

Shifting Resources: Mixed-Media Printmaking Reflecting the Migration of Natural and Cultural Resources in the Age of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were (1) to study the concept of the cross-border movement of natural and cultural resources in the age of globalization, and (2) to create a mixed-media print combining woodcut print with the collage of print fragments. The work employs cartographic aesthetics as a visual strategy for giving concrete form to the networks through which materials, products, knowledge, and cultural heritage move. The black surface with rough traces represents landscapes interfered with by human activity; the overlapping white linear structure represents networks of trade routes and systems of cultural transmission; the green collaged fragments represent the directional flow of resources; and the red accents represent points of conflict and loss during transit. The results show that the integration of printing techniques with collage produces fragmented and overlapping levels of surface, reflecting the paradox of contemporary societies that seek to preserve cultural identities while the foundations of those identities are constantly being displaced. The work passed an evaluation by five external experts, received a rating of A (Very Good), and was exhibited at The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop and Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026).

Keywords: Mixed Media Prints, Resource Mobility, Globalization, Cartographic Aesthetics

Introduction

In the age of globalization, the movement of resources across borders is more continuous and intense than in any previous era in history (Steger, 2023). Resources here refer not only to natural resources, such as minerals, timber, or agricultural products transported along international trade routes, but also to cultural resources, namely knowledge, wisdom, craftsmanship, and artistic practices that move together with people, capital systems, and communication technologies. Such movement produces a two-sided effect: on one side, cross-cultural exchange and innovation; on the other, the modification of local identities and the destabilization of the communities that were once the sources of those resources (Kiarie, 2024). The central paradox of contemporary society therefore lies in its effort to preserve cultural identity while the very foundations of that identity, whether natural materials, traditional knowledge, or artistic practices, are constantly being moved and transformed (Hiswara et al., 2023).

The creator, as an artist who has worked continuously on environmental issues and the changing urban landscape, has observed this phenomenon of resource mobility through first-hand experience of participating in artist exchange programs and international exhibitions. These experiences made visible the flows of materials, concepts, and methods of art-making across borders, as well as the traces of loss that occur along the way, and led to the central question of this project: how can this invisible network of movement be given concrete form in the visual arts?

“Shifting Resources” was created in response to this question, using cartographic aesthetics as the principal strategy for representing such networks. Mapping has become a significant visual paradigm in modern and contemporary art because the cartographic model possesses the power to constitute multiple worldviews characteristic of the contemporary condition (Moro, 2021). The visual structure of the work, consisting of white lines woven across a black surface, recalls a city plan or a map of transportation routes seen from a bird’s-eye view, while the mixed-media printing technique, which combines printing with the collage of green and red print fragments, opens up fragmented, overlapping, and incomplete surfaces that correspond to the content of the work concerning movement, transformation, and loss. This article therefore presents the concept, process, and results of the creation of this work as a case study in the use of visual language to reflect on a phenomenon of the contemporary world. The work was selected for exhibition at The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop and Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026).

Research objectives

1. To study the concept of the cross-border movement of natural and cultural resources in the age of globalization.
2. To create a mixed-media print combining woodcut print with the collage of print fragments.

Scope of Research

This creative research studies the concept of cross-border resource movement in the age of globalization by limiting its interpretation to two dimensions: the dimension of natural resources, which move through international trade and transportation systems, and the dimension of cultural resources, namely knowledge, wisdom, and artistic practices, which move together with people and capital systems. The study does not cover statistical analysis or international trade economics; rather, it interprets the phenomenon through the artist’s perspective in order to create visual representations. In terms of form and technique, the scope is defined as the creation of one mixed-media print, measuring 56 x 76 centimeters, in which a white linear structure is created on a black surface using woodblock printing, combined with the collage of green and red print fragments on paper, in an abstract style that relies on cartographic aesthetics as the principal compositional strategy. In terms of dissemination, the work was created for and exhibited at The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop and Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026), held during March 8-11, 2026.

Literature Review

Appadurai's Global Cultural Flow

Arjun Appadurai, an anthropologist of cultural globalization, proposed in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* that globalization is not merely an economic phenomenon but a system of flows that move constantly across borders in five dimensions: ethnoscap, technoscap, finanscap, mediascap, and ideoscap (Appadurai, 1996). These five flows do not move in the same direction or in harmony with one another; they travel at different speeds and along different paths, producing disjunctures between them. Appadurai’s key point is that when a cultural resource moves away from its place of origin, a condition known as deterritorialization, the meanings and identities tied to that resource are always reinterpreted and reconstructed in the destination context. Subsequent scholarship in mobility studies has reinforced this view, treating the movement of people, objects, and meanings as a defining condition of contemporary life rather than an exception to it (Cresswell, 2021; Sheller, 2021), while recent research on cultural identity confirms that identities are continually performed and renegotiated as cultural materials circulate into new contexts (Condemayta Soto et al., 2023). In the visual arts specifically, this condition has reshaped the global art field itself, expanding the circulation of artists and works well beyond their points of origin (Buchholz, 2022).

This concept is the conceptual cornerstone of “Shifting Resources” on two levels. The first is the level of imagery: the densely interwoven paths without a single center correspond to the character of the five flows moving simultaneously but without unified order, while the red accents, which represent conflict and loss during movement, are comparable to the disjunctures that Appadurai identifies when flows of different dimensions collide. The second is the level of process: collaging printed fragments from one work into a new work materially enacts deterritorialization, in that the green and red fragments are removed from their original context and given new meanings in new positions, just as cultural resources change in meaning when they move across borders.

Related Artists

Julie Mehretu (b. 1970), an Ethiopian-American artist, is a leading figure in the use of cartographic aesthetics to reflect on globalization. Her large-scale paintings and drawings, such as *Stadia* (2004) and *Mogamma* (2012), are built from layered architectural plans, city maps, transportation routes, and abstract marks, creating images of dense and dynamic networks. Her practice examines how forces such as migration, capitalism, and power flow across borders and shape contemporary lives, structures that are invisible to the naked eye yet determine lived experience (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2021). Her work has accordingly been discussed as a map of the world system compressed onto a single pictorial plane (Moro, 2021).

“Shifting Resources” shares common ground with Mehretu’s approach in its use of interwoven linear structures to represent cross-border networks of movement, and in its reliance on a view from above, akin to map reading, to reveal hidden systems. The present work differs, however, in its process. Mehretu builds her layers through drawing and painting on canvas, whereas the creator chose the printmaking process, which carries the implication of transferring traces from the block to the paper, combined with the collage of actual printed fragments, so that the movement of material becomes tangible within the process itself, not only at the level of the image. This concern with rendering transnational networks visible also resonates with the way maps have been used to chart the globalized geographies of contemporary art exhibitions (Zarobell, 2022).



Figure 1. Installation view of Julie Mehretu’s *Mogamma* (A Painting in Four Parts), 2012, at Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany. (Photo © Haupt & Binder)

Source: <https://burnaway.org/magazine/julie-mehretu-contemporary-sublime/>

Research methodology

The creation of “Shifting Resources” was conducted as practice-based research, in which knowledge is generated through and embodied in the creative process itself (Leavy, 2020; Vear, 2022). The first stage was the study and collection of data: documentary research on the concept of globalization and cross-border resource movement, in both its natural and cultural dimensions, together with the study of artworks that use cartographic aesthetics as a creative strategy. Data were also gathered from the creator’s first-hand experiences of participating in artist exchange programs and international

exhibitions, which served as an empirical source on the circulation of materials, knowledge, and artistic practices across cultures. The data were then analyzed and synthesized into the main concept of the work, defined through three key themes: the invisible networks of movement, the landscape interfered with by human activity, and the paradox between preservation and movement. A visual symbol system was then established in accordance with these themes: the black surface representing the landscape, the white lines representing networks of routes, green representing the directional flow of resources, and red representing points of conflict and loss.

Once the conceptual framework and symbol system had been established, the creator produced sketches to experiment with compositions based on cartographic aesthetics, determining the rhythm of the interweaving linear structure, the positions of the collaged fragments, and the weight relationship between the black areas and the white space, so that the overall image would convey a dense and dynamic network. The actual work, measuring 56 x 76 centimeters, was then created. The process began with the preparation of the woodblock, carved so that the network of lines would remain as the unprinted white structure of the composition. The black surface structure was then printed onto the paper, with the traces and blurring that occur naturally in the printing process retained as part of the expression. The final stage was the collage of green and red print fragments, cut into geometric shapes, circles, and bands, onto predetermined positions to create focal points and directions of movement within the image, an approach consistent with the renewed prominence of collage as a language of fragmentation and juxtaposition in contemporary art (Phaidon Editors, 2023). The completed work was then disseminated to the public at The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop and Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026), and the knowledge gained from the creative process was compiled into this academic article.



Figure 2. Shifting Resources, 2026, woodcut with the collage of print fragments, 56 x 76 cm.
Source: Pasutt Kanrattanasutra



Figure 3. The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop & Exhibition 2026(RSSICAW 2026), scheduled during March 8–11, 2026
Source: <https://fa.rmutt.ac.th/rss-icawe/>



Figure 4. Shifting Resources has been selected for publication in the RSSICAW 2026 Program Book submitted to participate in The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop & Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026), scheduled during March 8–11, 2026
Source: <https://fa.rmUTT.ac.th/rss-icawe/>

Findings

The results of the creation of "Shifting Resources" are presented in accordance with the two research objectives as follows.

1. Results of the Study on the Cross-Border Movement of Natural and Cultural Resources in the Age of Globalization

The study found that the movement of resources across borders in the age of globalization occurs simultaneously in two categories. The first is natural resources, which move through international trade and transportation systems. The second is cultural resources, namely knowledge, wisdom, and artistic practices, which move along with people, capital systems, and networks of artistic exchange. This movement produces a significant paradox: while societies strive to preserve their cultural identities, the very foundations of those identities, whether natural materials, traditional knowledge, or artistic practices, are continuously displaced and transformed. This finding is consistent with Appadurai's (1996) concept of global cultural flows, in which resources that move away from their place of origin are always reinterpreted and reconstructed in new contexts, and with the international policy perspective that regards cultural resources as a global public good whose circulation must be carefully governed (UNESCO, 2022). The study results were synthesized into three key themes for the creative process, namely the invisible networks of movement, the landscape interfered with by human activity, and the paradox between rootedness and mobility. These themes were then translated into a systematic visual symbol system: the black surface representing the landscape, the white lines representing networks of routes, green representing the directional flow of resources, and red representing points of conflict and loss. The study thus provided a clear conceptual framework that guided every subsequent stage of the creation.

2. Results of the Creation of the Mixed-Media Print

The completed work is a mixed-media print measuring 56 x 76 centimeters, combining woodblock printing techniques with the collage of print fragments, which conveys the networks of resource migration through cartographic aesthetics in accordance with the objective. Each visual element performs a specific communicative function. The black surface, with its rough and blurred traces arising naturally from the printing process, represents landscapes that have been interfered with and altered by human activity. The white linear structure interweaving across the entire composition recalls a city plan or transportation network viewed from above, representing the infrastructure of trade routes and systems of cultural transmission. The green collaged fragments, cut into arrow-like and geometric shapes,

indicate the directional flow of resources, while the red accents embedded within the collaged pieces signify points of conflict and loss that occur during transit.

In terms of technique, the integration of the woodblock printing process with collage produces two distinct levels of surface: the surface of the print itself, which is blurred and unified with the paper, and the surface of the collaged fragments, which rise above the picture plane and contrast sharply in color with the black-and-white structure. This difference creates a visual rhythm that leads the viewer's eye in continuous movement across the composition, corresponding to the content of the work concerning ceaseless migration. Furthermore, the fragmented and overlapping condition of the pictorial plane reflects the state of contemporary society, which must negotiate between maintaining local roots and engaging in global mobility. The quality of the work was affirmed through its selection for The 16th International Creative Arts Workshop and Exhibition 2026 (RSSICAW 2026), where it passed an evaluation by five experts from external institutions and received a rating of A (Very Good), together with publication in the online program book of the exhibition.

Conclusions and Discussion

The creation of "Shifting Resources" achieved both research objectives. The study of cross-border resource movement in the age of globalization provided a clear conceptual framework, synthesized into three key themes: the invisible networks of movement, the landscape interfered with by human activity, and the paradox between rootedness and mobility. These themes were successfully translated into a mixed-media print combining woodblock printing with collage, in which cartographic aesthetics transformed abstract networks of resource migration into a concrete visual experience. The integration of printing and collage created fragmented, overlapping surfaces that embody the central paradox of contemporary society: the effort to preserve cultural identities whose foundations are continuously displaced. The work was evaluated at the level of A (Very Good) by five external experts and exhibited at RSSICAW 2026, confirming its achievement in both creative quality and the dissemination of knowledge. Future work may extend this approach into a series exploring resource movement in specific regional contexts, or into participatory processes in which audiences contribute collage fragments, allowing the migration of materials and meanings to occur within the creative process itself.

The results of this creative research raise three points of discussion.

First, cartographic aesthetics proved highly effective for representing globalization. The view from above allows viewers to perceive entire networks of interwoven routes at a single glance, transforming abstract systemic concepts into tangible visual experience. This is consistent with the practice of Julie Mehretu (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2021) and with the broader recognition in the cartographic humanities that the map is a powerful cultural form for thinking through contemporary spatial conditions (Moro, 2021; Rossetto & Lo Presti, 2024), here realized through printmaking rather than painting.

Second, the correspondence between technique and content was decisive. Printing, by nature a transfer of images from block to paper, parallels the content of migration; what appears at the destination is never identical to the origin, echoing Appadurai's (1996) concept of deterritorialization. The collage of print fragments extends this further, as material migration actually occurs within the creative process itself rather than being merely represented, a form of knowledge specific to creative practice (Phillips, 2022).

Third, the work affirms the artist's role as a questioner rather than a provider of answers. It offers no judgment on whether resource movement is beneficial or harmful, but opens space for viewers to contemplate the paradox between preservation and transformation. The creator's first-hand experience within international artist exchange networks lends the work an insider's perspective and strengthens its communicative power. In this respect the work exemplifies how arts-based inquiry can generate and communicate knowledge that complements more conventional discursive forms (Archibald, 2022; Nathan et al., 2023).

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