

P R E S S R E L E A S E**Virtual Showcase for Schönbrunn Palace at ITB**

Mediating the Real Experience: Ars Electronica Futurelab and Schönbrunn Palace present new 3D visualizations at the ITB international tourism expo in Berlin.

Vienna/Linz/Berlin, March 9, 2006 (Ars Electronica). Priceless miniatures, an impressive collection of paintings, the sumptuous ambience of historical furnishings and interior decor—a wealth of brilliant impressions makes up the unique atmosphere of Schönbrunn Palace. Classical marketing materials about such a place can provide valuable information at important tourism expos attended by the industry's top professionals; what cannot be delivered in this way, however, is a complete and realistic impression of the cultural delights that await visitors to Schönbrunn.

The Schönbrunn Palace Society therefore decided to take an innovative approach and turned to the Ars Electronica Futurelab to carry it out. In a pilot project, the Linz media art laboratory visualized the "Million Room" in the form of an interactive 3D simulation. In the wake of its tremendous success, additional visualizations—of the Ceremonial Hall and one of the three Pink Rooms—soon followed. Now, all three digitized interiors are being presented for the first time to tourism professionals from all over the world at the ITB expo in Berlin.

Tourism experts can visit “virtual Schönbrunn” and get an impression of its cultural treasures without ever having traveled to Vienna. These unforgettable tours are fully interactive, and the extremely high quality of the projection allows for total immersion in an opulent visual experience.

“At sales presentations in foreign countries, new technologies are enabling us to give an even better impression of Schönbrunn Palace’s unique atmosphere. Plus, with this interactive 3D visualization at our disposal, our expo booth now features an absolute highlight that really makes us stand out from the crowd,” said Franz Sattlecker, CEO of the Schönbrunn Society.

“Software specially developed in-house is what made it possible to achieve the utmost level of quality that we were striving for,” explained Horst Hörtnner, director of the Ars Electronica Futurelab. “Beyond a pure visualization of these historic interiors, the research effort that went into developing their virtual counterparts concentrated on the reproduction of an authentic spatial impression.”

The use of the ARSBOX technology—another innovation by the Ars Electronica Futurelab staff—provides multiple options in displaying the 3D environment, including one or more screens and a variety of configurations ranging all the way to a large-scale projection. For Schönbrunn, this means the availability of a really sensational attention-getter that is, at the same time, mobile and flexible and can deliver a powerful impression of the attractiveness of this destination to tour operators.

About the Ars Electronica Futurelab

The Futurelab is the prototype of a new kind of media art R&D laboratory in which artistic and technological innovation drives reciprocal inspiration. Each of the lab’s working groups brings together a wide variety of skills; their approach to a project is characterized by interdisciplinarity and international networking. Conceiving and

executing exhibitions and artistic installations as well as collaborations with university facilities and joint ventures with partners in the private sector frame the Futurelab's broad spectrum of activities.

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