URBAN ASSEMBLAGE: THE CITY AS ARCHITECTURE, MEDIA, AI AND BIG DATA.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Confined Cyberspace, Adjacent Space, and Circulating Space of an Aspiring Smart City: A Case Study of the Three Spaces Produced by the Media Poles in the Gangnam District, Seoul

• Author(s) Name:
Keebaik Sim

• University or Company Affiliation:
University of California, Berkeley

• Abstract (300 words):
Under the banner of making cities smarter, major cities across the globe are installing media poles and media kiosks in public spaces. This project examines a series of media poles constructed in 2009 alongside the Ubiquitous Street in the Gangnam district in Seoul, South Korea. The media poles initially attracted people’s attention but were soon neglected by both the public and the city municipal which had invested approximately $7,200,000 for the project.

In this study, I analyze the exceptional qualities of the media poles that distinguish them from other media screens. First, this paper examines the unique attributes of the media poles that come with their presence in the physical public space and their functions supported by their embedded software and technology. These two qualities of the
media poles produce three different types of spaces, which I define as the "confined cyberspace," the "adjacent space," and the "circulating public space".

Secondly, this study adopts the Lefebvrian concept of space to understand the discrepancies of social interactions between those initially “conceived” by the city municipal and those enacted by people in the “lived space.” To further unpack these discrepancies, I adopt Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalytic approach which leads to inter-relational thinking of the media poles among its various constituencies.

Lastly, this paper proposes the utilization of the three aforementioned spaces as a new way to design and imagine media poles in the city. This plan invites people to access the “confined cyberspace” through the screen on the media poles in front of the “adjacent space” and provides opportunities to interact with others in the physical “circulating public space”. The media poles’ significance will be more acknowledged with this new plan since it will be a way to deal with issues caused by the anonymity of cyberspaces.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Keebaik Sim is a designer, interdisciplinary artist, and academic. He is currently pursuing the Ph.D. track of History, Theory, and Society in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley and a recipient of the Berkeley Fellowship for Graduate Study. His current research is centered on the intersections of new technologies, space, and socio-cultural interactions.

He was a founder and a creative director at Urban Platz, reconnecting disconnected or alienated neighbors to help improve communities. He graduated with a Master in Design Studies (MDes) in Art, Design and the Public Domain at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) in 2017. For his thesis project at the GSD, he researched, designed, and implemented a series of cultural interventions between North Korean defector students and South Korean students in Seoul, Republic of Korea, to promote understanding between one another. This thesis won the Public Design Competition and was awarded a grant for implementation from the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Prior to attending Harvard, he gained a Bachelor of Industrial Design from Pratt Institute. He worked as a designer in various design firms and as a fine artist assistant.