

Ars Electronica Linz GmbH

With its specific orientation and the long-term continuity it has displayed since its inception in 1979, Ars Electronica is an internationally unique platform for digital art and media culture. It consists of four divisions: an avant-garde festival, a competition honoring outstanding work being done throughout this field, a museum carrying out an educational mission, and a media art lab that makes artistic competence available for R&D and industrial applications. Ars Electronica pursues a course that goes beyond purely technical and industrial interest, one whose essence is a holistic consideration of art, technology and society. Attention is focused less on the technology itself than on the social and cultural phenomena it engenders. Here, the reciprocal inspiration of artistic, technical and scholarly skills and knowledge opens up surprising new perspectives and highly innovative forms of collaboration.

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The Ars Electronica Festival (*1979)

Artists, network nomads, theoreticians, technologists, legal scholars—interdisciplinarity and the open encounter of experts from all over the world with highly diverse audiences characterize the Ars Electronica Festival. Staged annually since 1979, this internationally renowned week-long event provides an intense setting for artistic and scientific consideration of the social and cultural phenomena that are the upshot of the technological transformation of our world. In the form of symposia, exhibitions, performances and interventions, the festival lineup takes these inquiries beyond the realm of classical conference spaces and cultural venues and out into the cityscape and the public realm.

In 2008, the Ars Electronica Festival is scrutinizing the value of intellectual property and thereby facing one of the core issues of our modern knowledge-based society: that of freedom of information vs. copyright protection, big profit-making opportunities vs. the vision of an open knowledge-based society that seeks to build its new economy on the basis of creativity and innovation. And beyond that, we want to hammer out practical, workable rules to govern this new reality.

The 2008 Ars Electronica Festival. September 4 to 9. In Linz.

www.aec.at/culturaleconomy

The Prix Ars Electronica (*1987)

Ever since its founding in 1987, the Prix Ars Electronica has been the world's foremost competition in the cyberarts and a showcase of artistic excellence and innovation. From internationally renowned artists and Oscar-winners to up-and-coming young pioneers—the entire spectrum of creativity is represented among the thousands of entries received each year from throughout the world. Due to the competition being staged annually as well as its global reach and the thematically wide-ranging nature of the submissions, the Prix Ars Electronica Archive is now able to display the openness and diversity of media art and provide detailed insights into its development. With 3,374 projects submitted from 63 countries, the 2007 Prix Ars Electronica once again underscored its status as the world's most important showcase of excellence in digital media art.

The Ars Electronica Center ^(*1996)

Since opening its doors in 1996, the Ars Electronica Center has constituted the prototype of a "museum of the future." It targets broad-based audiences, utilizing interactive forms of mediation, virtual reality, digital networks and state-of-the-art media. Themes situated at the nexus of media art, high tech and social developments characterize the innovative exhibits. The installations presented here display astounding diversity but have one thing in common: implementing innovative, intuitive human-computer interaction that incorporates the user's body and senses. Based on hands-on involvement, these prototypes emancipate the user from passive observer to active participant. The aim is to deliver up-close-and-personal experiences of new technologies and virtual spaces.

A new and expanded Ars Electronica Center will debut in 2009. Immediately adjacent to the existing facility, a second multi-level structure is now going up. Both will ultimately be wrapped in a backlit glass shell, so that the end result will be a unified whole, a new highlight of the Linz cityscape and the architectural counterpart of the Lentos Museum of Art situated on the opposite bank of the Danube. On the east side of the building, there'll be an attractive plaza, an ideal site for public events. One end sweeps upward and features tiered seating. New labs and workshops for the Ars Electronica Futurelab will be located directly beneath the plaza. It will also provide very generously dimensioned exhibition halls: with a total of 6,500 m² of space, the new Ars Electronica Center will be approximately twice as large as the old facility. While construction work is in progress, the Museum of the Future is occupying a temporary location in downtown Linz at Graben 15 on the corner of Dametzstraße.

The Ars Electronica Futurelab ^(*1996)

The Ars Electronica Futurelab is a new type of media art laboratory in which artistic and technological innovation are mutually inspiring. The staff includes experts from a wide variety of fields; their approach to assignments is characterized by interdisciplinarity and international networking. The broad spectrum of the Futurelab's activities includes conception and realization of exhibition projects and artistic installations as well as joint ventures with partners in academia and the private sector.