

MONUMENT ⁵⁸

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

ART MATTERS

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SITE SPACE



THE UNDERGROUND

CHUNGMU-RO SUBWAY STATION, KOREA

THE CHUNGMU-RO SUBWAY station in Seoul, recently completed by New York-based Cho Slade Architecture with local architect Kwang Soo Kim, has been reconfigured from a generic passageway into a centre for new media art. In doing so, the collaboration has created not only a place for learning but a space for contemplation and repose amid the flux of a transportation network.

Built for an organisation known as the Independent Filmmakers of Korea, the architects transformed an existing 500sqm passageway into a linear arrangement of zones for editing, teaching and screening with exhibition and office areas. A strip of corridor runs alongside to facilitate the flow of pedestrian subway traffic.

The architects see the insertion of this new technological and visual environment as an opportunity to engage with ideas of time and space by exploring the simultaneous existence of

both a transient environment (corridor) and a fixed destination point (media art centre). As well as catering to the needs of the staff and students of the film organisation, the centre is open to the public during the day. Subway patrons can wander freely in and out of certain areas and bide their time by watching films on video screens or by relaxing on snaking cushioned seating.

By redefining the passageway into a multifunctional area for film, the architects have experimented with ideas of mediation and representation with relevant cinematic effect. A simple system of reflection and projection is created through seamless surfaces such as glazed and mirrored walls, floors finished in highly-reflective paint and a suspended ceiling of stretched plastic. Through the application of these elements, the original linear composition is transformed into a dynamic multidirectional environment. The resulting

multiplicity of views within this space continuously alter the occupant's perception and movement either through or past the structure.

James Slade of Cho Slade Architecture points out that the projections and reflections produced by the design physically mediate the activities within the space – in juxtaposition to the electronic mediation represented by the institution itself. The new insertion not only provides a backdrop for the viewing of images, it makes a spectacle out of inhabiting space, by heightening awareness of time and position. In essence, this spatial manipulation provides a moment of pause and (literal) reflection amid the context of the speed and movement of a subway.

Jacqueline Khu

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUNG-SIK

