

OK | CYBERARTS 2016

Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition

8. – 18. September

Press information, Sept. 8th.2016

The Prix Ars Electronica is one of the most important awards in the world for creativity and a pioneering spirit in the field of digital media.

Since 1998, the OK in the Upper Austrian Cultural Quarter presents the /CYBERARTS Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition/. The exhibition is considered an international survey show of digital media art. With their shared drive for what is new and often working in interdisciplinary cooperations, the award-winners offer an overview of developments with their works, demonstrating which social dynamics and topics are currently definitive.

More than thirty projects are presented as installations or documentations in the Ursulinenhof – from the foyer on the ground floor up to the attic. The British curator and theorist Jasia Reichard, distinguished this year as /Visionary Pioneer of Media Art/, offers insights into her extraordinary curatorial practice, art criticism and theory, covering more than fifty years, in the form of an archive.

In addition, there are evening events, such as the meanwhile legendary /OK | Night/, spread out this year from the OK Platz to Solaris all the way to the OK Deck.

What is new is the workshop program /Modular Music Days/, where developers and producers of synthesizer modules, synth nerds, musicians, and interested people come together for an inspiring exchange. There is also an extra workshop for girls, entitled /Girls on Wires/, to ease their entry into synthesizer modular technique and give them space for their own experiments.

CYBERARTS is open every day from 10:00 am to 8:30 pm (Sat., 10.9., until 10:00 pm) until 18 September. Visitors with a CyberArts ticket can also visit the Höhenrausch.

EXHIBITION

INTERACTIVE ART

The Interactive Art+ category has been a Prix Ars Electronica mainstay since 1990. The entries include a broad spectrum of formats ranging from installations to network projects. The jury focuses on the artistic quality of how the work's interaction is designed and developed, and looks for a meaningful dialog between the content on one hand and the work's interaction principles and interfaces on the other. Of particular interest is the sociopolitical relevance of the interaction and how it manifests an inherent potential to expand human beings' scope for action.

GOLDEN NICA

Mathias Jud, Christoph Wachter /CH

Can you hear me?
Installation, Video
canyouhear.me

In a society under constant surveillance, where governments abuse power and act against basic human rights, interventions such as Can you hear me? provide us with powerful tools to challenge these systems and make our voices heard. Wachter and Jud were asked to present work at the Swiss embassy in Berlin. In this way the artists gained access to a space for dialogue situated in the government district, next to the German Federal Chancellery. The neighbourhood houses other embassies, such as those of the British and the USA. On the roofs of these buildings is a great deal of surveillance equipment, including hidden antennas and listening devices. The artists built makeshift can-antennas, uncamouflaged and clearly visible, and situated them directly between the listening posts of NSA and GCHQ. These antennas became the starting point for an open communication network. Everyone could participate using their WiFi-enabled devices. A collective conversation space in which every participant has equal rights occupied a space usually reserved for wiretapping. Within this network the voices of the everyday citizenry found their way into the enclosures of power. In addition to the documentation of this project there is an installation of antennas shown on the canopy of the Ursulinenhof.

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Frank Kolkman /NL

OpenSurgery
Installation, Video 37'1"
www.opensurgery.net

The large number of YouTube videos of mainly uninsured Americans performing and sharing medical hacks inspired Frank Kolkman to create OpenSurgery: A DIY surgical robot, which can be used to perform laparoscopic surgery ¹. OpenSurgery examines the question of whether do-it-yourself surgical tools are a suitable alternatives to increasingly expensive health services. By combining 3D printing and laser cutting with hacked surgical pieces and components bought online, Kolkman's robot trades

medical compliance for accessibility and easy distribution. Since it requires a surgeon to operate it, Open-Surgery intends, instead of providing an immediate solution, to facilitate discussion about alternative models of healthcare. The project raises important questions about inequality, ethics, and the lack of access to essential health services experienced by a growing number of people around the world.

¹ *a surgical technique with optical instruments*

Ann-Katrin Krenz /DE

Parasitic/Symbiotic

Installation, Video 2'33"

frau-krenz.de/parasitic-symbiotic

The relationship between humans and nature seems to be out of balance. The human, a being defined by technology, is harming the environment on which its existence depends. In Parasitic/Symbiotic this tension between nature and technology is addressed. A scenario is established in which a human-made technical device sits, parasite-like, upon a tree. It contains a milling machine, which moves along the tree and carves a text into it. The text is a poem, Abschied, by Romanticist Joseph von Eichendorff, 1810. The poem expresses the Romantic ideals of humanities desire for oneness with nature. By carving into and harming the tree, this mechanised action directly contradicts these principles. The result is an encoded form of the poem, which incorporates digital aesthetics whilst also becoming a part of the living tree. The resulting damage to the tree is superficial. It will live on merging with the artificial carving until the artwork becomes one with nature.

HONORARY MENTION

Richard Vijgen /NL

Architecture of Radio

Installation, Documentation 1'04"

www.architectureofradio.com

Based on your GPS location, the app shows a 360-degree visualization of the Infosphere, — the manmade ecosystem of wireless infrastructure around you. The dataset includes almost 7 million cell towers, 19 million Wi-Fi routers, and hundreds of satellites. Our digital lives depend on these very physical systems for communication, observation, and navigation. A site specific version of the app includes wired communication infrastructure embedded in the exhibition space. Its aim is to provide a comprehensive window into the Infosphere. By revealing the defining infrastructure of these times, Architecture of Radio hopes to inspire a relation between ourselves and the technological world we are building.

Unknown Fields Division

Liam Young /UK / AU

Rare Earthenware

Installation, Documentation 2'00"

www.unknownfieldsdivision.com

Three ceramic Ming-style vessels crafted from toxic mud from a barely liquid lake in Baotou, Inner Mongolia, continually pumped with tailings from rare earth refining process, stand for the amount of waste created in the production of three items of technology—a smartphone, a featherweight laptop, and the cell of a smart car battery. They serve as witnesses to our participation in and interaction with this vicious circle of consumerism and exploitation and reminding us of the disturbing consequences of our consumerist habits, leading to a toxic future. These three Rare Earthenware vessels are the physical embodiment of a contemporary global supply network that displaces earth and weaves matter across the planet. They are presented as objects of desire, but their elevated radiation levels and toxicity make them objects we would not want to possess. They represent the undesirable consequences of our material desires.

Prokop Batoniček /CZ, Benjamin Maus /DE

Jller

Installation

allesblinkt.com/jller; prokopbartonicek.com/jller

Jller is an apparatus that sorts pebbles from a specific river by geological age. The stones were taken from the stream bed of the German river, Jller. The history, origin, and path of each stone found in a river is specific to its location, as every river has a different composition of rock types. The origin of these stones is precisely documented, as the machine automatically analyses the stones by type and age. The machine works with an image recognition system that processes the images of the stones and maps each of their locations on the platform throughout the ordering process. The information extracted from each stone are dominant colour, colour composition, and histograms of structural features such as lines, layers, patterns, grain and surface texture. It performs this act of sorting with a series of beautiful, choreographed moves.

Martin Molin /SE, Wintergatan /SE

Marble Machine

Video 4'32", Documentation 1 + 2, 20'55"

www.wintergatan.net/#/m.m.machine

Marble Machine is both an instrument and the song itself—the process of making is embedded within and is inseparable from the process of composition. It brings programming, performance, traditional handcrafting and digital production together to make a contemporary pop song using ancient techniques and modern tools. This machine is an ingenious work that explores the relationship of music to movement, mathematics, physical processes, and systems thinking. The machine consists of around 3000 parts and 3000 screws, including 500 LEGO parts, 5 full-size sheets of Baltic birch plywood, and 2000 marbles. The Marble Machine features the following instruments: Kickdrum, snare drum, hihat, sizzle cymbal, electric bass and vibraphone. With more than 23 million clicks on YouTube the video is a hit on the social media platforms.

Louis-Philippe Demers, Bill Vorn /CA

Inferno

Installation & Performance, Documentation 3'26"

billvorn.concordia.ca/robography/inferno.html

Among cultures throughout history, the representations of Hell, demons, and punishments are vast. In Inferno, the anxiety of the Singularity translates Hell and infinite punishment into a pseudo-model of infinite automation (rituals) and subordination to the machine. Inferno is a participative robotic performance project that addresses many recurrent issues revolving around human-robot symbiotic relationships. A selected group of the public is given an active part in the performance, creating a radical instance of immersive and participative experiences. Through wearing or being entrapped in a robotic entity, the concept of the Cyborg that emerged in the late 80s is invoked. Here you can see a documentation of Inferno. During the Ars Electronica Festival, you can also experience the performance live in the Ursulinensaal.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik /UK /CH

Random Darknet Shopper

Videoinstallation 9'40"

www.bitnik.org/r

Hidden online markets exemplify how the Internet in general, and Darknets in particular, are helping to increasingly blur the lines of national legal dictates: What is legally produced and sold in one country is not necessarily even legal in another. Being global, these markets connect diverse jurisdictions, questioning notions of legality and producing a vast grey zone of goods available virtually everywhere. The Random Darknet Shopper is an exploration of the deep web via the goods traded there. The automated online shopping bot operated from within three exhibition spaces between 2014 and 2016 with a budget of \$100 in Bitcoins per week. The bot went shopping in the deep web, where it randomly chose and purchased one item per week and had it mailed directly to the exhibition space. The documentation provides an insight into the dark side of the Internet.

onformative in collaboration with Christian Loclair /DE

Pathfinder-Generative approach for conceptual choreography

Documentation 2'48"

onformative.com/work/pathfinder

Pathfinder is designed to initiate inspiration for choreography. The tool generates an algorithm that projects abstract shapes into space, creating a digital environment to stimulate dancers. The system produces logical transitions between geometric shapes to guide and inspire the user into complimenting these forms by producing continuously transforming human states. Choreographers can adjust parameters to delineate a desired type of animation without the ability to define the exact output. Pathfinder opens new perspectives in dance and choreography. It aims to encourage the creative abilities of generations of digital artists, dancers, and choreographers.

Mat Collishaw /UK

The Garden of Uneathly Delights, 2009

Installation

Courtesy: Private collection

Throughout his career Mat Collishaw has created a series of zoetropes; a device dating back to the 1860s used to create the illusion of a moving image. Originally the honorary mention was given to the British artist for All Things Fall comprising of over 300 individual figures, bringing to life the biblical tale of genocide The Massacre of the Innocents. In the work exhibited here, The Garden of Uneathly Delights (2009) was inspired by another iconic painting; Hieronymus Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights, 1490 and 1510. As the machine rotates, an animated scene of human brutality against the animal kingdom appears, that is both compelling and unsavoury. Devilish imps attempt to spear snails, throw rocks at butterflies and hit fish in this spectral garden. The zoetrope's uncannily fast revolution seduces the viewer, before they fully realise they are complicit within a scene of violence. Collishaw successfully draws upon the language and traditions of art history, using modern technology and visual devices that beguile the human eye, to present excesses of violence that are both alluring and mesmerizing.

Kyle McDonald /US

Exhausting a Crowd

Documentation, Video by Nico Turner, 12 hours

with Jonas Jongejan (Collaboration and Site development)

Commissioned by Victoria and Albert Museum for "All of this Belongs to You"

exhaustingacrowd.com

Exhausting a Crowd was inspired by Georges Perec's novel, An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris (Tentative d'épuisement d'un Lieu parisien), and automates the task of completely describing the events of 12 hours in a busy public space like Piccadilly Circus in London. The events occurring during this period are open to anyone to comment upon, annotate, or tag, resulting in a collaborative interpretation of the narrative. Some commentaries provide narration for complex multi-character stories, others catalogue every single selfie taken. The work is a beautiful record of the energy present in shared space, as well as a disturbing look into the potential for control in a dystopian environment of constant mass surveillance.

Robertina Šebjanič, Slavko Glamočanin /SI

Aurelia 1 + Hz/proto viva sonification

Documentation 5'07", Video 21'23"

robertina.net/aurelia-1hz-PROTO-VIVA-SONIFICATION

Aurelia 1+Hz/proto viva sonification is an interactive performance that explores the phenomena of interspecies communication, sonification of the environment, and underwater acoustic/bioacoustics, using jellyfish. Jellyfish are one of the rare organisms that seem perfectly suited for the Anthropocene era. The current 6th Mass Extinction may not apply to them, in fact, their numbers are growing. It is not established (yet) how they communicate. Do they feel vibration? Aurelia aurita's gravity receptors (calcium crystals) are the same as in the human inner ear. The performance features live transmitted sound, generated by Aurelia aurita (also known as moon jellyfish).

Sound loops containing recordings of the jellyfish and sonic experiments generated from pre-recorded jellyfish blooms out at sea are mixed into a new soundscape score, which is assembled into an immersive, sonic and visual experience. The artists consider the exploration of interspecies communication to be crucial for our developing a better understanding of the earth's environment and restoring a deeper relationship between all forms of life.

Yoichi Ochiai /JP

Fairy Lights in Femtoseconds

Documentation 3'10"

digitalnature.slis.tsukuba.ac.jp/2015/06/fairy-lights-in-femtoseconds

Fairy Lights in Femtoseconds is a 3-dimensional holograph that creates a dialogue between the physical and the immaterial, melting the border between matter and images. The result of a successful collaboration between artist Yoichi Ochiai and three Japanese universities, compositions of light fields are created using laser-induced plasma, operating in 30 femtosecond pulses (30 quadrillionths of a second). Exciting the plasma at high intensity for ultra short time periods causes it to emit light arbitrarily outwards into 3D space. Holographic synthesis on light fields has long been the subject of science fiction and is often visualised in movies and computer games. This project employs a method of rendering aerial and volumetric graphics into three-dimensional, computationally controlled matter. It evokes a magical science fiction narrative, situating the imaginary and intangible within the ordinary world.

COMPUTER ANIMATION

Digital filmmaking now encompasses very diverse genres and techniques—mapping architecture and landscapes, time-based sculptural works, experimental-abstract visual design and interactive features operate alongside the storytelling and special effects of commercials and feature films. These vertices also demarcate the range of computer animation today, though visual design's boundaries are becoming increasingly permeable. The Prix Ars Electronica Animation Festival features the best of this year's submissions and additional programs. The categories this year are: Deconstructed Realities, Visuals & Sound, Statement, Abstract, Expanded & Experimental, Narration, Comedy & Black Humor and Late Nite. A selection is screened at Central Linz, Landstraße 36, which also hosts the Expanded Animation Symposium. Electronic Theater is a very entertaining presentation of all the prizewinning works in the 2016 Prix Ars Electronica's Computer Animation/Film/VFX category.

GOLDEN NICA

Boris Labbé /FR

Rhizome

Installation

www.borislabbé.com/Rhizome

Rhizome by Boris Labbé, a film director and visual artist based in Madrid, is a complex animated film. Approximately 2,300 original Indian ink and watercolour drawings were needed to create the work. The artist blended these together using complementary techniques such as the software After Effects to produce a post-digital painting-like visual poem. Rhizome invites the viewer to get lost in a microscopically small world that is in constant change, permanently redistributing itself in a mind-blowing metaphor of evolution, urbanization, migration, and the mutation of societies. Highly elaborate aesthetic research mixes with complex hand-drawn animation and computer crowd-simulation to build a multi-layered but very coherent universe. The musical composition created by Brazilian composer Aurélio Edler-Copes, forms a haunting rhythmic base, acute and repetitive which articulates the word "Rhizome" in Morse code.

DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

In 1995 in the wake of the World Wide Web's emergence, the Prix Ars Electronica launched its Internet category, and then proceeded to repeatedly redefine it in accordance with the rapid development of life online. The focus is currently on projects with significant social relevance. Citizen activism, strategies to promote financial and political transparency, enabling projects in the so-called Global South, optimizing individual potential and crowdfunding reflect the massive paradigm shift that's still underway.

GOLDEN NICA

P2P Foundation

Documentation 3'32"

p2pfoundation.net

This digital community, launched in 2005 by Michel Bauwens, is dedicated to advancing the social potential of peer-to-peer technologies. As a decentralized and self-organized non-profit organization, it analyzes, documents and promotes peer-to-peer strategies that seem to be well-suited to facing the challenges and problems of our times in ways that display great future promise. The focus is on three key traits: sustainability, openness and solidarity. Since its inception, the community of the P2P Foundation has input over 30,000 entries documenting the history and development of the peer-to-peer movement. One of the very first articles about the crypto-currency Bitcoin was published on the P2P Foundation's website. Since its launch in 2006, the P2P Foundation Wiki has been accessed more than 27 million times and contains the world's largest collection of knowledge about P2P.

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Refugee Phrasebook

Installation, Documentation 1'59"

www.refugeephasebook.de

Julieta Aranda/Berlin, Monika Dorniak/London, Paul Feigelfeld/Berlin, Caoimhe Gallagher/Dublin, Zoe Claire Miller/ Berlin, Markus Neuschafer/Berlin, Agostina Rufolo/Buenos Aires, Judith

Refugee Phrasebook is an open collaborative project that provides a collection of useful phrases, icons and links for refugees and their helpers to support them after their arrival in a new place. It assembles important phrases from various fields and encourages designers and experts to improve on the material, for example, by creating basic vocabulary tables for medical and legal terminology in 44 different languages. Together with a global network of volunteer translators, editors, designers, printers, publishers, lawyers, doctors, etc. plus partner institutions in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, Refugee Phrasebook continues to develop sustainable communication tools to help support an open culture. All materials are adaptable to local needs and are distributed with open licenses in ready-to-print formats for immediate use all over Europe and the world.

SAZAE bot

Documentation 6'10"

twitter.com/sazae_f

A bot (short for robot) is a computer program that can automatically perform certain repetitive tasks without having to rely on instructions from a human user. The SAZAE bot is just such a program. The bot went online in summer 2010 and is active on Twitter since that time. It presents itself as a parody of a Manga figure who is extremely popular in Japan, Sazae-San. The SAZAE bot reacts to tweets and re-tweets. Its followers are known to particularly appreciate its witty remarks. Then, in 2014, Hitoyo Nakano was “born” and the anonymous human user behind the SAZAE bot assumed a distinct identity. Since this moment, the SAZAE bot has been controlled via Google Forum, where anyone can post tweets as SAZAE bot completely anonymously. This isn’t just a site for exchanging opinions and jokes; here, people also arrange face-to-face meetings and other activities in the real world—for instance, handing out candy around Christmas time, balloon takeoffs, guerrilla actions, attending Ted Talks or making a live appearance at the UN|COMMONS conference in Berlin.

PRIX FORUM

The Prix Forums offers the opportunity to meet 2016 Prix Ars Electronica winners and hear them talk about their work, motives and motivation. All talks will be held on Saturday 10th of September in the Ursulinensaal at the OÖ Kulturquartier, except for the Prix Forum Computer Animation/Film/VFX, which is scheduled on Friday 9th of September at Central Linz, Landstraße 36.

MODULAR MUSIC DAYS

Fri. 9. Sept., 12.00 a.m. – 8.30 p.m., OK
Sat. 10. Sept., 10.30 a.m – 8.30 p.m., OK

In recent years modular synthesizer systems have not only been undergoing a revival, but the development of this form of sound generation is also being newly impelled and ranges from classical sound modules all the way to experimental approaches. Synthesizer module developers and producers, synth nerds, musicians, and the interested and curious meet for a stimulating exchange. The exhibitions, workshops and lectures are free. Participation with your own modular system requires registration at houztekk.com.

GIRLS ON WIRES

Modular Synthesizer workshop for girls with Jessica Kert (Schneiders Laden Berlin)
Fri. 9. Sept. + Sat. 10. Sept., 5.00 – 6.30 p.m. each day

OK NIGHT

Sat. 10. September

ELECTRONIC THEATER

8 p.m. Cinema on the roof top and 10 p.m. Movie 2
With the best computer animation films of the Prix Ars Electronica on the big screen.

CLUBNIGHT

Starting 9.00 p.m.
OK Platz, OK Deck, Solaris

For the meanwhile legendary OK Night during Ars Electronica, this year the OK Deck will be transformed into a “modular club”. The music program largely comes from musicians from the “Modular Music Days”

Curators: Markus Reindl in cooperation with Maximilian Meindl (Modular Music Days)

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photographs: <http://www.ok-centrum.at>