

Press Information - The Results

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PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA 2005: The Results

Creative artists from 71 countries submitted 2,975 works for Prix Ars Electronica prize consideration this year. Computer Animation and Interactive Art are the areas that showed strongest growth in the number of entries. Prize money totaling € 110,000 will be awarded to the winners in six categories.

The Prix Ars Electronica is produced by the Ars Electronica Center in cooperation with the ORF—Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio, the Brucknerhaus Linz and the O.K Center for Contemporary Art. Ever since its inception, the competition's focus has been on state-of-the-art creativity in the key fields of digital media: *Computer Animation / Visual Effects*, *Digital Musics*, *Interactive Art* and *Net Vision*. With the inauguration of the *Digital Communities* category in 2004, the Prix Ars Electronica has devoted increasing attention to the impact art and technology are having on social developments. The "*u19 - freestyle computing*" category for young people and *[the next idea] art and technology grant* offer Austria's computerized younger generation and up-and-coming young artists a creative platform and prominent showcase for their encounters with new media.

The astounding number of countries from which entries were submitted this year powerfully underscores the international significance of the Prix Ars Electronica. The competition's activities have resonated not only in the major Western industrial nations but also in small states—the Solomon Islands, for instance—located in distant regions of the globe. Entries from Iran, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and the Congo are impressive testimony to the Prix Ars Electronica's intercultural impact. The winners of this year's Golden Nicas are from Poland, India, Latvia, the US, Canada and Austria.

A host of internationally prominent experts convened April 21-24 in Linz. Over the course of intensive deliberations, they evaluated the projects that were submitted for Prix Ars Electronica prize consideration this year and reached their final decisions on April 24. From a total of 2,975 entries, the seven juries selected the winners of six Golden Nicas, 12 Awards of Distinction and 73 Honorary Mentions as well as the recipients of *[the next idea] art and technology grant* and several merchandise prizes. The juries also named the winners of two special awards.

Once again this year, the winning projects confirm the competition's role as a barometer of international trends in the world of media art.

Using technology as an artistic implement is now something taken completely for granted

Asked to sum up the general trends that have emerged from the 2005 Prix Ars Electronica competition, Ars Electronica Artistic Director Gerfried Stocker concluded that technology as an object of

artistic consideration has now clearly been relegated to a position of secondary importance as compared to Prix Ars Electronica competitions in previous years, when the technology itself consistently occupied the focal point of attention. “*New media are now taken completely for granted as artistic instruments that can be used to express a broad spectrum of ideas, concepts and narratives,*” Gerfried Stocker said.

“*Accordingly, investigations analyzing the discourses inherent in social and political circumstances have assumed an increasingly prominent position in contemporary media art, as have art-immanent manifestations and elaborations, as well as reflections of the formal syntax of the early days of media art,*” Christine Schöpf added.

“*More and more museums and festivals are making space available to display media art, which is providing artists not only with a material basis for their professional existence but also with a more professional way to go about doing their art. This state of affairs has manifested itself at the Prix Ars Electronica as a continually rising standard of quality being exhibited by the works submitted,*” Gerfried Stocker went on to note.

Both Gerfried Stocker and Christine Schöpf have ascertained that there is wide-ranging acceptance of media art in many different circles throughout the art scene.

Trend Barometer of the Media Art World

Once again in 2005, the winners of the six Golden Nica statuettes underscore the Prix Ars Electronica’s preeminent position as seismograph signaling the emergence of new developments in global media culture.

Like every year, the prizewinning works in the “classic” categories of digital media art impressed the jurors by successfully combining a highly professional approach with extremely innovative ideas. A very sarcastic sense of humor is the outstanding feature displayed by Tomek Baginski in his film “*Fallen Art*” the winner of the Golden Nica in the *Computer Animation / Visual Effects* category. An impressive work of animation that, within a few minutes time, tells a very unusual story full of unexpected plot twists and turns, “*Fallen Art*” nevertheless succeeds on its own terms as a superb and fully realized work of filmmaking.

The Golden Nica in the *Digital Musics* category goes to acoustic pioneer Maryanne Amacher for her installation “*TEO!*,” a *sonic sculpture* conceived as a sound installation for the Esplanade des Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The linkup of individual biographies and the existential spheres inhabited by human beings whose lives are interconnected via international trade is the centerpiece of **/MILKproject*, the winning work in the *Interactive Art* category. In this installation by the RIXC-Riga Center for New Media Culture, visitors experience the incredible diversity of cultures and realms of life in a Europe that is in the process of growing together. The plot structure in this narrative is provided by the international trade in milk—one of mankind’s most basic and most important foodstuffs—between Latvia and the Netherlands. *Processing* opens up new possibilities for artistic work in the graphics field. This software—a programming language and a development environment for working with graphics—was created collaboratively by a large community. Benjamin Fry and Casey Reas initiated the project; for their efforts, they’ve been named the recipients of the Golden Nica in the *Net Vision* category.

Akshaya, the winning project in the socio-politically oriented *Digital Communities* category, comes from India. This is the most ambitious development program that has ever been launched to take advantage of information and communication technologies. Within a period of three years, Akshaya has established 6,000 Internet centers in the Indian State of Kerala, set up infrastructure for the local population and, in doing so, simultaneously created 50,000 new jobs.

The winning projects in the two competitions for young people are efforts that take two highly contrasting approaches to creativity. With his method of scanning entire film sequences from the moni-

tor screen and utilizing this material to create images—“frozen time” as it were—Klagenfurt native Markus Sucher has come up with what amounts to a completely new artform, which he refers to as *Rennacs Studies*.

A completely different approach is being taken by the designer of the project that has been singled out for recognition with *[the next idea] art and technology grant* for up-and-coming young artists under age 27. “USED Clothing” as conceptualized by Linz native Martin Mairinger shows how second-hand clothes can be transformed into a communications medium. The “USED Clothing” project will be brought to fruition over the coming months at the Ars Electronica Futurelab and will make its public debut in September for the men and women of Linz to try out in actual practice. And another Linz native came up with one of the concepts that garnered an Honorary Mention in *[the next idea] art and technology grant* competition: The Machine_Man project functions by means of the electrical stimulation of muscles to transform human beings into industrial robots on an assembly line.

Prix Ars Electronica at the 2005 Ars Electronica Festival

The Prix Ars Electronica awards ceremony will be staged by the Ars Electronica Center and the Austrian Broadcasting Company’s Upper Austria Regional Studio in conjunction with the Ars Electronica Festival on September 2, 2005 in the Brucknerhaus in Linz. The “Cyberarts 2005” exhibition in the O.K Center for Contemporary Art will showcase the prizewinning works and thus offer visitors an impressive glimpse of state-of-the-art excellence in the digital arts. The Prix Artists’ Forum is a multi-day event at which prizewinning artists will discuss their work.

As part of this year’s Festival, Ars Electronica will be opening a special “u19 - freestyle computing” exhibition, which will run until March 2006 in the Museum of the Future.

A documentation of the competition is being released by the Hatje Cantz Verlag publishing house to coincide with the 2005 Ars Electronica Festival. This media package entitled “CyberArts 2005” will consist of a detailed and comprehensive catalog as well as a DVD and a CD.

The Austrian Broadcasting Company’s Upper Austria Regional Studio is producing a documentary film about the Festival and the Prix Ars Electronica, which will be aired on September 4, 2005 on ORF 2 and on September 5, 2005 on 3sat.

Prize Benefactors and Sponsors

The Ars Electronica Festival and the Prix Ars Electronica are conducted by the Ars Electronica Center in cooperation with the Austrian Broadcasting Company’s Upper Austria Regional Studio, the Brucknerhaus Linz and the O.K Center for Contemporary Art.

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