

Call for Papers and Project Presentations

(For an additional call for submission of digital images see below)

Submission deadline: 1 May 2005

URBAN SCREENS 2005

Discovering the Potential of Outdoor Screens for Urban Society

Time: Friday, 23 September 2005 (extended to the 24th according to feedback)
Location: Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Organization: Institute of Network Cultures, Interactive Media, Hogeschool van Amsterdam
Department of Art and Public Space, Gerrit Rietveld Academy / University of Amsterdam
Urban||Resear**tc**h, Berlin

URBAN SCREENS 2005 is an international conference ranging from critical theory to project experiences by researchers and practitioners in the field of Art, Architecture, Urban Studies and Digital Culture. The focus is on understanding how the growing infrastructure of large digital displays influences the visual sphere of our public spaces. How can the commercial use of these screens be broadened and culturally curated to contribute to a lively urban society?

The conference will feature three main topics:

- Shaping the urban media-scapes
- Addressing the social value and civic culture
- Experiences from practical case studies

Public space has always been a place for human interaction, a unique arena for exchange of rituals and communication in a constant process of renewal, challenging the development of society. Its architectural dimension, being a storytelling medium itself, has played a changing role of importance in providing a stage for this interaction. The way the space is inhabited can be read as a participatory process of its audience. The (vanishing) role as space for social and symbolic discourse has been often discussed in urban sociology. Modernization, the growing independence from place and time and the individualization seem to destroy the city rhythm and its social systems. New virtual spaces have been populated instead. Starting with the development of virtual cities within chat rooms and spaces for production of identity, we now face community experiments like collaborative wikis, blogs or mobile phone networks in the growing field of social computing. Parallel to this development an "event culture" has evolved in the real urban space of internationally competing cities, focusing on tourism and consumption. In the context of this rapidly evolving commercial information sphere, developers are bringing new digital display technology into the urban landscape.

Considering the social sustainability of our cities it is necessary to look closer at the liveability and openness of public spaces. The experience, made in the new digital communication spheres, might serve as an inspiration for the social enhancement of our urban surroundings. Instead of just showing commercials, could the large outdoor displays function as experimental "visualization zone" of the fusing of the virtual public spaces and our real world? Can screens function as a new mirror reflecting the public sphere, a medium of communication of the city with itself?

The conference wants to launch a discussion about how digital culture can make use of the existing and future screening infrastructure, in terms of art and social or political practices, generating a higher value for its operators and "users". We want to address the existing commercial predetermination and explore the nuance between art, interventions and entertainment to stimulate a lively culture. Other key issues are: mediated interaction, content, participation of the local community, restrictions due to technical limits, and the incorporation of the screens in the architecture of our urban landscape. We are happy to announce our special guest speakers Lev Manovich, Visual Arts Department, University of California, San Diego and Mike Gibbons, Chief Project Manager, Live Events, BBC.

Researchers and practitioners in the field of Art, Architecture, Urban Studies and Digital Culture are invited to submit proposals for papers and presentations on key issues and implemented cutting-edge projects.

The following aspects might serve as guideline for content, addressed in submissions:

Topic 1 "Shaping the urban media-scapes"

- The historical overview of the development an urban media-sphere.
- Future technologies and visions shaping the media-scape
- Critical review of visual and sonic noise versus liveability
- Peoples predetermined media perception in public space
- Melting layers of technology and the cityscape creating a new dimension
- Investigating the aesthetics of design in the context of the urban landscape

Topic 2 "Addressing the social value and civic culture"

- Changing from consumer entertainment to participation of a wide range users
- Limits and challenges of new responsible public-private partnerships
- Mediated interactions as new forms of civic culture and use of public space
- Issues of censorship in content management
- Possible social applications for the community addressing local events, social integration, education
- Long-term value of local identity and cultural diversity through open access?
- Urban branding changing the perception of locations

Topic 3 "Experiences from practical case studies"

- Experiences with production of new and old cultural content for screens
- Technological limits and challenges in content creation and enhancement
- Evaluation studies, responses from participants and interactions
- Case studies of cultural screenings
- The role of government involvement, policy, planning and management
- Experiences with public and private cooperation
- Cooperation with other arts forms and creative industries

Application format:

1. Name of the project/paper
2. Author(s)
3. Contact person (e-mail/phone/fax/postal address)
4. Short 350-word abstract of the paper/presentation
5. Short biography of the author(s)
6. Related web-links
7. Description of the type of media needed for the presentation

Please write the following in the subject heading of the submission email: "URBAN SCREENS 05 – submission"

Additional call for submission of digital images:

For a visual screening we are collecting various pictures of urban screens. Please submit high-resolution images in digitalized format, together with the date, the name of the location and photographer.

For your inspiration look at the Russian Internet Journal about large electronic LED screens:

<http://www.screens.ru>

Further information / mailinglist:

Preparations of the event will include an online discussion via a special mailinglist. During and after the conference live web-casting and other online documentations will present the content to a wider audience.

To subscribe and participate in the urbanscreens-I mailinglist register at:

http://listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/urbanscreens-I_listcultures.org

If you like to know more, have a look at the background text:

http://culturebase.org/home/struppek/Homepage/urbanscreens_background.html

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