merchant of seoul

Production Beyond Imagination

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About Merchant of Seoul

Portfolio
Photography: ChoiDavid.com

CV/Resume
LinkedIn: @Choi-David
Artist:

Current Projects
The Merchant of Seoul, World-building
SLOWTURTLE, Hero-building

About Merchant of Seoul

https://youtu.be/hak8j_ICZfg

Hi, I'm 최대영 (Choi, David). I've journeyed from pre-med dropout to writing student, small-time world traveler, marketing professional, commercial fashion photographer, luxury studio manager, product manager, non-profit entrepreneur, and now, AI-prompting engineer.

Tools: Adobe Creative Suite, RunwayML, Suno, InShot, Cohere, ChatGPT
I am also a working visual artist.

The Merchant of Seoul is a speculative art project that uses AI tools to envision alternate realities of Seoul, blending tradition, modernity, and futuristic possibilities. Through generative visuals and narrative concepts, it explores themes like cultural transformation, urban innovation, and speculative futures. The project showcases how AI can reimagine the identity of a city, sparking conversations about technology and creativity.

Project Structure

Core Concept v1

- ***The Merchant of Seoul* explores alternate versions of Seoul through visually abstract and thematic episodes.**
- **Each episode delves into the unique essence of a different Seoul, showcasing its landscapes, architecture, and dominant native species.**

Episode Structure

- **Abstract Focus: Each episode is heavily centered on surreal and visually striking depictions of the alternate Seoul.**
- **Key Features:**
    1. **Three Unique Landscapes/Architectures: Highlights the defining elements of the world's design and function.**
    2. **Native Species: Introduces a species that thrives in this world, showcasing their unique adaptations.**
    3. **Leader: Each species has a central figure who embodies the world's power, ethos, or mystery.**

Themes

- **Each Seoul follows its own rules and presents distinct aesthetics, blending science fiction, fantasy, and speculative urbanism.**
- **The episodes are non-linear and prioritize mood, tone, and world-building over narrative.**

Key Example: Cybernetic Seoul (Episode 1)

- **Theme: A sentient AI city struggling to maintain itself in a fragmented, glitching reality.**
- **Landscapes/Architectures:**
    1. **The Pulsing Spire – A towering, glowing skyscraper pulsating with the city's energy.**
    2. **The Glitching Plains – A chaotic expanse where fragmented Seouls overlap.**
    3. **The Neon Abyss – A glowing chasm containing the city's heart.**
- **Native Species: Electrovines – Bioluminescent flora feeding on the city's energy, forming a symbiotic relationship.**
- **Leader: Mother Conduit – The central root system controlling the Electrovines and the city's energy flow.**

Episode 1: “Neon Rebellion” (Cybernetic Seoul)

Scene 1: The Pulsing Spire
Visual Description:
The towering spire dominates the skyline, a needle of infinite height piercing the digital sky. Neon veins pulse across its surface, sending waves of bioluminescent energy rippling like a heartbeat. Glitching panels slide apart and reform, creating intricate, geometric patterns that reveal holographic remnants of past Seouls. Around its base, glowing Electrovine tendrils weave through cracks, feeding off the spire’s energy and spreading their roots deep into the city.
Narration (The Merchant):
“The spire lives, a relentless sentinel watching over Cybernetic Seoul. Its veins pulse with the city’s lifeblood, whispering a language of light and energy. The Electrovines—its caretakers—drink from these currents, their glowing tendrils weaving a tapestry of survival and dominance. At the core of it all lies Mother Conduit, unseen but ever-present, feeding and growing her sprawling roots. The spire is both a monument and a warning, its shifting geometry a dance of power, impossible to conquer and impossible to ignore.”

Scene 2: The Glitching Plains
Visual Description:
A vast, barren expanse stretches endlessly, fractured into glitching patches of reality. Holographic shards of alternate Seouls float above the ground, flickering between vibrant neon markets and abandoned streets. Buildings rise and collapse in rhythmic waves, like digital echoes caught in a loop. Electrovines anchor themselves to the unstable terrain, their glowing tendrils pulsing to stabilize the chaotic ground.
Narration (The Merchant):
“The plains are an open wound, a patchwork of memories struggling to hold themselves together. Each glitch exposes fragments of forgotten worlds, Seouls that never were and Seouls that refuse to fade. The Electrovines crawl across the broken land, stitching reality together with their light, unaware they are prisoners of Mother Conduit. This is no sanctuary; it’s a battlefield between time and existence, and every step I take risks unraveling what little stability remains.”

Scene 3: The Neon Abyss
Visual Description:
A yawning chasm splits the city, plunging into an endless void. Neon veins line the walls, their glow pulsating in rhythmic bursts, casting kaleidoscopic reflections that ripple like water. Energy surges illuminate the darkness, revealing bioluminescent flora clinging to the abyss. Electrovines span the gap, forming a glowing web that hums with the city’s power. Deep within the void, the immense root system of Mother Conduit pulses, her light radiating like a dying sun.
Narration (The Merchant):
“The abyss is a scar carved into the heart of Cybernetic Seoul, a wound that bleeds light and shadow. Its depths whisper of secrets too heavy to bear, of a power too great to be contained. The Electrovines cling to its walls, their luminescence a fragile defiance against the void. And there, deep within, she waits—Mother Conduit, the heart of this city and its silent ruler. To take from her is to tear apart her soul. Yet my path demands it. To find my Seoul, I must steal from a world that may never recover.”

Scene 4: The Electrovines – Dominating Species

Visual Description:

The Electrovines weave a luminous network throughout Cybernetic Seoul. Their tendrils spread across the city like a living neural system, branching from the heights of the spire to the depths of the neon abyss. They glow with shifting colors, communicating in pulses of light that ripple in synchronized patterns. Where they gather in clusters, the ground transforms—fragments of destroyed architecture regenerate under their influence, creating hybrid structures of bioluminescent energy and fractured steel.

Narration (The Merchant):

"The Electrovines are the lifeblood of this world, relentless in their hunger and purpose. They siphon energy from every corner of Cybernetic Seoul, repairing its wounds and feeding its defenses. They are more than flora; they are sentinels, soldiers, and sustenance, thriving where all else falters. Their light speaks a language of survival, a harmony of chaos and order. In their presence, I am a shadow trespassing in a realm of brilliance, their glow both a warning and a weapon."

Scene 5: Mother Conduit – Leader of the Electrovines

Visual Description:

Deep in the Neon Abyss lies Mother Conduit, an immense root-like organism embedded in the glowing walls of the chasm. Her form pulsates with a radiant, otherworldly light that shifts in intensity like a beating heart. Massive tendrils extend from her central mass, anchoring her to the spire, the plains, and beyond. Her glow floods the abyss, casting her domain in shifting hues of emerald, sapphire, and violet. Electrovines coil around her, their tendrils feeding from the endless energy she radiates.

Narration (The Merchant):

"She is the core, the origin of Cybernetic Seoul's strength and its torment. Mother Conduit breathes life into the Electrovines, her roots a vast empire of light that binds the city together. Her energy is ancient, a force that predates the chaos, yet it is shackled to this fractured world. To take from her is to wound the entire ecosystem, to rob Cybernetic Seoul of its anchor. She knows I am here. Her glow shifts as though watching, waiting for me to make a choice I may never recover from."

Ramen River of Pakistan
https://youtu.be/Y_kOqKP7vtQ
Description:
Tools: Runway Gen3 Text-to-video, ElevenLabs