

## Dossier Mobility in the Cinema

*Edited by Tamara L. Falicov*

In Chris Marker's 1971 documentary *The Train Rolls On*, a Cinetrain director Alexander Medvedkin is asked about the importance of the Soviet film trains that travelled around the countryside in the 1930s. Medvedkin said that the purpose of the trains was to "film our people, show these films to our people, and thereby help them construct a new world." This dossier on mobile cinemas/screens brings together various essays interpreting how mobile cinemas participate in image making, whether by governments at the macro level to bridge the gap between rural and urban settings as part of a nation building project or as new aesthetic and sensory worlds created when cinemas become accessible and wearable through new technologies such as cellular phones, headphones and embodied screen architectures.

As John Sloop observes, "one of the themes that repeatedly appears in discussions of a variety of mobile technologies, is that in McLuhan's words, media are prosthetics allowing us to transcend space and time, and they are an articulation of 'freedom' with 'consumption.'"<sup>1</sup> I would add that mobile cinemas also have the potential to be at once democratizing and individualizing. From 1963 Cuba to 2009 Korea, mobile cinemas are more than simply portable movie theatres or ideological devices. As complex aesthetic, sensory, technological and ideological sound-images, mobile cinemas are moving worlds.

1 Marshall McLuhan quoted in John M. Sloop, "Thoughts on Democracy and Mobility" [accessed July 14, 2009] at [http://www.cas.sc.edu/engl/Rhet\\_Theory\\_Conf/Papers/Sloop.pdf](http://www.cas.sc.edu/engl/Rhet_Theory_Conf/Papers/Sloop.pdf)