Mobile-mentory mobile documentaries in the mediascape.

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MOBILE-MENTARY
MOBILE DOCUMENTARIES IN THE MEDIASCAPE

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the potential of and prospects for mobile documentary filmmaking. As a result of practice-led research, the city film *Max with a Keitai* was produced on mobile camera phones for cinematic projection. The feature-length documentary portrays the contemporary Japanese megalopolis through the lens of a mobile phone and records the mobile filmmaking process. Simultaneously, the project experimented with mobile phones as viewing devices for 'micro-movies'. Through curating an international mobile art exhibition and mobile feature film screening, the research explored the new mobile aesthetic from 2004 onwards, which is presented as the *Keitai Aesthetic* in this thesis.

In the first chapters the thesis maps out the early mobile mediascape in the years 2004 to 2007 and analyses cinematic technology through user-based histories. Furthermore, the theoretical framework explores the city films of the 1920s and the concept of motion in film. Mobile filmmaking in the years 2004 to 2007 constitutes a return to non-linear documentary practices, such as interval theory (Dziga Vertov) and *Ur-Kino* (Hans Richter). The final chapters examine the new emerging mobile aesthetic in the research timeframe from 2004 to 2007 and further develop the argument that innovation in mobile filmmaking occurred, both in the domain of the gallery and the film-festival context before the media industry realized the potential of mobile media. The particular mobile resolution adds new elements to the emerging *Keitai Aesthetic*: the experience of location, notions of personal, immediate and intimate qualities.

This research documents the alternative approach offered by the mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) and explores its potential as an intervention into the industry dominated discourse.

Contents

Part 1: DVDs

DVD I: *Max with a Keitai*

      (Schleser, 3gp/mpeg4 video, 58 min., Japan 2008)

DVD II: *mobile micro-movies*

      (Schleser, 3gp video, 23 one to three minute micro-movies, to be distributed via Bluetooth hub in an urban environment, Japan 2008)

Part 2: Thesis

1. Introduction

These days a large number of people leave their home every day with the tools required to produce a feature documentary on them: a mobile phone and a laptop. Mobile devices with video cameras now outnumber digital video and still cameras. More than a dozen film festivals for (short) mobile films have appeared internationally between 2004 and 2007 (see appendix B). A close analysis of the mediascape reveals that mobile videos are present in music videos, advertising and news broadcasts. On an international level, one can locate independent practitioners utilising mobile video and users creating new forms of cultural production through the 3gp mobile video format.

On the other hand, these mobile videos have found very little resonance in the entertainment and mobile industry. Multinational mobile phone companies seem to have ignored the prospects of 3gp media, with the exception of advertising and PR campaigns. This research proposes that alternatives to the industry's usage and understanding of the mobile video technology can be encouraged through demonstrating in novel ways how to use mobile video. The mobile 3gp video format, as the practice components demonstrate (Part 1), has capabilities to produce innovation and enable transformation; innovation in the form of new aesthetics and

transformation through emphasising the role of the user in creating these aesthetics as an alternative cultural practice.

1.1 Research Questions

This study addresses four research questions.

Research question 1:

- **In what sense can mobile documentaries be constituted as an alternative to dominant, mainstream or commonsensical uses of the mobile phones' video capacity?**

In the first instance, my research project needed to demonstrate the overlooked capacities of mobile video. The aim was to set a key frame to evaluate subsequent mobile video projects and to function as an intervention to the current industry discourse. The Keitai Aesthetic cannot necessarily be translated into economic success, but is a new phenomenon in the mediascape that emerged in 2005. This alternative to the dominant, mainstream and commonsensical uses of mobile phone video leads to the new definition of the mobile-mentary and an understanding about the working practices of mobile documentaries. The research indicates that the capacity to produce innovation can also be located in the domain of the user. Beyond UGC (user-generated-content), user-groups can take part in creating new aesthetics and documentary formats. These elements might not necessarily be driven by economic endeavours, but illustrate the potential for radical changes in the contemporary mediascape.

Research question 2:

- **What are the common features of independent and artists' mobile documentaries during the period in focus?**

Part 1 of this practice-led research project experiments with producing a city film on a mobile device for the cinema (DVD I) and for the mobile screen (DVD II). The technical capacities or limitations are appropriated in a creative, mobile-specific practice, based on the mobile resolution. In part 2, the thesis, an analysis of the context in which the work was produced in the years 2004 to 2007, is presented. The findings of the research lead towards the definition of the mobile-mentary and the Keitai Aesthetic. With the continuous technological advancement of mobile devices (i.e. the GPS functionality, the development of Bluetooth 2.0, mobile applications and LTE [Long Term Evolution], the significant increase in mobile internet usage) new opportunities to further expand the current research can be explored. Through the introduction of these developments as a standard feature in camera phones, mobile video has potential to be integrated into the field of locative media or AR (Augmented Reality). As these processes were only made possible from 2008 onwards, they could not be addressed in the current research. The capacity to produce innovation and an alternative to the industry discourse is explored through a creative application of mobile media.

The project studies the mobile resolution and mobile video format, which entered the mediascape from 2004 onwards. Through looking at this body of work in an international context and curating the emerging mobile practices in the research time frame, common features of independent practioners and artists can be observed. The analysis explores the pixel, which is the key characteristic of the mobile resolution, as

a common feature and not as a problem as defined in the entertainment industry. In the Keitai Aesthetic, the formation as alternative cultural practice crystallises and takes shape demonstrating the potential of mobile video.

Research question 3:

- **What elements of the 3gp devices can be appropriated to make a feature length documentary?**

The pre-production experiments provided a beta-version for the city film production. The successful camera-test with a two mega-pixel phone resulted in the idea of exploring the pixelated 3gp videos and led to the discovery of the mobile aesthetics. It also became clear during the experiments that the elements of movement and rhythm can be recognised in 3gp videos: no matter how pixelated the video is, movement within the frame can be decoded. Therefore movement is explored as the leitmotif structuring the film and implying its possibility to function as an alternative to narrative and industry formats.

The research looks at the difference between the approaches in the entertainment and mobile industry and the context of a user-interpretation of technology. The distinction between the industry practices and the user-groups of creative independent practitioners is elaborated. Furthermore, the thesis studies mobile work as alternative cultural formations produced for exhibition in the gallery context and screening at film festivals. These emerging mobile (documentary) practices were curated in the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition, where the content of the DVDs was showcased in public and to an expert audience. In a similar context to the emergence of the city films in the 1920s, documentary as defined in the terms section, provides a space to explore

innovation in the area of mobile video. The parallels here concern the entry of film technology into a non-industrial or as yet unstructured industrial framework, and the way that artists have created new means to work with the medium, producing feature length non-linear and non-narrative experimental films.

Research question 4:

- **Can the mobile phone also be used as a viewing device?**

The research is an investigation of a previously unexamined mobile media practice. In the production process on location, I realised that the mobile video files need to be transferred via Bluetooth from mobile devices to a non-linear editing system. Through this process, the idea was examined in a reverse mechanism to distribute micro-movies to mobile devices and also to consider the mobile phone as a viewing device.

This thesis introduces the argument that mobile video can be positioned as a new asset in the mediascape. The *mobile micro-movies* (DVD II) aim towards illustrating that the mobile screen has capacities to be applied as a viewing device. The micro-movies are conceptualised as an alternative video format, as an experience rather than content.

These four research questions engage with the new possibilities of mobile video. Using a mobile phone as a filmmaking tool means to explore the capacity of a device which was never intended for feature (documentary) filmmaking. The practice-led research aims to demonstrate that the technical limitations of the device can be appropriated through a creative practice based on movement and rhythm. An exploration of the

mobile device and the 3gp video form can provide an alternative to the industry discourse. Innovation is created through entering a transitional, as yet undefined territory in documentary production. Furthermore the context of user-based histories allows us to study innovation ("the first use of a new idea", Edgerton 2007, p. ix) within the domain of the users and "pro-d-users" (Wintonick in Blassnigg [online] 2004). The thesis demonstrates that mobile video can be used beyond mainstream media and paparazzi content, "dirty reality" (Birchall 2008, p.280) and downloadable mobisodes or UGC (user-generated-content). The prospects and possibilities of mobile media are examined in an experimental method with the objective to log and capture the mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) production. The focus here is on the exploration of mobile video and the creative application of technology in conceptual and novel ways.

In order to gain a background understanding about mobile video, the history of mobile phones is flagged up, but it is not the research's aim to analyse policies and the dissemination of technology or the diffusion of innovation on a general or macro level. The research illustrates how a mobile phone can be appropriated for this form of cultural production, and how users, independent practitioners, filmmakers and artists (the users of technology) explored these new emerging possibilities in the years 2004-2007. Furthermore this research reflects on the cultural construction of mobile video technology through the "technological imaginary" (Punt 2000) and "consensual understanding" (Punt 2000) of mobile videos in the mediascape.

1.2 Research Context

The research focuses on exploring the mobile phone as a creative tool in the discipline of documentary filmmaking. In the academic field of sociology and communication studies the mobile phone has gained attention. Whilst research in these disciplines looks at the macro-structures of society, a lack of interest in the creative capacities and exploration of mobile opportunities is evident. While this PhD research aims at actively expanding the boundaries of the field and can demonstrate new prospects for documentary theory and practice, the communication studies approach is merely passively reflecting upon change. Also, a discussion of aesthetics and the exploration of the creative features of emerging mobile practices do not exist in social science and communication texts[1], such as Castells (2006), Glotz (2005) or Goggin (2006). Castell gathers data to explain a shift towards a mobile network society, Glotz analyses the mobile cultural identities and Goggin examines the mobile phone as a cultural object. Beyond technical and programming texts or interface design studies [Studio 7.5 (2006) or Jones (2006) among others], no publication to date deals with the creative aspects of mobile media, such as the practice of mobile documentary filmmaking.

Furthermore, this research emphasises the role of the user in the innovation process. In the years 2004-2007, independent creative practitioners (artists, filmmakers, photographers and mobile phone users) illustrated an alternative understanding and interpretation of mobile video to the industry production of mobile content. Mobile video can produce creative innovation and enable transformation through expanding

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[1] for further discussion in sociology or communication see Agar (2005), Horst (2006), Ito (2006), Jenkins (2006), Katz (2002) and (2006), Kavoori (2006), Levionson (2004), Ling (2004) and (2005), Rheingold (2003) and Steinbock (2007).

the boundaries of filmmaking and exploring new ways to film and view mobile videos. In opposition to "an innovation-centric view of technology driven by economic determinism" (Punt 2008, p. 147), the exploration of form becomes a long-term investment in order to understand the capacities of the mobile video format in this research project. As illustrated in chapter two, the industry is only interested in exploring new mechanisms to create revenue, looking into the production of mobisodes using HD cameras and the Hollywood system to distribute mobile content through iTunes, Ovi or similar online and mobile stores. An alternative mobile practice as cultural product can illustrate the potential to work <u>with</u> mobile devices outside this economically driven system and therefore allow an evaluation of mobile-specific formats. The exploration of the mobile video aesthetic in the years 2004 to 2007 illustrates an alternative to the economic determinism in the mainstream entertainment and mobile industry. The exploration of the emerging aesthetic in an international context and through a user-based analysis illustrates the prospects and potential of mobile video in the alternative space of the mobile-mentary (mobile documentary).

The mobile-mentary project positions the 3gp and mpeg 4 formats not as a technological limitation, but as an emerging creative feature and characteristic that entered the mediascape from 2004 onwards. In the years 2005 and 2006 more than 14 mobile film festivals appeared internationally (see appendix B for reference). These festivals showcased mobile productions mainly under one or five minutes in length. Prior to the FIL*M*OBILE screening in 2008, no festival looked into the potential of mobile devices for feature-length productions; furthermore no festival, exhibition or conference discussed the potential and prospects of mobile media as a new asset in

the mediascape. The FIL*M*OBILE exhibition curatorially explored for the first time the impact of the emerging mobile practices. As a key finding, the formation of a mobile-specific aesthetic can be demonstrated. In the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition in the London Gallery West, mobile productions were screened on phones, TVs, as single-screen large projection, and printed as small and large-scale photography, in interactive and online formats. These exhibited works were all produced on mobile devices. Other initiatives such as the *Nokia connect to Art* (see discussion in the next chapter) have made use of mobiles only as a displaying unit of art work rather than a source of production.

As no contemporary theoretical conceptions suggested themselves as a suitable basis for mobile documentary filmmaking, a historical perspective was chosen. Chapter Five demonstrates how Vertov's and Richter's definitions of documentary are related to the feature-length mobile production *Max with a Keitai* (Schleser, 3gp/mpeg4 video, 58 min., Japan 2008). The 1920s provide a framework illustrating alternative definitions and practices of feature-length documentary projects as formulated by the avant-garde. The genre of the city film, which emerged in this timeframe, outlines the pioneering work of artists and technicians through conceptual engagement with the parameters of film, drawing upon the application of movement and the formation of new aesthetics.

A key difference from the 1920s is that mobile video is now ubiquitous. Therefore Chapter Three provides an introduction to user-based histories. On an everyday basis, one holds the possibilities for filmmaking literally in one's hands. The approach, drawing upon user-based histories, allows the thesis to provide an alternative to the

mainstream industry understanding of mobile media. The concepts of the "technological imaginary" (Punt 2000, p.19) and "consensual understanding" (Punt 2000, p.17) will be outlined in the technological review and in relation to the definition of the neologism *mobile-mentary* in Chapter Seven.

1.3 Method

Within the practice-led research, I used three main elements to evaluate my own experimental work. This section will highlight the reasons for (i) creating the vblog (video blog), (ii) my approach towards mobile filmmaking and (iii) creating the FIL*M*OBILE network. These elements not only allowed me to reflect upon my work, but also to present the research in public and to an expert audience.

(i) **The vblog** (www.mobile-mentary.co.uk)

The word documentary itself derives from the French, who used the term *documentaire* to describe travelogues (Grierson in MacCann 1966, p.207). The mobile-mentary vblog (video blog) functions in a similar fashion, while creating a visual database as a resource for mobile filmmaking. The visual sketchbook provides a documentation of the production process in (almost) real-time as the experimental feature documentary develops.

No guidelines, whether technical or creative, or any reference material existed in 2005. The vblog is a production and research diary outlining the experimentation process during the four-month filming on location in Japan from September to

December 2006. Every day, the mobile video was logged, captured and analysed. The indexing was conducted according to its graphical parameters and the filmed subject matter. At the same time comments on the production were posted online, which later became the intertitles in the feature *Max with a Keitai*.

(ii) **Mobile filmmaking**

The reflective subject matter of the feature film (making a documentary film about making a documentary with a mobile phone) records the research process. The mobile filmmaking process is revealed in part 1 (DVD I), and analysed in part 2, the thesis, of the research project. As part 1 (DVD I and DVD II) demonstrates, mobile devices open up new possibilities of alternative cultural formations in the form of documentary filmmaking. These alternatives and mobile-specific characteristics are explored in the following chapters. The mobile aesthetic is linked to the 3gp mobile video format and interpreted through the users of the technology. The *mobile-mentary* project is an experiment in "cinematic communication" (opening titles in *The Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov, 1929, Soviet Union) exploring the "third screen" (Goggin 2006, p.162).

In the first instance a mobile-mentary prototype project needed to be created in order to understand and evaluate how the mobile phone video footage and the 3gp medium work and where to position the new format in the contemporary mediascape. In order to really understand the current and potential impact of camera-phone technologies on our culture and our lives, one needs to produce work with the mobile device to demonstrate the capacities for innovation in the field. Hans Richter argued, "What

and how to make and do, you learn only by making and doing." (Hans Richter 1971, p. 103)

Max with a Keitai portrays Japanese culture in 2006 and updates the image of Japan through providing an alternative reading to the perception of Japan as progressive and technologically the most advanced centre of mobile culture. The city film also records the failures of the Japanese technoculture, such as the derelict shopping mall in Den-Den town (Electric City) with the keitai (mobile phone).

(iii) **FIL*M*OBILE conference and exhibition**

FIL*M*OBILE is a network project, established as part of this research, which created a dialogue between the industry, filmmakers and artists working with mobile devices. The project consisted of several parts: networking events, an international research conference, cinema screenings and a gallery exhibition. During the events the practice components were presented in public, which enabled me to analyse my work in relation to the work of my peers. (FIL*M*OBILE conference in the Lumière Cinema, London, 4th and 5th April 2008; FIL*M*OBILE exhibition in the London Gallery West, London, 3rd April to 4th May 2008; www.filmobile.net; see also image documentation appendix F and see further detailed discussion in Chapter Six).

1.4 Hypotheses

This study asserts four hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1:

Mobile documentaries can be positioned as an alternative cultural formation to the mobile and entertainment industries' discourse.

Through shifting the focus from an economically driven agenda to a creative exploration of the possibilities of mobile documentaries, one can expand the boundaries in the field of documentary filmmaking. A consideration of the mobile phone's technical limitations will be key when using the mobile phone as a filmmaking tool. Once a prototype project has been produced, it can allow users to realise the potential of mobile documentary filmmaking. Mobile documentaries can demonstrate an alternative cultural formation to the industry discourse. Through positioning the work in the independent sector of the gallery and film festival context, creative practices and aesthetics can be further examined. Moreover the field of so-called amateur media is considered. Through a user-based history, one can reveal an alternative cultural formation and analyse the "consensual understanding" (Punt 2000, p.17) of mobile video.

Hypothesis 2:

The mobile video format is a new asset in the mediascape. A creative application of mobile can produce a mobile-specific aesthetic.

From having viewed a large body of mobile media projects, having curated a mobile (film) art exhibition and having pioneered the world premiere of a dedicated mobile feature film screening as part of the FIL*M*OBILE events, I have come to recognise similar patterns in mobile video. The approach towards mobile documentary filmmaking can be related to the non-linear and abstract city-film productions in the 1920s, which were produced in North America, Europe, the Soviet Union and Japan.

The work of the 1920s avant-garde documentary filmmakers can be expanded in the mobile realm. The approach towards conceptualising alternative documentary categories in the form of non-linear and non-narrative documentary filmmaking without a script is a useful resource for mobile documentary filmmaking. By means of drawing upon an experimental approach, one can thus focus on the visual elements of mobile video production, the pixel. The exploration of movement was formulated into an international documentary discourse by the filmmakers affiliated with the avant-garde in the 1920s. Hans Richter, working with Eggeling, saw the work in abstract filmmaking as a *Universelle Sprache* (universal language) (Foster 1998, p.76); and Dziga Vertov worked to create a new visual language (Feldman 1998, Michelson 1984, Petric 1987 and Roberts 2000). The focus on the pixel as a graphical representation can be read with fewer cultural connotations than narrative constructs. Therefore the formation of an alternative mobile documentary practice can produce a similar kind of universal and international approach.

Hypothesis 3:

One can produce a feature-length documentary by means of using the pixel as a leitmotif and reference for the digital texture of mobile phone video.

One can work with 3gp video using the pixel as the leitmotif and movement as a structure to construct a non-linear feature film. These ideas are related to the creative interpretation of technology in novel ways. In contrast to the industry formats and standards, which can be defined as "technological imaginary" (Punt 2000, p.19), mobile documentary filmmaking allows pro-d-users to explore the capacities only limited to the boundaries of one's imagination. Prior to the introduction of sound film, the term documentary was explored in a variety of creative and conceptual parameters

(see Chapter Four). The documentary format in the interwar period offered the freedom to explore the creative capacity of film, set free from the constraints of narrative and economic driven implementations which overshadowed documentary in the subsequent decade. The city film genre was a resource for introducing new documentary filmmaking methods and aesthetics to the film industry, in the same way as a user-based exploration and analysis of mobile video can lead the innovation process.

Hypothesis 4:

> **The idea to use mobile phones in a way they were never intended for allows experimentation with mobile devices in creative and conceptual forms.**

The mobile phone, manufactured and labelled as a communication device, can be appropriated as a filmmaking tool. DVD I demonstrates this potential. In order to investigate the contribution of mobile video to the field of documentary theory and practice, I chose to produce a feature documentary on a mobile device.

The mobile phone not only has a camera but also a screen. The mobilisation of viewing experiences in urban environments can be explored in the form of *mobile micro-movies*, as presented in DVD II. Through experimentation with mobile experiences rather than content, innovation can be imported into the mediascape. The work contributes to illustrating an alternative meaning and understanding of mobile video technology. Chapter Six deals with the practice components and demonstrates that multiple contemporary histories of mobile video can be located in the mediascape. In the subsequent chapter the discussion of mobile video is related to the consensual understanding of mobile video technology as a cultural construct.

1.5 Explanation of Terms

(i)   Glossary of technical terms:

3G, 3gp, micro-movie, mpeg4, Keitai

3G

Third-Generation (3G) mobile communication technology allows permanent data connection, data transmission and the technical capacities to handle multimedia, including mobile photography and mobile video.

3gp

The first generation 3G mobile camera phones had the capacity to record in the mobile video format 176x144, using the 3gp video compression format filming 12 frames per second. The 3gp format is a global standard developed by the Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) in 1998. Three years later, the second generation of 3G phones was launched in Japan, which were capable of working with a QVGA 320x240 resolution. These phones use the mpeg 4 video compression format, which can record in 29 frames per second. The latest mobile devices using the mpeg 4 standard have video capacities similar to standard DV video.

Micro-movie

The term "micro-movie" was coined by Nicholas Negroponte's Architecture Machine Group at MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the 1980s. It was expanded by Glorianna Davenport (Director of the Interactive Cinema Group at MIT Media

Lab) in the context of interactive video databases in 1993 (Wolf 2005 [online]). In *Orchestrating Digital Micro-movies*, Davenport describes a micro-movie as a short piece of video with descriptive information attached to it (Davenport in Wolf 2005 [online]).

Mpeg 4

The mpeg 4 codec allows users to work with mobile phone video files in the digital standard size QVGA 320 x 240. As the name indicates, this is a quarter of native video format VGA (640x480) and therefore the video does not pixelate when imported in a standard DV environment. QVGA is the current standard format for online video. QVGA (Quarter Video Graphics Array) is a multimedia video format and MPEG (Moving Picture Experts Group) a video compression format.

Since 2006, mobile phones have been available in Japan including cameras that have the ability to record with a resolution almost comparable to VHS / DVD quality. This technological development resulted from the advancement of the mpeg-4 codec, "which is the new compression standard for satellites and DVDs", (Nokia 2006 [online]). In Europe, the mobile phone industry only commenced marketing mobile devices as filmmaking tools in 2008, once the mpeg 4 standard was launched (see further discussion on page 37).

Keitai

The mobile phone is termed *keitai* in Japan. *Keitai* also means: hand-carry, small and portable, carrying something, form, shape or figure, and mobile phone (Flaherty 2007 [online]). When working with low-res mobile video, the parameters of form became

the focal point in the research project. The mobile video's original qualities are revealed in its specific shape and figure, the pixel.

(ii)   Definitions of key theoretical terms:

Documentary, Keitai Aesthetic, Mediascape, User-based history

Documentary

The analysis presented in this thesis does not define documentary film by means of the conventional comparison to fictional storytelling, but rather as a framework that allows users to explore new film forms and aesthetics. Documentary provides a platform to explore creative innovation in filmmaking. The ideas of using unscripted and non-linear work for feature-length documentary films first appear in the 1920s: the pioneering documentary definitions of Dziga Vertov and Hans Richter, as outlined in Chapter Five, provide a starting point for this research. The relationship between mobile video and the documentary format is analysed through the practice components. The documentary category (according to the 1920s conceptualisation) provides a theoretical framework to contextualise the mobile experiments. In this decade, like the research project, documentary was formulated as a hybrid category. The 1920s documentary filmmakers, who were affiliated with the avant-garde circles, were interested in exploring new documentary definitions, forms and aesthetics. The pioneers were creating new visual languages and new documentary film forms. Their methods of drawing upon movement can be applied in the mobile realm. Within the literature, John Grierson is cited as the first to introduce the term 'documentary' during the course of a review of Robert Flaherty's film *Moana* in a 1926 issue of the

New York Sun (Winston 1999, p.8 and MacCann 1966, p. 207). The debates within the field of documentary theory and practice agree as much on this overture as the arguments are diversified within the discourse of documentary. Writing in 1949, Hans Richter stated:

> Twenty years ago most documentary films, like those made by Ivens, Vigo, Vertov and Grierson, were shown as avant-garde films on avant-garde programs. Today the documentary film is a respected, well-defined category in the film industry alongside the fictional entertainment film.
> (Richter 1949, p. 34)

The documentary category developed with the appearance of the early cinematic machines. Similar to the city films of the 1920s, the early cinema films illustrate an interest in the urban environment, which suggests strong parallels with contemporary mobile productions. Barnouw argues that, by 1907, the one-reel documentaries began to be outnumbered by fiction film and that the newsreel institutionalised the actualities and documentaries (Barnouw 1993, p.21). The avant-garde city filmmakers in particular were using the city film category in an innovative way and were exploring the boundaries of the documentary format. In *Projected Cities – Cinema and Urban Space*, Stephen Barber contrasts the arrival sequence of Walter Ruttmann's documentary *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (*Berlin Symphony einer Grosstadt*, 1929, Germany) with the Lumière brothers' *Arrival of the Train* (*L'arrivée d'un Train en Gare*, 1895, France). He argues that the 30 years illustrate the development from an "artless arrival" (Barber 2002, p.32) to a "representation of the forms of the city in juxtaposition with the dynamics of sensory perception" (Barber 2002, p.9). The works in the earliest decade of cinema were pioneering the technology, while the subsequent decades focused on the film language. DVD I is therefore contextualised through the documentary approach of the 1920s and DVD II relates the ideas of the early cinematic machines to the micro-movies. In the inter-war

period, innovation in the film industry was shaped through the creative exploration of documentary filmmaking, illustrated in this thesis through the emergence of the 'city film' category. The film industry applied the city film techniques into their standard production environment. The working practice for documentary developed according to the visual parameters of perception, which are explored in this research as a framework for mobile filmmaking drawing upon the visual qualities of the pixel. However, with the introduction of sound film, this practice faded out on the cinema screens.

Keitai Aesthetic

As mentioned in the definition of the term Keitai, the meaning of the word includes connotations of form, shape or figure. The mobile video's original qualities are revealed in its specific digital texture shape and figure, the pixel, which is the distinctive element of this emerging aesthetic. In this uniquely mobile parameter, a strong sense of the user and location is exposed: these elements are also found in the city film genre. The Keitai Aesthetic can represent the contemporary city in novel ways; mobile video can update the city film genre and capture urban space through the pixelated video in a way that has not been experienced before. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the users of the technology have introduced this new mobile video format into the mediascape. The practice components (DVD I) of the thesis illustrate how to merge mobile video into one coherent feature-length film. No industry format provides a framework for this category and therefore the project can be positioned in an alternative space in the mediascape.

Mediascape

Writing in *Culture*, Raymond Williams (1981) uses the terms "emergent" and "residual" to describe changes in the domain of cultural production: residual, as they reference the work of earlier decades as an alternative that was established in the last century; and simultaneously, emergent, as the projects have different motivations and work with different technologies, creating residual aesthetics that can represent emergent cultural formations. Williams classifies three types of external relations in cultural formations; (a) specialising, (b) alternative and (c) oppositional. The work of the avant-garde is situated in the latter category, (c). Fuelled by the explosive socio-cultural conditions in the 1920s, constructivists like Richter and Vertov were influenced by the agendas of the Soviet political discourses. In this decade the notion of revolutions, abrupt power changes and shifts framed the work of the artists. This research makes reference to these conditions, but focuses on the potential of the creative practices. The term "alternative", as Williams argues, indicates that "the long and complex history of the relations between cultural producers and their material means of production has not ended, but is still open and active" (Williams 1981, p.118). Being aware of the significance of cultural production in relation to access and the means of production, this research is sympathetic to the idea of change from within the mediascape. Users are not only creating stories, but also contributing to the formation of new aesthetics and innovation in the field of documentary filmmaking. As a model of mobile-mentaries in the mediascape, one could therefore apply William's notion of the alternative category (b),

> … as in the cases of the provision of alternative facilities for the production, exhibition or publication of certain kinds of work, where it is believed that existing institutions exclude or tend to exclude these.
> (Williams, 1981 p.70)

The term mediascape is adopted from an exhibition held in New York in the Guggenheim Museum in 1996. The video art exhibition explored the work of international artists with reference to the changing media technologies and the aesthetics of video art. As the curator put it:

> The mass manufacturing and distribution of video and computer equipment has generated entirely new forms of cultural production. In unprecedented numbers, and with a sophistication born of easy access to complex technologies, artists are using these devices as aesthetic tools to develop a new syntax and structure for art making.
> (Krens 1996, p.7)

The reference to the relationship between the contemporary development of mobile video technology (3gp) and the artistic uses of these aesthetic tools (mobile devices) also results in emerging mobile video practices. While video art surfaced in the gallery context, mobile phone videos transcend the boundary of the galleries into a ubiquitous realm in the mediascape. The materialisation of mobile video in the mediascape in the years 2004 to 2007 was initiated through the users of the technology. While the industry does not allow the low-res format to be imported into the mediascape, the gallery offers a space to exhibit these developments.

Within the academic discourse, mediascape is normally referenced in relation to the discussions of Appadurai (1996). Writing in *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai introduces the term mediascape (in the chapter "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy").

> Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places.
> (Appadurai 1996, p.35)

Rather than deconstructing the ideology and discourses of the narrative-based work, this research is exploring the idea of actively producing alternatives to these imagined narratives. Furthermore, the research draws attention to the aspect of the "technological imaginary," drawing upon the work of Punt (2000) in *Early Cinema and the Technological Imaginary*. The cultural construction of the early cinematic technology as much as mobile video allows one to argue for multiple historic accounts. By illustrating the potential of mobile media for cultural production outside the domain of "narrative-based accounts of strips of reality" (Appadurai 1996, p.35), alternative cultural formations can emerge. This notion of alternative, as defined above, is based on the idea of using the phone as a creative tool for self-expression and providing the possibility to users to document their situations and environments. In Part 1, the practice components demonstrate this potential. The contemporary mediascape is in an interregnum, and emergent mobile practices can exceed existing narrative codifications and discourses.

User-based histories

In addition to the previously outlined contributions of part 1, the practical work functions as an example to illustrate how users and pro-d-users can enable transformation in the mediascape. In the case of mobile video, users generate creative innovation and not the producers of the technology (i.e. mobile phone companies). Mobile video has the potential to enable transformation in the case of users' agency and the capacity to produce alternative cultural formations in the mediascape. Not only the production of content within the domain of UGC (user-generated-content) and social media is present, but also the contribution to the formation of aesthetics.

These cultural formations, which present alternatives to the mainstream, entered the mediascape from 2004 onwards. The extent of these phenomena can be defined as intervention to the industry discourse positioned in an alternative space of the mobile-mentary. The mobile industry is branding mobile devices in order to construct a technological imaginary, while users created alternative practices.

1.6 Contribution to Knowledge

A key contribution to knowledge made by this research is the documenting of the diverse mobile videos which emerged in the 3gp format between 2004 and 2007. With the introduction of mpeg 4 video, a new standard for mobile videos has been set, making outmoded the first generation of 3gp mobile videos: this research thus documents a history which would otherwise have been lost. The mobile video format, as the practice components demonstrate, has capabilities to produce innovation and enable transformation; innovation in the form of new mobile video aesthetics and transformation in emphasising the role of the user in creating these aesthetics as an alternative cultural practice.

The Keitai Aesthetic is characterised through the mobile resolution. By means of applying a filmmaking method based on movement and rhythm, expanding the work of the 1920s in the mobile realm, a mobile-specific form is infused in the mediascape. The core argument crystallises in the description and analysis of the development of a new form of mobile documentary filmmaking in the mediascape in the years 2004 to 2007. From the practice components and the mobile (film) art works curated in the

FIL*M*OBILE exhibition, the Keitai Aesthetic is developed as a cultural format and alternative to the industry dominated discourse. Moreover, the thesis outlines the cultural constructs that frame the meaning of mobile video in the contemporary mediascape.

2. The Early Mobile Mediascape (2004-2007)

This chapter introduces the categorisation of Mobile Devices in the Gallery - Art Exhibitions, the Industry Discourse and Mobile Filmmaking. It reviews the differences between these categories and illustrates the ways in which the mobile video has entered the mediascape. The art exhibitions section looks at the mobile-related work exhibited in galleries previous to the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition. The analysis points at the differences and developments of this new emerging phenomen in the years 2004 to 2007. The Industry Discourse section outlines the mobile and entertainment industries' approach, of downloadable mobisodes and other forms of using mobile devices to generate revenue, while the section on mobile filmmaking surveys short and feature length mobile filmmaking projects. The Mobile Filmmaking, and the subsequent section of Mobile Devices in the Gallery, illustrate the previously mentioned alternative approaches to the industry discourse. Opposing the economic deterministic logic of the mobile and entertainment industry, this thesis explores the aesthetic opportunities that some institutions and co-operations exclude or tend to exclude. Furthermore, one has to mention in this context that the mobile video first appeared in the gallery, at art exhibitions and at film festivals before it surfaced in the mobile and entertainment industry.

2.1 Mobile Devices in the Gallery - Art Exhibitions

Within the research timeframe, two exhibitions can be mentioned which illustrate the potential of mobile devices. The *Nokia Connect to Art* (2006) (Nokia [online]) online showcase, and *CELL PHONE: Art and the Mobile Phone* (2007) in the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, USA, introduced mobile devices into the gallery. Both exhibitions featured work by internationally recognised artists and art collectives[2] (*Contemporary Museum* (2007) [online] and *Nokia Connect to Art* (2006) [online]). The key distinction to point out here is that these exhibitions feature art work created <u>for</u> mobile devices, while this research project is looking into creating work <u>with</u> mobile devices (i) for the cinema screen (DVD I *Max with a Keitai*) and (ii) for the mobile-screen (DVD II *mobile micro-movies*). The artists in these exhibitions apply various technologies and practices to mobile media, while the mobile-mentary research uses mobile video, the low-res format, as a source to produce work. Some of these artists might not have realised the potential of mobile video or did not dare to implement the low-cost production tool into their practice.

In *Connecting to Mobile Phone Art: Engaging New Media Potential*, Joe Martin Hill provides an overview of the contemporary global art-scene and opens his enquiry by questioning if works of art for mobile phones are a new art form, a new medium, or simply a new incarnation of old media (Hill 2005 [online]). He draws upon art history

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[2] *CELL PHONE: Art and the Mobile Phone* featured Beatrice Valentine Amrhein, Blast Theory, Steve Bradley, Family Filter, Jonah Brucker-Cohen, Tim Redfren, Duncan Murphy, Informationlab, Ursula Lavrencic and Auke Touwslager, Golan Levin, Paul Notzold, Mark Shepard, URBANtells, James Rouvelle, Joe Rensel and Angie Waller. The *Nokia Connect to Art* exhibition included works by the international artists Xu Bing, Feng Mengbo, Ai Weiwei, Studio Azzurro, Bianco-Valente, Botto & Bruno, Globalgroove, Antonio Rovaldi, Zimmer Frei, Sari Kaasinen, Kati Aberg, Osmo Rauhala, Stefan Lindfors, Juha Hermanus, Louise Bourgeois, William Wegman, David Salle, Nam June Paik and Brian Alfred.

to outline the moments in time when new tools, technology and media established themselves in the (art) world (such as Jan van Eyck paintings, Lumière films or Nam June Paik videos) and concludes that mobile phones have the potential to impact upon the current conditions.

> The vast audience is out there, and in years to come, art on mobile phones – and even new forms of aesthetic expression made possible by mobile phone technologies – are likely to claim their place in the annals of art history.
> (Hill 2005 online)

While Hill offers no proof for his claims, the present mobile-mentary study clearly demonstrates the potential of mobile video and defines the Keitai Aesthetic. His forecasts are generalising, while the mobile-mentary project analyses mobile video in detail. The practice-led research illustrates the capacity of mobile video for documentary filmmaking (DVD I) and use of mobile media as a screening device (DVD II). Furthermore, Hill does not mention the notion of the user in contributing to the shaping of these new prospects: for him the role of mobile phone art is limited to those artists commissioned by Nokia and invited to exhibit at the Biennales, Arts Electronica and the Documenta exhibitions. However, he does mention the "Russian avant-garde's goal of reaching the ordinary person", which could also be termed as the Soviet agenda that was driving the new emerging art in contemporary Russia in the 1920s. Hill limits mobile media art practice to the scope of institutions (Hill 2005 [online]), when one should rather note that individuals have the possibilities of creating alternative histories to the institutions or large-scale organisations and especially the multinational co-operations. According to Hill, it seems that Nokia shall remain the innovation leader and the only innovator. Therefore the category of the mobile phone user is neglected. In fact, Nokia is very restrictive in user

participation, as the most recent incidents in Iran have demonstrated (see Cellan-Jones 2009 [online]).

Additionally, Hill mentions the trend of the documentary mode in the art world, referring to the *Documenta XI* (Kassel, Germany 2007). This is a fruitful reference, but the featured works of Ulrike Ottinger (*Southeast Passage*, 2002) and Amar Kanwar (*A Season Outside*, 1998) are produced on DV-CAM / Digi-Beta. The mobile-mentary project goes beyond the sole notion of a documentary mode or a referencing of these trends and uses a mobile device to produce a feature documentary. Hill's essay is missing any reference to mobile video productions of any kind.

The claims of *Nokia Connect to Art, CELL PHONE: Art and the Mobile Phone, Connecting to Mobile Phone Art: Engaging New Media Potential* are very broad and different from the focus of this research project. All these initiatives were led and supported by Nokia. Therefore no critical argument is present. These attempts were part of a branding and PR exercise and not an investigation to generate new knowledge about mobile media. Therefore only well established artists were chosen. These artists could transfer their practices and brand-like identities, or rather fame, into the field of the mobile media. Unlike these initiatives, the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition curated mobile (film) art works in a way that focused on the new mobile aesthetics. (Chapters Six and Seven outline these elements in greater detail). This research argues that these mobile characteristics can be located in an alternative field due to fact that the works were produced <u>with</u> mobile devices and therefore introduce a new aesthetic into the mediascape.

One of the earliest examples of mobile film art produced on a mobile device is *Speech Marks* (2004), by the British artist Steve Hawley. In 2004, he won a special prize at the *VAD Digital Arts Festival* in Girona, Spain for his three-minute mobile video. He captured fragments of everyday life, which are digitally composed into a "collage of moving images" (Hawley 2004 [online]). Hawley uses the mobile video's limitation actively to create his mobile video. In comparison to *Cell Stories* (Lachmann 2004), which is described in the Mobile Filmmaking section, Hawley superimposes the different images, stitching them together into one image in an imperfect manner. The notion of imperfection is embedded in the mobile phone video and revealed through the pixels' texture. Also in 2004, Melissa Bliss produced *e-state*, a 90-second film for mobile devices, which portrays flows of mobile communication in an East London housing estate. The mobile film production involved teenagers from the location as cast and crew. In her 2005 mobile production *In My Name*, Melissa Bliss transmitted her social commentary about state control and surveillance, filmed on location, to the Norwich East-International Gallery. In the same year she presented *Here I Am, Still Strong* in the Arena Gallery in Liverpool as video artefacts on a mobile phone. Mobile phones were mounted in the gallery as a new canvas format. Her mobile phone productions explore the relationship between technology and its users, which is an interesting aspect when considering the mobile phone as a fusion of communication and lens-based media. These mobile video works do not conform to any industry standard, but explore mobile videos' prospects. Steve Hawley's and Melissa Bliss' mobile video art work were chosen for the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition, as they reference the unique mobile quality of the 3gp video, the pixel.

2.2 Industry Discourse

With the exception of UGC, in the years 2004 to 2006 mobile video was ignored by the film, TV and mobile media industry. In 2005, mobile camera phones received an "accelerator push" (Winston 1998, p.3) through the tragic London bombings. The London 7/7 events, along with the September riots in Paris in 2006, can be defined as the tipping-point within the chronicle of mobile video in the contemporary mediascape. In news broadcasting, mobile phone footage is now frequently used for news reports when camera teams are unable to provide visual material. The culmination of a build-up of small changes that effects a big change represents the method by which mobile phones have entered the mediascape.

Next to the potential of mobile media to keep up with user demands for 24/7 connectivity and constant access to updated information on events, it is important to note that the pixelated 3G mobile phone videos seem to provide more significant footage than broadcast media. The mobile phone's unique authenticity value can be decoded through the aesthetics of the low-resolution video. The demand in the media for this mobile phone footage is also driven by its positive resonance amongst audiences. The mainstream media perception of mobile phone video at this point in time has been defined as "dirty reality" (Birchall 2008, p.282). Mobile phone footage has greater potential than just mojo (mobile journalism), distribution of ring tones or mobile paparazzi-like content (such as Saddam Hussein's hanging, Kate Moss' alleged hard-drug abuse or the exposure of the underground street artist Bansky, amongst others). The consideration of form in these examples is neglected with the exception that the low resolution aesthetic has connotations of authenticity that the industry format cannot offer.

Despite the fact that by 2006 mobile phones with video and still cameras had outnumbered the total volume of film and digital cameras sold worldwide, it was only in 2009 that the mobile industry began to recognise the mobile video format for filmmaking. The current advances in mobile camera technology (six mega-pixel cameras with high resolution in native video format, such as Nokia's N86, LG Viewty Smart or Sony Ericsson C905 Plus), were driven by a marketing strategy to advance mobile phone sales. The idea of mobile filmmaking only entered the public discourse in 2009. The industry perceptions of these devices can be summarised through a quote in the London newspaper *Metro* in the article "The future in focus"; "…with ever more impressive handsets available, technology is taking over tradition" (Hart 2009, p. 28). On the contrary, this research argues for the reactivation of alternative traditions, which emerged in the decade of silent documentary filmmaking.

Galleries, art and film festivals have provided a greater amount of freedom to explore the new mobile aesthetics. The works exhibited and screened outside the industry do not need to match the manufacturing standards or formats. In contrast to the industry products, these mobile works do not need to function as a consumable unit, such as the industry's format of a "mobisode" (Quinion 2005 [online]). A mobisode (from mobile and episode) is a mini-television series episode, apparently suitable for viewing on small screen devices. Vodaphone signed a deal with Fox in the USA to produce 24 one-minute spin-off episodes of its drama *24* with a parallel sub-plot under the title *24: Conspiracy* (Quinion 2005 [online]). Commercial Hollywood or 'cellywood' film productions for mobile devices were launched in 2004. Here one has to note that mobisodes are produced with HD equipment for mobile viewing. Twentieth Century Fox Studio produced the first mobisodes *24* (Fox, US, 2004),

Sunset Hotel (Fox, US, 2004) and *Love and Hate* (Fox, US, 2004), which were distributed via exclusive deals with network providers in the following year. Fox recognises that

> …the entertainment industry evolved as a new media like motion picture, radio, broadcast television and even cable emerged, video multimedia is evolving and adapting to the new format of mobility.
> (Fitchard 2006 [online])

At this point in time, the entertainment industry is not exploring mobility to its full extent or utilising mobile media as a new format. Neither alternative models of distribution, such as hypermedia concepts using matrix (Lowe 1999, p.62) or rhizomatic communication structures (Weibel 2002, p.50), nor the mobile aesthetics, are considered in the entertainment industry. The mobisodes follow the industry conventions, based on the DV or HDV standards, which can be clearly differentiated from the more innovative mobile media work produced by artists and filmmakers in the years 2004 to 2007. Users and independent practitioners make use of the distinctive mobile resolution to construct work, while the mobile phone video codec does not meet the requirements set by the TV and film industry conventions, norms and image quality ratios. This divergence between the commercial narrative mobisodes and mobile video projects earlier described can be further articulated in the following account provided by Eric Young, director of the mobisode drama *24*. Holson reveals Young's approach:

> About 70 percent of the images he used were close-ups of actors, because panoramic shots appeared blurry. He said he used tiny speakers to hear what "the sound of a neck cracking" would be like on a cell phone after one of the episode's characters died from a snapped vertebra. But for gunshot wounds, the director was forced to make the bullet holes extra large and to double the amount of blood so they could be easily identified on the small screen.
> (Holson 2005 [online])

These cellywood dramas are purely audio-driven narratives. Without the voice over narration and dialogue the mobisodes would make little sense. The mobisodes do not consider the original mobile resolution for filmic expression; they merely use the mobile media as a distribution and not a production format. Production is only restricted to the industry-based formats, which exclude 3gp video. Furthermore, mobile video's distinctive characteristic, the pixel, which highlights the presence of the visual media, seems to be defined as a technical problem in TV and film studio productions. In the industry jargon, one refers to the filmic texture as artefact or fragment rather than as a form of filmic expression.

A one-to-one translation or repackaging of cinematic or TV formats to the mobile screen is also problematic. The viewing experience on mobile devices is quite distinctive from the cinema, TV or desktop experience. Apple celebrates itself for the iTunes store, but it is rather selling content that is not intended to be viewed on mobile devices and iPods. Aside from the film industries' HD production format, it is also the distribution mechanisms through which the network providers endeavour to maintain their monopoly position in the domain of 3G networks[3], which in turn are embedded in the policy regulations of the European Union[4]. The study of these factors involves a number of parameters that are beyond the scope of this research. (For an indication see

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[3] The network providers maintain their monopolistic positions for distributing content via mobile 3G networks. "Whilst Premium SMS (PSMS) offers some great opportunities for both micro billing and non-credit card billing systems, the payouts offered by the networks are very low. For a £1.50 PSMS that the user pays (£1.26 after VAT), the operator and aggregator will take over 30p. This figure can be much higher on some networks. This leaves little over 90p for the content provider, creator or developer. It means that the content provider can be forced into a position of charging considerably more for mobile content than when it is delivered though credit card billing on a web-site…The mobile operators have generally regarded themselves as the key providers of mobile content, assuming that most people will want to download through their portals" (Brill 2007 [online]). Some network providers even block or restrict the mobile internet access for certain applications such as *Fring* (a mobile peer-to-peer mobile internet telephone system). By doing this the network providers protected and preserved their stable trading circumstances.

[4] Most European governments auctioned their UMTS licences in 2000. Japanese regulators did not charge for their licences, which allowed Japanese companies to invest extensively in their research and development. *UMTS and 3G licences* [online] http://www.umtsworld.com/industry/licenses.htm

debates about Mobile TV standards or Janson Wilson *3G to Web 2.0 Can Mobile Telephony Become an Architecture of Participation?*) The introduction of Third Generation (3G) as a new standard for mobile communication created unexplored and currently undefined new prospects for the media-industries and users alike. 3G networks replaced the 2G analogue technology in 2003. According to Thompson, it was not the first time that the phone industry had invented a technology before it had worked out what it would be used for (Thompson 2005, p.273). The mobile phone users not only developed means to utilise mobile devices in one's everyday life, but also to integrate mobile video into the mediascape. Thompson's quote hints at the formation of user-based histories (see discussion in the next chapter). Within this context, mediascape is understood as a field within which a new practice can develop. The *Mediascape* exhibition in the Guggenheim Museum New York (1996) illustrated how video technology could be used in innovative means beyond its application in the TV and entertainment industry. The artists in this exhibition situated video in an alternative space and developed distinctive working practices. As pointed out in the definition of mediascape in the First chapter, the camera phone can transmit this development into the mobile realm. The low-res format of the first generation mobile video phones provides a new visual pattern originating from the technical constraints. Furthermore, the low-res mobile video format has capacities for alternative forms of cultural production.

As no platform or recognition is given to the emergent mobile video format in the industries, mobile video can be positioned outside the industry discourse as a new asset in the mediascape. Mobile phone productions produced by users present an illustration of new prospects in practice beyond established industry conventions, expanding the boundaries within documentary practice. Besides the use of mobile

phone video footage in news broadcasts and on vblogs, mobile phone video footage has also surfaced in music videos (*Some Postman* [2005] produced by the Australian production company, Film Headquarters, for the US indy-rock band *The Presidents*), commercials (The *THINK!* [2006] campaign produced by Leo Burnett for the Department for Transport) and at film-festivals. The latter examples draw upon a treatment of mobile video that originates from the practice of independent filmmakers rather than the industry discourse.

2.3 Mobile Filmmaking

This section surveys mobile filmmaking projects that explore mobile video in an innovative and creative style considering the mobile-specific resolution. The projects discussed integrate the mobile phone video's distinctive look and its mobile dynamics. With its low-res capacities, the mobile phone was not created as a visual device with the intention of video or media production, but it can be appropriated as a tool for mobile filmmaking. In 2006 the music video to the song *Some Postman* was produced on multiple mobile phones by Film Headquarters. Similarly to the approach chosen by Steve Hawley, mobile phone footage was translated to the TV or cinema screen by means of applying a montage technique using multiple split-screens. Referring back to the above-mentioned *Think* commercial, Leo Burnett gave the following account of how they used the mobile phone for the DfT commissioned advert:

> We selected a group of real teenagers from London and gave
> them mobile phones and asked them to go out on their own and
> record their genuine roadside behaviour, which became the first

20 seconds of the commercial. We later worked with the teens to
craft a chilling conclusion.
(Leo Burnett 2006[5])

By mirroring an amateur filmmaking style, which is reminiscent of mobile phone formats produced by users, the advertising message is successfully transmitted through applying an authentic technique and aesthetic. The advertisement is an edited and staged mobile production, which draws upon the "highly immediate and accessible aesthetic" (*Single-Shot* [online] 2006) of the mobile phone video. Artists and filmmakers have explored these aspects, which found no resonance in the mainstream entertainment and mobile industry previous to 2009. Mobile projects like Dean Terry's *mobile video painting project v1* (Terry 2006 [online]), or the UK Film and Arts Council *Single Shot* (2006) competition, for works produced in a single shot to be screened online and on mobile devices, experiment with the new mobile phone pixel look. Within the *Single Shot* competition, Clio Barnard produced the single-shot short *Dark Glass* (2006), which she filmed on a mobile device. On the *Single Shot* website, *Dark Glass* is described as a "taut micro-drama, which emphasises the unsteady nature of the image itself" (Tate 2006 [online]). This interpretation is based on the mobile video's pixel qualities.

Filmmaking in the domain of the small screen (176 x 208 pixels) is situated in a non-standardised area of audiovisual media production. Rather than viewing the pixel as an obstruction, the argument presented in this research is to explore the mobile video's particularity. Here one can position the mobile video format on the other side of HD video. Working with the mobile devices' texture, the pixel, places mobile video outside the industry discourse. This space is increasingly located in the gallery

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[5] See appendix (C) e-mail communication.

(as described in the beginning of this chapter) and the film festival domain. From 2004 to 2007, 14 film festivals[6] focused on fictional as well as non-fictional mobile content, produced either by or for mobile phones. The *Idfa* (*International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam*) 2005 film festival claims to have screened the first short documentary film, *Cell Stories* (Edward Lachman, Double Wide Media, USA, 2004), which was entirely shot on a mobile phone (*Idfa* 2005 [online]). Edward Lachman, a cinematographer and director working on feature, documentary and commercial productions, "made four ultra-short films in which people tell tall tales about their cell phones. The image is divided into six segments that chop up the narration and visualise the story" (*Idfa* 2005 [online]). These short documentaries were sponsored by Motorola and screened on their website (www.hellomoto.com), but also gained exposure at international film-festivals (such as the *Chicago International Documentary Festival*) after the premiere of *Cell Stories* at *Idfa*. I would suggest that the creative decision to use a six-segment split screen results from the mobile dimension 176 x 144: using six mobile videos simultaneously does not require blowing up the image, and with only a little scaling the native video (VGA 640 x 480) resolution is matched. The voice-over of these short tales was not recorded on mobile devices, as the sound quality is too clear for the first generation of mobile phones.

In addition to the *Idfa* festival, the first film festivals that paid attention to mobile media were the *Big Digit* (USA, 2003)*, Nokia Shorts* (in collaboration with *Raindance* film festival, UK, 2003) and *Tampere* (Finland, 2003) film festival. These film festivals featured calls for mobile short film productions. In the case of *Nokia*

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[6] See appendix (B) mobile film festivals.

Shorts, mobile videos were limited to only 15 seconds in duration. In the following three years, *The 4ᵗʰ Screen* (USA, 2004)*, Mobicapping*, *Mobile Exposure* (USA, 2004) and the *Supershorts Mobile Competition* (UK, 2004) premiered as exclusive mobile film-festivals. By the end of 2006, mobile phone filmmaking also encroached on the field of feature film festivals. Two recent examples highlight the advancement of mobile filmmaking into the domain of feature film productions: the Italian documentary *New Love Meetings* (2006) by Marcello Mencarini (http://www.nuovicomizidamore.com) and the drama *SMS Sugar Man* (2006/2007) (http://www.smssugarman.com) by South-African filmmaker Aryan Kaganof, who claims to have produced the first feature film shot on a mobile phone. Aryan Kaganof contends;

> We are re-writing the book on cinema here …, things will never be the same again. From now onwards, all you'll need [to make a film] is a good idea, a cell phone, a laptop and you're off. It opens up a whole world of possibilities for filmmakers ...
> (Kaganof 2006 [online])

After completing his first production Kaganof reflects upon mobile phone filmmaking;

> Mobile filming is an entirely different way of constructing space. Mobile film imagery is now. Only now. And that is enough. Whether one rejoices in this development or not is actually quite irrelevant. Having being trained classically as a 35mm film maker I have bridged the analogue to digital period in my film making career. The mobile phone film period is startlingly different from mere digital video and I am not even all that sure yet exactly why. But my intuition tells me this is so.
> (Kaganof 2008 [online])

In *SMS Sugar Man,* the mobile phone is skilfully interwoven with the narrative construction of the drama as a communication device. The story of the sugar man is revealed in an intimate and immediate way through the mobile phone. From a technical perspective, one should add that the accomplishment of *SMS Sugar Man*

depends upon the way in which the film exploits the strengths of the mobile video whilst overshadowing the unique look and feel of the pixel aesthetic. Kaganof makes use of split-screen compositions and a large number of close-ups and superimpositions. *SMS Sugar Man* is an interesting example illustrating the potential of mobile phones in the domain of narrative feature film production, although the narrative structure, and the editing according to the sync sound, limit the exploration of the mobile phone's particularity and pixel aesthetic. *SMS Sugar Man* adapts to the rhythm of the character's voice leading the story of the film. In *Italian Love Meetings* (2006), the mobile phone production is also driven by the audio recording rather than the visuals. This Italian documentary shot on a mobile phone mainly makes use of close-up shots and relies predominantly on vox pops. Experimental mobile feature films, such as *Nausea* (Noel-Tod, UK, 2005) or *Why didn't anybody tell me it would become this bad in Afghanistan* (Frisch, Netherlands, 2007), reveal a greater focus on the pixel imagery and use rhythmic and associative editing. Cyrus Frisch, the Dutch filmmaker who produced *Why didn't anybody tell me it would become this bad in Afghanistan*, describes his mobile film as "an extremely subjective psychological drama, which has documentary-like attributes" (Digital Content Producer [online] 2007). *Why didn't anybody tell me it would become this bad in Afghanistan* tells a story through the eyes of a Dutch veteran dealing with the tensions and conflicts of immigrants within Dutch society. In contrast to the previously mentioned work the film has no voice-over, but consists of unpolished diegetic recordings. Le Franc emphasises its abstract quality:

> Blown up for the big screen, the shimmering vagueness of the image takes on a vibrant quality all its own. The experience is not so much like watching a movie as looking at some fascinatingly intricate and difficult-to-decipher action painting.
> (Le Fanu 2007, p.9)

Matthew Noel-Tod's 54-minute experimental mobile video production *Nausea* is inspired by impressionistic imagery. He uses aspects of pixelation, colour and video noise in a poetic way, using intertitles from the diary of Jean-Paul Sartre. The British filmmaker is telling a personal story constructed out of memory fragments recorded with a mobile device.

Filmmakers like Matthew Noel-Tod or Cyrus Frisch approach mobile phone filmmaking in a style utilising the mobile phones' distinctive pixel qualities. The use of montage and non-linear patterns to portray a location can be historically contextualised through the city film genre (see discussion in Chapter Four). Split screen compositions, rhythmic and associative editing emphasise the montage technique, which can be linked to the documentary filmmaking practice of Dziga Vertov and Hans Richter. The latter's definition of documentary frames the exploration of creative and conceptual means to produce innovation in filmmaking:

> By means of abandoning a continuous plot, the documentary film relies on montage to a higher degree than fictional filmmaking. Also the documentary film artist has got a greater amount of artistic freedom if he knows how to discover and to appropriate it. (Richter 1940, p.30)

This discovery is also at the core of the emerging mobile aesthetic. Independent producers, users, and pro-d-users use mobile devices to explore mobile dynamics and parameters, expanding the boundaries of filmmaking. One can also point out the association between cinema and the city, which is an established discourse (see Barber 2002, Clarke 1997, Fitzmaurice *et al.* 2003, Shiel *et al.* 2001, Webber *et al.* 2007). This relationship between cinema and the city can be re-framed as a new interdependency between the mobile device and the city. According to the most recent UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund report in 2007, more people now live in the

cities than in rural areas[7] and the medium that the majority of people have access to on a global scale is the mobile device. *Marketwire* reports that "a historic milestone was achieved for the wireless industry with 4 billion connections to mobile devices worldwide" towards the end of 2008:

> This estimate by Informa Telecoms & Media represents 60% of the entire global population today. In some countries, millions of people are now experiencing connectivity to the world for the first time through wireless and changing their economic, social and political fortunes forever.
> (Livingston [online] 2008)

Mobile video has the potential to create a change from within the mediascape driven by the users of mobile video technology. From 2004 to 2007 one can identify a distinction between, on the one hand, a creative mobile media practice emerging at film festivals and in the gallery space, showcasing the possibilities for cultural production created by users, and, on the other, the commercial, revenue-driven entertainment media concepts of mobisodes, downloadable ring tones, adult content and the mobile application market. The agenda of the mobile and entertainment industry is determined by economics, while users are crossing the boundaries exploring the tangents of this format. Pro-d-users are in particular taking a leading position in this field. "In this intellectual regime, the task of the artist is to examine a medium for those messages and forms that it alone can express" (Punt 2000, p. 62). Like the avant-garde artists in the '20s, today users of the technology are leading the innovation process. Filmmaking practices such as montage were developed in alternative environments, the artists' circles and networks: their adoption by the film industry followed after the premieres of the experimental documentaries. In a similar way, the exploration of mobile video is leading the way for industry discourse. The 1920s are seen as a transitional period for documentary theory and practice. In this

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[7] UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund (2007) *Urbanization: A Majority in Cities* [online]

decade the definitions of documentary were theorised by practitioners and placed in a public discourse. In mobile documentary filmmaking, one also needs to establish new terms, vocabulary and parameters in order to explore and analyse the mobile video works produced in the years 2004-2007.

3. Technological Review: The Perception of Cinematic Technology

Writing in *Does Technology Drive History – The Dilemma of Technological Determinism,* Marx and Smith conceptualise technological determinism as hard or soft. Technology and historical change can be reviewed in relation to the question of agency, "the power to effect change" and "the initiator of actions capable of controlling human destiny" (Marx 1994, p. xii). The hard view perceives technological development as an autonomous force driving history and progress. This monocausal approach can be critiqued, as technology is not organised as an institution; "it has no members or stated policies, nor does it initiate actions" (Marx 1994, p. xii). Moreover it can be defined as an "abstract, disembodied, quasi-metaphysical entity" (Marx 1994, p. xii). The soft approach, however, studies "less specific, multivalent explanations" and investigates the circumstances and situations of the actors of technology in "the various and complex social, economic, political and cultural mix" (Marx 1994, p. xii).

In this research the understanding of cinematic technology is linked to a multiplicity of properties and prospects. This thesis's objective is to examine an alternative interpretation of the mobile 3gp video, investigating the use of mobile video technology outside the industry discourse. Therefore particular emphasis is placed on the role of the user and amateur media in illustrating alternatives. In other words, this study explores the technology-in-use and looks into the multiple uses and ideas at

work with cinematic technologies. The model developed by Punt (2000) in *Early Cinema and the Technological Imaginary*, which examines the cultural construction of cinematic technology in early cinema, provides a pattern to examine the consensual understanding of mobile videos in the contemporary mediascape. In contrast to the first 20 years of the last century, the notion of the user in documentary film is becoming more significant now, as mobile devices are omnipresent. Therefore the case of the pro-d-user (Wintonick 2004) and the approach towards examining cinematic technologies through a user-based history (Edgerton 2007) are investigated in this chapter.

3.1 Technology and Historical Change

Writing in *Early Cinema and the Technological Imaginary*, Michael Punt outlines the period of early cinema as a dynamic process in which a number of individuals and collectives were taking part in shaping the invention of the cinematic technologies. He identifies the key figures in early cinema histories, Edison, the Lumières, Méliès and Paul amongst others. The backgrounds of the inventors shaped their interest in exploring the prototypes that led towards the construction of the cinematic apparatus and institutions. The inventors approached their research projects and experiments from various angles and each had a distinct set of economic, scientific and creative agendas. Punt argues for a reinterpretation of the existing linear technological history of cinema, "a collective interpretation of a number of devices around the same time was an important determining factor in how various machines were used" (Punt 2000, p.17). A non-linear approach to cinema allows one to shift away from technological

determinism towards a specific cultural practice. Furthermore it allows us to understand the cinematic machine in the light of multiple functions beyond the economic agendas of the entertainment system, as data storage, as news medium and as an instructional apparatus (Punt 2000, p 44). By means of studying multiple approaches, which contextualise an emerging practice, common denominators can be investigated.

> These broader understandings imply that its use as "the movies" was not the inevitable consequence of the technology, nor was it the product of its initial exploitation by Lumière, Edison, Paul et al.
> (Punt 2000, p.96)

This approach to studying cinematic technology is defined as meta-discursive. It not only examines early cinema, but also analyses the "consensual understanding" (Punt 2000, p.17) in the process that shapes the meaning that the cinematic technologies acquire. Punt argues that the significant point is that invention and history are dynamic processes in which ideas become stabilised through a cultural process of representation (Punt 2007, p. 17). These historic processes involve a "network of influences" and can be located in any specific temporary setting (Punt 2007, p. 19). In the context of this thesis, the research analyses the period from 2004 to 2007 as the temporary frame for the investigation of mobile documentaries. In this timeframe a window for experimentation with the 3gp media was opened, which is studied as an interaction of technology and historical change. It is a

> …consequence of a complex convergence of individual and generalised forces which temporarily found a meaning in a particular machine ensemble; a process that might be described as its "mutual intelligibility".
> (Punt 2000, p.18)

Punt points out the fact that there was no common consensus towards the cinematic invention before it entered the public arena, "a persistent, stable interpretation ascribed to a particular technology that is shared by significant sections of society"

(Punt 2000, p.20). As mentioned in Chapter Two, the mobile cameraphone entered the mediascape before its applications were explored. Therefore no industry regulations for mobile video existed in the research timeframe. While the industry was exploring revenue models to market mobile video and content, users developed new possibilities according to their own multiple agendas. The process that leads to the construction of meaning attached to technology is described by Punt as the "technological imaginary" (Punt 2000, p.20). In *Early Cinema and the Technological Imaginary*, Punt defines the concept as "the intellectual space from which mental models of technology emerge as representations" (Punt 2000, p.150). The idea is not only looking at the technology (hardware) but also its "representation of cultural aspirations".

> …both rational and irrational ideas to the processes of invention in order to accommodate and consolidate the range of understandings that surround new ideas. Without the inherent negotiability of the concept of the technological imaginary, it becomes difficult to account for technology as anything other than a hard cultural determinant — something it evidently is not.
> (Punt 2000, p.20)

The research into early film history as much as early forms of mobile filmmaking is "revealing a complex network of interaction between the social, economic and technological determinants of film production and exhibition" (Punt 2000, p.90).

In the case of mobile documentaries in the contemporary mediascape as much as in the case of the invention of cinema, "the discrepancy between what the various individuals thought they had produced and what cinema as an entertainment machine actually became" provides a case for an intervention through illustrating the approach to multiple histories of the early cinematic machine. The consideration of alternatives is key, as it allows an evaluation of what one perceives as "consensual understanding"

(Punt 2000, p.17) and the processes that led towards this perception. Writing in *The Shock of the Old – Technology and Global History since 1900*, David Edgerton, says that too often histories are written as if no alternative could or did exist (Edgerton 2007, p. xiii). This argument can also be transferred into the processes that shape and transform the contemporary mobile mediascape. Edgerton points to the fact that most accounts of technology are innovation-based timelines, whereas the application of technologies is rather a "mix and match across centuries" (Edgerton 2007, p. xii). In line with Punt's argument, a non-linear approach is open to new interpretations and allows us to argue for interventions. Edgerton maintains that a central characteristic of user-based history is that alternatives exist for nearly all technologies. Furthermore, he attaches a creole attribute to technology: he characterises it as "derivative and hybrid between the incomer and existing" (Edgerton 2007, p. 43). He describes creole technologies as earthy, local, genuine, vulgar and popular (Edgerton 2007, p.43). The approach gives users a licence to get dirty with the shiny HD mediascape. The spectacle and exclusiveness of bourgeois media is lost in this approach; it allows users to define and appropriate formats according to their needs and not according to the economically driven accounts of the industry. An alternative consideration of existing technologies and working practices is emphasised in Edgerton's approach. He illustrates how a history of technology-in-use can destabilise contemporary claims of innovation and novelty. The image of new technologies can be radically altered through this bottom-up approach. In the current time of the buzz-creating viral new economy, the formation of a *MySpace* and *YouTube* generation, a shift towards non-economic deterministic models and scenarios can demonstrate the potential and prospects not envisioned by the CEOs, creative directors and account managers in the entertainment industries. An approach towards a user interpretation of technology and

innovation can provide an alternative consensual understanding of technologies and their practices in use. The field of documentary provides a platform to explore transformations that can provide alternative accounts and produce change within the mediascape.

3.2 User-based Histories

In *The Shock of the Old – Technology and Global History since 1900*, David Edgerton analyses technologies of the everyday that are marginalised in the contemporary discourse deconstructing innovation. According to Edgerton a "technology-in-use" and a "use-based history" can "shift attention from the new to the old, the big to the small, the spectacular to the mundane, the masculine to the feminine, [and] the rich to the poor" (Edgerton 2007, p. xiv). The mobile video positions itself as mundane rather than spectacular. Mobile video is capturing the everyday rather than narrative constructs. Within the arena of video production, 3gp video seems to be an underdog, not considered as a serious format by the industries and not even defined as a filmmaking tool by its inventors (before the switch from 3gp to mpeg 4 video formats). Edgerton argues that "history is changed when we put it into the technology that counts, not only the famous spectacular technologies but the low and ubiquitous ones" (Edgerton 2007, p.212). The mobile video is ubiquitous in our contemporary mediascape, but has not found its resonance in the industry discourse. As a consequence, alternative scenarios for mobile documentary production have emerged. The potential of the low-tech mobile devices can provide access to documentary filmmaking tools that can produce alternatives to the high-definition industry formats.

As the categories of user and producer break down, the distinction between industry and amateur becomes 'pixelated'. In *Documentary Film at the Junction Between Art, Politics, and New Technologies*, Martha Blassnigg reviews the "New Media: Frontiers in Documentary" master class at the *International Documentary Film Festival, Amsterdam* (November 2004). At this film festival, the Canadian documentary filmmaker, Peter Wintonick, introduced the conceptual model of the "pro-d-user", which relates to "the blurring roles of the user and the producer (pro-d-user)", the related political impact of subversive and interactive use of new technologies (Wintonick in Blassnigg [online] 2004). The pro-d-user continues to blur the boundaries of previously distinctive categories of producer and user. In the context of documentary film, Danny Birchall writes in *Online Documentary* that the elements one sees in documentary films on the world wide web are "being reconfigured into new, often fractured and fragmentary forms, mostly by amateurs" (Birchall 2007, p.282). This account can contribute to the bigger picture of user-based histories, which can provide an understanding about media (in this case mobile video) through an analysis of technology-in use. A user-based interpretation allows me to argue for the formation of alternative practices to the mobisodes.

Innovation in this field is emerging through a user-based exploration of technology. The user has capacities to contribute to the definition of alternatives. There "are alternative technologies, alternative paths of invention" (Edgerton 2007, p.210). Within this context, one can refer to the emerging possibilities in the timeline of so-called amateur technology (16/8 mm, Super 8, VHS video or mobile media). The standard introduced by the industries is a rather imaginary one and the discourse behind the formation of amateur technology is meant to maintain a distinction between

industry and users of the technology. Users can contribute to the production of content and innovate new aesthetic forms.

> A more user-based history has shown great discrepancy between the vision of those who invented and innovated the technology and those who shaped it in relation to a discriminating audience…we are now able to recognise the beholder's share in shaping the meaning of the invention and forcing a form that was beyond the conception of the producers.
> (Punt 2008, p. 144)

The mobile camera phone as a ready-made consumer product was foreshadowed by a DIY[8] application created by Philip Kahn in 1997[9]. This semi-professional prototype illustrates how a user appropriated existing technology in a novel way. By combining a digital camera, laptop and mobile phone, a user created a new technological capacity prior to the introduction of an industry prototype. In contrast, the history of the mobile phone is normally tracked back to its origins as a communication device, originating from the labs of scientists for military purposes. Mobile phone technology has undergone a relatively long period of development from the first two-way portable radio, the Motorola SCR-100, used in World War Two, to the production of the first prototype, which was produced by Martin Cooper in 1973. The Motorola project manager is widely credited with inventing the first personal, hand-held phone, the *DynaTAC* (Thompson 2005, p.99). While the technology originated from the science labs, the application of the mobile device is driven by the users. Here text messaging provides a model for the presented case of mobile video.

> Kltr is the clln of sgns spcfc to a sosIET. Evry tek hs a kltr of its own. A kltr cn b hrd 2 undrstan 2 outsdrs. Ther is no bttr illstrn of ths thn txt mesgs. Txt msg ws an accident. No1 expected it. Whn the 1st txt mesg ws sent, in 1993 by Nokia eng stdnt Riku Pihkonen, the telcom cpnies thought it ws nt important. SMS –

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[8] Do it yourself

[9] Maney (2007) *Baby's arrival inspires the birth of the cellphone camera — and societal evolution*. US today [online].

> Short Message Service – ws nt considrd a majr pt of GSM. Like
> mny teks, the *pwr* of txt – indeed, the *pwr* of the fon – wz
> discvrd by users. In case of txt mssng, the usrs were the yng or
> poor in the W and E.
> (Agar 2003, p. 105)[10]

The potential of mobile video has been illustrated through the examples discussed in the previous chapters outlining the early mobile mediascape. Writing in *Technologies of Seeing* and *Media Technology and Society,* Brian Winston develops a model encompassing two centuries of "change and development in communications as a field (the social sphere) in which two elements (science and technology) intersect" (Winston 1998, p.3). Brian Winston's model accounts for the long period of development driven by the supervening social necessities. "The state of the market, or better, of society is the crucial factor in enabling the development and diffusion of any communication technology or in hindering it" (Winston 1996, p.3). While Winston refers to the social matrix that shapes technology, the notion of the user who plays a significant role in the history of the mobile video can be added to this discourse. With continuous trends in individualisation (Beck 1997), globalisation and mobilisation of markets (Appadurai 1990), lifestyle and consumer culture (Featherstone 1991), the elusive and fragmented consumer requires 24/7 access to communication and information media. The mobile phone is the device that can meet these demands technologically and aesthetically. The advances in handset technology in the 90s and "the growing importance of personal expression through consumer electronics (including phones as fashion items)" (Thompson 2005, p.99) has transformed the

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[10] Jon Agar also provides a translation into everyday English of the section entitled *Txt Msgs*: "What is culture? Culture is the collection of signs specific to a society. Every technology has a culture of its own. A culture can be hard to understand to outsiders. There is no better illustration of this than text messages. Text messaging was an accident. No one expected it. When the first text message was sent, in 1993 by Nokia engineering student Riku Pihkonen, the telecommunication companies thought it was not important. SMS – Short Message Service – was not considered a major part of GSM. Like many technologies, the power of text – indeed the power of the phone – was discovered by users. In the case of text messaging, the users were the young or poor in the West and East" (Agar 2003, p. 177).

mobile phone from a 80s snob brick to a mass-produced customised product of contemporary consumer culture. Within the communication industry, the mobile phone with photography capacity was invented as a marketing tool in Japan. In 2000, Sharp launched the first mobile phone equipped with a camera. The SH-04 for J-Phone in Japan (Turrettini, E. 2003 [online]) instantly matured from a gadget (Rubinstein 2005, p.113) to a standard feature in mobile communication. In 2004, 150 million camera phone units were sold worldwide and this was predicted to reach 656 million units by 2008 (O'Keefe 2004 [online]). A "rapid adoption of camera phones worldwide will generate 29 billion digital images captured this year" (O'Keefe 2004 [online]).

Writing in *d-Cinema — d-Déjà vu*, Michael Punt, outlines how information and product designers were misled by a critical discourse dealing with technological agency and the relationship between technology and culture. In the article he defines a set of characteristics, which can also frame the practice of mobile video:

> Those people who use the inventions of scientists and
> technologists seldom, if ever, interpret the products in ways
> that the inventors anticipated (or in the case of cinema could
> even have anticipated).
> (Punt 2004, p.10)

As the industry did not engage in mobile video production, nor even think of producing feature films by this means, an alternative space emerged out of a user practice. In the article "Parallel Histories: Early Cinema and Digital Media", Punt draws upon the process of invention and innovation of cinema technology "as a convergence of non-hierarchical discourses which produced a machine open to plural interpretation and constant reinterpretation through history" (Punt 2000, p.75). He is using early cinematic devices to argue for a consideration of alternative practices:

> …when new technologies meet popular audiences they can be significantly transformed beyond the inventor's recognition (a process that can continue long after product development).
> (Punt 2000, p.70)

Within the history of cinema and filmmaking one can identify examples to illustrate how the professional industry imposed standards in order to restrain the impact of amateur or community-based film productions. 16mm cameras were introduced in 1923 (Winston 1996, p.58) but only made an impact about 30 years later. In 1938, *Amateur Ciné World* (Winston 1996, p.67) emphasised the potential of the more mobile 16mm cameras in comparison to the industry standard of 35mm format. Professional documentary filmmakers ignored the 16mm format, which was associated with the private sphere and was therefore deemed inappropriate for public-sphere or public education in the style of Grierson (Winston 1996, p.66). In the 1930s, agitprop groups and ethnographers called attention to the 16mm format, which was widely ignored by the industry. Similarly one can apply the following statements of filmmakers of the 30s, who believed in the avenue to progress, to mobile video devices. "The 16mm camera (*or mobile video device*) in the right hands is no toy; sub-standard is the only way out" (Winston 1996, p.67; italics my emphasis). Writing in *The Technologies of Seeing*, Brian Winston argues "it was attitude not technology which held 16mm back professionally in the 30s" (Winston 1996, p.67). This case can be compared to mobile video in the contemporary mediascape.

The divergence between economic interest and the application of technology is also recognisable in radio. Here one can point to parallels in the development of an industry and its relation to the role of the user. Writing in *Assembling Portable Talk*

and Mobile Worlds: Sound Technologies and Mobile Social Networks, Farnsworth and Austrin observe how the radiotelephone began as an amateur device. Radio went from being an amateur format into a commercial mainstream medium. In the early 1920s a hybrid of radio and telephone technology was used as "a medium of multiple address for public occasions… The broadcasting of news was both professional and improvised" (Lasen in Farnsworth and Austrin 2005, p. 17). In this context one can compare the potential of mobile phones for documentary filmmaking, suggesting that amateurs and users can contribute to the creation of new formats.

At this point in time, mobile video is not yet defined through any imaginary industry conventions as such, but the media format is characterised by a vast amount of prospects. At the time of researching and writing this thesis, the entertainment and mobile industry is conducting research in the area of mobile TV standards, such as DVB-H, which could change the peer-to-peer approach of mobile media through a one-way mass media dissemination model. Amateur media, as outlined in the next section, can provide an alternative to these industry forms and hierarchical discourses.

3.3 Amateur Media

Writing in the article "Creativity in Amateur Multimedia: Popular Culture, Critical Theory and HCI", Jeffrey Bardzell points to the aesthetic maturation of amateur multimedia ranging from video podcasts to machinima[11] and Flash animations to

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[11] (machine and cinema, recording of video games)

user-created metaverses[12]. He argues that amateur media are a cultural phenomenon and the emerging amateur multimedia aesthetics is not recognised in the academic community. His research is based on multimedia authoring tools and he positions amateur productions in the field of popular culture. Bardzell draws on a cultural studies approach and HUI (human computer interaction), because "neither one on its own is sufficient to understand the continued development of the phenomenon" (Bardzell 2007, p.15). Bardzell presents an interesting argument, but in a similar way to the earlier-mentioned Nokia exhibition, he does not realise that capabilities of the so-called amateur technology.

Bardzell refers to creativity as an "act of discovering and extending the hidden logic of technological media forms" (Bardzell 2007, p.20). Moreover, he says that creativity "contributes to discourses about the world and our place in it" (Bardzell 2007, p.20). In his study and comparison of multimedia authoring interfaces, he concludes that amateurs can produce culturally meaningful work (Bardzell 2007, p.31); amateur productions provide a forum to share common interests, which he links to parody and comedy. However, he does not acknowledge the possibility of amateur tools being used beyond these forms to produce work, which could provide alternatives to professional standards, and no references to any historical periods are provided in Bardzell's discussion of contemporary multimedia. He describes amateur *YouTube* videos as personal, confessional, and intimate. "They are not cinematic and often not even narrative. … it is the locus of the birth of a major new non-narrative genre of film, perhaps the first since the documentary" (Bardzell, 2007 p.27). My argument would be to see this development, rather, as an extension of the

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[12] (a virtual world in which avatars represent characters, e.g.*Second Life* www.secondlife.com)

documentary, as the genre provides a platform for the exploration of new aesthetics, discourses and cultural formats. In this context, the approach of comparing documentary filmmaking in the decade before the introduction of sound film to mobile phone filmmaking provides a theoretical and historical framework. This model transcends any technological deterministic account as it is the creative practice and application-in-use that define the innovative elements in the production, not the technological sophistication of the media technology. "Amateur multimedia is the locus of tremendous artistic innovation" (Bardzell p.15). The amateur illuminates the possibilities for change that can arise in the mediascape, so that the professional standards can be seen as technological imaginary. In the age of HD video, the amateur media can provide an alternative to the mainstream consensual understanding of (mobile) video technology in the mediascape.

Next to Bardzell's writing on amateur media on can also refer here to Judi Hetrick's article "Amateur Video must not be overlooked" in *Moving Image*. She argues that the term *vernacular video* "can be used as a new and more precise category to describe nonfiction videos made by untrained camera operators who attempt to realistically reflect life around them" (Hetrick 2006, p. 78). Here she refers to the contribution of community groups to the production of public, social, and civic documents; she argues that the community members rarely employ professional filmmaking conventions. The phenomena of community media productions can now be shifted to the next level through social media and open-source applications and CC (creative commons) licensing laws. On the other side of the media spectrum, communication and entertainment industries are striving to exert control over the mobile content sector and are aiming to introduce standards that oppose the openness

and community-based approach to media production of the users. As mentioned before the notion of the user in the industry is neglected by attitude rather than aptitude.

A curated screening by the London-based *Cogcollective* under the theme *Screen Dump* (2006) presented the "original low-res format" from video-user groups, which present a "glimpse of this new online cinema" (Sanderson 2006 [online]). The curator Philip Sanderson describes the mobile and web-cam productions as:

> DIY videos have much in common with pre-narrative cinema. Rarely over three minutes in length, they are a modern version of the one-reeler of the 1890s, full of everyday scenes, stunts and one-liners.
> (Sanderson 2006 [online])

The exhibition features *YouTube* personalities such as *lonelygirl15* or skate videos, which introduce the audience as pro-d-users in the mediascape. These examples, as much as mobile video in the contemporary mediascape, illustrate that users can create, and contribute to, not only content productions, but also new formats alongside the inventors of the technology.

Beyond the discussion of users becoming content producers, one can now also consider users contributing to the formation of cinematic forms, which is revealed in the new emerging mobile aesthetics. Mobile video in the area of documentary can be related to Edgerton's argument that small technologies can have big effects (Edgerton 2007, p.22). Amateur media not only provides an alternative field to the mainstream but also can produce the work of mainstream media. Mobile media provides a clear case for an intervention in the mediascape. "Alternatives are everywhere, though they are often invisible" (Edgerton 2007, p.8).

4. Contextual Review: The City Film

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework, which reflects on the practice components of the research project. The first section focuses on the emergence of the city film in the 1920s and discusses the networks of artists and technicians who shaped the documentary category in this decade. The chapter referring to the Key Figures in the 1920s illustrates the city film format as a framework for innovation in documentary. As case studies, the works *The Man with a Movie Camera, Berlin Symphony of a City* and *Le Tour Eiffel* are examined. These city films are studied through a focus on the concept of movement and rhythm in documentary filmmaking, which provides a context for the practice elements.

4.1 The City Film – Artists and Technicians producing Documentaries

The *city film* as feature-length documentary format (also referred to as *city symphony* or *Stadtfilm* in German and *documentaire urbain* in French) emerged in Europe, Northern America, the Soviet Union and Japan in the 1920s. Despite its diverse articulations and conceptualisation, the genre is linked to the field of experimental documentary practice, which itself is characterised by a multiplicity of nonconformist approaches to filmmaking and divergent stylistic techniques. Le Grice argues that one of experimental cinema's aims is to object to a cultural singularity in filmmaking (Le

Grice 2001, p.295). As a result, a diversification of alternative forms in comparison to narrative constructions can be observed since the 1920s. In *A New History of Documentary*, Jack Ellis and Betsy McLane expand on this point and position documentary and avant-garde film next to fiction film, which both preceding categories oppose. The documentarists (artists and technicians) affiliated with the avant-garde circles experimented with cinematic forms to create aesthetics that distinguished film from the fields of literature and theatre (Ellis and McLane 2005, p.44). The inspiration for the exploration of the city film or city symphony category can be linked to the interdependency between the simultaneous transmutation of the city and the mediascapes in the 1920s. Despite the cultural and socio-economic differences across the nation states, this development occurred on a global level. Here one can refer to Kenji Mizoguchi's *Tokai Kokyogaku* (Metropolitan Symphony) and *Tokyo Koshinkyoku* (Tokyo March), two city films produced in Japan in 1929. Cinema as a mechanical, time-based medium seemed to provide new technological means to capture the dynamics of modernity. The metropolitan centres were shaped by the visual presence of machines in motion and their rhythms that inter-fused all layers of modern society. Moving-images had the capacity to frame the experience of modernity and reflect upon "a visual pattern of urban reality" (Weiner 1970, p.128). By the end of the 19th century industrialisation had changed the face of the European capitals into new centres of commerce. As Martin puts it: "both the design of individual buildings and the entire urban area transformed the city into a pulsating organism that not only reflected the vitality of society but potentiated the phenomena of motion and speed" (Martin 2005, p.16). Within this new urban environment, avant-garde artists utilised these impulses of the city and applied the metropolis as a canvas and stage on which to produce their work. Artists and technicians used the medium of

film to capture a new experience, the city in motion. At this time cinema was the medium that could capture these dynamics and documentary was the format to represent these new experiences. The urban documentaries of the 1920s experimented with the form and mediation of the subject, the metropolis. The filmic parameters of movement, creating a rhythm over time, attempted to detach film from literary and theatrical traditions. As a result of the experiments, new cinematic techniques emerged. Documentary provided a category to explore the cinematic medium:

> Some twenty years ago the documentary thesis offered … a chance of freedom from the irons of the commercial cinema. Because documentary was concerned with a new use of film …it provided immense opportunities for experimentation with the filmic medium. New uses involved new techniques.
> (Wright 1951, p.321)

Here one can point to split-screen compositions, dissolves, freeze frames, accelerated motion, reverse motion, slow motion, montage and non-linear filmmaking techniques. The work of the abstract cinema by Ruttmann (*Opus I*, Walter Ruttman, 1921, Germany; *Opus II*, Walter Ruttman, 1922, Germany; *Opus III*, Walter Ruttman, 1923, Germany; *Opus IV*, Walter Ruttman, 1924, Germany; *Opus V*, Walter Ruttmann, 1925, Germany) and Richter (*Rhythmus 21*, Hans Richter, 1921, Germany; *Rhythmus 23*, Hans Richter, 1923, Germany; *Rhythmus 25*, Hans Richter, 1925, Germany) illustrate the approaches to filmmaking as painting in time, exploring the filmic time and space dimensions. In 1925 the *Novembergruppe* exhibited *Der Absolute Film* in Germany, which included the filmic works of Hirschfeld-Mack, Hans Richter, Viking Eggling, Walter Ruttmann, Fernand Léger, Francis Picabia and René Clair. This film screening was the first public exhibition of the German Absolute Film and also included the work of the French avant-garde. Léger's *Images Mobiles* (1924) and Picabia and Clair's *Entr'Acte* (1924) influenced the development of the aesthetic approach to abstraction in documentary filmmaking. In these French experimental

films, abstraction creates non-narrative film patterns based on the concept of movement. Richter and Ruttmann implemented these ideas in their documentaries in the subsequent years, expanding the documentary aesthetics in this decade.

4.1.1 Key Figures in the 1920s

Various European art movements influenced the city symphonies of the 1920s: Futurism (1910 Milan), Expressionism (Munich 1911), Cubism (Paris 1906-08), De Stijl (Leyden 1916), Constructivism (1914 Moscow), Dadaism (Paris, Zurich, Cologne, Berlin 1916) and Surrealism (1924 Paris) (Barr 1964). All these movements respectively shaped and created different forms and techniques of working with cinematic technology. Each European metropolitan centre (Moscow, Berlin, Paris) had its own local character and developed a localised style and approach towards the city film. The accelerated development of new film forms in the 1920s can be related to the artistic exchange that occurred in the inter-war period on a national and international level. The city filmmakers (Vertov and Ruttmann) were affiliated with the international avant-garde circles. Within these environments, new practices, aesthetics and definitions of documentary were developed. It is important to note that the film industry followed the artists' and technicians' innovations, such as adopting their new montage techniques in the subsequent years (Goergen 2005, p.495). Furthermore, one can note that the proliferation of new ideological value systems across Europe had an impact on the avant-garde artists. Writing in *Hans Richter: Constructivist Filmmaker*, Justin Hoffmann argues that Richter and Eggeling focused their interests on a utopian plane, as it was impossible to exercise any influence on socio-cultural conditions in the early years of the Weimar Republic. "Their premise

was a new system of communication based on visual perception" (Hoffmann 1998, p.75).

The dynamics of movement in film can be recognised in the city films of this decade. The key films in this timeframe before the introduction of sound film are *Manhatta* (Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, 1921, USA), *Rien que les Heures* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1926, France), *Berlin, Die Symphonie einer Großstadt* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927, Germany) and *Chelovek' s Kino-apparatom* (Dziga Vertov, 1929, Soviet Union) and the never-realised project *Dynamics of a Great City* (Moholy-Nagy, 1921, Germany). László Moholy-Nagy's (1921) project appears to have had an influence on Walter Ruttmann when he produced the opening sequence of *Berlin Symphony of a City*.

> The intention of the film *Dynamic of the Metropolis* is not to teach, nor to moralise, nor to tell a story; its effect is meant to be visual. The elements of the visual have not in this film an absolute logical connection with one another; their photographic, visual relationships, nevertheless, make them knit together into a vital association of events in space and time and bring the viewer actively into the dynamic of the city. … aim of the film: to take advantage of the camera, to give it its own optical action, optical arrangement of tempo – instead of literary, theatrical action: dynamic of the optical. Much movement some heightened to the point of brutality.
> (Moholy-Nagy 1925, p.122)

Moholy-Nagy's 1921 visually driven project aimed towards creating a new aesthetic based upon unconventional camera perspectives and new montage techniques. In the same year, one of the first ever city film productions, *Manhatta*, was realised by New York based photographer and artist Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler in Manhattan, New York City. They inter-cut Manhattan's skyline with a poem of Walt Whitman via intertitles. *Manhatta* uses various distinctive camera techniques unusual for its time, and (extremely high) angles to capture the city life on location in New York

City. Most of these perspectives provide new angles and new insights into city life, which one would normally not experience. In *City Space, Technology, Popular Culture: The Modernism of Paul Strand's and Charles Sheeler's Manhatta*, Juan Suárez highlights that *Manhatta*'s alignment of modernism, technology, and city space had already been foreshadowed in the 1910s by the magazine *The Soil* (Suárez 2002, p.90). *Manhatta* was largely ignored in the United States, while at a Parisian Dadaist event, the city film was recognised as a pioneering effort[13] (Weiner 1970, p.282). Ellis and McLane's examination corresponds to Suárez's opinion, "Manhatta might be thought of as an embryonic beginning of the city symphony films that link avant-garde with documentary" (Ellis and McLane 2005 p.46).

Following the exploration of camera viewpoints in the latter city film, the experimentation with editing distinguishes the city films produced at the end of the 1920s. As a pattern for non-linear filmmaking, rhythm can play a significant role in the editing process. "Rhythm contains alternation, order, and organisation of time and space. It conveys energy; there is the alternation of tension and release, expectation and satisfaction, emphasis and de-emphasis" (Kolaja and Foster 1965, p.353). Movement is the leitmotif in the city film productions, which is set into a sequence through montage. Drawing upon the city films, Alexander Graf says;

> These environments themselves are the material from which the
> films are composed, and the urban experience (and "cinema", of
> course) is their sole subject matter.
> (Graf 2007, p.85)

Quoting Jean Paul Goergen, Graf writes that Ruttmann's *Berlin* marks a turning point in the filmic representation of the city in its "transposition of observation, in the

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[13] *Manhatta* was screened in Paris at a Dadaist event, together with a Man Ray film, alongside readings of Apollinaire's poems, and music by Eric Satie (Suárez 2002, p.96).

transition from documentation of an object to the documentation of an experience"
(Graf 2007, p.85). The aim of the experiments with movement in the city films is to
evoke the subjective experiences of the city. The metropolis developed in
interdependency with industrialisation and the changing socio-economic landscape;
these dynamics within the metropolitan centres could be captured in a new vision.
The artists and technicians were interested in exploring these prospects and
possibilities of film in order to capture the experience of the city. The techniques and
forms that emerged out of the experimental work mark a departure from the theatrical
and literary modes of filmic construction. The artists and technicians used the
documentary format as a platform for their experimentations. Retrospectively, one
can classify the interaction between exploring the city and the emerging filmic
possibilities as the common denominator of the city film category. This category
makes use of the documentary techniques and further develops the aesthetics of
documentary. The background of the artists and technicians producing these
documentaries can explain their common interest in exploring these new forms and
aesthetics. Artists and technicians exchanged their ideas at screenings such as *Soirée
du Cour à Barbe* (1923), *Exposition des Arts Décorative* (1925), *Der Absolute Film*
(1925), *Film and Photography* (1929), *Le Sarraz* (1929) or the *Filmliga* (from 1928
onwards) across Europe. Through the establishing of active networks by and for
filmmakers, the practitioners were leading the innovation process. Among the many
experimental works of this decade, one can point here to the collaborative project
Entr'acte, led by René Clair. This 1924 co-production included many of the leading
figures of the Parisian art scene including Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Man
Ray and others. The artists' and technicians' experiments can be seen as one of the
main factors which influenced the conceptual advancement of the city film genre. In

this decade artists like Richter or Ruttman, and technicians like Dziga Vertov or the camera operator Guido Seeber, explored new methods to develop film forms. As an example one can name the short film *Der KIPHO-Film* (Guido Seeber, Germany, 1929) produced by the latter for the *Film and Photography* exhibition in Germany in 1929. On a number of occasions, the practitioners worked towards similar ends without knowing about the work of their peers. The international gatherings and screenings simultaneously facilitated a debate and the establishment of the field, while driving the innovation process in the development of filmmaking practices. The documentary format proliferated cinematic techniques that were applied in the film industry in subsequent years. It is important to note that the artists and technicians produced alternatives to the entertainment-driven theatrical and literary methods, based on the concept of motion in film; this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4.2 City Film as Innovation in Documentary

By the end of the 1920s, political regimes had realised the power of documentary productions, and by the mid 1930s "documentary films had became almost exclusively a medium for propaganda, used to persuade, manipulate and control" (Macdonald and Cousins 1996, p.127). Moreover, the film industry manifested filmmaking practices, forms and conventions based upon profit models, and marketed feature documentary film as a mass-produced commodity. In this timeframe the introduction of sound film set a new standard (Ellis and McLane 2005, p.54 and Aitken 2000, p.14). The appearance of the sound film established sync sound productions that changed the prospects of a cinematic language based on movement.

The film pioneers' work, developed in the previous decade, faded out. The standardisation of filmmaking practice was mainly a product of the studio system and filmmaking as such became a professional practice following imagined industry rules and conventions. In addition, the entertainment industry set a technological standard that independent practioners could not compete with, owing to the limitation of their budgets. The avant-garde "was killed in part by the expensive complexity and cumbersomeness of sound, added to the motion picture in the late 1920s" (Ellis and McLane 2005 p.54).

Moholy-Nagy, a Bauhaus theorist and multi-media artist, is described as an artist for whom the questions of form were primary (Whitford 1993, p.8). In his 1926 article "'Isms' or Art?", he argues that it is obvious that a new technique must create a new and adequate form (Moholy-Nagy in Whitford 1993, p. 115). In the book *Vision in Motion* (1930), Moholy-Nagy defines the three main elements of film as light, motion and sound. The visual dominance of film productions in the 1920s was abandoned through the introduction of sound to motion pictures. The sound film predetermines a number of editing decisions, as the image has to follow the sync of the visual and audio. Moholy-Nagy says that five separate shots in a silent picture would equate to two or three shots for the same scene in the sound film (Moholy-Nagy 1930, p.281). "This is the main cause for the optical dullness of most sound films" (Moholy-Nagy, 1930, p.281). Furthermore, montage and interval theory cannot be applied to the full extent in narrative sound film.

Before the premiere of *Berlin*, which can be described as Germany's first feature documentary (Prümm 2005, p.411), Ruttmann said that no language or no concepts

existed that could define his project. "A film without a story, without love, drama and without a happy ending" (Rutmann in Prümm 2005, p.411). Prümm argues that *Berlin* constitutes a dual origin, a pilot film of the documentary category and one of the first comprehensive city portraits. The innovative aspect of the project is based on the conceptualising of new documentary production methods. Artists such as Van Doesburg and EL Lissitzky defined "art just as much as science and technology {as} a method for organising life in general" (Borchardt-Hume 2006, p.74). In the *Book of New Artists*, Kassák writes in 1922 that "Art means producing…art, science, technology are in contact and converge within one point..." (Kassák 1922, p.3). The working practices of artists and technicians such as Dziga Vetov, Hans Richter or René Clair were based on analytical methods and the experimental work conducted in a "quasi-scientific way" (Hoffmann 2006, p.83) to create a visual language specific to the cinematic medium.

4.2.1 *The Man with a Movie Camera*

In Dziga Vertov's 1929 pioneering work *Chelovek s kino-apparatom* (*The Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov, 1929, Soviet Union), he applied the *kino-eye* method, filming life in the cities of Moscow, Kiev, Riga and Odessa. Elizaveta Svilova (his wife) edited the film fragments into one (filmic) work. *The Man with a Movie Camera* is the diary of the cameraman. Furthermore, the work is also a self-reflective documentary about filmmaking. Dziga Vertov, Elizaveta Svilova, Mikhail Kaufman (his brother and camera operator) are part of the film illustrating their activities at all stages of the film production. Also the screening of the film in the movie theatre itself is part of the film. The ending sequence reveals flashbacks from the production

process, switching our attention between the filmic space-time continuum and the movie on the cinema screen. The last sequence makes use of the time-lapse technique, forwarding the movement of city life, pedestrians, and transport systems into a filmic rhythm. The filmed material's pictorial composition is given an emphasis over the actual pictorial representation. A pendular, projector light and the movement of Elizaveta's eyes are edited in one rhythm. The last image shows a superimposition of an eye over the camera's lens. The shutter closes and one has to leave the filmic world. *The Man with a Movie Camera* illustrates the potential of filmmaking techniques and also educates the viewer about these. Split-screen composition, dissolves, freeze frames, accelerated motion, reverse motion, slow motion are the elements of Verotv's experiment in cinematic communication. Furthermore, it is an illustration of how to merge form and content into a new aesthetic through referencing the production process. The film's plot is based on the filmmaking process and records the life of the new Soviet citizen from sunrise to sunset. The film is divided into different thematic fields which are connected through the movement in-between the shots, which constructs Vertov's interval method (see further elaboration on page 88).

4.2.2 *Berlin Symphony of a City*

As mentioned earlier, *Berlin Symphony of a City*'s opening sequence references the never-realised project *Dynamics of a Great City* (Von Ankum 1996, p. 214). By making use of a combination of multiple viewpoints, the optical possibilities of cinematic montage can be illustrated. Ruttman also uses an animation of abstract images in the opening sequence. A reflection of water is dissolved into an abstract

image similar to his earlier works *Opus I-V* (Walter Ruttmann, 1921-1925, Germany). Through movement a pattern is created which fades into a rail crossing gate. This sequence, the arrival of a train into Berlin, takes the viewer from the countryside into the cityscape. Like Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*, Ruttmann's Berlin is illustrating the metropolis and its citizens waking up and commencing their everyday activities. The work and leisure activities are documented in five acts. The final act reveals the nightlife in the golden 1920s. The film ends with a firework, an optical crescendo. In *Imagining Reality*, Macdonald and Cousins describe *Berlin* as a rhythmically cut portrait of Weimer Berlin, while Ellis and McLane highlight the kinetic organising principle of Ruttmann's city film in *A New History of Documentary Film*. Ruttmann's work captures the impact of modernity on metropolitan life through rhythm (Ellis and McLane 2005, p.44; Macdonald and Cousins 1996, p.127). The movement in the city guides the montage practices. To exemplify this, one can point here to the rollercoaster ride or the streetcar as the leitmotif for movement. In an abstract construction the streetcar and the rollercoaster create a rhythm and pattern for movement within the filmic space.

4.2.3 *La Tour Eiffel*

René Clair's fascination with the modern city is omnipresent in his film *La Tour Eiffel* (Clair, 1928, France) a short film about the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The experimentation with camera techniques and editing is constructed without a script. Writing in *The Films of René Clair*, R.C. Dale refers to a comment by Clair;

> …we really just went out and shot a lot of footage, and I didn't
> know what was going to happen to it until I started to put it

together in the cutting room, where I assembled it largely by
trial and error.
(Clair in Dale 1987, p.112)

Furthermore, Dale says Clair had "dreamed the film would be free of any
restrictions and restraints imposed by narrative fiction. For the first and last
time in his career, he worked with no plot whatsoever, and with no script or
scenario" (Clair in Dale 1987, p.112). His later work had a major impact on
Vertov. Writing in *The Man with the Movie Camera: from Magician to
Epistemologist*, Annette Michelson states that Vertov saw another of Clair's
films, *Paris qui Dort*, three years before he produced *The Man with the Movie
Camera*. According to his journal notes, the film left Vertov with mixed
feelings, as he was planning to produce *Moscow Asleep* (Michelson 1972, p.
67 and 68). Deleuze argues that in *Paris qui Dort* (aka *Paris Asleep*, *The
Crazy Ray* or *At 3:25*), Clair had impressed Vertov by separating out such
intervals at points where "movement stops, re-starts, reverses itself,
accelerates or slows down: a sort of differential of movement" (Deleuze 1986,
p.45). *Paris qui Dort* (*aka The Crazy Ray*), produced in 1923, set a cinematic
key-frame by utilising film techniques based upon the possibilities of altering
perceptions of time and space. The film's aesthetics, innovation in editing and
montage techniques led the way for plot and story construction through
movement in filmmaking.

5. Theoretical Review: The Concept of Motion in Film

The following section provides a framework for theorising film through movement. The theoretical perceptions regarding movement are discussed through the work of Marey's scientific experiments and the phenomenological concept of Bergson. The film experiments of the documentary practioners Hans Richter and Dziga Vertov are examined as key works that use movement as a leitmotif in non-narrative documentary filmmaking.

5.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Framing Movement: Marey and Bergson

Movement can be located as one of the key concerns in theorising film. This section will outline Marey's scientific and Bergson's phenomenological approaches that framed movement in the early stages leading to the development of cinematic technology. Modernity defined new concepts of the space-time continuum, which could be documented with cinematic technology in novel ways. Marey published *Le Mouvement* in 1894, illustrating the prospects and possibilities of chronophotography, which translates from Greek meaning 'inscription of time by light.' Marey experimented with the possibilities of instantaneous photography. The chronophotographic machine used a diaphragm, which gave very short periods of

exposure at regular intervals of time. The objective of Marey's experiment was to "translate movement into a visible language" (Braun 1994, p.349). As a trained physician and physiologist, he approached "the study of movement from a mechanical point of view" (Braun 1994, p.349), and used the cinematic possibilities to explain "new attributes of movement in the domain of physical laws" (Braun 1994, p.349). His interest in movement originated from the examination of motion in organs (the circulation and blood pressure) and later the study of locomotion. Marey was especially interested in using slow motion and high-speed cinematography to examine processes not visible to the human eye. Marta Braun points to the fact that there was really no extant technique for studying movement (Braun 1994, p. 15). Marey's aim was to produce machines to document movement, which is otherwise inaccessible to observation. In this context it is interesting to note that Marey says in *Le Mouvement* "it is essential that each should be studied under natural conditions" (Marey 1894, p.34) or, as one would say in documentary filmmaking, on location: the documentary aesthetics are also set in motion with these experiments.

In 1882 he produced the chronophotographic fixed-plate camera with a timed shutter. This technology allowed Marey to capture several successive images of a single movement on one plate. His key descriptions in identifying the character of movement are velocity and acceleration (Marey 1894, p.34). He addresses the limitations of graphic representation of movement in *Le Mouvement*, writing that chronophotography "provides us with the means of constructing the curves of movement" (Marey 1894, p.53). The cinematic technology allowed him to decipher and represent "the successive attitudes of a moving object, it affords a very different picture from what is actually seen by the eye when looking at the object itself" (Braun

1972, p.305). As a scientist, he envisioned the contribution of the experiments in movement to be applied to a number of fields ranging from medicine to the humanities. His experiments can be described as a technological blueprint for the motion-picture entertainment industry. One has to mention, though, that he was never interested in commercialising his experimental work. The development of the chronophotograph illustrates an early example of the divergence between cinematic experiments and the commercial exploitation of the entertainment industry.

The commercial entertainment industry based cinema technology on the machines that Marey developed. In 1888, Marey presented the first ever images depicting movement to the Académie des Sciences. The fixed-plate chronophotograph was used for motion photography and in 1892 he started working on an apparatus to project the movements; one year after the Lumières' public presentation of the cinematograph, he could develop a working method for the projection of his scientific experiments. However, the Lumières' cinematograph was a commercial success due to the fact that the film projection was aimed at large audiences, and not used for animated portraits or slot machines as envisioned by Marey's assistant Demeny. By 1892 the phonoscope, a machine intended for the education of deaf children, gained attention from investors in the entertainment industry. In the same year the Société Génerale du Phonoscope was set-up to gain revenues through animated portraits, penny-in-the-slot machines and a combination of phonoscope and phonograph (Braun 1992, p.182). The society quickly became mired in conflict due to Marey's scientific, and his assistant Demeny's commercial, interest. After a meeting between Marey and Edison in 1889, the latter is said to have been inspired to develop the Kinetoscope (Braun 1992, p.182).

The work of Marey allows us to analyse the object of stroboscopy, which one can date back to Plateau's Phenakistoscope. By recording with a cinematic machine at different speeds, photographic objects can be made visible to the human eye, which one might otherwise not perceive. Marey reminds us in *Le Mouvement* that the physiological property of the retina retains the impression of an image for a brief moment after the object has disappeared. The duration of this retinal picture is estimated at 1/10 part of a second. Matching the speed of two objects at this speed will lead to discontinuity and the image will appear to be visible (Marey 1894, p. 305). This perceptual feature allows us to describe movement as the essence of cinema.

Writing in *Passion for the Trace*, Francois Dagognet points to Marey's activities saying they had an impact on art, for the futurists as well as the cubists (Dagognet 1992, p.12). In *Picturing Time: the Work of Etienne-Jules Marey*, Braun outlines the relationship between Bergson and Marey, saying that they were acquainted, but "their ideas of the nature of reality were hardly compatible though" (Braun 1992, p.281). For Marey, reality is based on the invisible matter that can be revealed by his machines and the cinematographic technology, while Bergson's view is opposed to these ideas. For Bergson reality is a flux of becoming: the solid contours of the closely-knit images, which we call the material world, are only a necessary invention of our senses (Bergson 1907, p. xxiv). Braun states that Bergson's philosophy had no visible impact on Marey's experiments, but Marey's cinematographic innovation had a "profound effect on Bergson's writing" (Braun 1992, p. 279). Bergson does not refer to Marey's work, but analyses the cinematographical method in detail in

Creative Evolution. For Bergson, Marey can be seen as an example "for demonstrating just what reality is not" (Braun 1992, p. 280). Bergson's concept works towards a new understanding of reality.

> The real whole might well be, we conceive, an indivisible continuity. The systems we cut out within it would, properly speaking, not then be parts at all; they would be partial views of the whole. And, with these partial views put end to end, you will not make even a beginning of the reconstruction of the whole, any more than, by multiplying photographs of an object in a thousand different aspects, you will reproduce the object itself. … But it does not follow that chemistry and physics will ever give us the key to life.
> (Bergson 1907, p.31)

The discourses that frame movement, the modes of perception and the human sensory capacities are open to interpretation, and lie on opposing sides of the argument related to movement. For Marey, the eye is inadequate to decipher the world. Therefore he invented the cinematic machine to capture processes which we cannot perceive: movement. Marey enhanced what he believed to be the limitation of our human vision through machines. In Bergson's concept of reality, the experience of time and movement is an active entity. Time is defined in his phenomenological approach as "heterogenous flux and movement is reality itself" (Bergson 1907, p.278). Bergson describes time as duration, which "means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new" (Bergson 1907, p.14). In contrast to Marey's scientific approach with the aim to capture movement, Bergson's conception can be seen as a critique of the assumptions of mechanical and scientific capacities of recording and capturing reality. For Bergson, movement functions like intuition, which is operating between our consciousness and ourselves. It is an act of becoming. For Bergson, becoming is qualitative and evolutionary. Movement means becoming. Bergson is drawing upon a union of the theory of knowledge and life, which is described as a "circular process" in which the entities push each other on unceasingly

(Bergson 1907, p. xxiv). His phenomenological construct is working towards a method, and illustrating the possibilities beyond the, for him, limited scientific discourse. Knowledge is constructed as accumulated experience. His project works towards analysing reality as life, life as movement and movement as an act or process of creation. Here, one can point to the flow of reality, which is not a static or fixed parameter. The real and facts of life were to be decoded in the *élan vital* through experience. Knowledge, artistic creation and creative activity can emerge from intuition. For Bergson, experience is the currency of creativity, intuition is positioned on a higher level than formulae and statistics. Actuality and reality emerge from experience and take shape as awareness in our consciousness. Experience is a process of discovery of the choices and alternatives of becoming, action processes one can engage in.

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson compares the cinematographic machine to knowledge, "the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind" (Bergson 1907, p.332). Again, the essence of cinema is movement. "In order that pictures may be animated, there must be movement somewhere" (Bergson 1907, p.331), and consequently the construction of knowledge. The application of the cinematographical method therefore leads to a "perpetual recommencement".

> In order to advance with the moving reality, you must replace
> yourself within it. Install yourself within change and you will
> grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which
> it might at any instant be immobilised.
> (Bergson 1907, p. 308)

Following Bergson's model of the cinematic apparatus, any single movement is a movement between two stops and therefore a motionless trajectory. "Movement is made of immobilities" (Bergson 1907, p.334) and later he states "movement coincides

with immobility" (Bergson 1907, p.336). In order to prevail over this logical deadlock, one must aim to overcome the cinematographical habit of our intellect: the transitional steps and stops are imaginary, like cinematic illusions. According to Bergson, reality crystallises in the becoming. The becoming is thus an experience through which one can "escape the cinematographic mechanism of thought" (Bergon 1907, p.341). Bergson proposes to place oneself along the transition.

> The reason is that there is more in the transition than the series of states, that is to say, the possible cuts – more in the movement than the series of positions, that is to say, the possible stop.
> (Bergson 1907, p.341)

By being in the movement one can analyse the position actively while remaining engaged in the transitional process. One is not merely passively reacting, but interacting and taking shape. "Experience confronts us with becoming: that is sensible reality" (Bergson 1907, p.341). Bergson defines this as a more intelligible reality. The essence is positioned in the idea, which is located in the movement process, "the quality, which is a moment of becoming; the form, which is a moment of evolution" (Bergson 1907, p.315). The essence is a negotiation of alternations in process. In Bergson's concept the notion of process is omnipresent. Therefore the temporal quality of time, or rather duration, is counted according to the intervals and moments of stops. In contrast to experience, science is static and does not consider this process. Therefore no experience emerges in the scientific equation (i.e. Marey's experiments). As our senses work like the camera, the picture of reality is incomplete. Braun fruitfully sums up Bergson's argument, saying that the camera could never capture reality because it operated just like sensory perception; "it immobilised; it halted and separated the invisible flux, extracting immobile views from a mobile spectacle; it

falsified the real" (Braun 1992, p.280). Bergson's concept resonates in Deleuze's (2001) book *The Movement Image*.

While Bergson was working in the early days of cinema, his concepts can be placed in a moment alongside the development of cinematic form. "The evolution of cinema, the conquest of its own essence or novelty, was to take place through montage…" (Deleuze 2001, p.3). Montage by its very nature is based upon movement. Dziga Vertov's interval theory is based on movement in-between the connected shots, which can be related to the Bergsonian notion of becoming. So it is, in the case of Hans Richter's documentaries, that this essence of film is developed into a documentary filmmaking form.

5.2 Hans Richter's Documentaries

Hans Richter approached the medium of film as a painter. He was predominantly interested in exploring abstract visual capabilities of film. Regarding his own work, Richter stated (in his words) "meaning might not be the point here" (Richter 1971, p.131). Richter describes the element of motion as the original impulse for abstract filmmaking, which he termed "Ur-Kino" (or "urcinema") (Richter 1971, p.148).

In 1921 Hans Richter completed his first film, called *Film ist Rhythmus* (1921) (*Film is Rhythm*) and worked alongside Eggeling's *Generalbass der Malerei* (1918) (*Elements of Painting*). Their works are illustrated in the literature as a method of artistic *Gestaltung*, a term which originate from German and means combining the

process of design and planning in one artefact (Finkeldey 1998, p.95). Moreover, the German artist described his filmic work as "scientific investigation of the elements of art" (Richter in Finkeldey 1998, p.101).

Richter's documentary *Everything Turns* (1928) illustrates the connection between filmic form and content. The intertitles reveal, "The film starts…everything turns, everything resolves!" (Intertitles in *Everything Turns*, Hans Richter, 1928, Germany). One sees the audience entering a show-fair and taking their seats, which is similar to the beginning of Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*. The circus show begins as an indirect representation of the cinematic spectacle and Richter makes use of the whole portfolio of cinematography and editing techniques to capture the experience of not only seeing but experiencing a circus show. Film, as much as a circus show, is not a construct of magic, but a skill of tricks and cinematic practices. "The country fair seen as a valse of the amusement machines." (Intertitles in *Everything Turns*, Hans Richter, 1928, Germany). It is an exploration, not only of the circus, but also of filmic form and aesthetics. Hans Richter juxtaposes abstract fast-forward footage and still frames within the circus performance; the editing techniques of split screens and extreme camera angles generate an impression of spectacle.

Richter is revealing the filmic qualities of movement in his documentaries. Movement is guiding the whole process. Within the context of his work it is a development from the *Filmstudie* (1925), the abstract *Rhythmus 21* and *Rhythmus 25* films towards working with photorealistic images in an abstract form. Movement is the guiding theme in his early films as much as in his later films, *Ghost before Breakfast* (1928), *Race Symphony* (1928), *Inflation* (1928) and *Two Pence Magic* (1930). As Hans

Richter himself argued in his 1952 article in the *Magazine of Art,* "twenty years ago the documentary was shown and considered exclusively as avant-garde; today it is accepted as a legitimate film species" (Richter 1952, p. 86). Richter defines rhythm as "the chief sensation of any kinetic expression" (Richter 1952 p.84). In *My Experience with Movement in Painting and Film*, he argues that rhythm is "articulated time"; according to his experimental filmmaking approach, the story in film is born through rhythm: "rhythm can be defined as the repetition of similar elements at regular or recognisably related intervals" (Richter 1965, p.84). For Richter, rhythm is the key factor in the construction of a filmic work. Movement is given priority over a script.

> The flow of visual images always makes a story, whether there is a story or not; that is how our mind works…you always tell a kind of story, with or without natural objects…The medium of film turns everything into a story, because it moves.
> (Richter 1965, p.155)

In Richter's work, motion and visual expression are defined through a cinematic rhythm. "The screen no longer opened like a window through which one watched what was happening, but rather became a precisely calculable form in its own right" (Richter in Hoffmann 1998, p.79). Through the filmic parameter of motion, Hans Richter created a precisely calculable unit to construct a filmic experience.

In 1920 Hans Richter and Viking Eggling produced the pamphlet *Universelle Sprache*. Beyond creating a filmic form, Richter and Eggling worked on an approach in which abstract form:

> …offers the possibility of a language above and beyond all national language frontiers. This basis for such a language would lie in the identical form perception in all human beings and would offer the promise of a universal art, as it had never existed before.
> (Richter 1971, p. 144)

Richter and Eggling stated that they had been influenced through their perceptual (non-linguistic) studies of the world's oldest language, Chinese. Moreover, they were working with the medium of scrolls as used by the Chinese, Japanese and Egyptians, which resemble the concept of the celluloid reel. Richter and Eggling were not concerned with content or subject matter, but rather "abstract narratives of pure form – its becoming, its being, its beauty" (Richter 1971, p.113).

The illusory impression of movement, stroboscopic movement or movement as interval of duration, the "account of the interpenetration of our conscious states" (Bergson in Pearson 2002, p.64), is one of the main features surrounding the magic of cinema. The magic of these works and the city films in the 1920s is defined through a synergy of filmic form and content, which allows the filmmaker to present a new experience on the cinema screen. It is not magic, though, but a cinematic method based on movement.

5.3 Dziga Vertov's Experiments in Cinematic Communication

Dziga Vertov, whose real name was Denis Abramovich Kaufman, produced *Lenin Kino-Pravda* (1924), *Kino-Eye* (1924), *A Sixth of the World* (1926), *Stride, Soviet* (1926), *Eleventh Year* (1927) and *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). In 1916 he commenced experimenting with sounds, which he called "a montage of stenographic notes and sound recordings" (Vertov in Artforum 1972, p.82). Influenced by the poetry of Mayakovsky, Vertov composed "communication structures" in a "new vision of external reality" (Petric 1987, p.29).

Vertov used filmed fragments (shots) with the intention of disrupting the film's linear

development and thwarting the reader's narrative expectations (Petric 1987, p.29). He

introduced a conceptual approach based on an interval technique of filmmaking,

which he termed "Kinochestvo" (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p.5). Interval theory is

defined according to the "art of organisation" (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p.5).

Vertov utilises "the transition from one movement to another… the necessary

movements of objects in space as a rhythmical artistic whole, in harmony with the

properties of the material and the internal rhythm of each object… providing a kinetic

resolution" (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p.5). Dziga Vertov was primarily interested in

the space between the frames. Weibel quotes Vertov from his manifesto *We*, written

in 1922:

> The material – the artistic elements of motion – are the intervals (the
> transition from one movement to another), but not motion itself. They
> (the intervals) also direct the action towards a kinetic resolution. The
> organisation of motion is the organisation of its elements, that is to say
> of the intervals within a phrase…but the interval between two frames,
> which is the important element of the articulation of meaning. The
> grouping of such units of meaning (of such units of articulation) forms
> a phrase.
> (Vertov in Weibel 1979, p. 47)

Dziga Vertov and his *kinoks* (production crews) identified a cinematic practice and

visual languages based on filmic intervals:

> …a passage from one movement to another, and not movements
> themselves, constitute the material (elements of the art of
> movement)… to a simple visual equation, to a visual formula that best
> expresses the essential subject of the film, that is the most difficult and
> most important task that the author-editor confronts…
> (Mayne 1975, p. 120)

Vertov's method originated from various experiments in "cinematic communication"

(Vertov 1929) with the film medium. In the opening sequence of the *Man with a*

Movie Camera (Vertov, 1929, Soviet Union) he defines cinematic communication as;

A record in celluloid on 6 reels.
(An excerpt from the diary of a cameraman.)
This film presents an experiment in the cinematic communication
of visible events.
Without the aid of intertitles.
(A film without intertitles.)
Without the aid of a scenario.
(A film without a scenario.)
Without the aid of theatre.
(A film without sets, actors, etc.)
This experimental work aims at creating a truly international
absolute language of cinema based on its total separation from the
language of theatre and literature.
(Vertov 1929)

Dziga Vertov's *Chelovek s Kino-Apparatom* and the *kino-eye* productions attempted

to create a new visual language (Feldman 1998, Michelson 1984, Petric 1987 and

Roberts 2000). Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera* depicts the production

process, the selection of locations and themes, filming on location and montage work.

For Vertov, the montage process is a synthesis of these stages. Vertov's background

as an editor, having produced the first newsreel programs in the Soviet Union

(*Kinonedelia-Filmweek*) from 1918 onwards, equipped him with the technical and

creative insights for non-linear documentary production. In 1923 he published the

manifesto of the *Council of Three*, entitled *Kinoks: a Revolution*.

My path leads to the creation of a fresh perception of the world. I
decipher in a new way a world unknown to you.
(Vertov in Roberts 2000, p.5)

Vertov's kino-eye productions were based upon montage, which

…means organising film fragments (shots) into a film-object. It means
writing something cinematic with the recorded shot… Every kino-eye
production is subject to montage from the moment the theme is chosen
until the film's release in its completed form. In other words, it is
editing during the entire process of film production.
(Vertov in Michelson 1984, p. 88)

Roberts (2000) points out that in these statements, Vertov is having difficulties in

expressing his cinematic method in written language (Roberts, 2000, p.35). Due to the

cinematic characteristic and cinematic experience, it is difficult to describe and

express these visual phenomena of the kino-eye in writing.

> Montage means organising film fragments (shots) into a film-object. It means writing something cinematic with the recorded shots. It does not mean selecting the fragments for "scenes" (the theatrical bias), or for titles (the literary bias).
> (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p. 88)

The key to kino-eye productions is based upon the movement within the frame.

> The combining (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factoring out) of related pieces. Continuous shifting of the pieces until all are placed in a rhythmical order such that all links of meaning coincide with visual linkage. As the final result of all these mixings, shifting, cancellations, we obtain a visual equation, a visual formula…100 percent film-object, the concentrated essence of I see – I kino-see.
> (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p. 88)

Movement is the essence in this visual formula or visual equation, to link film-

fragments and construct one coherent work:

> The school of kino-eye calls for construction of the film-object upon "intervals," that is, upon the movement between shots, upon the visual correlation of shots with one another, upon transitions from one visual stimulus to another.
> Movement between shots, the visual "interval", the visual correlation of shots, is, according to kino-eye, a complex quantity. It consists of the sum of various correlations, of which the chief are…
> the correlation of movements within the frame…
> (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p. 90)

Vertov points to the correlation of planes (close-up, long shot, etc.), light vs. shadow

and recording speeds as parameters to link the film fragments in a non-linear way.

The result is a highly crafted montage sequence. "I am kino-eye: I am in constant

motion" (Vertov in Michelson 1984, p. 88).

6. Practices: DVD and FIL*M*OBILE

This PhD thesis includes two DVDs. One DVD contains *Max with a Keitai* and one DVD contains the *mobile micro-movie* project. The work is discussed in this order, as the micro-movie conceptualisation resulted from the process of producing *Max with a Keitai*. (Also see appendix G for complete list of practice components).

This chapter will outline the content of the DVDs and discuss the production process. Section 6.3 explains how the footage was chosen for *Max with a Keitai*. In addition, this chapter will deal with the difficulties I had to overcome in working with the mobile resolution and mobile video. Section 6.2 illustrates how the pre-production experiments informed the project and the idea of conceptualising the micro-movies. Section 6.5 outlines the mobile (film) art works curated and screened at the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition. Within the analysis of the exhibited projects, the qualities of the mobile resolution, the focus on the rhythmic and non-linear construction of mobile video, the significance of location, the strong presence of the everyday, the notion of subjective, personal, private and the impulse of intimacy and immediacy are revealed. These characteristics provide a case for establishing the argument leading to the formation of a mobile aesthetic.

Beyond the aims and objectives of this research, certain ethical questions could be addressed, as the mobile device is positioned in a grey area in terms of legal questions. This analysis would take the research out of its current context, though.

The study poses no serious ethical problems. (According to the University of Westminster PhD regulations, this research has been classified as class 1. The study or practice has minimal or no ethical implications). The mobile video material includes no taped interviews except with myself. *Max with a Keitai* is illustrating my journey as a mobile phone filmmaker in Japan.

Some questions about intercultural communication could emerge from this research, as the mobile video was produced in Japan. However, these inquiries are beyond the scope of this research and the thesis' 40 000 word format is inadequate to address these elements.

Furthermore, the research acknowledges that there is a long history in the distinction between photography and cinematography. The semiotic and stylistic difference is relevant, but would shift the focus of this PhD thesis. All capacities of the mobile phone were explored creatively. The choice to use certain photographic and cinematographic components results from the technical limitations of mobile video.

6.1 Experiment in Cinematic Communication

This experimental work aims at creating a visual language for small screen and mobile devices. A new form of mobile-mentary filmmaking. Max was only equipped with a laptop and a Keitai.

> Keitai (Japanese = hand-carry) 1) small + portable, 2) carrying
> something, 3) form, shape or figure, 4) Mobile Phone.
> (Schleser 2008)

With the aim of producing an experimental documentary on a mobile phone, Japan was chosen as it is the country with the longest history of mobile devices. As mentioned before, the first mobile phone with a video camera, the SHARP SH-04, was introduced in Japan by Jphone in 2000.

In the experimental feature documentary *Max with a Keitai*, I made a distinct choice in using a 2005 mobile phone, recording in the low-res resolution 3gp format with a 176 x 208 pixel resolution. In addition a Japanese mobile camera phone, the Foma N902, was used in the production. In 2006 the mobile camera already had the capacity to record in the mpeg4 compression and the native video format QVGA (320x240) in 2006. However, in 2005, when I commenced the research project, file size limitations and video technology in mobile devices made this task a high-risk endeavour. The first and second generation of mobile phones had limited storage capacities (512 MB micro SD cards) and could only record in 12 frames per second. The two-megapixel mobile cameras compressed the video with the first generation of the 3gp video format. Technically and conceptually it seemed almost impossible to film a feature project on a mobile phone.

Writing in the 2006 publication *Cellphone Cultures*, Goggin outlines the format of the 3GP media devices:

> The quality of their lenses is inferior to that of analogue and
> digital cameras, as they are made from plastic rather than glass.
> So far resolution has been relatively poor, compared to the
> standard quickly established by digital cameras. Other early
> problems included limited storage capability, relatively short
> battery life, and lack of control over exposure, focus, and lens
> size, compared to fuller-featured digital and analogue cameras.
> (Goggin 2006, p.152)

Beyond these quoted challenges for the production, there were a number of problems ranging from the non-existence of any technical support to the incompatibility of the file formats and the different landscape (standard video formats) and portrait (early mobile video format) framing orientations when importing into a non-linear editing system.

The experiment in cinematic communication consists of the following components, which are discussed in this chapter.

Pre-Production Experiments

The Mobile Filmmaker (Schleser 2005 UK, DV pal and 3gp)

Messenger (Schleser 2005 UK, HDV and 3gp)

Mobile movie cam (Schleser 2005 UK, HDV and 3gp)

(Available for viewing on http://www.youtube.com/user/mobilementary)

Max with a Keitai

An experimental city film produced on a mobile phone for single screen cinematic projection. As part of the mobile filmmaking process I created the mobile-mentary vblog, a visual sketchbook, which provides a documentation of the production process in (almost) real-time during the four months of production. (www.mobile-mentary.co.uk)

mobile micro-movies

A non-linear series of 23 one-to-three-minute mobile video clips, which can be sent to mobile devices via a Bluetooth hub in order to view the feature project on mobile devices in an urban environment.

FIL*M*OBILE

(see terms)

6.2 Pre-Production Experiments

In the pre-production I produced a prototype short *The Mobile Filmmaker*. The project was mainly concerned with addressing the following technical problems:

> How will it be possible to collect all filmic material for a feature film on 512 MB memory cards?
>
> How do I work with the mobile portrait and cinematic landscape framing orientation formats?
>
> And will it be possible to use 3gp mobile video in non-linear editing programs?

A 512 MB memory card only holds about 15 minutes of mobile video footage. As a solution to this problem I would carry my laptop in my backpack and have four extra memory cards on me. I managed to ensure that mobile video files would play on my laptop. The experimental nature of the project, as much as the unexpected challenges

and solutions I encountered to these problems, were intended to be both part of the research process and the film. The self-reflective nature of the film documents the research process.

In early camera phones, video footage is captured in portrait rather than the filmic landscape picture orientation. When importing the 3gp video files into the DV environment the different framing orientations were realised. Through the exploration of the mobile resolution, the work took the form of splits-screens and the idea emerged to use different video layers simultaneously.

Another of the unforeseen circumstances is revealed in the film: the amount of hard disk space needed to render the mobile video files when editing in non-linear editing systems. Despite the fact that the files are very small for video files (due to the 3gp compression) their render time is enormous. In 2005 Final Cut Pro was the only software that allowed the playing of 3gp video files without converting the video file format. The 3gp codec is based on the Quicktime format, which is Apple's multimedia software architecture.

The prototype short film *The Mobile Filmmaker* functioned like a camera test. The documentary type film illustrates the distinction between DV video and 3gp mobile videos. One of the most interesting aspects that emerged out of the pre-production experiments is the distinctive look of the 3gp video when converted to DV Pal video. Some 3gp files do extensively pixelate. This element is exaggerated when blowing up mobile footage to DV formats. However, the key finding from the pre-production

experiments demonstrates that it does not matter how much an image pixelates, movement can always be decoded.

This aspect led towards the focus of using the pixel as the leitmotif in the city film *Max with a Keitai*. This observation, working with mobile video in a rather graphical manner rather than focusing on the content, led me to the work of the 1920s filmmakers. As discussed in Chapter Four, the works of Hans Richter and Dziga Vertov provide an approach to working with mobile video footage. Furthermore, their documentary practice is non-scripted and non-narrative, which was also intended for the feature mobile documentary project. Abstract patterns, graphical elements and shades of contrast revealed and framed the location in a different format, not 576x482, but mobile 174x144. In order to showcase the potential of mobile documentary filmmaking, the work was conceptualised for cinematic projection: in this way a comparison between mobile media and industry standard production formats on the cinema screen can be established.

The experiments were shot on location. No stylised props or sets were used, and no script existed. Lighting was limited to natural light and no colour correction was made in the editing or post-production process. Framing included an examination of camera angles and distances (i.e. extreme long shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up, extreme close-up), a combination of different heights of the camera to the scene during shooting and the application of mobile framing (i.e. pan, tilt, tracking). In addition time lapses were recorded to capture movement within the frame. In the pre-production experiments I realised that the editing should be conducted while filming on location, in order to eliminate the distinction between the production and post-

production process. The experimental work followed the rules of the kinoks filmmaking school rather than the industry conventions and expands kinoks filmmaking into the realm of mobile documentary.

> The kinoks attribute a completely different significance to editing and regard it as the organization of the visible world. *Editing during observation* - orienting the unaided eye at any place, any time. *Editing after observation* - mentally organising what has been seen, according to charecteric features. *Editing during filming* - orienting the aided eye of the movie camera in the place inspected in step 1. Adjusting for the somewhat changed conditions of filming. *Editing after filming* - roughly organising the footage according to characteristic features. Looking for the montage fragments that are lacking. *Gauging by sight (hunting for montage fragments)* - instantaneous orienting in any visual environment so as to capture the essential links shots. Exceptional attentiveness. A military rule: gauging by sight, speed, attack. *The final editing* - revealing minor concealed themes together with the major ones. Reorganizing all the footage into the best sequence. Bringing out the core of the film-object. Co-ordinating similar elements, and finally numerically calculating the montage grouping.
> (Vetov in Michelson 1984, p.71)

Within Final Cut Pro, I used dissolves, fades, cuts in a discontinuity editing style . I assumed that montage would be the key to link various elements, having the possibility of drawing upon motion-graphics or applying AFX (to expand the montage elements). Through the reference to the 1920s, I decided to work without diegetic sound. I treated video and sound as two separate entities and merged these together in the final montage. I believe that video and sound are two separate entities that work according to their own specifications. The editing and montage work treated audio and video as autonomous and neglected sync sound to a great extent. All sound files were based on mobile field recordings.

Abstract film, interval theory and the city films present the exploration of the filmic qualities beyond narratives, allowing one to create a visual story based on the pixel. The graphical patterns (which are specific to the mobile resolution in the form of

pixels) are exaggerated when expanded on the cinema screen. The application of the visual elements was a reference to the applied documentary framework of the 1920s. The mobile phone moving-images used video, which is RGB[14], while the 1920s city film productions were photographed in black and white. Colour added another dimension as a graphical element to the rhythmic construction of the film. The digital aspect is at the core of the pixel. (This characteristic is overexposed in the mobile aesthetic, which I term Keitai Aesthetic, in the next chapter.) Like in abstract films, some images are not always recognisable according to the photographic representation, but the motion of the pixel within the frame can always be decoded. A conceptual working method with mobile video can execute a continued relevance in the most likely case that technology will be upgraded and further develops.

6.3 *Max with a Keitai*

As mentioned before, I made the choice to go to Japan because it is the country where mobile phones with video recording devices first appeared in the public space. In addition, Japan has a long history and image of a technologically progressive environment. This combination set the parameters for the experiment in "cinematic communication" (Vertov 1929). The objective of *Max with a Keitai* was to produce a feature length city film and to document the production process with a mobile device. During the pre-production experiments in London, I realised that neither the mobile industry nor the film industry would recognise or accept the potential of mobile devices for feature filmmaking. As successfully established in the pre-production

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[14] RGB is a short form for red, green, and blue in an additive color model.

experiments[15], the pixel can function as the leitmotiv for the flow of mobile video rather than making use of a script to construct the city film. The pixelation of mobile video is a result of the 3gp compression format and is the core element of the emerging Keitai Aesthetic.

The city screen nexus was captured with the mobile phone and has provided an update for the city film genre. Historically, the city films have been concerned with the exploration, expression and examination of cinematic forms and technologies. *Max with a Keitai* expands the city film genre into the mobile realm. The idea was to produce non-scripted films in an experimental method based upon trial and error, as illustrated in the quote by René Clair (see page 75). The documentation of an experience (the city) as present in Ruttmann's work (see Chapter Four, Key Figures in the 1920s), the experimentation with camera techniques, unconventional camera angles and innovative approaches to editing (see Dziga Vertov's interval theory) provide an alternative to narrative cinema, and aim at separating cinema from its literary and theatrical traditions. The innovative ideas of the city filmmakers are expanded into the mobile realm. In accordance with Ruttmann's argument (see page 72) mobile filmmaking requires not only new techniques, but also new terminologies.

Max with a Keitai is a digital record of a video-blog (www.mobile-mentary.co.uk). The vblog was produced during the production process on location in Japan in 2006. The experimental city film *Max with a Keitai* was edited on location and screened for the first time in Japan at the Design Fiesta in Tokyo (http://www.designfesta.com) in December 2006. The screening of the film to a Japanese audience became part of the

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[15] The mobile-mentary pre-productions experiments are show-cased online (http://www.youtube.com/ user/mobilementary) and have been screened at various film festivals (*Super Shorts* Film Festival July 2006 and *The Smalls*, showcase for short-films, September 2006).

project and is a direct reference to the *Man with a Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929, Soviet Union). Vertov (or also Wenders in *Tokyo GA*, 1984) describes his filmic project as the diary of a cameraman, while the mobile-mentary project is a vblog (video blog) record, a visual (almost) real-time sketchbook.

As the project name indicates, *Max with a Keitai* has a significant personal emphasis. The mobile phone, as a filmmaking tool, and the vblog, as a record of the mobile phone filmmaker, are quite intimate media. This impression is emphasised through the voice-overs in the form of telephone calls in *Max with a Keitai;* some of these telephone calls are created with a personal note in order to reflect an intimate telephone conversation. These telephone conversations reveal the everyday life and personal experience of the filmmaker. My name is chosen as an emphasis in personalising the project beyond the modernist identification with the role of the camera operator. The telephone conversations and text messages mirror not only the intimacy, but also the immediacy, of the mobile medium. The textual or voice-over annotations are rather more like interpersonal conversations than the authoritative voice-overs featured in mainstream media. The visual qualities lead the construction of the city film, and not the voice comments. Some intertitles with comments from the weblog were used to shift away from a singular interpretation. The vblog functioned as a production diary and travel log. It is possible to identify a conceptual similarity between documentary and (video) blogs at this level. The vblogs can be seen as an extension of the documentary format on the web sphere.

> A weblog is a record of travels on the Web, so a mobile phone log (moblog) should be a record of travels in the world. …As we chatter and text away, our phones could record and share the parts we choose: a walking, talking, seeing record of our time around town, corrected and augmented by other mobloggers.

The comments from other bloggers are included in *Max with a Keitai* as intertitles, which implements the web 2.0 impulse. The blog allows other people, beyond myself as the filmmaker, to have a voice in the documentary. *Max with a Keitai* bridges the filmic and online formats through the simulation of SMS-intertitles appearing on screen. This point also refers back to the argument established in Chapter Three illustrating the innovative capacity of amateur media.

During the production of *Max with a Keitai*, the video-blog functioned as a video database. In the first instance, the 3gp videos were indexed daily according to their time and date on location. While filming on location I collected 723 MB of mobile video material with my mobile phone, which equates to approximately 190 hours of video material. The conceptual problem of linking a large number of unscripted recordings into one project has been mastered by the Soviet film pioneer Dziga Vertov, who, as previously described, provided an alternative to the commercially driven fiction cinema. Dziga Vertov's *Chelovek s Kino-Apparatom* and the *Kino-eye productions* attempted to create a new visual language through a practice-led approach to working with film. The vblog indicated the first attempts in the editing and montage process, while the filming continued throughout the next month. The montage is driven by the images' characteristics and not the photorealistic representation. Most files that are chosen for the final project were published on a more or less regular basis on the blog about 12 hours after filming on location. An indexical sequence and record based upon the date of production does exist. Within the database, the assembled mobile video files were placed into different categories

based upon their photographic and abstract representations. These qualities were defined to make a selection of the mobile video footage.

In the second instance, the video fragments were evaluated and edited into short clips and uploaded to the vblog. As I was working with the keitai (mobile phone) for the first time, I examined the mobile 3gp videos at the end of each day. Within this process the video clips were copied and saved in two other databases. The process of mobile phone filmmaking does not include logging and capturing, as the filmic material was copied from the memory card during the production process. I developed a taxonomy based on thematic tags, (such as transport, tradition or Tokyo), and one according to the visual characteristics of the 3gp video, i.e. dominant colour in the frame (such as green and orange), movement on a horizontal or vertical plane and the movement in-between frames. The structure of *Max with a Keitai* itself took shape during the editing process. I started to insert the videos in the non-linear desktop editing program's timeline in a similar way as the videos had been featured on the mobile-mentary vblog (www.mobile-mentary.co.uk). The database, which included the 3gp videos tagged according to their parameters, provided a basis for the creation of the visual rhythm. In the final stages of editing, the video files were then linked according to a visual rhythm, which originated from the above-described pixel qualities. The exploration of the pixel is positioning itself against the commercial product of sync sound. The soundtrack, which was produced in collaboration with Dithernoise (aka Simon Longo), Demetris Roditis, Kota Kawasaki, Glitchworks (aka Jo Thomas), Will K-nine (aka Will Oliver) and Charlie McConville, mirrored the approach defined in the pre-production experiments. These sound artists and music producers were instructed to produce soundscapes based upon my mobile field-recordings. All sound files were generated on mobile devices.

The Japanese phone could record in stereo sound, which was greatly appreciated by the four different composers. All music was produced for the project under my direction. As the composers used the vblog to follow my mobile video accumulation, they had a relatively good idea about the project. By the time I returned to the UK, the soundtrack was developed to a draft version. At this point I merged the mobile video and sound for the first time. The fine-tuning was conducted according to certain visual key points. Before the final cut, the film was screened at the FIL*M*OBILE screening. Further feedback was generated through the vblog and a number of screening sessions with the sound artists. The discussions between the sound artists and myself and my directions in producing the sound score were also noted on the blog on a number of occasions. In a comparable way to Vertov's documentary filmmaking approach, I collected fragments of everyday life in Japan. The city film also captures my everyday life as a mobile phone filmmaker during the mobile-mentary production in the Japanese megalopolis in the Taiheiyō Belt.

Tokyo and the Taiheiyō Belt established its position as the world's leading technology hub in the early 1980s. The modern concept of the metropolis has been extended towards the formation of Global Cities (Sassen 2001) expanding its city gateways into global nodes. The mobile phone, which is termed *keitai* in Japan, became the icon of Japanese technoculture.

> In 1999 the total number of mobile phones in Japan (56.9 million) exceeded that of regular fixed phones (55 million) for the first time. Also 7.5 million people in Japan use mobile phone-based Internet services.
> (Karan 2005, p.350)

At the turn of the millennium, around 35 million people were living in the global city of Tokyo, which is one of the most economically productive urban

areas in the world (Sassen 2001, p.218). Tokyo emulates the concept of a technoscape, which John Urry defines as:

> …the contemporary landscapes shot through with technological elements which enrol people, space and the elements connecting people and spaces into sociotechnical assemblages, especially the transportational technologies, such as roads, rail, subway and airports, but also the informational technologies such as signs, schedules, surveillance systems, radio signals and mobile telephony calls.
> (Urry 2006, p.9)

The geographic location of the technoscape is by no means limited to Tokyo. The concept of a city is pushed beyond its boundaries, resulting in the formation of a megalopolis. The megalopolis of the Taiheiyō Belt, the Tokaido corridor, includes the Ibaraki Prefecture in the north of Japan and reaches to the Fukuoka Prefecture in the south of Japan. The Pacific Belt includes the major cities of Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Himeji and Hiroshima amongst others. The megalopolis' urban architecture and the prominent display of technology in public places, such as the Shinkansen bullet trains and large scale video billboards, foreshadowed the new image of a 21st century megalopolis in the 1980s. The cityscapes are depicted as a hybrid of tradition and progressive technoculture. *Max with a Keitai* provides an updated reading to the experimental documentaries produced in Tokyo by Wim Wenders (*Tokyo GA* 1985) and Chris Marker (*Sans Soleil* 1983) in the political and cultural landscape of the 80s.

> Over time, new images of the city and urban life developed as the documentary film itself evolved into various new forms.
> (Clarke 1997, p.62)

Through a critical lens, Max records the failures of the technoculture, such as the derelict shopping mall in Den-Den town (= Electric city). This sequence can be seen as a requiem of consumer culture. The imagery of a shopping

centre equipped with a rollercoaster but no customers, and the sight of abandoned shops, epitomise the economic recession that hit Japan in the 1990s. These new images of Japan stand in contrast to the futuristic progressive images of *Sans Soleil* or *Tokyo GA*. The effect of the economic recession in the 90s can be contextualised through the *haikyo* phenomenon[16], which provides a largely unknown picture of the postmodern megalopolis. The pixel video reveals the economic downturn in juxtaposition to the most advanced technoculture. The pixel is the driving force of the film's construction. The exposure of the "smallest element of an image that can be individually processed in a video display system" (IEEE 2008 [online]) creates a unique effect on the cinema screen. In its most expressive state this feature is depicted in the A-dome scene (00:00:37:03 - 00:00:38:56). This sequence is a symbolic statement, which emphasises the status of the pixelation on the discursive layer. The implosion of the pixel is a reference in form and content: Hiroshima marked the destruction of the traditional Japanese way of life and simultaneously introduced a new epoch of consumer culture. The significance of this reference is manifested through the atom test conducted in North Korea during the time of production of *Max with a Keitai* in Japan[17]. The fragmentation of the digital pixel suggests the atomic implosion. This is a visual characteristic of the Keitai Aesthetic when blowing up mobile phone video footage to cinematic dimensions. The mobile phone as

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[16] Japanese photographers use the word as a label for deserted modern buildings, most of which were built in the post war era. (Miller 2007, *No Man's Land* [online] http://metropolis.co.jp/tokyo/711/feature.asp)
The work *Note of Ruins – Dilapidated Spaces Show Nostalgia* of the Japanese photographer Toru Kurihara illustrates the ruins of urban consumer culture projects in Japan.
[17] *Outcry at N Korea 'nuclear test'* BBC news [online] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6033457.stm

a tool for cinematic communication can push the representation of the digital

city to the next level.

6.4 *mobile micro-movies*

The 23 micro-movies emerged out of the production process of transferring the files

between my mobile device and my laptop (MacBookPro) in the production process of

Max with a Keitai. This experience made me realise that the mobile device is not only

a film tool but could also be used as a screening tool. The project positions itself in

opposition to the mobisodes. The practice-led research into micro-movies is rather

more conceptually driven than focused on narrative content. The micro-movies are

extracts from the above outlined feature length mobile documentary. The idea was to

transmit the micro-movies during the screening or outside the cinematic space via

Bluetooth. The micro-movies are intended to be viewed in the city space, and aim to

be understood as creating a new mobile experience in the in-between space. Some

pioneering elements of the Bluetooth distribution of the *mobile micro-movies* project

(as exhibited in the London Gallery West during the FIL*M*OBILE events) are now

appearing in marketing, or to be precise in the new field of proximity marketing.

Mobile media allow users to view micro-movies in environments or situations where

no screen is present. The mobile micro-movies can be played on mobile devices at

any time in any location: the space or environment that has no screens present, the in-

between space, becomes the mobile environment. In the experimentation, the duration

of micro-movies was set to one to three minutes, to enable a mobile experience for the

in-between space. The feature project can thus be disseminated from the cinema to the

mobile screen via Bluetooth technology. The duration of the feature project is approximately 56 minutes (, which divided by 2.5 [average duration of the *mobile micro-movies*] equals 22,4, so almost 23,) and 23 micro-movies were made. The numbers 56 and 23 were chosen as Tokyo has 23 wards and I spent 56 days on location. This does not mean that these numbers represent each ward and every minute of film equals one day of production, but the figures originate from the project's theme in a holistic way.

During the pre-production experiments I realised that working with split screens provided a fruitful opportunity to work with 3gp video. Furthermore, I expanded upon this discovery, experimenting with micro-movies and extracting these in the split screen sequences of the feature length project. Here I was exploring the concept of taking some elements of the city film out of the cinematic environment and providing the opportunity to view the micro-movies in an urban environment. The aspect of translation between the mobile device and the cinema screen considers a mobile-specific rhythm for the cinema and mobile screen. The non-linear approach of *Max with a Keitai* made it feasible to extract mobile videos in the form of micro-movies via Bluetooth for viewing in the streets. The split screens could expand the notion of a spatial montage (Manovich 2000 [online]). Lev Manovich describes spatial montage in the *Language of New Media* as a "number of images, potentially of different sizes and proportions, appearing on the screen at the same time" (Manovich 2001, p. 322). According to Manovich, the sequential images can be replaced with spatial qualities. He quotes a number of media examples in very recent years that make use of split-screen techniques, such Mike Figgis's *Timecode* (2000) or the TV series *24 hours*, next to numerous music videos and commercials (Manovich 2002 online).

> If traditional cinema privileges the temporal relationship between a particular image and other images which come before and after, computer cinema introduces in a set of new relationships which can be described by terms "spatial" and "simultaneous": the relationship between different layers in a composite; the relationship between a frame of a movie and other information which can be hyperlinked to this frame; the relationships between different images which can be distributed over the screen at the same time, etc. These new "techniques" of a moving-image can be used to achieve "spatial montage".
> (Manovich 2002 [online])

Lev Manovich refers to these elements as a paradigm shift, which is now implemented into the compositing and special effects software. Adobe After Effects enables video to be used in a three dimensional space on the screen. The micro-movies expand this experience into non-screen environments, physically every environment where one can take a mobile device. The mobile device is thus taking the images out of the cinematic experience onto the street, expanding spatial montage into the everyday environment.

As part of the project, I explored the differences between the viewing experience in the cinema and on mobile devices. Following the parameters of a cinema screening and a mobile screening, different conceptions appeared to play an important role. In a cinema, the audience is viewing a projection in a darkened room for a certain period of time. In mainstream cinema we are usually presented with a continuous narrative story construction, which cannot be interrupted at any point; continuous editing drives the linear storyline from beginning to end. Therefore it is bound by a notion of chronological development. In a cinematic environment the viewing experience is relatively standardised (a dark room in which one is facing a screen in front of the cinema projector). The viewing experience and the narrative construction are thus a linear process, a spatial confinement of the narrative genres. In contrast, the mobile

viewing experience is an extension of the spatial montage. The micro-movies can be sent in intervals at different times of the day. The aim of the micro-movies is to merge the location of the viewing (i.e. in this case London's cityscape) with the filmic representation of a place on the other side of the world (in the case of the mobile-mentary project, Japan). The user experience is taking the potential viewing time into consideration. The 23 micro-movies are constructed in a non-sequential fashion and can be viewed in any order to establish an understanding of the whole project. Most likely the *mobile micro-movies* will be viewed in situations where no other screen media are available. Consequently the user might not be solely focusing on the micro-movies, as users may be viewing the content whilst being on the move themselves. The mobile viewing experience is a spatial montage between the onscreen experience and the environment of the location where one is viewing the *mobile micro-movies*.

6.5 FIL*M*OBILE

In order to evaluate the mobile experiments of this thesis, a space was needed for the examination and discussion of mobile media projects. In an analogous way to experimental documentary, which is studied in comparison to other documentary films within this category, mobile phone video productions need to be evaluated in a field in their own category, amongst other mobile media practices. In the years from 2004 onwards, mobile video established itself as a new asset in the mediascape with its distinctive characteristics.

Previous to FIL*M*OBILE, there were no events which ran an international conference in conjunction with a mobile (film) art exhibition and dedicated feature length mobile film cinema screening programme in the UK. Internationally, one can note some interesting initiatives, such as the *Pocket Film Festival* in Paris, which has been running since 2005 and showcases a broad-range of activities including exhibitions and talks. In 2006, the first edition of the annual *Mobilefest* took place in San Paulo. The increasing number of mobile film festivals world-wide and major industry events, such as *Mobile World Congress*, emphasise not only the formation of a new mobile industry, but also new mobile video practices entering the mediascape. In order to fully analyse and explore the new formats of mobile media production, one will need to contrast and compare the mobile video and artwork according to their own mobile parameters. A framework for a debate on the subject of new mobile media has been curated in the FIL*M*OBILE network. In order to document the emerging form of mobile filmmaking and art in a scholarly fashion, the FIL*M*OBILE network was created. FIL*M*OBILE is a networking project, which aims to create a dialogue between the industry, filmmakers and artists working with mobile devices on an international level. The FIL*M*OBILE project kick-started its activities with a networking event in June 2007[18] and in the second networking event in December the international dimension was emphasised through a live web-broadcast with the *Mobilefest* in San Paulo[19] (see further information and video documentation online at

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[18] Speakers at the FIL*M*OBILE networking event in the Centre for Excellence (CEPLW) at the University of Westminster: Alfie Dennen (moblog UK), Daniel Florencio (filmmaker), Davide Scalenghe (Current TV), Dennis Morrison (zzizzl films), Romain Forquy (photographer) and Max Schleser (FIL*M*OBILE).

[19] Speakers in London: Eva Weber (BBC and documentary director - *The Intimacy of Strangers*), Lisa Roberts (Pocket Shorts, Video Umbrella, Single Shot), Daniel Florencio (filmmaker and Current TV pods producer), Camille Barker (Artist and SMARTLab researcher), Max Schleser (mobile filmmaker and University of Westminster PhD candidate). Speakers in São Paulo: Alberto Tognazzi (MovilFilm Fest), Zico Góes (Programme director MTV), Maurício Hirata (Ministry of Culture, Brazil), Wagner Martins (Economist-*Cocadaboa*), Mauro Rubens (VJ and video artist) and Duncan Kennedy (Mobifest Canada).

www.filmobile.net). The *Mobilefest* was launched in November 2006 with a seminar discussing the social, cultural and aesthetic implications that mobiles and mobile technologies have been promoting on a global scale. The *mobile-mentary* project was represented with a video presentation, and in the following year the live web broadcast was realised. On the 4th and 5th April 2008 the international FIL*M*OBILE conference took place at the Old Lumière Cinema. 150 delegates and 22 conference speakers[20] from Australia, Germany, Italy, South Africa, US and the UK discussed the cultural and social impact of mobile technologies in the domain of art and media practice. The conference featured industry panels, another live web broadcast with the *Mobilefest* in San Paulo and a cinema screening programme of feature mobile phone productions, including world premiere screenings. The conference ran in conjunction with the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition in the London Gallery West. As the field is in the process of establishing itself, the exhibition chose the work of practitioners that showcase diverse approaches to mobile media art and mobile filmmaking. The influences range from photography, net and new media art, filmmaking, video production to fine art.

One can clearly contrast the work exhibited in the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition with the mainstream mobile media as outlined in the Industry Discourse section. The global

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[20] Melissa Bliss (Artist), Emma Bewley (TV Producer, Leo Burnett), Helen Keegan (mobile marketing consultant), Kasia Molga (artist), Dennis Morrison (zzizzl Films), Emily Renshaw-Smith (Current TV), Jo Thomas (sound artist), Bebe Beard (Suffolk University, Bosten), Camille Baker (SMARTlab, University of East London), Professor Emiliana De Blasio (University of Campobasso, Italy), Mark Brill (Ping Corporation Ltd, immedia24), Chris Chadwick (ICDC, Liverpool), Elizabeth Evans (University of Nottingham), Daniel Florencio – Mobile content producer (Brazil and UK), Professor Lizbeth Goodman (SMARTlab), Marcelo Godoy (Mobilefest, Brazil), Paulo Hartmann (Mobilefest, Brazil), Professor Steve Hawley (Manchester Metropolitan University), Larissa Hjorth (RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia), Monica Horten (University of Westminster), Brian House (Knifeandfork – New York, USA), Thomas Meyer (University of Siegen, Germany), Max Schleser (University of Westminster), Professor Michele Sorice (Crisc-Cmcs, University of Rome, Italy and University of Lugano, Switzerland), Terry Wright (University of Ulster).

entertainment industry (exemplified here through media companies like the Mobile Media Company, AOL Time Warner, Microsoft Corp or Walt Disney amongst other multinational cooperations) is trying to utilise the mobile medium to create a new market for revenues. "Mobile content will be worth in excess of £5.46 billion globally by 2011, according to analyst house Screen Digest" (mad.co.uk [online]). The drama-driven Hollywood (or Cellywood) narratives, presented as mobisodes, seldom explore the capacity to create revenue through the mobile medium. A great amount of mainstream mobile media content is repackaged and converted from the TV or the cinema screen without considering mobile-specific parameters such as mobile aesthetics, mobile resolution or movement and rhythm in mobile video. The different screen dimension 176x220, 176x208 to 1440x1080, 1280x1080 are all treated homogenously, when a much more tailor-made mobile experience is required (see *mobile micro-movies* section). FILM*O*BILE exhibited alternative approaches, which surfaced in the gallery, at art exhibitions and at film festivals. These works can be clustered as an alternative format of cultural production in ways that the industry and other institutions exclude, or tend to exclude, for political and economic reasons. The argument established in Chapter Four, that artists and technicians were leading the innovation process of documentary in the 1920s, resonates in the contemporary mobile mediascape. The FILM*O*BILE events showcased the multiplicity in the creative application of mobile video, which is theoretically underpinned through a user-based history of mobile video. This approach facilitates the seeding of creative innovation and opposes an economic deterministic and monocausal direction as introduced in the industry discourse section. No technological imaginary limitations or industry conventions were discussed, but on the contrary the significance of mobile media as a tool for cultural production and transformation. The artist Melissa Bliss

(London based artist) talked about *Instant Films* producing workshops with institutions to engage young adults into filmmaking using mobile devices. Chris Chadwick (ICDC, Liverpool) showcased the results from the *Mobile Movies* project, which used a similarly inclusive approach to work with teenagers in Liverpool. Jo Thomas (UEL, London) explored the mobile device as a musical instrument and Bebe Beard (Suffolk University, Bosten, USA), a performance artist, as a tool for tracing movements of mobile devices on canvas. Brian House from *Knife and Fork* (New York, USA) presented subversive mobile storytelling projects, and Terry Wright, University of Ulster, pointed to the political implications of the mobile projects *Drogheda Viaduct* and *Battle of the Boyne*. These examples, among some other papers, illustrate the innovative aspects of the conference and demonstrate that mobile video has the potential to implement change in the mediascape. The representation of cultural alternatives and aspirations, as discussed in Chapter Three through Punt's approach in relation to early cinema as a cultural construct, allows me to account for a negotiation of the processes that define mobile video. Currently the consensual understanding of mobile video technology is shaped by multinational corporations through PR and branding exercises, while users and pro-d-users have illustrated innovation of the technology in use. FIL*M*OBILE illustrates these multiple facets of mobile video, which exist in the contemporary mediascape. Moreover, the mobile feature film screening underlines the argument that amateur media can do the work of high-end technologies. As industry standards have yet to be successfully established, an opportunity for wide experimentation presents itself, and allows us as users to explore the potential of the mobile video. The mobile projects discussed at the FIL*M*OBILE events take the notion of user-agency into account and showcase the way that a creative application of mobile video can empower user-groups. In

particular, work that engages young adults and teenagers illustrates the prospects for enabling transformation. FIL*M*OBILE can be defined as an intervention into the industry discourse of mobile video. The FIL*M*OBILE exhibition revealed the wide range of mobile prospects in an emerging domain, which might soon change once imaginary standards (like mobile TV) are introduced.

> Rather than trying to identify what is unique about digital computers functioning as media creation, media distribution and telecommunication devices, we may instead look for certain aesthetic techniques and ideological tropes which accompany every new modern media and telecommunication technology at the initial stage of their introduction and dissemination.
> (Manovich 2003, p.19)

The Keitai Aesthetic as defined in the next chapter belongs to a "genre which is not alien to the cinema, but which actually has its origins in the fundamental principles of cinematography" (Piotrovskij in Eagle 1981, p.131). Writing in *Theory of Cine-genres*, Piotrovskij argues that narrative and dramatic impulses "are alien to the basic nature of cinema" (Piotrovskij in Eagle 1981, p.132). This statement emphasises the core problem of mobile media at this current moment in time.

> The function of rhythm can hardly be disputed in regard to any cine-genre, but in the construction of plotless films it acquires extreme importance. A montage regulated by rhythm is the feature that marks importance. A montage regulated by rhythm is the feature that marks the newly invented genre … as an aesthetic genre… Rhythm is the basic compositional factor for the genre invented by the Kinoki…
> (Piotrovskij in Eagle 1981, p.146)

Piotrovskij's account considers the principles of film composition, which, according to him, must be assessed from the point of view of the specific cinematic material and the technical laws which govern it (Piotrovskij in Eagle 1981, p.131). These parameters provide a framework to analyse mobile video according to its own specific texture and particular mobile resolution. Through exploring the quality of movement in mobile videos, a pace and rhythm specific to mobile videos can be demonstrated.

The mobile projects exhibited in the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition, *Speech Marks* (Steve Hawley, 2004, UK), *Being There* (Anders Weberg and Robert Willim, 2006, Sweden)*, Dance into Action* (Henry Reichhold, 2006, UK)*, Yours and Mine* (Anne Massoni, 2007, USA) as much as the mobile feature productions *Nausea* (Matthew Noel-Tod, 2005, UK) or *Max with a Keitai* (Max Schleser, 2008, Japan/UK) are characterised by their rhythmic construction of content rather than by similarities in narrative or plot. These works reveal the pixel aesthetic that is formulated in the next chapter. Following the Kinoki documentary filmmaking method, the cine-genre is related to the notion of the everyday. "A literary scenario immediately cancels its meaning and significance. Because our objects are constructed by editing, by organising the footage of everyday life, unlike artistic dramas that are constructed by the writer's pen" (Vertov in Michelson, 1984 p.90). Everyday life and communication have become intertwined in the last decade;

> …because mobile communication is pervasive and reaches all
> domains of human activity, its mediating effects can be observed
> in these different dimensions…mobile technologies are becoming
> an integral part of people's everyday activities.
> (Castells 2007, p.78)

The FIL*M*OBILE exhibition included a number of works which use everyday activities as their source for mobile photography and filmmaking projects. *You & Me* shows a relationship of two female characters' everyday picture message communication, and *Speech Marks* depicts scenes which are a collection of moments drawn from everyday life (i.e. washing a car or meetings at work). The notion of the everyday is also captured in the mobile photography of Berlin based photographer Elly Clarke and the mobile installation of New York based artist Brian House. The mobile photography project *Alternative Funding Strategy 2008: Unique Elly Clarke Photos Not Yet Taken on her Mobile Phone* and mobile video installation *The*

Wrench, reveal everyday activities such as travelling, and are structured around daily patterns, such as meals. Furthermore, the notion of the everyday underlines the personal character of the mobile (film) art works. These intimate impulses also occur in *Max with a Keitai* (see discussion in section 6.3). The notion of autobiographical work is framed with the subjective mobile camera, a personal mobile video media. This intimate notion of mobile media is present in various works exhibited and films screened at the FIL*M*OBILE events. One example from the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition is Camille Barker's *Mind Touch: Embodied Transference and Transcendence*, which is an experiment in non-verbal communication. Her mobile performances incorporate the aspects of personal and intimate media through using mobile devices to transmit feelings. Another characteristic, which can also be attached to mobile video's participatory prospects, is its immediate quality. In the article and paper presented at the FIL*M*OBILE conference *Waiting for immediacy (exercises for documenting everyday life)* Larissa Hjorth observes,

> The rise of mobile media parallels the rise of the webcam (Koskela 2004) by affording everyday users with the ability to document and edit their stories, however, mobile media promises more — the portal to new arising forms of distribution such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld mini-hompy, YouTube etc… But what makes mobile media so distinctive as an art form?
> (Hjorth 2007, p.1)

In her article, Hjorth points to the answer of her question, arguing a case for the engagement with the third space. The third space presents an environment which is mobile and of extreme localized nature (Hjorth 2007, p.1). This immediate experience emerging in this space can be captured by mobile media.

The FIL*M*OBILE exhibition also showcased the various forms for displaying these experiences. Henry Reichold's large-scale panoramic photography illustrates the

contribution of mobile images to the large-scale media. Reichold's panoramic landscapes and city images are produced entirely on mobile devices. A picture is made up of around 250 mobile phone images and digitally stitched into one artefact. Henry Reichold's landscape photography is juxtaposed in the FIL*M*OBILE exhibition with Anne Massoni's mobile portraits. The work is a direct reference to MMS (multimedia messaging systems) and picture phoning.

> Photography thus acquires the status of an instant communication medium that is nearly as synchronous as voice and text messaging … Whether it is in the immediacy of the exchange between mobile phones and/or in the instantaneousness of the photographic act that we see photography's power of representation, a new imaginary and visual language is introduced, one which upholds and reinforces the emotion inhering in an imagined 'being there'.
> (Rivière in Ling 2005, p.167)

The work by Kasia Molga, *Breaking News*, is an interactive installation, which juxtaposes news story headlines and personal news of the spectator that can be sent via SMS. The text triggers a message in an interactive landscape of the everyday. The spectators' comments will appear as a ship in the ocean of news. According to Molga, she questions the viewer's attitude towards conventions of understanding what art is, while introducing new forms of experience using modern technologies (Molga 2007 [online]). The mobile phone is the portal to this new mode of experience, thanks to which a user can be part of the bigger picture in the mediascape. Furthermore, the mobile phone can give a voice to the individual and question the mainstream media. The mobile phone enables us to create alternative spaces beyond the industry discourse. The next chapter will discuss the mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) as an alternative discourse.

7. Findings

This chapter will outline the findings of the practice-led research project. I will discuss the Keitai Aesthetic on the cinema screen that emerged in the mediascape in the years 2004 to 2007. Within the analysis, I will define the mobile resolution through the Japanese term *Keitai* to implement the concept of movement. The Keitai Aesthetic is a return to the documentary filmmaking method presented in Chapters Four and Five. Due to the limitations of the mobile resolution, the documentary filmmaking practices of the 1920s, which emerged in the decade before sound film, can be applied to mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) filmmaking. This approach considers the texture of film, or rather the 3gp mobile video format, and utilises the pixel as the leitmotif.

The years 2004 to 2007 can be characterised in mobile filmmaking as a return to perception-based concepts of movement. Through a systematic arrangement and study of mobile video one can capture a new mobile aesthetic that exposes the experience of location, notions of immediate and intimate qualities in the mobile resolution. Furthermore, the Keitai Aesthetic allowed me to display a new image of Tokyo in the production of *Max with a Keitai*. Simultaneously the research is illustrating a different understanding of mobile video to the mobile and entertainment industries' perception of the 3gp video format. This research defines the aesthetic that entered the mediascape through a bottom-up approach and creates prospects for

change within the mediascape in alternative domains to the industry discourse. The investigation of mobile media in this research generated three key findings, which I will discuss in the following sections.

(i)   Keitai Aesthetic (on the single screen cinematic projection)

(ii)   Mobile Screen (viewing mobile micro-movies in the city)

(iii)   Alternative Discourse: mobile-mentary

The mobile phone allows a formation of unconventional mobile video practices that embrace transformation within the mediascape. Lisa Gye writes in *Picture This: the Impact of Mobile Camera Phones on Personal Photographic Practices* about mobile photography. She argues that camera phones are not just another kind of camera and allow the evolution of new kinds of imaging practices (Gye 2007, p. 279). This argument is carried forward into the domain of mobile video. These new imaging practices are contained in the Keitai Aesthetic. The findings chapter will showcase the significance of location in mobile filmmaking and the mobile particularity of immediacy and intimacy. These qualities are implemented in the mobile resolution and therefore distinctive from DV or HD video formats.

7.1 Keitai Aesthetic

The formation of the Keitai Aesthetic is based on the mobile experiments and the results presented in part 1 (DVD I and DVD II). This section will define the Keitai Aesthetic drawing upon the findings from the cinematic experiment discussing:

(i)   the Mobile Resolution

and

(ii)   Movement and Rhythm in Mobile Filmmaking

These two categories are key to mobile filmmaking, as the Keitai Aesthetic is based on the mobile resolution. The new quality in this aesthetic is expressed, on the visual level, through digital pixel compositions and fragmentations. The research demonstrates that these two categories provide a method for working with 3gp video. Through opposing the requirement that a narrative is packed into a commercial unit for sale, the mobile resolution is not defined as a fragment, an artefact or a problem, but a feature. The non-linearity in the research practice components allows me to explore the capacities of mobile video and provide innovative solutions to the research problems.

7.1.1 The Mobile Resolution

In the Practices Chapter, I quoted Larissa Hjorth, who pointed out that the mobile phones' particular look is related to the rise of webcams at the end of the 1990s. The mobile video aesthetic is distinctive from the webcam videos of talking heads, but they are similar to the extent that both partake in the newly emerging interpretation of media formats by users. With the 2005 *YouTube* phenomenon, a new platform emerged to screen (mainly) low-res productions. The spirit of the kinoks and the school of kino-eye filmmaking are present in the mobile-mentary project as much as in the videos screened on *YouTube*. As outlined in Chapter Three, amateur media can

provide an alternative to the industry discourse and function as a matrix for innovation. We hold the possibilities for filmmaking in our hands on a daily basis. The means of production for mobile filmmaking have been made accessible, as the Motorola advertisement slogan reveals *We're all Filmmakers Now*[21]. But the potential still remains unlocked. From 2007 onwards, the industry has been trying to market the mobile device as professional camera equipment. As one example, one could point to a Samsung advertisement, which uses professional set lights (see appendix H). Other examples have been summarised in the Industry Discourse section in Chapter Two (see page 36). These campaigns are attempts to brand mobile filmmaking rather than to explore its particular qualities. The multinational companies aim to define the concensual understanding of mobile video technology while users have already showcased its application since 2004.

In mobile phone filmmaking, the years 2004 to 2007 are characterised by the 3gp mobile video format. The 3gp mobile phone videos are distinctive from mini DV or HD video formats, while mpeg 4 is qualitatively very close to mini DV. The Keitai Aesthetic is thus the result of the specific file compression formats and the small size of the mobile phone camera (and its plastic lens) itself. The newness of the mobile medium is characterised by its distinctive low-resolution style. In *Downloading the Documentary*, David Chapman suggests that a non-broadcast video format creates a particularity of its own. He says that the question of image quality in terms of standards of definition is becoming less significant. Furthermore, he highlights the notion that people are now beginning to find the look of non-broadcast video formats pleasurable. Here Chapman is referring to the look of Super 8 film (Chapman 1998,

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[21] http://www.ogilvy.co.uk/index.php/our-work/film-makers/

p.180). The specific look of the mobile resolution is now being widely recognised, as a number of mobile projects have entered the mediascape (see Chapter Two). One can recognise the 3gp video immediately through its low resolution. The mobile-mentary project implemented this mobile signifier, the 3gp mobile resolution, as a quality characterising mobile videos.

At the core of the practice component (DVD I) is the abstract treatment of the pixel as a driving parameter in the construction of the story. As a result of the pre-production experiments, I realized that it does not matter how pixelated the image is, movement will always be decoded. Beyond the technical aspects of the mobile resolution, the creative filmmaking practice based on movement defines the Keitai Aesthetic. The mobile-mentary project challenges the capacity of industry formats based upon imaginary equipment standards. Especially at a time when the industry is shifting towards HD, mobile video provides an alternative at the opposite end of the (video resolution) scale. The mobile phone video will not replace mini DV or HD filmmaking, but can situate itself alongside them. In *Max with a Keitai* the digital city is documented in a way that could not be achieved using the DV or HD formats. The fragmented pixel is an abstract representation of our contemporary decade, which by its very nature has connotations of the digital Zeitgeist attached to it. The pixel can thus provide a new image of Tokyo. The new image of mobile video originates from the mobile resolution. The first generation of 3gp video is captured in 12 frames per second, using a two megapixel camera with a mobile resolution of 176 x 144 pixels. The mobile video pixelates even further, when blown up to the DV resolution. In this mobile resolution one can discover a feature unique to the low-res format: the pixel can transmit an experience about the filmed location.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, for Bergson experience is the currency of creativity and intuition is positioned on a higher level than formulas and statistics. Actuality and reality emerge from experience and take shape as awareness in our consciousness. Experience is a process of discovering the choices and alternatives of becoming, which stimulates action processes one can engage in. According to Bergson, our senses work like the camera, therefore the picture of reality is incomplete. The 3gp mobile resolution video mirrors this imperfection. The mobile resolution functions like intuition. The mobile videos are all shot on location and transcend an experience of "being there", expanding Rivière's earlier quote into the domain of mobile filmmaking. The city films of the 1920s capture the experience of the city and simultaneously provide a new film form and aesthetic. Mobile videos work on a similar level, expanding the notion of experience in relation to location on an immediate and intimate level (see also the discussion of *Max with a Kaitei* and the description dealing with aspects of intimacy and immediacy in the FIL*M*OBILE section). Aesthetics are here also understood and analysed as the mediation of an experience. Within the pixelated videos the significance of location is manifest. This notion can be exemplified through one of the most common phrases in mobile-phone conversations: "Where are you?" or "I am at…". These phrases emphasise the importance of location within voice communication, which shifts into the field of cinematic communication (Vertov 1929). "Third-generation (3G) cell phones are increasingly less about talking and more about image" (Robertson 2007, p.279). This argument can also be recognised in mobile filmmaking. By means of working with the pixel on a visual layer, the low-resolution obstruction can be turned into a unique

characteristic through focusing on a documentary filmmaking practice based on movement.

The mobile phone, in opposition to HD cameras, has a greater potential to transmit an intimate experience. The images captured on mobile devices are so close that one could touch them, therefore one can identify with the mobile phone filmmaker, i.e. the viewer, as a mobile phone user, holds the capacities to undertake recordings in his or her hands. As a documentary filmmaker, one would normally place the camera in a safe position and then use the tele-focus lens to film a scene at a distance, zooming to the space where the action occurs. The mobile phone does not have these capacities and requires the filmmaker to be involved in the action. This directness to the location is transmitted to the cinema screen. The notion of intimacy is explored in the city film *Max with a Keitai* through the perspective of the filmmaker. I remind the audience about the production process through showing myself in reflections in mirrors, buildings and buses using my camera-phone to film (0:00:02:37.16 – 0:00:02:51.84, 0:00:21:20.40 – 0:00:25:43.20, 0:00:33:06.84 – 0:00:33:59.04 and 0:00:34:48.76 – 0:00:34:58.76). Another intimate, and also immediate, connotation is the conscious disregarding of the 180-degree rule. I cross this imaginary separation of the film industry. As the mobile resolution is not defined according to industry standards, a separation between producer and user becomes superfluous. The pro-d-user can operate on both sides. The mobile resolution allows the positioning of the 3gp video in an alternative field to the industry discourse. As mobile video cameras are found in our pockets rather than in the studios of TV production or on film sets, it is in the domain of the user where one can locate the mobile resolution.

The documentary category can facilitate an experimental approach, which spans across the imaginary boundaries of technical standards. This thesis argues for a consideration of the mobile resolution to evaluate the emerging mobile video formats. The Keitai Aesthetic provides opportunities to take part in the cultural representation process, which implies a radical change in the mediascape. The notion of change on the aesthetic level might not be recognised in the industry discourse; but in the gallery and the film festival context, and especially the domain of the user, the mobile aesthetic demonstrates potential transformation. A shift towards the empowerment of the user can be facilitated through recogising mobile media outside the mass production, mediation and consumption approach. This domain is related to a more specific personal or community based approach. The mobile resolution allows the embedding of mobile videos in blogs and distribution via Bluetooth, while it can also be applied to produce work for cinema screenings. As described in Chapter Six, the mobile-mentary project links these domains, which the industry has not managed to capture yet, through a mobile documentary filmmaking method based on movement.

7.1.2 Movement and Rhythm in Mobile Filmmaking

On the cinema screen, the pixel creates a new look and feel. The mobile resolution imports a new image, as outlined in the previous section, into the mediascape. This aesthetic might not qualify for the standard of the industry but has its own qualities. The mobile videos are edited according to the graphic parameters within the frame and the flow of movement in-between the sequences of the mobile video. A visual

rhythm based on the pixel is constructed within the practice components. *Max with a Keitai* is based upon the visual rhythm integral to the sequences of the mobile videos. The important thing, Vertov said, is not to separate the form from content. "The secret lies in unity of form and content" (Vertov in Macdonald 1994, p.50). The movement within and in-between the frame was used as an initial parameter to edit the 190 hours of filmed material shot on location within four months. A method of filmmaking based on movement thus provides an alternative to narration. Furthermore, movement and rhythm allowed me to enter the Japanese culture and explore the Japanese cityscape with fewer cultural barriers. Here one can establish another parallel to the work of Hans Richter and Dziga Vertov. As mentioned before, Richter's approach working towards universal language and Vertov's interval theory resulting from the experiments in cinematic communication were aiming to create an international film language.

Movement in mobile filmmaking can be applied to shift away from the entertainment-driven theatrical and literary modes, focusing instead on the particularity of mobile video. The montage work created a pace that emerged out of the mobile videos itself. The pace in the montage process is not following any narrative story elements or the sync sound, but the movement of the pixel. This creates a rhythm that is integral to the mobile resolution and is based on the experience of the Japanese location. Drawing upon the argument presented in Chapter Four (page 72) sync sound sets films to a slower editing rhythm and thus cannot represent the particularity of the mobile video or the specific pace of the location. As an example one can refer here to the juxtaposition of the fast-forward Japanese city lifestyle (see SMS intertitle in *Max*

with a Keitai or *Hayaku (='be quick')* blog entry[22]) compared and contrasted with the harmony found in the temple sequences in *Max with a Keitai* (00:27:27:00, 00:28:48:00 and 00:53:53:00). The montage pace in *Max with a Keitai* is based on the pixel and can thus transmit the experience of this location. The mobile aesthetic allowed me to create a form that takes the priority in constructing the film. As Moholy-Nagy argued, a new technique must create a new and adequate form (see page 72). This new mobile form crystallises in the Keitai Aesthetic. When working with mobile video, one can reactivate the interval and abstract filmmaking practices and expand them into the mobile domain. Richter as a documentary filmmaker was not only interested in exploring meaning, but also in investigating form. The abstract filmmaking techniques implemented in Hans Richter's documentaries created a rhythm specific to the filmed objects in movement. In *Max with a Keitai*, the Keitai Aesthetic in the form of the pixels sets the rhythm. Furthermore, one can point here to the *Gestaltung* (see page 84) and the kinoks-montage practice (see pages 88 and 98), especially the interval theory or Kinochestvo (see page 88) which were successfully applied as mobile documentary filmmaking practice in *Max with a Keitai*. The art of organisation in kinoks filmmaking links the mobile video from one sequence to the next following the movement of the pixel. The link between different thematic subject

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[22] Hayaku (='be quick')

The city is criss-crossed by trains, cars and pedestrian bridges. The illuminated billboards flash like microprocessors directing the traffic of the town. The post-modern impression of a city is fuelled through the Japanese mentality. Office ward workers, couriers, businesswoman, and lots of other passers-by seem to be in a constant hurry. At the street junction in Shibuya a video billboard uses live-video input.
The digital feedback loop as a metaphor represents the city and will be applied in the montage production process (due to start next week)…
2 Responses to "*Hayaku* (='be quick')"
1. Francesco Says: October 11th, 2006 at 5:39 pm. *Hayaku*, "Quickly". But the real question is: the direction you're following … was your own decision?… sometime It's impossible figure out it. 2. Eri says: October 29th, 2006 at 11:31 am. I myself walk "hayaku" because I want to get on the Super Rapid Train in 4 mins. in Osaka if not I can't make it to the next subway in Kobe. I want to get "hayaku" to work because I was asked to give a poster "hayaku"…. (http://www.mobile-mentary.co.uk)

fields (as outlined on page 103) could thus be established. The kinetic resolution was given priority in the pixel construction. As a result a coherent work is presented for single screen projection.

Movement provides an aesthetic key capable of unlocking the potential of mobile video. When working with pixelated material, a visual rhythm driving an abstract movement can be used to produce a feature length film. By placing mobile video outside the industry conventions and standards, using an experimental approach focused on the form of mobile video, one can transmit experience about the location in an immediate and intimate form. The mobile video allows one to add another chapter to the history of the development of film aesthetics. The Keitai Aesthetic is emerging out of a visual quality that has been created by the users of the technology. Writing in *Digital Aesthetics*, Sean Cubitt argues: "the purpose of inquiry into the digital arts is not to affirm what is, but to promote the becoming of what is not-yet, the grounds of the future as they exist in the present" (Cubitt 1998, p. X). Mobile phones venture into new territories exploring and extending concepts of cinematic form. The new cinematic form can be expanded into the cityscape as a *mobile micro-movie* or, on the level of discourse, leverage transformation through the mobile-mentary as a cultural practice.

7.2 Mobile Screen

An unintended discovery was made when working with mobile devices. The mobile phone is not only an alternative production device (i.e. filming a feature film with a mobile phone instead of using a DV or HD CAM) but can also function as a mobile

screening device. Within this process, other functions of mobile devices such as Bluetooth, the wireless communication protocol, are explored. This communication protocol was developed to enable communication between IT devices. Mobile technologies have added a new chapter to film technology and its history-in-use. In this time of convergence and media-integration between different devices (computer, mobile, web based application, home entertainment devices, etc) the one parameter that will distinguish these media is the way of viewing - or rather experiencing - the media. The formation of new mobile video practices can also be linked to the mobility of the media, which has been foreshadowed by devices such as the Walkman, the pager, the Gameboy or digital still cameras. The camera phone enables agents to navigate through a number of territories and spaces, which were previously not connected to a cinematic experience. The mobile phone enables us to view images in any location, which traditionally used to be connected to the fixed point of the cinema theatre, home or desktop space. In a similar way that image recognition technology in the form of semacodes (as it already exists in Japan within the public space) links one's everyday life environment with the World Wide Web, the mobile phone has the potential to link the diegetic environment of the user holding the mobile device in her or his hand with a filmic location, which is presented on screen. Thus the two distinctive spaces can merge into one experience. Within this new (mobile) media experience the non-diegetic sound of the (mobile screening) environment will thus merge with the visual content on screen (or the sound from the field recordings with the environment of the mobile device's location). The *mobile micro-movies* allow the viewing of a city film project within the city, merging the mobile screen with the diegetic environment into one new experience. In order to further evoke this experience in the *mobile micro-movies*, I used Bluetooth as a dissemination tool. The

mobile-mentary project focuses its attention on exploring new possibilities of using mobile video technology beyond the industries' objective and parameter of sales and revenue. The practice components, the *mobile micro-movie* project and the feature documentary *Max with a Keitai* interact as a prototype experiment exploring the idea of creating one project filmed on mobile phones for a single screen cinematic projection and simultaneously as new mobile viewing experience. The consideration of form becomes a long-term investment into the construction of knowledge about the *mobile micro-movies* and mobile resolution. One of the key findings outlined earlier, the notion of transmitting an experience of location through the mobile resolution, can also be expanded into the *mobile micro-movies* practice research component (DVD II). The micro-movies project aims to explore the aspect of translation between the cinema and mobile screen. This process converts the mobile material, based on the rhythm integral to the mobile video sequences. Not only are the technical parameters of screen size and dimension important to consider, but also the montage technique that can address the elements of movement and rhythm. By considering the concept of movement in mobile video the translation from the cinema to the mobile screen or vice versa can be undertaken. Through using movement, a visual link between the mobile screen and the cinema screen can be produced. On the Video Vortex blog, hosted by the Amsterdam based Institute for Network Cultures, filmmaker Andreas Treske points to the essay on *Online Video Aesthetics* to illustrate the parameters of the mobile media:

> Portable devices, such as the iPhone, are used ubiquitously, which is different from cinema … It is therefore inevitable that we study new methods of impact and discover new ways relating it to video.
> (Treske 2008 [online])

The *mobile micro-movies* project is edited with distinctive rhythms according to the specific viewing experiences. When micro-movies are to be viewed in a non-cinematic environment, being out-and-about and watching micro-movies on the go, a different movement and rhythm in mobile montage can be considered. The user is not able to discard her or his contact with the environment completely as s/he navigates in a public space: one of the senses, either the visual or acoustic, will need to connect to the urban environment. By contrast, the cinematic experience is linked to a specific location (cinema) and time (film screening's start and duration) in a darkened room. The mobile screens not only represent the concepts of a mobile viewing experience (detached from a specific location and time), but also draw attention to the interrelationship between cityspace, cityscape and media. The entertainment industry has so far not considered the different viewing parameters, nor the different rhythms, which the two environments (cinema and mobile screen) require. In relation to this context I will refer back to the argument established in Chapters Two and Five, highlighting the multiplicity of the cultural contexts in which the cinematic machines were invented and entered the public arena. Transfering Edgerton's and Punt's arguments into the domain of mobile filmmaking, multiple applications and understandings of mobile video technology are possible. The *mobile micro-movies* project is providing a redefinition and different understanding of mobile video as found in the entertainment system.

From the historical origin of the first cinematic machines, one can draw a parallel with the development and cultural representation of mobile phone video. The very first moving-image machines were not only produced with the intention of working as part of the entertainment industry, but also under the function of scientific research. In

the section 'Theoretical Perspectives on Framing Movement', Marey's scientific experiments were outlined, which can be distinguished from the Lumière brothers' work. The Lumières were building an international brand through developing a cinema machine driven by an economic interest and entrepreneurial objectives. Rather than being filmmakers, the Lumière brothers were entrepreneurs. They strategically held back their sales and then released the cinematograph at the peak of the interest in it, creating their market in order to eliminate their rivals, such as the Skladanowsky brothers' Bioskop or Thomas Alva Edison's Black Maria amongst others. This competition for market domination can be related in a contemporary scenario to the power games between Apple, Microsoft, Nokia, Sun, Sony-Eriksson and Google etc to establish their mobile devices and operating systems as a standard in the contemporary mobile mediascape. Michael Punt argues that "perhaps the most obvious parallel between cinema and digital technology can be found in the intersection of advertising and entertainment" (Punt 2000, p. 64). The success of the Lumière brothers' machine in opposition to Edison's device was in its size and functionality. The cinematograph could be operated by one person and function as a camera for filming, a projector and a printing machine. Similarly, the very latest mobile devices allow filming, editing and printing (digital disseminating via the internet or Bluetooth) all via one mobile device. In 2005 these technical capabilities did not exist, but the technology would now allow further expansion of the *mobile micro-movies* project (as one example, one can point here to the Pangea Day project which I engaged in, see description page 177). This practice-led research has produced a body of work which challenges the concept of the mobisode and ventures into new territory. "As I see it, the future of the cinema may not be in the cinema at all" (Grierson 1979, p.69).

7.3 Alternative Discourse: mobile-mentary

Part 1 (DVD I and DVD II) of this thesis demonstrates that in the research timeframe from 2004 to 2007 further possibilities of exploring mobile media existed than were acknowledged by the industry. The entertainment and mobile industry was, and is, not interested in exploring the mobile phone as a filmmaking tool as the mobile phone does not match the traditional – or rather imaginary – industries' production formats. The Keitai Aesthetic is therefore not related to these standards, but can be evaluated according to its own parameters, which are outlined as location-specific and having immediate and intimate qualities attached to it. By examining mobile productions through its creative particularity as well as the specific rhythm that mobile-mentaries (mobile documentaries) develop, an intervention into the contemporary industry discourse can be established. The mobile aesthetic bears implications of transformation within the mediascape. The presented meta-discursive examination of early cinema as presented in Chapter Three can be applied to the early mobile mediascape. Through pointing at the consensual understanding of how technologies acquire meaning, alternatives can be implemented. Punt's approach to technology and history provides a pattern for the discussion of mobile video in the context of user-based histories.

As mentioned previously, it is key to analyse invention and the formation of a contemporary history of mobile media as dynamic processes. The technological imaginary, functioning as a cultural signifier of representation, is being shaped by various environments. It provides a model to explain the recent PR campaigns of the mobile phone industry. The industry observed and waited until users provided scenarios and then rolled out global marketing campaigns. Some of these elements

that define the Keitai Aesthetic, creating a story through the pixel and movement, intimacy and immediacy or other mobile characteristics mentioned in the FIL*M*OBILE section, can now be found in the mobile and entertainment industry without any reference to the source idea generators, the users of the mobile media. One example is the website http://www.3snapshots.com/tokyo/. (Launched in 2009, four years after the mobile-mentary blog). A new mobile videophone is advertised through a mobile-video blog, which is very similar to the mobile-mentary blog. Or as seen in *Cloverfield* (Reeves, 2008, Bad Robot and Paramount Pictures, USA) mobile phone footage had a Hollywood premiere acting as UGC and as a new format of the hand-held shot, using the above criteria of the Keitai Aesthetic. More mobile video is about to appear in a cinema near you, without any reference to the early pioneers of the mobile mediascape, which this thesis outlined.

The user interpretation of technology provides a licence to intervene within the industry discourse. The FIL*M*OBILE events showcased a formative intervention. As a result, the neologism of the mobile-mentary can be defined. In this context mobile means an open approach to work with mobile devices within the framework of documentary. The term 'Documentary' is used in this research to refer to a format before it was defined as such in the 1920s, illustrating the opportunity for users, pro-d-users, filmmakers and artists to explore the new emerging possibilities of mobile video. The argument created here can be linked to the framework of user-based histories presented in Chapter Three. The consideration of a user-based history allows scholars to document the multiplicity of mobile filmmaking as outlined in this thesis. The plural interpretations were curated through the FIL*M*OBILE network. The innovation did not result from one institution, project or practioner, but the creative

actions of a number of individuals internationally. Michael Punt writes in the earlier

quoted article in *Convergence* that

> It was the Lumières' agents in the field, and entertainers such
> as Georges Méliès who in collaboration with the audience
> participated in the invention of the cinema and are responsible
> for its history. This suggests that a more subtle view of the
> relationship between digital cinema and culture might be
> called for - at least one that factors in a determining function of
> other interpretative groups which are often in tension with the
> declarations of the industry moguls.
> (Punt 2004, p.11)

The networks of individuals mentioned in this thesis contribute to the formation of the

mobile-mentary. As an intervention in the mediascape it is visible through the Keitai

Aesthetic. The interpretation of technology-in-use is a formative involvement in the

contemporary mediascape, illustrating its alternative reading to the development of

the mobile industry discourse in the years 2004-2007. The formation of an alternative

mobile-mentary category is not driven by the industry, but by the users and their

mobile creations. These cultural formations appear in the mediascape in the form of

the Keitai Aesthetic.

> From this perspective, the history of a technology stops at its
> innovation - the point at which technical problems are resolved
> to the satisfaction of the producer. Whilst this may be a
> valuable procedure for practical engineers, the invitation to
> think of technological change as progress, or evolutionary, or
> developmental, is to invest technology with agency through a
> set of preferred metaphors.
> (Punt 2004, p.10)

The pro-d-users are creating aesthetics as cultural formats that allow an expression of

one's agency. The aesthetics discussed in the previous section can be placed into a

particular development that emerged within digital media in the last decade, driven by

users introducing the pixel aesthetic into the mediascape through a bottom-up

approach. Through applying Punt's non-linear approach to early cinema to the

contemporary mobile mediascape outlined in this thesis, it is possible for new

interpretations to emerge and allow one to argue for interventions. What scientists in the period of early cinema, artists and technicians in the 1920s, and users and amateur media in the contemporary domain all show is that a network of practioners can create innovation, and not solely the industry. The early mobile mediascape is facing a national or pan-territorial restriction on one side through network providers, various mobile standards and national or European communication laws. On the other side one can perceive an international community of users who are exploring the mobile video technology without these restrictions and conventions. Within this construct a space in the mediascape has emerged that users have utilised. In a similar situation to documentary film in the 1920s, mobile phone video work is situated in a non-defined space, which allows a conceptual and creative exploration of the format.

In the years 2004 to 2007 a window for experimentation opened. Here one can note a parallel development between artists working with a medium in innovative ways and an industry building its fort around this media as a territory. A rapid development from a new prototype to mass-produced products, swiftly changing industry patterns and an institutional pressure towards content production, exemplify the similarity within the formation of the documentary film discourse and now the mobile industry. The mobile device can break the barrier to the access of the media at a time when the industry is upgrading to the new HD standard. HD video equipment has increased significantly in price and in order to see in the new high definition format one will need to purchase HD monitors and projectors. Such a costly investment will be beyond the scope of many non-G8 countries, and new mobile media can offer a user-friendly alternative. The financial factors make mobile-mentaries an interesting alternative for users. Financially and aesthetically the mobile video can be situated in

a space of its own, a space beyond the entertainment industry, a space of peer and user groups, a space in the public domain within the gallery and festival context: both latter environments demonstrate an alternative to the mass media industry. It is immediate and intimate in character, a personalisation emphasising our individual agency. I could make a difference and hope to inspire other users with his project. If the industry is not reacting to the change, I could inform my peers (at the FILMOBILE conference) and also inspire young people in a number of workshops (see appendix D).

8. Conclusion

Mobile video is a new asset in the contemporary mediascape. Despite its saturation and the fact that mobile phones with video recording capacities have outnumbered digital video and still cameras, no research existed previous to this thesis dealing with the emergence of mobile documentaries. The research operated in a timeframe from 2004 to 2007. In the very early years of the young history of mobile video, a window for experimentation opened. The practice components of this research (DVD I and DVD II) demonstrate the prospects and potential of this new format. The research also analyses mobile documentaries through their emerging aesthetics and formation as an alternative to mainstream media and the industry discourse. The 3gp (and mpeg4) videos appeared in diverse fields in the mediascape, in the gallery, at art-exhibitions, at film festivals and in the entertainment and mobile industry. The thesis illustrates that multiple histories of mobile video exist in the contemporary mediascape and positions these in opposition to the industry discourse. As the mobile documentaries and related mobile videos have found no resonance in the mainstream media or the industry discourse, they are positioned in the domain of the mobile-mentary. The research provides a record in the form of an overview of the key developments and emerging practices related to video work produced on mobile devices in the above-mentioned timeframe. Without the scholarly documentation, the creative work on mobile devices during this period would not have been recorded and therefore lost.

Through experimenting with mobile video I realised that the 3gp video files have their own aesthetic. The key finding of this research is the formation of the Keitai Aesthetic. This aesthetic can be characterised through qualities that are recognised in various works produced on mobile devices. The low-res camera and file formats bear hidden potential to frame the world in a more intimidate and immediate style. Mobile documentaries are edited in a different rhythm and pace compared with the industry format of mobisodes. While the industry format is an audio-driven narrative, mobile documentaries draw upon their own aesthetics. The Keitai Aesthetic is thus the result of the specific file compression format and its distinctive mobile resolution. This limitation of the two and four mega pixel cameras defines its characteristic and introduces a new mobile-specific look and feel in the mediascape. Due to this limitation of the mobile video format, a framework from the period of the 1920s was chosen. The documentary aesthetics that were developed in the city film category, which explore movement and rhythm, also provide an approach for mobile documentary filmmaking.

The thesis has demonstrated that a network of users, including artists and independent filmmakers, utilised the mobile video to create mobile-mentaries in the early years of mobile video, before the entertainment and mobile industry began to market mobile devices as filmmaking tools. The focus on the non-narrative, and on the application of montage and rhythmic constructions, allows one to create a parallel to documentary filmmaking practices existing in the 1920s. In that decade, the city filmmakers produced innovation within the documentary domain through exploring the aesthetics of that format. Hans Richter's Ur-Kino and Dziga Vertov's interval documentary

filmmaking techniques can be expanded in the mobile realm to develop a mobile documentary practice to work with the mobile resolution.

In order to document in a scholarly way the emerging Keitai Aesthetic and the appearance of mobile video on an international level, the FIL*M*OBILE network was launched (www.filmobile.net). The FIL*M*OBILE event included a conference and the world's first dedicated mobile feature film screening in the Lumière Cinema and an exhibition in the London Gallery West. The events showcased the above-described characteristics of the mobile aesthetic, which are also key qualities of the practice components (DVD I and DVD II). The pixelated 3gp video became the focal point in the research project. In mobile phone filmmaking, the years 2004-2007 are characterised by this format. As the low-res format was not recognised as a filmmaking standard by the mobile or entertainment industry, it can be located in the alternative domain of the mobile-mentary (mobile documentary). The mobile industry only realised the potential of mobile filmmaking with the introduction of the mpeg4 video compression file format. This recognition appeared after the public premiere of *Max with a Keitai* at the FIL*M*OBILE events.

As a key difference to the situation in the 1920s, the thesis noted that mobile devices are now omnipresent. The pervasiveness of mobile devices in the mediascape is not matched by its application for innovation and potential to enable transformation. A technological review of cinematic technology emphasises the notion that the industry maintains an interest in establishing a distinction between amateur media and industry formats. While the industry does not realise the potential of mobile devices, an alternative field has emerged within the mediascape. By drawing upon the theoretical-

framework of user-based histories, mobile video can be evaluated independently of the industry formats and regulations. Here, mobile-mentary is defined as an intervention into the industry discourse. Moreover, the research illustrates that innovation and transformation in the mediascpe are possible and that alternatives exist. These formations are driven by the users of technology through a creative exploration of mobile videos' capacities. In this context amateur mobile media can provide an alternative to the mainstream media. As outlined in this thesis, mobile-mentaries are perceived as a cultural practice that has entered the mediascape from within and through a bottom-up approach. Users not only contribute to the production of content but also to the formation of new aesthetic forms. In the Keitai Aesthetic, the notion of the mobile-mentary as an intervention and alternative practice crystallise as a cultural format. This new emerging mobile-mentary filmmaking method has successfully found its application in workshops with local communities in London and internationally (see www.filmobile.net and appendix D for further information).

This thesis has demonstrated that, on an international level, user-groups, pro-d-users, artists and independent practioners can create new forms of cultural production. The innovative potential has been ignored by the industrys' economic agendas. Based on the theoretical underpinning of user-based histories, innovation is present in the form of the Kaitei Aesthetic and transformation in emphasising the role of the user to create this new aesthetics as a cultural format. These arguments are driven by the practice components, which broke new ground and led towards the formation of the mobile-mentary in the contemporary mediascape.

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10. Web Resources and Filmography

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Filmography

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A Sixth of the World (Dziga Vertov, 1926, Soviet Union)

Being There (Anders Weberg and Robert Willim, 2006, Schweden)

Berlin, die Synphonie einer Großstadt (Ruttmann, Walter, 1927, Germany)

Blackmail (Alfred Hitchcock,1929, USA)

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982, USA)

Cell Stories (Edward Lachman, Double Wide Media, 2004, USA)

Chelovek s kino-apparatom (Vertov, Dziga, 1929, Soviet Union)

City Lights (Charlie Chaplin, 1931, USA)

Dance into Action (Henry Reichhold, 2006, UK)

Dark Glass (Clio Barnard, 2006, UK)

Deutsche Waffenschmieden (Leni Riefenstahl, 1940, Nazi Germany/Third Reich)

Deutschland von Gestern und Heute (Wilfried Basse, 1932, Germany)

Eleventh Year (Dziga Vertov, 1927, Soviet Union)

Entr'acte (René Clair, 1924, France)

Film ist Rhythmus (*Film is Rhythm*) (Hans Richter, 1921, Germany)

Filmstudie (Hans Richter, 1925, Germany)

Ghost before Breakfast (Hans Richter, 1928, Germany)

Images Mobiles (Fernard Léger, 1924, France)

Inflation (Hans Richter, 1928, Germany)

Kino-Eye (Dziga Vertov, 1924, Soviet Union)

Lenin Kino-Pravda (Dziga Vertov, 1924, Soviet Union)

London (Patrick Keiller, 1994, UK)

London Orbital (Ian Sinclair and Christopher Petit, 2002, UK)

Manhatta (Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, 1921, USA)

Max with a Keitai (Max Schleser, 2008, Japan/UK)

Ménilmontant (Dimitri Kirsanoff, 1926, France)

Menschen am Sonntag (Sidomak brothers, 1930, Germany)

Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1926, Germany)

Nausea (Matthew Noel-Tod, 2005, UK)

New Love Meetings (Marcello Mencarini, 2006, Italy)

Nanook of the North (Flaherty, 1922, US)

Opus 1-5 (Walter Ruttmann, 1921-1925, Germany)

Paris qui Dort (*aka The Crazy Ray*) (René Clair, 1923, Frace)

Race Symphony (Hans Richter, 1928, Germany)

Rhythmus 23 (Hans Richter, 1923, Germany)

Rhythmus 21 (Hans Richter, 1921, Germany)

Rhythmus 25 (Hans Richter, 1925, Germany)

Rien que les Heures (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1926, France)

Sans Soleil (Chris Marker, 1983, France)

Screen Dump (Cogcollective by Sanderson, 2006, UK)

SMS Sugar Man (Aryan Kaganof,2006-2008, South Africa)

Solaris (Andrey Tarkovsky, 1972, Soviet Union)

Some Postman (Film Headquarters for the US indy-rock band *The Presidents*, 2005, Australia)

Speech Marks (Steve Hawley, 2004, UK)

Stride, Soviet (Dziga Vertov, 1926, Soviet Union)

Sunrise (Friedrich W. Murnau, 1927, USA)

Tarnation (Jonathan Caouette, 2003, USA)

The Adventures of Prince Achmed (Lotte Reiniger, 1926, Germany)

The Bridge (Joris Ivens, 1928, Netherlands)

The Crowd (King Vidor, 1929, USA)

The Matrix (Wachowski Brothers, 1999, USA)

THINK! (Leo Burnett for the Department for Transport, 2005, UK)

Tokai Kokyogaku (Metropolitan Symphony) (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1929, Japan)

Tokyo GA (Wim Wenders, 1985, Germany)

Tokyo Koshinkyoku (Tokyo March) (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1929, Japan)

Tokyo Story (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953, Japan)

Two Pence Magic (Hans Richter, 1930, Germany)

Why didn't anybody tell me it would become this bad in Afghanistan (Cyrus Frisch, 2007, Netherlands)

Yours and Mine (Anne Massoni, 2007, USA)

11. Appendix

Appendix (A) - mobile Java documentary

At this stage the *mobile-mentary* project has been completed according to the aims and objectives set three years ago. Through the development of technology in the last three years new possibilities of Mobile 2.0 have emerged. The java mobile documentary project is a conceptualisation for a film project generated by mobile video files submitted by mobile phone users.

Furthermore the incorporation of location can be recognised in current web 2.0/mobile 2.0 applications such as Bliin and geo-tagging via google maps and GPS functionality in mobile phones. The area of locative media now has the potential to be merged with lens-based media. This opens up new opportunities for GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and geo-mapping film projects.

mobile-mentary / Java - database mobile documentary project

The following segment of the java mobile documentary / *mobile-mentary* project was developed under the direction of Max Schleser in collaboration with Vincent Chinapiel, 3rd year IT student from the Faculty of Information Technology & Communication at the Limkokwing University in London during the spring semester 2008.

The first section will illustrate how video (or still images) can be transferred from mobile devices to a main server, which can compare the transferred files with media stored in a database. The database server can integrate the transferred file with media

files stored on the database and then output the transferred media embedded in database media-files back to the mobile device or another screening device. This system allows the creation of a digital feedback loop and produces a continuous film, based upon media files submitted by mobile phone users.

The system has been developed in J2ME and can interact with a computer database at this stage. The database is programmed to select images according to the transferred files' visual characteristics of colour and movement. In the case of the *mobile-mentary* project the city film genre functions as an umbrella theme to combine images from various users. The java documentary project functions as a prototype, which has the potential to be used within other mobile-media/documentary projects.

The dynamic personal mobile media transferred by mobile devices to the database is re-mixed with the content stored on the database according to an editing syntax, which is based on the film *Max with a Keitai*. This syntax can be described as a visual rhythm. The main server will select and combine the transferred files and the database files according to the defined syntax, which is considering the visual rhythm of the submitted files. The database program will search for media-files similar to the submitted video-file within the existing database. The criteria for the selection of adjacent files are based on the submitted media's pixel and colour composition(s). If the selected files qualify they will be transferred back to the user. In case the condition is not true, the server will need to reject the files and allow the user to retry the process with different mobile video files.

|	
Regent street show window Distribution via Bluetooth hub.	
mobile-mentary in the streets	
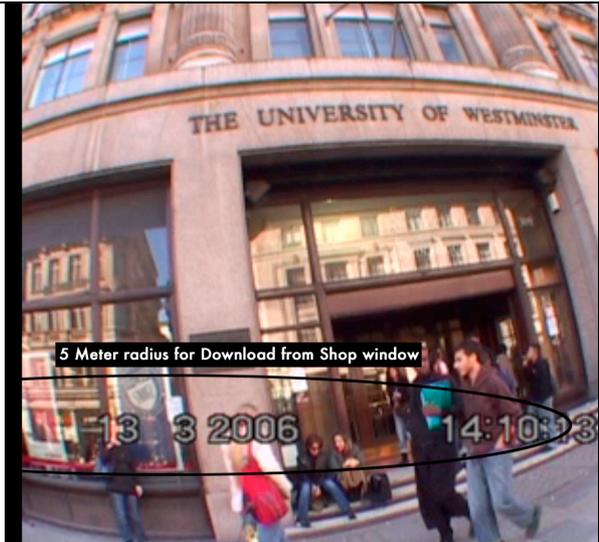
Dissemination of micro-movies via Bluetooth hub:
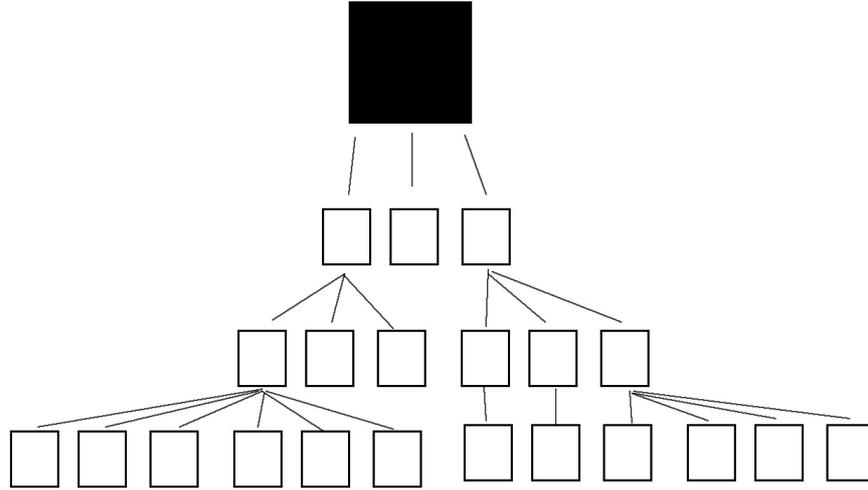
One-way Bluetooth sending unit (technology existing; ready to operate)


Bluetooth hub
5m radius
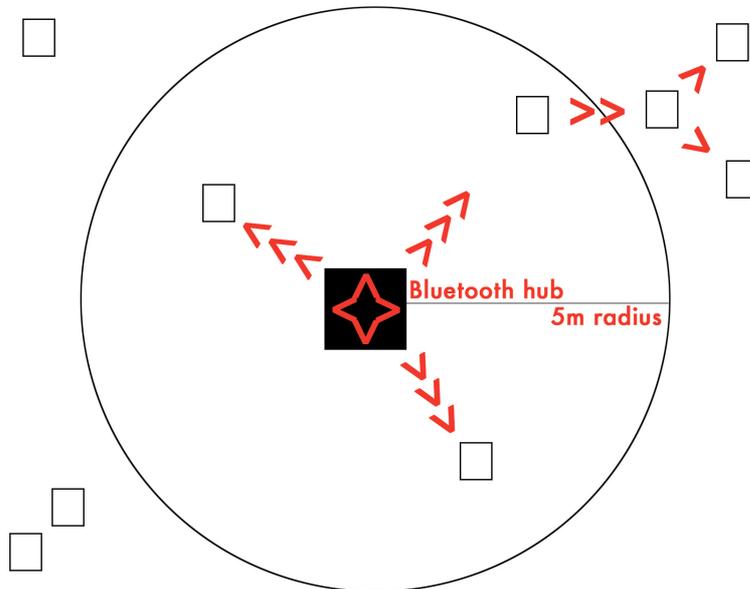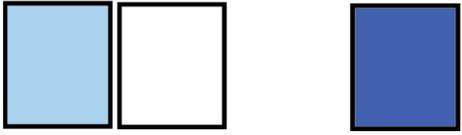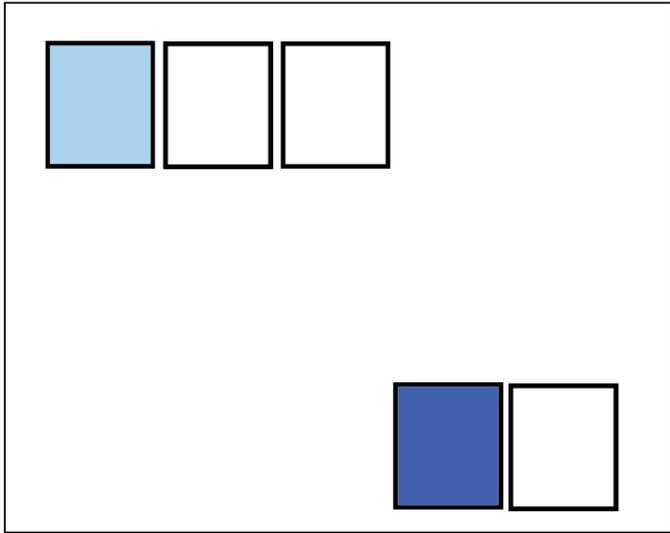
Micro-movies will appear on screen via split screen (spatial montage). This method is used to translate micro-movies in-between the mobile device and the silver screen.

Two-way system (sending <-> receiving micro-movies)
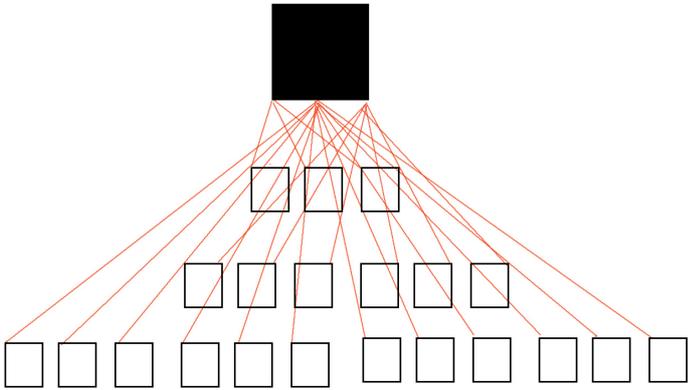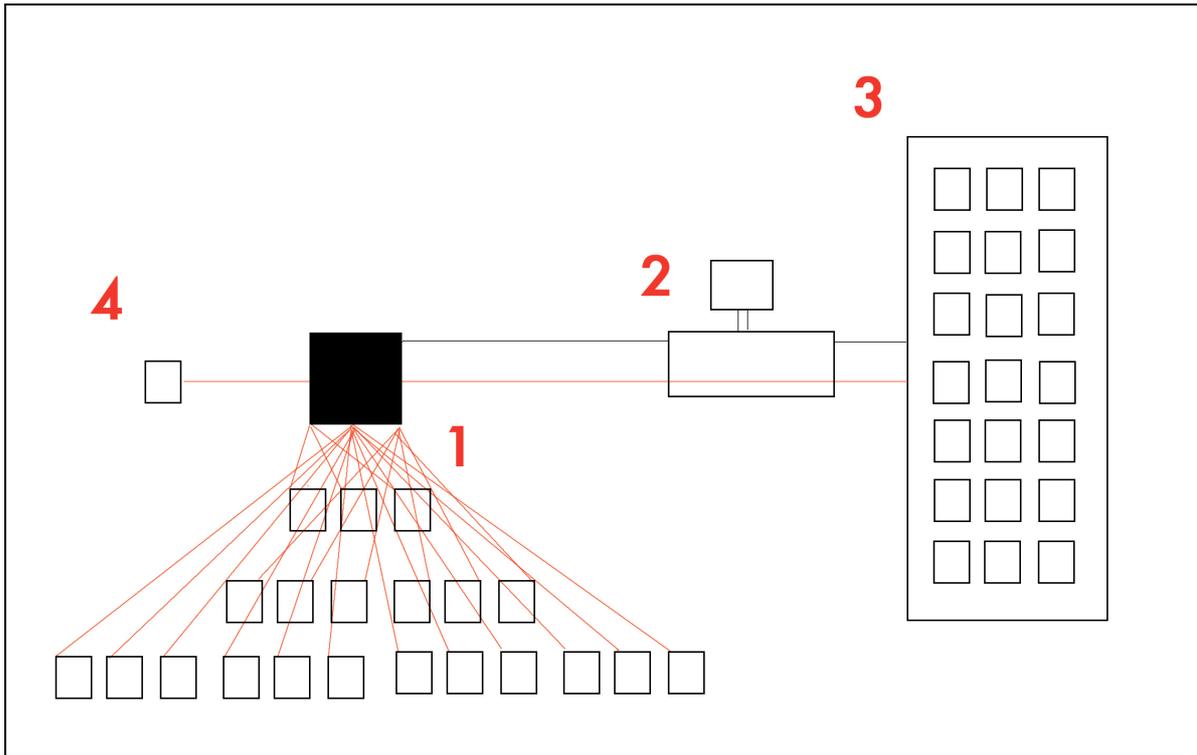
1 Bluetooth hub
2 PC – database application
3 Database application working according to the *mobile-mentary* filmmaking method
4 Mobile device receiving final movie (depending on Java application various output
formats are possible)

This system could be technically realised by a 3rd year student (dissertation project) or ideally a Mobile Computing MSC student.

Student/collaborator will develop a mobile java application using a j2me client that is able to connect to a PC-based server application via Bluetooth OBEX API. Using an appositely designed application specific protocol, the client will be able to select some video files stored in the PC server database, and download such files to the mobile client (again via Bluetooth). The mobile client application will be able to playback the video file (in 3GP format) using the Java Mobile Media API.
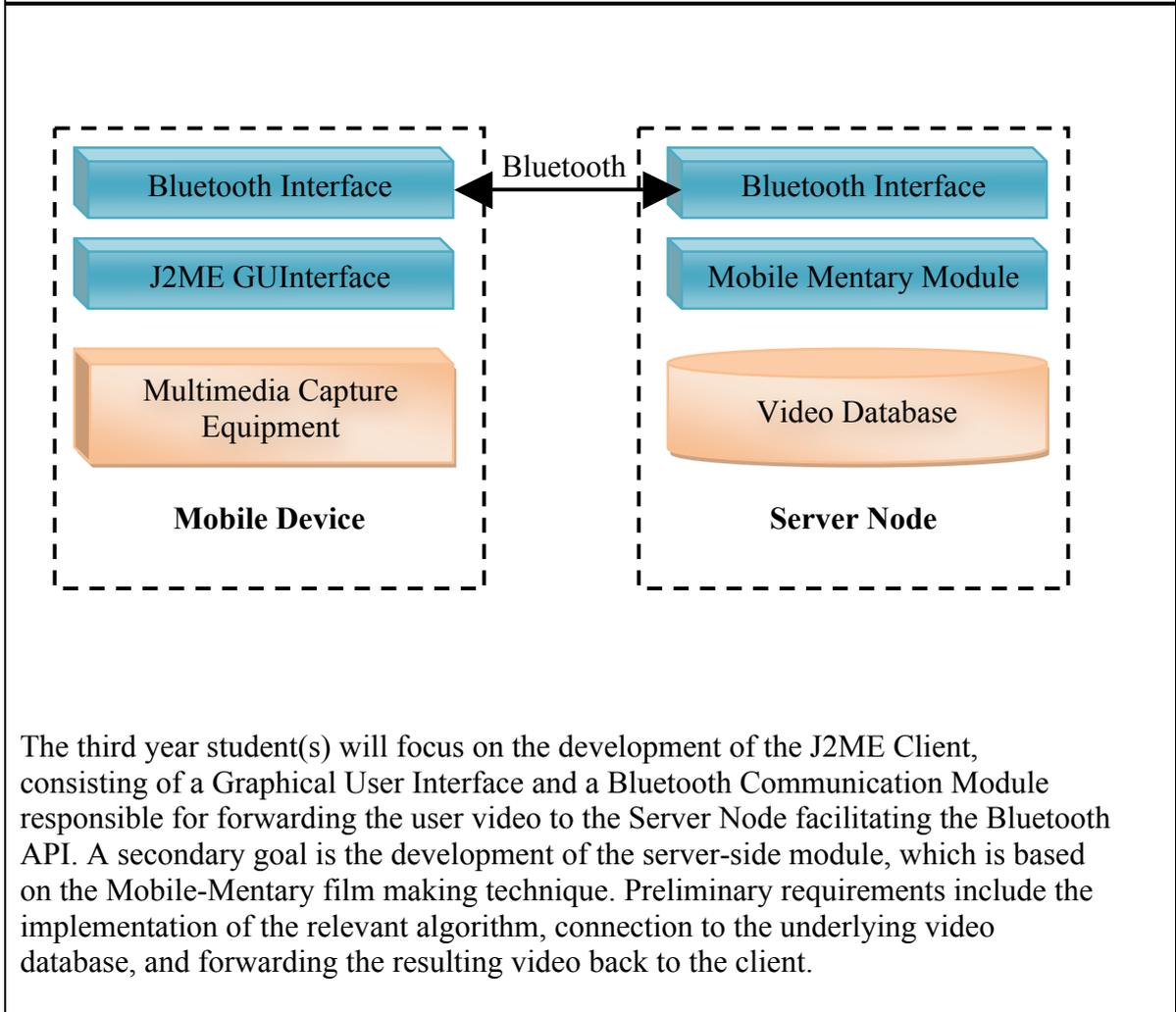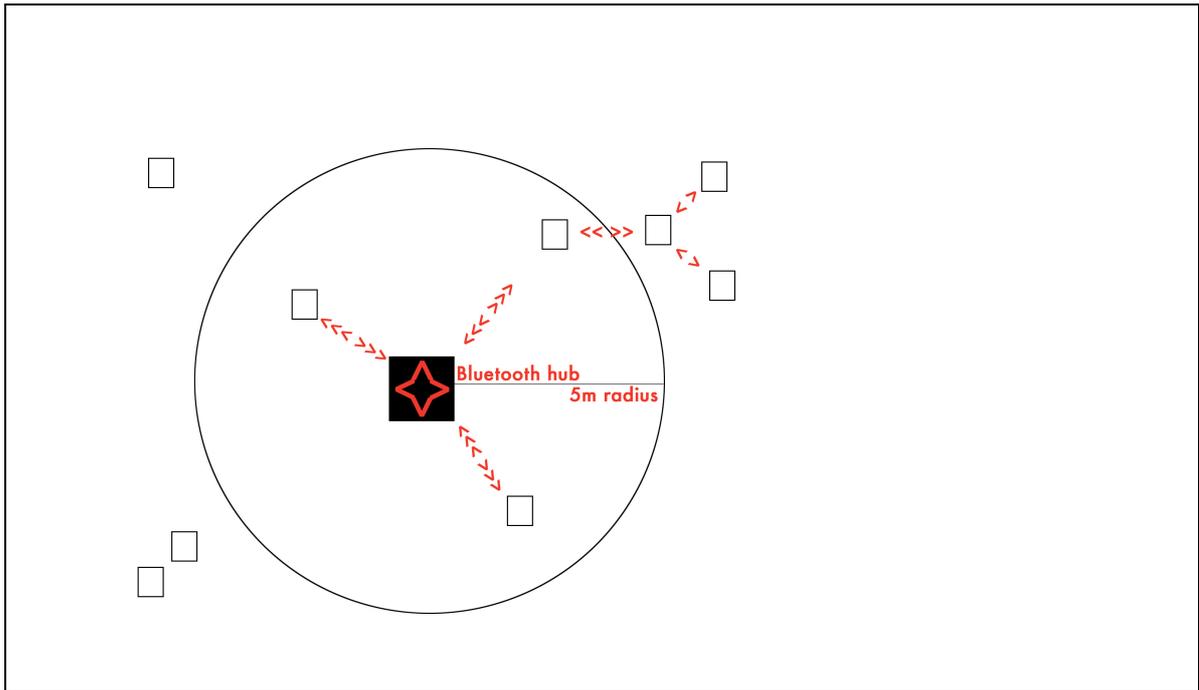
The third year student(s) will focus on the development of the J2ME Client, consisting of a Graphical User Interface and a Bluetooth Communication Module responsible for forwarding the user video to the Server Node facilitating the Bluetooth API. A secondary goal is the development of the server-side module, which is based on the Mobile-Mentary film making technique. Preliminary requirements include the implementation of the relevant algorithm, connection to the underlying video database, and forwarding the resulting video back to the client.

At this stage the project has three main modules: Bluetooth, Files and Folders and Camera. The camera module uses a canvas class component to perform the actions. In terms of performance and functionality, it should load the canvas in place of the form that has the options for the camera module. (See graph A).

The main task of the Bluetooth module is to establish communication to the mobile devices. The files and folder module will introduce a structure for the communication to the database. The camera module is related to both the Bluetooth and the Files and Folders modules respectively. The main target of this module is to take still images and transfer them to the database. At later stage of production of this project, the camera should be able to take video capture instead of just having still images, which is functioning at the moment. For each user the system will be provide a unique login data that will allow them to upload any files to the main server. Once the main server has recognised the user, they will be allowed to access the server and thus transfer the files accordingly.

Currently the system has been tested using a Sony Ericsson, category k800 – k800i. These options can be changed in the future and thus be modified programmatically at later stage of production.

The system can be easily installed onto mobile devices by using either cable or Bluetooth facilities to transfer and install the system. The extension of the files executed comes up as .jar file and .jad file. The .jar file is the executable file in java. The application can be reused at a later stage after future modification, as it is the midlet that controls the functionalities of the other part of the project. The midlet, which is the parent of the project allow users to make selections from the main menu.

It works exactly as private software of its own. Therefore the integration and

reusability of the system will not be a constraint.

Net Beans (2008) www.netbeans.org [Accessed 20 April 2008]

Sun Microsystems (2008) www.Java.sun.com [Accessed 20 April 2008]

Graph A   The flow of information structure of the project
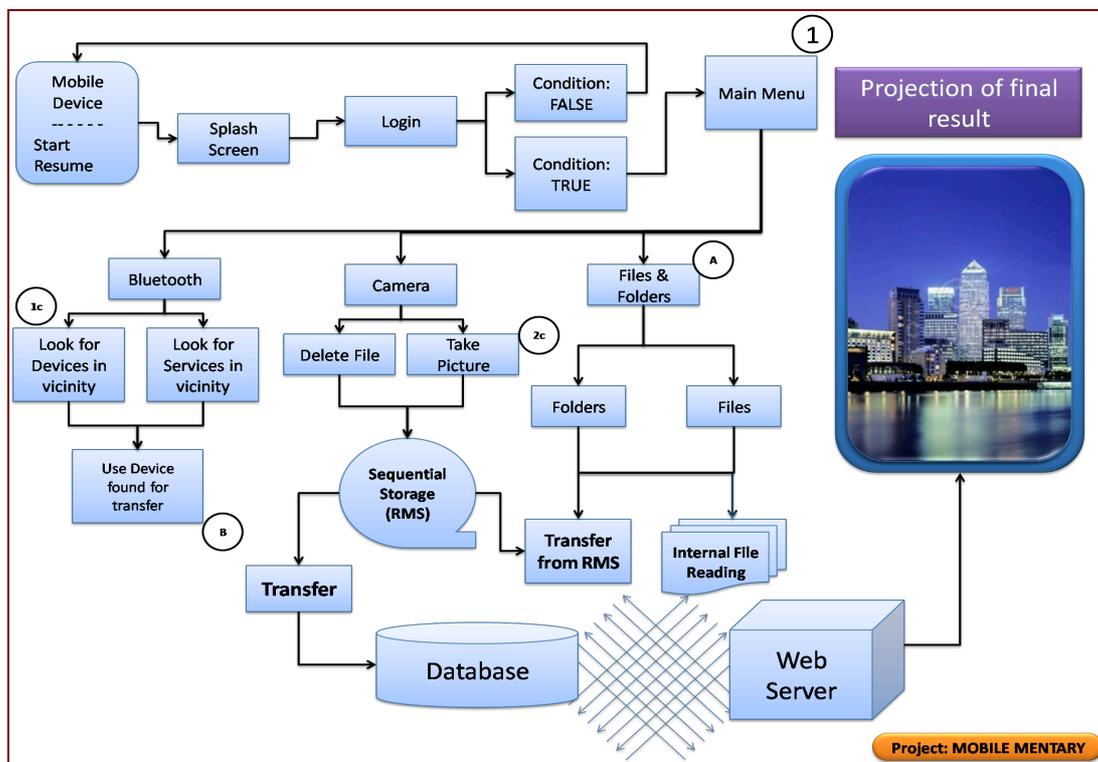
Appendix (B) - mobile film festivals

Festival Name	Sponsors	Regulations	URL	Location/date
Pocket Shorts Scotland	Scottish Enterprise Nesta, Scottish Screen	Duration: 4 x 15sec. / 2 x 30 sec. / 1 x 60 sec. / File Size: Less than 1 MB preferred. 2 MB maximum	http://www.pocketshorts.com/scotland/index.html	Scotland
First Time Mobile FilmMakers	Nokia, Discovery Channel	n/a	www.mobifilms.net	Asian-pacific / Australia
Dark- light Festival	Arts Council, Nokia	n/a	http://www.darklight-filmfestival.com/	Dublin / 17th-21st November, Darklight
Potenza Film Festival, Italy		n/a	http://www.potenzafilmfestival.it./	International PhoneMovies 13./17.12.2005
MicroMovie AWARD	Simens	various	http://www.micromovie-award.com/	Various - ongoing
DEPICT !	Orange	90 Sec.	www.depict.org	23 - 27 November 2005 Brief Encounters / Bristol International Short Film festival
Nokia Shorts 2005	Nokia Raindance	15 Seconds (no more than three seconds of front and five seconds of end credits) Nokia Shorts Handset-only Category Shot entirely on a mobile phone with video-recording capabilities / personal computer for editing and add music, but no additional video material or visual effects.	www.nokiashorts.co.uk	U.K.
Stuttgart	Local, state, German governme	Mikrokino (microcinema) under 30 min.	www.filmwinter.de	Stuttgart, Germany 19.-22. Januar 2006

	nt and European Union media program			
Berlin	Going Underground	n/a	www.interfilm.de	Berlin, 1-6 Nov 05
Zoie Film festival	Cellular Cinema Festival	Under 5 min.	http://www.zoiefilms.com/cellularcinema.html	U.S.A. 2005
bitfilms	Sony, Intel, ATi, Studio Hamburg	90 sec. 3gp – Quicktime - .swf in the format 176x144 pixels	www.bitfilm.de	Hamburg, Nov 2-6 2005
Toronto International Film Festival	Motorola	n/a	http://www.e.bell.ca/filmfest/2005/home.asp	Toronto, Sep 8-17 2005
San Francisco 49th Film festival	San Franscisco Film Society, SKYY, Virgin	Works made by mobile devices, works made to be specifically viewed on mobile devices, works that use wireless signals as a new aesthetic medium	http://www.sffs.org/festival/wireless06.html	San Francisco April 21 – May 05 2006

Appendix (C) - Leo Burnett email

Email from James Walker-Smith (received 10 May 2006 / James.Walker-
Smith@leoburnett.co.uk)

Department for Transport: Teenage Road Safety 2005

Case Study Summary for COI 10.5.06

Background
Teenagers think they know how to cross a road. Yet traffic remains the biggest single
cause of accidental death for 12-16 year olds in the UK. In 2003, 1,398 teens aged 11-
16 were killed or seriously injured on roads in the UK. Through a rigorous research
process we learned that teenagers think they can cross the road; they know the green
cross code and don't need to be 'told' what to do. We needed to get them to
reconsider their road safety behaviour and think twice about the dangers. Road safety
is very far down their list of priorities - exams, friendships, relationships, parents, sex,
drugs and so on are all much greater and more immediate concerns. We needed to
find a way to get into their lives and friendship groups and make a connection.

Campaign
We identified that teenagers have a misplaced confidence in their ability and often go
through the motions of crossing carefully but do not pay real attention. In effect they
are looking but not really seeing the danger - they are on autopilot. As a result our TV
spot dramatises teenage autopilot behaviour with a tragic result.

Teenagers are a very discerning and savvy audience, for this ad to be taken seriously
we needed a credible and engaging device to stand out from the crowd of brands and
voices shouting at teens. The creative team decided to shoot the entire commercial on
a mobile phone, an advertising first. This gives the ad the all important 1st person
viewpoint taking the audience into the group of friends. We selected a group of real
teenagers from London and gave them mobile phones and asked them to go out on
their own and record their genuine road-side behaviour which became the first 20
seconds of the commercial. We later worked with the teens to craft a chilling
conclusion. The result was an absolutely credible film which demonstrated how not
giving the road your full attention can have tragic consequences. We launched virally
via a bespoke website set up to be forwarded amongst teenagers to generate word of
mouth (www.notlooking.co.uk) and we have developed two dramatic 6$ print
executions which build on the autopilot strategy.

Results
While this campaign is still very fresh there has been an incredible response from the
press and individuals. National broadcasters including the BBC and Sky have featured
the commercial as a story in itself and alongside outstanding coverage in national
editorial the result has been a substantial amplification of our campaign. The viral
campaign has proved incredibly successful and after just 1 week we had generated
over 150,000 hits (views). The result is that the campaign has clearly put the issue of
road safety back onto the agenda for teenagers.

'We feel as if we are really intruding on the teen group's private interactions as the kids lark about in the street. The moment of horrific impact is therefore all the more powerful for being still more removed from the "slickness" of advertising film. Powerful stuff.'

Stefano Hatfield, Independent 29.08.05.

Appendix (D) - FIL*M*OBILE mobile filmmaking workshops

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Appendix (E) – Nokia Pangea Day Project
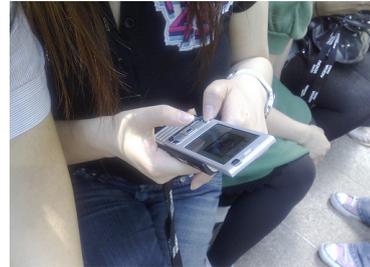
Appendix (F) - FIL*M*OBILE exhibition / cinema screening

FIL*M*OBILE conference

Appendix (F) - FIL*M*OBILE exhibition / cinema screening

FIL*M*OBILE exhibition

Appendix (G) - Practice components reference

The Mobile-Filmmaker (Schleser 2005 UK)
http://www.mobile-mentary.co.uk
Pre-production short exploring mobile and DV aesthetics. Filmed on location in
London on a mobile phone and mini DV cam.

The Messenger (Schleser 2005 UK)
http://www.mobile-mentary.co.uk
Pre-production experiment produced on a HD and mobile phone camera for viewing
on mobile devices.

The mobile-mentary vblog (Schleser 2007 UK/Japan)
http://www.mobile-mentary.co.uk
A visual sketchbook providing an almost real-time progress of the *mobile-mentary*
project.

Nokia Pangee Day Project
Icarus (Schleser 2008 UK)
http://share.ovi.com/media/londonteam.08052008/londonteam.10475
All one to three minute films were shot and edited and uploaded to the internet in
under 45 min on mobile devices.

FIL*M*OBILE conference, exhibition and cinema screening April/May 08.
www.filmobile.net

FIL*M*OBILE workshops
Mobile filmmaking workshops Summer 08
http://www.flickr.com/photos/visual_sketchbook/

The mobile-mentary micro-movie project (Schleser 2008 UK/Japan)
23 micro-movies for mobile distribution via Bluetooth hubs. Screened at the London
Gallery West London, May 2007 and The Magnificent Seven, Lisbon, October 2007.

Max with a Keitai (Schleser 2008 UK/Japan)
Experimental feature documentary shot entirely on mobile devices.

Appendix (H) – Samsung advertisement

(08/09/2007 London)