Prix Ars Electronica 2004

International Competition for Cyberarts
http://prixars.aec.at

PRIXARS
PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA

Computer Animation / Visual Effects
Digital Musics
Interactive Art
Net Vision
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Press Information - Information about the Winning Projects
Linz, May 4, 2004

PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA 2004

Golden Nicas

Golden Nica – Computer Animation / Visual Effects
Chris Landreth
Ryan

An outstanding graphic artist and a Canadian pioneer of the art of animation. An Oscar nominee. Today, a street person begging for spare change. An artist who lost his creativity. A fallen angel. Arrogant, shy, broken. Not destroyed. "Ryan" is a 14-minute-long film that tells the incredible but true story of Ryan Larkin, a man who, 35 years ago, was producing some of the most influential animated films of the day. Now, he lives off welfare and what he can panhandle in the city of Montreal. How could this happen to a talented man like him? "Ryan" treats this question from various perspectives and, in doing so, demonstrates the possibility of creating a documentary film with animation. The audience hears the voices of real people who accompanied Ryan as he made his way through life. In the world of computer-animated film, these people speak through strange, distorted, broken, disembodied beings, humans whose exterior appearance comes across as bizarre, humorous or irritating.

Golden Nica – Digital Musics
Thomas Köner
"Banlieue du vide"

"Banlieue du vide" deals with surveillance and emptiness. During the winter of 2003-4, Thomas Köner collected approximately 3,000 images recorded by surveillance cameras and made freely available in the Internet. All of these images show empty, snow-covered streets by night. Köner then added an accompanying soundtrack of colorless ambient noise and traffic sounds that represent memory. The only noticeable movement in these images framed within a setting of monumental background sound effects is that of the changing structures of the snow on the streets.

Golden Nica – Interactive Art
Ben Rubin, Mark Hansen
Listening Post

A darkened space, 231 fluorescent text displays attached to a taut, vertically-strung, semi-circular net, eight loudspeakers and two subwoofers—this is the setting for "Listening Post." An aluminum lattice on the wall opposite the net reflects the light of the monitor screens and controls the acoustics of the space. Several computers analyze data from thousands of Internet chat rooms and newsgroups,

and cull out 85 postings that begin with "I am," "I like" or "I love." Gradually, the communiqués appear on the displays, filling more and more space with their light. The selected texts vary in length and complexity; simpler and shorter ones come first. The beep of a telephone answering machine precedes the appearance of each message. This setting is variously modified in different segments. "Listening Post" sheds light on the enormous quantity of the online discourse in the digital Tower of Babel and reveals the absolutely unbelievable mass of human communication in the Internet.

Golden Nica – Net Vision
Creative Commons
www.creativecommons.org

Debates about copyright are usually played out between two extremes: there are those who envision a tough copyright that automatically protects all rights to a work; arrayed opposite them, advocates of a vision of freedom in which creatives should have the right to use available material. Reconciliation, compromise and moderate approaches have become rare in this discussion of evermore-restrictive measures on one hand and the fears of draconian copyright laws on the other. The aim of Creative Commons is to show the way between these two extremes. Authors/creators can place their works at the disposal of the general public—to any extent they wish—in accordance with the guidelines of Creative Commons. Instead of "all rights reserved" as is automatically the case in classic copyright law, a Creative Commons license provides a "certain rights reserved" alternative. In this way, works can be released for limited use. The jury's decision to award a Golden Nica to Creative Commons is meant to signal its decisive approbation and encouragement of open source projects and the free software movement that are currently embroiled in this issue.

Golden Nica – Digital Communities
The World Starts With Me
http://www.theworldstarts.org
(NL / UGANDA)

"The World Starts With Me" is a sex education and AIDS prevention project that simultaneously gives young Ugandans the opportunity to acquire Internet and computer skills. The program is aimed at school children and young adults. To reach this target group, 52 "Telecenters" (facilities equipped with IT infrastructure including PCs with Internet access) have been set up throughout Uganda. The program focuses particularly on 12- to 19-year-olds, with the objective of improving their understanding of sexuality. The website features a very attractive, inviting design and takes a playful approach to mediating complicated content, which is presented in a way that enables young people to recognize situations confronting them personally in their everyday lives. This program is very popular in Uganda and is being used in many schools and institutions.

Golden Nica - Digital Communities
Wikipedia
www.wikipedia.org
(USA)

"Wikipedia" is an online encyclopedia that all Internet users can collaborate on by writing and submitting new articles or improving existing ones.
The original English-language version of this encyclopedia was launched in January 2001. Three essential characteristics make the "Wikipedia" project one that is still unique in the Internet:

1. It is based on a wiki—i.e. software that allows users themselves to revise content. "Wikipedia" is the first solidly grounded, general encyclopedia to take shape in this format. It is a community project, jointly constructed and administered.
2. The authors/creators of the texts and media in "Wikipedia" make their work available to the general public, and thus permit anyone to process the content further and disseminate it. These rights can never be restricted.
3. The number of wikipedias in other languages is increasing. There is even one in Esperanto, the

invented international language, which is also the first Esperanto encyclopedia of any kind. There are currently wikipedias in more than 50 languages.

"Wikipedia" is living proof that content and knowledge can also organize themselves. Although theoretically possible, vandalism is not a big problem. The community itself is continually working on the site and developing it further.

Golden Nica – u19-freestyle computing
Thomas Winkler
GPS::Tron

The GPS application by Thomas Winkler is an adaptation of the classic game "Tron" for cell phones. In a very impressive performance, the 19-year-old from Hartberg, Styria expanded the game's concept by adding levels of reality and virtuality that blend into the realm of augmented reality. In Thomas Winkler's game, the player's movements in real space, which are tracked by GPS and transmitted to the cell phone's display, influence his/her position in the game. Each player is represented by a line that gets longer and longer. However, the player's own line is not allowed to cross itself or the opponent's line—if it does, that player loses. This is a game for two players—even those who are geographically distant from one another.

Awards of Distinction

Award of Distinction – Computer Animation / Visual Effects
Park Sejong (Australian Film Television and Radio School)
Birthday Boy

The story: during the Korean War, little Manuk is playing in the streets of his village and dreaming of life on the front. When he returns home, he discovers a small birthday present that would go on to change his life. The jury was especially taken with the convincing depiction of human facial expressions in this lovingly animated story by Sojong Park, a student at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS).

Award of Distinction - Computeranimation / Visual Effects
François Blondeau | Thibault Deloof | Jérémie Droulers | Christoph Stampe (Supinfocom)
Parenthèse

A little man confronts transience in a restless city. This animated work by students at the Supinfocom Institute in France follows the melancholy figure as he moves through the streets. His loneliness amidst the masses of people around him becomes palpable. Lines of literary text flow into the plot and form the audience's view of the protagonist and his view of the world. "Paranthèse" thus joins "Birthday Boy" as the second student film to win an Award of Distinction in the 2004 Prix Ars Electronica's Computer Animation / Visual Effects category.

Award of Distinction – Digital Musics
AGF
"Westernization Completed"

AGF's second solo album explores new patterns in the relation between sound and language. Fractured tonal and linguistic sequences, audible jumps, intentional pauses—poetry arises out of the reorganization of these vocabulary building blocks. The components have a tonality all their own and thus become an additional musical stratum and a superimposed level of meaning. AGF shifts its vocals into the center of attention and, in doing so, entices the listener to measure his/her associative potential against their streams of thought. Painting fragile, transparent pictures with sound and mixing in starkly contrasting elements like rolling bass waves or clicking punctuation marks engenders an organic ensemble of acoustic imagery.

Award of Distinction – Digital Musics
Janek Schaefer, audiOh! Room
"SKATE"

"Skate" plays with the possibilities of the LP by breaking apart the standard spiral groove into small units of sound. The work encompasses numerous aspects of sound (re)production and playback methods. Janek Schaefer has developed a fragmented technique that involves applying scratches to a record's surface. When the LP is played, the needle follows its own random path through this fractured terrain of physical and tonal detours. The type of turntable, the RPM selection, and the user him/herself influence the outcome, and each new playback results in new compositions.

Award of Distinction – Interactive Art
Feng Mengbo
Ah_Q

With "Quake III" as the basis of his work, Feng has come up with a very different sort of video game. On one hand, the keyboard has been replaced by a "dancing board" to allow users to control the game with their feet; on the other hand, Feng Mengbo has imparted a clearly ironic-political note to the game by inserting himself—camera in one hand, plasma gun in the other—into the game as an on-screen figure. Feng Mengbo is one of the leading Chinese media artists. His games, films and photographs reflect his unique style and creativity in dealing with virtual reality.

Award of Distinction – Interactive Art
Kenneth Rinaldo
Augmented Fish Reality

"Augmented Fish Reality" is an interactive installation. Each of five goldfish bowls containing Siamese fighting fish sits atop a rolling pedestal. Four infrared sensors built into each goldfish bowl register the movements of the fish and transform them into movements of the pedestals. In this way, the fish can move about in space. Siamese fighting fish have excellent vision and display a high degree of social organization. The installation thus enables the fish to communicate with one another; in addition, there is interaction among the fish and visitors to the installation. Images captured by mini-cameras mounted in the goldfish bowls are projected within the installation space in real time and enable visitors to observe the world from the perspective of the fish.

Award of Distinction – Net Vision
Marcos Weskamp, Dan Albritton
Newsmap
http://www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/

Newsmap is an application that depicts the permanently changing map of Google news. A visualization algorithm produces a visual representation of the enormous quantity of information gathered by Google. Beyond that, the graphic depiction enables users to get a quick overview of breaking international news and, in doing so, provides background information on its distribution and how it is processed further, and sheds light on the mechanisms of news production on a global level.

Award of Distinction – Net Vision
MoveOn.org
Bush in 30 seconds
http://www.bushin30seconds.org

Set up as a contest, this website publishes and evaluates the best clips that critically confront the policies of George W. Bush. Submitted clips cannot be over 30 seconds long. The clips that are published at www.bushin30seconds.org constitute a real display of creative fireworks. The initiators' primary aim is to juxtapose a counterpoint to the US media system that is, in their opinion, not sufficiently critical of the president. The site is an outstanding blend of political commitment and entertaining content.

Award of Distinction – D i g i t a l C o m m u n i t i e s
dol2day – democracy online
http://www.dol2day.de
(D)

With over 30,000 registered users, "dol2day" is the largest German-language community dedicated to politics and political discourse in the Internet. The site offers moderated live chats with German politicians at least three times a month, a chat series focusing on a variety of different topics, over 2,500 Internet initiatives, as well as a non-partisan "dol" newspaper that regularly appears online. Moreover, "dol2day" is a political, democratic simulation on the Internet, and is the first community with a virtual party system and regularly held elections. The government elected in this way has the right to initiate changes in the community, although all such measures must be put to a direct vote of the members. The entire setup is subject to the will of the members, who report on events within the community, conduct interviews, and also raise and address explosive, real-life issues.

Award of Distinction – D i g i t a l C o m m u n i t i e s
Krebs-Kompass
http://www.krebs-kompass.de
(D)

"Krebs-Kompass" offers information about all topics related to cancer. This site provides an innovative combination of expert counseling and mutual emotional support by those battling this disease. Thus, in addition to making available information online, "Krebs-Kompass" also offers a means of getting into contact with others who have cancer (moderated forum, moderated chat, regional get-togethers) or to submit queries to experts via e-mail. Its mission is to provide "high-quality information that enables people with cancer to make the transition from submissive, uninformed sufferers to knowledgeable human beings actively battling their disease." In going about this, "Krebs-Kompass" has reached over 1.7 million people in German-speaking Europe since 1997.

Award of Distinction – D i g i t a l C o m m u n i t i e s
Open-Clothes - 6 billion ways of fashion for 6 billion people
http://www.open-clothes.com/
(J)

"Open-Clothes" is a community of young Japanese fashion enthusiasts who are not content with conventional mainstream styles. "open-clothes.com" is a meeting place for tailors showcasing their private creations, and potential customers with a taste for extraordinary, new custom-tailored garments. Articles of clothing can be displayed, scrutinized, critiqued and purchased online. Buyers contact producers directly and order items of clothing "made to measure." The community's credo is to offer clothes in "'I' Size"—that is, individually designed and produced. The overall picture that emerges is one of a lively online community whose forms of contact and network linkages differ markedly from conventional portals like e-bay. The site also offers a stark contrast to the strictly hierarchical and centrally organized Japanese clothing industry that generally does little to nurture newcomers or small producers with no support from large production firms. "Open-Clothes" thus supports the entire value-creation chain in fashion making and contributes to the resurrection of a culture of small-scale producers that had become extinct in the wake of industrialization and globalization.

Award of Distinction – D i g i t a l C o m m u n i t i e s
smart X tension
http://www.mulonga.net
(A / Zimb)

In 2001-02, the "Tonga.Online" project established the first computer center in one of the most remote regions of Zimbabwe. The project is currently being expanded—smart X tension—to reach additional villages on the opposite bank of the Zambezi River in neighboring Zambia.
The Tonga community was torn apart 50 years ago by the erection of the Kariba Dam. Today, follow-

ing a massive resettlement program, part of the population lives in Zimbabwe and part in Zambia—separated by massive Lake Kariba and the Zambezi River. Communication between the two segments has been cut off for the most part since then. Nevertheless, the Tonga have preserved their shared culture, and above all their highly complex way of making music. Now, modern technologies are making it possible to re-intensify contacts beyond the borders of individual countries. A community whose shared cultural heritage has preserved its sense of community during a 50-year separation can now grow back together as a digital community.

Award of Distinction – u19-freestyle computing
Gottfried Haider
radio2stream
www.gohai.net

"radio2stream" transforms the radio signal of an analog antenna into an mp3 stream that can be received by several computers. The radio station to be tuned in is chosen in an online selection process. Gottfried Haider's aim with this project was to establish a bridge between the radio and the PC, and to enable users to conveniently listen to the radio with their PCs since some stations are not available online via stream. The voting system also yields a nice community feature.

Award of Distinction – U19-freestyle computing
Manuel Fallmann
MINDistortion.tk - sanity is not statistical

Inspiration and ideas are lurking everywhere—on signs pointing the way to the emergency exit, on the way home on a rainy night, or perhaps just in songs that absolutely cry out to be used in a soundtrack. For a while now, visitors to the MINDistortion forum have been able to exchange ideas and experiences, and a small but dedicated community has formed. "Animotion," a game that emerged as a spin-off of what began as a programming experiment, gives users the opportunity to try their hand at animation and enables them to save their creations online. Moreover, visitors to Manuel Fallmann's website can also submit and display their own drawings and animated sequences. After all, the Internet is just full of such creative people…

Award of Distinction – u19 freestyle computing
Project Group of the Europahauptschule Hall in Tirol
Hos Geldiniz Avusturya

Time and time again, children whose families only recently moved to Austria are shunted off into special ed programs or even facilities to treat learning disabilities simply because these youngsters lack German language skills and despite the fact that their academic performance often would otherwise be superior to that of their fellow students who are native German speakers.
This CD is meant to help remedy this situation. Another aim of the project is to make an additional teaching aid available to instructors of German as a second language.
This learning CD is designed to give kids the opportunity to acquire the vocabulary necessary for (school)day-to-(school)day life and to self-test this new knowledge in a fun way. Furthermore, the ability to hear how the expressions are pronounced provides a way to get around reading problems. The production staff made a particular effort to make the testing process as entertaining as possible. The vocabulary list is also available as a .pdf-file that can be printed out to enable pupils and teachers to utilize a hard copy of the material.

Award of Distinction – u19 freestyle computing
David Haslinger
Es war einmal ein Mann…

David Haslinger's project was an outgrowth of his encounter with the book "Kinderreime" (Children's Rhymes). He got the idea of making a story out of his favorite rhyme, "Es war einmal ein Mann" (There once was a man…). He worked on this by searching for pictures in the Internet, printing them out, cutting them up and, finally, photographing them with a digital camera. The poem itself was

recorded digitally. The result of a lot of painstaking work at the computer using this material and graphics processing software was a short film featuring the poem recited by David Haslinger and illustrated by the sequence of processed images.

Art and Technology Grant [the next idea]
Akio Kamisato, Satoshi Shibata, Takehisa Mashimo
"Moony" - Sensitive Smoke Project

Virtual butterflies that flutter about in space and react to the presence of visitors—if you touch them or try to catch them, they fly away; but if you hold your hand steady, they return and, with a little luck, alight on your outstretched hand. The "Moony" project is meant to make such a scenario possible. Its aim is to develop an intuitive interface that can be used in conjunction with smoke or steam, projections and sensors. A forerunner project has already been carried out. Water vapor serves as the projection surface for the visualizations. The challenge in taking this to the next level is developing the projection medium further to the point that it is itself invisible and the user can focus exclusively on the projection. Tremendous potential is inherent in the development of this project, which could ultimately make it possible to work with computers in ways that go beyond manipulating a keyboard and a mouse.

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