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## A Curated Showcase of Curatorial Visions



*Matadero Madrid's display at ICI's TEMP Curatorial Hub (All photos by author)*

As the art world expands and significance is given not just to the act of creating art but also the structural art world around it — dealers dealing, curators curating, and directors directing — it's more than possible to have an exhibition that's not really about the art at all. Such is the case at Independent Curators International's new [presentation at TEMP](#), a pop-up space in a generous ground floor loft just off Manhattan's Canal Street.

TEMP, the brainchild of two recent NYU grads with access to some prime real estate, kicked off its programming with a middling presentation of young artists that [erred on the hipster side](#) — provocative portraits of the city's partying youth,

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performative video self portraits, and haphazard painting installations sprinkled with a few more effective artistic evocations of emerging digital culture. The ICI exhibition, an extension of the “curatorial hub” based at their nearby office, conversely goes for a drier, more intellectual angle. The nonprofit chose a selection of four international alternative art spaces, each with its own provocative programming style, and gave them discrete sections of the space to represent their work. It’s a curated showcase of curatorial prowess.



*Raw Material Company's bookshelf at TEMP*

That might make the exhibition sound boring or insular, but, for the most part, it isn't. Kind of like a miniature version of the Venice or Gwangju biennale, the TEMP show is an elegant way to get a quick glimpse into the local artistic communities of a few disparate spots around the globe, in this case Spain's Matadero Madrid, Vilnius, Lithuania's Contemporary Art Center, Hong Kong's Videotage, and Dakar, Senegal's Raw Material Company.

ICI highlights not artwork per se, but instead the difficult and valuable labor of growing lasting institutions, creative communities, and records of artists and their work. Though the figure of the curator might be overvalued in the art world at

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present, TEMP reminds us that it's not all about Hans Ulrich Obrist's latest signature galavant. It's ongoing, omnipresent process that collaboratively shapes how we perceive and participate in the art world.

The gallery is divided into four sections with four distinct displays that adopt the minimalist, semiotic visual tropes of contemporary institutional critique.

Publications abound; Raw Material Company presents a table of pamphlets arrayed next to a bookshelf holding a critical theory-heavy "ideal library" of art-historical and political texts. The curated installation of documents shows the postmodern cultural era as seen from a particular worldview often inaccessible from within the New York City bubble.

The Spanish art space Matadero Madrid shows two installations of their archive of artist work, the first a bookcase of binders with each spine labeled with the name of an artist, and the second an interactive website organized by theme that displays the work of those same artists. The setup points to the duality of how we experience art in the international community — small art organizations exist as much in the form of their libraries and websites as they do in real space.



*The Hong Kong-based Videotage's television stations*

In TEMP's basement, the Hong Kong space Videotage has the installation that looks most like an art piece. It's an array of modular, CNC-milled chair-television units that wouldn't be out of place in a futuristic Ikea (or a Ryan Trecartin piece). The onboard monitors display a series of video pieces, some of which riff on news broadcasts and PSAs. The collected work is another kind of digital archive, and it might easily be experienced on YouTube, but the physical form of the installation — surreally sprinkled with tropical plants as it is — hints at the personality and locality of the organization.

The significance of ICI's TEMP curatorial hub lays in its ability to clarify the global social network of the art world, tracing the activities of curators and institutions

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across national boundaries and between spaces, both real and virtual. Though this exhibition doesn't emphasize art objects, how it speaks to the ways art is presented and disseminated is both entertaining and critically educational.