



SIMPLICITY - the art of complexity
Ars Electronica Festival 2006
Linz, Do 31. August - Di 5. September 2006
www.aec.at/simplicity

Presse-Information

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Press Conference
Friday, 30 June 2006, 10:00
Ars Electronica Center
SKY Media Loft Café & Bar
Hauptstraße 2-4
A-4040 Linz



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1. Featured speakers, Linz, June 30, 2006

Gerfried Stocker

CEO, Artistic Co-Director of Ars Electronica Center and visual artist

Born January 21, 1964 in Judenburg, Styria. 1991 Foundation of x-space team for the realization of interdisciplinary projects. Numerous installations and performance projects focused on the intersection of man-machine interaction, robotics and telecommunication. Responsible for the design of radio network projects and the realization of the world-wide project, "Horizontal Radio". Since 1995 CEO of Ars Electronica Center.

Christine Schöpf

Artistic Co-Director of Ars Electronica

Dr Christine Schöpf has been involved with the evolution of the festival Ars Electronica at a number of different levels. Head of "Art and Science" at the ORF's Upper Austrian regional radio station since 1981, she has been a formative influence on Ars Electronica and the Prix Ars Electronica since their inception.

Since 1996 Gerfried Stocker and Christine Schöpf have been jointly responsible as artistic directors for the program design of Ars Electronica.

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2. Press release, Linz, June 30, 2006

SIMPLICITY - the art of complexity

Our world's increasing complexity and its tension-filled interplay with our own growing need for a comprehensive, comprehensible overview of the world will occupy the focal point of attention at the 2006 Ars Electronica Festival. This theme is the common denominator of a feature-packed calendar of events, conferences, symposia, exhibitions and performances that will comprehensively showcase the state of the art of global media culture.

Linz, June 30, 2006 (Ars Electronica). The program that's been lined up for Ars Electronica 2006 is a multifaceted encounter with possibilities and strategies designed to help us effectively manage the increasingly multi-layered complexity of our reality.

"If we succeed in dealing with complexity in a constructive way and taking advantage of it, then this phenomenon that is increasingly dominating all aspects of our life opens up tremendous prospects for our future," stated Ars Electronica Artistic Director Gerfried Stocker.

"Coming up with intelligent, easy-to-use solutions for complicated, multidimensional tasks is currently the most pressing task that we face. That goes for information technology just as much as it applies to art and other facets of life in our society," Christine Schöpf pointed out in stressing the importance of this year's Festival theme. Christine Schöpf and Gerfried Stocker are co-directors of Ars Electronica.

Implementing new technologies, digital ones included, always entails social consequences that have to be taken into consideration. Among the pressing questions we face: How can computer programs be designed so as to minimize the obstacles that prevent individuals from accessing them? How can we more accurately grasp the concrete social impact of new technologies? What qualities must hardware possess in order to provide everyone—and not just the technocratic elite—with access to it? How can we take optimal advantage of the opportunities that complexity presents in order to identify that which is essential for us in the flood of information with which we are deluged? And what role does art play in its function as avant-garde domain and field of experimentation amidst constantly multiplying data, more and more options and permanent change?

A richly varied program and an eminently incomparable atmosphere are the defining features of the Ars Electronica Festival. In addition to symposia, conferences, concerts and exhibitions, a profusion of art projects installed in public spaces invites those partaking of it to engage in interaction, discussion and dialog. From August 31 to September 5, all of Linz becomes a stage set for media installations, screenings and sound sculptures—a most enthralling experience for highly diversified audiences.

A detailed, comprehensive rundown of the program is available online at www.aec.at/simplicity.

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3. Program preview: "Simplicity – the art of complexity"

New Events, New Locations

"Back to nature," the trend to spirituality, and yearning for tranquility amidst the commotion all around us—typical buzzwords: cocooning and "neo-Biedermeier"—are examples of people's efforts to demarcate realms for a retreat inwards. In order to investigate these aspects of simplicity, Ars Electronica will be going on a retreat of its own to **St. Florian, a baroque monastery near Linz**. Going to the Country – An Outing to the Hinterland in Search of Simplicity. In an atmosphere of baroque splendor, a broad spectrum of events will elaborate on the multifarious facets and dimensions of simplicity. The day's agenda runs the gamut from casual talks and formal speeches to performances and concerts. Sound installations, a musical encounter of the monastery's famed Bruckner organ with live electronics, an exhibition of computer graphics and additional performances complete the artistic program.

Increasing complexity brings out a longing on the part of many people for a simple, old-fashioned, down-to-earth life, for simplicity in the traditional sense. The Festival's opening event, Harbor Resonance, reflects this yearning. The **Port of Linz** provides the backdrop for the climax of the first day's activities and the big kick-off of the Festival week. A night on the banks of the Danube featuring performances, installations and music will mark the beginning of the Ars Electronica Festival.

"A Song for C" from the HGKZ - School of Art and Design Zurich will add some technical complexity to the mix. Twice daily, this project will transform downtown Linz's "Arkade" shopping mall into an interactive TV studio for the cell phones of passers-by. "A Song for C" uses DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcasting: Handhelds), a cutting-edge technology that's being tried out for the first time in Austria in conjunction with this project. This will also be the largest DVB-H field test to date. "A Song for C" is being produced in cooperation with and with the support of Vodaphone Research Lab. "Mobile Assassins," "As if we were alone" and "Cell Booth" are some of the many installations in public spaces that thematize the growing mobility of digital technologies.

The **Animation Festival** at the O.K Center for Contemporary Art will offer a look at current trends and glimpses behind the scenes in the field of computerized animated filmmaking. The enthusiastic reception accorded to this event's premiere at the 2005 Ars Electronica made the decision to reprise it an easy one. This year's lineup spotlights "Young People as Computer Animators." High-tech productions from the USA and Japanese anime round out the program.

All of Linz Becomes a Stage

On September 1st, city-dwellers and visitors alike are invited to Linz's Main Square to participate in the big "Moon Ride." Cyclists will be hooking up their bikes to one of the countless generators set up there for them to provide the muscle power needed to charge a giant battery. Each revolution of every set of pedals moves the battery charge indicator a little closer to full. After nightfall, the stored energy will be used to light up an enormous balloon floating above the cityscape. This discharging process will be visible for miles and can last until the wee hours of the morning.

"Moon Ride" is a sensory encounter with the myths and rites of our light-and-sound-dominated e-culture. At the same time, it's a minimalist reflection of our electronic world, one that makes visible

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the charging and discharging processes inherent in everyday life.

In addition to "**moon ride**", two other projects—"Machine Man" and "Sledge Hammer"—will transform Linz's Main Square into a setting for reflecting on the man-machine relationship in the Post-Industrial Age.

A concert evening on a grand scale has become a traditional fixture at Ars Electronica. This year's offering, "**some sounds and some fury**," proffers tonal experiences at the nexus of orchestral music, digital sound synthesis, live electronics and remix. A performance venue consisting of the Lentos Museum, the Brucknerhaus and the riverside Danube Park will be the setting for a concert featuring works by John Cage, Ludger Brümmer, Philippe Manouri, Charles Amirkhanian and others. They will be performed by Linz's Bruckner Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, and will feature soloist Maki Namekawa on piano and live electronics.

"**Digital Musics in Concert**," the presentation of this year's prizewinning works in the Prix Ars Electronica's musical category, offers impressions along a spectrum bounded by the music of the spheres and the physical experience of sound. Featured works include "l'île re-sonante" by Eliane Radigue and "psychic stress soundtracks" by Joe Colley.

In line with the motto "**make it simple – do it yourself**", the electrolobby will become a workshop for media artists interested in using simple means to perform live media art experiments on software and hardware. A special highlight: the rehearsals of the interactive dance performance "Le Sacre du Printemps" (The Rite of Spring) can be viewed live. "Le Sacre du Printemps" is a co-production of the Brucknerhaus, the Ars Electronica Futurelab, Klaus Obermaier and Linz's Bruckner Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies.

"**The Electric Grandmother**" is a play (for kids 7 and up) by Franz Schwabeneder based on a short story by Ray Bradbury. This co-production of the Phoenix Theater and the Ars Electronica Futurelab will be presented at the Phoenix Theater in conjunction with the Festival.

At the Ars Electronica Gala, the spotlight will be focused on the artists themselves the whole evening. The highpoint of this glittering event will be the presentation of the Golden Nicas to the Prix Ars Electronica prizewinners. This year's honorees include pioneers of media art as well as many representatives of the younger generation of artists.

The nightly Electro-Beats at the Stadtwerkstatt are the perfect way to wind up Festival evenings on a high note.

SIMPLICITY - Conferences and Symposia

This year's **theme symposium** will focus on the challenges posed by a complex world. An array of top-name theoreticians, scientists and practitioners will take up issues connected with the interplay of simplicity and complexity. The symposium is being curated by **John Maeda**, a world-renowned graphic designer, visual artist, researcher at the MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] Media Lab and scholar who has been at the forefront of thinking about simplicity in the Digital Age. Maeda first made his mark by redefining the use of electronic media as a tool for expression for people of all ages and skills. A faculty member at the Media Lab since 1996, Maeda holds the E. Rudge and Nancy Allen Professorship of Media Arts and Sciences, and co-directs the Lab's design-oriented Physical Language Workshop and its SIMPLICITY consortium. He has had major exhibits of his work in Paris, London, New York, and Tokyo, and has written several books on his philosophy of "humanizing technology" through his perspective on the digital arts.

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In addition to curating the theme symposium, Maeda will also be present as featured artist in a theme exhibit. The world premiere of his latest book will be another Ars Electronica highlight.

The other speakers at the SIMPLICITY theme symposium are:

- *Sam Hecht*, who deals first and foremost with the interrelationships of simplicity and design;
- *Walter Bender*, former executive director of the MIT Media Lab, who, as president of the "one laptop per child" initiative, has been involved in the development of a computer designed to be affordable by everyone, even the population of developing countries;
- *Paola Antonelli*, curator of the Museum of Modern Art's Architecture and Design Department;
- *Hugh Herr*, head of MIT's Biomechatronic Working Group that is developing artificial legs made of biological tissue and titanium;
- *Jason Kottke*, famous for his Kottke.org weblog that deals, above all, with clear, simple, user-centered possibilities for making the Internet useful;
- *Gary Chang*, founder of the EDGE Institute, which has come up with innovative solutions in the spirit of simplicity in both cultural and commercial fields; and
- *Olga Goriunova*, artist and art scholar, co-organizer of the Read_Me Festival and co-founder of the runme website.

The trend towards simplicity, moreover, is reflected not only in information technology and design; it's also manifested by an ever-more-fervent longing for the simple life, the conception of which all too often becomes a cliché-ridden pastoral idyll. Attendees will consider this aspect of simplicity on the second day of the symposium in the baroque St. Florian Monastery, the venue of "**Going to the Country – An Outing to the Hinterland in Search of Simplicity**". *Oliviero Toscani* will address the interrelationships between Information Society and politics. A panel discussion featuring *Thomas Macho* and German trend analyst *Peter Wippermann* will be dedicated to contemporary manifestations of SIMPLICITY in connection with marketing, cultural studies and spirituality. Additional chats and speeches will shed light on the philosophical-mystical side of SIMPLICITY.

With the simplicity theme as a background constant, a series of conferences will scrutinize the latest trends in art, technology and society. **Pixelspaces**, the annual conference of experts organized by the Ars Electronica Futurelab, will be dedicated to a consideration of media art phenomena in connection with architecture and in the general context of public spaces. Cybernetics, a field that has been dealing with the design and control of complex systems since its very inception, is the subject of the "**When Cybernetics meet Aesthetics**" conference being organized by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Media.Art.Research. The **Radio FRO Conference** will consider the specific mission of radio and TV programming by public broadcasting systems in an ever more dynamically diversifying world of media. At the **Prix Forums**, Prix Ars Electronica prizewinners will elaborate on their productions, techniques and concepts.

The **electrolobby kitchen** in the Brucknerhaus has established itself over the years as a favorite setting for discussions among artists and visitors, exchanges of opinion, presentations of views as well as of artworks, and critical analysis of what's been going on at the Festival. Exhibitions

Ars Electronica 2006 provides a welcome occasion for wide-ranging collaboration with ORF's radio station Ö1. Programming in a variety of formats will present diverse takes on the "simplicity" theme.

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Media Art Exhibitions: World-Class, Worldwide

With 3,177 entries from 71 countries in 2006, the Prix Ars Electronica has once again confirmed its status as the largest and most important international showcase of excellence in the cyberarts. An extensive selection of outstanding works from this year's competition will be presented in the **CyberArts exhibition** at the O.K Center for Contemporary Art.

As a special consideration to local Ars Electronica aficionados, the Center will open its doors to the public to premiere the Museum of the Future's new exhibits a day before the Festival begins. This Open House is set for August 30th; admission is free for one and all. One much-awaited feature is the exhibit of prizewinning works from the Prix Ars Electronica's u19 – freestyle computing competition for young people.

For the sixth time this year, Linz's University of Art will host Ars Electronica Campus. The 2006 international guest institution is the **University of Art & Design in Helsinki**, Finland. Students at the school's Media Lab will present their works. The facility's interdisciplinary orientation gives rise to great expectations of a fascinating show. "**Campus: the beta lounge**" will showcase prototype works by undergrads in the University of Linz's Interface Culture program. These projects explore the zone of interplay where media art, applications and design research come together.

Several exhibitions at the Brucknerhaus will be showcasing exemplary projects by young media artists and, in doing so, establishing the "Hotspot Brucknerhaus" as an up-and-coming feature attraction at the Festival.

Private and Public Sector Support

The Ars Electronica Festival and the Prix Ars Electronica are financed by private sector sponsorship and government subsidies.

Ars Electronica is especially grateful to its lead sponsors, Telekom Austria and voestalpine. Ars Electronica has also received support from the City of Linz, the Province of Upper Austria and the Federal Chancellery / Art Section.

Ars Electronica also expresses its sincere appreciation to KulturKontakt Austria, Casinos Austria, Pöstlingbergschlössl, Sony DADC, SONY DVD Center Europe, Spring Global Mail and Linz AG.

Services, Accreditation and Information

During the time leading up to the Festival, our website www.aec.at/simplicity will provide you with regular updates about the Festival theme and program details. The Festival Blog is your reliable source of certified-fresh news and background info. During Ars Electronica, www.aec.at/simplicity will morph into an online showcase delivering live streams from symposia as well as online reports and podcasts about what's going on at the Festival.

Information in the form of press releases and photographic material in print-ready format are available from Ars Electronica's press portal at www.aec.at/press. Online accreditation of media outlet representatives will get underway on June 30th at www.aec.at/accreditation.

The ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio is producing a documentary about the Festival and Prix Ars Electronica. The ORF's radio station Ö1 is a media

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partner of Ars Electronica again this year.
Organizers

Organizers

The Ars Electronica Festival and the Prix Ars Electronica competition are produced by the Ars Electronica Center, ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio, Brucknerhaus Linz and the O.K Center for Contemporary Art in cooperation with the following Linz institutions: University of Art, Lentos Museum of Art, Architekturforum Oberösterreich and Posthof.



Centrum für Gegenwartskunst
Oberösterreich

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4. Program preview – overview

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

Open House at the Ars Electronica Center (free admission)

Premiere of the “Pixelspaces” exhibition

Thursday, August 31, 2006

!> Press Gathering: Lentos, 9:30 AM – presentation of the exhibition; shuttle service to the O.K Center

!> Press Gathering: O.K Center, 10:30 AM – press conference and presentation of the exhibition

“When Cybernetics meet Aesthetics” conference organized by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Media.Art.Research

Exhibition openings (Campus, O.K, Lentos, Architekturforum)

Evening: “Harbor Resonance,” the opening event at the Port of Linz

Friday, September 1, 2006

!> Press Gathering: Brucknerhaus, Café Anklang, 9:30 AM, opening press conference with the artistic directors

Theme Symposium, Simplicity – the art of complexity

Awards ceremony: u19 freestyle computing

Start of the electrolobby kitchen workshops, Brucknerhaus

Main Square (Hauptplatz): “Moon Ride”

Evening: Ars Electronica Gala, Brucknerhaus

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Ticket reservation requirement also applies to media outlet representatives!

Saturday, September 2, 2006

Going to the Country: Ars Electronica at St. Florian, a baroque monastery near Linz

Ars Electronica Futurelab’s “Pixelspaces” conference, Part I, Ars Electronica Center

Kitchen workshops

Visualisierte Linzer Klangwolke (visualized cloud of sound)

Electronic Theatre at the O.K Center for Contemporary Art

Evening event: O.K Night

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Sunday, September 3, 2006

Prix Ars Electronica Forums: Interactive Art, Digital Musics, Computer Animation

Ars Electronica Futurelab's "Pixelspaces" conference, Part II

Radio FRO Conference, Ars Electronica Center

Evening concert event: "some sounds and some fury" at Lentos, the Danube Park and the Brucknerhaus

Monday, September 4, 2006

Prix Ars Electronica Forums: Digital Communities, Net Vision; "Commons & Communities" with radio station Ö1

Evening event: Digital Musics in Concert, Brucknerhaus

Tuesday, September 5, 2006

"Do-it-yourself" workshop presentations in the Kitchen

Press gathering: Ars Electronica 2006 – The Wrap-up, Electrolobby Kitchen, 2:30 PM

Daily

CyberArts exhibition at the O.K Center for Contemporary Art

Campus: The Beta Lounge at the University of Art

Ars Electronica Center Exhibition at the Ars Electronica Center

Interactive projects on Linz's Main Square

Pixelspaces exhibition

Interface Culture exhibition

"Make it simple" workshops at the Brucknerhaus

electrolobby kitchen at the Brucknerhaus

Animation Festival at the O.K Center for Contemporary Art

Quarter Nightline at Stadtwerkstatt and "Roter Krebs"

Brucknerhaus exhibition at the Brucknerhaus Linz

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5. Photos

The following **print-quality images (18 cm x 13 cm / 300 dpi)** are available for **download at www.aec.at/presskit**



The Messenger
Paul DeMarinis
Photo: Paul DeMarinis



Die Elektrische Großmutter
Ars Electronica Futurelab in Kooperation mit
Theater Phoenix Photo: Ars Electronica Futurelab



Joutokäynti – Idle Running
Kristian Simolin and Pauli Laine
Photo: Kristian Smolin and Pauli Laine



Morphovision - Distorted House
Toshio Iwai + NHK Science & Technical Research
Laboratories Photo: Toshio Iwai + NHK STRL



Sonic Bed_London
Kaffe Matthews / Annette Works
Photo: Kaffe Matthews / Annette Works



Animaatiokone
Perttu Hämäläinen, Mikko Lindholm, Ari Nykänen
Photo: Hämäläinen / Lindholm / Nykänen

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6. About Ars Electronica

With its specific orientation and the long-standing continuity it has displayed since 1979, Ars Electronica is an internationally unique platform for digital art and media culture consisting of the following four divisions:

Ars Electronica – Festival for Art, Technology and Society
Prix Ars Electronica – International Competition for CyberArts
Ars Electronica Center – Museum of the Future
Ars Electronica Futurelab – Laboratory for Future Innovations

Ars Electronica Festival

The essence of the internationally renowned Ars Electronica Festival is interdisciplinarity and an open encounter of international experts from the arts and sciences with a broad audience of highly diverse backgrounds and interests. Annually since 1979, the Festival has featured a lineup of symposia, exhibitions, performances and events designed to further an artistic and scientific confrontation with the social and cultural phenomena that are the consequences of technological change.

Prix Ars Electronica

As the world's premier cyberarts competition, the Prix Ars Electronica has been a forum for artistic creativity and innovation since 1987. It is the trend barometer in an ever-expanding and increasingly diversified world of media art.

Thanks to its annually recurring nature, its international scope and the incredible variety of the works submitted for prize consideration, the enormous Prix Ars Electronica Archive provides a detailed look at the development of media art and a feel for its openness and diversity.

Ars Electronica Center

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 characterize 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.

Ars Electronica Futurelab

The Futurelab is a model of a new kind of media art laboratory in which artistic and technological innovations engender reciprocal inspiration. The lab's teams bring together a wide variety of specialized skills; their approach is characterized by interdisciplinarity and international networking. The Futurelab's wide-ranging activities include designing and engineering exhibitions, creating artistic installations, as well as pursuing collaborative research with universities and joint ventures with private sector associates.

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