

Christine Schöpf **Prix Ars Electronica**

Cyberarts 98

In an era of increasing digitization of all spheres of life — and thus of art as well — traditional theories and descriptive approaches must be reformulated. For decades, Benjamin's postulate of art's reproducibility as derived from the basic principles of art theory and the theory of culture also applied to media art, and particularly to film, photography and video; nevertheless, the rapid emergence of digital technology as a comprehensive new medium, and interactivity as the key cultural technique of our time, have confronted both artists and their public with new challenges. Moreover, this has meant a radical reformulation of art. On one hand, art increasingly disappears nowadays into networks and behind monitor screens; on the other hand, this process has naturally broken down the barriers separating high culture and the culture of everyday life, and those between elite and underground art. As never before, art has become one with the medium itself.

This development prompted the Austrian Broadcasting Co. (ORF) — as initiator (in 1979) and co-organizer of the Ars Electronica, Festival for art, technology and society — to take the next step forward. The Prix Ars Electronica was instituted as part of the festival program in 1987 as an international competition for computer art. Since its inception, it has been conceived as an invitation extended to a new avant-garde — artists, scientists, and developers around the world whose works have formulated new approaches to the artistic-cultural design of digital media beyond industrial modes of thought, and who have thus been laying the groundwork for emerging cyberart.

Basically, the Prix Ars Electronica has always been an interdisciplinary forum for creative talent in a wide array of disciplines — for musicians, animators, and graphic artists or, most recently, for those who have conceived new interfaces or pioneered network applications. This year, a new group can be added to the list of invitees: the cybergeneration, young people under the age of 19 who live in Austria are taking part in the Freestyle Computing category launched in 1998.

The Prix Ars Electronica was designed from the start as an open platform capable of reacting to rapid changes in the area of new media. During the early years, competitions were held in Computer Animation, Computer Music and Computer Graphics. In 1990, Interactive Art was added as a fourth category; in 1995, the existing Computer Graphics category was replaced by one dedicated to the World Wide Web.

What has remained the same has been the awarding of prize money. The amounts awarded are comparable to those of similar international prizes in traditional fields of art, which is meant to signal due respect and recognition to the efforts of artists in new media. In 1998, cash prizes totaling 1.35 million Austrian Schillings (ATS) and merchandise (in the new category under-19/cybergeneration Freestyle Computing) valued at approximately 200,000 ATS will be awarded. Thus, from its inception to the present, the Prix Ars Electronica has been the highest-endowed competition for cyberart. Since the Prix Ars Electronica's beginnings, this generosity has been made possible by the commitment of its sponsors and supporters including Siemens, Siemens Nixdorf, VOEST-ALPINE STAHL, the Province of Upper Austria, the City of Linz, Kapsch, Gerhard Andlinger Company, Datakom and the Austrian Postsparkasse (P.S.K.).

The grand-prize trophy in each of what has since become five competitive categories is the Golden Nica, a statuette which pays homage to the Louvre's Nike of Samothrace, the winged goddess of victory. It has come to be considered the Oscar of digital media. Winners of the Golden Nica of the Prix Ars Electronica since 1987 have included individuals such as John Lasseter, Tamás Waliczky, Joan Stavelly, Kaija Saarihao, Karl Sims, Tim Berners-Lee, Myron Krueger, Monika Fleischmann/Wolfgang Strauß, Knowbotic Research, Toshio Iwai/Ryuichi Sakamoto, Matt Heckert, Maurice Benayoun/Jean-Baptiste Barrière, as well as institutions like ILM and Digital Domain.

Over the years, the Prix Ars Electronica has increasingly become the centerpiece of the Ars Electronica Festival. In the context of the festival — held annually and focusing on a different central theme each year — it has become a reflection of the state-of-the-art in media art. In 1998, 1,300 projects from 40 countries have been submitted to the Prix Ars Electronica judging process; to this can be added 540 projects in the new U-19 category. There is no curator in the world who could assess, analyze, comprehend and process this quantity of work in one year. For the Prix Ars Electronica, five juries composed of international experts determine the winners of the three cash awards and up to 12 honorable mention prizes in each category. In 1998, they are: Michael Naimark, John Markoff, Machiko Kusahara, Hans-Peter Schwarz, Jon Snoddy (Interactive Art); Jean-Baptiste Barrière, Naut Humon, Laetitia Sonami, Jonty Harrison, Werner Vollert (Computer Music); Mark Dippé, Barbara Robertson, Peter Kogler, Rudolf John, Maurice Benayoun, Michael Wahrman, Larry Cuba (Computer Animation/Visual Effects); Joichi Ito, Derrick de Kerckhove, John Simon Jr., Andreas Broeckmann, Robert Gehorsam (.net); Stephan Sagmeister, Sirikit Amann, Norman Filz, Günther Hupfer and etoy.taki (U-19).

In their commitment to the Prix Ars Electronica, they all have one perspective in common: digitization impacts all phases of life at the turn-of-the-millennium, and that means radical changes for individuals as well as complex economic, financial, and political systems. An essentially industrially-oriented and commercially-oriented process of development is being countered by the positions of a new generation of artists, scientists, and researchers throughout the world. They are the creators of new interfaces, the wizards of the net, the designers of new graphic and tonal worlds — the cypherpunks, the critical potential of our times and thus the avant-garde of the communications of tomorrow.

Prix Ars Electronica — Cyberarts 98

.NET

Golden Nica

Knowbotic Research — IO_dencies. questioning urbanity, Tokyo 1997

Distinctions

E-Lab — Xchange

Kazuhiko Hachiya — PostPet

Honorary Mentions

Bruce Damer & Collaborators — Nerve Garden & other biological Worlds of Biota.org

Andy Deck — Space Invaders Act 1732

Paul Garrin/Andreas Troeger — name.space

I/O/D — Web Stalker

Koji Ito — NetRezonator

Thomax Kaulmann — Radio Internationale Stadt

Susan Meiselas/Alison Cornyn/Sue Johnson — akaKurdistan

Moove/Lothar Bongartz/Burak Kozan — Roomancer

James Stevens — Backspace

Andreas Trottmann — The Color of Email

Wendy Vissar — Lekso's Codebox

Michael G. Wagner/Shane Carroll — NetEscape

INTERACTIVE ART

Golden Nica

Maurice Benayoun/J.—B. Barrière — World Skin

Distinctions

Peter Broadwell/Rob Myers — Plasm: not a crime

Christian Möller — Audio Grove

Honorary Mentions

Jim Campbell — Simultaneous Perspective

Christoph Ebener/Uli Winters — Byte

Rafael Lozano—Hemmer/Will Bauer — Re:Positioning Fear

Akitsugu Maebayashi — Audible Distance

Joseph Michael — Holodeck

Iain Mott/Marc Raszewski/Jim Sosnin — Sound Mapping

Lisa Prah — Bernadette

David Small/Tom White — An Interactive Poetic Garden

Scott Sona Snibbe — Boundary Functions

Rachel Strickland — Portable Effects

Tamás Waliczky — Focus

Stephen Wilson — CrimeZyland

COMPUTER ANIMATION/VISUAL EFFECTS

Golden Nicas

Robert Legato/Digital Domain — Titanic

Liang—Yuan Wang — The Sitter

Distinctions

Christophe Hery/Habib Zargarpour/ILM — Spawn

Rob Coleman/ILM — Men in Black

Tamás Waliczky — Landscape

Kazumo Morino — Runners

Honorary Mentions

Joey Lessard — Sweet Extreme

Thierry Prieur/Pascal Roulin — Gallop Racer II

Nobuo Takahashi — Ellipsoid

Yan Breuleux/Alain Thibault — A—Light

Laurence Leydier — Trade Secrets from the Violin Masters

Steven Stahlberg — Virtual Actress Move Test

Nobuto Ochiai — Zaijian

Constantin Chamski — Migrations

Julien Dajez — U—Man

Stefan Smith/Windmill Lane Productions — Rococo #506

Violet Suk/Martin Koch — Replica

Yves le Peillet — Le ressac

Nelson Max — Homage to Hilbert

Diana Walczak/Jeff Kleiser/Kleiser—Walczak Construction Comp. — Monsters of Grace

Sébastien Larrue — La Tour de Vésone

Mark Stetson/Digital Domain — The Fifth Element

Jan Pinkava/Pixar — Geri's Game

Kaori Saito/Links Corp. — Pinka

Tom Bertino/ILM — Flubber

Charles Gibson — MouseHunt

Dennis Muren/ILM — The Lost World: Jurassic Park

Phil Tippett/Craig Hayes/Tippet Studios — Starship Troopers

Movida/Ben Stassen — Virtual Museum of History

Wayne Gilbert — CPU

Computer Music

Golden Nica

Peter Bosch/Simone Simons — Krachtgever

Distinctions

Aquiles Pantaleão — Three Inconspicuous Settings

Hans Tutschku — extrémités lointaines

Honorary Mentions

Natasha Barrett — Little Animals

Bret Battey— On the Presence of Water

David Behrman — QS/RL — Penlight

Luigi Ceccarelli — De zarb à daf

Ambrose Field — Empty Spaces

Joshua Fineberg — Empreintes

Joseph Hyde — Zoetrope

Gordon Monahan — Flex Machine/Excerpt from Machine Matrix

Adrian J. Moore — Foil/Counterfoil

Maggi Payne — Apparent Horizon

Jøran Rudi — Concrete Net

Hildegard Westerkamp — Gently Penetrating ...

G.H. Hovagimyan/Peter Sinclair — A Soa(pOp)era for Laptops

u19/Cybergeneration

Golden Nica

Die anonymen Titaniker — Titanic — der Film

Distinctions

Leonhard Huber — Midi—Paint

Stephan Mitterndorfer — Referate-Fundus

Honorary Mentions

Martin Ankerl — New Mouse

Futureware 2001 — Würstelstand

Gottfried Haider — Der Traum des

Computers

Verena Holzknecht — Blauer Nachthimmel

Informatikgruppe der Hauptschule Mittersill — 100 Jahre Pinzgaubahn

Helmut Klinger — Legodogs

Alexander Kvasnicka — Evolution

Doris Mätzler/Jürgen Bereuter — Lost Poem

Kathrin Meralla/Paul Swoboboda — 38911 Basic Bytes Free

Thomas Oberhofer — Life in the 90ies

Paul Pak — Der virtuelle Blindenstock

Thomas Pintaric/Christoph Sprenger/Alexander Koschier — Nightmare on Rainberg

Peter Plessas — Well

Markus Strahlhofer — Generation 1.x

3A-Klasse, Volksschule Vereinsgasse, Wien — 3A im Internet

Selected works of the Prix Ars Electronica are being presented in the Cyberarts 98 exhibition at the O.K Centrum für Gegenwartskunst. You will find a detailed description of the projects in the Prix Ars Electronica book

Cyberarts 98
International Compendium
Prix Ars Electronica

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