

	Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems Issue 9, Vol. 8, 2025
	TITLE OF THE RESEARCH ARTICLE  Intercultural interactions and identity hybridization between Europe and the Maghreb in the digital age
Radhia Cherak	Dr. Lecturer Class A, Sodidlem Laboratory, Department of French Language and Literature, Institute of Letters and Languages, University Center of Barika, Barika, 05001 Algeria E-mail: radhia.cherak@cu-barika.dz
Nouhad Tigani	Dr. Lecturer Class A, Department of French Language and Literature, Institute of Letters and Languages, University Center of Barika, Amdoukal Road, Barika, 05001 Algeria E-mail: nouhad.tigani@cu-barika.dz
Radia Bellagoun	Dr. Lecturer Class A, Sodidlem Laboratory, Department of French Language and Literature, Institute of Letters and Languages, University Center of Barika, Amdoukal Road, Barika, 05001 Algeria E-mail : radia.bellagoun@cu-barika.dz
Issue web link	https://imcra-az.org/archive/383-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-9-vol-8-2025.html
Keywords	Digital age, intercultural interactions, sharing and exchange, identity hybridization, Europe and the Maghreb.
Abstract Cultural transfers between Europe and other countries of the world are not unilateral but fall within a dynamic of reciprocity, where each party influences and is influenced. This interaction leads to cultural hybridization, enriching identities and artistic expressions on each side. To explore cultural transfers and the reinvention of engagement between Europe and other countries of the world, it is essential to formulate problems that make it possible to approach this subject from different angles. It is a matter of identifying concrete examples of cultural transfers influenced by digital technologies, including various fields; then choosing cases from a specific region in order to have a global perspective. Cultural transfers between Europe and other countries of the world are not unilateral but fall within a dynamic of reciprocity, where each party influences and is influenced. This interaction leads to cultural hybridization, enriching identities and artistic expressions on each side. We must note that the cultural relations between Europe and the Maghreb, rooted in a millennial history of exchanges, confrontations and mutual influences, have experienced since the advent of the digital age a profound and multidimensional transformation	
Citation. Radhia C; Nouhad T; Radia B. (2025). Intercultural interactions and identity hybridization between Europe and the Maghreb in the digital age. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i>, 8(9), 1294–1302. https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/8.9.106	

Licensed

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems (SEI) by IMCRA - International Meetings and Journals Research Association (Azerbaijan). This is an open access article under the **CC BY** license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Received: 26.04.2025

Accepted: 27.08.2025

Publishing time: 10.10.2025

Introduction: This evolution is part of a context of accelerated globalization, where information and communication technologies are redrawing the contours of cross-border cultural interactions. Historically speaking, Euro-Maghreb cultural exchanges have been shaped by complex dynamics, combining periods of colonial domination, migratory movements and diplomatic initiatives. As Benjamin Stora (2018) points out in his book *La guerre des mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial*, these relations have long been marked by asymmetries and memorial tensions. However, the emergence of digital technologies has introduced new paradigms into this historical configuration. The advent of digital technologies has profoundly transformed cultural dynamics and modes of communication on a global scale. In this context, relations between Europe and the Maghreb are no exception, continually redefining themselves under the influence of new means of sharing and exchange offered by digital technology. In particular, social networks play a central role in bringing cultures together, facilitating an unprecedented circulation of ideas, works of art, and cultural practices between these two regions.

The Maghreb, composed of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania, occupies a strategic and historical position as a crossroads between Africa and Europe. This region, rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, shares with Europe deep historical ties, marked by commercial exchanges, migratory flows and reciprocal cultural influences. In the digital age, these ties are amplified and made more complex by the increasing use of digital platforms. According to a study from the Hootsuite Digital Report 2023, North Africa records one of the fastest growth rates in social network penetration, with a strong presence of young users who adopt these technologies for the expression of their identities and the promotion of their cultures.

I. Problematic

This new dynamic also raises complex issues. On the one hand, cultural transfers facilitated by digital technologies can lead to a redefinition of identities, where the local and the global intertwine in an unprecedented but sometimes conflictual way. On the other hand, social networks, while democratizing access to culture, can also reinforce stereotypes or simplistic representations of Maghreb cultures.

It is essential to formulate issues that make it possible to approach this subject from different angles, namely: How do digital technologies, particularly social networks, facilitate cultural transfers and the engagement of artists between Europe and the Maghreb, and what are their impacts on artistic and cultural creation on both sides of the Mediterranean?

II. Hypothesis

Our questions are situated in a context marked by a redefinition of cultural relations between the two regions, where artists, creators and activists use digital platforms to disseminate content, engage in cross-border dialogues, and navigate complex identity issues. Thus, the hypothesis we formulate is based on the idea that digital technologies, and in particular social networks, as privileged spaces for sharing and interaction, play a central role in redefining artistic practices between Europe and the Maghreb, by facilitating not only accelerated cultural transfers, but also by creating a new space of engagement for artists, where the boundaries between

creation, activism and transnational collaboration become increasingly blurred but also allowing European artists and creators to reach Maghreb audiences, thus promoting a reciprocal enrichment of cultural practices. This dynamic contributes to a redefinition of the modes of artistic engagement on both sides of the Mediterranean, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries while highlighting a diversity of representations that nourish a renewed intercultural dialogue.

III. Objectives

The objectives of this article are to understand how social networks promote these reciprocal cultural exchanges and to analyze the impacts of these interactions on artistic creation processes in the two regions. On the one hand, it will be a question of examining how Maghreb artists and collectives use social networks to engage in dialogues with European audiences and how this influences their artistic production and their practices of societal engagement. On the other hand, the study will also explore how European creators exploit these same platforms to interact with Maghreb audiences, and how these interactions contribute to a dynamic of intercultural inspiration and exchange.

IV. Role of social networks in cultural exchanges

Social networks, where users interact, play a central role in redefining contemporary cultural exchanges by offering digital spaces that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube or even TikTok, act not only as vectors for disseminating cultural content, but also as catalysts for intercultural interactions and dialogues. By enabling an almost instantaneous and accessible dissemination of artistic creations and cultural productions, social networks disrupt traditional paradigms of cultural transmission, while opening up new perspectives for engagement and co-creation between artists and audiences from different regions of the world.

From a theoretical point of view, social networks fall within a logic of digital globalization which reconfigures the modalities of cultural production and reception. They promote the emergence of what some researchers call the “third space” where cultural identities can be negotiated, hybridized and reconstructed through virtual interactions.

In the context of exchanges between Europe and the Maghreb, these platforms allow a bidirectional circulation of works and ideas, offering creators from both regions the opportunity to dialogue, to mutually influence each other and to appropriate cultural elements from the other shore of the Mediterranean.

On a practical level, Maghreb artists and creators use social networks to disseminate their works and engage in discussions with European audiences, often with logic of visibility and international recognition. For example, Algerian artists share videos, or visual works that question cultural stereotypes, address social or political themes, and invite collective reflection. This digital dissemination makes it possible to bypass traditional institutional channels, often restrictive, and also makes it possible to directly reach diversified audiences, thus contributing to a decentralization of artistic production and a pluralization of voices in the public space. Social networks appear as hybrid spaces where complex negotiations around cultural identities and representations take place. They allow the reconfiguration of the modalities of artistic engagement, offering creators new possibilities to challenge and mobilize diverse audiences beyond national borders.

V. Transformation of cultural practices

The rise of digital technologies and social networks has profoundly transformed cultural practices on a global scale, impacting both the production and the consumption of artistic works. In the context of cultural exchanges between Europe and the Maghreb, this transformation is manifested by significant changes in the modes of creation, dissemination and reception of cultural content. Social networks, as platforms for sharing and communication, have reconfigured the traditional dynamics of the cultural scene, promoting the emergence of new practices that redefine the contours of artistic and societal engagement. One of the major transformations concerns the democratization of access to tools of creation and dissemination. Maghreb artists, like their European counterparts, now benefit from accessible platforms that allow them to produce and share their works without going through traditional institutional circuits often perceived as elitist or restrictive. This democratization has allowed the emergence of new and diverse voices, particularly young creators who use social networks to bypass financial, geographical or political barriers. Thus, cultural practices become more inclusive, giving voice to artists from varied backgrounds and often marginalized in traditional cultural spaces.

Social networks have allowed the development of new forms of artistic engagement, where creators no longer content themselves with producing works for a passive audience, but use them as vectors of social and political mobilization. Cultural practices then become acts of engagement, forms of militant expression that fall within specific socio-political contexts. For example, artists from the Maghreb use Instagram or YouTube to raise awareness on issues such as freedom of expression, women's rights or social justice, thus creating works that go beyond aesthetics to embrace civic and ethical dimensions.

However, these transformations are not without challenges: the overabundance of content on social networks can dilute the attention given to individual works, while the algorithmic logics of platforms often favor content that generates the most instant engagement, to the detriment of more reflective or protest works. Moreover, the speed and transience of digital exchanges raise questions about the sustainability and long-term impact of cultural practices in this environment. Artists must navigate these new realities, balancing the search for visibility and audience with artistic integrity and societal engagement.

Ultimately, the transformation of cultural practices under the influence of social networks and digital technologies illustrates a cultural landscape in full mutation, characterized by increased fluidity and adaptability. These new practices offer unique opportunities to rethink artistic engagement and to renew cultural exchanges between Europe and the Maghreb.

VI. Work Methodology: Analysis of Artistic and Cultural Engagement through Social Networks between Europe and the Maghreb

To achieve our objectives, our article will adopt a mixed methodology, combining a qualitative analysis of content shared on social networks with real case studies and testimonies from artists and collectives from both regions. Concrete examples of engagement and artistic creation on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and YouTube will be analyzed, highlighting interactions and reciprocal influences.

Artistic and cultural engagement in the digital age must be analyzed in the context of local socio-political struggles, where artists and activists use social networks to engage on issues of human rights, social justice, and democracy. For example, the "Hirak" movement in Algeria has demonstrated how social networks can become

powerful tools for citizen mobilization and the dissemination of protest messages. Artists and activists use these platforms not only to raise awareness and mobilize, but also to create alternative spaces of expression.

V.1. Case Study: The Impact of Hirak on Digital Artistic Engagement in Algeria

One of the most emblematic examples of how Maghreb artists use social networks to engage politically is the Hirak movement in Algeria. Presentation of a real case of an artist or collective using social networks for societal causes, such as the Hirak movement or other artistic initiatives having a notable impact.

The Hirak movement in Algeria, which began in February 2019, is an excellent example of how social networks played a central role in citizen mobilization, the dissemination of protest messages, and the creation of alternative spaces of expression. In a context where traditional media were often controlled or limited by the government, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube became essential channels for organizing and expressing the people's demands.

Hirak began with peaceful demonstrations against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's decision to seek a fifth term. Calls to demonstrate were widely disseminated via Facebook and Twitter, allowing a wide audience, including the Algerian diaspora, to coordinate. Videos of demonstrations, often shot with smartphones, were quickly shared online, giving the movement international visibility.

Algerian artists, whether painters, musicians or poets, used social networks to engage in the movement, not only by participating in demonstrations, but also by producing works that capture the spirit of Hirak. These creations quickly circulated online, reinforcing the visibility and emotional impact of the protests. This digital engagement of the Algerian diaspora in France creates a direct connection between the two regions. Demonstrations in support of Hirak organized in Paris, Marseille, and other European cities are often documented on social networks and relayed by Algerian activists.

“We are the flood”: Algerian artists lend their voices to the protest movement. In the country or in exile, artists created a powerful work reflecting a historic period in the history of Algeria. “After six weeks of peaceful protests in Algeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned, thus responding to the protesters' first demand.” Artists, men and women, also protest against the system and for their country through their art. *Middle East Eye* profiles seven artists and their works, which reveal the current state of mind in Algeria.

Many who have protested since February 22 repeated the lyrics of popular hymns such as *Liberté* by Soolking, where “there is a work on the language: rhymes, mixing of languages (Algerian Arabic, French, Tamazight) and language levels to make the youth's demands heard.” (Karima Ait-Dahmane, 2019: 162). Committed artists, men and women, also protest against the system and for their country through their art to make their voices heard and defend their cause. Indeed, “the Algerians invented two verbs ‘Vendredire’ in Algeria and ‘Dimancher’ in European capitals.” (Karima Ait-Dahmane, 2019: 23).

“Freedom, freedom, freedom, it is first in our hearts.” These words are tagged on the country's walls and shouted in unison during demonstrations, reflecting energetic national unity. They are taken from *Liberté*, a song by Algerian rapper Soolking where “there is a space reserved for artistic creation, for the incredible genius that links intelligence to humor and creativity to engagement.” (Karima Ait-Dahmane, 2019: 152). Published on YouTube on March 14, it has been viewed more than 44 million times. The song became so popular with a predominantly young population that it is considered an anthem of the revolution. Soolking (29 years old) was

already famous in Algeria when he immortalized with his music and gentle lyrics the pacifist spirit of a movement that was widely praised for its pacifism and its ability to avoid violence.

A young woman in a hoodie makes a call on a graffiti-covered public phone in a dark corridor in the middle of the city. This is how the video clip *Allô le système* begins, the striking and direct protest song by Raja Meziane (30 years old). “This idea of calling the system haunts me,” the artist said in a phone interview with *MEE* from Prague, where she now lives: “I always wonder why our people cannot express themselves.” In her clip, viewed more than 16 million times, she calls the system – which she describes as “a gang of crooks” – from a public phone, but no one answers. Her lyrics are powerful: “You buried us alive and left the dead in power,” and her chorus echoes the people’s demands: “We want a republic, a people’s democracy, not a monarchy.” Known for her political commitment, she wanted to support Algerians with her “cry of anger” in music rather than with a speech. “With a song, there is an artistic work that captures attention. It gives people chills.”

A dancer performs an arabesque in the middle of a demonstration in the streets of Algiers; this photo quickly went viral and was shared by millions of people. *Poetic Protest* is a performance by dancer and model Melissa Ziad, immortalized by photographer Rania G. Taken on March 1, the photo touched many people around the world through the grace of movement, the implicit idea of youth and women’s emancipation, and the people’s confidence in their victory: “*Poetic Protest symbolizes for me poetry, freedom and lightness, in the image of this tall upright posture,*” the photographer told *MEE*. “Because I hope this protest movement will lift us all up.”

Due to a recent intervention, Mounia Lazali (Mya, 42 years old), a professional painter based in Algiers, is unable to march with everyone during the usual Friday demonstrations. Instead, she does what she always does to express herself: she paints. “I wanted to paint this popular energy,” she said in a phone interview. “So when you look at the painting, you feel what it’s like to be in the street.” Her first painting is entitled #silMYA “pacifism” because this word became a slogan and a hashtag of the revolution. It is also a nod to her artist name. Lazali painted two other works during the same period and shared them on social networks. Although already reserved by private collectors, what moved her most was the people’s reaction. “They said they recognized themselves in my paintings, that is really rewarding,” said the artist, who defines the artist as the messenger of the people who “condenses emotions, channels them into beauty and creation, to participate in the writing of history.”

Houari Bouchenak (37 years old), based in Tlemcen, in northwestern Algeria, never misses a demonstration. With his camera, he captures faces, emotions, and the crowd’s energy. “It’s as if our history had always been hidden or distorted,” he said in a phone interview. “So it is a way of leaving traces and protesting through photography.” His images capture something ephemeral in this period of unpredictable change in the country, as illustrated by the metaphorical power of the photo above: “There is the flag, the light, but we cannot see entirely and the silhouettes of people are not yet in the light. For me, this represents the people’s optimism in this moment and the blurry transition period we are going through and have not yet emerged from.”

When Saâd Benkhelif saw people marching while holding his drawing in the streets, it warmed the heart of the satirical cartoonist: “That means the message got through,” said the 37-year-old, who works for the independent daily *El Watan*. Like many, he was outraged by Bouteflika’s candidacy for a 5th term. Drawing was for him a visceral and militant need. “It’s as if my pen, my sheet of paper were calling me,” he told *MEE* by phone. He

wants to make people think through the incisive satire and analysis that only a cartoon can offer. “A picture is worth a thousand words,” he recalled.

Recent films such as *Les bien heureux* (2017) by Sofia Djama or *En attendant les Hirondelles* (2017) by Karim Moussaoui give insight into the sorrows, traumas and hopes of Algeria. “In my film, I evoked the difficulty of moving on,” Moussaoui (43 years old) said in a phone interview. “To move towards an inner revolution so that it materializes in a global revolution.” This is what is currently happening in Algeria.

Nassima Guessoum uses documentary to explore social themes in Algeria, particularly women’s rights and collective memory. Her film *10949 femmes* was widely disseminated and discussed on social networks, attracting international attention to the issue of women’s emancipation in Algeria.

Kenza Farah is an artist who uses her music to celebrate Algerian culture and themes of emancipation and hope. On her social platforms, she shares positive messages about Algeria and highlights the country’s talents and cultural richness.

V.2. Examples of Engaged European Artists who Defend African Causes and are Active on Social Networks

Yann Arthus-Bertrand (France), photographer and filmmaker, is committed to raising awareness of environmental and social issues through works such as *Home* and *Human*. He highlights the challenges faced by African countries, particularly climate change and poverty. He uses his social networks to promote his documentaries and photographs, while raising awareness of these causes.

Rena Effendi (Azerbaijan/United Kingdom) is a photographer who has documented many causes in Africa, such as the preservation of indigenous cultures and the impacts of pollution on local communities. She is active on Instagram, where she shares powerful visual stories on Africa’s challenges and resilience.

Stéphane de Freitas (France), filmmaker and artist, is known for his documentary *À Voix Haute* and for projects that encourage youth expression and empowerment. He has collaborated with African organizations to support education and social inclusion, and he uses his social networks to share these initiatives and raise awareness of the importance of personal and collective expression.

Vivienne Westwood (United Kingdom), stylist, activist. Although a stylist, she is also a staunch advocate for human and environmental rights. She has supported campaigns against climate change, which severely affects African countries, and has used her platform to promote initiatives related to social justice in Africa. Her messages of engagement are often disseminated via her social networks.

V.3. Transnational Collaboration: An Artistic Dialogue between France and the Maghreb

Another striking example is the collaboration between French and Maghreb artists via platforms such as YouTube and Facebook Live. In 2020, during the virtual exhibition *Voix Libres: Art et Politique*, organized by French artists in support of Hirak, artists such as Rachid Koraïchi and French graphic designers shared works in real time, generating critical discussions on the links between art and politics.

A mural jointly created by a collective of Algerian and French artists, shared on Instagram and accompanied by a Facebook live, where the artists explained their approaches in real time. This collaboration generated numerous interactions and comments from viewers in France and Algeria, illustrating cultural hybridization through digital art. An artist from the collective noted during an interview: “The digital allows us to work together despite the distance. Our works now carry the influences of both sides of the Mediterranean. The

visual motifs of traditional Algerian arts merge with contemporary aesthetics from Parisian Street art.” This demonstrates an artistic co-construction made possible by digital tools.

This kind of initiative demonstrates how digital technologies facilitate not only the circulation of ideas but also transnational artistic creations. The works produced often address shared themes, such as freedom, identity, and revolt, while reflecting the aesthetic influences of the two regions. Moreover, French artists influenced by Algerian protest movements created visual and musical works integrating elements of the Hirak, showing a form of solidarity and mutual inspiration.

French artists such as JR, known for his socially engaged visual installations, expressed their support for the Hirak on Instagram and Twitter. Through visual projects depicting protest scenes or portraits of Algerian demonstrators, JR and others not only documented the movement but also contributed to drawing international, particularly European, attention. In return, this inspired Algerian artists to use similar forms of expression, such as street art and photography, to give a visual voice to the movement.

The engagement of Algerian artists on social networks has also fostered the creation of cultural bridges between Europe and the Maghreb. Digital platforms allow for smoother collaborations, where artists on both sides can exchange ideas, organize online events, or work on joint projects.

In Europe, activists in France, Spain, and elsewhere observed how the Algerian people mobilized peacefully to demand reforms without descending into violence. This movement strengthened faith in the power of citizen mobilization to demand democracy. Similarities were observed in movements in Latin America (such as in Chile or Colombia), where citizens demanded political and economic reforms.

Although France did not officially support the Hirak movement, it took into account potential repercussions, notably concerning immigration and refugee flows, which influenced certain political discussions in Europe. The Hirak highlighted the fight against corruption and autocratic regimes, a message that resonated in other regions. In Eastern Europe, for example, similar protests against corruption (such as in Romania or Bulgaria) saw in the Hirak a source of inspiration to maintain constant pressure on political elites.

Conclusion

The engagement of artists through digital means, within the framework of the Hirak, is part of a process of dynamic cultural exchanges between Algeria and Europe, particularly France. Social networks allow artists on both sides to collaborate, mutually influence each other, and create works that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. These interactions promote a hybridization of discourses and aesthetics while amplifying social movements on an international scale.

Digital technologies not only transform art as a form of expression, but they also redefine the way artists from the Maghreb and Europe interact with their audience. Thanks to these tools, artists are no longer limited to creating works to be contemplated, but seek to actively involve the spectator in discussions on contemporary social and political issues.

This phenomenon fosters an unprecedented collective participation, where everyone, whether artist or spectator, becomes an engaged actor in the artistic process and the debates it raises. By transcending geographical and cultural boundaries, works disseminated online make it possible to create spaces for dialogue where individuals feel concerned and mobilized around shared values. Digital art thus becomes a lever to promote social action, transforming spectators into active participants in humanitarian or political causes. This

dynamic shows that digital art, beyond being a simple aesthetic expression, is also a powerful catalyst for transnational discussions and actions, strengthening collective engagement across cultures and territories.

Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The study was carried out using the authors' own academic resources.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The authors maintain full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this research.

Bibliography

1. Ait Dahmane, K. (2019). *Vendredire en Algérie: Humour, chants et engagement*. Barzakh.
2. Appadurai, A. (2013). *The future as cultural fact: Essays on the global condition*. Verso.
3. Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford University Press.
4. Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
5. García Canclini, N. (2010). *Cultures hybrides: Stratégies pour entrer et sortir de la modernité* (P. Le Bris, Trans.). Presses de l'Université Laval. (Original work published 1990)
6. Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York University Press.
7. Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. Penguin Press.