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Abstract

Cinema in Your hand, Cinema on the Street:

The aesthetics of convergence in Korean *Mobile(phone) Cinema*

This paper will examine the aesthetics and the cultural implications of “mobile screen technology”, with specific focus on the Korean *Mobile (phone) Cinema* in the context of the history of screen and media convergence.

“Mobile Cinema” is a commercial name for a series of short digital movies exclusively produced for mobile phone device as a part of the wireless multimedia services in Korea. Since SK telecom, the leading wireless service company in Korea, first launched this service in 2002, about 30 short movies with different genres and styles have been made by well-known Korean filmmakers. Not only it proves the potential of mobile phone as a new screen venue through its commercial success, but it epitomizes the central characteristics and issues of mobile screen technology. As a research object, I will analyze several examples of Mobile Cinema focusing on their formal characteristics, mode of address and unique viewing experiences.

First of all, I argue that the aesthetics of mobile screen lies in its nature as a digital transmedia which rearticulates the conventions of succeeding media such as cinema, TV, telecommunication and Internet as well as introduces new characteristics and imperatives that are properties of mobile screen technology alone. Based on this premise, I will explore how each distinct form of media constitutes the formal structure of Mobile Cinema. Particularly, I will try to answer to what extent the cinematic tradition continues or discontinues within the technological constraints of Mobile Cinema.

Secondly, I will examine the significance of the changed viewing experience of Mobile Cinema due to its technological condition of “mobility” and “interactivity”. I would like to answer such questions as how this new viewing condition affects the

traditional time-space relations for the individual user and transpositions the presence of visual images into the physical space of user. At the same time, how is this changed viewing condition of cinema on small hand-held screen and, most extensively, cinema on the street, reflected to the form of Mobile Cinema?

I expect this analysis of the Korean Mobile Cinema from the Cinema and New Media studies perspective will not only address to the local specific issues but also articulate possible theoretical issues of mobile screen technology and furthermore, mobile phone culture. Most of all, considering that aesthetic aspect of mobile screen technology has not been fully discussed within the field, I expect this paper to position mobile screen properly in the larger context of aesthetic discourse on digital media culture.

Biography

HyeRyoung Ok is a Ph.D. student in Critical Studies, School of Cinema and TV, University of Southern California. Born in Korea, she received her first M.A. degree in Aesthetics and Art Theory from Seoul National University and second one in Cinema Studies from New York University. Her research area encompasses, but is not limited to New Media study, wireless screen technology and East Asian Cinema and media. Currently, she is preparing her Ph.D. dissertation about wireless screen technology. From upcoming spring semester, she will join the research project, "Mobile Home Entertainment" conducted by Entertainment Technology Center at USC.