

Mobile Asia (Second Draft Proposal)

Why Mobile Asia?

Asian region releases the potential of new media culture and technology through diverse contexts and meanings. As the largest market for mobile industries in the world, Asian region is leading the growth of new media technology and expanding its practical applicability to every aspect of social life. However, the ever-emerging imagination, adaptability, and sustainability of human life find its way to tackle the shade of technological determinism. Korean youth use mobile phones to escape everyday routine whereas Bangladeshi farmers find the proper prices of crops. The old boundaries between high arts, mass culture, technology and community are getting blurry and the new forms of practices are quickly reaching into regions where the urgency of new identities and harmonies demands proactive ideas and solutions.

In order to grapple with the urgency, Art Center Nabi launches *Mobile Asia*, a long-term networked project dedicated to develop creative communities across Asian region in the area of new media and cultural development. We recognize that the creative agencies in Asia have not been effectively connected to build collective visions based on sharing and critiquing of local experiences. We aim at creating a sustainable yet flexible form of alliance that is able to produce practical solutions and critical perspectives for what is happening “now and here” in the Asian region. We truly believe in the value of “unforced agreement” created by diversity of opinions yet by willingness to collaborate. We invite artists, audiences, art managers, activists, businessmen, government officials for on-going critiques, dialogues, and, most importantly, actions to fulfill new possibilities in the age of uncertainty and globalization.

Agenda

Mobile Asia investigates how different localities (re)shape the use of new media technology within their own cultural, political, and economic contexts and explore common visions that will lead to a new sense of community across the region. *Mobile Asia* is interested especially in the following agenda areas.

- 1) Body: How information and communication technology (ICT) and wireless/wired network construct and reshape bodily experiences and our concept of physicality through the wearables, locative, and telepresence.
- 2) Urbanity: How ICT and wireless/wired network bring about new perceptions and social interactions in urban environment and remap the rapidly changing dynamics of city life.
- 3) Connectivity: How ICT and wireless/wired network stimulate and reconstruct social relationship, network activities, and communication.
- 4) Cultural Development: How new media cultures prompt or challenge economic and political development.

Main Objectives

- 1) *Creativity*
 - *Mobile Asia* aims to search new forms of creativity emerging from mixture between technology and culture within the Asian region and beyond.
 - *Mobile Asia* aims to explore the potential of new media as means for expressing and connecting newly emerging identities and cultures within the Asian region and beyond.
- 2) *Reflection*
 - *Mobile Asia* aims to discuss the impact of ICT on local cultures in its effect of both bridging and deepening the differences across the Asian region
 - *Mobile Asia* aims to investigate a variety of cultural strategies by creative communities using new media as a tool to expand and reshape the public domains across the Asian region.
- 3) *Solidarity*
 - To address common agenda and proactive solutions regarding the problems of fragmented practices in arts, academia, and policy-making areas within the Asian region and beyond.

- To create various forms of transnational alliances and collaborative practices among creative agencies in Asia who have been disconnected in the past but share similar concerns.

Projects and Strategies

In order to cover a wide range of interests and identities across the Asian region, *Mobile Asia* expects diverse agencies ranging from artists, audiences, scholars, professionals, activists, to policy-makers to participate. The main projects are initially designed by Art Center Nabi although the detailed execution and direction of the projects will be modified and further developed throughout the planning process in the pilot year.

- 1) Project development: *Mobile Asia* endeavors to support and present creative energies and productions in new media culture in Asian region.
 - **Mobile Asia Competition 2006**: *Mobile Asia* hosts Mobile Asia Competition 2006 to reflect upon the mobile cultures of Asian region through creative works and ideas by artists and media-makers.
 - **Exchange Program**: *Mobile Asia* promotes cultural exchange among cultural groups and individual artists among Asian countries and/or between Asian region and non-Asian region.
 - **Exhibition**: *Mobile Asia* presents exhibitions based on collective curation and/or broader thematic approaches to promote critical thoughts and alternative aesthetics that are relevant and unique to contemporary Asian experiences.
- 2) Information Mapping & Research: *Mobile Asia* operates as an idea generator to critique the current trend and explore the future of communication technologies and cultures in Asian region.
 - **Feature, the magazine**: *Mobile Asia* publishes *Feature*, an on-line magazine to address the multiple facets of new media in Asia by attracting a wide range of voices from journalists, scholars, and practitioners.
 - **M-Flow, the blog**: *Mobile Asia* introduces updated, grounded writings centering on Asian cultures and media trends addressed by a body of selected bloggers from all over the world.
 - **Research**: *Mobile Asia* publishes in-depth research reports and book series based on collaborative, long-term studies of commonalities and differences among new media experiences in Asian region.
 - **Conference**: *Mobile Asia* organizes a conference dedicated to an exchange of academic studies of new media in the Asian region, an examination of the role of Asian culture and identities in the global communities, and a suggestion of policy initiatives to enhance cultural empowerment for the public within Asia and beyond.
- 3) Network & Collaboration
 - All the activities and projects above take place through collective frameworks. We induce participation from a wide range of creative agencies including artists, professionals, cultural workers, policy-makers, etc. to share resources, information, and opinions. This way, *Mobile Asia* will grow as an ever-evolving entity that avoids inertia and, instead, embraces inputs from diverse positions and visions.

Expected Outcome

Mobile Asia will:

- Create a hub for experimenting and displaying new creativity in the Asian region and beyond.
- Provoke new appreciation of Asian identities and cultures not as in homogenizing entity but as in diversifying movement within the Asian region and beyond.
- Foster inter-disciplinary understanding and practices combining art, technology, and popular culture
- Produce a sustainable forum hosting critical ideas and discourses about new media within the Asian region and beyond.
- Create a network platform through which a variety of individuals and groups work together to produce collective projects within the Asian region and beyond.

- Produce publication series documenting, researching, and archiving the currency of new media in Asia.
- Empower the local groups to better serve the public through diverse, innovative projects.
- Encourage governments, NGOs, philanthropies, and cultural institutions to recognize the importance of cultural empowerment and develop proactive policy initiatives dedicated to that end.

Board and Committees

The following administrative components are at the core of leadership of *Mobile Asia* connecting with the broadest interests of participants. The board and committee members will represent the diversity of countries, areas of expertise, arts disciplines, etc.

- 1) Executive Committee: Executive Committee plans and executes the entire projects of *Mobile Asia* – organizes exhibitions, guides researches, establishes partnerships, and promotes visibility. The members of Executive Committee will include arts practitioners who are committed to the regional development of networks and collaborative projects within Asia and beyond. The Executive Committee in particular consists of project managers in charge of each project component of *Mobile Asia*.
- 2) Editorial Committee: Editorial Committee supervises the editorial direction of forum and publication components. The members of Editorial Committee will include scholars, journalists, and writers who are active both on-line and off-line with interests in new media within the Asian region and beyond.
- 3) Board of Directors: Board of Directors oversees and supports the overall projects of *Mobile Asia*. The members of the Board fundraise for the overall projects of *Mobile Asia* and reach out to a wide range of philanthropic, corporate, and governmental agencies to promote *Mobile Asia*.
- 4) Advisory Committee: Advisory Committee advises committees and board on the planning and executing of *Mobile Asia*. The members of the Advisory Committee will include renowned leaders with expertise and experiences in the fields of arts, education, and activism.

Time Line

- 1) Year 1: Pilot Year
 - Launch *Mobile Asia* Website and *Mobile Asia Competition 2006*.
 - Seek out core participant groups and individuals especially through networks of cities where new media practices emerge and bring them on board within the first 6 months.
 - Set up committees and board, hire project managers, and develop partnerships.
 - Compose the editorial board and launch *Mobile Asia* Magazine by September, 2006.
 - Convene a planning meeting on-line or off-line within 6 months after launching the website.
 - Develop marketing and fundraising strategies for overall *Mobile Asia* and individual project components as well at the end of the pilot year.
 - Begin planning/conversational sessions for specific projects with project managers and local representatives to assess the current issues and needs in the area of cultural development within the Asian region and beyond.
 - Begin writing proposals applying for venues and grants for particular project components.
 - Begin initial information mapping and research projects including *Feature* and *M-Flow* within the 6 months of the website launching.
 - Application to possible grants awarded to international projects involving cultural exchange and networking.
- 2) Year 2: Implementing Year
 - Continue initial projects and develop possible future projects.
 - Organize exhibition series centered on media based on need assessment within the Asian region and beyond at the beginning of the implementing year.
 - Begin a research project within and across localities based on the need assessment in the area of cultural development in the Asian region and beyond.

- Begin a localization of the projects by setting up local groups and agenda within each involved country.
- 3) Year 3: Stabilizing Year
- Generate a book series based on the project results of the year 1 and 2.
 - Convene a conference based on the project results of the year 1 and 2.
 - Begins evaluation of the overall *Mobile Asia* projects in the areas of leadership, visions, programming, structure, management, etc.
 - Map out strategies to secure stability and garner resources for the following years.

What we propose

- 1) Locate local individuals and groups who will be able to participate in the *Mobile Asia* projects including competition, exhibition, exchange program, conference, magazine, and research.
- 2) Build city-to-city networks of arts organizations and artist groups to share the proposed agenda of *Mobile Asia* such as body, urbanity, connectivity, and cultural development and discuss the direction of future projects.
- 3) Develop particular arts, research, or multi-disciplinary projects dealing with the above agenda in exchange and networking forms that can be realizable in Asian countries.