

Ars Electronica Festival 2014:

# C ... what it takes to change

September 4-8, 2014 in Linz, Austria

*creativity, catalysts, community, collaboration, communication, content, commons, competition, chaos, culture, cooperation, crossover, cross-disciplinarity, capability, capacity, capital, craving, caution, certainty, confidence, challenge, choice, citizens, clouds, crowds, clusters, code, coexistence, cohesion, coincidence, cynicism, cacophony, commitment, compromises, consideration, coordination, copyright, copyleft, correlation, courtesy, craziness, credibility, criticism, cruelty, cubicles, cookies, caffeine, cognition, china, cumulation, culmination, cyberspace, cyber-arts ... **what it takes to change***

(Linz, March 24, 2014) The 2014 Ars Electronica Festival is set for September 4-8. This year's theme is "C ... what it takes to change," an inquiry into the prerequisites and framework conditions necessary to enable social innovation and renewal to emerge and make an impact. The focus will be on art as catalyst. The in-depth elaborations, lively discussions and bold provocations will feature, as usual, artists, scholars and scientists from all over the world—renowned intellectuals confronted by young contrarians, top experts encountering interested laypersons, the pioneers of the Digital Revolution face to face with the shooting stars of today's media art scene. From September 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, Ars Electronica will once again be a setting for reciprocal exchange and networking, a one-of-a-kind forum in which perspectives and opinions are negotiated and presented in the form of speeches, artistic installations, performances and interventions. It will be taking place at multiple locations throughout the city, in established artistic venues and public spaces alike.

## C ... what it takes to change

In 1835, Jöns Jakob Berzelius discovered that many chemical reactions take place only when certain materials are added to the mix. He called them catalysts. Exactly 60 years later, Wilhelm Ostwald, who would go on to win the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, began his definition of this phenomenon as follows: "A catalyst is a material that affects the rate of a chemical reaction yet emerges unchanged from it."

### Art as Catalyst ...

But just what does all this have to do with Ars Electronica, or (media) art for that matter? Well, just like in the case of many chemical reactions which occur only in the presence of particular substances that enable the elements which are supposed to interact to engage one another, artists make their own contributions to triggering or accelerating social transformation and renewal processes. Artists help tear down antiquated, decrepit structures by calling into question our accustomed ways of perceiving the world, nurturing doubts, or provoking us with totally new interpretations.

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
christopher.sonnleitner@aec.at  
www.aec.at/press

... and what it takes to initiate social change

But what's needed for artists to be able to carry out this social role and contribute to social development? This calls for open spaces and places of encounter and exchange; it takes surprises and inspiration, the opportunity and experience of making, designing and developing things on one's own; what's necessary are the courage to fail, and deriving enjoyment from sharing one's ideas with others. And we have to have artists, scientists, scholars, engineers, entrepreneurs, leading-edge thinkers, imitators and tweekers, mavericks and team players, malcontents and co-conspirators, tinkerers and dreamers. And it takes faith (or the illusion?) that they—or all of us—actually can change the shape of things to come.

Now, 35 years after the convergence of a group of extraordinary individuals amidst a very special set of facts and circumstances led to the founding of Ars Electronica, the history of Ars Electronica itself and the role it has played could serve as one of the many answers to the question posed by this year's festival theme ...

---

Ars Electronica Festival 2014: <http://www.aec.at/c/en/>

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.sonnleitner@aec.at](mailto:christopher.sonnleitner@aec.at)  
[www.aec.at/press](http://www.aec.at/press)