thought while offering a practical tool for reflection and action. The project articulates curation, research, and technology in a manner that expands the boundaries of knowledge, creating an environment conducive to contestation and the redefinition of practices of production and dissemination of digital culture. By doing so, it fosters alternative strategies of resistance and critical interpretation of the dynamics of digital colonialism, encouraging counter-hegemonic approaches to its understanding.