



THE BIG PICTURE

New Concepts for a New World

Ars Electronica 2012

Festival for Art, Technology and Society

Linz, Thursday, August 30 to Monday, September 3, 2012

(Linz, March 30, 2012) THE BIG PICTURE is the theme of the 2012 Ars Electronica Festival being held in Linz, Austria from August 30 to September 3. Occupying the focal point is the effort to identify all-encompassing images that capture the world that's coming to be, Big Pictures that do justice to the progressive globalization and interrelatedness of our world, ones that capture its contradictions and flaws as well as ways in which people are coming together. By showcasing inspiring best-practice examples from art and science, this year's festival is a call for a new, open-minded way of considering the development of a viable vision of our future—how such a Big Picture ought to be composed and how it might become reality.

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
www.aec.at/press



On the Threshold of a New Epoch?

Amidst the turbulence of humankind's present crises, it's clear that the world of our future will be different. Politically, since the West will no longer be able to afford its leadership role and new powers such as China and India are just getting started playing their parts on the global political stage. Economically, because the financial sector as the engine of growth has run out of gas, and petroleum-based industry as a whole is motoring towards history's junk heap. And not least of all ecologically, since global warming is accelerating and its effects on our planet's ecosystem are becoming more massive by the day. Even if we already know all of this and we're aware that we have to make the necessary changes, we persist in our indecisive hesitation, indulging in the fantasy that everything is going to be OK—whereby OK means: the way it used to be. The fact that this is precisely what is not going to happen is something only a few of us are willing to admit. But by persisting on our well-trodden paths, we ignore precisely those great opportunities that naturally arise in times rocked by crises.

Where Might These Big Pictures of the Future Emerge? Envisioned by Whom?

Accordingly, the aim of serious approaches to solutions cannot be to restore the status quo; instead, they have to pursue a global vision of our future. But where can this be headed? And who can specify the direction and the speed of our journey? It's obvious that there no longer exists a center of power that can tell the rest of the world what it has to do. Rather, the work of our future is going on at multiple locations and being done by diverse protagonists. And each one of them reserves the right to establish his/her own priorities. Nevertheless, the quality of their collaboration with all the others will be decisive for the success or failure of their undertakings because we all need each other in this globalized, networked world of ours and it's no longer possible to proceed in complete isolation. At the same time, the way we think about the world and our place in it will be determined less and less by politics or religions and increasingly by findings in (natural) science. And because we feel, sense or know that everything around us is getting more and more complicated, what we're seeing as a result is a renaissance of the scientific expert—one that's no longer either an overspecialized nerd or a universal genius but more of a team player.

Imaging Procedures Deliver the Icons of our Age ...

Key importance in this process is assumed by new image-generating processes, which are in many instance all that we have available to impressively depict scientific insights and to generate, among other things, true icons. Like the first satellite picture of our Blue Planet that displayed such extraordinary power in demonstrating the fact that we're all in the same boat. Or animated images of the human brain and its gigantic network of synapses, and visualizations of our DNA and thus of the building blocks of life itself.

... and Social Networks Disseminate them Globally

Much of the propagation of sensational news items and images no longer proceeds through conventional media but rather above all via social networks in which they can instantaneously reach hundreds of millions of people, transcending linguistic, cultural and religious barriers to trigger various sorts of delight or horror. This unprecedented circulation of information, in turn, does its part to further undermine traditional power structures and the authority of previously accepted opinion leaders and to nurture the formation of totally new communities and hierarchies.

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
www.aec.at/press



Best Practice from Art and Science

Nevertheless, all of these sensations propagated via the internet do not coalesce to form a new picture of the world. They're all just parts of a big jigsaw puzzle that attest to the fragmentation, multifaceted nature and complexity of our reality. In order to assemble them into one big whole, the first thing we have to do is get an overview. But a precondition for this is a broader, more open-minded perspective like the one that has been successfully applied only in science and art up to now. Such a point of view would enable us to peer beyond the boundaries of our individual cultures, ideologies, specialized disciplines and habitual ways of doing things, and behold the gigantic patchwork of our globalized world. And this is precisely where the 2012 Ars Electronica Festival comes in—bringing together models that can serve as paragons and best-practice examples from science and art whose interdisciplinary approaches preordain them to provide suitable role models. This, in turn, is meant as the point of departure of a discussion of how a Big Picture of our times ought to be composed and what strategies are conducive to being able to see and take it.

Seed Will Be a Featured Guest at the 2012 Festival

The New York based Seed is a partner for this year's Festival. Seed comes with an international acknowledged expertise with regards to design and technology for the visualisation and transfer of scientific thinking and data. In the course of the Ars Electronica Festival, Seed participates in a symposium, an exhibition and workshops.

UdK–Berlin University of the Arts to Curate Campus

Students enrolled in the prestigious UdK–Berlin University of the Arts' Sound Studies master's program will produce the Campus at Ars Electronica 2012. These young scholars deal with cultural, communicational, ethnographic, historical and anthropological aspects of sound and hearing. Festivalgoers will be able to see and, above all, hear their work on the premises of the Art University, in the space on Hauptplatz that used to house the Linz 2009 Infopoint and in public spaces.

WikiSym 2012 in Linz

WikiSym is an annual symposium on the subject of wikis and open collaboration. First held in 2005 in San Diego, Canada, the conference site has alternated between Europe and America ever since. It's being held in Linz this year, organized by Open Commons Region Linz and Ars Electronica.

u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD

Launched in 2011 as a test balloon, u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD quickly established itself as Ars Electronica's prime omnibus initiative expressly for kids and young people. The first phase was a "festival within the Festival"; u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD has since grown to also encompass a separate Prix Ars Electronica competition category, an educational program for various types of schools and different grade levels, as well as an assortment of workshops offered throughout the year at the Ars Electronica Center.

The Next Generation's Big Pictures

During the festival, u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD will, of course, also be looking at "big pictures" and asking youngsters how they envision the world of tomorrow. Symposia, exhibitions and workshops will give young

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
www.aec.at/press



people opportunities to present their conceptions, engage in a process of mutual exchange, and do networking. This is meant to be another fun and effective way to implement the core concept of u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD—for the adults of tomorrow to actively, self-confidently have a say in configuring the world of tomorrow. This year's project associates include two Austrian federal ministries (education & art; commerce, family & youth), the regional child welfare organization, adult education institution, agency for the integration of immigrants, chamber of commerce and Red Cross, Linz Art University and the apprentice initiative. International network partners include mb21 (Switzerland), Migros (Hungary), the c3<19 young people's competition (Bulgaria) and computerspace.org.

CREATE YOUR REGION – The Future is Emerging Regionally

Also making its debut is u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD's first full-year initiative: CREATE YOUR REGION Ars Electronica, the OTELO open technology labs and the Province of Upper Austria's six Leader regions are making things happen at precisely that point that's usually the end of the line for young people—namely, where it comes to actually implementing their ideas. In this spirit, CREATE YOUR REGION offers kids not only support in developing ideas but also a framework conducive to bringing them to fruition. The mission of this pilot project set to run for three years is to launch creative circulation among the regions, the City of Linz and the big, wide world beyond. The annual Ars Electronica Festival will serve as the initiative's hub and high-profile showcase. The regional headquarters are the individual OTELOs and similar facilities. The members of the CREATE YOUR REGION network are Ars Electronica, the six Leader regions (Traunstein, Vöckla-Ager, Nationalpark Region OÖ. Kalkalpen, Traunviertler Alpenvorland, Linz-Land, Mühlviertler Kernland) and the OTELO open technology labs.

Summer Camp at Ars Electronica

In cooperation with the Kinderfreunde child welfare organization, Ars Electronica is premiering a summer camp this year. From Sunday, August 26 to Sunday, September 2, kids age 9-13 can attend the Festival Camp and partake of all u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD activities. Accommodations will be at Linz's Froschberg youth hostel.

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
www.aec.at/press



About the Ars Electronica Festival

Consistent interdisciplinarity and open encounters involving international experts and highly diverse audiences define the essence of the Ars Electronica Festival. Since 1979, this world-renowned annual event has been dedicated to staging intense confrontations with social and cultural phenomena that are the upshots of scientific and technological progress. Symposia, exhibitions, performances, concerts and interventions take these encounters out beyond the confines of classic conference spaces and cultural venues and get them out into the public sphere where they belong.

About u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD

The mission of u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD is to encourage young people to develop their ideas and visions, to go public with them and put them to the test. The formats designed to make this happen include an annual nationwide idea competition, a festival for kids and young people also staged annually, a lineup of guided tours and workshops offered throughout the year, as well as individual programs custom tailored to various types of schools and different grade levels. u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD is an ongoing experiment being carried out jointly by youngsters and an array of associates in art & culture, education & science, politics and commerce, who are collaboratively developing and producing all activities running in conjunction with u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD.

Artistic Directors

Christine Schöpf (AT)

Since 1979, Christine Schöpf has been a driving force behind Ars Electronica's development. Between 1987 and 2003, she played a key role in conceiving and organizing the Prix Ars Electronica. Since 1996, she and Gerfried Stocker have shared responsibility for the artistic direction of the Ars Electronica Festival. Christine Schöpf studied German & Romance languages and literature and then worked as a radio & TV journalist. From 1981 to 2008, she was in charge of cultural and scientific reporting at the ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio. In 2009, Linz Art University bestowed the title of honorary professor on Christine Schöpf.

Gerfried Stocker (AT)

Gerfried Stocker is a media artist and telecommunications engineer. In 1991, he founded x-space, a team formed to carry out interdisciplinary projects, which went on to produce numerous installations and performances featuring elements of interaction, robotics and telecommunications. Since 1995, Gerfried Stocker has been artistic director of Ars Electronica. In 1995-96, he headed the crew of artists and technicians that developed the Ars Electronica Center's pioneering new exhibition strategies and set up the facility's in-house R&D department, the Ars Electronica Futurelab. He has been chiefly responsible for conceiving and implementing the series of international exhibitions that Ars Electronica has staged since 2004, and, beginning in 2005, for the planning and thematic repositioning of the new, expanded Ars Electronica Center.

Ars Electronica Festival 2012: www.aec.at/thebigpicture

u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD: www.u19.at

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
www.aec.at/press