

## **DIGITAL SENSES – when digital data turns into art**

**From April 18 to May 11, 2008 at the Center for Contemporary Art in Kiev, Ars Electronica will show some simple and quite surprising ways in which digital codes can be transformed into works of art.**

Imagine this: you're standing in a dark room, holding a glowing orb in your hand. Before you, suspended from the ceiling, is a net on which hundreds of brightly shimmering butterflies can be seen. Magically attracted by the ball of light in your hand, these radiant creatures follow your every movement—to the left, to the right, up and down. Subdued piano music underscores this enchanting scene. "Phantasm" is the title of Japanese artist Takahiro Matsuo's interactive installation, one of eight works on display from April 18 to May 11, 2008 at the Center for Contemporary Art in Kiev that enable visitors to experience digital codes in ways that are as simple as they are surprising.

### **A Digital Sense?**

The complex interplay delivered by our senses lets us perceive our surroundings. We see and hear, we touch, smell and taste. It's even claimed that we occasionally develop a sixth sense that enables us to react intuitively in tense situations. But then, what might be termed a seventh, digital, sense surely seems too far-fetched—or does it? Sensory experiences are essentially encoded communiqués that are transported to our brain via nerve fibers and decoded there. Increasingly nowadays, these stimuli we receive are of a digital nature. Even if the phenomena that trigger these signals are purely virtual, the actions that we subsequently undertake in response to them are very real indeed, and in light of this, wouldn't it be quite justified to speak of a "digital

sense"? After all, don't we develop new forms of perception to precisely the extent that our environment is pervaded by new technologies and digital messages? That, for example, let us differentiate between important and unimportant stimuli? In order to not only correctly interpret these new surroundings but also to develop new cultural techniques that enable us to deal appropriately with this environment?

"DIGITAL SENSES – when digital data turns into art" takes both playful and serious approaches to our perception of reality. We human beings react to virtual stimuli and, conversely, virtual life reacts to us. This exhibition is not designed to settle once and for all whether and in which form digital senses exist; this is rather meant as the launch of a utopian thought experiment that will run from April 18 to May 11, 2008 at the Center for Contemporary Art in Kiev.

### **DIGITAL SENSES - when digital data turns into art**

Opening: April 17, 2008

Run: April 18 to May 11, 2008

Venue: Center for Contemporary Art, Kiev, The Ukraine

Curators:

Natalia Manzhali, Liudmilla Motsiuk, Ivan Tsupka / MediArtLab Kiev

Manuela Pfaffenberger and Gerfried Stocker / Ars Electronica Linz

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