

Interfacelifting

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Considering the infrastructure it houses, the Ars Electronica Center—Museum of the Future is actually a machine, one that is programmable and dynamic, a freely configurable “hall of mirrors” in the sense that the technological creativity of the present reflects the future. That is this facility’s essential metaphor, imagery that corresponds to its programmatically derived inner workings. What is being programmed is neither the art nor the future but rather the reflection, and this is the basis of the facility’s inherent creativity—technological creativity as the interface between today and tomorrow. “Face the future!” When, however, media—via art—definitively evoke a facility, then *pro domo* to the extent that they produce its manifestation and function as a derivative of its organizing principles. The facility’s exterior shell—beyond architectural-poetic practice whereby windows have already been designated as elements of transparency between interior and exterior domains—actually would assume the function of an interface. Dynamism, its most fundamental characteristic, represents what has been, in the case of the Ars Electronica Center, merely the entree.

After all, externally, the edifice—as the result of a process of rethinking/redefinition during the course of its construction—was just a building, which is to say a structure without correspondence to the facility’s technical, aesthetic and educational—in short: dynamic—organization. The Center has signaled its singular status within the cityscape of Linz above all with the large-format graphics—embodying the slogan “Face the Future,” changing each year with the respective Festival theme—that have adorned the building’s façade overlooking the city’s Main Square and most important bridge. The external shell, on the other hand, remained static, and would have continued to do so—theoretically—even if the graphics had changed more frequently, and even if the speed of the succession of images had increased to that of an animated film.

Thus, a sort of interfacelifting was undertaken with the installation of the media façade. The media façade is a projection screen encompassing three of the building’s exterior walls. In line with its function as an interface, it is a freely programmable surface with the capability of visualizing “transparency between interior and exterior domains”—which it to say manipulation in a way that depends on content.

The images are to be projected during the evening hours until midnight by three synchronized projectors positioned on the east, south and west sides of the building. The columns and projector housings were designed by Scott Ritter.

The media façade will kick off by presenting a variation on Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman’s installation entitled *Hidden Worlds of Noise and Voice*. Indoors, it generates graphic objects out of voices; outdoors, the immediate surroundings of the Museum have been miked to pick up the *Noise and Voice* emanating from passers-by and the urban soundscape. Also linked sensorially to the environment in which it is set, this installation is not an application in the sense of a secondary accessory but rather an essential enhancement. With it, the Ars Electronica Center, as an architectural component of an urban public space and as part of its institutional mission, publicizes the “space” in which its relation to the city is played out.