Mini Review

The relational screen and contemporary visuality

Abstract

The article treats the contemporary visuality mediated by the body-screen, analyzing media facade projects in Seoul. The media screens in these projects offer the opportunity of perception of new reality and reflection on life in city and functions as the relational screen by relating the architecture, urban space and spectator. Media facade project shows the generative characteristic of the artwork and the screen-mediated viewing makes it possible to define the contemporary visuality..

Keywords: city as screen, screen mediated viewing, contemporary visuality, media facade project

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Introduction

Screens are everywhere in our global city. They include an array of relatively new breeds that came out in the electronic and digital age such as media facades and mobile screens. These screens are no more dependent upon the immobility of the spectator as in the previous screen interfaces that dominated the culture of the moving image. They raise a remarkable demand to redefine the ontology of the screen, in terms of its changing and diversified relationships to its components. The development of the digital technology and projection technology produces series of discussions associated to various form of visual immersing possibilities by the way of projecting image directly to the obscure surface surrounded by us, especially on the architecture in the city.

Recently, video art is combined with architecture in a specific place and media screen mediates a new kind of viewing in the city. In Seoul, there have been so many media projects such as Seoul Square and Outdoor screening projects in Seoul Media Art Biennale, etc.

The emergence of various screen interfaces from all parts of the city lays the importance on the role of media screen in new perception and experience of time and space in our daily life. The screens appeared into art galleries as early as the late 1950s. Film and video screen served both as constitutive elements of happenings, performances and expanded cinema events. The incorporation of mass media screens into art environments or installations in the mid-1960s.

In screen-reliant installations, the artists invite viewers to understand the screen as well as the site and experience of screen as material. Cinema screen, often described as the black box, reinforces the illusory power of the visual image inside the frame and at the same time imposing on the spectator an immobile and confined position. The screen refers an interface translated the three-dimensional space into the immaterial, virtualized, two-dimensional surface, devoid of spatial dimensions.[1]

The 'networked screen' of Haidee Wasson[2], as a concept for linking "screens to the larger and frequently amorphous ideas and practices that constitute them, and to the material contexts in which such screens connect viewer to image, user to screen, and spectator to spectacle"[2] formulates the screen in the larger formation of our media culture and propagates the moving image and its cohort audiovisual stimuli.

By the development of modern media technologies such as cinema and telecommunication media, contemporary media platforms can be accessed through digital network. The screen as a mediator formulates the viewer's gaze, organizes a virtual world for the spectator.

we will define the contemporary visuality by screen-mediated viewing in the city, by investigating media façade projects in Seoul.

Media facade projects in seoul

Light Wall project (2009) can be characterized by outdoor video image projection in the facade of Seoul Museum of Art. Light Wall introduced architecture mapping method. This method rebuilds virtual spaces identical to building structure and then renders video in the virtual space on real time basis and finally projects the result of rendering into the wall. This 3D Video Projection Mapping, allowed to create dynamic displays on facade surfaces of museum, using the program language vvvv as real-time image platform to control the final model in hundreds of thousands of spots.

By increasing computers and projectors, image can be extended without any limitation and interactive media can be implemented. Video image, which is projected onto a large screen, gives a sense of contacting with spectators and images, and also this lets people feel immersed into space. This media installation work in urban space pioneers artistic, social and cultural issues as a correction of public space via arts.

Although new media arts using new technologies such as computer programming under digital environment utilize technologies exclusively, its technical attempt can be converted into a generative process in which image continues to be changed and created. In other words, detection by programming and sensor continues to bring about image change and formative change.

It makes it possible to express the image as real as to paint directly on the façade and offers the immersive experience by removing the physical and psychic interval between image and spectator. The technological development makes it possible to offer this kind of immersion (Figure 1).

Seoul Square Building has a media façade of the 99 meter wide and 78 meter long, using the LED system on its whole front side. The media facade of Seoul Square was made as a showcase of media art made by artists and graphic designers. Its whole front side turns into a giant electronic canvas after 8 p.m. everyday to show luminous media works such as Julian Opie's "Walking People" and Yang Man-gi's "Mimesis-scape."

The famous buildings having media facades installed on their outer walls are Dexia Tower in Brussels, Millennium Park in Chicago and the Chanel building in Tokyo. The media screens in the city environment contributes to spectator's experience by what Manovich calls 'the augmented space'-the physical space overlaid with dynamically changing information.

Lee Yeseung <Unplug yourself> is executed in 2012, as a part of Outdoor Screening Project in Seoul Square Seoul International Media Art Biennale. This is a webcam interactive media installation and live performance and related with an interactive media facade by the participation of the spectator using the cellular phone. The spectator, firstly, participated in Shadow Puppet working stage and Shadow Live performing stage next to Seoul Station. And then the performance in this Live Performance stage is captured in real-time by the IP camera and transmitted into the Seoul Square using the program Max MSP, Jitter. The materials used as follows: music box, shadow puppets, 4-channel speakers, Microphone, IR sensor, IP camera (Figure 2).

As Mark Hansen points out, in conjunction with the medial interface, the embodied activity of the viewer functions to restore some of motivation between the image interface and the digital data: In the process through which the mediated digital data is transformed into the perceivable image, the spectator engages with actual objects in real time and space and at the same time, with immaterial state in that his or her metaphorical projection into virtual times and spaces. Traditional concept of time and space is destroyed and specially the space becomes the diverse field, not the static unit and modified as a juxtaposition of different perception and essence. The electronic media screen functions as an interface by relating the architecture, space and spectator and mediates the new experience in the city.

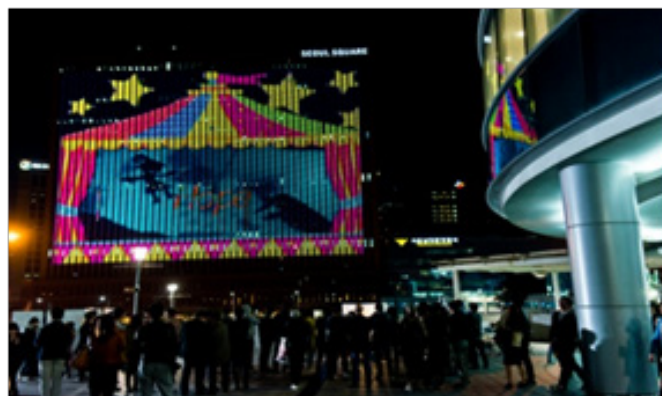**Figure 1** Light Wall Project, Tempo Museum by Mioon.

Figure 2 Unplug Yourself, Interactive media installation and live performance by Lee Yeseung.

Contemporary visuality by screen-mediated viewing

Media facade becomes the relational architecture which extends the historical and aesthetic context by adding the audio visual elements on the architecture in the city. The spectator can experience somewhat disturbing and tactile perception and come to know that his own experience and body are reconfigured by the screen. In fact, the screen mediates the viewer's experience and organizes a virtual

world for him by the participation of spectator in this immersive environment. In this context, as Fredric James pointed out the most important aspects in the postmodern aspects, Media facade, becomes a direct example of this phenomenon the depth which is displaced by a surface or multiple surfaces. In fact, the screen mediates the viewer's experience, organizes a virtual world for him by the participation of spectator in this immersive environment. In this context, media facade becomes a direct example of this postmodern phenomenon, of which the depth is displaced by a surface or multiple surfaces. The media facade reveals the logics of image space, in which the spectator is located by the relation with his own body in the form of perception.[3]

Media facade, mediating the possible relation of the physical and virtual space, becomes the relational screen which extends the historical and aesthetic context by adding the audio visual elements on the architecture in the city. The spectator modifies and completes the works by the direct participation. Therefore the meaning of the work can be opened and the subjective experience of spectator is melt in this process.

Conclusion

We have analyzed media facade projects in Seoul. The media facade mediates the spectator's experience in big city, such as new reality, the virtual and the real, immersion and interactivity. The spectator must participated in the process using the body as the site where all sensory information is processed and where information from distinct senses. Media facade functions as a media screen which gives time-space shifting effects, by defining its relationship to its site and to subjects and opportunity of mediation- material, psychic, ideological and institutional- that are structural to interactions as body-screen.

The media in city is now not existing for self neither for abstractly and virtual reality and but in the general appearance of metropolis. It affect each other and gives experience of immersion by image projection on building or large screen of LED.

Media project in a city connects art and daily routine, and makes division of reality and illusion meaningless and then it is believed to realize a mixed reality by extending communication between reality and illusion. Various interfaces based on digital media make it possible to communicate with spectators and art works while communication between reality and virtual world is realized by encountering our body and environment, past and memory, and virtual world of future which can't be seen and touched. In this communication through interface, spectator becomes a sort of system user and actively engages in building urban environment and is able to acquire possibility to experience corporality and change of cognition crossing illusion and reality. Interactive art works using physical computing can recognize not only visual capability but also various senses which could be recognized through sensory organs in body such as auditory sense and tactile sense.

Media reality of metropolis as formative space mediated by screen defines that there is not one major discourse in the gigantic text, rather they are different discourses each other simultaneously compatible. Media facade functions by relating the architecture, urban space and spectator and remediates the electronic mediation by the body-screen. Media facade project shows the generative characteristic of the artwork and the screen-mediated viewing in media facade project makes it possible to define the contemporary visuality.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of interest

Author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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