

Pre-Olympia Cultural Program Features Media Art basis wien and Ars Electronica in Peking

In the official cultural program being staged in conjunction with China's Summer Olympic Games, basis wien and Ars Electronica are elaborating on the significance of media art. International experts convened June 10-11 at the Beijing Museum of the Imperial City for the "How to do media art?" symposium, and the "SYNTHETIC TIMES – Media Art in China" exhibition held in connection with it at the National Art Museum of China is one of highlights of the 2008 games' cultural program.

The image of the artist and of artistic production has changed radically over the last 30 years. Now, the work of media artists is no longer characterized primarily by collaboration, exchange and networking—for instance, among technicians, programmers, scientists and theoreticians. The members of a new generation of artists have themselves acquired a wide array of skills and are moving forward on this basis.

At "How to do media art?" basis wien and Ars Electronica joined a host of experts from around the world to deal with essential issues having to do with the production and documentation of art in a globalized world. How are media artists in Europe and China dealing with the new conditions of production that are an upshot of globalization? Which strategies have emerged from this set of circumstances for the production, curating and documentation of art in Europe and China? To what extent is the training that artists are receiving—at universities, for example—taking all these

changes into account? What exactly does documenting art mean in different cultural contexts? And what forms might East-West cooperation take?

Panelists included media artists Feng Mengbo (CN), Gong Yan (CN) and Kurt Hentschläger (A) as well as curators Marie Luise Angerer (A) and Li Zhenhua (CN). Representatives of leading institutions such as Barbara London of MOMA New York, Katja Kwastek of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Media.Art.Research Linz and Li Mei of the Chinese National Academy of Arts also attended. Joining the discussion were basis wien CEO Lioba Reddeker and Christine Schöpf, co-artistic director of the Ars Electronica Festival.

basis wien (www.basis-wien.at), Austria's largest contemporary art documentation center, is initiator of the European Art Net. The member institutions of Europe's most extensive art network provide facilities for doing free research (www.european-art.net). Networking with Chinese partners is now enabling the European Art Net to get linked up with Asia. The resulting East-West coalition will facilitate sharing know-how and information about art, and enable scholars to work towards a global art history in the future.

Ars Electronica Linz's specific orientation and long-term continuity have made it an internationally unique center for digital art and media culture. It's comprised of four divisions: an avant-garde festival, a competition that functions as a showcase of excellence, a museum with an educational mission, and a media art lab that makes artistic skills available to R&D facilities and private sector associates. Beyond purely technical and industrial approaches, Ars Electronica takes a wide-angle view of the interface of art, technology and society, whereby the focus is not so much on the technology itself as on the social and cultural phenomena engendered by it. Since

1979, reciprocal inspiration on the part of those possessing artistic, technical and scholarly competence has been opening up novel and surprising perspectives as well as highly innovative opportunities for collaboration.

Additional information about the "SYNTHETIC TIMES – Media Art in China" exhibition is available at <http://www.mediartchina.org/introduction>

Contact:

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Ars Electronica Press Officer

Tel +43.732.7272-38
Fax +43.732.7272-638
Mobil: +43.664-81 26 156

e-mail: christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
URL: <http://www.aec.at/press>