

P R E S S R E L E A S E**New Leadership at the Museum of the Future**

With the recent appointment of Nicoletta Blacher as director of the Museum of the Future, a dynamic young woman has assumed yet another leading position in the Linz cultural scene. Topping Ms. Blacher's management agenda: actively responding to visitors' wishes and needs, as well as making the facility a venue for stimulating dialog.

Filling the post of Museum director is the latest step in the Museum's ongoing strategic orientation on mediating the public's encounter with the future. Temporary exhibits focusing on specific themes, intensified cooperation with other institutions and expansion of the facility's program of activities are in store for the Ars Electronica Center – Museum of the Future.

With her extensive experience in a variety of cultural fields, Ms. Blacher is a perfect fit for this management slot. According to Ars Electronica Artistic Director Gerfried Stocker: "The decisive factor in our decision was Nicoletta Blacher's wide-ranging expertise that nicely matched what we were looking for: substantive competence as well as experience in cultural mediation and project management." The new director is an eloquent speaker who exudes charisma. "It's an exciting challenge to grow the Museum's outreach programs, working with fascinating themes and propagating new ideas," said Blacher, who hit the ground running in her new job.

Nicoletta Blacher was born in Fohnsdorf in the Austrian Province of Styria. She studied theater arts, psychology, philosophy and German language and literature in Vienna. After earning her master's degree, she spent several years in an upper

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echelon position at the Austrian Culture Service (ÖKS). She was then active as a cultural manager and consultant, initiating and organizing a diverse array of cultural productions in Berlin (including the “Museumsinsselfestival” and “transportale”). An essential aspect of her work has consistently been to establish networks linking up traditional cultural institutions, government agencies involved in administering cultural life, independent artists and the private sector.

The Ars Electronica Center opened in 1996 as a prototype of a “Museum of the Future.” Its mission is to utilize interactive forms of mediation to facilitate the general public’s encounter with virtual reality, digital networks and modern media. A focus on issues at the interface of media art, new technologies and social developments characterizes the Center’s innovative exhibitions. Beyond this, the Ars Electronica Center is the permanent base and thus the organizational foundation of Ars Electronica’s regional and international activities.