

Ars Electronica Festival 2013

# TOTAL RECALL

## The Evolution of Memory

Linz, September, 5 – 9

(Vienna/ Linz, August 28, 2013) This year's Ars Electronica Festival is set for September 5-9 in Linz. The title is TOTAL RECALL – The Evolution of Memory. The festival program will consist, as always, of a splendid array of symposia, exhibitions, performances, interventions and concerts; the details will be announced online at [www.aec.at/totalrecall/en](http://www.aec.at/totalrecall/en) over the coming weeks. We will also be publishing in-depth information about participating artists and scientists, and interviews with them at [www.aec.at/aeblog/en](http://www.aec.at/aeblog/en).

### TOTAL RECALL – The Evolution of Memory

This year's Ars Electronica will bring together neuroscientists and computer engineers, artists and philosophers for an in-depth consideration of TOTAL RECALL and an endeavor to elaborate on how we human beings deal with storing our memories, preserving them, and also, at times, trying to forget. In going about this, the focus will be on three key aspects: (neuro) scientific findings and insights about what memory actually is and what meaning it possesses for our consciousness and our identity; the various cultures of remembrance and the diverse storage media used in the past and the present; and future forms and methods of conserving memory.

### About the Ars Electronica Festival

Since 1979, the Ars Electronica Festival has been coming to grips with reciprocities at the interface of art, technology and society. Symposia, exhibitions, performances, interventions and concerts variously elaborate on a specific theme chosen each year on the basis of its importance and timeliness. Another signature element of this conclave is the consistent effort to put on events in extraordinary, unconventional settings. Linz's Danube harbor infrastructure, tunnels cut into the city's rocky hills, monasteries and cathedrals, factories and mills, and a downtown parking deck are a few of the venues at which Ars Electronica has staged its annual discourse amidst the public sphere. The jam-packed festival line-up features hundreds of artists, scientists and hightech insiders from all over the world. It's produced by Ars Electronica, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the City of Linz, and co-produced by the ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio, the Brucknerhaus concert hall and the OK Center for Contemporary Art.

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Ars Electronica Festival 2013: <http://www.aec.at/totalrecall/en/>

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## The 2013 Festival Highlights

### WIR SIND HIER – The Opening Event

Thursday, September 5 / 8:30 PM / Tabakfabrik Linz (Courtyard)

WIR SIND HIER [WE ARE HERE] opens this year's festival with a bang! This actionist live performance in the Tabakfabrik's courtyard takes the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first book burnings in Nazi Germany as an occasion to increase awareness about recent developments in surveillance and censorship. The crossmedia art project launched by *Salvatore Vanasco* and supported by several prominent artists already got underway in mid-July. Ever since, the project website [www.wir-sind-hier.org](http://www.wir-sind-hier.org) has been publishing submitted texts, photos and films as well as updates about ongoing actions. The mission: expressing opinions, taking a stand, giving advice, developing ideas, lodging demands and amassing knowledge. The guiding principle: have your say and listen up when others respond. WIR SIND HIER is designed for people who oppose the government's data retention efforts, PRISM and the many other forms of digital surveillance and censorship, and for people who refuse to yield to the sense of hopelessness and the indifference that come with this territory. And all of it in total awareness that this endeavor is no doubt ultimately futile, and the project will fail in the end. What nevertheless remains is the hope that all over the world, over and over again, people are standing up, demonstrating solidarity and proclaiming loud and clear: WE ARE HERE!

### TOTAL RECALL Symposium

Friday, September 6 / 10 AM-1:30 PM, 2:30-6 PM / Brucknerhaus (Mittlerer Saal)

Sunday, September 8 / 2:30-5 PM / Brucknerhaus (Mittlerer Saal)

The centerpiece of this year's Ars Electronica conference program is the TOTAL RECALL theme symposium. The three sessions will be held on Friday, September 6th and Sunday, September 8th in the Brucknerhaus. On Friday, the focus will first be on human recollection and on nature's capacity to remember. Attendees will then consider the future of memory. Atop Sunday's agenda is cultural & technological history.

#### Session 1 / Friday morning

Following opening remarks by *Gerfried Stocker* (artistic director of Ars Electronica), psychologist and neuroscientist *John-Dylan Haynes* (Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience at Charité Berlin) will provide an introduction to the latest research on cognition and the brain. He'll screen selected scenes from some classic science-fiction films—including "Total Recall" with Arnold Schwarzenegger, of course—to portray the current state of research in neuroscience and future prospects in this field. *Aleida Assmann* (University of Konstanz), a scholar in the fields of literary studies and English, will deal with forms of forgetting. Her point of departure is the tense interrelationship between the selective character of memories and the omnipresence of the past, which, thanks to new media and virtually unlimited data storage capabilities, can be accessed anytime, anywhere. Mapping

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the network of nerves in the human brain will be the subject of a speech by neuroscientist *Alfred Anwander (Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences)*. He'll report on diffusion tensor imaging and connectome research, methods scientists are now using to better understand human memory. Neuroscientist *Arno Villringer (Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences)* will then discuss the loss of memory and go into dementia from neurological and clinical perspectives. His elaborations will lead into remarks by *Helga Rohra*, a woman suffering from Lewy Body Dementia. She'll give an account of daily life with this condition.

### Session 2 / Friday afternoon

To kick off the second session, molecular biologist *Barbara Hohn (Friedrich Miescher Institute)* will elaborate on how plants pass on what they remember despite their lack of neuronal memory via genetic and epigenetic mechanisms. Then, mathematician and zoologist *Nick Goldman (European Bioinformatics Institute)* will report on the first successful attempt to convert an MP3 file into DNA sequences, store them to memory, and send them in this form to a recipient able, in turn, to decode this material and play it back without error. From this point of departure, Nick Goldman will consider the future of data storage and, together with artist and filmmaker *Charlotte Jarvis*, present an artistic-scientific joint research project in which a specially composed piece of music in the form of DNA sequences has been stored to memory. It will be impossible to be played back until the decoding procedure necessary to do so is available to the general public. The future of memory will also be the subject of the next speeches. In a live remote broadcast, computer scientist *Dharmendra S Modha (IBM Cognitive Computing Center)* will talk about the challenges that have to be overcome in order to depict human memory on the computer. A rather more skeptical view of this mammoth undertaking will then be taken by *Hans-Ulrich Dodt (Vienna University of Technology)*, an expert in medicine, physics and bio-electronics. To conclude this session, physicist and mathematician *Rodrigo Quijano Quiroga (head of the University of Leicester's NeuroEngineering Lab)* will talk about his research on so-called concept cells, which the media often refers to as Jennifer Aniston neurons.

### Session 3 / Sunday afternoon

The third session of this year's symposium is set for Sunday afternoon. The focal-point theme: cultural & technological history. *Claudia Schmölders (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)*, a philosopher and scholar of German language & literature, will report on the almost total absence of female voices in archived sound recordings. Then, media philosopher *Frank Hartmann (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)* will take us back to the early history of Information Society—to Paul Otlet and his ground-breaking prototype of a universal library that's often called the first forerunner of the internet. *Michael Buckland (UC Berkeley, professor emeritus)*, a historian and scholar in the field of library science, will introduce another pioneer of modern information processing, Emanuel Goldberg. Catapulting us back into the present will be *Hiroshi Ishiguro (Osaka University)*, the star of Japanese robotics research. He'll discuss the androids he aims to use to preserve the memory of outstanding individuals.

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## HR Giger and the Art of Biomechanics

The Art of Biomechanics: Thursday, September 5 / 10 AM-9 PM, Friday, September 6 to Monday, September 9 / 10 AM-7 PM / LENTOS Art Museum

Giger's World: Friday, September 6 / 10 PM / Ars Electronica Center (Deep Space)

*HR Giger* is the featured artist at Ars Electronica 2013. The creator of the Oscar-winning Alien figure in the landmark sci-fi film of the same name was one of the first to integrate biomechanics into his artistic work, and is one of the pioneers of fantastic art. Even now, his art draws inspiration from his childhood fears and obsessions, including global atomic war and being victimized by technological progress. He also incessantly deals with the cycle of birth, eros and death, which he endeavors to manifest artistically in the form of disturbing "biomechanoids," the cyborgs that are typical of his work. During the Ars Electronica festival, some of the artist's world-famous but never-before-exhibited works will be on display in the LENTOS Art Museum. *HR Giger – The Art of Biomechanics* will trace the development of *Giger's* inimitable style. The point of departure is the Necronom cycle of the 1970s; the latest chapter is Ridley Scott's 2012 film "Prometheus." The legendary "Alien Diaries" by *HR Giger* will debut in book form. *Giger's World* is the title of a series of high-definition gigapixel images the artist will screen in Deep Space at the Ars Electronica Center.

## CyberArts 2013

Thursday, September 5 to Sunday, September 15 / 10 AM-9 PM / OK Center for Contemporary Art

This year's CyberArts exhibition at the OK Center for Contemporary Art presents 15 prizewinning initiatives and projects from four Prix Ars Electronica categories—*Digital Communities*, *Hybrid Art*, *Interactive Art* and *Digital Musics & Sound Art*. Initiatives from the Digital Communities category are *El Campo de Cebada (ES)*, *Refugees United (DK)* and *Visualizing Palestine (PS)*. There are five works from the Hybrid Art category: *The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project* by *Koen Vanmechelen (BE)*, *Five Variations of Phonic Circumstances and a Pause* by *Tania Candiani (MX)*, *Mycotecture* by *Phil Ross (US)*, *The Blind Robot* by *Louis-Philippe Demers (CA/SG)* and *Pancreas* by *Thomas Feuerstein (AT)*. *Pendulum Choir* by *Michel Décosterd (CH)* and *André Décosterd (CH)*, *Rain Room* by *rAndom International (UK)*, *AHORA. A song in the Hypertemporal Surface* by *Hernán Kerlleñevich (AR)* and *Mene Savasta Alsina (AR)*, *Angles Mirror* by *Daniel Rozin (US)*, *Down with Wrestlers with Systems and Mental Nonadapters!* by *Kawarga Dmitry & Elena (RU)*, *Ishin-Den-Shin* by *Olivier Bau (FR)*, *Yuri Suzuki (JP)* and *Ivan Poupyrev (RU)* are the six works from the Interactive Art category. The Digital Musics & Sound Art category is represented by *frequencies (a)* by *Nicolas Bernier (CA)*, *SjQ++* by the Japanese artists' collective of the same name, and *Borderlands Granular* by *Chris Carlson (US)*. The show was curated by Genoveva Rückert and is running until September 15, 2013.

## IL(L) Machine – Ars Campus Israel

Thursday, September 5 to Monday, September 9 / 10 AM-7 PM / Linz Art University (Brückenkopfgebäude West)

A Campus exhibition highlights the Ars Electronica Festival program once again this year. The innovative tweak for 2013: the spotlight won't be on a single college but rather on the art school network of a whole country. "IL(L) Machine – Ars Campus Israel" presents works by 67

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undergrads at Israel's 10 leading academic institutions including schools in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Ramat Gan. The exhibition's theme is technology and how it increasingly pervades everyday life. The point of departure of these artistic reflections is the fact that new technologies have long since become mediators between us and our surroundings. We use technologies to communicate with the world and to experience it; they are omnipresent and indispensable. At the same time, though, we're increasingly troubled by the actual or purported impact this incessant use of technology is having on our emotional makeup, our interpersonal relations, and the construction of our identities. The show is initiated and directed by Lila Chitayat and curated by Yael Eylat Van-Essen.

## TOTAL RECALL Exhibition: The Memory we always wanted or the Memory we never asked for?

Thursday, Sunday & Monday, September 5, 8 & 9 / 10 AM-7 PM; Friday, September 6 / 10 AM-5:30 PM; Saturday, September 7 / 10 AM-5 PM / Brucknerhaus (Lobby)

*The Memory we always wanted or the Memory we never asked for?* is the title of this year's festival theme exhibition. Its thematic setup is oriented on the tripartite structure of the symposium: mapping the human brain, DNA as nature's memory, and the history of data storage devices & media. It's also a concerted endeavor to deal with the dilemma of an Information Society torn between manic efforts to memorize everything and the fear of digital memory that never forgets. And selected examples show how media artists and internet activists are dealing with so-called Big Bad Companies.

## Project Genesis – Life from the Lab

Thursday to Monday, September 5-9 / 10 AM-9 PM / Ars Electronica Center (Levels 1 & 2)  
Friday, September 6 / 9 AM-12 Midnight / Ars Electronica Center (Levels 1 & 2)

This Ars Electronica Center's exhibition on synthetic biology opened in early August. It goes into the current state of scientific research in this field and features artistic takes on it. There are four thematic clusters: Biomedica, Synthetic Hybrids, Genetic Ethos and Citizen Science. The 18 works are by artists from Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Spain and Switzerland.

## The Big Concertnight

SO 8.9. / 7 PM-12 Midnight / LENTOS Art Museum (Freiraum, Auditorium), Donaupark, Brucknerhaus (Großer Saal, Foyer)

Orchestral music and digital sounds, live electronics and visualizations are the key elements that go into the Big Concert Night that Ars Electronica, the Brucknerhaus Linz and the Bruckner Orchester have been staging annually since 2002. The prime attributes of this extraordinary get-together are juxtapositions of music from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as well as encounters of acoustic instruments and digital media. It's also become a tradition to invite artists to contribute live visualizations of the musical works being performed. This year's Big Concert Night is set for Sunday, September 8 at 7 PM. The overture this time around is *Acoustic Time Travel* by *Bill Fontana (US)*, the latest Prix Ars Electronica Collide@CERN honoree. He's followed by the duo of *Carl Stone (US)* and *Gil Kuno (JP)*

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performing *Radiologic*. Music performed during the next break is by *MFRedman Collective*. Then it's on to the Brucknerhaus for a screening of *Welcome Transients*, a show by *Ernie Kovacs (US)*, and the *Bruckner Orchester Linz* conducted by *Dennis Russell Davies (US/AT)* performing the *10<sup>th</sup> Symphony* by *Philip Glass (US)*, *Requies* by *Luciano Berio (IT)* and, with vibraphone soloist *David Friedman (US)*, *Leah Muir's (US) By the Reflecting Pool*. The visualizations are the work of *Aristides Garcia (ES)* and *Andreas Koller (AT/UK)*. During an intermission, *TOTAL RECALL* Exhibition Performances will star *Yuri Suzuki (JP)*, *Keith Lam (HK)* and *Michelle Ngai (TW)* displaying their musical gifts in their installations *The Sound of the Earth* and *Device Playing: Cassette Recorder (II)*. Making its Austrian debut is the audiovisual production *Ye Shanghai* by *Roberto Paci Dalò (IT)* about the Jewish ghetto in Shanghai during and after World War II. The lineup for the electronic finale features *re-lay (Tobias Ehrhardt, AT)* & *19 hertz (Emanuel Jauk, AT)* with *cut.repeat* as well as *Daito Manabe* and *Satoru Higa (both JP)*.

## Dennis Russell Davies (US/AT) and Maki Namekawa (JP/AT): The Memory of Le Sacre du Printemps

Friday, Sunday & Monday, September 6, 8 & 9 / 4:30 PM / Ars Electronica Center (Deep Space)

To mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the premiere of *Igor Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps* [The Rite of Spring], *Dennis Russell Davies* and *Maki Namekawa* are performing this celebrated piece. Its extraordinary rhythmic and tonal structures are why it's now considered one of the milestones of 20<sup>th</sup>-century music, and they're precisely what incurred the wrath and derision of music lovers a century ago. The debut performance on May 29, 1913 at Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées was greeted by laughter and whistling. In the Ars Electronica Center's Deep Space, *Dennis Russell Davies* and *Maki Namekawa* will play the version for four hands on the piano that brings out the work's rhythmic fury much more strikingly than the orchestral version. The manual acrobatics required to pull off this feat is a dramatic spectacle in its own right and, accordingly, the leitmotif of the real-time visualization of the concert.

## voest Alpine Klangwolke: Bruckner Lives!

Saturday, September 7 / 8:00 PM / Donaupark

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vibraphone soloist *David Friedman (US)*, *Leah Muir's (US) By the Reflecting Pool*. The visualizations are the work of *Aristides García (ES)* and *Andreas Koller (AT/UK)*. During an intermission, TOTAL RECALL Exhibition Performances will star *Yuri Suzuki (JP)*, *Keith Lam (HK)* and *Michelle Ngai (TW)* displaying their musical gifts in their installations *The Sound of the Earth* and *Device Playing: Cassette Recorder (II)*. Making its Austrian debut is the audiovisual production *Ye Shanghai* by *Roberto Paci Dalò (IT)* about the Jewish ghetto in Shanghai during and after World War II. The lineup for the electronic finale features *re-lay (Tobias Ehrhardt, AT)* & *19 hertz (Emanuel Jauk, AT)* with *cut.repeat* as well as *Daito Manabe* and *Satoru Higa (both JP)*.

## Wolfgang Dorninger's Aural Memory Machine in Linz's Cathedral

Saturday, September 7 / 12 Noon-5 PM, 8 PM-12 Midnight / St. Mary's Cathedral

For two years now, the festival has been making guest appearances for an evening—sometimes quite a long one—in Linz's cathedral. Its architecture and acoustics constitute a setting that is as unique as it is challenging for artists who work with sound. Following *Sam Auinger (2011)* and *Rupert Huber (2012)*, *Wolfgang Dorninger* will make the space resound this year. His *Aural Memory Machine* is an eight-channel sound installation designed for input by festivalgoers present in the cathedral. Neither musical training nor technical skills are necessary; all you have to do is sit down at one of eight MIDI keyboards on site and enter any text you want, which special software converts into sounds (actually previously captured field recordings). The grand finale will be an evening concert in which *Wolfgang Dorninger*, *Petra Anlanger*, *Richard Eigner*, *Georg Edlinger*, *Volker Kagerer* and cathedral organist *Wolfgang Kreuzhuber* use the same instrument to play a preselected repertoire: texts from this year's Ars Electronica catalog.

## Gamestage @ Ars Electronica

Retro/per/spektiven: Thursday, September 5 / 12 Noon-12 Midnight; Friday to Monday, September 6-9 / 10 AM-9 PM / Tabakfabrik Linz

Ludic Memento: Thursday, September 5 / 12 Noon-12 Midnight; Friday to Monday, September 6-9 / 10 AM-9 PM / Tabakfabrik Linz

u19 GAME LAB: Thursday to Monday, September 5-9 / 10 AM-7 PM / Ars Electronica Quarter

Game Jam: Saturday, September 7 / 3-7 PM; Sunday, September 8 / 4-5 PM; Monday, September 9 / 10 AM-9 PM / Tabakfabrik Linz

Computer games have not only imparted decisive impetus to the constant upgrading and enhancement of hardware and software (i.e. graphics performance and memory capacity); they've also carved out a major niche in our cultural memory. So there's no shortage of reasons for the festival to play up computer gaming. The retro/per/spektiven and Ludic Memento exhibitions lets you bond again with pals you used to spend a lot of time with: genuine arcade machines and classics from the 40-year history of computer games. In the *Game Jam*, professional developers will vie with one another and a tight deadline to create playable game prototypes within 48 hours. Theme: to be announced at kickoff. In u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD's GameLab, an ambitious international crew of up-and-coming young developers will come up with a sophisticated game of their own.

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## u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD Exhibit

Thursday to Monday, September 5-9 / 10 AM-9 PM / Ars Electronica Quarter

The u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD Exhibition is what Ars Electronica's festival within a festival for youngsters is all about! It's a showcase of the 15 most outstanding works and projects submitted by Austrian young people for prize consideration in 2012-13 to the Prix Ars Electronica's u19 category. *Dominik Koller's* (17) *Visual:Drumset* is equipped with projection technology that responds to each beat by conjuring up a visual right on the head of the drum. Young people attending the Ursprung High School for Agriculture and Forestry came up with *Soilution*, sort of the Austrian equivalent of the incredibly fertile black earth of the Amazon basin. Other prizewinners are a biogas facility developed by some Innsbruck Technical School students for a village in Burkina Faso, *Lena Sophie Wagner's* (8) rucksack-style school satchel that gives the wearer a backrub, and *Simon Stix's* (19) ecological-social horror scenario entitled *Dictatorship of Perfection. Gekommen, um zu bleiben: Zur falschen Zeit im falschen Land* [They came to stay: The wrong time in the wrong country] is a student radio production about the situation of young refugees who came to Austria alone. The stop-motion video entitled *stop war, start thinking* is a wake-up call about global armaments expenditures. *Florian Bührlé* (14), *Isidor Dietrich* (18) and students at Horn High School produced animated shorts entitled *Destino, facebook, BluCar* and *Nur Kreide. Modern Media Guide* is a highly versatile museum guide for any smartphone. *Elisabeth Bloder* (17) designed *A Moving Picture*, an illuminated image made of LEDs and Plexiglas that reacts to clapping and motion by lighting up. The title of this work by *Gabriel Krög* (19) says it all: *Konstruktion eines Fortbewegungsmittels nach dem Vorbild einer Ameise* [Construction of a means of conveyance modeled on an ant]. About three dozen young designers at Linz's High School for Artistic Design created *Schulgedächtnis* [School memory] in which past, present and future students can deposit and exchange memories of their schooldays.

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