

Hertzblut—Pixelspaces 2005

“Mere computation brings forth neither lust nor pain, neither poetry and beauty nor the magic of sounds and hopes, love and doubt.”

Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind*, 1991

As this year's installment of the annual Pixelspaces conference series, *Hertzblut* carries on the tradition of spotlighting motifs that presently occupy the focal point of attention in a number of disciplines across the technological spectrum. This approach is designed to enable participants to come to terms with issues of great current relevance through a discourse in which many different voices and a wide variety of perspectives are represented. *Hertzblut* is the title of Pixelspaces 2005. This symposium will scrutinize the compatibility of emotions and computer technology, and analyze the emotional rush that is the upshot of man-machine interaction.

The confrontation with this overall issue will take place via encounter with two focal-point topics: on one hand, to what extent are machines in a position to understand and depict emotions or to process forms of human emotion; on the other hand, to what extent can machines develop their own forms of emotional intelligence and involve the user in a digitally produced emotional process? This will entail addressing questions that arise in the zone of impact in which the possibilities of computer technology meet cultural and psychological patterns, and will be based on presentations of state-of-the-art approaches to research and current media art projects being pursued by staff members of leading R&D facilities and media labs around the world.

Previous symposia have thematized the relations between computer technology and art, architecture and the human body. *Hertzblut* will expand the dimensions of this encounter once again and encompass areas of activity that, in a process of transdisciplinary exchange, can be activated as a source of impetus for new ways of going about practical work with digital media.

Here, the latest insights from the fields of neurobiology and research into human emotions will meet up with findings yielded by experience with project-based applications. By bringing together expert knowledge, practical skills and experimental results, *Pixelspaces 2005*



represents an endeavor to approach the essence of what the digital projection of emotions seeks to accomplish. Thus, in addition to going into established dramaturgical systems for communicating emotions in medial contexts, the symposium's proceedings will elaborate on new scientific approaches to portraying emotional perceptions and forms of behavior. Above all, the new dramaturgical structures of interactive systems and non-linear visualizations call for innovative methods of bringing across emotional content. How can emotional processes be consciously deployed and communicated to viewers? What artistic tools and instruments of media technology are available to stimulate emotional receptors? These tasks have to be mastered in a way that is compatible with the overall aim of activating the intended process of identification between the individual viewer and that which is produced by computer. Are there universally applicable methods or formulas to accomplish this? If so, could there possibly be new formats for the *mise en scène* of media art experiences that can be derived from them? Accordingly, could there be an additional orientation applicable to artistic work with media technology: emotional impact as criterion of quality? Aspects of techno-biological interface design are being subjected to a new way of looking at things, whereby investigating the qualities of human-computer interfaces and concepts of interaction among technical objects and organic bodies also means dealing with multimodal processes of exchange among medium, human body and environment. When the perception of body and environment increasingly crystallizes in mediatized domains and medial interfaces, then medial apparatuses can hardly be conceptualized any longer as objects in a purely technical context. When the approaches of media theory develop further in the direction of no longer considering medial objects as machinery of estrangement that establishes a competitive relationship between mankind and artificial intelligence, then a possible alternative would be to accept them as productive processes for the creation of novel worlds.

Hertzblut seeks the crux of this matter in the relation between rational processes and the persistent mystery of emotion.

After all, aren't emotions precisely what play an essential function in producing perceptions of the world? Consequently, feelings definitely have to be taken into account to produce an optimal fit of media's structure, design and content to make for a successful link up with real-world patterns of thought and behavior.

