



*THE ART
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*INTERVIEW
Hyung-ki Kim*

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Current status on New Media Art

Beginning of 1960s, Nam Jun Baek introduced 'video'—a new media to work with back then—, and completely distorted over threw what was understood as 'common sense' or normal. The reason why such works by him were globally praised and was accepted was not just because of this medium, video, but because the medium itself represented the cultural and artistic development of the time. Mediums that were discovered from the advancement in technology excited the art world for sure. Especially, the possibility that there will be a new genre of art that unites all kinds of mediums that were developing on its own was brought a lot of expectations. But lets now stop for a moment and look back at New Media Art's progress. There are many digital art works in galleries here and there, yet the viewers constantly ponder on what kind of an artistic sensation they are supposed to be feeling from these works. Currently, one of the crucial problem New Media Art needs to solve is the lack of communication with the audience. The reciprocally of New Media Art was once seen as a strong plus, but now it is seen as threatening or limiting element of the movement. Furthermore, if the sharing of the communicating of the art and the viewer only to a superficial level (for example, just admiring the art work's technological aspects) the authenticity of New Media Art is spoiled. With much care and consideration, we can try to predict

some directions New Media Art will take in the future. One of the important aspects we must consider is the increase in artistic depth of New Media Art. Of course, such proposition could include the possibility that we must discuss what art is or what it means to be artistic, making this discussion a sensitive and a complicated topic. However, in the current scope of art world, New Media Art is often ignored as something other than art, making the previous statement valid. In this essay, I focus on a different directional approach in discussing the future of New Media Art. Contact with the new environment, thus through the expansion of interface, the concept of New Media Art expands and the enhancement in communication. If, the former talked about the development as a genre of art, the latter mean the dissection of the genre or the expansion in the theory. Such two different approaches in developing New Media Art lets us study the conflict and harmony of "Media" and "Art", making us wonder if it's a fundamental issue. But if in the past Media was used as a medium for artistic creation, in present day Media is used to not only affect the artistic world but also out society in general. Thus we must consider this question about Media and art in a grander scale and observe it as an interdisciplinary study.

Virtual reality and the aesthetics of our reality: mechanical manipulation of reproduced ‘actual’.

Currently our physical world is deeply related to the media and the virtual reality that we are facing a crisis in dwelling in that artificial world. If we observe today’s society, this kind accusation may not sound so absurd. For example, we wake up to our alarm set in our cell phones, read about daily news on the web, and communicate with others by phone. Work place without a computer is hard to imagine, and free time without a TV is tough. Our lifestyle depends on the virtual world little by little. The media sets the rhythm of our lives; we recognize each other through the use of media; and we exist within the comfort media provides us. Soon, this tightly constructed virtual mechanical world exists in our minds like the actual one. To borrow the word of Wolfgang Welsch, reality can be manipulated through a use of medium even to one’s core, and can be formed aesthetically. If we stick to his words and believe that the virtual reality is a medium that we can manipulate and aesthetically develop, New Media Art can be understood in a broader sense, in relation to our reality. If so, where will New Media Art expand to and where can we see an example of such interaction?

Here lets think again about Welsch’s comment. Welsch, mentioning the desire to escape to virtual world and its aestheics,

said that as the difference between the real action and simulation becomes hard to distinguish, the media corresponds to this and puts on a image as if role playing or imagining. To elaborate the idea, the media manipulated our reality into something else and lets us exist in this virtual platform of their own version of reality. In the past, media existed to ‘function’, and we used the media as a tool to enrich our lives. But the advantage media showed us didn’t end here. The newest technology invented media that could create fake reality and even set its own limitation. Such change lets us focus on the aesthetics of this virtual reality that has formed. And this new type of reality entertains and beautifies, discarding the limitations and shortages that existed in the physical world. That is, the mechanical world’s lightness in existence is something we should be aware of when dealing with the aesthetics in our reality.

Video Game Art as Entertainment

The virtualization of the reality and in its aesthetics comes from our perception in sensitivity. The perception of sensitivity refers to the desire for entertainment shown from the people who decided to leave the physical world to live in the virtual one. Such aspect coincides with the satisfaction offered by virtual reality in computer or video games. It is because our nature finds entertainment in turning reality into images, and such artificial images give satisfying sensation one can’t find in their daily lives. Here, the perception of senses show its duality. It is perception and sensation. Aesthetic is about emphasizing pleasant sensation. If we study this sensation in a theoretical meaning, we can divide hobby-satisfaction relation into two: “sensation-hobby Sinnen-Geschmacks” and “reflection-hobby Reflexions-Geschmacks”. If former is a more general average desire of a human being, the latter is the reflecting attitude of such desire. It is a type of a distance in the fact that reflection-hobby kind of desire for aesthetics. Such kind of two courses are seen with distance between the joy we get from computer and

video games and medium New Media Art uses. If we are reminded of the play and art relationship Hojingha compared to poem and music, we can see the corresponding relationship between video games and art. Except, Hojingha concentrated on the humans before their logical and ethical development, and their pure joy and entertainment, he seems to be suggesting that such innocence is related to the creative and artistic side. However as art now days functions in a lot more different fields, we will be able to observe the two in a more efficient way. Plus, as in art, keeping the distance functions as a very important factor we can expect a previously suggested sensation and reflection as a dual role. What we must thing about is that such sensation-hobby and reflection-hobby relationship is narrowing their distance. There are many video games and art which we can observe such change is their relationship. Lindin Lab’s Second Life is a virtual platform that borrowed the theory from video games, and New Media Art works are becoming more interactive and imaginary than ever before. The viewers are no longer a passive audience, and are engaging in a creative experience and being part of the artistic creation. But although the relationship between art and video game can be supportive in their development, it is not easy to have them in such a close relationship and exist mutually. Video games

criticize the purity of Art and Art refuses the commercialism of video games. Yet the virtualization of reality and aesthetics of the reality will need both video games and art as a new reflection-hobby.

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KOREAN ARTIST INTERVIEW

HYUNG -KI KIM

In today's interview, we met Kim Hyung Ki director who was in charge of Incheon International Digital Art Festival ; INDAF 2009.

Kim Hyung Ki director is a professor at Jung Ang University's Visual Tecnology Grad school program, a New Media Artist and a director in curating. We met him to discuss New Media Art and INDAF exhibition.

Aliceon:

Hello, so you are directing the Incheon International Digital Art Festival ; INDAF 2009 which is a part of the Incheon International City festival. Could you please explain what the focus and the meaning of this exhibition is?

Hyung-ki Kim:

First of all, there is a big meaning in the fact that this Digital Art Festival is opening in Incheon. We must pay attention to the city's uniqueness and the advantages of Songdo's geographical location. Incheon has tried before to develop its cultural and artistic sides, yet it had some flaws in comparison to its effort. In fact, is a completely new city made according to plans, which makes it perfect to apply IT technologies. This city that emphasizes the basic technologies we have, and has fundamentals in new technologies exists within the ideas of digital art, new city, ubiquitous city, international city, and free trade area. Songdo, where the event is held at, is still in process of becoming a complete city. I choose the theme as Vistas, to represent the possibilities of this future city. I chose the word Vistas to refer to

its definition as a great view, or a panorama of the view, and think of it as a great window to our future—a hopeful vision we have for this city. Our future is a part of IT, technology, digital art and that leads us to the digital art festival.

Aliceon:

You said that Vistas to show the panorama of the future city is the theme of this exhibition. Under such a huge theme, inter-time, inter-space, interface aspect of this exhibitions tells me that you are interested in the “inter” part about New Media Art. This seems to be the core of our discussion. Would you please explain further?

Hyung-ki Kim:

The reality we live in could be compared to dreaming one. The experience between waking and dreaming; images that seem to be from other dimensions and a fantasy; all that we perceive in our brains can feel the same yet a dream and reality can't be the same. Time is also distorted through the use of images and film, yet we

recognize time within it. Between one thing and another exists this “inter” aspect. Space also changed through the development of technology. The distance between our country and the other changed, and is significantly different in our tele-freelance society. Digital technology has affected our concept of space and the emotional influence within such space. Space and time, time and people, people and space... Such relationships has a gap that we can't solidify like how we can't fully examine our present. Far yet near; I have to explain systematically to express such concept through the use of the three themes.



Aliceon:

Similar to Linz, Austria's case, we can use cultural development to expand the city and emphasize its significance. I understand that this is an opening event, or the place for networking and that artists who can show and satisfy that expectations on culture are extremely important. What did you feel about the competition that was the core part of the event?

Hyung-ki Kim:

Pieces that exceeded my expectations were submitted. There was about 300 pieces. Of course we could always have more but I am satisfied with what we had as our first exhibition. I hope there will be

more promotions in advertising the event and will be more entries in the future.

Aliceon:

Do you have any further interest in fields such as a professor, New Media Artists, producing and administering?

Hyung-ki Kim:

I met many people in New Media Art world when I left to Paris in 1985 after quitting my major, Chemistry. The biggest epiphany I had was the difficulties I experienced trying to be the center of art history-making movement. I returned thinking that I will try again, because I couldn't break that wall,

and I realized that our country had so much potential in New Media Art in our current digital art world. I became a curator for this event to provide support for the future artists in Korea. My goal is to help them become the best in becoming international artists.

{Aliceon Paper}

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