

Ars Electronica exhibition opening in Berlin

Impetus and Movement

The third exhibition presented jointly by Volkswagen and Ars Electronica opens on July 12, 2012

(Berlin / Linz, July 12, 2012) The third exhibition produced jointly by Volkswagen and Ars Electronica opens on Thursday, July 12, 2012. "Impetus and Movement" is the show's title; Automobil Forum Unter den Linden reprises as the venue. Here, artists from Europe, the USA and Japan have created mises-en-scène for deliveries of an impulse and the processes launched thereby as means of scrutinizing the tension and interplay between self-determination and disenfranchisement. The spectrum of their works includes subversive strategies for asserting a claim to a presence in the public sphere, unconventional methods of seeing the world through another's eyes, and nonsensical machines designed to carry out simple tasks in as complicated a way as possible. "Impetus and Movement" runs through Sunday, September 16, 2012. Admission is free of charge.

The Works of Art

Floor (2007) / Cantoni/Crescenti (BR)

<http://www.cantoni-crescenti.com.br>

"Floor" consists of a track several meters in length that installation visitors can walk on. The track consists of thin steel plates; below it arranged perpendicular to its length is an aluminum bar that slowly moves from one end of the track to the other and thereby causes a hump to protrude upward. The result is a steely wave rolling across the smooth surface, which in turn creates an interesting play of light and shadow. And like a real wave in water, all that lies in its path is gently uplifted as the wave proceeds down the track.

In Your Hands (2008) / Dash Macdonald (GB)

The roller skates Dash MacDonald dashes about on aren't the kind you buy in stores. His skates can be remote controlled via radio and steered in any direction. In one of his "In Your Hands" performances, he literally turns over the controls to passers-by, who can then move him about like an action figure. With people faced by such temptation, it usually doesn't take long before the skates are being maneuvered into ever-more-absurd and impossible situations. Amidst the general mirth, most people fail to get the point Dash Macdonald is trying to make here: to find out how far people will go in amusing themselves at someone else's expense? "In Your Hands" was inspired by the Milgram and Stanford Prison experiments. "Impetus and Movement" presents a video of a performance.

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Save Yourself!!! (2007) / Junji Watanabe, Tomofumi Yoshida und Hideyuki Ando (JP)

www.junji.org/saveyourself

“Save Yourself” is quite an unusual challenge to the human sense of equilibrium. The installation consists of a glass bowl half full of water and a small raft floating on the water’s surface. The raft is equipped with a specially developed sensor that registers the slightest motion and converts it into electrical impulses that, via cable and special headphones containing built-in electrodes, are transmitted towards the area of the wearer’s head that controls the sense of balance. Meanwhile, the wearer is trying to hold the bowl in his/her hands as steady as possible. But if the water and the raft-borne sensor begin to move, this disturbance is conveyed directly to the balance mechanism in the test subject’s inner ear, which gets things swaying even more.

CabBoots (2005) / Martin Frey (DE)

<http://www.freymartin.de/en/projects/cabboots>

German artist Martin Frey’s “CabBoots” constitute an innovative pedestrian guidance system. The interface makes the communicated information palpable and intuitively understandable by applying it right to that part of the body that is most directly involved in walking: the foot. The point of departure of Martin Frey’s considerations is the topography of a hiking path, which is typically trampled down in the middle and noticeably higher on either edge. Walking along such a trail, your feet come down upon flat ground only in the middle of the path. The upward curvature of the ground on the trail’s outer edges produces a slight—and slightly uncomfortable—pronation of the foot. This is something that human beings intuitively avoid, so that we invariably seek out the middle of the path. This is where Martin Frey’s “CabBoots” come in. They tilt the soles to the outside or inside and thus steer the wearer in a particular direction. In this way, virtual routes can be navigated without a map—or one’s eyes, for that matter. The software for determining the walker’s position and calculating the route is designed to run on mobile devices like a smartphone, iPhone or PDA that can communicate wirelessly with the CabBoots.

The Tenth Sentiment (2010) / Ryota Kuwakubo (JP)

<http://www.vector-scan.com/>

Ryota Kuwakubo makes the shadows of common, everyday objects dance across the installation space’s walls, thereby forming enigmatic shapes and poetic landscapes. A simple pasta sieve can become a majestic skyscraper; a light bulb can morph into an entire power plant. Ryota Kuwakubo uses only objects whose value and meaning are generally linked to their functionality. He disjoins precisely this connection and thereby endows these objects with a totally new significance.

Transitions (2012) / Julius Stahl (DE)

<http://www.juliusstahl.de/transitions.html>

Julius Stahl’s “Transitions” invites you to go on an unusual soundwalk. The participants wear headphones that register all noises and sounds in their immediate surroundings and transmit them via radio signal to another set of headphones. Thus, every soundwalk participant hears with someone else’s ears.

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Acoustic Octahedral Geometry (2012) / Daisuke Ishida (JP/DE)

<http://isddsk.com/>

Daisuke Ishida explores space solely by means of sound. The artist creates architecture, the forms and boundaries of which are strictly of an acoustic nature. He uses a hypersonic sound system to erect the walls, floor and ceiling of his invisible “Acoustic Octahedral Geometry.” This construction can be perceived—i.e. is audible—only when one crosses through the sound bundle, interrupting, reflecting or redirecting it. The resulting interference, in turn, forms new, invisible lines and thereby a new, ephemeral architecture.

Particles (2005) / Daito Manabe (JP)

<http://www.daito.ws/en/work/particles.html>

Daito Manabe’s (JP) “Particles” is a beautifully stylish work of luminous art. In a totally darkened room, eight LED-studded balls roll down the eight tracks of a tall spiral “coaster.” Since the LEDs blink on for only a short time, installation visitors get the impression that they’re observing light particles floating through the room. The respective positions of the eight balls and the pattern in which they’re illuminated also generate a soundscape that is played on eight loudspeaker channels.

Inter-Discommunication Machine (1993) / Kazuhiko Hachiya (JP)

<http://eyebeam.org/people/kazuhiko-hachiya>

The “Inter-Discommunication Machine” enables users to see the world through the eyes of another person. All that’s necessary to do so are two head-mounted displays (HMD). These devices are worn like eyeglasses—a monitor is mounted on the inner side of each lens—and there’s a tiny video camera capturing what’s going on in the direction the wearer is facing. The video footage each camera takes is radioed to the other person’s HMD, which enables both participants to see what their counterpart is looking at.

Melonia Shoes (2010) / Naim Josefi (SE)

Melonia shoes consist of 100% polyamide and are output by a 3D printer. Each is a one-piece construction, so when the wearer doesn’t like them anymore, they can be melted down to provide the raw material for a new pair. This eye-catching footwear convincingly demonstrated how well it works at last year’s Stockholm Fashion Week.

Tipp-Kicker (2012) / Joseph Herscher (US)

<http://www.josephherscher.com/>

Joseph Herscher (US) designs and builds giant mechanical apparatuses to perform very specific tasks, whereby the jobs are generally rather simple matters whereas the devices to do them are about as complex as can be. Herscher’s contrivances are usually powered by tiny balls that, once they’re set in motion, collide with various obstacles and, in doing so, invariably trigger new motion. Impetus is followed by movement is followed by impetus is followed by movement until, for instance, a watering can is tipped to the point that it pours its

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contents into a flower pot to refresh the plant growing within. The expression “Rube Goldberg machine” was named after American cartoonist Reuben L. Goldberg, whose Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts constructed such whimsical devices, contraptions as complex as they are unnecessary.

For “Impetus and Movement,” Joseph Herscher created “Tipp-Kicker,” a man vs. machine showdown inspired by the game of almost the same name. In it, the machine tries to shoot a goal; the human being attempts to prevent just that. But it wouldn’t be a work by Joseph Herscher if the artist didn’t stage this seemingly simple set of facts in as convoluted a way as possible. What he’s come up with is a ludicrous chain reaction that proceeds clear across the entire exhibition: a rope uncoils, a keg rolls, a teakettle swings through the room and all sorts of other wacky things occur before the ball is finally sent on its merry way. The human player is strongly advised to keep an eye on all of this in order to reckon the path of the subsequent shot.

Additional works are presented in the form of videos:

The Page Turner (2012) / Joseph Herscher (US)

<http://www.josephherscher.com/>

A sip of coffee gets this story started; in the final act, the page of a newspaper is turned. What happens in between is a madcap but highly fragile chain reaction impressively executed by a nonsensical machine that its maker, American artist Joseph Herscher, calls, oddly enough, “The Page Turner.”

Grand Rapids LipDub Video / Rob Bliss, Scott Erickson (US)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPijZCO67WI>

The term “lipdub” refers to a music video shot in one take and screened without cuts in which the cast members lip-sync the sound track song. There were 5,000 people involved in shooting the “Grand Rapids LipDub Video.” A large section of downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan was closed off to provide an unobstructed space for marching bands, parades and processions, a wedding party, cars and a helicopter. The video was made in response to a Newsweek article that called Grand Rapids a “dying city.”

Needing Getting (2012) / OK Go

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mejb0Fk7H6c>

It took four months to prepare to shoot this video. OK Go, an American alternative rock band, set up approximately 1,000 musical instruments along a two-mile course in the desert near Los Angeles. In addition to about 50 pianos and several dozen Gretsch guitars, lots of home-brew sound generating devices came into play. A car was equipped with pneumatic arms. Then, lead singer Damian hit the gas and sped off on his first run. After four exhausting days, the shoot was a wrap. The result: a film that’s a lot more than just a music video.

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This too shall pass (2010) / OK Go

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qybUFnY7Y8w>

Lots of tiny details are the actual stars of this video. It took the crew of 60 technicians and assistants an hour to get the whole complicated setup into the START position. Shooting the video with multiple Steadicams took more than two days; 60 takes were required.

Home Made Rollercoaster (2002) / John Ivers (US)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfsteApcvt4&feature=youtu.be>

John Ivers got tired of waiting in long lines at amusement parks, so he decided to build his own rollercoaster. The scrap metal structure he welded together in 2002 and that still graces his backyard even features a 360° loop.

Ser y durar (2011) / Democracia (ES)

<http://www.democracia.com.es/about-us/>

In the late 1980s, young people in certain Paris suburbs began to take a totally new approach to making their predominantly steel, concrete and glass environment their own. They declared conventional, prescribed paths to be off-limits and proceeded to devise and set out on their own routes—ones that always had to lead from Point A to Point B as quickly and directly as possible. In going about this, the *traceurs* (“trailblazers”) acrobatically overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers. In addition to intentionally disregarding prevailing rules, the *traceurs* highly esteem not damaging their surroundings. *Parcour* stands for responsible, independent behavior that is freed from regulations. Implicit in it is respect for the environment and for other human beings. Now, 20 years after it was invented, *parcour* has long since ceased to be a youth movement in the *banlieue*; it’s a trendy urban sport. The *traceurs* from Democracia shot their *parcour* video in Madrid’s La Almudena Cemetery.

Techno Jeep (2009) / Julian Smith (US)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFybwg4wadI>

Julian Smith directed this effort: techno music created strictly from sounds that a car produces. The preparations could hardly have been any simpler: two weeks before the shoot, each participating “musician” selected his/her favorite sound. The candidates included: the slamming of the doors, the whirring of the power seat adjuster, the ka-chunk of the power door lock actuator, and the noise the starter makes turning over. All these tones were recorded with directional microphones and then digitized.

Impuls und Bewegung / Impetus and Movement: <http://export.aec.at/berlin2012/en>

Ars Electronica: <http://www.aec.at/news/en/>

Automobil Forum Unter den Linden: <http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/afb/content/de/homepage.html>

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