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Public Screens I: Theorizing Screens and Screen Technologies in Public Spaces

This proposal presents two sessions on urban screens. Urban screens range in size, resolution, use and location. They are both public amenities and cinematic screens deployed in public spaces in urban contexts. They make use of innovative LED and LCD technologies, and can be found on projection broads, information terminals and intelligent buildings, and are used for entertainment, live television broadcasting, marketing and exhibiting new media digital art. The first session, Panel 1, focuses on public screens in general, with case studies from Hong Kong, Cairo and Shanghai. It examines the theorization of screen technologies in public spaces. The second session, Panel 2, focuses on big screens in Australia and South Korea, with specific emphasis on cultural policy and its impact on culture-led urban regeneration, new media art, cultural citizenship and transnational exchange.

LED and LCD moving image screens in public spaces are a relatively recent phenomenon, adding to the “ambient television” so famously analyzed by Anna McCarthy. How should we approach this new object? From Media Studies, with theories of the media and their role in the creation of public culture and participation in social communication? From Film and Television Studies, with its interests in the text and reception? From Anthropology, Cultural Studies and Visual Studies, with their interest in everyday life, experience, and the city? The papers on this panel explore a range of potential approaches to grappling with this new phenomenon.