

Science Fiction

Sunday, September 26, 1982, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, Regional Studio for Upper Austria, Public Studio, Franckstraße 2 a, 4010 Linz

Workshop

SCIENCE FICTION IN PRACTICE: Film, Video, Comics, Music

Participants:

David Di Francesco and Dr. Alvy Ray Smith (Lucasfilm/Los Angeles)

Michael Weisser (Bremen)

Jean-Pierre Dionnet (Métal Hurlant/Paris)

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Werner Krützfeldt (Hamburg)

Moderator of the Day: Dr. Herbert W. Franke

The Science Fiction Workshop is connected to the World Meeting of World SF–The International Science Fiction Association of Professionals held within Ars Electronica.

World-SF–General-Meeting 1982

On the occasion of the second World Conference of Science Fiction Writers in Dublin (Eire) in 1978, the International Science Fiction Association of Professionals was founded. It is unique among literary organizations. Membership with World SF is open to everyone dealing with science fiction professionally and the organization is therefore, unlike many others, not restricted to a special field only. For this reason, members of World-SF are not only authors, editors, publishers, and translators but also teachers, composers, film producers, and many others. World-SF does not know any national nor ideological boundaries. The Association is represented in many countries outside Europe, as, for instance, in China, Japan, America, Brazil, Australia, and in practically every country of Western and Eastern Europe.

World-SF regularly publishes a "News Letter" and a "Journal". Its main forum, however, is its annual General Meeting attended by delegates from the various countries.

The General Meeting 1982 has been invited to Linz by the organizers of Ars Electronica. This year's program includes reports by every member country about science fiction activities in the respective country in the course of the past year, a lecture in German on the development of science fiction, papers by various experts, and workshops providing an opportunity for members of World-SF to discuss various topics of general interest. The General Meeting 1982 will be held in the Schillerpark-Hotel, Rainerstraße 2-4, Linz, on Saturday, September 25, 1982. Within the context of the General Meeting 1982, the Science Fiction Workshop will be held in the Regional Studio for Upper Austria of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, Franckstraße 2 a, Linz, under the auspices of Ars Electronica 82.

Gerald Bishop, World-SF

SCIENCE FICTION WORKSHOP

Science Fiction in Practice: Film, Video, Comics, Music

10.00 a.m.: Science Fiction Film Tricks: David DiFrancesco and Dr. Alvy Ray Smith (Lucasfilm/Los Angeles)

11.00 a.m.: Science Fiction Videos: Michael Weisser (Bremen)
2.00 p.m.: Science Fiction Comics: Jean-Pierre Dionnet (Métal Hurlant/Paris)
3.00 p.m.: Science Fiction in Music: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Werner Krütfeldt (Hamburg)
4.30 p.m.: Panel Discussion with members of World-SF

Moderator of the Day and Chairman of the Panel: Dr. Herbert W. Franke (München)

8.00 p.m.: GALAXY CYGNUS-A (Premiere): Optico-musical event by Michael Weisser and Robert Schröder

The utopian feature of Ars Electronica implies a relation to science fiction, at least where it is concerned with the effects of technological innovation in society and its reactions thereto.

An object of science fiction is to convert abstract futurological extrapolation into the concrete and to expound it.

In this disguise the formerly abstract and unrealistic suddenly becomes pertinent to one's personal life. It stimulates a critical analysis which exceeds by far the educational effect of comparable lines of light reading.

Science fiction is not only literature, it expresses itself in several tyoes of media. As their subject is removed from the here and the now, authors and producers want to depart from the conventional in their methods of realization and to try new approaches. This may explain why many of the subjects of electronic art relate directly to the scene of action of science fiction—future and space—although no organized communication had been established between science fiction and electronic art. High quality science fiction frequently initiated the creation of these works, and as a consequence direct contacts were established between members of various spheres of art—of literature, music, and the fine arts.

Such considerations led to a remarkable initiative of some science fiction writers.

The English author Brian W. Aldiss and the American author Harry Harrison organized a First World Science Fiction Writers Conference in 1976. It was meant to be an alternative to the long-established Science Fiction Fan-Cons that were dominated by enthusiastic, usually youthful readers and where the writers' interest in an exchange of ideas was drowned by the deafening exuberance. Communication was needed more than ever, for the long-scorned genre of science fiction had acquired new facets: political, ideological, and even literary.

At Ars Electronica 82 for the first time the subject will be that kind of science fiction which does not propagate its ideas in print but through different media. They are mainly film, video, and music but also those graphic products that are known as comics and presented in print but also as movies.

With some of these media, the relations to science fiction can even be called classic, as with film and its first relevant movies like "Metropolis" and "Gold". Even then, producers tried to impress by the utopian setting: a challenge for film tricks and special effects as scenery must be shown that does not exist or rather cannot yet be reached by men. We have come a long way from the scenecraft of the early stage to present-day computer animation which produces electronically true-to-life pictures of futurist technology. In his famous science fiction film "2001—a Space Odyssey", Kubrik has realized thrilling flights with electronic means. It took several years before other film producers made use of the advance in computer technology,

first and foremost was George Lucas with his "Star Wars" series. Video Art has been known for a mere ten years and is not nearly as established as film art—but here, too, attempts at utopian subjects have been made. Video Art is an offspring of television, in technical terms: an example of analogue technique. In recent years the differences between the two methods, between the analogue and the digital technique, the latter represented by the computer, begin to merge. Digital elements gradually enter analogue technique and vice versa. Similarly, the classical methods of film and the new methods of television are being reconciled. All this will open up new possibilities for visual arts, and their impact on the field of science fiction will be considerable.

Obviously, the imaginative setting of many science fiction stories is a challenge for graphic art. Today, there exists a science fiction art proper, developed in part as illustration for literature, and often developed quite independently. Science fiction does imply action and thus the very medium for its graphic presentation is the comic strip. As in science fiction literature, we have ample trivial specimen, but here, too, the swampy but fertile soil has produced off-shoots of high originality and artistic quality. Unfortunately, they do not conform to popular concepts of beauty. Animated cartoons are closely related to comics magazines and books. Formerly and even today, they have consisted of a succession of uncountable drawings, in the near future they will be interpolated electronically, from a few original copies.

The electronic sound in the supporting music cannot be ignored, although less known is the fact that in the beginning electronic music was interpreted by respected classical musicians of renown. Even then their results were considered examples of musical expression of the near or more distant future. Rock and pop music have taken a different course of development, and yet it is electro-acoustics that can emphasize the "sense of wonder" of science fiction most effectively.

Dr. Herbert W. Franke

Lucasfilm computer development division

George Lucas's company, Lucasfilm Ltd., hired Ed Catmull two and a half years ago to head its Computer Development Division. The charter of the group is to modernize the filmmaking process by introduction of digital techniques. The initial approaches to this task taken by the 30-odd members of the group are represented by the three principal projects: digital audio, video editing, and computer graphics. These are to be joined soon by a fourth project: games. These projects include both software and hardware personnel chosen from top rated institutions here and in Europe. The projects have each been in existence for just over a year and will begin to produce results during the next year or two. In particular, the digital audio project will produce a totally digital audio mixing facility. The video editing project will build a video disc-based, computer-controlled editing system. The computer graphics project will build a 3-dimensional image synthesis software system and machines to realize it. Perhaps most importantly, all of these projects will be coordinated into a single filmmaking tool wedded intimately with the "conventional" special-effects system of Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic Division.

David Di Francesco

David began his computer graphics career at Computer Image Corp. in 1970. He joined Alvy Ray Smith at Xerox PARC and was another of the original members of the NYIT computer

graphics lab. He was in charge of the Cicomed film printer at NYIT and oversaw the development of a film-to-video scanning machine there. He was responsible for the processing, editing, and logging of all film associated with the lab, and after five years at NYIT, he joined JPL where he helped develop a video-to-film output device. His computer graphics artworks have appeared in national magazines. His photographs and films of other's artworks have appeared in the Museum of Modern Art and in other galleries around the world.

Alvy Ray Smith

Professor of computer science at New York University and Berkeley, he began his computer graphics career at Xerox PARC (Palo Alto Research Center), working on the first sophisticated framebuffer-based computer graphics machine as programmer and artist. He joined Ed Catmull as one of the original members of the NYIT (New York Institute of Technology) computer graphics lab, helping to develop this lab into one of the most outstanding computer graphics installations in the world. He spent five years at NYIT writing a great deal of software including the program "Paint" which was sold to Ampex (and now marketed under the name AVA [Ampex Video Art]). He worked most recently at Cal Tech's JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory). He has published numerous technical papers and his computer graphics artworks have been seen in national magazines, on national television shows, and at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

SF-VIDEO

= Notes on the Encounter with the Unknown = Everyone believing to know what science fiction is, is thoroughly mistaken, for true science fiction is beyond all preconceived ideas!

1. Science fiction is the mental encounter with the unknown, it is the attempt to deal with what is not seen, not heard, not sensed. Where science fiction has become consumable, it has become a mere commodity and only helps to confirm existing patterns of thought and structures of emotion instead of questioning them.

Where science fiction prophesies a solution, it has failed in its emancipatory drive and has turned a mere prostitute on the general market of superficial deception and vain promise.

Genuine science fiction is not only determined by the innovative character of its content but by its obligation to find new media as vehicles for its message.

Science fiction requires utmost attention and contains urgent topicality, as it is not a mere story nor a sequence of images nor a succession of voices and sounds but a vista of possible futures. To the extent that possible reality is evident in science fiction's fantasies, it will challenge the personal concern of the audience.

2. New media determined by technology are an expression of our science-oriented world. Electronics, in particular, have become a progressive element of our society, profoundly affecting the individual psyche as well as the social system as such.

Video is a separate technique of electronic image processing with synchronous sound. By increasing use in amateur film making and by almost 20 years of application in the field of fine arts, video has attained a significance surpassing TV recording and the passive reproduction of movie cassettes. Video can offer more than the reproduction of reality. Applied actively, video, like the novel, the film or the radio play, creates another, an artificial

world with an artificial action. As video can be used in combination with other electronic systems of data processing, it becomes the ideal medium of science fiction. Graphic or three-dimensional sequences of images confront the audience with planned or incidental new worlds of image and sound.

If unrestricted by purposes, the art of science fiction is to break up established relations of purpose-ruled plots as well as the traditional scale of rules and values, video science fiction as a mass medium will be able and predestined to communicate a creative and positive message!

Michael Weisser

Born in 1948

1975 (Sept. 6/7) environment "Sound & Space", large-screen slide-projection in the Cultural Center/Bonn accompanied by the sound of Tangerine Dream and Terry Riley.

1975 (Nov. 20–Dec. 4) Environment "New Views of an Old City". Nine endless projectors in the Lower Town Hall of Bremen.

1976 (May) "Artificial Garden", a concept of art. Award (together with F. Deventer /Kassel) for entry in the competition "Model projects" under the auspices of the senator for science and art in Bremen.

1980

Design of album covers with "Phantastic Photography":

— Christian von Eschersheim, "Midsummernight's Dream", Sky

— Mythos, "Quasar" (back cover), Sky–P'Cock, "The Prophet", IC

— Robert Schröder, "Floating Music", IC

— Klaus Schulze, "digit", Metronome

1981

Design of album covers with "Fantastic Photography":

— Wahnfried, "Sound Wave", IC–Baffo Banfi "Hearth", IC

— P'Cock, "Incognito", IC

— Klaus Schulze, "Mindphaser", Metronome

1982 SYN-CODE-7, science fiction novel, Suhrkamp ed.

1982 "Ego Alter Ego", science fiction story, published in: Kopernikus 6, Moewing

1982 "Angel Bi", science fiction story, publ. in the June edition of Penthouse

1982 "Arguments in favour of the combination of arts and sciences", comments on the work of Herbert W. Franke, publ. in: Polaris 6, Suhrkamp ed.

1982 Cover design for paperbacks with "Phantastic Photography" for Suhrkamp ed.:

— SYN-CODE-7, M. Weisser, 1982

— The Other Future (ed. by F. Rottensteiner) 1982

— The Error of the Great Magician, J. and G. Braun, 1982

— Crystal World, J. G. Ballard, 1982

— DIGIT, M. Weisser, 1983

1982 Membership with World-SF

1982 Video cassette "Project Cygnus-A" together with Robert Schröder

Projects planned:

1983 DIGIT, science fiction novel, Suhrkamp ed. (January)

1983 GES-Project, science fiction story, in "Formalhaut", Goldmann ed. (June)

1983 The White Noise of Cygnus-A, science fiction story, Polaris 7

Science Fiction Comic Strips

Generally speaking there are two kinds of science fiction: the one proceeding from the French author Jules Verne and the other from the English H. G. Wells. Science fiction in the tradition of Jules Verne comprises pictures of mounted rockets, giant robots, enormous machinery and even science. In Jules Verne form of science fiction, pictures are necessary.

The other form of science fiction, the one deriving from H. G. Wells, is introspective, psychological, philosophical, phantasmal. This is the realm of literature.

Even if comic strip authors sometimes make an attempt at Wells, they are actually completely committed to Jules Verne.

Up to the war of 1914, the comic strip is comical. It is the age of "Felix the Cat" and "Little Nemo". The onset of World War I is at the same time the beginning of an era in which the machine is triumphant over man. For the first time tanks assault a cavalry that had not changed since the ancient Greeks and those weird, enormous, terrifying tanks are victorious. The comics after World War I were created by a generation that had witnessed and survived that terrible war: Those were the archaic rockets of "Buck Rogers" and the cosmic cannons of "Flash Gordon". A whole imagery of science fiction comic strips was invented that does not change until World War II. If I say invent, I am somewhat exaggerating, for in reality they quite often merely continue, improve or copy the illustrations of popular science fiction magazines of that time.

In America after World War II first attempts are made at something new, especially with the E.C. Comics which try to adapt more intimist stories. This time, in short, comic strips try to pursue the line of H. G. Wells instead of that of Jules Verne. Europe, however, is still dominated by Jules Verne. An admirable series, "Les pioniers de l'espérance" by Raymond Poivet continues the style of "Flash Gordon" in France and so does "Dan Dare" by Frank Hampson in England.

We have to admit that with the exception of the neo-Victorian comic strips by the Belgian Edgar Pierre Jacobs this situation has hardly changed and that we are still at the level of "Flash Gordon". The seventies, however, have brought an innovation, this time from Europe, essentially with two French designers: Philippe Druillet and Moebius. Somewhere between gothic horror and baroque science fiction, Bruillet goes beyond the traditional scope of comic strips into a delirious and cyclopean universe with no place for human beings. Moebius on his part invents an intimate world of flying reptiles and awkward rockets, a world which has left an impression on practically every contemporary science fiction film.

And it is the science fiction film that has experienced an extraordinary change within the past years. Proclaimed dead in the fifties and reanimated with "Star Wars", the cinema has discovered the incredible wealth of imagination of comic strips. In the past 7 to 8 years, we find decors by Druillet, Moebius or their emulators in practically every film if they do not themselves take part in the realization, which is often the case.

If you ask for the causes of such a wealth of imagination, the question is easily answered: The science fiction writer describes in words but does not show anything. His mind roams about but he cannot specify his visions. The film-maker may have all the imagination in the world but due to the enormous costs he will, most of the time, return to a solution that has existed before. The author of comic strips, however, is all by himself at his drawing board. With a stroke of his pen he can destroy a whole galaxy, within an hour he can create an enormous space fleet or invent a non-terrestrial being 100,000 kilometers high wearing size 10 shoes.

Jean Pierre Dionnet,

Born in Paris in 1947, studies theology, law, literature, and journalism, after three years he interrupts his studies and turns to comic strips.

In 1968 he writes historical and critical texts on the unappreciated heroes of the American comic strip.

In 1969 he joins the staff of the journal "Pilote" and becomes a scenarist for comic strips.

In 1973 Jean Pierre Dionnet becomes literary director of the department "comic strips" at "Nathan", in 1974 he is nominated chief editor of the "L'Echo des Savanes" and towards the end of the same year he creates the magazine "Metal Hurlant" together with Druillet and Moebius. Meanwhile, "Métal Hurlant" has become known the world over—there are American, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, German and other editions. "Métal Hurlant" is the first comic strip magazine that has been turned into a film. "Métal Hurlant" has now become a publishing house "Les Humanoïdes Associés", publishing almost 100 titles per year.

In 1981, Jean Pierre Dionnet tries himself at a new line, he produces, authors and interprets together with Philippe Manoeuvre a TV rock-comics program entitled "The Impeccable".

At present, he is writing the second sequence of the American film "Heavy Metal 2", a science fiction cartoon with music by Paul McCartney.

Prof. Dr. Werner Krütfeldt

Science Fiction and Music

Interrelations and communications between science fiction and music are manifold and more complex than generally accepted. We must not concern ourselves solely with an examination of rather successful attempts at adequate music—rare as they may be—for film or video production. I rather want to explain

(1) how music becomes the theme of literary science fiction or

(2) how science fiction can be a topic for music not only in the sphere of so-called serious music.

(3) We will obviously also touch upon the relation of many musicians to science fiction and the relation of many science fiction writers to music.

Finally, (4) the symbolic and background character of music within science fiction—in particular literary science fiction—will be dealt with.

Prof. Dr. Werner Krütfeldt

Born in Kiel on September 27, 1928.

Studies at the Academy of Music in Hamburg: composition and music education; at the University of Hamburg: musicology and German language and literature. Graduated with a Ph.D. in 1961.

Since 1954 assistant professor of musical theory at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Hamburg, since 1968 professor of composition and musicology at the same institution, publications in the field of music didactics and new music.

Since 1964 concerned with experimental and electronic music.

Member of the German Council of Music (Deutscher Musikrat) as Chairman of AGMM.

President of the Hamburg Council of Music.

Dr. Herbert W. Franke
Born in Vienna in 1927.

Studied at the University of Vienna (physics, chemistry, psychology and philosophy), graduated with a doctors degree of philosophy. Technological research, five years employment in industry.

Since 1957 Dr. Franke has been a free-lance writer (books and radio plays).
Active interest in computer art.

Short-stories:

"The Green Comet", Goldmann ed., Munich 1960
"Heirs of Einstein", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1972
"The Return of Zarathustra", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1977
"Paradise 3000", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1981

Novels:

"The Mental Network", Goldmann ed., Munich 1961
"The Orchid Cage", Goldmann ed., Munich 1961
"Column of Glass", Goldmann ed., Munich 1962
"The Steel Desert", Goldmann ed., Munich 1962
"The Ivory Tower", Goldmann ed., Munich 1965
"Zone Zero", Kindler and Lichtenberg ed., Paperback, Munich 1970
"Ypsilon Minus", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1976
"The Return of Zarathustra", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1977
"Sirius Transit", Suhrkamp ad., Frankfurt/Main 1979
"School for Supermen", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/ Main 1980
"Death of an Immortal", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/ Main 1982

Radio plays:

"No Trace of Life", Suhrkamp ed., Frankfurt/Main 1981

Translations in Great Britain, the USA, Japan, France, Italy, Jugoslavia, Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Hungary.

Friday, September 24, 1982 through Friday, October 1, 1982

Stadtmuseum Nordico, Bethlehemstraße 7, ground floor

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK EXHIBITION

In the context of Ars Electronica and in cooperation with World SF, The International Science Fiction Association of Professionals, presents examples of science fiction literature from all over the world in the municipal museum of Linz (the Linzer Stadtmuseum Nordico).

The exhibition is to supplement the annual General Meeting of World SF in Linz and the Science Fiction Workshop held in the Regional Studio for Upper Austria of the Austrian Radio on September 26, 1982.

It offers a survey of science fiction literature inside and outside of Europe—from America to China. This exhibition is complemented by a show of science fiction pictures by the Dutch photographer Peter Coene.