



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

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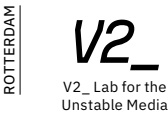
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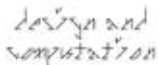
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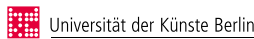
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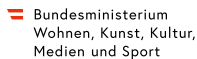
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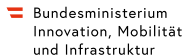
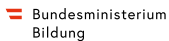
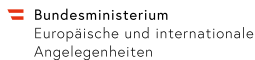
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Gerfried Stocker (AT)

Co-CEO / Artistic Director Ars Electronica

PANIC

yes / no

When we no longer understand the world around us, when things change faster than we can comprehend them, we humans apparently tend to become irrational, paying more attention to how loud a voice is than to what it is actually saying, and preferring to believe what we want to hear as truth. We find ourselves back in Plato's cave, worshipping the shadow interpreters. Nothing seems more disturbing than change; yet we need nothing more urgently than change. But we are increasingly unable to agree on what or who should change and how it should be accomplished.

...and what do we even mean when we talk about radical changes?

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
And you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

When Bob Dylan wrote these lines in 1963, which are so relevant to our times, not least in view of the fact that water levels are now literally rising, the civil rights movement in the USA had reached a peak—the March on Washington and Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" have become iconic in history—and it was clear to everyone what kind of upheaval was being talked about: new beginnings, progress, freedom, coded as ideals of the Western world, seemed so irresistibly convincing and unstoppable that it would only be a matter of time before they would prevail globally.

It was also the time in which the USA was finally able to position itself as the global hegemonic power—militarily, economically, and perhaps above all culturally, "The American Way of Life" prevailed in the free world. Politically, John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" (I am a Berliner), just a few months before he was assassinated, became the legendary symbol of a hegemonic understanding of a protective sovereign who does not subjugate, but rather motivates voluntary allegiance through the advantages and promises of his lifestyle. At least, that is how it was understood, since elsewhere people were not squeamish about using military might and nuclear deterrence as tools of power.

(The 20-year Vietnam War, 1955–1975, was not fought in order to conquer the country, but rather to assert the claim to leadership.)

All that was missing was the collapse of the USSR after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the deal seemed to be sealed. However, it had been overlooked that the economic interdependencies and dependencies resulting from globalization and the far-reaching liberalization of markets—coupled with the global digital infrastructure—would also bring about a decentralization of power structures. Not a dissolution, but a fragmentation in which power is no longer exercised exclusively through direct control or hierarchical structures, but increasingly depends on consensus building and the balancing of interests.

In the resulting hegemonic interregnum, not only did emerging geopolitical actors, especially China, position themselves, but there was also a massive shift toward technology corporations, which, with their own feudal spheres of power, evade state regulation in many areas. While the United States remains the central nervous system of global financial markets, this symbol of power has also experienced visible signs of erosion due to the dynamics of globalization and, most recently, the rise of cryptocurrencies.

Panic does not arise from the mere fear of danger, but from the realization of its inevitability—the feeling of being defenselessly exposed to it, with no possibility of escape or control.

Against this backdrop, the irrational (because it's not based on facts and reality-based strategies) turn to oligarchic fascist ideologies, as we currently see in the USA, can certainly be seen as a panic reaction of a global power that has to face the fact that it has lost, or is about to lose, its hegemony. Frustration over the “American Decline” is accordingly one of the strongest motivations behind the MAGA narrative. Trying to explain the broad support solely with dissatisfaction over high egg prices falls short and overlooks the deeper psychology behind it. The aggressively erratic behavior of Trump, his followers, and agitators—these castles in the air of rage and self-importance—in their force and doggedness bear clear traits of a final rebellion, a defiant denial of reality. We know how dangerous and destructive these symptoms of agony are, not only from many historical examples—it is also currently evident in Vladimir Putin's belligerent restoration efforts and the broad approval his policies enjoy in Russia.

Of course, the same can be said about Europe's new right-wing extremism, where the only new thing is its worryingly increased reach and the dull insensitivity with which we face these excesses. In an unprecedentedly interconnected and digitally borderless world, people are suddenly seeking territorial boundaries and confines again; the problems of migration flows are only part of the reason for this. The sudden resurgence of interest in land ownership and physical territory, reflected in the rhetoric of those leaving the EU as well as in Trump's fantasies of annexing Greenland and Canada, is a reaction to the loss of control that one faces in internationally and globally networked alliances. Those who cannot assert themselves in the expanse of negotiation and consensus-building would rather return to the small table and pound on it with their fists.

What we should be afraid of.

What's brewing is a fear-driven mood, ranging from vague rejection to abysmal hatred, directed against anything that smacks of change. Against immigration, against climate activists, against diversity, against transgender people, against the realization that the world is far more complex than we'd like it to be.

Common sense is declared to have primacy over science and knowledge, and truth is no longer defined as the agreement of a statement with its subject matter, but rather as the lowest common denominator of claims that most closely correspond to what we wish for rather than what is actually happening. Regardless of the fact that 2024 was the hottest year on record, regardless of the fact that the coronavirus vaccination has saved countless people from severe illness, from

long-term COVID, and even from death... etc. etc. This erosion of truth, driven by the profit-driven algorithms of social media, is followed by the erosion of trust, perhaps the most important element for the cohesion of a society.

What is turning fear into panic, even more than the unpredictability and recklessness of the Trump administration, is the emerging disorientation now that Trump has renounced loyalty and solidarity—cornerstones of the hegemonic order since the end of World War II 80 years ago—within the entire free world (including within the United States). A disorientation as a result of which Europe is now committing itself, at breathtaking speed, to a war economy and arming itself with weapons that will be largely useless in the truly decisive battle of the coming decades: the fight against the effects of climate change.

When fear can no longer be attributed to specific dangers and risks, it turns into panic; the stress hormone adrenaline is released, the heart rate accelerates, more blood is pumped through the veins, and the muscles tense.

Do we react recklessly or do we concentrate our strength?

Fear makes us small and discouraged. How can we maintain and strengthen our momentum for the future?

How do we avoid getting stuck in the fear of uncertainty and forgetting that we can only move forward through constant change? By insisting on the status quo, we rob ourselves of the power of imagination and the courage to see the future as a viable prospect that we must shape.

And that is precisely the task of artistic work and its impact in this time of profound upheaval.

Highlights

Don't panic at the sight of this year's vast festival program. These are the highlights not to miss.

Events and Performances

The **Pre-Opening Walk** kicks off the Festival week. At the Upper Austrian Cultural Association, the Francisco Carolinum, the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, the University of Arts Linz, the Atelierhaus Salzamt, the Ars Electronica Center, and the Stadtwerkstatt, curators and artists will welcome you and offer you exclusive insights into their exhibitions and programs.

With the **official Opening of Ars Electronica** (p. 272) at St. Mary's Cathedral, we invite you to celebrate the start of the Festival together with us and many, many artists and art enthusiasts from all over the world. As a guest performance of the Brucknerfest 2025, special highlights are on the program for this evening: With *Visible "An die Freude,"* the hearing-impaired musicians of the inclusive children's and youth choir **White Hands Chorus NIPPON** from Japan, founded by **Erika Colon**, will perform the European anthem together with the **Company of Music**, the vocal ensemble led by Johannes Hiemetsberger. While some sing the text, others will express it rhythmically in sign language. You and everyone else in the audience are cordially invited to sing and sign along. As part of the *Waltz Symphony*, everything

revolves around the music of Johann Strauss. Students from four renowned music universities have used an AI system developed at the Ars Electronica Futurelab to create works inspired by the musical legacy of the Viennese "Waltz King." Excerpts from their compositions will be performed by musicians from the Bruckner Orchestra Linz. The *Waltz Symphony* is a project of the **Ars Electronica Futurelab** in cooperation with four leading music academies and was commissioned for the **Johann Strauss 2025 Vienna** festival year.

The **Prix Ars Electronica Award Ceremony** will take place for the second time at the **Design Center Linz**. Its stars are the outstanding artists who will be awarded a Golden Nica of the Prix Ars Electronica 2025. Also expected and honored on stage are the winners of this year's STARTS Prize and of the STARTS Prize Africa (p. 109), as well as representatives of the *HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation* initiative and *MoFWaste–The Museum of Food Waste*, the winners of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science (p. 113).

The **Big Concert Night** (p. 274) will be performed in POSTCITY's Train Hall and will commemorate the end of the Second World War 80 years ago. The centerpiece is the chamber opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis oder Die Tod-Verweigerung*, with music by Viktor Ullmann and a libretto by Peter Kein, which was written in 1943/44 in the Theresienstadt ghetto. The impressive work is presented as a combination of orchestral performance and scenically visualized staging. The production is a cooperation between **Ars Electronica**, **Dennis Russell Davies**, the **Filharmonie Brno**, the **Landestheater Linz**, and the **University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw)**.

Following this performance, the **Ars Electronica Nightline** (p. 280) presents DJ sets and performances from Switzerland, in collaboration with Pro Helvetia, in POSTCITY's Train Hall. A highlight is the Catalan singer and composer **Maria Arnal**, who won a STARTS Prize in 2024 and performed at SÓNAR in June 2025, causing a sensation with her experiments located between avant-garde pop, electronics, and polyphonic traditional music.

Sonic Saturday (p. 284) at the **Anton Bruckner University** opens up fascinating worlds of sound for you. For the first time, one of the musical highlights will take place at the Ars Electronica Center—in cooperation with the Brucknerfest as the opening of the Klangwolke (sound cloud)

in **Deep Space 8K**: With their piano concert *CHROMA*, **Daniel Oliver Moser** (composition) and **Konstantin Semilakovs** (piano and visuals) present a work that combines piano sounds with generative visualizations.

The **Futurelab Night** (p. 395) also invites you to Deep Space 8K and shows how new technologies and artistic approaches can be combined to create extraordinary and fascinating experiences. Projects from the **Ars Electronica Futurelab** will be presented, including the Europe-wide XR research project **SHARESPACE**.

In the context of **ACuTe** (p. 117), this year's festival puts the spotlight on **Digital Theater**. ACuTe is a European innovation project that uses new technologies to rethink theater and performance art—from storytelling and stage design to audience engagement. We present the interactive theater project *The Trial against Humanity* by **Det Norske Teatret** (p. 303), in which actors have to face the accusation of a superior AI that has decided to wipe out humanity in order to save the planet—a rational act that it sees as an expression of love. Director **Peer Perez Øian** addresses guilt, responsibility, the limits of technological control and, not least, the role of AI. You should also watch *White Hunger* by **Oxi Koskelainen** (p. 306). This visually impressive sci-fi piece is set in a dystopian future in Finland, in which a water crisis and famine divide society into winners and losers and tells a story of survival, social inequality, and human cohesion.

Exhibitions

One must-see show is the **Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition** (p. 80). The most important exhibition of the festival will be shown for the second time in a row at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz and presents outstanding media art projects that were submitted to and awarded the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica. The robotic installation *Requiem for an Exit* by **Frode Oldereid and Thomas Kvam**, winner of the Golden Nica in New Animation Art, and the political robotics project *Guanaquex* by **Paula Gaetano Adi**, winner of the Golden Nica in AI and Life Art, will be on show. Likewise a must-see is the project *Organism* by **Navid Navab** and **Garnet Willis**, winner of the Golden Nica in Digital Musics, which we present to you in St. Mary's Cathedral in Linz.

Under no circumstances should you miss the large **Theme Exhibition** *Complex. Absurd. Ominous.* (p. 48) in the extensive catacombs of POSTCITY. Here you can experience works that visualize and reflect on the power of art—especially in times of upheaval and uncertainty. **Calin Segal's** interactive installation *WHISPERS* (p. 78), for example, examines how algorithmically curated content and digital discourses shape our identities. **Noemi Iglesias Barrios**, on the other hand, has collaborated with **Radix**, the **Knowledge Center Data and Society** and the **League for Human Rights** to create *The Falling City* (p. 75), an artistic AI surveillance system that searches not for aggression but for love in the public space of Brussels. **Etsuko Ichihara** and the **Civic Creative Base Tokyo (CCBT)** present *Dystopia Land* (p. 57), a participatory exhibition project that creates a dystopian parallel universe as a way to think together about possible futures, alternative

ways of living, and resilience in the face of global crises. **Jin Lee's** expansive installation *Liminal Ring* (p. 61) is a poetic-technological symbol of the fragile balance between our desire for order and the uncontrollable complexity of natural systems—laminar air currents symbolize our striving for control over nature and the limits we come up against in the process. Or **Marc Vilanova's** huge sound installation *Phonos* (p. 64), which uses 208 recycled loudspeakers in an attempt to make infrasound frequencies that are inaudible to us visible and audible—their movements and mechanical noises create a polyphonic rhythm that, despite the size of the work, invites us to a personal, close encounter. In addition, this time we are also presenting the results of a one-year **artist-in-residence program** of the **European Digital Deal** (p. 114), which was created at leading cultural institutions such as **Onassis Stegi**, **Braga Media Arts**, **Wag Futurelab**, and at **Ars Electronica** in Linz.

Once again, we are dedicating an exclusive exhibition area to the **STARTS Prize and STARTS Prize Africa projects** (p. 107), both initiatives of the European Commission. Among others, we present *Sensing Quantum* by **LAS Art Foundation**, awarded the Grand Prize for Innovative Collaboration, *AI War Cloud Database* by **Sarah Ciston**, awarded the Grand Prize for Artistic Exploration, and *The Wild Future Lab* by **Kairos Futura**, awarded the Grand Prize of the STARTS Prize Africa 2025.

You can also selected the projects of the **winners of the State of the ART(ist) competition** (p. 88) and the **Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity** at POSTCITY.

Both awards are presented by Ars Electronica together with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. In addition, we present the works of Latin American artists who received the **CIFO x Ars Electronica Award** in 2025, as well as **contributions by Chilean artists** who were selected as part of a joint open call by the Chilean Ministry of Culture, the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ars Electronica, and will be brought to Linz.

The **LIT—Linz Institute of Technology Exhibition** (p. 218) of the **Johannes Kepler University Linz** presents projects developed especially for the festival by JKU researchers and artists. With “*Breaking News: Wolpertinger sighted in Linz!*” by **Antonela Tommasel**, **Anna Hausberger**, **Markus Schedl**, **Gustavo Escobedo**, **Samaa Mizar**, and **Michael Preisach** (p. 221), you can find out how emotions, prejudices, and social influence shape our judgment, and thereby sharpen your critical thinking. *The Dream In Experience* by **Andreas Kaindlstorfer**, **Andreas Strauss**, and **Reinhard Gupfinger** (p. 227) focuses on sleep as a central factor for health and well-being. It concerns sleep culture and critical reflection on the use of AI and big data for personal health monitoring. What all the projects have in common is that they show what art can contribute to science and, conversely, what science can contribute to art, and how both can create something new together. You can expect artistic stagings of exciting scientific questions.

The **University of Arts Linz** has been a central partner of Ars Electronica for more than two decades and is once again presenting numerous

works from its fields of study (p. 122). The projects will be shown in the two bridgehead buildings and on Linz’s main square. You should definitely visit the splace gallery on the main square, where the **National Academy of Art Sofia**, the **Featured University 2025**, is on show this time.

The **Campus Exhibition** (p. 120) will also feature contributions from students and professors from more than 30 international universities. The **Bauhaus-Universität Weimar** (p. 211), **Zurich University of the Arts** (p. 215), **University of Seville** (p. 199), **Musrara**, the **Naggar School of Art and Society**, **Jerusalem** (p. 185), **National Tsing Hua University** (p. 184), **Department of Art Science**, **Osaka University of Arts** (p. 192), **Computational Media and Arts**, **Hong Kong University of Science & Technology—Guangzhou** (p. 178), **ShanghaiTech University** (p. 201), **MFA Computer Arts**, **The School of Visual Arts** (p. 189), and the **University of Chicago** (p. 169) are participating.

Whether in the main buildings of the University of Arts Linz, in splace or in POSTCITY—you will see works and performances by young artists everywhere that fascinate with their creative approaches and interesting themes.

In the **Ars Electronica Features** exhibition (p. 232), you can experience artistic projects brought to Linz by a network of organizations and institutions. With the immersive project *Model Collapse* by **Cyanne van den Houten** and **Ymer Marinus** (p. 238), for example, you can take a look behind the scenes of AI and create a new civilization with the VR game *Ekklesia* by **Staatstheater Augsburg** (p. 303).

Conferences, Talks, Screenings

From September 3 to 7, POSTCITY will not only be a hub for a whole series of exhibitions, but also a forum for exciting **lectures, presentations, and panels on the festival theme** (p. 38) that will accompany visitors throughout the festival week. Other specialist conferences are also on the program.

In 2025, Ars Electronica will focus on education over several days. The symposium, which has been organized jointly with the University College of Teacher Education Upper Austria for years, will be complemented by an international symposium, which, as part of the EU-funded **Critical ChangeLab** (p. 118) project, will focus on the topics of democracy, media literacy, and didactics.

Together with more than ten European partners, the EU co-financed project **ACuTe** (p. 117) will address the topic of AI and artistic creation with a focus on digital theater. Applications of AI in content creation, in the production phase, and in the area of audience engagement will be presented and discussed. In 2025, there will also be another **STARTS Day**, co-hosted with the European Digital Innovation Hub AI5Production, which will provide a forum for players from industry, art, and technology to discuss Europe's digital sovereignty and future.

Austria joined the European Union on January 1, 1995. To mark the anniversary, Ars Electronica and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport are planning **Platform Europe Day**. In the spirit of European exchange, a series of workshops for cultural managers from European institutions will also take place.

A key role is played by the EU-funded **EXCENTRIC** (p. 119) project, which focuses on digital transformation in cultural organizations, the **NEB Junction** (p. 118) project, which brings together the knowledge of the **New European Bauhaus** initiative, and other European bodies and institutions.

The conference program at POSTCITY is rounded off by presentations and discussion rounds on the topic of **Citizen Science** as part of the EU-funded **IMPETUS** project (p. 112). The focus will be on pioneering methods and the question of how artists and young people in particular can actively contribute to the research process.

Fans of and experts in animation art take note—the 13th edition of **Expanded** (p. 317) focuses on scientific contributions from the fields of augmented animation and interactive art. The focus is on innovative audiovisual forms of expression at the interface of art and technology. You can expect scientific and artistic lectures as well as panel discussions with exciting international guests. *Expanded 2025* takes place at the Ars Electronica Center (Sky Loft) and is organized by the **Hagenberg Campus of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria**. In line with this conference, the **Atelierhaus Salzamt** (p. 319) will once again turn into a place of innovative animations for the duration of the festival. Animation fans can also look forward to the *Ars Electronica Animation Festival 2025* (p. 308) at the **Ars Electronica Center**, showcasing outstanding works from the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica submissions and celebrating the medium's rich diversity.

Specials

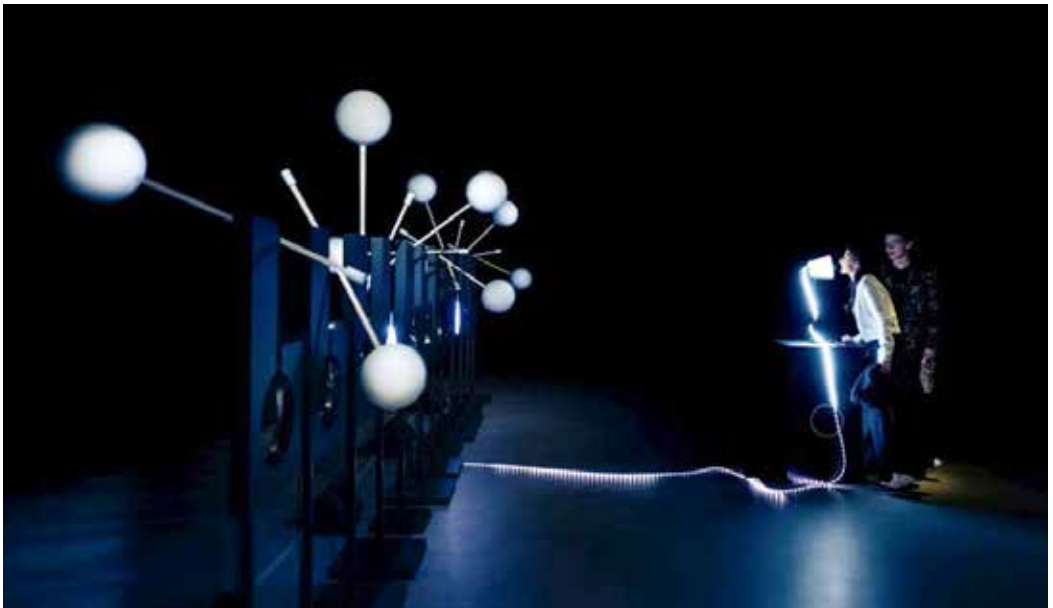
create your world (p. 258) has been supporting the next generation of designers and creatives since 1998. The program connects young people, invites them to exchange ideas, is committed to their future prospects and gives exposure to their concerns. During the festival, create your world will occupy more than 2,000 square meters on the second floor of POSTCITY—transforming it into an inspiring playground where you can experiment, tinker, and discuss with young and young-at-heart explorers. You should certainly take a look at the exhibition in which we present the projects that won the u19 category of the Prix Ars Electronica.

Flood the Zone with Courage (p. 254) is a participatory art project by Ars Electronica and the JKU's **Circus of Knowledge** that responds to the paralyzing effects of global crises. Together with artists, activists and students, you can try out new ways of protesting and getting involved in civil society. During the festival, the project will unfold in public spaces and POSTCITY—with live interventions, a creative center called Pavilion against Indifference, and international **protest labs** that combine digital tools with local activism. When we think about the practice and impact of art in times of upheaval, we need to consider not only the artists, but also the institutions that support them. So, what role does Ars Electronica play—and what does it actually want to achieve? Initially founded as just a festival in 1979, **Ars Electronica** has developed into a unique **ecosystem** over the decades.

Today, it is many things at once: a platform for artists that supports, disseminates, and celebrates their work. A forum for activists and initiatives that blur the boundaries between art, science, and technology and aim to improve our everyday lives. A learning space that enables students, job seekers, and everyone else to engage playfully and critically with new technologies. A laboratory-atelier that develops prototypes that aim to initiate social innovation. A creative partner for companies that helps them not only generate profits, but also create meaning and social benefit. All of this is driven by the question: How do we want to live in the future and how can we make this future a reality? As part of this year's festival, we not only want to introduce you to the Ars Electronica ecosystem, but also invite you to discuss our current projects with us. You can talk to the researchers, developers, and artists of the **Ars Electronica Futurelab** (p. 392), who are experimenting with exciting prototypes at the interface of art, technology and society. Or with the team members of **Ars Electronica Solutions** (p. 412), who are working on innovative storytelling for science lighthouses such as the **ESA** or interactive installations for museums such as the **Gasometer Oberhausen** or the **Pinakothek Munich** as well as events such as **EXPO 2020 Dubai**. Right next door, we invite you to exchange and discuss in the **Art Thinking Lounge** (p. 82) and **POSTCITY Town Hall**.

Since its opening on January 1, 2009, the **Deep Space 8K** (p. 320) at the Ars Electronica Center has been a crowd puller—and a hotspot of the Ars Electronica Festival year after year. Artists and scientists from all over the world use the unique stage to present their breathtaking 3D applications, gigapixel images and immersive performances. Over the years, Deep Space 8K has been the stage for researchers from the Louvre, the Museo Reina Sofía and the Vatican Museums, presenting works by artists such as Hermann Nitsch and H.R. Giger, as well

as pioneering digital works by Karl Sims. In 2010, ASIMO, then the world's most advanced humanoid robot, even made an appearance here. In 2025 we present exclusive programs with contributions from the **National Gallery London** (p. 322), the **National Gallery Washington** (p. 337), and the **Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna** (p. 333). We also celebrate the **year of quantum science and technology**, and provide a stage for artistic performances and university research projects on motion tracking and gaming.



Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition: *From 0* by Superbe (BE) © Quentin Chevrier

Who needs art in times like these?

Amid global crises and radical upheavals, the Ars Electronica Festival asks what role art can play—as a catalyst for new perspectives, as a space for reflection, and as a driving force for a collectively shaped future.

When we no longer understand the world around us, when things change faster than we can comprehend them, we humans apparently tend to act irrationally—we pay more attention to how loud a voice is than to what it says, and we prefer to believe what we want to hear rather than what is actually true. We find ourselves back in Plato's cave, worshipping the interpreters of shadows.

With these words, Gerfried Stocker opens his curatorial statement for Ars Electronica 2025. With this in mind, let's take a look at the central themes of this year's Festival for Art, Technology, and Society.

Where we stand

Status quo, you know, is Latin for "the mess we're in".

—Ronald Reagan

Nothing remains of Francis Fukuyama's 1989 prediction of "the end of history." Instead, the Anthropocene seems to be turning into a disaster.

Whether it's the economy, society, politics, or the environment—everything is in crisis. Things we took for granted—such as the commitment to the transatlantic alliance, the Paris Climate Agreement, or liberal democracy itself—are being called into question.

In 2025, Xi Jinping and China will be viewed more positively than Donald Trump and the United States in more than 100 countries, according to a survey by the Democracy Perception Index. The world seems to have reached a tipping point—but is it a turning point, a collapse, or perhaps even a new beginning? Donald Trump has ended the US foreign policy established by Franklin D. Roosevelt, which was geared towards international cooperation, and replaced it with his "America First" agenda. At the same time, he is attacking liberal democracy and its institutions head-on. But radical forces are flourishing in many European countries as well—in Hungary, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Portugal, and Poland, there are increasingly open calls to destroy the system, weaken international alliances, or even dissolve them altogether. Meanwhile, authoritarian states such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran are striving for a multipolar world order that will secure their own spheres of influence. Politics based on "law rather than power" seems to be giving way once again to an attitude that Thucydides described in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*: "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."

Technological progress is unfolding at a breathtaking pace. Increasingly, we find ourselves torn between utopian and dystopian

visions of a world based on intelligent machines. And by “we,” we don’t just mean laypeople. While “AI accelerationists” such as Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, rave about a new “age of intelligence,” the “AI safety community”—AI researchers such as Eliezer Yudkowsky and Daniel Kokotajlo—warn that AI could herald the end of humanity. Others, such as leading computer scientist Ilya Sutskever, seem to be both “boomers” and “doomers,” while experts such as scientist and author Kate Crawford advocate for “AI ethics” and call for a focus on the negative consequences of AI here and now rather than hypothetical dangers in the distant future: the exploitation of people, the misuse of data, and negative consequences for the environment.

The fact is that the academic world currently plays only a minor role in the development of Artificial Intelligence. The field is dominated by a few powerful tech companies engaged in a relentless race. To win this race, unprecedented amounts of capital, data, computing power, and human expertise are being deployed—and any form of regulation is being prevented by any means necessary. In such a climate, societal interests are neglected. It’s not about what benefits the general public, but about using “everything apps” to retain millions of users, generate billions in revenue, and ensure further growth, as journalist Matteo Wang writes. Instead of useful tools that meaningfully support our lives, we are threatened by a flood of bots that tell us what we want to hear, assist us with shopping, and collect even more information about us in the process. It is no longer us who control the technological mega-systems of our world, but rather the other way around: these systems control us. Because the power of the tech industry continues to grow, journalist and author Karen Hao sees a new empire emerging that exploits people and extracts resources worldwide—all under the guise of a “civilizing mission” that would bring progress and modernity. Climate change is accelerating, leading to increasingly severe storms, floods, and droughts. These extreme events destroy livelihoods, fuel conflicts, and drive people from their homes.

Although we have made great strides in green energy, the pace is far from sufficient. Looking to the future, our prospects for success are bleak: the rise of political forces that deny climate change raises fears that we will fail to seize the window of opportunity we still have to mitigate the crisis.

Our world is changing at an unprecedented pace. It is becoming more complex and unstable. Our future seems more uncertain than ever. This makes a Festival like Ars Electronica all the more important, as it takes the status quo as its starting point and asks how art and culture can contribute to changing things for the better.

Living in a State of Uncertainty

We may be living through times of unprecedented change, but in uncertainty lies the power to influence the future. Now is not the time to despair, but to act.

—Rebecca Solnit

We don’t like uncertainty. And for good reason. “We fear and avoid uncertainty because, in terms of survival, we need and want answers,” says journalist and author Maggie Jackson. “We need to solve problems; we need to know what to eat and what to do. That’s why, over the course of evolution, we’ve developed a stress response when we’re confronted with something new, unexpected, unclear, or ambiguous—our bodies and brains immediately go into alarm mode.” Evolution has made our brains the perfect prediction machine.

It not only helps us understand the world around us, but also constantly think ahead about how things might develop and how we should respond. From an evolutionary point of view, everything we think and do is aimed at combating chaos and creating order.

To ensure that our predictions work not only in the moment but also over longer periods of time, we have begun to observe our environment, collect data, and identify patterns. Whether as nomads or settled farmers, knowledge of future developments and events has always been a decisive advantage, often even essential for survival. Nothing has changed in this respect to this day. But no matter how much we strive to minimize uncertainty, the world and our lives are characterized by constant change. The success of our species therefore depends not only on our ability to reduce uncertainty, but also on our ability to adapt, discover new things, and develop solutions. “The uncertainty of the moment—the realization that you have reached the limits of your knowledge—triggers a series of neural processes: your attention expands, your brain becomes more open to new information, and your working memory is strengthened,” says Maggie Jackson. Or as psychologist Joseph Cable puts it: “This is the moment when the brain says to itself: There is something to learn here.”

But why is it so difficult for us to evolve and master the challenges of our time? Perhaps because, for most of human history, there was little need to think long term. Threats were usually immediate, so our survival depended on quick, short-term reactions. The risks we face today are of a different nature. “We no longer live in a world of clear, local cause-and-effect relationships, and the greatest threats to our civilization unfold over decades or centuries,” write Ella Saltmarsh and Beatrice Pembroke, founders of the *Long Term Project*.

However, the longer we remain stuck in the confusion and uncertainty of comprehensive political, social, and technological change, the more our confidence in our institutions and systems to develop viable solutions dwindles.

This, in turn, creates collective stress that makes us susceptible to rigid thinking patterns and ideological simplifications.

In such a polarized society, it becomes nearly impossible to find satisfactory compromises.

Instead of clinging to outdated concepts, we should learn to embrace uncertainty and seek new solutions, says Maggie Jackson. She points to studies that show that creativity and curiosity go hand in hand with the ability to withstand the stress of uncertainty. Uncertainty is not only a threat. It is also the source of our greatest hopes, because it means that the future is not yet written. Uncertainty opens up possibilities.

The Role of Artistic and Cultural Practices in Times of Radical Change

Giving people access to data most often leaves them feeling overwhelmed and disconnected, not empowered and poised for action. This is where art can make a difference. Art does not show people what to do, yet engaging with a good work of art can connect you to your senses, body, and mind. It can make the world felt. And this felt feeling may spur thinking, engagement, and even action.

—Olafur Eliasson

Instead of doing things the way they have always been done, most artists see uncertainty as their greatest strength. They not only accept the chaos of the world, they celebrate and embrace it. Artists expect that even the best plans and most compelling visions will not unfold as expected. They consciously seek the unexpected—and make new discoveries.

“It’s not that the ball of an idea [...] is automatically destined to move in the direction predetermined by the person who threw it first. The interception of the idea—and the twist it can be given once it is captured between our hard drives as it travels through the world—can fundamentally change its trajectory. Things can fly back and forth for a long time or pick up spins and speeds that take them into completely unexpected orbits,” write Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta of Raqs Media Collective about their artistic practice.

That does not mean that sound plans or clear goals are unnecessary. But we should not turn them into dogma—especially when the world around us is changing so rapidly. It takes courage and openness to allow new insights that challenge our thinking and change our goals.

Of course, it makes no sense to talk about “artists” here as if they all use the same methods or think in the same way. But that is precisely the point: the diversity of their perspectives and approaches is essential for a vibrant, pluralistic, and innovative society—their sharp analyses as much as their romantic gestures, their concrete proposals as much as their wild speculations. Artists create spaces and moments in which we can free ourselves from constraints and dogmas and see the world anew. They enable us to experience ideas emotionally and physically and to let our thoughts wander.

Novels and poems, paintings and photographs, songs and films—they all shape our collective memory of the past, our experience of the present, and our hopes for the future. Art challenges the “monopolization of possible realities,” as author, journalist, cultural philosopher, and teacher Mark Fisher put it. And it is culture that politics follows. As the most important exhibition of every Ars Electronica Festival, the Prix Ars Electronica exhibition brings together outstanding artistic works that deal with the defining technologies and issues of our time—as a mirror, as an intervention, as a vision.

The large-scale Theme Exhibition, in turn, invites visitors to experience art physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The Campus exhibition highlights how art universities around the world are rethinking their teaching—and thus actively shaping the future of artistic practice. The collaboration between art and science is exemplified by the LIT exhibition.

Every Ars Electronica celebrates artistic creativity in all its facets and forms of expression. Through exhibitions, performances, and concerts, the Festival shows that art is above all an attitude. Art is “not a thing, but a way,” as author and philosopher Elbert Hubbard put it.

Resistance & Collectiveness and Democratic Responsibilities

Human Existence is a constant battle among competing impulses—between self-love and love of others, between the noble and the base, between the desire for freedom and the desire for order and security—and because these struggles never end, the fate of liberalism and democracy in the world are never settled.

—Robert Kagan

Democracy is not a state of being. It is a process that unfolds when we act as citizens. In authoritarian systems, everything emanates from the leadership—usually the leader—and everyone else must follow or remain silent. In a democracy, this dynamic is reversed: we, the citizens, must act, articulate our ideas and desires, and demand that our representatives implement them.

Democracy is complex, slow, and demanding. To avoid a concentration of power, it must be designed to be “inefficient” in a sense. Nevertheless, no other political system we know of offers individuals such a degree of security, freedom, and self-determination—and the possibility of continuously changing course.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that “democracies value both freedom and equality, both personal freedom and social justice.” While inextricably linked, these ideals inevitably come into conflict with one another. “Young people need to understand that conflict is to be expected and is not a sign of a failing system,” historian and educator Paul Gagnon put it succinctly.

Sometimes democracy flourishes; sometimes it doesn’t work, comes under pressure, and needs to be defended. Today, liberal democracy is threatened from outside by authoritarian regimes and from within by extreme forces that declare progress itself to be evil. As a supposed solution, they promote a return to a simple and familiar past—one that, of course, never existed.

That’s dangerous. When asked how he went bankrupt, Mike Campbell replies in Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*: “Two ways. First gradually, then suddenly.” It’s a very apt description of the collapse of political orders—and of what could lie ahead if we don’t stand up to the forces seeking to undermine or destroy our system. Faster than we think, we could find ourselves in a form of “competitive authoritarianism” “in which parties participate in elections, but the abuse of power by incumbents systematically distorts the competitive conditions to the disadvantage of the opposition,” as political scientist Steven Levitsky writes. “We are now in a situation where we are all being tested in one way or another—and where we must decide what we stand for,” as Barack Obama put it during a discussion event in June 2025.

Artists have always been at the forefront of resistance against authoritarian forces—if only because their work is based on freedom of expression. As Robert De Niro said in Cannes: “Art is democratic.

Art is inclusive, it brings people together. Art seeks truth. Art thrives on diversity. And that is precisely why art is a threat ... to autocrats and fascists.”

But fighting against something or someone is not enough in the long run. It is always about working for something and forging coalitions. This means reaching out to other communities, understanding their needs, finding common ground, and developing inclusive visions for the future—exactly what a Festival like Ars Electronica has made its *raison d’être*.

As a society, we form a collective—whether we want to or not. But becoming an active part of a community within this larger whole and working together to move things forward is something completely different. Artists often work together and know what makes this successful. It is important to “disagree when necessary and agree whenever possible,” writes the Raqs Media Collective, looking back on a variety of projects in which “agreements and disagreements did not cancel each other out in a zero-sum game, but led to new levels of connectedness.”

Strengthening the “community muscle” is more urgent today than ever before. Journalist and author Derek Thompson describes how disruptive technologies over the past few decades have led us to spend more and more time alone. Cars, television, smartphones, social media, streaming services: they were all marketed with the promise of bringing us closer together—and yet they have driven us further apart. Our social lives are increasingly reduced to our own families, a few close friends, and digital “tribes.” What is disappearing is what sociologists call the “village”—the social fabric that emerges when we talk to our neighbors, join clubs, or attend events such as church services. Today, we hardly ever meet people with whom we share some things but disagree on many others—and we are rapidly losing the ability to communicate across differences. It seems downright cynical when Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, whose platforms have contributed significantly to polarization and loneliness, now touts AI bots as our future friends or even romantic partners.

Festivals are more important today than ever before—above all because they bring people together. This is particularly true of Ars Electronica, which appeals to so many different communities that are united by their shared interest in shaping the future, but differ significantly in their perspectives and approaches. By creating temporary spaces where people from different countries, cultures, disciplines, and fields can meet, listen to each other, and discover what they have in common, Ars Electronica becomes a catalyst for dialogue, empathy, and change.

In addition, Ars Electronica presents numerous projects and initiatives that take a clear stand against authoritarianism and oppression—as well as those that strengthen social cohesion. They all combine art, science, and civil society into an inspiring force for freedom and self-determination.

The exhibition *State of the ART(ist)* highlights the existential threats facing many artists today—threats such as repression, displacement, and ecological disasters. Here, art is an expression of resistance, hope, and survival. The Award for Digital Humanity emphasizes that art functions as a humanistic practice—one that critically reflects on digital developments and points to alternatives for a more just and democratic future. The European Union Prize for Citizen Science, in turn, shows how art, research, and social engagement can intertwine to shape actively an inclusive and sustainable society. The *Flood the Zone with Courage* campaign explores new forms of protest and civic engagement that combine digital tools with local activism. Special attention is also paid to the next generation: the *create your world* program creates spaces for young perspectives and creative self-empowerment—as an investment in a future built on openness, participation, and imagination. Eighty years after the end of World War II and in the midst of a new global arms race, this year's Theme Symposium will focus intensively on strategies and narratives surrounding European security, peacekeeping between societies and states, and the role, methods, and strategies of investigative journalism in times of (information) war.

Building Infrastructure, Imparting Skills, Promoting Innovation—Digital Agency & Sovereignty

Now is the time for Europe
to be digitally sovereign.

**—Angela Merkel, Mette Frederiksen,
Kaja Kallas, and Sanna Marin
in a joint letter to Ursula von der Leyen**

The world we have created is permeated by digital technologies. Those who develop, implement, and control these technologies wield enormous power. It is therefore no surprise that digital sovereignty is at the top of the political agenda everywhere. But what does it actually mean to be digitally sovereign?

Essentially, it is about the ability of a state or organization to shape its digital future independently. Such digital sovereignty encompasses a physical level (infrastructure and technology), a code level (standards, rules, design), and a data level (ownership, data flows, use).

The US, China, and Europe are pursuing very different approaches to securing their digital sovereignty. The US is committed to an open digital space in which companies can operate with virtually no restrictions. China is pursuing a heavily state-controlled path. Europe has opted for a model that focuses on individual rights.

These differences are most evident in the way data is handled. The US supports the free flow of both personal and non-personal data. There is no federal regulation governing the handling of data, although individual states have enacted their own laws. In China, the Personal Information Protection Law came into force in 2021, setting out rules for the processing and protection of personal data.

Non-personal data is classified according to specific criteria such as national security or public interest. The Cybersecurity Law of 2017 and the Data Security Law of 2021 also regulate data transfers abroad. In Europe, the protection of personal data is considered a fundamental right and has been regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) since 2018. Non-personal data should flow freely, but fair access rules must be observed.

The US, China, and Europe are also taking different approaches to Artificial Intelligence. After Donald Trump abolished his predecessor's "AI Bill of Rights," the US is currently relying more or less on self-regulation by companies. China, on the other hand, has established state-controlled AI governance with measures such as the "Administrative Provisions on Algorithmic Recommendations" and the "National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund." Europe is pursuing a very comprehensive regulatory approach with the AI Act, the Digital Markets Act (DMA), and the Digital Services Act (DSA). The focus is on human rights, transparency obligations, and analyses for high-risk AI systems.

Regulation is important because it provides a framework for digital activity. However, these rules must also be effective in practice: companies that flout the rules must be held accountable. But that will not be enough.

Today, the major tech companies are almost exclusively based in the US and China. Furthermore, American and Chinese companies operate more than 90 percent of the data centers used by other companies and institutions worldwide for AI work. "Oil-producing countries have had a disproportionate influence on international affairs; in an AI-driven near future, computing power providers could have something similar, as they control access to a critical resource," says Oxford professor Vili Lehdonvirta.

This is a major problem for Europe, especially in view of an increasingly fragmented global political landscape. Europe's strongest lever is its market of 450 million users, which no globally active company can ignore.

But apart from this "Brussels effect," Europe currently has few trump cards up its sleeve.

To achieve digital sovereignty, the EU must therefore build infrastructure, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, digitize public services, teach basic digital skills, and train IT professionals. All of this is set out in the EU's "Digital Compass"—the political program for shaping the digital decade until 2030.

If this succeeds, Europe will be able to develop, operate, and use its own technologies. If it fails, US corporations will continue to determine our digital future—and will likely cause the same problems they have already caused with social media. Why? Because these companies are financed by venture capital—and therefore must grow constantly. Not because they follow an ideological growth dogma, but because growth brings tangible economic benefits: as long as their price-earnings ratios (P/E ratios) remain high, investors expect expansion and pay high sums for shares. This makes them considerably more valuable. This, in turn, enables tech companies to pay top talent—or competitors—not with scarce cash, but with lucrative stock options, while at the same time getting them to support and promote the narrative of growth. As blogger, journalist, and author Cory Doctorow writes, this creates a "micro- and macro-economy of growth pressure." In this system, new products and trends do not serve the common good, but rather the logic of permanent expansion.

Artificial Intelligence is a powerful form of technology. But that is precisely why our knowledge, data, resources, and money should not be invested in flattering agents who tell us what we want to hear or in shopping chatbots that recommend products we don't need. When Microsoft CTO Kevin Scott raves that in the "Agentic Web" everything will run "asynchronously" in the future, he essentially means that Big Tech is climbing to the next level of the attention economy: With the help of AI agents that make decisions, act, and above all shop on our behalf while we are busy doing other things, the tech industry wants to monetize something that has naturally been limited until now: our attention.

As part of Ars Electronica 2025, a whole series of artistic projects will be shown that deal with the consequences of “surveillance capitalism,” a term coined by social psychologist, philosopher, and author Shoshana Zuboff. These projects will ask questions about what role we humans are actually intended to play in the future visions of Big Tech. These projects will be presented in the Theme Exhibition. The Theme Conference will also address these and related issues.

Numerous lectures, Town Hall meetings, and workshops will discuss what visions of the future might look like that are based on transparent and purposeful technologies, increase our productivity, promote creativity, and enable scientific progress. Last but not least, the EuroStack White Paper will be discussed. Based on the premise that we need technologies that contribute rather than extract, the Ars Electronica Festival will also address the question of how art and culture can promote Europe’s digital sovereignty.

Agreeing on Environmental Actions & Implementing the Green Deal

It’s always been a problem, that the most dangerous thing on the planet is invisible, odorless, tasteless, and doesn’t actually do anything to you directly.

—Bill McKibben

On August 1, 2024, humanity had used up the planet’s ecological resources for the entire year. Bad enough, this global average obscures the fact that wealthier countries bear proportionately far more responsibility. Qatar reached its “Overshoot Day” on February 11, the US on March 14, and Canada on March 15. South Korea exceeded its limit on April 4. Almost all European countries followed suit in April and May, along

with Australia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Japan. China reached this point on June 1, and the United Kingdom on June 3.

2024 was the hottest year since records began and part of a decade that is considered the warmest ever recorded. What is sounding alarm bells worldwide is hitting Europe particularly hard: no other continent has warmed as much since the 1980s, according to the European State of the Climate Report 2024. The effects are dramatic: we are experiencing extreme droughts, storms, and floods with increasing frequency. But none of this is new. For decades, scientists have been warning—ever since the report *The Limits to Growth*—about the ecological and social consequences of our actions: for our health, our livelihoods, and the stability of our societies. It has long been known that when the climate changes drastically in a short period of time, social tensions, conflicts, and migration are the immediate consequences—with profound implications for our civilization.

In the mid-2020s, this is no longer a bleak future scenario—it is reality. Climate change is accelerating, and we can no longer reverse it. But we can slow its momentum, buy time, and learn to deal with its effects. And this is precisely where there is reason for hope.

In 2024, more than 92 percent of global growth in electricity capacity came from renewable energies. A total of 585 gigawatts were added: 42 percent from solar energy, 29 percent from hydropower, 25 percent from wind energy, and the rest from other sources. However, as with resource consumption, there are significant regional differences. Asia—especially China—added 421.5 gigawatts last year alone and now leads the way with a total of 2,382 gigawatts of renewable capacity. Europe follows with an increase of 70.1 gigawatts to a total of 848 gigawatts. North America increased by 45.9 gigawatts to 573 gigawatts. With an increase of only 4.2 gigawatts, Africa has a total of 67 gigawatts. This uneven development shows that the energy transition will also produce winners and losers—and thus a new (im)balance in global power relations.

Overall, global growth in renewable energy capacity was 15.1 percent in 2024. This is encouraging, but not enough. To triple global green electricity capacity by 2030, annual growth of at least 16.6 percent is needed. Whether this will be achieved is questionable, especially in light of political forces that deny climate change and continue or return to a “drill, baby, drill” approach.

Our way of life has always depended largely on the resources and, in particular, the forms of energy available to us. As long as energy had to be generated with great effort (labor), products were expensive to manufacture and purchase—and therefore had to be durable. This changed with the advent of petroleum. Suddenly, cheap energy was available in abundance and goods could be produced cheaply and in large quantities. This gave rise to the throwaway society with precarious jobs, growing inequality, and an escalating ecological emergency. We are now at the dawn of a new era of energy production, and it remains to be seen how this change will shape our economy and culture.

But we don’t just need new forms of energy. We need to tell fundamentally new stories about the future—stories about clean air, less noise, and healthier food, but above all about secure livelihoods, fair jobs, and social equality. We need stories about a future that does not rely on cheaper things that exacerbate our crisis yet do not make us happier, but rather produces goods that actually improve our lives.

A festival like Ars Electronica can contribute to this. It not only brings together a global network of experts and promotes exchange on questions about the future. Above all, it serves as a prototypical platform where people from all over the world can draw inspiration and motivation from those who are already working on green solutions—and return home with new drive to take action themselves.

Preparing for the Unpredictable— Education in the 21st Century

Give the pupils something to do,
not something to learn; and the
doing is of such a nature as to demand
thinking; learning naturally results.

—John Dewey

In the mid-2020s, we are less able than ever to predict what our world and our lives will look like in the future. What does this mean for our education system? What should it actually achieve if we don’t know what skills will be in demand in 10, 15 or 20 years’ time? How do we prepare ourselves—and, above all, the next generation—for the unpredictable?

“People who have become so-called routine experts often fall into carryover mode—they apply old knowledge and familiar rules of thumb to new situations. And that’s when they start to fail,” says author Maggie Jackson. Rebecca Winthrop, an expert on global education, emphasizes that education is much more than the mere transfer of knowledge: “It’s about learning to live with others, getting to know yourself, and developing the flexible skills needed to navigate an uncertain world.” In a dynamic world, it is not primarily factual knowledge that counts, but the willingness and motivation to continuously learn new things. In times of uncertainty, it is these qualities that make people creators and trailblazers. To promote this, education must create spaces where children, young people, and adults can experience how fulfilling it is to explore, discover, and solve problems creatively. “Children need to find their spark,” says Rebecca Winthrop. They need opportunities to engage intensively with something, overcome challenges, and grow through difficult tasks—especially at a time when Artificial Intelligence seems to be taking more and more work off our hands with seemingly little effort.

So what should we learn—and why and how? The Ars Electronica Festival 2025 will address these questions in a series of lectures and discussions that bring together perspectives from education, art, science, and business.

Change Course

If we want people to face the future with confidence again, we must learn to see it as an opportunity. We need inspiring images and stories of a future in which we want to live—one that is not characterized by limitations and scarcity, but by possibilities and abundance. And we must create the institutions and ecosystems that will make these visions a reality. “To get the future we want, we need to build and invent more of what we need,” say journalists and authors Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson.

Progress has never been linear and is never guaranteed. Nothing in the course of human history has been or is inevitable. If life has improved, it is only because people have made decisions, taken responsibility, and changed the world—not because things would have turned out better on their own. Educator and historian Paul Gagnon said that a look at history is enough to “develop a deep understanding of how difficult it is to preserve civilization or improve human life—and how we have nevertheless succeeded time and again.”

Every generation must drive progress forward in new ways. Today, we too are faced with the question of whether to accept the status quo or actively steer things in a direction we consider desirable and necessary. But how can we achieve this?

MIT economists Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson write that we must question dominant narratives, break down existing norms, strengthen countervailing forces, and find political solutions. As Europe’s largest platform for Art, Technology, and Society, Ars Electronica wants to contribute to this collective effort: We try to ask the right questions, promote dialogue, forge new alliances, inspiring people to ask themselves, “What if?”—and encourage them to take action.

This commitment shapes not only our annual Festival, but all our activities throughout the year. Since its founding in 1979, Ars Electronica has become a creative ecosystem dedicated to a central question: What kind of future do we want to live in—and how can we shape it?

46 years after its founding, Ars Electronica is many things: a home for artists whose work is supported and made visible here; a platform for activists and initiatives that connect Art, Science, and Technology to improve our everyday lives; a space for education that helps students, job seekers, and lifelong learners to critically engage with technology and shape their own future. A laboratory and workshop where prototypes and spaces for experimentation are created. A creative engine that helps companies think beyond profit and consider meaning and impact, and help shape change.

We host an annual Festival, curate exhibitions, organize conferences, issue open calls, conduct artistic and scientific research, develop prototypes, design immersive experiences, and create spaces where people can meet—and ideas come to life. We do all this with and for artists, scientists, technologists, activists, educators, institutions, companies, political decision-makers, and the general public.

We know that we cannot change the course of events on our own. But perhaps we can motivate our visitors to join a project in their neighborhood. Perhaps we can encourage young people to believe in their ideas and create something of their own. Perhaps we can inspire CEOs to align their companies in such a way that they not only generate profit but also create social value. Perhaps we will give politicians an impetus to rethink their role—and their legacy. And perhaps we will help people realize that they—that we all—can indeed play a role in shaping our future. At least that is our hope. And who knows?

What lies ahead seems improbable.
Once it has passed, it seems inevitable.

—Rebecca Solnit

DISCURSIVE AND PROFES FORMATS

PROGRAM SIONAL

The
Theme
Symposium
explores how panic
functions in our brains
and bodies, as well as how we
can confront both individual and
collective states of panic. It also sheds
light on strategies, in the form of artistic and
cultural practices, that could help us navigate and
live with uncertainty instead of panic when faced with it.

— Ana Maria Carabelea and Daniela Sivestrin,
Co-Curators Theme Symposium

Discursive program and professional formats

Ars Electronica Festival is a space of exchange for those interested in developing and innovating for societal and cultural good. Artists and activists share their methods and visions in our discursive formats, professionals exchange with policy makers, and cultural practitioners keep up to date on trends and current topics. Thanks to this, Ars Electronica serves as a place to evolve ideas as well as networks, to disseminate novel solutions, and to maximize their visibility and impact. Here is where panic turns into progress.

Varied visions: Conference program

This year's program on the **Conference Stage** focuses on mitigation strategies for panic in challenging times. Threats of war and treats of climate emergency, strategies for digital sovereignty, the role of arts and culture in strengthening Europe's resilience, the evolution of AI and its impact on societies and creation processes, as well as the development of medical and quantum technologies: all these are among the major topics to be discussed over the course of five days in POSTCITY.

We open the program with an investigation of ***Panic in a Global Context: Neuroscience, Culture, and Crisis***, curated by Daniela Silvestrin. The conference will shed light on the cultural history of dystopian narratives, which have always served as a mirror of social insecurities. Also under discussion: ways in which current threats—from wars to political upheavals—are triggering new forms of panic and shaping our coexistence. The aim is to understand and reflect on **panic as both a societal and individual phenomenon** from a variety of perspectives, while also examining strategies to confront and overcome it through peacebuilding initiatives and community work at both individual and societal levels. From a **medical perspective**, various brain regions such as the amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex are involved in anxiety and panic, working

together with neurotransmitters like serotonin and noradrenaline to regulate the fear response. Yet panic is not merely felt by individuals; it also reflects the **complexity of global systems** and structures.

Embedded in and detached from the economic, technological, social, and political web of contemporary crises, arts and culture represent a privileged site for understanding the making and remaking of these conditions. To mark **30 years of Austrian membership in the European Union**, we dedicate a two-day conference to ***Reimagining Europe's Future*** within this year's theme symposium. This offers a space in which to reflect on the EU's policies and rethink the role of the arts in shaping what comes next.

On Thursday, we stage the **STARTS Day 2025** as an ***Archipelago of Possible Futures*** summit, curated by Francesca Bria and José Luis de Vicente. Under the title ***From AI Wars to Dual Futures: Reclaiming Democracy in the Face of Authoritarian Tech***, we discuss Technological Sovereignty, Quantum Imagination, and the Democratic Stack. Prominent voices will take the stage, including artists, scientists, policymakers, critical technologists, and cultural workers, who will give thought to who builds the **infrastructure** and the **technological stack** we live inside and how can we reclaim its layers as sites of collective

agency. More than a mere policy summit or traditional symposium, this day is a curated choreography of high-stakes ideas, speculative infrastructures, and radical imagination.

Friday, day two of the European focus, is entitled ***Art and Culture in Times of Uncertainty: From Artistic Practice to Social Action***. Curated by Ana Maria Carabelea, the conference situates art and culture at the intersection of disciplinary paths, a site of collective and individual sense-making and translating complexities across disciplinary narratives. We shall look at how the **European Union**—through schemes like New European Bauhaus, STARTS, the EITs, and Horizon or Creative Europe—promotes artistic and cultural forms of expression and how culture can, in turn, inform policymaking. Artists then take the stage to discuss the political gestures within their work—whether as commentary, critique, or direct engagement with communities, politics, and public life. The afternoon shifts the focus on the role of art in addressing individual panic and **mental health**, as well as its contribution to medical literacy. In dialogue with EIT Health, EIT Culture & Creativity, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft, a mix of medical practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and artists reflect on the impact of an interdisciplinary approach to medical research and healthcare environments. On Saturday, we invite you to become spectators of ***Staged Realities***, curated by The Catalysts. From the ancient *deus ex machina* crane through Rossum's *Universal Robots*, technology has always been both at the core of stagecraft and fueling the imagination of playwrights. Today, AI enters the stage bringing new possibilities: it opens up new layers of creative experimentation and iteration, as well as supporting institutional growth and helping with audience development. It is indeed a powerful new tool, but how do we ensure we embrace it with care and understanding, while safeguarding our digital sovereignty? The hands-on program brings to stage leading practitioners, technologists, and researchers of **AI in theater and performative art**, and itself unfolds like a play. It begins with a Prologue to



© flap

set the scene, moving through three thematic Acts that explore the intersections of creativity, technological innovation, and social impact, and closes with an Epilogue to reflect on what kind of new reality is taking the stage.

Sunday, finally, is dedicated to an investigation of human impact and the position of humanity in the digital aera in the panel ***Earth as a Sensorium*** with Territorial Agency and Anthropocene experts. We also explore the concept of **Digital Humanism**, and dive into the question of authorities of knowledge creation in an **interactive session on Art+Science collaborations**.

The conference program has been developed and presented within the context of European Digital Deal, STARTS Ec(h)o, ACuTe, and Studiotopia, as well as in collaboration with EIT Culture and Creativity, EIT Health and the Open Innovation in Science Center of the Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport. Studiotopia and ACuTe are co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union. STARTS Ec(h)o is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101135691.

Community commitment: The Education Stage

The **Education Stage** is all about education, knowledge transfer, and social participation. Educators, researchers and cultural mediators will present innovative educational projects and creative learning concepts in talks, presentations, and discussions. The stage offers space for exchange and inspiration.

We start our education focus on Wednesday with the **Symposium Perspectives on Political Education**, a collaboration with the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour and the University of Education Upper Austria. In this symposium, we engage with different layers of reality and explore how they influence one another, as well as considering the opportunities and risks that arise from the simultaneous existence of multiple realities. We ask what role schools and educational institutions—as spaces of encounter—can play in helping people from different realities connect, with the goal of **strengthening democracy**.

On Thursday and Friday, we host the **E-Education Days**, but also continue the investigation into education for democracy with the symposium **Panic as Pedagogy: Learning for Critical Change**, curated by Andrew Newman. On Thursday, we speak about **Educating an A(ctivist) Intelligence**. As young people navigate a world fueled by AI, urgency and uncertainty challenge democratic futures. This session centers on **radical AI education** as civic armor, aligned with the festival's call for a "digital immune system" rather than falling prey to alarmism. Educational activists, youth organizers, and techno-critics will spotlight initiatives that transcend basic digital literacy: young learners conducting investigations into algorithmic bias, staging AI-driven performance interventions, and building democratic norms through collective code and critique. We close the day with a possible perspective for activist impact, investigating **how young people can contribute their perspectives through Citizen Science** approaches. On the second day, we look at **Learning to Disrupt: Non-Formal Education for Critical Change**. Museums, makerspaces,

and other cultural institutions have long been seen as spaces of learning and wonder—but despite their reach and creative potential, non-formal institutions remain under-recognized in education policy across Europe. The speakers will make the case for a new policy paradigm: one that invests in **non-formal education as a democratic infrastructure**. As trust in institutions falters, these spaces may hold the key to reconnecting young people to public life—not through slogans, but through shared practice, creative resistance, and care.

On Saturday, finally, we widen our perspective and delve into the topic of **Citizen Science** even more deeply. The conference **New Pathways: AI, Art, and Collaboration in Citizen Science**, curated by Daniela Silvestrin in collaboration with the **IMPETUS** project, explores the diverse potential of Citizen Science to drive innovation, creativity, and policy impact—while also addressing the challenges that come with it. Sessions will highlight **how AI technologies can enhance participation** and data use, and how **collaborations with artists** open new paths for community engagement and co-creation. We shall also address barriers to inclusion, data ethics, and the difficulty of **influencing policy**, particularly in under-resourced or politically unstable contexts. Through practical examples and current research, the program offers insights into building stronger, more inclusive, and impactful citizen science initiatives and showcases inspiring examples.

The Education Stage program has been developed and presented within the context of Critical Change-Lab and IMPETUS, as well as in collaboration with the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labor and the University of Education Upper Austria. Critical ChangeLab is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101094217—HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-04. IMPETUS is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101058677—HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01.

Possible practices: Workshops

In this year's workshop program, we move from ideas to implementation. The workshop program aims at capacity building and innovation both in the field of professionalizing cultural work and educational approaches, and artistic methodology.

The workshop ***Supporting your Research with the ERC*** by Aneta Krzemień Barkley provides an overview of European Research Council's funding opportunities, the evaluation procedure, and general advice on preparing a proposal. ***Keep Calm and Create a Critical ChangeLab***, hosted by Tactical Tech and the Critical ChangeLab consortium, explores practical tools and real-world strategies for designing democratic learning spaces. ***Human-Machine Teamwork*** by the GfG – Gruppe für Gestaltung explains how AI can become a productive team member in educational and cultural organizations. These workshops support our audience in **developing new professional skills**.

Reflective, yet practice oriented approaches to technology are offered in the workshops ***Archival Images of AI*** by Rasa Bocyte, ***AI TOOLBOX*** presented by the PREMIERE project, and ***CreAItivity*** by Philipp Wintersberger. We investigate the increasingly fluid boundaries between human and machine creativity, discuss both the potential and the limitations of AI systems, work with tools designed to facilitate the use of computer-based generative methods for creative work in the performing arts, and replace misleading visual tropes with more inclusive and realistic imagery by reusing cultural heritage collections.

In artist-led workshops such as ***Synthesis*** by Fara Peluso, ***Object-Object Mending*** by Xueyi Sun, and ***From Nature to Nozzle: DIY Bioplastic Filament*** by Sebla Harnuboglu Ogur, Axel Sylvester, and Umut Ogur, we demonstrate **innovative approaches to materials**

developed through artistic research. We inquire into energy and resource efficiency in digital fabrication through the lens of food-based bioplastics, learn how a DIY bioreactor can be built to grow *Spirulina* microalgae and produce pills, and construct a decentralized material ecology from items discarded by mainstream market logic.

In a workshop hosted by Masakhane, we work ***Towards nutritional datasets, sustainable preservation and economic empowerment*** and look at machine learning in African communities. Visitors are invited to participate in ***Micro-Rituals for "Dystopia Land"*** by Etsuko Itchihara, exploring dystopian scenarios and worldbuilding in the setting of an alternative Japan. A game of absurd sensing infrastructures that explores the forced convergence of technological sensing and more-than-human sensory capacities, finally, is offered in ***Canary in the Coal Mine*** by Denisa Pupalova, Léna Defay, and Lina Mittendorff.

The workshop program has been developed and presented within the context of Critical ChangeLab, ACuTe, Tilling Roots&Seeds and PREMIERE. ACuTe and Tilling Roots&Seeds are co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union. Critical ChangeLab is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101094217—HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-04. PREMIERE is funded by the European Union.



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Next networks: Professional formats

Throughout the five days of the festival, a bouquet of **lectures and talks** are presented in addition to the extensive conference program. Formats include **Meet the Artist**, and the **NeXus Forum**, as well as individual lectures delivered by Ars Electronica and its partners. These inputs not only offer insight into **trends in the field** and inspire **new ideas**, they also offer the opportunity to explore topics of future collaborations.

Through collaboration with major infrastructure initiatives such as the European endeavors **STARTS (Science+Technology+Arts)**, **New European Bauhaus (NEB)**, the **EIT for Culture & Creativity** and the **Creative Europe** program, but also international networks, this year's festival offers daily **professional networking opportunities**. Over breakfast, drinks or snacks, representatives of these infrastructures meet each other and mingle with the audience and network of Ars Electronica. This opens a unique space for exchanging ideas, where communities who might not often meet each other elsewhere find the possibility to expand their perspectives and scope. Thanks to the **diversity of professional communities** gathered here, Ars Electronica also hosts dedicated events and summits that boost interdisciplinary exchange. This year, the **EXCENTRIC** project benefits from this environment in a **Network Activation Event** on data sharing in the CCSIs.

The format of **Townhall meetings**, which are open to all and hosted by Ars Electronica and its

partners, allows our visitors to build networks on specific topics such as **Citizen Science, Theater and Digital Media, Art, Soil, and Community** and many more besides. Participants can meet the winners of the **VH Award**, or connect to the representatives of the **NEB Junction** project. Through the selected topics of these meetings, they offer speakers and audiences gathered in our conference program a dedicated space to **exchange on a more personal level**. They also allow those taking part to learn about possible funding avenues and business models. The Town Hall meetings are co-hosted in a space developed by **CIFRA**—our kitchen of the future. Though you will not find a fridge or stove here, this is where the recipes of tomorrow are being prepared. Emotions, ideas, and hopes blend with speculative ingredients. Each visitor receives a unique fusion of flavors—political, nostalgic, resistant, rewilding.

Numerous **Artist Drinks** let curators, artists, and culture and art professionals explore possibilities for joint endeavors. Our international artistic network meets in these gatherings, which are co-hosted by long-standing partners such as **Pro Helvetia**, Antenne du Québec à Berlin, and others. Connecting in the context of the **Gwangyang – Linz Media Arts Exchange 2025**, meeting the artists from Taiwan or Latin America who are presented in this year's festival, or just having a casual drink—new opportunities and a good time are guaranteed for all.



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EXHIBITION

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Panic has the
power to disorient us,
to paralyze us, to lead us
nowhere. And yet, at the same
time, it can also become a force that
anchors us in the here and now, at the
heart of the problems themselves—
precisely where fragility is greatest and where
we are most urgently needed.

— Manuela Naveau, Co-Curator Theme Exhibition

Theme Exhibition

Manuela Naveau (AT) / Co-Curator Theme Exhibition

PANIC: Complex. Absurd. Omnious.

When asked what title the thematic exhibition would bear, we responded with astonishment. What could be more urgent to interrogate, in a festival whose central theme in 2025 is *PANIC—yes/no*, than the title itself? It took a moment of reflection to realize that our concern was not solely with examining the current state of panic, but to ask deeper questions: What are we actually afraid of, what we ought to fear and why is it important?

Political spectacle in the grip of marketing frenzy, the return of warfare and militarisation, social inequalities, horrific violations of human rights, constraints on diversity and identity, climate change and environmental anxieties, commercial promises fabricating artificial needs, tendencies toward external control, and broader concerns about survival—these are but a few of the signs that we are edging ever closer to moments of individual or collective panic.

And above all, when the fear of panic becomes panic itself, what remains? What is left to choose from? To play dead or to flee—either way, to run away from the choice itself?

If panic represents the certainty of crisis, the

moment when fragility becomes visible and undeniable, then fear points to an existential state of anticipation of a crisis that might arise. A state that—according to the differentiation suggested by Keith Tester (2013)—is important because it not only tests our fragility and sensitivity, but makes us realize that anxiety is not necessarily a state that we need to suppress. Going further, we can ask ourselves: Is there something positive that could arise through panic? Could signs of panic contribute to something?

This exhibition traces the places where moments of fear and collective panic are rooted and discusses a way of imagining alternative scenarios.

COMPLEX (panic as fragmented multiplicity)

In her 2020 article *The Sisyphean Cycle of Technology Panics*, Amy Orben characterizes panic-laden states—historically triggered by major technological shifts—as “inefficient” and “ineffective.” Time and again, these cycles have gripped society with fear in response to emerging technologies. While Orben’s analysis primarily links panic and inefficiency to technological

developments, she also reminds us that panic is never free from political, economic, or social interests. However, in attempting to address complex issues, she argues that we often seek simplification via technological tools and procedures.

Even if we long for the simplicity of the things around us, we know that we live in a deeply complex reality characterized by transitions and profound changes, in which we are constantly searching for a balance in conditions of radical uncertainty. Times in which the very contours of what we deem familiar can shift abruptly, revealing themselves as something totally distant, almost alien. Times in which projecting thought beyond the immediacy of the present becomes an arduous task—and the future looms as a black hole in which we risk losing ourselves. Or could panic be a strategic endeavor to enable us to recognize ourselves and our environment in their complexity as a result?

ABSURD (Panic as a tool)

It is precisely within a context of uncertainty that we all become more susceptible to strategies of manipulation: the instrumentalization of our deepest doubts, concerns, and discomfort makes room for a pervasive narrative where panic is transformed into both the object and the instrument of propaganda. How is this possible? Chaos becomes a powerful strategy to urge the necessity for a superimposed order—when human suffering is turned into spectacle: something we are forced to witness, yet rendered unable to truly respond. The absurd emerges where systems of meaning fracture, and panic is exploited to generate consensus, sow confusion, divert collective attention, and ultimately neutralize response. Rules appear suspended, roles become blurred, and the very possibility of action short-circuited. If everything is destined to repeat itself, what meaning can any form of action or reaction still hold? On the contrary: Can the absurd moment of panic not also be understood as sudden but (more or less) welcome irritation that defies all reason and is thus able to explode thought patterns?

OMINOUS (Panic as a method)

Panic emerges as something that dwells in the recesses of collective consciousness. We sense that something is profoundly wrong, yet are unable to reach it—panic as the systematic method inducing this kind of obscurity, a fog that paralyzes response. When everything around us feels “wrong,” it becomes difficult to discern a point of departure from which meaningful change might begin. When everything feels virtually close, yet remains inevitably distant in reality, everyone ends up feeling implicated, but never truly obliged or compelled to act.

Threat does not always show itself. It often lies beneath the surface of normality, felt but unnamed. Thus it may seem that the only way to cope is to perform functionality—to keep pretending, at all costs, even when we sense that something essential is cracking.

Even when we perceive that something vital is being sacrificed.

Even when we realize that our world is not actually panicking enough?

This brings us back to fragility, and to the urging necessity to be acquainted with it, to root ourselves in it. Panic has the power to disorient, to immobilize, to lead us nowhere. And yet, at the same time, it may also resolve into a force that anchors us here and now, at the core of the very problems—within the very sites of fragility, where we most need to be. It is through this act of exposure that the possibility of something else, a potential exit, may begin to emerge: a way to imagine alternative scenarios and counter-narratives. Our exhibition invites the audience to inhabit this exposure as an unveiled space to move through, to breathe in and out. A space in which to rest, observe, feel, and perceive—because it is only when we start to recognize its contours that it becomes possible to embrace complexity, deconstruct absurdity, and confront threats. Because what is at stake is simply too important to just let it go.

Exhibition Text: Manuela Naveau & Martina Pace

Marta Revuelta (ES/CH), Laurent Weingart (CH)

AI Facial Profiling, Levels of Paranoia

In today's digital age, biometric surveillance systems powered by AI are becoming increasingly common. AI companies claim their systems can analyze a person's facial features to predict subtle patterns of so-called "suspect" personality types. Inspired by psychometric research that purports to detect criminal potential from a single photograph—and drawing from the world of firearms—we present a "physiognomic machine": a computer vision and pattern recognition system that assesses an individual's ability to handle firearms and predicts their threat level through biometric facial analysis. The device features a weaponized camera and an AI-driven mechanical system that classifies individuals into

two categories: high-risk threats and lower-risk subjects.

Situated between fiction and reality, the installation simulates a security protocol experience. It uses the individual as a point of departure for a critical examination of algorithmic bias, challenging the trust and legitimacy we place in so-called intelligent systems.

AI Facial Profiling, Levels of Paranoia, 2018–2020

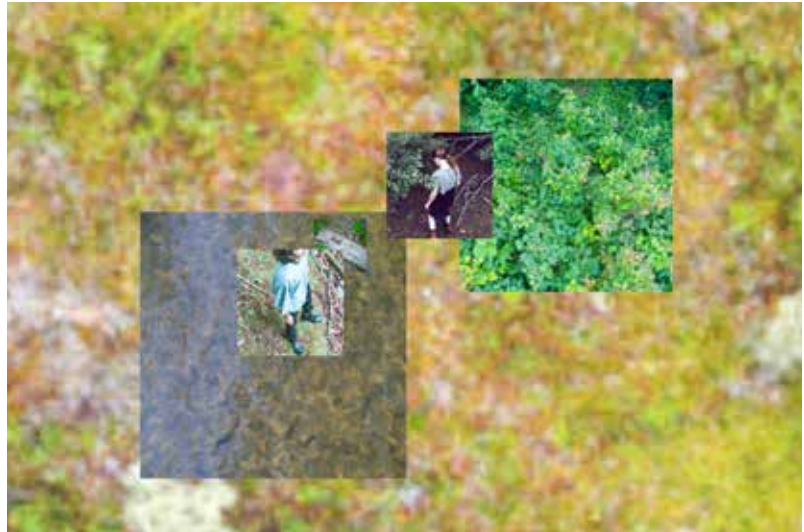
By Marta Revuelta, in collaboration with Laurent Weingart and Marc Wettstein

With the kind support of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, Switzerland.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.



© HEAD Baptiste Coulon



© Till Schönwetter

Till Schönwetter (DE)

a terrarium

a terrarium explores artificial life, survival, and collapse within a sealed environment. A projection maps an evolving simulation onto a miniature landscape, turning the terrarium into a living world. Visitors can read and influence the emerging narratives, sending “god prompts” to influence the system. Within, generative AI agents build shelters, cultivate land, and adapt to their surroundings. Their behavior is driven by a system inspired by *Generative Agents: Interactive Simulacra of Human Behavior* (Park et al., 2023), in which language-model cognition, memory, and reflection are combined to simulate believable planning and social dynamics.

The environment evolves continuously, shaped by agent actions and external interventions. Referencing artificial life research, ecological experiments, god games, and AI alignment debates, the project reflects on control, consequence, and the strange familiarity of artificial struggle.

Selected work of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

This project is presented with the support of the City of Gwangyang, the City of Linz and the Ars Electronica Festival as a recipient of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

Natalia Rivera (CO)

Bacteria cloud of clouds

Bacteria cloud of clouds is an art-sci project that investigates, maps, and cherishes the microbiobiodiversity found in the clouds of one of the rainiest places on earth, the biogeographical Chocó, in Colombia. Bacteria cloud is how we usually call part of the microbiome that surrounds a living organism; however studies in bioprecipitation have shown us that not only are there bacteria in the clouds but these microorganisms might have an important role in atmospheric physical and chemical processes. Clouds are living organisms themselves. The installation combines fog from rain water and a digital visualization of the open source genetic information of the microbiome. As we keep plants' seeds in banks to grow them in the future, the artist creates a digital seed of life from the clouds, as a way to keep and care for what we want to bring with us to upcoming worlds, those

we are co-creating. This installation develops the speculative idea of culturing clouds, culturing life through clouds, and enabling its diversification with them.

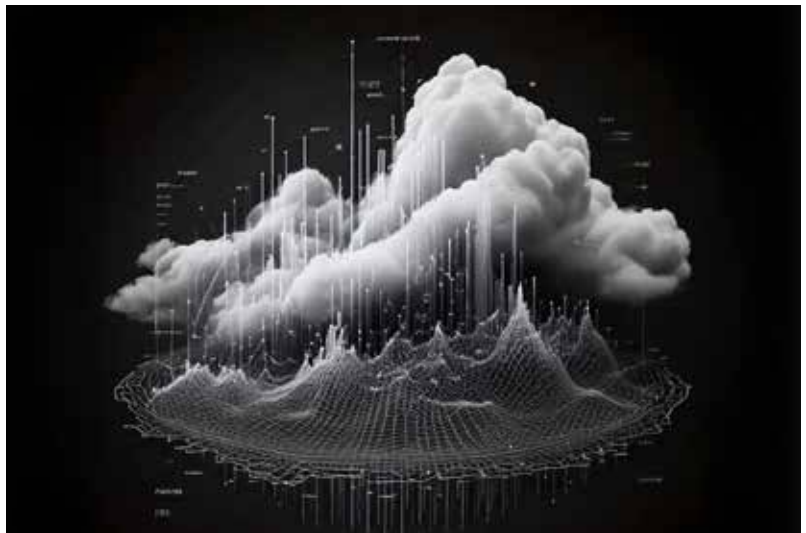
Produced in collaboration with Fredy Parra and María Cecilia Medina

Scientific advice and research: Lorena Medina, Juan Manuel Anzola, María Mercedes Zambrano, and Marcela Uribe. Laboratorio Corpogen and Laboratorio de Aguas y Alimentos UTP.

Support in research: Fredy Parra, Sara Arenas, and Michael Osorio

Communication, audio and video: Juan Felipe Fernández
Thanks for their support to the community of Carmelo, Chocó

The project has been produced as part of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards, a cooperation between Ars Electronica Festival and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO).



© Generated with Adobe Firefly by Natalia Rivera



© 2girls1comp, Grand Theft Auto V (Rockstar Games, 2013)

2girls1comp (CH/IT)

Dancing Plague

In *Dancing Plague*, a mod for *Grand Theft Auto V*, the game's traditionally gendered choreography is subverted, forcing every male NPC to dance feverishly whenever the player holds the H key. This intervention spotlights the inherent gender biases within the game's animation system, where dance moves are primarily designed for female performers, often objectified as sex workers. By redirecting these choreographies to male characters, the mod disrupts the rigid binaries coded into the game, creating a spectacle where masculinity is both liberated and challenged.

Azu Tiwaline, a French-Tunisian musician known for blending contemporary electronic music with sub-Saharan trance traditions, was commissioned to create the soundtrack. Her work underscores the mod's themes of ritual, trance, and liberation.

Made with *Grand Theft Auto V* (Rockstar Games, 2013)

Music: Magnetic Service (Extended Version) by Azu

Tiwaline featuring Cinna Peyghamy

With the permission of Livy Sound & Cylid Publishing.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Noemi Iglesias Barrios (ES)

Dat–Astral Chart

Dat–Astral Chart explores how data mining shapes digital identities and reflects on the ecological and social impact of hyperconnectivity. The project centers on a hexagonal interactive prediction machine that simulates fingerprint and phone scans to reveal participants' digital personality types, presented as twelve unique "digital signs." Visitors receive a personalized card describing their profile, blending playful fortune-telling aesthetics with critical reflection. The installation evokes classic prediction devices with lights, sound, and esoteric engravings, addressing datafication as a new form of extractivism with planetary consequences.

It invites audiences to question algorithmic influence on identity, free will, and the future, highlighting intersections between technology, materiality, and sustainability.

Supported by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) and the University of Fine Arts of Lisbon. Special thanks to all collaborators and institutions that made the realization of *Dat–Astral Chart* possible: Victor Mazón Gardoqui, Sérgio Lunik y Ora Labora.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© La Costa Studio

Marta Revuelta (ES/CH) in collaboration with Laurent Weingart (CH)

Droning

Autonomous Weapons and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Droning is an AI-driven art installation that interrogates the logic of autonomous weapons and the algorithmic reduction of human life to targetable data. At its core is a custom-built dirigible, inspired by military surveillance blimps and equipped with real-time computer vision trained on combat footage datasets, which surveils and classifies visitors as either “enemy combatants” or “neutral civilians.”

A ground control station displays these classifications and potential strike decisions, simulating the logic of automated systems. The installation offers a critical reflection on *algorithmic targeting*—how machine perception translates movement and posture into threat typologies.

Engaging with themes of surveillance, biopolitics, and militarized vision, *Droning* exposes the epistemic violence embedded in machinic perception and challenges audiences to confront the ethical asymmetries of AI-mediated warfare and the infrastructures that sustain it.



© Sandra Pointet

Droning, 2021–2024

By Marta Revuelta, in collaboration with Laurent Weingart
With the kind support of the International Red Cross and
Red Crescent Museum, Geneva, Switzerland.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council
Pro Helvetia.

Takayuki Todo (JP)

Dynamics of a Dog on a Leash

The installation *Dynamics of Dog on a Leash* shows a chained four-legged robot dog in a restricted state, about to attack. Viewers face its “murderous gaze” while staying safely beyond its reach. Though it has deadly power, it’s barely controlled by a “chain of ethics.” Will it seem like a “living other”? The dog thrashes, struggles, and collapses from overheating, mimicking a pitiful circus beast. People observe the spectacle as if watching a tragic performance. Social media reactions range from alarm to admiration. Some accuse the artist of harming humanity or abusing robots, while others praise the powerful show. The work highlights how robot motions still trigger our empathy, even though the machines

feel no pain. Their reactions are artificial, yet disturbingly lifelike. We are unable to cognitively discern the robot from a real animal. In an age of living with robots, will we grow more sensitive—or completely numb?

Technical staff: Yuki Koyama, Takeru Saito, Kazuki Karakami

With support from: “Project to Support Emerging Media Arts Creators” by Agency of Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, (2024).

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© Takuma Yamazaki



© Ayami Kawashima

Etsuko Ichihara (JP), Civic Creative Base Tokyo [CCBT] (JP)

Dystopia Land

Dystopia Land explores ways to survive in a society beset by problems and to create a vision of the future.

Based on multifaceted research, the project focuses on the paradoxical positivity inherent in the act of predicting and envisaging the dystopia that awaits, and aspires to build resilience to the uncertainty we face.

The installation embodies the chronological passage of time, starting at the back of the space in ancient history and proceeding to the future. Along the way, the visitor experiences a bizarre and fantastical world: an ancient religion

that worships a goat born with one eye due to a genetic abnormality; a robot that dances and sings fictional folk songs; propaganda footage made by a failing government using generative AI; and creepy hybrid creatures. Through this vision of a dystopic Japan in a parallel universe, the installation presents not just human folly, but the tenacity by which we have overcome disasters and difficulties in the past.

Organized by Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Civic Creative Base Tokyo [CCBT] (Arts Council Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE x Simon Weckert (DE/US)

ELON

The project immerses visitors in a hypnopompic world of techno-glamour and future panic. In our vibrant shrine to all things Tesla, guests encounter the surreal magic at the crossroads of modern dread and electric dreams. Inspired by *Elon Magazine*—the only celebrity magazine devoted to the world’s most charismatic oligarch—this two-room installation invites both awe and unease.

In the first room, AI-generated satirical images depict a massive Elon Musk doppelgänger surveying your trembling flesh. Nearby, colorful lenticular prints offer shifting perspectives on the many faces of our electric savior. Are we all Elon? Can you imagine?

The second room throbs with sensual techno-energy: 69 copies of *Elon Magazine* displayed like sacred relics or luxury goods. A hypnotic soundscape blends with looping video from Gigafactories in Berlin and Austin, ensuring you vibrate with giga-energy while gently lulled between hype and panic.



© Simon Weckert, GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE

GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE: Randy Lewis (US), Florian Grundmüller (DE), Craig Campbell (US), Simon Weckert (DE)

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal.
European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© QuoArtis

César Escudero Andaluz (ES)

Free Universal Cut Kit for Internet Dissidence [F.U.C.K.-ID]

The internet is a medium influenced by political and power dynamics in which geopolitical actors determine its functioning, organization, and control over internet users. The *Free and Universal Cut Kit for Internet Dissidence [F.U.C.K.-ID]* is an autonomous cutting device powered by marine currents that can cut underwater Internet cables. It is available from the artist's website for free download .STL files, for later 3D printing.

F.U.C.K.-ID serves as a critical design concept to shed light on the problems of control and surveillance. It visualizes the socio-political effects of the physical Internet infrastructure

and returns to users the ability to decide about their data and privacy. In essence, *F.U.C.K.-ID* is an internet stop button. How to set it up: A diver fastens the screws that attach the device to the cable. Once connected, the spring at the back presses the saw to the cable and the current of the sea moves the vane that drives the saw.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Ioana Vreme Moser (RO/DE)

Fluid Anatomy

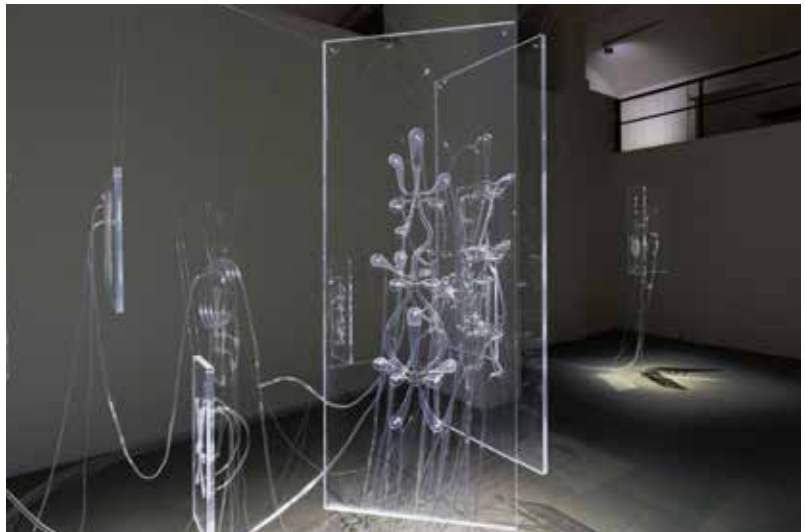
Powered by water and air, *Fluid Anatomy* unveils an analogue hydro-pneumatic computer guiding fluids through movement, pressure, and resonance. Over 20 historical fluidic forms, restored from patents, entangle into a large circuit. Water flows through branching tubes, adhering to convex morphologies where form directs function. An oscillator clocks the flow, while fluidic sensors trace presence. Circuits built from “fluidistors” and logic gates count, store, subtract, and compare. Parallel air paths activate oscillators into pneumatic rhythms. Emerging in the 1950s, fluidics performed electronic-like operations in aerospace, automation, and medicine. With the rise of speed-focused microelectronics, it faded into obscurity. Reviving fluidics as a tactile and resonant technology, *Fluid Anatomy* reveals a

parallel history, one where computation unfolds in sync with the rhythms of water and air. Transparent plates and tubes entangle to make operations visible, transforming movement and sound into a vibrating computational dialogue.

Produced & Curated by singuhr projekte
Technical support: Dorian Largen
Production support: Jan Rohmer, FabLab.ro
Scientific Advice: Dr. Benjamin Bühling.

Support received from Musikfonds E.V. (DE); Bezirksamt Pankow, Berlin (DE)
Research conducted at: Tangible Music Lab & hosted through Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal.
European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© Roman März



© DJF.FILM

Jin Lee (KR)

Liminal Ring

Liminal Ring explores the human desire to impose order on natural chaos. The project investigates the tension between artificially controlled systems and the unpredictable complexity of nature. The installation features 384 precisely calibrated fans that generate laminar airflow rings—visualizing artificial, imperfect cycles in contrast to nature’s seamless circulations. These rings form shifting, ephemeral structures within a larger turbulent field, symbolizing both the beauty and futility of human intervention. Culturally and philosophically, the work draws from post-industrial attitudes toward nature, where technology is often seen as a tool for mastery. Scientifically, it references principles

of fluid dynamics and chaos theory to question the limits of prediction and control. The project invites viewers to confront the arrogance of believing nature can be tamed, and to reflect on humanity’s precarious relationship with the systems we only partially understand.

Sponsored by:

ZER01NE 2023

Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture 2024

Selected work of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

This project is presented with the support of the City of Gwangyang, the City of Linz and the Ars Electronica Festival as a recipient of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

Amir Bastan (IR), Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL), Johannes Braumann (AT)

MycoGravity

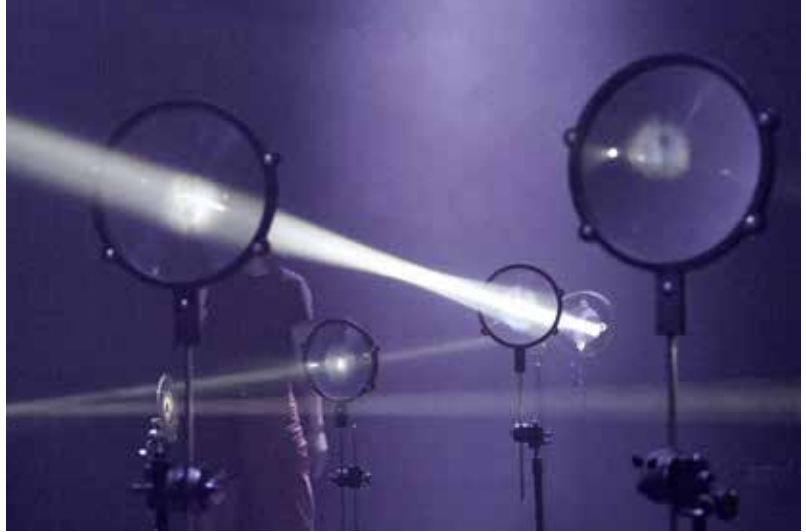
Life on Earth has evolved in constant relation to gravity, yet we rarely consider how deeply it shapes living systems, until we imagine a place without it. Fungi sense gravity through gravitropism, guiding the growth of fruiting bodies, though the mechanisms behind it remain largely unknown. In *MycoGravity*, pink oyster mushrooms grow inside a custom-built bioreactor mounted on a KUKA robotic arm. Inspired by NASA's random positioning machines, the robot's programmed movement simulates altered gravity. Over time, sculptural mushrooms emerge, shaped by their environment without a stable gravitational

direction. Sensors and cameras monitor environmental conditions and fungal activity in the bioreactor. The floating bioreactor rotating in space becomes a living sculpture. Visitors can follow their transformation via real-time data online. *MycoGravity* explores what it means to bring terrestrial life into unfamiliar environments, and how life might continue to respond, delicately and unexpectedly.

Creative Robotics, University of Arts Linz in co-production with KUKA CEE, Mushroom Research Center Austria.



© Amir Bastan



© Jonathan Goulet

Peter van Haaften (CA), Michael Montanaro (CA), Garnet Willis (CA)

ON AIR

The audience speaks into the bells of two horns. Sound is inhaled into an alchemical apparatus. The collected voices become chaotically entangled within the tensile confines of an expanding latex balloon. Trapped inside the captured aether words collide, fragment, and recombine, modulating their contextual and phonetic arrangement. A soundscape of ricocheting voices is perceived, emerging from deep inside the balloon. Over time, the pressure becomes too great and like a sonic capacitor, sound is freed from its reservoir.

The valves open. Airborne voices are forced through a series of reflective steel cornets towards an elastic membrane where mechanically induced friction compels the collected voices to incandesce.

Behind the pulsating membrane, an iris opens, slowly releasing the luminous voices towards a series of glass lenses and mirrors. From here follows a five-part choral harmony of mirrors that builds into a final cacophonous performance of sound, rhythm, and light.

With support from: Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des Arts de Montréal, Fonds de recherche du Québec, MOULIN DE L'IMPRÉVU, and Concordia University (Montréal).

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Presented with the support of CALQ.

Marc Vilanova (ES)

Phonos

Infrasounds drift beneath the threshold of human hearing. Despite remaining largely unresearched and unregulated, these low-frequency vibrations shape ecosystems and impact the well-being of humans and more-than-humans.

Phonos is a sculptural installation of 208 recycled speakers—each one restored, stripped of its cone, and reprogrammed to receive a unique infrasound. Too small to voice these signals into the air, the speakers reveal their mechanical effort: coils vibrate, membranes ripple in tension and metallic components creak. An algorithm modeled on collective animal behaviour sequences their movements into an ever-changing polyrhythm of tremors and buzzes.

Despite its monumental scale, *Phonos* invites

closeness. The sculpture becomes a living organism that breathes and pulsates, creating an intimate, shared experience to attune to imperceptible acoustic ecologies. Through embodied listening, *Phonos* offers a space to relate to and care for the sonic worlds that hold us.

Structure designed and created in collaboration with:
2monos

Metal Work: Alejandro Dumon, Ivan Mena, Marc Vilanova
Hardware and Software: Alfredo Ardia

Installation Support: Mateu Targa, Joan Perramon,
Júlia Faura, Venus Villa

Text: Ana Prendes

Supported by: Fundació Phonos, OSIC, Fabra i Coats,
Casal Soler, Museu de la Música, Auditori de Barcelona,
Institut Ramon Llull, Konvent Puntzero

Presented with the support of the Institut Ramon Llull.



© Anna Benet



© Emma Harris

Emma Harris (DK)

Plant Exposures

Plant Exposures responds to biodiversity loss and soil depletion caused by industrial agriculture by exploring the intricate relationships between soil, plants, and humans. Through low-toxicity analog film and photographic processes, it reimagines agricultural landscapes by focusing on species coexistence, positioning overlooked weeds as collaborators and indicators of soil health. Plants and microbes are invited into the image-making process through direct contact with light-sensitive materials and hand processing using plant-based developers. These material encounters—shaped by time, temperature, and plant chemistry—embrace

unpredictability and resistance, raising questions about more-than-human agency. *Plant Exposures* asks how interspecies collaborations reshape our understanding of agriculture, and through the analog aesthetic of contact, opens up new ways of perceiving the traces and presences of beings that often lie beyond the limits of human perception.

Research, film, photography, sound: Emma Harris

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Lisa Großkopf (AT)

Quitting Smoking Might Be Easier

In the digital age, youthfulness is the ultimate social status symbol. Instagram and other platforms are teeming with flawless foreheads, sculpted jaws, and plump cheeks, all thanks to easy-to-use photo editing apps. The multi-billion dollar fast-growing cosmetics industry is flooding the market with all sorts of creams and serums that claim to slow the inevitable aging process. The list of ingredients in these products keeps getting longer and longer, and includes everything from caviar to avocado to snail slime. Fads like using a jawline trainer, doing face yoga, or getting a leech treatment quickly pass each other the

baton. Großkopf's photo series *Quitting Smoking Might Be Easier* takes a humorous look at this trend. In a series of self-portraits, she poses with a cigarette in her mouth, an act that epitomizes the antithesis of anti-aging par excellence. The cigarette turns the quest for eternal youth into a pointless paradox and the race against time into a ridiculous farce.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© Andreas Hafenscher/KBB



© Santiago Morilla

Santiago Morilla (ES)

Ritual Device for Fungal Humus

Everyone should be a musician, a dancer, and a fungus farmer (at the same time)

The core of the project focuses on understanding what the interaction with and care of healthy soil means for the future of agri-food systems. This also implies understanding how fungi emerge as perfect indicators of biodiversity as they point to the necessary existence of interspecies collaboration in metabolic processes.

The audience is presented with a garden device designed for the cultivation and biosonification of saprophytic fungi. The device functions as an interactive installation, where a soundscape interprets the blooming of the fungi crop. Simultaneously, the performative actions of the audience—detected through their presence and touch on the surrounding soil—are musically integrated in real time. The work proposes that art can help reimagine the future through synaptic

and performative empathy, encouraging us to see and listen to the soil as an extension of our own bodies, as part of a shared ecosystem.

Concept and Art Direction: Santiago Morilla

Produced with the support of Quo Artis Foundation, the Dept. of Culture of the Government of Catalonia, and the Barcelona City Council.

Physical Computing and Software Development:

Joaku de Sotavento & Fernando Fernández

Soundscape Design: Santiago Morilla and Joaku de Sotavento (Vocals: Coco Moya)

Hardware Design and Construction: Santiago Morilla, Olly Needham and Nicholas Burrridge

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Mali Weil (IT)

Rituals | The Mountain of Advanced Dreams

The Mountain of Advanced Dreams is a research-based art project initiated by Mali Weil, critically focused on Interspecies Diplomacies, or on how to imagine different relationships with other living and non-living beings and territories. It layers philosophical, scientific, and speculative approaches with world-building elements and finds its narrative matrix in the two-channel video *Rituals*. Here the film is divided into three parts: three rituals structured around the themes of the body, language, devouring, death, and dreams. Video, objects, performances, publications and a School of Interspecies Diplomacies and Werewolfish Studies—a nomadic platform for training and research on diplomatic practices—

are all part of a worlding process aimed at devising fictional spaces capable of bridging past and future, diverse theories, practices, and disciplines, functioning as legal experiments for new ecologies.

Produced by Centrale Fies and Mali Weil with Festspillene | Nord Norge. Project supported by the Italian Council (2021), Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity, Italian Ministry of Culture and by Fondazione Caritro, Regione Trentino Alto-Adige. With The Financial Assistance of the European Union through the Culture Moves Europe implemented by Goethe Institut.

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



© Roberta Segata / courtesy Mali Weil and Museo Madre



© Stefanie Schwarzwimmer

Stefanie Schwarzwimmer (AT)

Seedless Fruits

Tanja speaks English and excels at small talk. Thorsten enjoys eating “Pocket Coffee.” Tillmann loves team-building events—he recently found one of the three door openers needed to escape the Chamber of Horrors during a group visit to an “escape room.” Thorsten is in the top tax bracket. Tanja is doing Veganuary. Tillmann is the first to be let go.

Seedless Fruits is about the founding of a new company whose product or service remains undefined. We drift through an imposing corporate headquarters that gradually begins to crack and crumble. It’s a satirical commentary on the dark sides of neoliberal office culture and alienated labor within a self-perpetuating system of value creation—without content.

Concept/Text: Stefanie Schwarzwimmer
 Visuals: Stefanie Schwarzwimmer,
 Christian Schwarzwimmer, Yurii Blyzniuk
 Sound Design: Christopher Schmidt
 Voice Acting: Anna Lucia Nissen, Tino Hillebrand,
 Sarah Loibl, Axel Vormbäumen
 Sound Studio: Nordkurier TV und Studio GmbH & Co. KG
 Research/Text: Editing June Drevet

Supported by
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 NEUSTART KULTUR
 Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und
 Medien
 Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal.
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 program of the European Union and by the Austrian
 Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and
 Sport.

Alberto Anhaus (IT)

SOTTOBOSCO

SOTTOBOSCO is an intermedial installation that imagines a post-natural undergrowth shaped by both organic and artificial life. The project explores how ecosystems might evolve in response to the infiltration of synthetic materials, drawing inspiration from the project *Flora robotica*—an architectural system that merges living plants and distributed robotics. At its core, *SOTTOBOSCO* questions how hybrid environments may redefine nature. Audiences encounter a large box-shaped structure resembling a terrarium evoking a tree trunk. Here, micro-robotic insects generate sounds and movements. Suspended above is a

net canopy of leaves emitting the scent of moist earth. The immersive environment combines Arduino-powered micro-robots and organic materials, offering a sensory journey into a speculative, non-human perspective of future soil life. Are we aware of what we are stepping into?

Creation/Composition: Alberto Anhaus

Production: Alberto Anhaus

Production Partner: BG Life Srl

Technical Support: Fabio Machiavelli

Render: Alvise Anhaus, Etienne Denoly

Presented with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute in Vienna.



© Alberto Anhaus



© James Medcraft, courtesy of Marshmallow Laser Feast

Marshmallow Laser Feast (GB)

Sweet Dreams

Delicious Lies Within

Surreal and satirical, *Sweet Dreams* is a multimedia work exploring how food culture shapes—and distorts—our desires. *Sweet Dreams* blends physical and digital storytelling, pulling audiences into a world where food is more than sustenance; it is a status symbol, a moral dilemma, a carefully marketed illusion. From hyper-processed snacks to extravagant gold-plated feasts, this work unpacks the contradictions of modern consumption. Originally conceived over 8 rooms, the storyworld was created using a combination of 2D, 3D, and gen-AI animated material with a custom VR puppeteering pipeline. Every facet of the experiential environment was conceived as a three-dimensional, interactive world where storytelling emerges from space itself—designed

to be navigated, performed, and activated by the audience.

This bite sized adaptation for Ars Electronica shows a flavor of *Sweet Dreams* and *The Real Good Chicken Company*—a fast-food empire grappling with an uncertain future.

A Marshmallow Laser Feast and Factory International Production.

Created by Marshmallow Laser Feast (Robin McNicholas, Ersin Han Ersin, Barnaby Steel).

Written by Simon Wroe.

Made with the support of the BFI Filmmaking Fund.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Fara Peluso (DE/IT)

Synthenesis

The *Synthenesis* project envisages a near-future scenario in which people will be able to grow spirulina algae as a food source in their daily lives, proposing how living machines can synthesise Spirulina pills to improve body and mental health. The artwork depicts a hybrid organ of human and non-human body, synthesizing pearls of Spirulina. It employs a spherification reaction, enclosing Spirulina liquid in a gel membrane of sodium alginate and calcium chloride. After a few minutes, an outer layer is formed, creating flexible, edible Spirulina pills.

Combining DIY biology with soft robotics, glassblowing, and bioplastic membranes, the

artwork reflects on the values of future society and the relationship between humans, nature, and technology.

Synthenesis questions what we can do to shape the future, addressing topics of care, decision-making and empowerment. How can living machines grow food, be integrated into our spaces and rituals, and improve planetary health?

Partner: QuoArtis

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



© Fara Peluso



© Osamu Sakamoto/Courtesy of KOTARO NUKAGA

Sputniko! (JP/GB)

Tech Bro Debates Humanity

Tech Bro Debates Humanity features two AI-generated “Tech Bros”—white male avatars created from Sputniko!’s own face and voice—locked in a self-important debate about the future of humanity. Their dialogue, also AI-generated, satirizes Silicon Valley’s tendency to amplify its own echo chamber, especially when discussing world-changing ideas. Referencing the legacy of female artists who adopt male personas to disrupt gender norms, the piece also nods to Donna Haraway’s cyborg theory, blurring boundaries between human and machine, male

and female. What once promised democratization has turned into an exclusive boys’ club. As DEI ideals are pushed aside, the installation asks: Who gets to shape the future—and should we trust them?

Technical Producer: Kanji Kyoda

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Kika Echeverría (CL), Carlos Sfeir (CL/ES)

The Echoes of Prometheus

There was a fire. Gunpowder was ignited, leaving mineral traces along a copper surface. Sparks danced in a rumbling red glow. The heated metal emitted low and resonant sounds, while the fire faded away. Sizzling traces left behind by the flame cooled, crystallizing the experience into sound.

The long metal plate echoes the low frequencies of what has been witnessed—a present sound that not only recalls what has been missed, but also what has become.

The installation is an invitation to wonder why technology—represented by the sacred fire stolen

from the gods by the Greek titan and gifted to humanity—has become a symbol of panic, extraction, and destruction, overshadowing its spiritual warmth, celebratory nature, and power to bring people together.

Carlos Sfeir (Installation)

Kika Echeverría (Sound Installation)

The participation is the result of a collaboration between Ars Electronica and the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio and the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores | Gobierno de Chile.



© Kika Echeverría



© Noemi Iglesias Barrios

Noemi Iglesias Barrios (ES)

The Falling City

The Falling City explores how emotional expression is shaped or suppressed by urban environments by measuring the levels of affective display in public space. The installation uses computer vision to detect actions such as holding hands, hugging, or kissing. Each gesture activates a unique hand-blown glass lamp suspended from the ceiling, emitting colored light—blue, green, or pink—whose intensity reflects the emotional charge of the moment. An Emotional Counter displays the total accumulated seconds of affection detected by the system, visualized through illuminated numerical blocks. The project merges technology, craft, and urban

research to reflect on the visibility of emotions in contemporary cities. Audiences are invited to consider how social structures shape our intimacy in the public space.

No images are stored, and no facial recognition or any other kind of invasive technologies are used.

Support has been provided by Innovative Partner Projects of the Flemish Community. Onassis Collection.

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Giulia Essayad (CH)

Unspeakable (I'm Ready)

The examination of attributions to femininity and corresponding body images is an essential part of this work, but not exclusively so. A rope binds the artist's naked body, which mutates into an erotic object through its deformation. The artist draws on the Japanese art of bondage, "Shibari", in which the aesthetics are determined by nudity, the rope, and the knot technique. The power imbalance between the artist and the viewer is reinforced in the work by the fact that the black-and-white photographs—five facsimiles of wet collodion photographs—are packaged in a thermoformed box. This is held together with a rubber band and presented for viewing on a sales display.

The simultaneity of deformation, eroticisation, aestheticisation, and monetisation of one's own body are essential features of the work, which can be understood as a metaphor for today's online culture.

Giulia Essayad, *Unspeakable (I'm ready)*, 2023-2024, 5 facsimiles of wet collodion photographs, print on Plexiglas, lamination, 12 x 10 cm. Each photograph is separately packaged in a thermoformed box, 16 x 12.2 cm. Each edition includes 5 photographs bound by an elastic band. The edition consists of 8 copies, 2 H.C. and 3 e.a., labeled and numbered. Edition of the Centre édition contemporaine, Geneva, 2024.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.



© Sandra Pointet Courtesy Centre d'édition contemporaine, Geneva



© Jerónimo Reyes-Retana

Jerónimo Reyes-Retana (MX)

Void in Resonance

Artist and researcher Jerónimo Reyes-Retana defines colonial voids as territories and communities subjected to cartographic erasure in service of modern/colonial expansion through infrastructure and industrialization. One such place is El Campo Pesquero de Playa Bagdad, a marginalized community at the eastern edge of the Mexico–U.S. border, where the Río Bravo/Grande meets the Gulf of Mexico.

Just four kilometers north, SpaceX's spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas, threatens Playa Bagdad's oyster field with sonic shock waves produced during rocket launches—a unique case of

transboundary sonic violence. Informed by over four years of fieldwork, *Void in Resonance* juxtaposes the vernacular architecture and technologies of Playa Bagdad with elements that evoke SpaceX's high-tech designs.

Through a deliberately underexposed aesthetic, the work reflects on the human and ecological costs of an emerging era of outer space industrialization.

The project has been produced as part of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards, a cooperation between Ars Electronica Festival and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO).

Calin Segal (RO)

WHISPERS

Inside the New Economy of Rage

WHISPERS explores how belief systems behave when confronted with optimized algorithms designed to reward those who monetize rage. The project investigates how social media personas, the so-called opinion leaders, operate in this space. It exposes the tactics and "rules of engagement" that drive their rhetorical construct, resulting in an experience that highlights the rigid logic of dogmatic beliefs through exaggerated caricatures.

The installation centers on a live debate space where AI actors tackle viewer-suggested topics with fierce intensity. These digital figures pivot between unfiltered conflict and carefully crafted rhetoric, all in service of persuading the audience to their viewpoint. By leaving little

room for nuance debate we see how coherence and empathy begin to fracture, sometimes with darkly comic results, sometimes with unsettling consequences.

Rosa M. Gil-Iranzo, Associate Professor Universitat de Lleida

Santiago Latorre, LIA Sound Laboratory Curator Etopia Center for Art and Technology

Simon Colton, Professor of Computational Creativity, AI and Games Queen Mary University of London

Blanca Perez Ferrer, EU project coordinator and curator Etopia Center for Art and Technology

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© In-dialog



© Total Refusal

Total Refusal (AT)

World at Stake

A golfer fails to strike, a soccer team plays against itself, and a rally co-driver loses direction. *World at Stake* unfolds on a field where movement fades and action stalls.

At its center: an audience unable to act, that remains present, yet unresponsive.

Shot in sports video games, the film *World at Stake* turns the ordering principles of victory and defeat upside down and negotiates social roles between individual sovereignty and collective passivity. In the face of catastrophe, a sense of political powerlessness remains: collective, persistent, and difficult to name.

Nothing less than the world is at stake.

A film by Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim & Jona Kleinlein, presented by Total Refusal.

Sound Design: Bernhard Zorzi

Music: Adrian Jonas Haim

Modding: Nikola Supukovic, Jakob Sam

Voice: Jacob Banigan, Jan-Wieger van den Berg

3D Model: Patrik Tagunoff

Shot in the games: FIFA 23, PGA Tour 2K21,

DiRT Rally 2.0

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition

Emiko Ogawa (JP/AT) / Co-Curator & Head of Prix Ars Electronica

Welcome to Pluriversal Futures

Prix Ars Electronica is the world's longest-running media art competition, and since its inception in 1987, it has consistently served as a sensitive barometer of the spirit of the times. The Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition, where the award-winning works are presented, offers an excellent opportunity to learn about concepts of the futures that have yet to be articulated. In 2025, there were 3,987 entries from 98 countries around the world. A notable trend among this year's award-winning works is the reinterpretation of humanity from a planetary and long-term perspective and the expression of "multiple" and even "pluriversal" visions of the futures that are appropriate to specific cultures and contexts.

The Golden Nica for New Animation Art was awarded to *Requiem for an Exit*, an expanded cinema experience featuring a 4-meter-tall robot created through sophisticated projection mapping that speaks to all of humanity about the essence of being human.

This work by composer and sound designer Frode Oldereid (NO) and artist and author Thomas Kvam (NO) takes the simple form of a robot's monologue, challenging us to consider the world from the perspective of "humanity" as a whole, in which nationality and race are transcended.

The Golden Nica for Artificial Life & Intelligence was awarded to *Guanauquex*. This project retraces the route of the "Andes Crossing," a historical event that served as one of the catalysts for Latin America's decolonization in the 19th century, reinterpreted in a contemporary context. Paula Gaetano Adi (AR) redefines the relationship between humans, machines, and the Earth by reimagining robots not as tools for environmental exploitation but as allies in repairing the planet.

The Golden Nica for Digital Musics & Sound Art was awarded to *Organism*, an installation and performance that reconstructs a historic pipe organ and combines it with three pendulums to create a new instrument that evokes chaos and sonic turbulence. This project by artist and composer Navid Navab (IR/CA) and artist and audio engineer Garnet Willis (CA) invites people to experience poetic sounds that embrace uncertainty and entanglement, rather than controlled composition.

We, who live in a world where we have some degree of freedom to engage with technology like AI and robotics, as well as scientific knowledge and data, are challenged by the artists, who pose such astute questions as: Are you still content to be a bystander? What vision speaks to you, and how will you help shape the future?

Featured Artworks in Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition 2025

Requiem for an Exit © Thomas Kvam
Golden Nica—New Animation Art



New Animation Art

GOLDEN NICA

Requiem for an Exit, Frode Oldereid (NO),
Thomas Kvam (NO)

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Ito Meikyū, Boris Labbé (FR)

Artificial Life & Intelligence

GOLDEN NICA

Guaquaerx, Paula Gaetano Adi (AR)

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Anatomy of Non-Fact. Chapters 1 & 2,
Martyna Marciniak (PL)

XXX Machina, Erin Robinson (GB),
Anthony Frisby (GB)

Guaquaerx © Pavel Romaniko
Golden Nica—Artificial Life & Intelligence



Digital Musics & Sound Art

GOLDEN NICA

Organism, Navid Navab (IR/CA), Garnet Willis (CA)

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Mineral Amnesia, Ioana Vreme Moser (RO)

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk,
Jonathan Chaim Reus (US/NL)

HONORARY MENTION

Bora: Bora, Zhao Zhou (NL)

Fromø, Superbe (BE)

Organism © Miha Godec
Golden Nica—Digital Musics & Sound Art



More information about the prize winners is available in
the Prix Ars Electronica 2025 catalog.

ART THINKING LOUNGE

Ars Electronica (AT) x Hakuhold Inc. (JP)

Future Citizen Kit

In these uncertain times, there is a growing demand for transformation across various sectors of society, including education, industry, and government. The platform *Art Thinking Lounge* was born from the collaboration between the Japanese integrated marketing and innovation company, Hakuhold, and Ars Electronica. Art Thinking Lounge serves as a space to gather practices and wisdom that return the potential of art for transformation to citizens and society, fostering a venue for exchange of ideas.

The theme of this year's lounge is *Future Citizen Kit*. Three groups—Ars Electronica Futurelab, Hakuhold, and the Fashion Frontier Program (FFP)—will present various toolkits for the citizens of the future.

Ars Electronica Futurelab, the research and development division of Ars Electronica, is a lab and atelier dedicated to prototyping the future. By harnessing AI, they will present *Citizen Manifesto*, a program that fosters playful dialogue about the co-creation of future manifestos, with a focus on the festival's theme of *PANIC—yes/no*.

HAKUHODO Inc., Sei-katsu-sha insight R&D Institute, the research and development organization of Hakuhold, will showcase three research tools that focus on the “small voices”

of citizens, allowing participants to experience their philosophy of “Sei-katsu-sha (living person) insight” at the People Thinking Lab.

The Fashion Frontier Program (FFP), an initiative by fashion designer Yuima Nakazato, is an educational and incubation program that nurtures artists who aim to transform the future of the fashion industry towards sustainability. They will showcase their future visions through clothing created from this FFP and provide a venue for citizens to offer feedback.

How can we, together with citizens, harness the power of art to address the upcoming technological advancements and societal challenges?



© Ars Electronica / Martin Hieslmair



© Ars Electronica / Martin Hieslmair

Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT), Hakuholdo Inc. (JP)

Citizen Manifesto

Citizen Manifesto is an installation by Hakuholdo and the Ars Electronica Futurelab that unites citizens to reimagine collective futures. In response to overwhelming global challenges, it invites participants to move from passive observation to active dialogue. They discuss what it means to be a citizen today and in the future, how to claim rights and contribute to realizing future actions. The participants' conversations are recorded and interpreted by an AI that transforms key ideas into visual messages.

These form the basis of *Citizen Manifesto* posters, which participants can modify and publish on a collective manifesto wall. In this way, cutting-edge technology is introduced not as a directive force, but as a responsible tool for empowering the co-creation of civic missions.

Hakuholdo Inc.

Ars Electronica: Denise Hirtenfelder, Nicolas Naveau, Peter Holzkorn, Otto Naderer, Maria Pfeifer, Emiko Ogawa, Hideaki Ogawa

PEOPLE THINKING LAB

HAKUHODO Inc., Sei-katsu-sha insight R&D Institute (JP)

People Thinking Lab

People Thinking Lab is an experimental initiative by Hakuhodo, grounded in over 40 years of “Sei-katsu-sha” research. Rather than reducing individuals to a single dimension as “consumers,” it embraces the philosophy of Sei-katsu-sha Thinking, which views people as multifaceted individuals who actively engage in diverse societies. Guided by this Sei-katsu-sha Thinking approach, the project explores new ways to create value for the future.

This year’s festival focuses specifically on “how to listen to the small voices of Sei-katsu-sha.” In an era where technology has advanced and information is abundant, society is also facing growing division and intolerance. Precisely because of this, the project believes that carefully listening to these small, personal voices and weaving them into shared knowledge—holds the

key to building a better future. This exhibition introduces three experimental thinking toolkits that explore the potential of listening to small voices.

The Hakuhodo Sei-Katsu-sha insight R&D Institute aspires to transform Sei-katsu-sha Thinking into a shared “technology” that can be used by various stakeholder—companies, organizations, society, and Sei-katsu-sha themselves—to co-create richer value together. “Sei-katsu-sha” is a term we use to describe people not simply as consumers, but as fully rounded individuals with their own lifestyles, aspirations, and dreams.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)

Techemography

Technology and Human Emotional Graphy

Techemography aims to explore and envision future scenes from the perspective of Sei-katsu-sha, based on people's "emotions" as "small voices" regarding evolving technologies. It visualizes how Sei-katsu-sha perceive and shape the image of evolving key technologies.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Akiko Iseyama (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)
Special thanks: Ryoji Tanaka (JP), Junghyun Kim (KR), Erika Takizaki (JP)



© Akiko Iseyama

Small Voices Studio

Making Voice Tangible

Making Voice Tangible explores the concept of creating "tangible tools" that facilitate listening to the "small voices" of Sei-katsu-sha. It showcases toolkits and tangible items designed to engage visitors with two exhibitions, using various metaphors—such as the weight of apples—to uncover "small voices" and emotions that are difficult to put into words.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)



© Hokuto Sajiki

Creative Questions for Dialogue

Small Voices, Infinite Questions

This exhibition invites you to explore the small, often unnoticed voices within everyday life through a wide range of creative questions. Do we really know our own voice best?

The most important voices are often overlooked and difficult to capture through conventional research. Through creative questioning, it aims to uncover the subtle yet significant insights hidden in the daily lives of Sei-katsu-sha.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)



© Hokuto Sajiki

FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (JP)

FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM 2025

The FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) is an educational award initiative that brings together learning and evaluation. Its mission is to discover and support fashion designers who embody both creativity and social responsibility, using the power of fashion to shape a better future.

For this exhibition, seven finalists have been selected from past programs. Each of them tackles a different social issue through their work, exploring themes such as science, agriculture, circularity, biodegradability, and tradition. Their pieces are not just garments—they are messages, visions, and questions about how we live and where we are heading.

Clothing, among the three necessities of life, is unique to humanity—not only serving function but also expressing identity, culture, and intent.

That's why thinking about the future of fashion is also thinking about our collective future.

Visitors are invited to vote on the theme: *What Future Do You Wear?* This vote is not about judging—it's about expressing values. Your voice contributes to the conversation and becomes part of the work itself. Feedback will be shared with the designers and the public, becoming inspiration for future creativity and dialogue.

Let the works speak to you—and let your vote be a step toward the future you want to help shape.

FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) is sponsored by YUIMA NAKAZATO LABORATORY and co-sponsored by the General Incorporated Association unisteps. It is also sponsored by Goldwin Corporation, Seiko Epson Corporation, Daimaru Matsuzakaya Department Stores Co., Ltd., and Toshima Co., Ltd. It is supported by the Ministry of the Environment.

© FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM





© FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM

Harima Maia (AR), Julia Moser (AT), Luna Nakagawa (JP), Misaki Suda (JP), Mitsuki Murata (JP), Sandra Jao (PH), Tatsumi Iwai (JP)

VOTE | What Future Do You Wear?

Seven finalists from the FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) present their works. They all engage with society through clothing, re-examining the future.

Maia Harima visualizes adaptive pressures and liberation using biodegradable fishing nets. Julia Moser explores beauty in “changing substances” like rust and metal, weaving science and time. Sandra Jao fuses traditional Philippine crafts with sustainable materials, expressing cultural and environmental coexistence. Luna Nakagawa explores symbiosis with mealworms,

re-examining the boundary between plastics and nature. Misaki Suda reconstructs the forest-human relationship through clothing dyed with filtered sunlight. Mitsuki Murata redefines agriculture, injecting his pride as a farmer into his clothing. Finally, Tatsumi Iwai imprints life’s circulation and leather on the body, linking Gonohe Town’s horse culture with his roots. These seven stories paint a comprehensive picture of the future of clothing and its social connections.

What Future Do You Wear?

State of the ART(ist)

We are living in a time of rupture, emergence, and collapse.

The ground is shifting beneath our feet—politically, ecologically, socially. Systems are breaking down, while new movements are rising. This simultaneity—of upheaval (Umbruch), uprising (Aufbruch), and breakdown (Abbruch)—encapsulates the global condition of 2025. Amid multiple crises, the world is re-arming at a historically alarming rate. Investment in military infrastructure, surveillance, and weaponized borders is soaring while peace processes falter, civic freedoms are eroded, and the scale and frequency of ecological disasters accelerate. From Gaza to Sudan to Goma, from Ukraine to Myanmar, intolerance and war has become a permanent fixture, not a last resort.

And yet, in the middle of this fractured juncture, art insists on life.

This year, the State of the ART(ist) Award received an extraordinary 506 submissions from 76 countries. The response reflects the growing urgency—and unyielding determination—of artists to claim spaces in the global conversation. We were struck by the breadth and intensity of the works submitted. We particularly welcomed a new wealth of submissions from across the African continent, showing great talent and humor, and illuminating structural injustices born of colonial legacies, conflict, and ecological degradation. A quarter of submissions came from individuals with diverse and intersectional identities, and the overall gender distribution was almost balanced.

The jury encountered works shaped by displacement, censorship, war, and climate collapse, but also courage, solidarity, and imagination. Artists shared not only stories of survival, but radical acts of world-building—developing communal tools, reviving ancestral knowledge, creating safe digital zones, and staging acts of protest that cannot be erased. They reminded us that in many places, to make art is to take great risks.

Although risk was a criteria of eligibility, our task as jurors was to give precedence to artistic excellence, rather than biography. And yet, the reality of risk was ever-present. Many submissions were created under surveillance, in exile, or in fragile, rapidly shifting conditions. What we encountered was not merely artwork about danger—it was often art despite of it.

The State of the ART(ist) initiative stands firmly for freedom of expression and the autonomy of artistic thought. It refuses the logic of collective blame or political scapegoating. The artists selected here are not the agents of governments or systems—they are critical observers, activists, visionaries, and truth-tellers in their own right.

To every artist who shared their work with us, please accept our words of sincere appreciation. Thank you. You have not only given us insight into this turbulent moment, but shown us how resistance, mourning, and dreaming can coexist. Your voices matter. Your art matters.

**Sergio Fontanella, Marita Muukkonen,
Ivor Stodolsky, Simon Mraz, Christl Baur**

David Shongo (CD)

Café Kuba

Café Kuba by David Shongo explores the act of creation in a context of war, collective trauma, and political instability. Filmed in Kinshasa after the fall of Goma and Bukavu to rebel forces, Shongo invents a new creative approach: a form of “fugitive art”—an aesthetic gesture born out of urgency, rooted in the vital need to create while evading authoritarian repression. He repurposes a street coffee cart into a mobile, poetic, and political recording device. This cart becomes the central protagonist, capturing the city’s pulses, bodies, and invisible tensions. Through a poetic visual language and immersive 3D sound design, the installation immerses the viewer in an intimate, fragile, and politically charged urban choreography of Kinshasa.

Produced by Tommy Simoens Gallery & Studio 1960
 Executive Producers: Tommy Simoens & David Shongo
 Production Management: Olga Sherazade Pitton
 Assistant Directors: Kevine Booto & Divin Kayanga
 Cinematography: David Shongo
 DoP: Kevin Booto
 Costume Design: Divin Kayanga
 Sound Recording: Djoe Wamba
 Sound Engineering: David Shongo
 With: Christian Tamba, Celeo, a.o.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© David Shongo

Maksym Khodak (UA)

Dear Jafar,

In this project, Maksym Khodak resorts to global cinema to overcome political differences and develop a common language. The artist is trying to get in touch with the well-known Iranian opposition director Jafar Panahi by writing him a letter, suggesting they create together a movie that reflects on the experience of the war in Ukraine and the role of Iranian Shahed-136 drones in Russian shelling.

A marble-embossed poster shows footage of a possible plot: Jafar Panahi sits on a couch while behind him a mobile fire team shoots down a target in the sky over Ukraine, or the artist's

parents ride their bicycles into a field to see the crater left by the downed drone. Breaking the silence of anticipation for the movie, the space is filled with the sound of revving engines from Khodak's new video work. The visual sequence consists of a set of scenes cut from Iranian films where people ride mopeds—a reference to current Ukrainian slang where the word “moped” is used to refer to Shahed drones.

Produced with the support of PichukArtCentre.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio for PichukArtCentre /
PichukArtCentre Prize 2025



© Oumar Sangho

Oumar Sangho (ML)

Dust of the Ancestors—Resisting Through Clay

Dust of the Ancestors—Resisting Through Clay is an artistic and political gesture of survival by Malian potter Oumar Sangho, heir to one of the oldest ceramic traditions in Africa: the terracotta heritage of Djenné-Djenno, dating back to the 3rd century BCE. This ancestral practice, rooted in animist beliefs, includes figurative sculpture, spiritual symbolism, and protective ritual forms—all transmitted orally through generations.

Today, such forms are disappearing. In Sangho's hometown of Djenné, religious fundamentalism and cultural repression have rendered his work taboo. Human figures, guardian spirits, and animist symbols are condemned as heretical. His art has become dangerous. Facing threats, marginalization, and economic exclusion, he has been forced to flee. He now works in exile, at the LAC de Lassa in Bamako, a collaborative space for endangered crafts and ancestral knowledge.

Dust of the Ancestors reclaims erased gestures and voices. It gives form to what is no longer allowed to exist. Through each sculpture, Sangho reconnects with a world under threat—transforming exile into presence, clay into testimony. In a global context of crisis, this work affirms that craft is resistance, and that art can be a place to breathe, persist, and remember.

Concept and Sculptures: Oumar Sangho

Host Institution: LAC de Lassa (Laboratoire des Arts Collaboratifs—Bamako, Mali)

Curation & Artistic coordination: Carole Refabert Traoré (LAC de Lassa).

Support received from LAC de Lassa—Bamako, Mali.

Local informal networks of artisans and nyamakala communities in Bamako.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

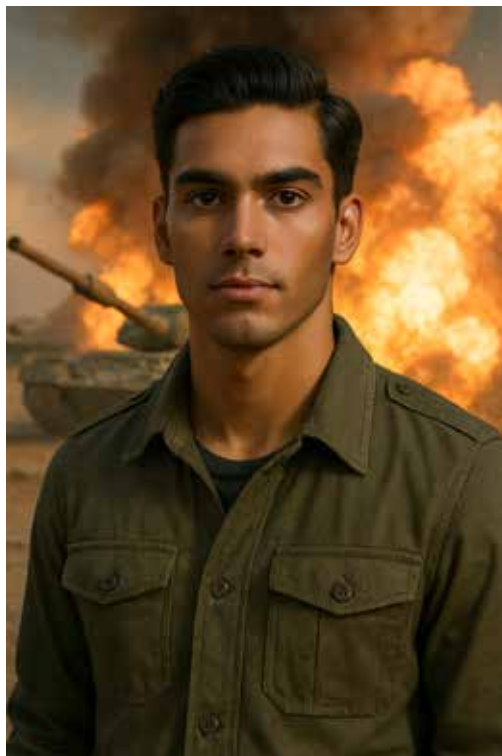
Marwa Abu Raida (PS)

Friends of Fearness

Psychological-social novel with political overtones

Friends of Fearness explores how fear shapes personal identity, political resistance, and human connection. The project presents a psychological-political novel set between Jerusalem and the U.S., tracing the intertwined lives of three friends—Jalil, Ozil, and Justin—as they navigate exile, memory, and trauma. Through lyrical storytelling, the project invites readers to reflect on the invisible scars left by occupation and displacement. Set against the cultural and socio-political backdrop of Palestine, *Friends of Fearness* offers a deep narrative of survival, belonging, and the cost of silence.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© AI-generated by ChatGPT (OpenAI), creative direction by Marwa Abu Raida



© Burak Kaçı

Anet Sandra Açıkgöz (TR)

Fugue

The video installation *Fugue* centers on the performance of perpetration and the confrontation with collective traumas that have remained unaddressed to this day. It takes its name from “fugue”—a polyphonic form in classical music derived from Latin, meaning “escape,” and characterized by repetition. This structure becomes a fundamental compositional principle within the work, both visually and sonically.

In the installation, the performance of perpetration—marked by the evasion of responsibility and the continual reproduction of the self through denial—is conveyed through the players game of dodgeball. In this context, the ball becomes a metaphor for guilt, denial, and the transfer of responsibility.

The figures appear locked in a persistent effort to reject accountability, repeating the same stance across different spatial and temporal possibilities. Each video channel consists of visuals and sound that share a common point of departure, but unfold at different times. This editing strategy refers both to the layered nature of the fugue structure and the temporal continuity of collective traumas, ultimately generating a form of testimony that becomes increasingly difficult to endure.

This project was realized in 2023 with the support of the Ali Ismail Korkmaz Foundation’s Young Artist Fund.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

Issa Touma (SY), Art Camping (Le Pont Art Organization) (SY)

Losing the freedom of choice

The project highlights the impact of the Syrian war on young people, especially girls who grew up in extremely difficult circumstances and have never sought asylum abroad. This generation has witnessed 14 years of war, the COVID-19 pandemic, a devastating earthquake, and now an Islamic Republic that is striving to curb and control personal freedoms in every possible way. For them, controlling women is a priority like controlling society as a whole.

Audiences will see stories narrated by girls about their relationships, their dreams, and their aspirations to live like Westerners on social media. They often imitate them. There are also sad stories of disappointment and the oppression imposed by parents and society. In their backgrounds, you will see a destroyed part of the city, and areas that have survived the destruction of war. Girls from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds represent the mosaic of Syrian society, many of whom are on the verge of extinction.

Thanks to all the women for their courage to share their stories and thanks also to the Art Camping members for all the work and time they gave.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© Issa Touma



© Breech Asher Harani

Breech Asher Harani (PH)

Pamalandong sa Danow (Reflection in the Marsh)

Agusan Marsh, the largest freshwater wetland in the Philippines, is home to various wild species and is considered a catch basin that helps regulate flooding in its surrounding areas. This is also the ancestral domain of the indigenous Agusanong Manobo people. But due to extreme weather events, their primary livelihood—fishing—is being affected and is slowly dwindling. The water levels in Agusan Marsh are slowly declining, putting the wetland at critical risk of disappearing. This process is being accelerated by land erosion from the highlands, caused by human incursions such as mining and deforestation.

Pamalandong sa Danow (Reflection in the Marsh) is a short documentary film that presents the realities of those already facing the worst impact of climate crisis and ecological degradation. Shot by Filipino filmmaker Breech Asher Harani alone, and in a span of twelve hours only, the film captures the lives of indigenous people of Agusan Marsh and what it means to them to preserve and protect their home.

Breech Asher Harani, Breeches & Ashers Studio, Davao, Philippines.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

Sophia Bulgakova (UA)

Спомини [Spomyny]

Спомини [Spomyny] is a Ukrainian word for “memories” or even “memoirs”. The work of Sophia Bulgakova with this title is an experience derived from personal and communal accounts of the recent three years of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, presented in the form of sonic artefacts collected by Sophia. These are showcased through an installation created from meters of insulation pipes.

Discovering one channel at a time and layering the sounds through the pipes, the audience is invited to unveil a non-linear narrative assembled out of intimate encounters of the artist and her struggles in between being abroad and returning home in the past years, collected testimonies and

conversations with friends, family, and strangers in Ukraine, found footage recordings through social media and news channels which capture glimpses of extreme experiences within everyday reality.

Technical Production & Sound Design: Ymer Marinus
Sound recording contributions: Ievgen Velychev, Diana Remizovska, Ivan Skoryna, Liza Golubova & everyone wanting to remain anonymous.

Спомини [Spomyny] is commissioned by Rewire in collaboration with iii.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© Pieter Kers



© Victor Zatikyan

Mariam Ghalayan (AM)

The Hole Open It

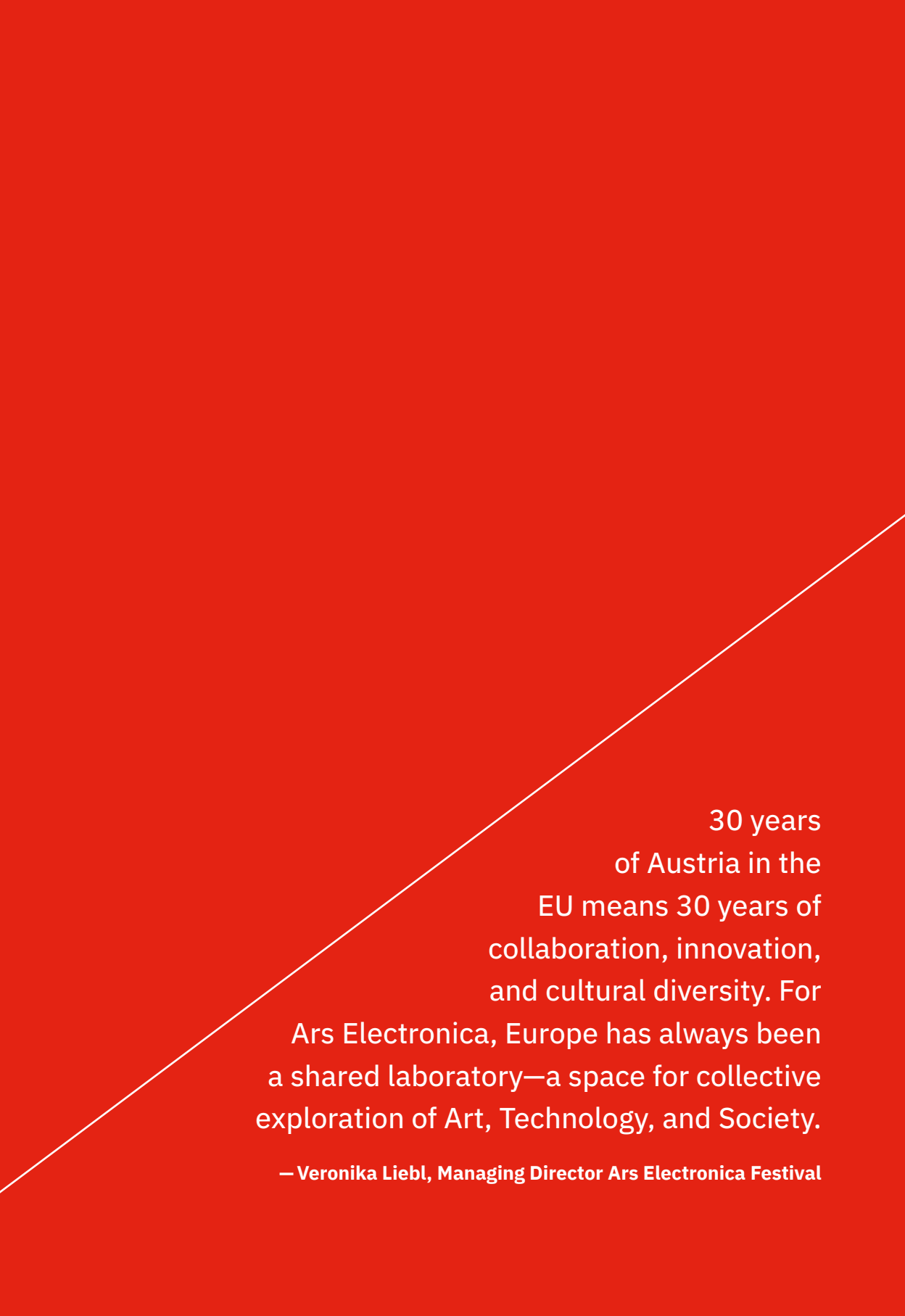
The Hole Open It is a performance and sound-based work that stages a visceral confrontation with memory, identity, and the primal intelligence of the body. Drawing from a poem in the artist's own book *Documentary Self Discovery*, the piece navigates the tension between inner resistance and the longing for transformation, embodied as a restless force imagined within the bones. Set on a stage partially flooded with water—a visual metaphor for memory and the subconscious—two female performers engage in a ritual of emotional and physical release.

The immersive soundscape weaves together breath, water, heartbeat rhythms, and fragmented classical motifs, oscillating between suffocation and revelation. Rooted in traditions of Cruel Theatre, the work reclaims the female body as a site of knowledge, vulnerability, and resistance.

Arash Azadi—Composer / Sound Artist
Mary Bayatyan—Co-author / Co-performer

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

PLATFORM EUROPE



30 years
of Austria in the
EU means 30 years of
collaboration, innovation,
and cultural diversity. For
Ars Electronica, Europe has always been
a shared laboratory—a space for collective
exploration of Art, Technology, and Society.

—Veronika Liebl, Managing Director Ars Electronica Festival

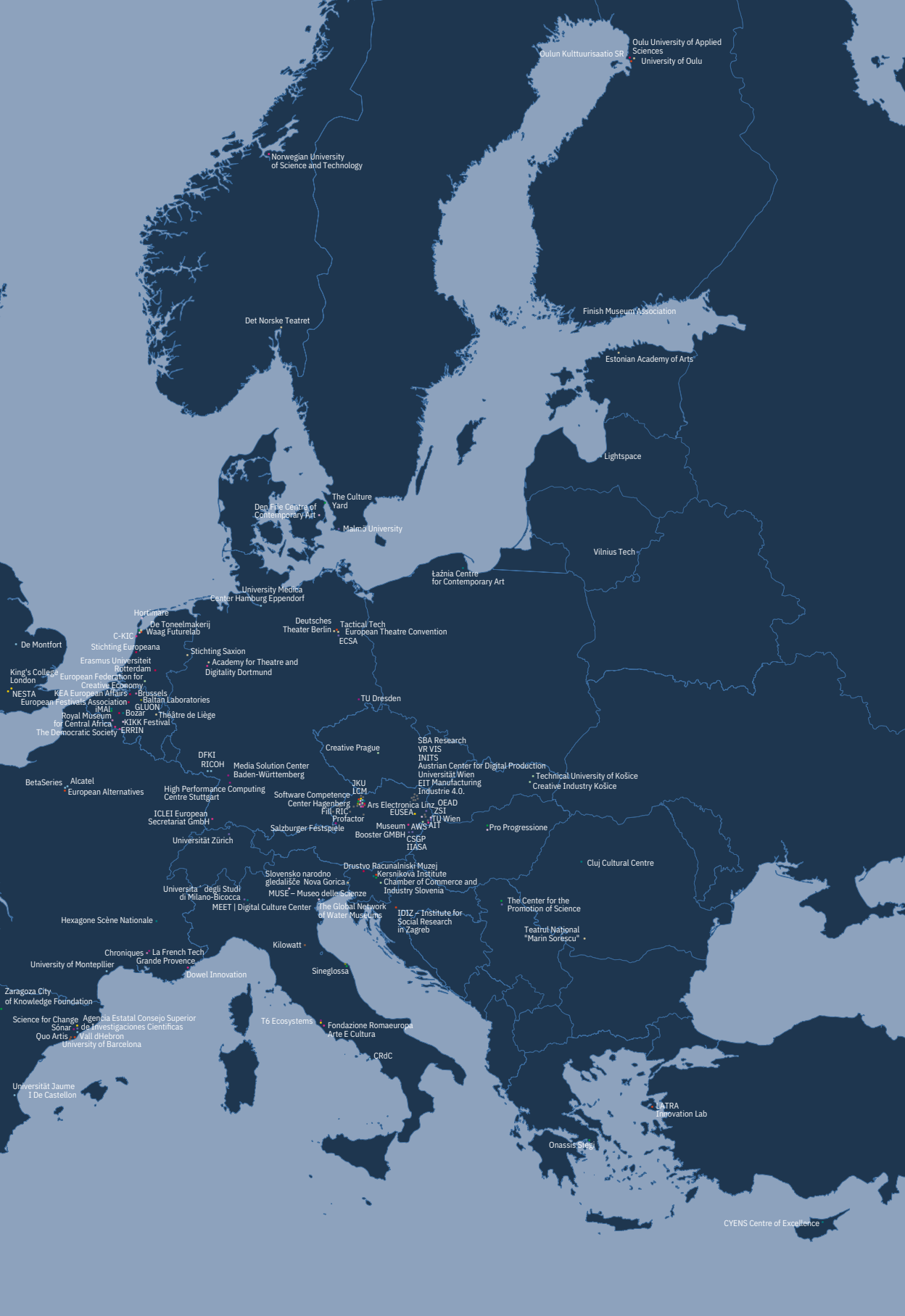
Ars Electronica Platform Europe

Projects

S+T+ARTS

- Ec(h)o • Afropean Intelligence • Aqua Motion
- ACuTe
- NEB Junction
- IMPETUS
- Critical ChangeLab
- European Digital Deal
- EXCENTRIC
- SHARESPACE
- RIECS-Concept
- Label4Future
- Tilling Roots&Seeds
- fAIr media
- Studiotopia
- AI5Production





Ars Electronica Platform Europe

Recent global developments at the ecological, technological, and socio-political levels have led us to believe that the only genuinely effective way to achieve change is through collaboration. Working together with diverse and unique people and institutions that negotiate their common hopes, concerns, and visions is the very DNA of Europe as a philosophical construct, a geographic space, and a political union. This idea lies at the core of Ars Electronica Platform Europe, where we re-imagine tech-driven change through art.

Ars Electronica is a platform for our European network to develop these approaches collaboratively, and Europe is the platform on which we showcase them to the world.

In 2025, when we celebrate 30 years of Austrian membership in the European Union, Platform Europe remains a forum of exchange and collaboration for a network of cultural institutions, artists, scientists, researchers, technologists, and policymakers who come together in different constellations around projects (co-)funded by

the European Union. We invite all of them to share their understanding of how Europe can look to the future without panic, building on the achievements of free movement, a shared cultural identity, equality and equal rights, as well as peacekeeping.

Though the issues we address here might be global, we acknowledge that our perspective is, inevitably so, deeply embedded in the European context. In creating this space of dialogue, we make room for a critical restiveness that challenges the universality of our European perspective, seeking to connect it to different viewpoints. Platform Europe remains a “work in progress” and invites all those interested in developing European futures to join the dialog aimed at tackling the panic points of our present: sustaining our democracies, achieving digital sovereignty, and strengthening our bonds sufficiently to capitalize on the wealth of perspectives that makes Europe the unique narrative it is today.



Francesca Bria (IT), Dirma Janse (NL)

The EuroStack Project

Building Europe's Digital Sovereignty Layer by Layer

The EuroStack is Europe's boldest proposal to reclaim digital sovereignty in the age of AI, surveillance capitalism, and techno-militarism. Developed by Francesca Bria and a wide coalition of European institutions and thinkers, the EuroStack presents a new political economy of digital infrastructure—reimagining the “stack” as a layered system of public power, ecological design, and democratic agency.

In contrast to the vertically integrated platforms of the United States and China—dominated by hyperscale compute, proprietary AI models, and extractive data regimes—the EuroStack envisions a federated, open, and plural technological foundation. Each layer of the stack—raw materials, chips, compute, AI, data, civic applications, and governance—is mapped not only as a site of geopolitical dependency, but as a field of collective reinvention.

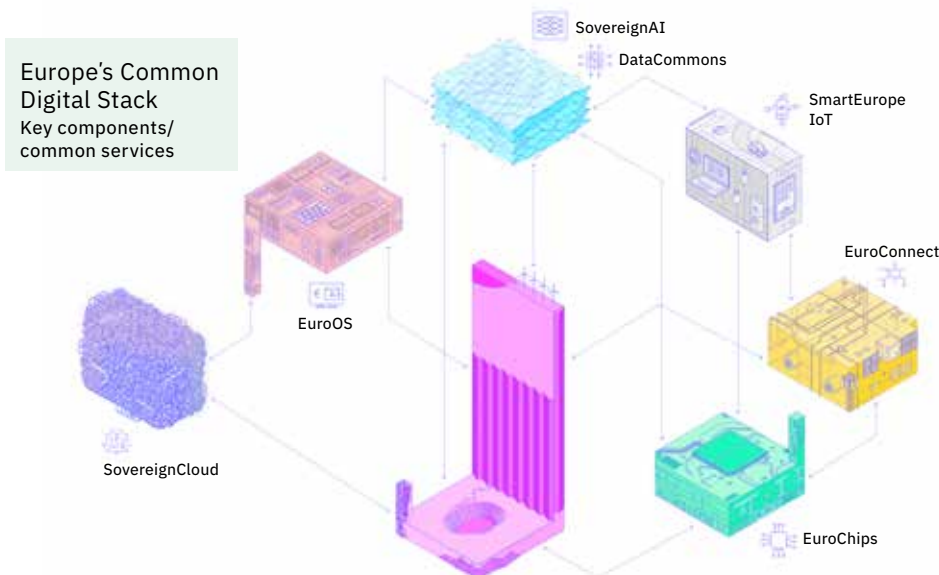
The core question: What would it mean for Europe to build its own technological infrastructure for the common good? The EuroStack is presented as a conceptual framework and policy blueprint. In the Ars Electronica 2025 context, the project is visualized through a curated info-architecture, mapping the stack's seven layers and

highlighting key sites of tension, opportunity, and transformation—from green semiconductors and sovereign cloud to democratic AI and planetary sensing.

Culturally and politically, the project draws inspiration from Europe's history of cooperative institutions—from the postwar steel and coal union to today's digital green transition—and asks how a shared technological infrastructure can become the backbone of a democratic, ecological, and culturally sovereign Europe.

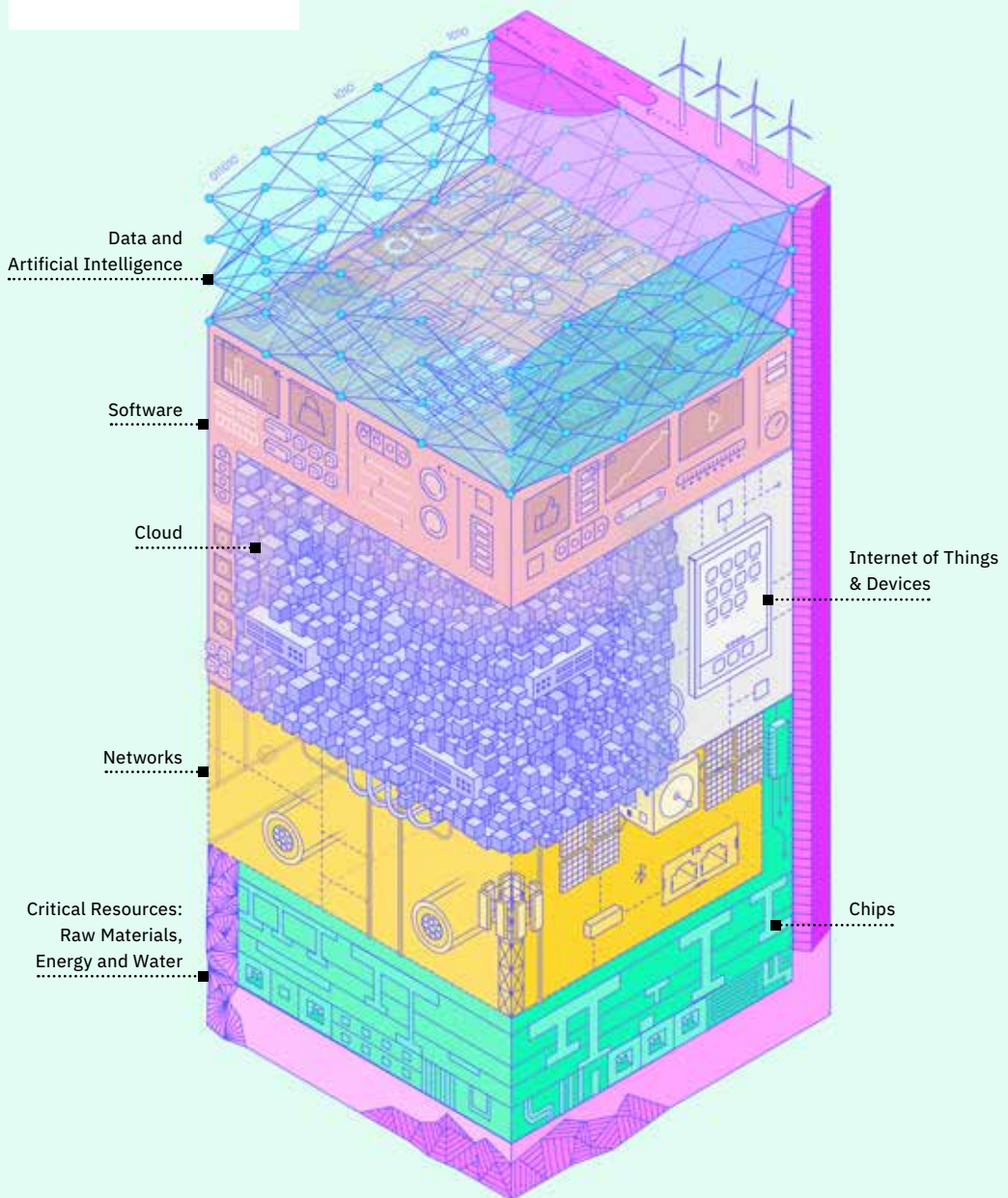
By situating digital infrastructure within the broader struggles of climate collapse, platform monopolies, and AI geopolitics, the EuroStack speaks to a Europe at crossroads: either dependent on foreign systems or ready to build its own stack, layer by layer.

Project Leadership and Coordination: Prof. Francesca Bria
Lead Authors EuroStack Report: Prof. Francesca Bria (Fellow, Mercator Stiftung; Honorary Professor, UCL IIPP), Prof. Paul Timmers (WeltWert®), Dr. Fausto Gernone (UCL IIPP)
Commissioned by: Bertelsmann Stiftung
Supported by: Mercator Stiftung, UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), CEPS
Infographics and visuals: Dirma Janse
Geographics mapping, cartography: Tim Tensen
Web development: Jose Núñez



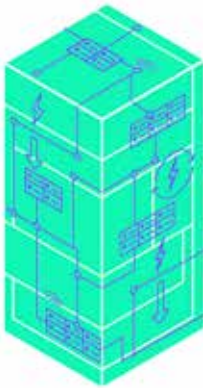
The current digital stack

The layers





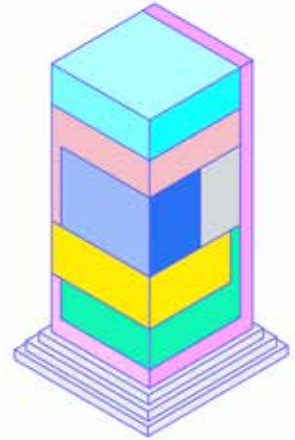
Sovereignty
and security



Sustainability



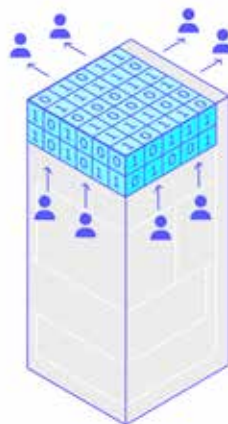
Decentralised sovereign
infrastructure



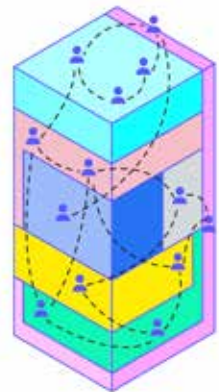
Strong democracy



De-Proprietarisation and
interoperability



Data as
common good



Inclusive
governance

The EuroStack

Core principles

Ling Tan (UK/SG)

Playing Democracy 2.0

Can democratic systems survive if we hold different values?

Democracy today is fragile. Throughout the world, its principles are being challenged by politicians, corporations, and individuals. Deciding how we are going to make collective decisions is urgent while the balance between individual and collective goals is delicate. Can democratic systems survive if we hold different values? Can collapse lead to better paradigms?

Playing Democracy 2.0 is a giant multiplayer game of Pong exploring the principles of democracy. Participants don't just play, they rewrite the rules to explore and challenge the limits of democracy.

Designed for up to four players, they control game paddles using their body movements tracked by 3D cameras.

Each time a team scores, they can modify one of six game rules, which are in essence the principles of democracy: fairness, equality, freedom, rights, transparency, accountability. Players can cooperate with each other, modify the rules individually or collectively, or violate them, which could cause the game to fall apart.

Project by Ling Tan. Sound design by uah.



© Ling Tan

S+T+ARTS

(Science+Technology+Arts)

The STARTS initiative can be understood as the precious core of Ars Electronica Platform Europe. Ars Electronica's long-standing involvement in STARTS is part of our wider commitment to designing and testing transdisciplinary practices and sustainably integrating art-thinking and artistic practice as innovation catalysts for research- and technology-related development. STARTS Residencies and STARTS Prize winners explore both innovative perspectives on the technosphere and, in many cases, planetary issues. STARTS Regional Centers dedicate themselves to the implementation of innovation on a practical level. Currently, Ars Electronica actively participates in three STARTS projects.

S+T+ARTS EC(H)O

Fostering ECOlogically conscious and Human compatible digital technology

In an age of societal and environmental emergency states when individual disciplines seem to have hit the ceiling in terms of innovation, Science, Technology, and the Arts outline new approaches, alternative perspectives, and creative solutions that promise to inspire progress and accelerate development. *STARTS Ec(h)o* supports practices at this intersection, recognizing the most successful artist-led, creative experimentations through the STARTS Prize, STARTS Residencies, and the annual AI&Music program at Sónar. Ars Electronica coordinates these efforts, hosting the STARTS Prize as well as Residencies.



Anna Schaeffner, Soft Collision © Florian Voggeneider

Partners: Ars Electronica (AT), INOVA+ (PT), La French Tech Grande Provence (FR), Media Solution Center Baden-Württemberg (DE), High Performance Computing Center Stuttgart (DE), Salzburger Festspiele (AT), Sónar (ES), T6 Ecosystems (IT), TUD Dresden University of Technology (DE)

Duration: 1.1.2024–31.12.2026

Website: starts-prize.aec.at

starts.eu/what-we-do/residences/startsecho

STARTS *Ec(h)o* is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement 101135691.

S+T+ARTS Aqua Motion

STARTS Aqua Motion aims to revolutionize water management in Europe through an interdisciplinary approach that merges artistic experimentation with cutting-edge technological innovations. Through 25 Residencies, the project harnesses the creativity of artists to

develop sustainable solutions for pressing water challenges across Europe's diverse regions with a focus on four critical basins—Atlantic-Arctic, Mediterranean Sea, Baltic-North Sea and Danube-Black Sea. Ars Electronica hosts two of these Residencies.

Partners: INOVA+ (PT), Ars Electronica (AT), AIR Centre (PT), +ATLANTIC CoLAB (PT), Hortimare (NL), Kikk Festival (BE), MUSE—Museo delle Scienze (IT), Pro Progressione (HU), Rio Neiva—Associação de Defesa do Ambiente (PT), The Global Network of Water Museums (WAMU-NET) (IT), Vienna University of Technology (AT), Waag Futurelab (NL)

Duration: 1.1.2025—31.12.2026

Website: starts.eu/what-we-do/residences/startsaquamotion

STARTS Aqua Motion is funded by the European Union under the STARTS—Science, Technology and Arts initiative of DG CNECT under Grant Agreement LC-03568055.

S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence

STARTS Afropean Intelligence aims to empower African artists and local pioneers in art-driven innovation. In collaboration with African and European ICT experts, prompt engineers, journalists, and activists, the project analyzes the use of AI in artistic practice and its influence on political, social, economic, and ecological discourses on the continent, merging AI technologies with the rich narratives and unique viewpoints of African-rooted movements. In this context, Ars Electronica hosts the STARTS Prize Africa.



Partners: GLUON (BE), Ars Electronica (AT), CHRONIQUES (FR), Royal Museum for Central Africa (BE)

Associated Partners: B'sarya for Arts (EG), INTERFERENCE (TN), Fak'ugesi Festival (ZA), Tshimologong (ZA), Gallery of Code (NG), Academy of Fine Arts of Kinshasa (CD), Krithika ArtProjects (CD)

Duration: 1.1.2025—30.6.2026

Website: starts.eu/afropean-intelligence

STARTS Afropean Intelligence is funded by the European Union under the STARTS—Science, Technology and Arts initiative of DG CNECT under Grant Agreement LC-03568051.

S+T+ARTS Prize Exhibition

Masha Zolotova (RU) / Co-Curator STARTS Prize Exhibition

Navigating Uncertainty

We are living through a time defined by shifting ground: ecological limits are being breached, political and social systems are in flux, and technologies are evolving too fast for us to meaningfully grasp their implications. The idea of a stable, predictable world no longer holds true. Uncertainty is often described as a lack of clarity, or an absence of information, but it is more than that. It is a structural feature of the systems we have built and the crises we now face. From climate change and algorithmic governance to geopolitical instability and the emergence of quantum technologies, we find ourselves confronting forms of uncertainty that are not simply technical, but existential. These are not problems to be solved with more data or better models, they require a deeper cultural and political reckoning. This exhibition brings together artistic and research-based practices that question the systems we live within and offer new frameworks for understanding, feeling, and navigating the unknown.

Climate Uncertainty

The impacts of climate change are undeniable, yet the complexity of the ecological systems involved often makes it difficult to fully predict where, when, and how these impacts will unfold. In this section, the projects engage with the entangled realities of environmental degradation, extractivism, and loss of biodiversity, while also highlighting alternative modes of understanding and acting within ecological systems.

Techno-Social Uncertainty

As the result of the unprecedented development of digital technologies, not just our tools are changing, but the structures of our society as well, yet these systems are often black boxes. This section looks at how artists and researchers show the impact of their output, make their workings visible, and imagine better futures.



Synthetic Memories © Domestic Data Streamers

Some reveal the power structures behind tech, while others rethink how it could serve the public and the planet. In this view, uncertainty becomes a prompt to question and reshape how we build and use technology, underlining the need for digital sovereignty, fair infrastructure, and critical digital literacy.

Fundamental Uncertainty

As quantum technologies move from theoretical physics into applied computing, they present a new layer of uncertainty—one that questions the very frameworks through which we understand reality. These technologies hold radical potential, yet for most people they remain difficult to grasp. The projects explore how culture can interpret, mediate, and expand our understanding of quantum science; they engage not only on the cognitive, but also on the emotional level.

In doing so, they contribute to a broader public imagination around quantum futures—one that is open, inclusive, and critically informed.

Uncertainty is not a problem to be solved, rather a condition to be understood. It shapes the way we relate to our environment, to technology, and to each other. The works in this exhibition do not offer fixed solutions. Instead, they act as tools—ways to see more clearly, to feel more deeply, and to imagine more expansively. This is also the core of the STARTS initiative: fostering collaboration between science, technology, and the arts to rethink innovation in the service of a more just and sustainable future. The exhibition features the selection of the STARTS Prize and STARTS Prize Africa winners, funded by the Horizon Europe Program of the European Union and DG CNECT in the framework of the STARTS Ec(h)o and STARTS Afropean Intelligence projects.

Featured Artworks in S+T+ARTS Prize Exhibition 2025

S+T+ARTS PRIZE

GRAND PRIZE

ARTISTIC EXPLORATION

AI War Cloud Database,
Sarah Ciston (US)

GRAND PRIZE

INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

Sensing Quantum,
LAS Art Foundation (DE)

HONORARY MENTIONS

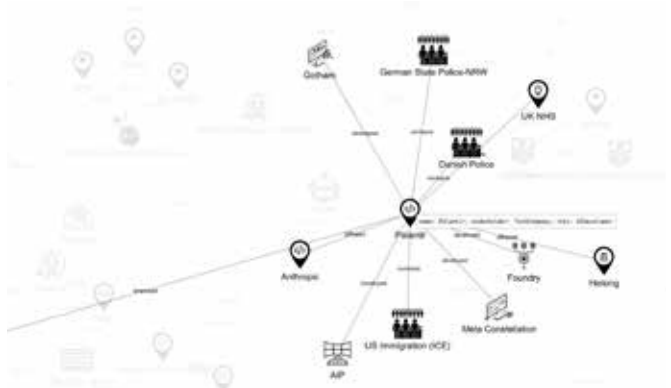
Coexist, Emergence Delft (NL)

Computational Compost,
Marina Otero Verzier (ES)

Synthetic Memories,
Domestic Data Streamers (ES)

NOMINATIONS

Large Language Writer,
Lucy Li (AT), Leo Mühlfeld (AT),
Alan Schiegl (AT)



AI War Cloud Database © Sarah Ciston



Computational Compost © Tabakalera

S+T+ARTS PRIZE AFRICA

GRAND PRIZE

The Wild Future Lab,
Kairos Futura (KE)

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Sands Of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through, Ala Praxis (NG)

More information about the Prize winners is available in the Prix Ars Electronica 2025 catalog.



The Wild Future Lab © Kairos Futura

Citizen Science

RIECS-Concept

Towards a Pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science

RIECS-Concept will set the basis for a unique research infrastructure that consolidates Citizen Science in Europe. The conceptualization will engage multiple stakeholders to reiterate the

importance of involving society in research processes. Ars Electronica plays an active role in the stakeholder engagement process throughout the entire project.

Partners: Fundacion Iberoicivis (ES), European Citizen Science Association (DE), Ars Electronica (AT), Spanish National Research Council (ES), OEAD GmbH—Agency for Education and Internationalisation (AT), Centre for Social Innovation GmbH (AT), The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (AT), Malmö University (SW), University of Milano-Bicocca (IT), Center for the Promotion of Science (RS), Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (LT), Citizen Science Global Partnership (AT), University of Zurich (CH)

Duration: 1.1.2025 — 31.12.2027

Website: concept.riecs.eu

RIECS-Concept is funded by the European Union's HORIZON EUROPE Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement 101188210.

IMPETUS

IMPETUS is a project that showcases ways in which Citizen Science contributes significantly to crucial social issues such as digital literacy, data justice and participatory governance. Citizen Science heightens trust in scientific expertise, increases critical thinking skills, and creates a robust defense against misinformation. *IMPETUS* is committed to reinforcing and enhancing the European Citizen Science ecosystem by

extending financial aid and strategic support to Citizen Science initiatives throughout Europe. The project offers innovative funding pathways for Citizen Science initiatives through the *IMPETUS Accelerator program*. In the context of *IMPETUS*, Ars Electronica hosts the *European Union Prize for Citizen Science* on behalf of the European Commission.

Partners: Zabala Innovation (ES), King's College London (GB), Ars Electronica (AT), NESTA (GB), Science for Change (ES), T6 Ecosystems (IT), European Science Engagement Association (AT)

Duration: 1.7.2022—30.6.2026

Website: impetus4citizenscience.eu

IMPETUS is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement 101058677—HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01.



Institute of Ethnography SASA (RS), University of Belgrade—Faculty of Philosophy (RS),
Roma women's center BIBIJA (RS)

HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation

Empowering Roma Women through Building Networks of Solidarity

HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation is dedicated to advancing the emancipation of Roma women in Serbia through an innovative and inclusive approach: the community mapping methodology. Serving as the cornerstone of the project, this methodology allows existing research limitations to be addressed and provides a platform for Roma women's empowerment, participation, and self-advocacy. This bottom-up approach recognizes the importance of community voices in shaping their future.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the Centre for the Promotion of Science (CPN), Republic of Serbia, that by choosing to support it financially has recognized the potential of

the HEROINES project. Also, we are deeply grateful to all amazing women, our associates and project participants from the citizen side of this project, from Roma Women's Center BIBIJA, Citizens' Association Ternipe from Pirot and Roma center for women and children Successful Women from Kostolac.



© NGO Ternipe

Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO (PT)

The Museum of Food Waste

Because food waste should be in the past.

The Museum of Food Waste is a Citizen Science project aiming to monitor food waste in 6 school canteens in Esposende and Viana do Castelo (Portugal), grounded on the relevance of engaging a younger generation as upcoming agent of change. 536 students (10-15 years old) took part in several stages of the process, during 40 days of food waste monitoring in 2024. This led to identifying 6,2 tons of waste for all canteens, in the form of students' plate leftovers, kitchen food surplus, and inedible kitchen food waste. Together with 26 teachers and 24 canteen staff members, the students identified good practices which are now broadly advocated for so they will be scaled.



© Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO

Presented in the context of *IMPETUS*. *IMPETUS* is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement 101058677—HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01.

European Digital Deal

European Digital Deal is a three-year investigation into how the accelerated, yet at times unconsidered, adoption of new technologies—such as Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, and algorithmic processing—can alter or undermine democratic processes.

European Digital Deal is located at the intersection of technological and socio-political narratives as a reminder of their deepening entanglement. Zooming into the risks and possibilities new technologies bring to existing forms of governance, the project calls on multiple voices to construct narratives and visions for a future in which use of technology is more deliberate and thought through. Reinventing the concept of artistic

residency to suit complex issues, we center it on the collaboration and exchange between artists, technologists, futurists, policymakers, curators, and more.

As the coordinator of the project, Ars Electronica is responsible for communication and content production within the project. This includes *The Digital Deal Podcast*—a series in which artists, cultural critics, and theorists discuss how new technologies reshape our democracies and help us make sense of these changes.

At this year's Festival, both the Theme exhibition and a full day of the Theme symposium are curated within the context of the *European Digital Deal*, showcasing the results.

Partners: Ars Electronica (AT), GLUON (BE), IMAL Art Center for Digital Cultures & Technology (BE), Kersnikova Institute / Kapelica Gallery (SI), LABoral (ES), Onassis Stegi (EL), Y csoport (HU), Sineglossa (IT), Teatro Circo de Braga (PT), The Center for the Promotion of Science (CPN) (RS), The Culture Yard (DK), Waag Futurelab (NL), Zaragoza City of Knowledge Foundation (FZC) (ES)

Duration: 1.1.2023–31.12.2025

Website: ars.electronica.art/eudigitaldeal

European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



fAIr media

Debunking AI-generated mis/disinformation in media

fAIr media sets out to debunk mis/disinformation, promote media literacy, and enhance citizens' capacity for and critical approach to media (including social media). This is achieved by means of an active and participatory methodology involving AI, professionals, artists, and young citizens. The project's main challenge is to work with experts to anticipate the impact of generative AI on the media landscape. At this year's festival, Ars Electronica hosts an OpenLab in the context of *fAIr media*.



© Tom Mesic

Partners: Zaragoza City of Knowledge Foundation (FZC) (ES), Ars Electronica (AT), Sineglossa (IT), Baltan Laboratories (NL)

Duration: 2.9.2024—1.9.2027

fAIr media is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union under Grant Agreement 101147977.

Studiotopia

Enter the Symbiocene with Arts and Science

In the face of complex issues and ramifying ecological implications of the Symbioscene, the second iteration of the Studiotope project engages collaborative frameworks and interdisciplinary expertise. The residency model is two-directional, with scientists from diverse disciplines working alongside and learning from established leading artists; parallel to this, emerging artists collaborate with leading scientists and research institutions. This all contributes to a better understanding of how artist-led transdisciplinary collaborations can contribute to tackling the questions of our time on a scientific and philosophical level.



© vog.photo

Ars Electronica hosts a debate with its *Studiotope* residents at this year's festival.

Partners: MEET | Digital Culture Center (IT), Ars Electronica (AT), Kersnikova Institute/Kapelica Gallery (SI), Bozar (BE), GLUON (BE), LABoral (ES), Hexagone (FR), Łaźnia Centre for Contemporary Art (PL), Cluj Cultural Centre (RO), Digital Hub/Beta Festival (IE), Cyens Centre of Excellence (CY)

Duration: 1.1.2024—31.12.2026

Website: studiotope.art

Studiotope is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Tilling Roots&Seeds

Tilling Roots&Seeds aims to enhance European cultural cooperation and artistic research and practice on topics like the plant biodiversity crisis and sustainable food systems in Europe. The overall objective of *Tilling Roots&Seeds* is to find collaborative ways to discover, regenerate,

and narrate different aspects of farmers' work in a way that implies interconnectedness, harmony with the natural world, and respect for future generations. Ars Electronica showcases artworks emerging from this discourse at this year's festival.

Partners: Quo Artis (ES), Ars Electronica (AT), KILOWATT (IT), University of Barcelona (ES)

Duration: 1.11.2023–31.10.2025

Website: tillingrootsandseeds.eu

Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

LABEL4FUTURE

Driving the Green Transition through Circular Economy Innovation

Label4Future is dedicated to advancing circular economy practices and innovation in the EU's less developed regions: Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland. Focused on the plastics industry and related sectors, the project supports

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in creating innovative, sustainable solutions. *Label4Future* uses the power of creativity to build better futures for our people, planet, clients, and communities.

Partners: Creative Industry Košice (CIKE) (SK), Ars Electronica (AT), European Federation for Creative Economy (Creative FED) (NL), Chamber of Commerce and Industry Slovenia (CCIS) (SI), Austria Wirtschaftsservice (AWS) (AT), Creative Prague (CZ), Technical University of Košice (TUKE) (SK)

Duration: 1.1.2024–31.12.2025

Website: label4future.eu

Label4Future is funded by the European Union (European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) under Grant Agreement 101133162.

AI5Production

European Digital Innovation Hub

AI5Production is an Austrian European Digital Innovation Hub. It supports Austrian SMEs active in the field of production to take steps in their digitalization processes, with a strong focus on Industry 5.0 technologies. Services

rendered by the hub include networking events, support to find investments, skills and training workshops, and free small research projects called Test-Before-Invest to minimize the risk of investing in risky new technologies.

Partners (all AT): Ars Electronica, VRVis, Austrian Institute of Technology, Inits, Austrian Center for Digital Production, Johannes Kepler University, TU Wien, Industrie 4.0 Österreich, EIT Manufacturing, Software Competence Center Hagenberg, Universität Wien, Regionales Innovations Centrum, Linz Center for Mechatronics, Profactor, Fill, SBA Research

Website: ai5production.at

Duration: 1.11.2022–31.10.2025

AI5Production has received funding from the European Union's research and innovation program Horizon Europe under Grant Agreement 101083472.

ACuTe

Culture Testbeds for Interactivity, Performance and Technology

ACuTe is a trendsetting, large-scale innovation project that aims to revolutionize the way theater and the performing arts are produced and performed with the help of emerging technology. In the process, new forms of cultural collaboration and competence development are to be established. In line with Platform Europe's commitment to the digital transformation of the cultural and creative sectors, the project creates "culture testbeds" in the performance arts. These entail incubation programs testing tangible prototypes to reimagine how we tell stories (new dramaturgies), how we produce stories (stage design), and how audiences interact with and

respond to them (audience engagement). The most impressive examples are showcased at this year's festival, together with a full day conference on the use of AI in performing arts.



De Toneelmakerij, Patchwork Girl
© Samme Peper

Partners: Oulu University of Applied Sciences (FI), Ars Electronica (AT), European Theatre Convention (DE), Centro Azkuna de Ocio y Cultura (ES), Estonian Academy of Arts (EE), Stichting Saxion (NL), Théâtre de Liège (BE), De Toneelmakerij (NL), Slovensko narodno gledališče Nova Gorica (SI), Det Norske Teatret (NO), Deutsches Theater Berlin (DE), Teatrul Național "Marin Sorescu" (RO), Academy for Theatre and Digitality (DE), Oulu Theatre (FI)

Website: acuteproject.eu

Duration: 1.7.2022–30.6.2026

ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

SHARESPACE

SHARESPACE is a cutting-edge XR research project that focuses on the exploration of shared hybrid spaces of the future where humans and avatars engage in real-time, embodied collaboration. The project focuses on two proof-of-principles that explore synchronization and amplification of movements in digital spaces, and applies its research concepts and technologies in three real-world scenarios: sport, health, and art.



Adelin Schweitzer, #ALPHALOOP
© Florian Voggeneder

Partners: Ars Electronica (AT), DFKI (DE), Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise (FR), The Centro Regionale di Competenze Nuove Tecnologie per le Attività Produttive S.c.a.r.l. (IT), Cyens Center of Excellence (CY), De Montfort University (GB), Hospital Vall d'Hebron (SP), Inria (FR), Lightspace Technologies SIA (LV), Ricoh Europe (DE), Universitat Jaume I De Castellon (SP), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (DE), University of Montpellier (FR)

Duration: 1.1.2023–31.12.2025

Website: sharespace.eu

SHARESPACE has received funding from the European Union's research and innovation program Horizon Europe under Grant Agreement 10192889.

NEB Junction

NEB Junction is a platform that brings together insights, ideas, and experiences from past and future projects within the *New European Bauhaus*—an initiative focused on making the green transition in our built environments more sustainable, inclusive, and appealing. The platform will gather knowledge, materials, and real-life experiences from across the NEB community and turn them into easy-to-understand “Knowledge Gems” through a user-friendly, AI-supported interface. At this year’s Festival, Ars Electronica kickstarts *NEB Junction*’s engagement with the community.



© Markus Schneeberger

Partners: NTNU (NO), AIT Austrian Institute of Technology (AT), ClimateKIC (NL), DOWEL Innovation (FR), ICLEI European Secretariat (DE), Ars Electronica (AT), European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) (BE), Democratic Society (BE)

Duration: 1.5.2025—31.10.2027

Website: nebjunction.eu

NEB Junction is funded by the European Union.

Critical ChangeLab

Critical ChangeLab adopts a bottom-up approach that empowers young people to “own” everyday democracy and engage in direct action towards achieving justice. Its aim is to strengthen democracy in Europe by creating and implementing a flexible model of democratic pedagogy. Ars Electronica has designed and implemented Critical ChangeLabs in various learning environments alongside nine project partners in different European countries. The goal is to enable young people to make a difference in their immediate surroundings, co-build democracy, with the end goal of fostering a sense of agency among a new generation. At this year's festival, we discuss these approaches in a conference on education.



© Tom Mesic

Partners: University of Oulu (FI), Ars Electronica (AT), Trinity College Dublin (IE), University of Barcelona (ES), Waag Futurelab (NL), Kersnikova Institute (SI), Tactical Tech (DE), European Alternatives (FR), LATRA Innovation Lab (GR), IDIZ—Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (HR)

Duration: 1.4.2023—31.3.2026

Website: criticalchangelab.eu

Critical ChangeLab is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement 101094217—HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-04.

EXCENTRIC

Excelling Human-Centric Collaborative Ecosystems for Smart Digital Transition in CCSI

EXCENTRIC is a pioneering initiative dedicated to transforming the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) through digital innovation by addressing the underutilization of data in daily operations. It centers on experience sectors—live music, theater, festivals, and museums—known for their capacity to create value by providing

audience-centric intangible cultural experiences. The project's ambition is to empower organizations in these sectors to develop, adopt, and integrate collaborative data-driven tools and practices for smart digital operations. At this year's festival, Ars Electronica hosts a Network Activation Event in this context.

Partners: Erasmus University Rotterdam (NL), Ars Electronica (AT), Waag Futurelab (NL), MUSEUM BOOSTER (AT), KEA European Affairs (BE), Fondazione Romaeuropa Arte E Cultura (IT), Društvo Racunalniski Muzej (SI), Oulun Kulttuurisaatio SR (FI), CTL Cultural Trend Lisbon Production & Management LDA (PT), Academy for Theatre and Digitality (DE), European Festivals Association (BE), Live (Developing Musical Actions) (FR), Stichting Europeana (NL)

Duration: 1.2.2025 – 31.1.2028

Website: excentric-project.com

EXCENTRIC is funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement 101178180.

EXCENTRIC—Network Activation Event

The Network Activation Event marks the establishment of a vast network of experts around the project. In this inaugural event, we bring together policymakers, sector advocates, and the project's own piloting institutions. Following a first day of networking, artistic input, and dynamic exchange, participants will gather for a second day. This includes a discursive program with cultural sector experts and a hands-on, futuring workshop in which real-life challenges inspire the design of transformational paths at an organizational, sectoral, and policymaking level.



© Ars Electronica / Martin Hieslmair

CAMPUS

Ars Electronica Campus Exhibition

What does it mean to prepare for the future when the future itself becomes unpredictable? When institutions falter, when technologies increasingly dominate, and, though designed to provide stability, themselves begin to tremble, then education finds itself at a turning point. In response to this year's festival theme, *PANIC – yes/no*, the Campus Exhibition 2025 brings together 37 universities from across the globe and contributions from 14 departments of the University of Arts Linz. Spanning multiple locations, from POSTCITY to the University of Arts' two main buildings, the Salzamt to splace, the exhibition examines the evolving role of creative education in a time defined by instability and transformation.

The Campus format has long served as a platform to explore how emerging artists are shaped not only by technological developments, but by teaching environments—by the ways they are taught to think, to question, and to act. This year, many of the featured projects shift focus from offering answers to cultivating the capacity to navigate uncertainty. Art, in this context, becomes a form of adaptive intelligence—a rehearsal space for futures as yet unknown.

More than a showcase of student work, the Campus Exhibition is a living laboratory for artistic research, experimentation, and cultural reflection. Artists from around the world engage with a reality marked by crisis, yet not devoid of possibility. The question is no longer whether to panic, but how to respond—with curiosity, resilience, and collective imagination.

The University of Arts Linz, as the co-host and academic partner of Ars Electronica Campus Exhibition, stages its theme both spatially and conceptually. Their intervention *Alles.Immer.Offen.* transforms sliding doors on Linz's Main Square into sonic, sensor-driven thresholds that speak to the absurdities of automation and the tensions between transparency and control in public space.



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

Every act of creation is a decision—a negotiation with systems, environments, and the unknown. Being a Campus partner means opening this process to our students, giving them a rare chance to share, learn, and grow within a global artistic community.

— Venelin Shurélov,
Campus partner National
Academy of Art Sofia

By turning a familiar form of technology into a choreography of access and refusal, the project invites reflection on what it means to be open—physically, politically, and psychologically—in a time of crisis. Also central to this year's Campus program is the National Academy of Art in Sofia, presented at splace on the Linz's Main Square. Their exhibition */decisions/make/art* reframes artistic creation as a logic of choice, response, and system-thinking. Through interactive installations, generative systems, and machine learning experiments, students explore how aesthetic expression becomes an ethical negotiation—a dynamic interplay between human intention and algorithmic environments. The *Expanded Play* exhibition—a collaborative effort between the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Masaryk University, and the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg—is located at the Salzamt. Beyond these anchor institutions, dozens of universities contribute perspectives. Their approaches are diverse—from immersive environments and critical interface design to speculative world-building and performative research—yet they share a common urgency: How can education cultivate not only skills, but resilience? What kinds of learning environments foster experimentation over conformity? And how can pedagogy remain a space of possibility in a world defined by volatility?

In a moment when traditional structures offer little clarity, the Campus Exhibition positions art schools as laboratories for living-with-uncertainty. Rather than answering panic with panic, the participating institutions engage it—as a force to be metabolized, questioned, and, ultimately, transformed. As part of this commitment to emerging voices, Ars Electronica will for the second time present the Campus Award, honoring the most outstanding student project in the exhibition and the institutions that nurture such excellence.

UNIVERSITY OF ARTS LINZ (AT)

Alles.Immer.Offen.

**Sliding doors on the main square. Constantly opening. And closing. And opening.
The world resides between doorways. And next to them.**

The University of Arts Linz is once again staging a curatorial intervention on the Hauptplatz, Linz's main square, during the Ars Electronica Festival—in addition to the exhibitions, the Sound Campus, and the discursive and performative presentations. Sensor-activated sliding glass doors usually go unnoticed in shopping malls, hospitals, or other public buildings.

As part of the Ars Electronica Festival, these overlooked structures are put in the spotlight on Linz's Hauptplatz. The University of Arts Linz responds to this year's theme, *PANIC—yes/no*, through the concept of automated openings—exhibiting the space between doors: from entrance to passage to exit. Our relationship to the world is challenged by an unceasing, automated absurdity. With every sensor-driven opening, glass doors begin to speak to the Linz public through unexpected sounds.

Alles.Immer.Offen. [Everything. Always. Open.] as hope, promise, uncertainty, or threat? Are we becoming increasingly reluctant to accept moments of openness?

What exactly are we afraid of—and why? What lies behind, between or beside doorways? And what promises come with doors that open on their own? The sound and noise installation on Linz's Hauptplatz explores the theme of openness. We are not aiming to convey insights or deliver knowledge. Instead, we invite people to think for themselves—to spark conversations among thinkers. We want to create a space within public space. A space that opens—and is meant to open again and again.

The theme draws inspiration from Beyoncé, Kim Beck and Osman Khan, Einstürzende Neubauten, and Hannah Arendt. We value transparency in showing how this work came about—particularly in a time shaped by opaque, automated information systems.

Beyoncé:

Shortly after the devastating Eaton and Palisades wildfires subsided in January 2025, Beyoncé received the Grammy for Album of the Year. The award was presented by firefighters from the Los Angeles Fire Department on the evening of Sunday, February 2. She concluded her brief acceptance speech, among other things, with the words: "I hope that we ... open doors." This statement was likely addressed less to the firefighters who presented her with the Grammy, and more to the fact that the very next morning, "Day Without Immigrants" protests were organized in several U.S. cities in response to the immigration policies of Donald Trump's second administration.

Hannah Arendt:

Political freedom, the public sphere, and moral responsibility are themes explored by Hannah Arendt in her various writings and publications. In preparing the Kunstuni Campus, her speech-turned-essay On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts on Lessing proved especially significant. Originally delivered as her acceptance speech for the Lessing Prize in 1959, it includes the line: "The world lies between people, and this 'in-between'—much more so than, as is often assumed, the people themselves or even 'the human being'—is today the subject of the greatest concern and the most visible dislocation in nearly all countries." Through these reflections, she urges a continued responsibility toward the world and a renewed examination of how we relate to it.

Kim Beck in collaboration with Osman Khan:

Amid the momentum of Linz's designation as European Capital of Culture in 2009, the Prix Ars Electronica honored a piece by Kim Beck and Osman Khan which has since found its way into the Ars Electronica Archive as video documentation. When Laughter Trips at the Threshold of the Divine—

a sliding door installation originally exhibited from August 2008 to August 2009 at Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY—was never realized in Linz, despite some recalling otherwise. Comparable installations include Carsten Höller's fully functional automatic sliding glass doors at Tate London in 2003. It would come as no surprise if numerous other automated door systems have been—and are still being—used as artistic tools for spatial interventions across, inside, outside, and in-between contexts.

Einstürzende Neubauten:

Lastly, the title of our installation takes form as a collage inspired by an album title from a well-known German band. Alles wieder offen [Everything open again] is both the name of an album and a track released in 2007 by Einstürzende Neubauten. The song's lyrics poetically and ironically explore different forms of new beginnings. In tribute to the band's influential musical legacy, we have titled our installation and the Kunstuni Campus Alles. Immer.Offen.

Technologies are doorways. Doorways are passages. Passages are in-between spaces. A collage of hope, promise, uncertainty, and threat. Yet the Kunstuni Campus is more than just a

collage. The following pages present the works and emerging artists who are exhibiting, performing, or contributing to a discursive assemblage—both in the buildings on Linz's Hauptplatz and on the campus in POSTCITY. *Alles.Immer.Offen.*

Manuela Naveau

Initiator and Curator of Kunstuni Campus
@ Ars Electronica Festival, Professor of Critical Data at the Interface Cultures Department, University of Arts Linz.

Hess Jeon, Sylvia Leitner, Alexander Wöran, Viktoria Angyal, Vladislav Nazarov, and Gudrun Oberndorfer

Project Management of Kunstuni Campus
@Ars Electronica Festival

Paul Eis

Architect

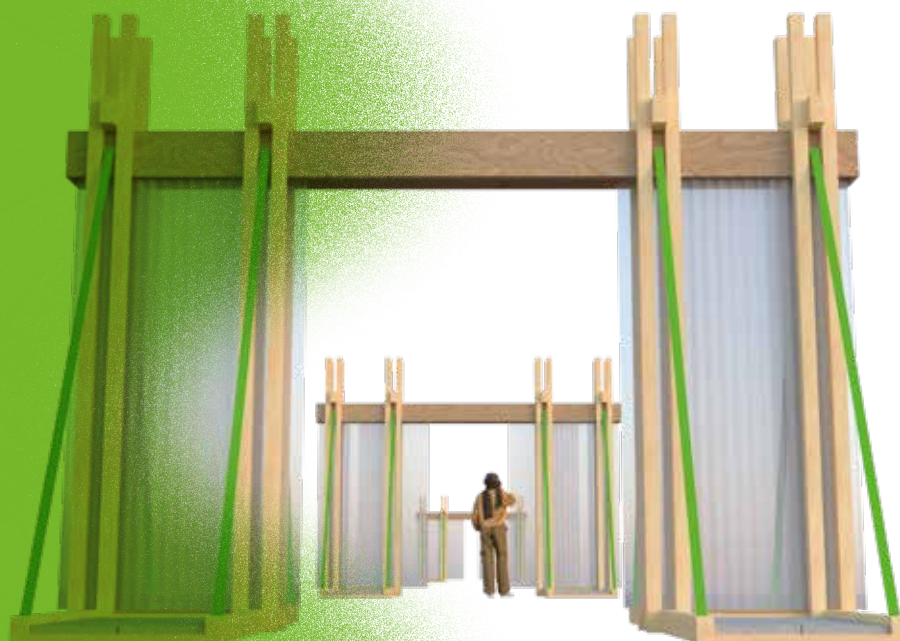
Jürgen Ropp

Audio Setup

MOOI DESIGN

Graphic Design

Installation at Hauptplatz made possible by the exceptional support from Peter Danereder GmbH.

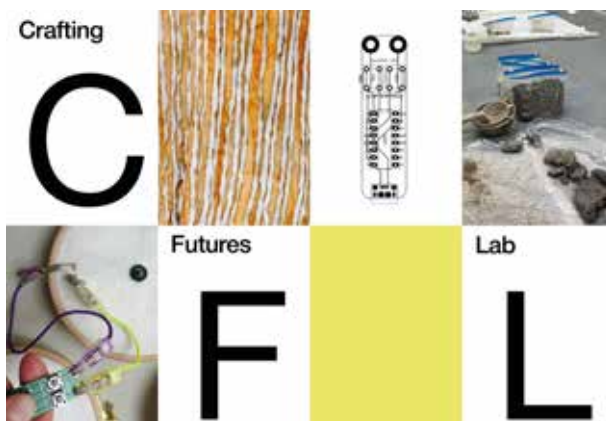


Design and Technology

Irene Posch (AT), Monja Hirscher (DE), Julia Moser (AT), Valerie Moschner (AT), Lilo Viehweg (DE), Anna Blumenkranz (DE), Petra Vicianova (CZ)

Crafting Futures Lab

For the fifth time, we are opening our lab to the public as part of the Ars Electronica Festival. Visitors are invited to explore evolving processes, conversations, and collaborations that shape our work in crafting practices that hold space for new narratives, educational approaches, and connected artifacts to evolve. Installations, prototypes, and annotated experiments offer insight into ongoing inquiries and encourage engagement with research and researchers.



© Irene Posch, Monja Hirscher, Julia Moser, Valerie Moschner, Lilo Viehweg, Anna Blumenkranz, Petra Vicianova

Fashion and Technology

David Schuch (AT)

Tasche



© David Schuch

This bag was made by manipulating the natural properties of gelatine and glycerine, which create a leather-like material. Use of a high heat air dryer causes the composite to melt and change in shape and size. It is then hand-shaped into the forms needed for the object, a difficult process that could tear the material at any moment. The cooled-down leather is very stable, however. This makes the bag as fragile as it is sturdy.

Fine Arts

Lou Seidl (DE)

Between routine and resilience

The artist's project was created during a residency at Marthashofen, Grafrath. During her stay, she explored how routines can function as a psychological protective mechanism. Conversations with people on site flow into a sound installation. At the same time, a blanket slowly takes shape, growing stitch by stitch—a metaphor for resilience, offering protection and warmth. In the video installation, sound and knitting process merge into a dialogue about repetition and the stability it can offer.

Lera Entmayr (AT)

Bio-Mapping Linz

Bio-Mapping Linz is an artistic exploration of the microbial landscapes surrounding the city's pigeon population. Between 2024 and 2025, samples were collected with cotton swabs from feathers, droppings, food sources, and nesting areas across Linz. These were transferred onto agar-agar and left to incubate at room temperature. What emerged were living portraits: each Petri dish developed a unique microbial pattern, shaped by the specific site and moment of collection.



Between routine and resilience © Lou Seidl



Bio-Mapping Linz © Lera Entmayr

Maxi Kling (DE)

Blutjägerschlachtvorhang

This work titled *Blutjägerschlachtvorhang* examines male-dominated internet subcultures, especially incels—a term used for men who feel excluded and radicalize through misogyny in online forums like 4Chan or video games. Kling uses video game aesthetics to reflect critically on this culture. Despite the hard materials, structural breaks appear, evoking fragility and feminine attributes. The work addresses both hypersexualized depictions of women and themes of rejection and alienation.

Ali Yaghoubi (IR)

Riddance

This project began before the pandemic and has grown over the course of four years, with new video fragments added annually. It represents a visual journey through stillness, struggle, movement, and acceptance—a ritual of release. Over time, the work transforms into a quiet meditation on absence: the empty space left behind by someone or something no longer there.



Blutjägerschlachtvorhang © Maxi Kling



Riddance © Ali Yaghoubi

Matilde Baldassari (IT), Łukasz Romero (CO),
Topi Piirainen (FI)

Scrape Sounds

Scrape Sounds is a sound installation constituted by a loop of a 1/4 inch sound tape sustained by found objects. The tape, linked symbiotically with the objects' bodies, binds them together into a playful composition. Concurrently, the tape is able to record and produce sound only due to the tension built up between the objects' bodies.

Sophia Horak (AT)

Ulva intestinalis

The performance shows the sympoietic life of three cyborgs, called *Ulva intestinalis* (sea lettuce). Our daily work contains rituals of care which must be enacted more extensively due to the prevailing politics of wage work, domestic labor, reproduction, and the expropriation and sexualization of women's* bodies. The exploitation of both nature and women* calls for a radical, social, and economic transformation which we call for with the bodily expression of our personal memories and through emotions around work, resistance, and frustration.



Scrape Sounds © Matilde Baldassari, Łukasz Romero,
Topi Piirainen



Ulva intestinalis © Sophia Horak

Sheida Ramhormozihosseinzadeh (IR)

The Pulse of Dance

The Pulse of Dance is an interactive kinetic sculpture designed as a plant-like body with soft tendrils, activated by human embrace. It gently responds to touch, dissolving boundaries between human, nature, and technology. Inspired by Object-Oriented Ontology, the work invites visitors to reflect on coexistence and the potential for equal relations among all beings.

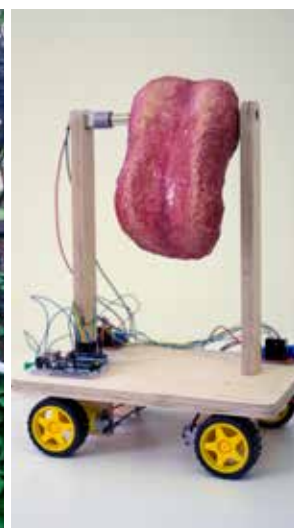
Laura Walter (DE)

untitled (to be licked at)

Who is watching? Who is being watched? *untitled (to be licked at)* subverts the familiar power dynamics of a (shop) window. As someone walks past, the kinetic object begins to move along the glass, licking it, and leaving visible traces of saliva behind. Echoing Linz's yellow sightseeing train, where observers unwittingly become the observed, this work raises broader questions about visibility, surveillance, and desire in both physical and digital spaces.



The Pulse of Dance
© Sheida Ramhormozihosseinzadeh



untitled (to be licked at) © Laura Walter

Graphic-design and Photography

Emma Pascale Bockelmann (DE)

[...]

[...] is an audio installation based on intimate interviews exploring relationships with mothers. The work reflects on both joyful and painful childhood memories, touching on themes of forgiveness, loss, and—above all—the profound bond between mother and child. These personal and honest stories invite listeners into a deeply emotional and nostalgic space that is at once universal and uniquely individual.



© Emma Pascale Bockelmann

Interface Cultures

Post-Human Resources: Twenty Years at the Edge of Interaction

What happens when technology is no longer an isolated tool for specific tasks, but embedded in a complex web of interrelationships? At Interface Cultures, we have spent over two decades exploring this evolving liaison as an artistic field—asking how we communicate with technology, not merely through it. In a world where digital interfaces shape our emotions, memories, and desires, excellence in media art demands more than technical skill; it calls for a critical sensitivity to emerging systems and the frictions that surface within our entanglement with them. Founded at the University of Arts Linz, Interface Cultures has grown into a vibrant community of artists, researchers, and educators committed to redefining the boundaries of media art. For more than 20 years, we have brought experimental works to the Ars Electronica Festival, contributing

to an ongoing global discourse on technology, art, and society from the perspective of younger generations. This year's exhibition, *Post-Human Resources*, arises from a moment of saturation—where every device demands our attention and every interface mirrors a culture of dopamine, urgency, and algorithmic control. We ask: What new narratives can resist this noise? How can we create spaces for care, attention, and reflection within systems designed for speed? *Post-Human Resources* is not just an exhibition—it is a space for reconfiguration. A collective gesture by a generation of artists attuned to the pulse of the present, offering subtle, imaginative, and resistant responses to the challenges of our mediated lives.

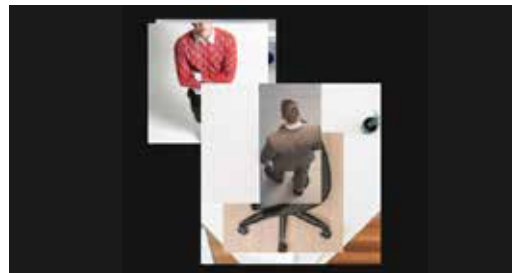
Faculty:

Manuela Naveau, Laurent Mignonneau, Fabricio Lamoncha, Michaela Ortner, Alexander Wöran, Gudrun Oberndorfer

Till Schönwetter (DE)

an office

In *an office*, generative AI agents contend with productivity, after having replaced all human workers. They now occupy the roles, routines, and responsibilities of a once-human workplace, where human observers act as distant managers, witnessing and occasionally intervening in the strange familiarity of artificial struggle.



© Till Schönwetter

Lucia Claus (GB), Hani Elias (GB)

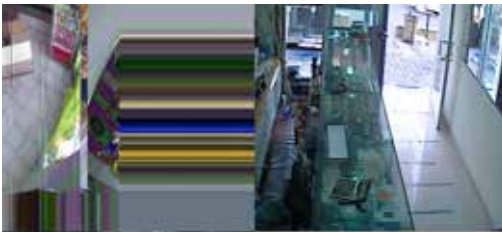
A Room with a View

A Room with a View is a collaborative audiovisual project exploring the boundary between private and public spaces. It features live, open-access camera streams from indoor spaces around the world, brought together into an immersive installation. Viewers are invited to explore the camera feeds and reflect on how it feels both to watch and be watched in everyday life. This project was made under the supervision of the Time-based and Interactive Media department as part of the Deep Space course.

Flavia Luna Somarriba Perez-Desoy (FR)

Ballad of a Frog

Ballad of a Frog is an immersive interactive art project designed to enhance hospital patients' well-being through therapeutic engagement. This project re-imagines hospital ceilings as serene, nature-inspired environments where patients can escape the clinical setting and find peace and relaxation. By combining gamified interactions with soothing audio-visual elements, *Ballad of a Frog* aims to alleviate stress and return a sense of tranquility, humanity, and control to the patients' journey.



A Room with a View © Lucia Claus, Hani Elias



Ballad of a Frog © Flavia Luna Somarriba Perez-Desoy

Volkan Dinçer (TR)

Difference: Anatomy of Stone

Difference: Anatomy of Stone offers a perspective on entities and their environment based on the concept of “non-organic life.” Stones retain thermal energy from the sun, and as the sun sets, the heat inside starts to move out through the stone. Peltier modules on the stone surface harvest electric energy during this process, which powers an LED bulb until there is no temperature difference between the stones and their environment. The bulb, as an implant, is a sign of life, it makes the stone similar to any organism metabolizing energy.

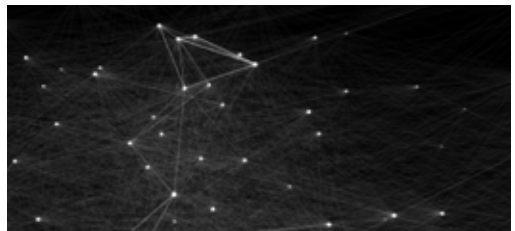
Ahmed Jamal (EG), Emma Silvana Tripaldi (IT),
Till Schönwetter (DE)

DreamAtlas

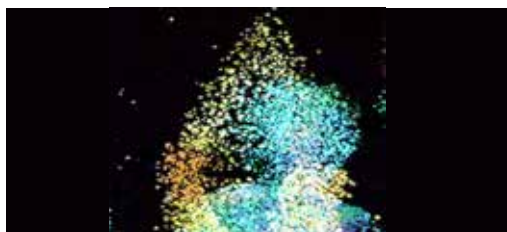
DreamAtlas is a growing map of shared dreams, in which visitors are invited to contribute personal dream fragments to a collective dream diary. Through algorithmic analysis, individual dreams connect into a visual constellation that reveals shared symbols, themes, and emotions. A repurposed telescope interface guides users through this inner universe, transforming subconscious exploration into a communal experience.



Difference: Anatomy of Stone © Volkan Dinçer



DreamAtlas © Ahmed Jamal, Emma Silvana Tripaldi,
Till Schönwetter



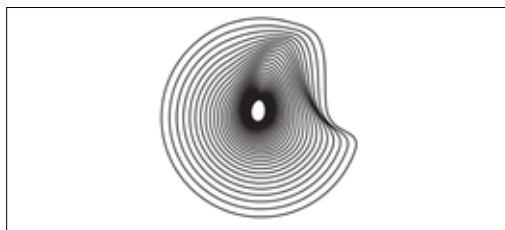
In Between © Joann Lee



feel.exe © Camilla Scholz



Feel.Back.Loop © Ghazal Hosseini



Embracing Sphere © Mehmet Colak

Yuseung Lee (KR)

In Between

In Between is an interactive media installation where emotions from different times meet. Users record their emotions as colors, and by turning a clock hand, they encounter the emotional traces of a past user—not as memory, but as presence. These emotions merge, shift, and create new affective experiences through evolving colors and sounds. Inspired by the Korean saying “옷깃만 스쳐도 인연이다” (“Even a brush of sleeves is predestined”), the work evokes unseen emotional connections that transcend time.

Ghazal Hosseini (IR)

Feel.Back.Loop

An Emotionally Intelligent Machine

Feel.Back.Loop is a robotic tail that explores how machines can learn, interpret, and respond to human emotion. Through affective computing and reinforcement learning, it develops an evolving mutual language—using human facial expression as feedback—to communicate emotionally through movement. The work reflects on human–AI interaction, questioning how establishing a bond with intelligent agents may reshape our emotional norms, sense of connection, social expectations, and cultural perception.

Camilla Scholz (DE)

feel.exe

feel.exe is an interactive artwork in the form of an esoteric programming language in which codes are created by expressing emotions, which in turn creates visuals. A tension between intention and interpretation arises as the code and the output hold meaning within different contexts. By blending code and feeling, *feel.exe* raises questions about the programmability of emotions and the cultural values embedded in algorithms, thereby embracing subjectivity and uncertainty in programming.

Mehmet Colak (TR)

Embracing Sphere

Embracing Sphere is an audio-tactile experience, a glimpse from the vast unknown places at Tannhauser Gate, a novel way to convey a story embedded within the environment itself. Through the interplay of spatialized sound and haptic feedback, *Embracing Sphere* aims to provoke the audience to perceive and interpret a story purely through hearing and feeling the simulated environment.

Hanif Haghtalab (IR)

JAM-E-JAM

JAM-E-JAM is an interactive installation that explores the instability of self-image. The work reimagines selfhood as dynamic, co-constructed, and inseparable from its environment. It draws from both Sufi anti-rationalism and post-cognitive theory, challenging fixed boundaries between mind, body, image, machine, and selfhood, and questioning mind-body dualism. The piece aims to destabilize conventional self-world dichotomies, suggesting that identity is never singular, but rather always becoming.

Lilly Marie Stelzer (DE)

On the nonexistence of detachment

Every second, every hour, every day, we are surrounded by language. Embedded with deeper truths of our society, it holds power, not only revealing, but shaping, and accompanying greater social change. For centuries, it has been women and other socially oppressed groups driving linguistic change. Now, with a growing presence of AI producing language, no longer are we the sole force behind linguistic change. So, with these changes taking place, how will our society change?

Tsu-Wei Lu (TW)

Mining

The viewer's attention triggers both the passage of time, through accelerated day-night cycles in a real-time virtual environment, and the autonomous trading of digital currency. This installation reveals how attention becomes a currency, creating the illusion of agency in immersive technologies. It prompts reflection on the construction of personal "value" in an era obsessed with productivity. The viewer's attention becomes both the condition for art to exist and the mechanism by which value is generated.

Ahmad Aiuby (EG)

OppenheimerAI

OppenheimerAI is a video installation and research-based art project that exposes the connections between AI's involvement in Big Tech, the military, and the art world, with a particular focus on the neocolonial dynamics of AI in the Middle East. This work aims to spark critical discourse about how we, as artists and arts workers, might develop more ethical, decolonial approaches to technological engagement and effectively reject being utilized as an onboarding tool for Big Tech.



JAM-E-JAM © Hanif Haghtalab



Mining © Tsu-Wei Lu



On the nonexistence of detachment © Lilly Marie Stelzer



OppenheimerAI © Ahmad Aiuby



Smile, you're on camera © Lucia Claus, Hani Elias



System Acknowledged © Zixin Mou

Lucia Claus (GB), Hani Elias (GB)

Smile, you're on camera

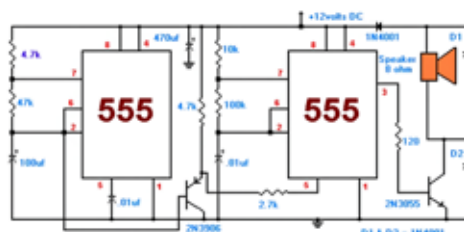
This installation explores the boundary between private and public spaces. It features a large world map with small screens showing live streams from indoor spaces in locations across the globe. Connected by visible cables, the screens form a network that invites viewers to reflect on how watching and being watched shapes behavior. With nearly one billion CCTV cameras in operation globally, surveillance has become routine. This has effectively normalized a culture of observation that subtly alters how we act through the awareness that we are never fully alone.

Zixin Mou (CN)

System Acknowledged

How a fair, neutral system quietly erases women's voices

Simulating a patriarchal, multilayered voice-filtering system, this work reveals how rejection is rationalized through language, procedures, and the illusion of fairness. The audience is invited to participate and experience the erasure of expression under structural oppression: how women's voices are filtered through rules and technical discourse in a system that appears neutral, fair, and well-structured. Witness how an oppressive structure justifies itself—quietly, logically, and systematically.



Overture © Andrea Corradi



PSY000T3 © Sofia Talanti

Andrea Corradi (IT)

Overture

Overture aims to transform an element of panic into an element of harmony. The protagonist of this performance, the “wöchentlicher Sirenen-test,” which translates as “weekly siren test,” sounds every Saturday in Linz at noon. The artist engages with this acoustic signal, a part of Linz’s urban identity, and attempts to shift its meaning by means of an acoustic reharmonization performed by an ensemble of musicians.

Musicians: Ricardo Pastor Pérez, Gorka Eginó Arroyo,
Sandra Muciño, Te-En Chen, Juan Lopez Cuamatzi,
Andreas Grönauer

Sofia Talanti (IT)

PSY000T3

Regulator of the Symbiocene

A soft robotic installation inspired by hypothyroidism, exploring slowness as a form of resistance to technological hyper-efficiency. By using biological dysfunction as a metaphor, the project proposes a speculative cyborg that processes data at a decelerated tempo, reflecting ecological rhythms and rethinking productivity. The robot will be modeling a future where slowing down can lead to the regeneration of both human and non-human systems.



© MAalex



© Leonardo LASER Linz

Alessia Fallica (IT), Martina Pizzigoni (IT)

Tutta Notte Buia

This interactive installation reimagines ancient mourning rituals through speculative digital erasure. Our digital identity is an aggregate of partial data and misattributions, forming a fragmented self. In an era where our presence extends beyond physical existence, what does it mean to die? Does deleting one's online presence equate to a second death, or does it offer liberation from perpetual surveillance? And, more importantly: do we really want to be forgotten? The artwork is produced as a result of the 2024 Traumstipendium prize, awarded by Energie AG and OÖ Landes Kultur GmbH.

Leonardo LASER Linz

Lab Songs Vol. II

Scientific revolutions lie not only in discoveries but also in changes in practices, goals, protocols, and evaluation methods. The laboratory, originally dedicated to scientific work and characterized by rigour and dedication to experimentation, now resonates across disciplines, promoting creativity and collaboration. Through our guests' experiences and songs, we will explore the laboratory as a heterotopic space capable of generating new agendas and structures for collective creation. Hosts: Fabricio Lamoncha & Christa Sommerer.

Media Culture and Art Theories

Lena Haslinger (AT), Laura Walter (DE)

körperhexen

körperhexen is a multimedia installation combining fashion, design, feminist research, traditional textile techniques, and modern ways of playing and shaping the non-normative body. Through 3D scans, which are loaded into the software Blender, the artist can experiment with the body and with shapes, without being limited by the laws of physics. In this way, new silhouettes are created, which are then translated into garments and textiles.



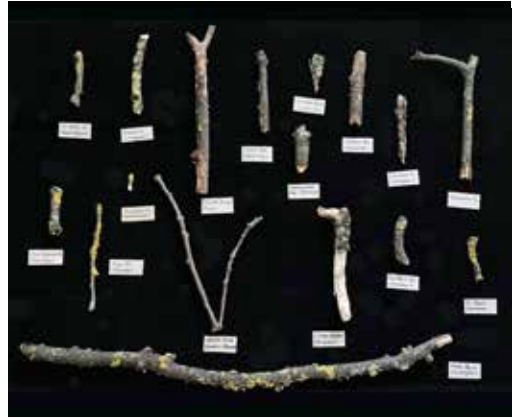
© Lena Haslinger, Laura Walter

PhD-program

Yixuan Wang (CN)

An Enlichenment: A Vital Recolonization in a Capitalist Crisis Era

Lichens are ideal pollutant bioindicators because they absorb anything that crosses their path, yet they are sensitive to air pollution. Lichens disappeared in London when the Great Smog of London of 1952 caused thousands of deaths. Today, lichens have recolonized once again, but not enough. This project links lichens, the history of capitalism and London's pollution, and the indigenous philosophy of "Buen Vivir." Digital lichens present and question the state of human existence.



© Yixuan Wang

Çağla Gillis (TR)

Block E, No. 5

In Block E, No. 5, Çağla Gillis traces a family's search for belonging across dislocated spaces—from a cold dormitory in Austria to an unfinished home in Istanbul. Through intimate calls, performative gestures, and layered sound, the film meditates on community, memory, and the emotional toll of waiting, revealing how the longing for "home" binds people across distance and time.



© Çağla Gillis

Critical Data Research Group

The Critical Data Research Group was founded by Manuela Naveau as part of the Critical Data professorship at Interface Cultures. Based on the premise that artists are of great value for the study and critical mediation of data usage, data processing systems, and related knowledge, the group not only aims to make visible how systems of digitalization work, but also how they do not. During the festival, the PhD students will present their research in a poster session.

The PhD Critical Data Research Group currently consists of: César Escudero Andaluz, Marta Beauchamp, Hess Jeon, Gordan Savičić, Juliane Götz, Yann Patrick Martins, Qingyi Ren, Charleen Elberskirch, Nomi Sasaki, Prince Yaw Gharbin, and Alexia Achilleos.



© Critical Data Research Group

Hanny Wijaya (ID), Zhiqian Yang (CN),
Shangyang Yu (CN)

DYSNOPIA

A World of Tranquility

The artwork *DYSNOPIA* represents the “mental clarity” through the installation space that combines physical objects with digital projection. By using multisensory elements, the space provides a holistic underwater environment with visual, tactile, and auditory experiences. The underwater panoramic view brings tranquility, so the audience can relax and alleviate their anxiety. Meanwhile, the growing corals and colors, enhanced through visual effects, motivate them to imagine a better future.



© Hanny Wijaya, Zhiqian Yang, Shangyang Yu

Fernando Obieta (CH), Cynthia Schemidt (CH)

i dropped the metal ball on the glass table and it broke. what is it?

This photo series questions automated gender categorization and the illusion of machine neutrality by showing the limitations of machine learning. Unlike humans, machines don't think; they recognize patterns, but lack real comprehension. Meaning is shaped by humans whose biases influence the output of a system and their interpretation. Categories are created by humans to interpret the androgynous-appearing person depicted, or to answer the question posed in the title of the work.



© Fernando Obieta, Cynthia Schemidt

Jieyuan Huang (CN)

Reassembling Painting— Black Box

This cross-disciplinary project blends elements in painting and technology, using CG-generated 3D scenes to form a virtual ruin. It deconstructs painting into a 3D-analytical format, probing physical intuitiveness in a post-digital world and the weakening of human presence. Recasting painting in a post-human context via digital visuals, it addresses themes of art authority, internet globalization, image archiving, and technological mysticism.



© Jieyuan Huang

Postdigital Lutherie

Sandra Beatriz Muciño Hernández (MX),
Lilith Isa (AT)

Saying, not saying

Saying, not saying is an experimental sound performance about the struggle to speak as women. Gag balls, garters, and gloves—objects linked to female sexuality—are hacked and repurposed as sound interfaces that capture breath and movement to trigger and shape sound. Our fragmented voices emerge through resistance, turning tools of silence into channels for expression and collective voice.



© Ozan Tezvaran

Obi Blanche (FI), Jonas Hammerer (AT)

Somatic Composition: Movement in Latent Space

This improvised performance explores embodiment and machine agency. Obi Blanche's DIY sensor guitar translates gesture into sound, navigating latent space through somatic feedback. Jonas Hammerer engages with generative, synthetic systems. Together, they investigate metacontrol, agency, and human-machine interplay in a dynamic composition emerging from movement, intuition, and real-time interaction.



© Obi Blanche, Jonas Hammerer

Gorka Egino (ES)

Soundpot

Soundpot is a playful sound art installation that reimagines musical creation through combinatorial exploration. It invites users to manipulate and merge sound objects—distinct sonic entities—by leveraging latent space interpolation within an autoencoder. Drawing inspiration from Pierre Schaeffer's concept of the "objet sonore" and the combinatorial logic of puzzle games like Alchemy, *Soundpot* questions the primacy of parameter-based control and the role of machine-assisted creativity.



© Gorka Egino

Sculptural Conceptions / Ceramics



© Helena Sekot

Helena Sekot (DE)

crush me

walkthrough

with your rubber soles / discharge your energy /
grind me further / I shatter irreversibly // tiny
shards / amorphous pieces / whispering damage
/ I am your entropy / state of disorder, randomness
and uncertainty



© Jieun (Jeenie) Kim

Jieun (Jeenie) Kim (KR)

I'm Here

Many people overlook the details of daily life more than they realize. This work began by observing small, often ignored habits, gestures, and speech patterns. I became curious about how people perceive their surroundings and how they show interest in others. Over time, my role shifted—from being part of the scene to simply observing the indifference. Do you notice what's around you, or do you pass by without seeing? If so... will you notice me?

Space and Design Strategies

Hannes Wizany (AT), Elisabeth Pérez (AT)

10x10

Separate places connect through constructed matter and material identity. *10x10* creates a dialog between two places that at first glance have nothing in common. Overlooked connections emerge, allowing hidden links to surface. The transformation of materials opens a space of tension between the natural and the constructed. The sculpture connects the seemingly unconnected and places it in a new context—making material, place, and identity visible.



© Hannes Wizany, Elisabeth Pérez

Moritz Böttjer (DE), Livia Schmitsberger (AT)

DAS PISSST UNS AN!

PEEING IS A BASIC NEED—AND IT SHOULDN'T PISS US OFF! Dirty toilets, long lines, unsafe spaces, 50 cent fees—that pisses us off! Our installation calls for free, clean, barrier-free toilets for all. Public toilets are rare, especially for women and genderqueer people, elders, and people with disabilities. Who gets to pee, when and where, affects safety, dignity, and access to public life. Toilets are about visibility, inclusion, even human rights.



© Lu Chih Kai

Lotta Bauer (DE)

Decomposing Haut/Haut

Decomposing Haut/Haut is an interactive installation that has evolved from the original project *Haut/Haut*. It explores agar-based bioplastic as an alternative to synthetics, encouraging a more sensitive approach to materials. Similar to human skin, the material ages, discolours, and dissolves—this ongoing transformation is also mirrored in the work itself. Videos of the original object are shown alongside touch-sensitive fragments that trigger sound, turning the act of touching into a dialog.



© Lotta Bauer

Fiona Prohaska (AT)

Perceived Love

Perceived Love explores the tension between holding on and letting go. Over ninety days, tears collected after a breakup were crystallized using aluminum potassium sulfate. Through a chemical process, the salt in the tears forms fragile structures that are later shaped into jewelry. *Perceived Love* translates thus emotional intensity into material presence, reframing softness and emotional exposure as something to be held, carried, and cherished.



© Fiona Prohaska

Textile Art and Design

Maryam Farhang (IR), Azam Shadpour (IR), Atousa Falamarzian (IR), Nazanin Aharipour (IR)

The Body as Material and Immaterial

In Iranian miniatures, light is a presence within the essence of beings, dissolving image hierarchy and uniting elements. The focus is on the body in awkward places, stitching together future, time, memory, and space like layers of fabrics, video, installation, exploring both the tangible and intangible boundaries of the body. Unusual gestures evoke vulnerability and transformation, asking: How does the body adapt to awkward places? How do war and displacement unwanted pain, trauma, and suffering?



© Maryam Farhang

Time-based and Interactive Media Arts



© Lun Raaberg

Lun Raaberg (AT)

Apfel/Eat Back

The apple is not a friendly object. When you approach it, it complains, which is rather unusual with apples. The apple: the fruit of knowledge, a symbol of sensual stimulation, the enemy of doctors. Is it malicious, or does it simply not want to be eaten? *Apfel/Eat Back* is a humanization, or rather a “dogification” of an otherwise speechless object. It explores the question of what personality a fruit would have and how it would react toward its natural predators.



© Janik Valler

Janik Valler (DE)

chaosscanner

data gathering unit

The installation *chaosscanner* embodies a robot that analyzes its surrounding spatial infrastructure on multiple levels, purposefully seeking information hidden from human perception. Equipped with various sensors, it probes its environment and transforms the collected data into the foundation for its next movements. In doing so, *chaosscanner* becomes an interactive machine that translates invisible data streams—hidden all around us—into physical motion.

Max Sabitzer (AT)

Copper Promises of Immediate Realities

Copper Promises Of Immediate Realities is a short film exploring the landscapes of long-distance relationships in the digital age. The story unfolds entirely through virtual environments, Google Earth imagery, and generated mountain ranges. Emotional distance between people relying on online communication is visualized through these empty landscapes. The film reflects on the paradox of digital connection and how the promise of instant communication can still leave us feeling deeply isolated.



© Max Sabitzer

Kristina Ontensone (RU)

Death gives Life

I have long thought about the connection between man and nature, and through the project I have expressed my ideas and beliefs. In this sculpture titled *Death gives Life*, I explore the idea of the body and soul of a person giving life to a tree after death. The soul does not escape, but passes to nature. The tree absorbs suffering and anxiety, thereby giving peace to the body and soul. In the process, the tree itself becomes wiser and stronger.



© Kristina Ontensone

Mohammad Reza Shirvan (IR),
Leah Valentina Hochedlinger (AT)

GREEN

GREEN is an interactive video featuring a performer draped in a large green cloth resembling a chador, moving slowly through the city. Filmed in an extreme long shot, it invites viewers to explore the scene via USB joystick. They can zoom in, observe passersby's reactions—or indifference—and choose their focus, turning passive viewing into an active, personal experience. Viewers are invited not only to interact visually but also to engage and participate in co-creation and storytelling.

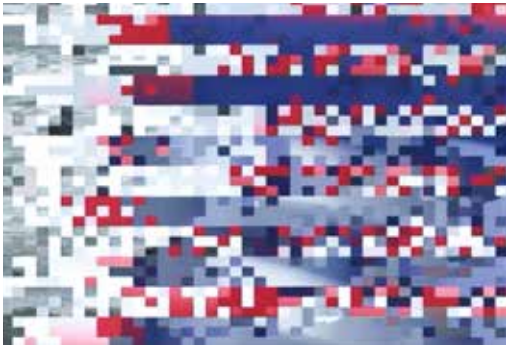


© Mohammad Reza Shirvan, Leah Valentina Hochedlinger

Lena Isabella Deisenberger (AT),
Francisca Friedrich (AT)

Heast

A portrait of Austria captured with a broken camera, accompanied by an enhanced and AI-generated version of the national anthem.



© Lena Isabella Deisenberger, Francisca Friedrich

Oleksandra Fesenko (UA)

Home portrait

Today's wars affect not only cities and battle-fields, but leave a deep mark on the inner world of those who are forced to leave their homeland. In this context, the native landscape turns into a carrier of cultural code and inner resilience. Through the interviews, the film depicts personal ties with home landscapes. It is dedicated to the forced separation of Ukrainians from their native land due to the Russian annexation in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022.



© Oleksandra Fesenko

Noah Berger (DE), Emilia Vogt (DE)

Intertwined Surfaces

This work by Emilia Vogt and Noayama (Noah Berger) presents a human-cybernetic organism in dialogue with its inner and outer worlds. A responsive soundscape unfolds—echoing bodily rhythms and the hum of nearby machines. Invisible currents between flesh and circuit become audible, as hidden structures are magnified, revealing in turn new proximities and unseen transmissions.



© Noah Berger, Emilia Vogt

Pauline Hübner (AT)

LARVA

Birth of vermin. The experimental short film *LARVA* brings inanimate objects to life under a microscope. Paper, fabric, plastic become insects and worms—both pretty and disgusting.



© Pauline Hübner

Yu-Ching Chen (TW)

I Say What You Taught Me To Say

Set on a fictional planet inhabited by parrots, this animated short follows a humanoid parrot who slowly realizes that everything she says is borrowed, repeated, imposed. Language becomes surface. Voice becomes performance. Meaning slips away. Wrapped in gentle colors and uncanny beauty, the film unravels how language can be inherited, distorted, and performed—until the self begins to fracture. When mimicry becomes survival, the parrot asks: Whose words am I really speaking?

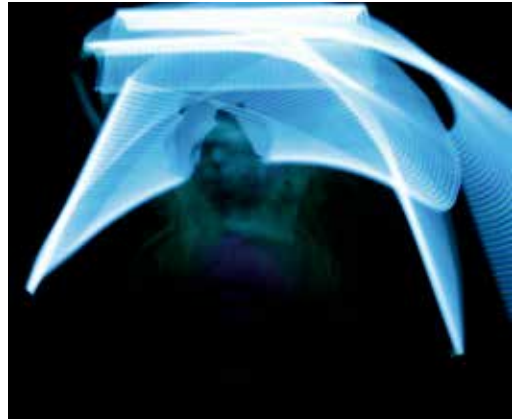


© Yu-Ching Chen

Ariathney Coyne (GR)

love letters

love letters is an ever-evolving performance driven by movement, audio-visuals, and language. The private “voice-inside-my-head” becomes audible as the audience is invited to witness a conversation or rather a duet between the artist and herself. Through the comedic tale of a love letter’s disappearance, dance, conversations, and melodies collage together—revealing what it feels like to be human.

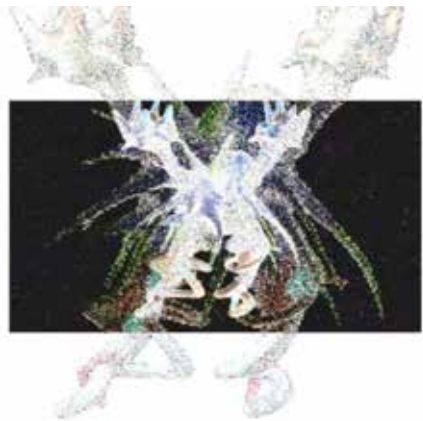


© Ariathney Coyne

Pal Klusacek (AT), Lukas Frühwirth (AT),
Arthur Gutmann (AT), Julian Lang (DE),
Francisco Valenca Vaz (BR)

Memory Game

How can popular music, gaming, and subcultural aesthetics question our relation to time and memory? Inspired by Caroline Levine’s ideas on form, rhythm, and time, the piece combines sound, image, and performance. A collaboration between Pal Klusacek and the grunge band Trauma Glow, it opens a portal to collective memory, with trust and nostalgic comforts. Listeners are invited to actively take part.

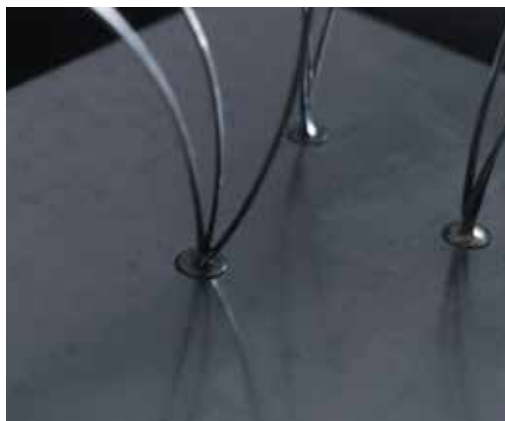


© Pal Klusacek, Lukas Frühwirth, Arthur Gutmann, Julian Lang, Francisco Valenca Vaz

Daniel Hans Walter (AT)

Metally Meadows

Meadows made of metal. Cold and stiff. You are not able to stroll around it, you are not able to wave your hand through it and softly feel little blades of grass, no tingling sensation between your toes... but a different kind of beauty. One equally to be shared with others. *Metally Meadows* is a sound device that mimics a field of grass built out of metal wires that are attached to metal plates on wooden frames. It is built to encourage discovery and simple playfulness with others.



© Daniel Hans Walter

Johannes Buchwieser (DE)

MYCELIUM

Animated Scanning Electron Microscopy

MYCELIUM was created by scanning electron microscope images of various fungal samples taken in the Ars Electronica Center BioLab. These high-resolution microscopic images were then animated to depict the fascinating structures and details of the fungal networks in a new dimension. The immersive sound design, composed using analog synthesizers, underscores the organic nature of the mycelial world.



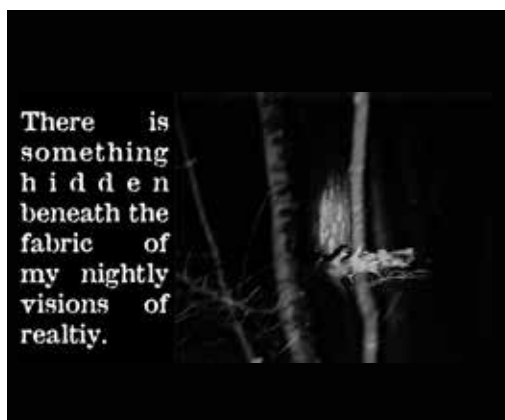
© Johannes Buchwieser

Francine Belinga (AT)

my strange night mare

The Hunting Stand

my strange night mare: The Hunting Stand is an interdisciplinary project blending music, video, and text. Evolving from an 11-track album, it centers around a dreamer haunted by nightmares shared across their family. The immersive installation includes video, sound, symbolic objects, and booklets, creating a dense, dreamlike environment.



© Francine Belinga

Elizaveta Belkevich (RU)

Paket ist unterwegs

Follow the path of a package through the still and abandoned halls of POSTCITY. This interactive video installation takes viewers on a virtual tour through POSTCITY. The goal was to capture and archive what it felt like to be in that space, through the building's structure and the movement of an object inside of it. The path you will see is a map, shaped by my own gaze.

Special thanks to Kotryna Kuraitytė, Daniel Hans Walter, Holunder Heiss.



© Elizaveta Belkevich

Lukas Barovič (DE)

Semi-Space

Making space visible and taking it away

A structure formed out of seven wooden pillars, forming an artistic playground and construction site. This installation becomes a place of exploration in movement and space for one individual to move through. Equipped with a roll of nylon thread, a dense net is created, connecting the seven different pillars into one singular object, thereby solidifying the space in between, making it barely visible, and thus taking it away by making it inaccessible.



© Lukas Barovič

Egemen Karaaslan (AT), Terēze Zabarovska (LV)

shards of a looking glass

This installation consists of the video *looking glass* by artists Terēze Zabarovska and Egemen Karaaslan. The short film was recorded using only reflections, either through windows or mirrors, to create a dreamy, melancholic atmosphere. The shards represent the fragmentation of one's true self as well as self-reflection. The projection in this installation is caught and scattered over and over again as the layers of shards offer only small glimpses of another world.



© Egemen Karaaslan, Terēze Zabarovska

Clara Stuflesser (IT)

SoundsLike Joy

The Happy Memory Archive

SoundsLike Joy explores the role technology plays in preserving memory, and how it can be a site of resistance in tough times. The project is comprised of a keyboard; on top of each button is a miniature figurine, each one representing a sound which plays once the button is pressed. The artist's mental health makes it difficult to remember joy, so he uses technology to explore how we archive joy. This interactive sound installation inspires others to think about the sounds of their memories.



© Remo Stuflesser

Daryna Stohnii (UA)

The Gallery of Context Lost

An interactive virtual exhibition-game based on the Unity game engine. This work explores the boundaries between game mechanics and exhibition experience. Visitors can walk through the exhibition, interact with objects, and influence the environment. The experience is designed to challenge the passive role of the viewer in a traditional exhibition format.



© Daryna Stohnii

Elena Jäger (DE)

Thinking About Better Endings

We rarely think about the end of things—our entire attention is focused on creating or producing something, and then on using or consuming it. This ignorance is the source of many of the problems we face today. Art can't simply be seen as an exception here; rather, it can take a pioneering position and demonstrate how we can arrive at more sustainable solutions for the materials that surround us. *Thinking About Better Endings* is my attempt to create something that has the potential to degrade completely.



© Elena Jäger



transcendent strings
© Maxemilian van der Meer



[un]forming © Paria Dayyani, Manuel Gester Suárez, Mobina Vatan Doost

Maxemilian van der Meer (DE)

transcendent strings

what remains, once you take the strings of a harp away? feeling without touch.

Paria Dayyani (IR), Manuel Gester Suárez (ES),
Mobina Vatan Doost (IR)

[un]forming

I often retrace how I fell at night—back to a time before me, before everything. I keep falling into it, endlessly, tirelessly: skin, blood, light, cracks. Nothing is clear. I cannot stay. Far from myself, watching you.

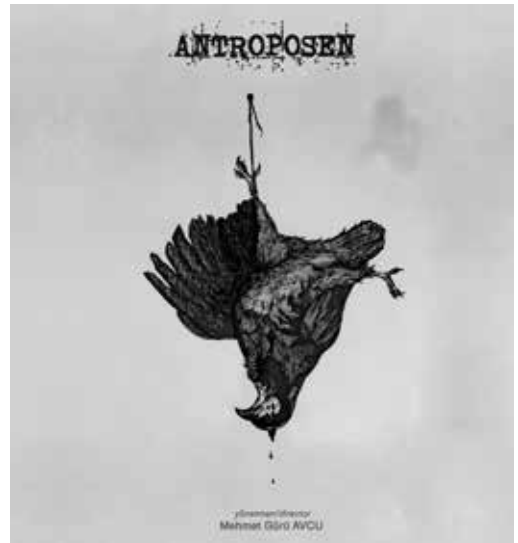
Time-based Media

Mehmet Gürü Avcu (TR)

Anthropocene

Anthropocene is a short documentary film about the water crisis, narrated through artworks by the painter Hasan. Endangered creatures are the main subject of this documentary film.

The construction of the Ilisu Dam resulted in the flooding of Hasankeyf and 270 villages, which have a history stretching back 12,000 years. The film explores how the construction of the dam has shaped both the ecosystem and the collective memory of the region surrounding the Tigris River.



© Mehmet Gürü Avcu

Shuting Wang (CN), Hanna Kortus (DE),
Yixue Bo (CN), Ellinor Brandenburg (DE),
Sasha Sokolov (RU), Paria Dayyani (IR),
Sashe Urdovski (MK)

Antinomy | 二律背反

Immersive Dance Performance

Antinomy is a 15-minute performance combining contemporary dance with generated visual art and video. It explores the paradox of bodily autonomy in a future where virtuality and control reshape human perception and identity.

Gustiele Fistaról (BR), Patrick Cuellar Ortiz (BO)

Being, Between

Being, Between is an interactive installation that attempts to bridge distances and materialize the ephemeral traces that flow between bodies in an encounter. Participants are connected from different locations, and their biodata weave a shared experience. Transformed into tactile vibrations, their encounter becomes a dialogue between signal and flesh. What remains of a connection when bodies speak through data? In an era of simulation, is the other truly there?

WMD Collective—Yinglin Zhou (CN),
Jieyuan Huang (CN)

Coded World, Mystic Human

This work entwines the human body and coded world via mechanical interfaces and data cables, portraying human existence in physical and virtual spaces that are blurred and interwoven. Through conceptual short-film scenes, the artist builds a futuristic, mythical atmosphere to explore critically emerging technologies such as brain-computer interfaces and post-network communities.

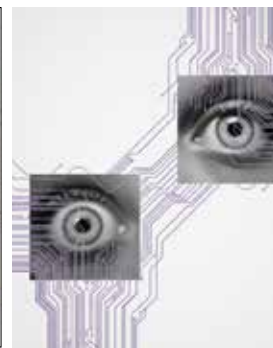
Vildan Dülgeroğlu (TR), Guney Tombak (TR)

Digital Sediments

Digital Sediments is an experimental video installation that explores the intersection of dream imagery and media archaeology. Through projections, plants, collages, and digital remnants, the installation unearths collective and personal memories from the subconscious and the internet. The work invites viewers to engage in a layered, poetic excavation of visual culture and identity.



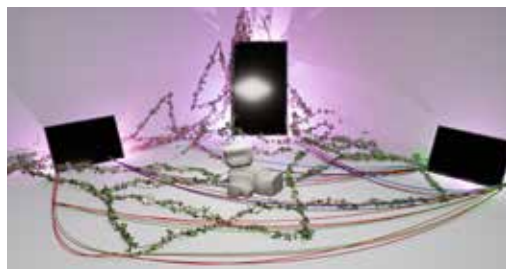
Antinomy | 二律背反
© Shuting Wang, Hanna
Kortus, Yixue Bo, Ellinor
Brandenburg, Sasha Sokolov,
Paria Dayyani, Sashe
Urdovski



Being, Between © Gustiele Fistaról



Coded World, Mystic Human © WMD Collective—Yinglin Zhou,
Jieyuan Huang



Digital Sediments © Vildan Dülgeroğlu, Guney Tombak



Intertwined © Dariusz Kowalski



Melancholy of Love © Hooshyar Zaheryani



Neurographia © Olesia Kvitka, Will Lopes



Nomadic © Yinglin Zhou

Dilara Gül (TR), Lena Pöschko (AT),
Anton Hößl (AT)

Intertwined

Life is one and alive in a myriad of forms. The boundaries of one body blend with another, emphasizing our shared connection to the universal flow of life energy. In this video installation, a CRT-TV is obscured by jungle-like foliage, the body of nature. The TV is entangled by plants and visuals of bodies of water, flowing together as if one entity. Through physical engagement, visitors are invited not only to see but to feel the connection between nature and human presence.

Olesia Kvitka (UA), Will Lopes (BR)

Neurographia

Dancing Through Data

Neurographia explores the translation of inner states into visual form. Using EEG data recorded during a Butoh dance performance, the project transforms neural activity into a dynamic video composition. The result is choreographic reflection—a poetic trace of embodied presence, where movement and mind converge in a delayed interplay of signal and sensation.

Hooshyar Zaheryani (IR)

Melancholy of Love

**I have invited you for an afternoon tea
but please, be here before dayspring!**

A cup of tea, a beam of light, and the hush of waiting—*Melancholy of Love* unfolds in a space where longing precedes time.

Rooted in the Persian concept of 'Mehr'—love as radiant stillness—it lingers between presence and absence, desire and silence. Here, morning arrives early for an afternoon not yet born, and love—unspoken, ungraspable—glows like steam in the quiet air.

Yinglin Zhou (CN)

Nomadic

Nomadic is an immersive work combining moving image and virtual space. Drawing on personal experience, the artist explores the fluidity of identity in urban settings. Using a game engine, the artist builds a virtual world with fragmented cityscapes. Still avatars with the artist's face suggest a drifting self. Personal images anchor memory, while music shapes a sensory journey. Furthermore, viewers can explore the space freely via the computer and co-create the evolving narrative.

Onur Sekmen (CY)

Panopticon

A factory gate opens, workers exit. *Panopticon* deconstructs this historical moment through Super 8, revealing labor as a structured, inherited cycle. Control persists beyond the gate, in frames, rhythms, and repetitions. Like film constructs movement, labor loops through illusion, with exit just another entrance. Watching and being watched merge in this ongoing mechanism.



© Onur Sekmen

Ebrahim Eskandari (IR), Yazdan Zand (IR)

Simurgh

The story of the Simurgh and the birds' journey in search of a righteous king is a timeless allegory for the quest for freedom and self-discovery—themes that resonate deeply in the context of immigration. *Simurgh*, a short film inspired by Persian myth, is an embodiment of this exploration. The film aims to bridge the ancient and the modern, creating a narrative that speaks to contemporary audiences while drawing from the rich tapestry of Persian mythology.



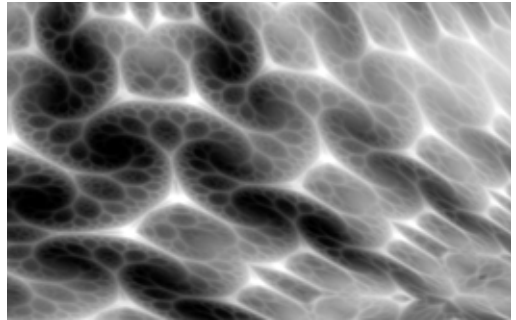
© Ebrahim Eskandari, Yazdan Zand

Katia Koohestani (IR)

Simulation

A Model of Reality through Digital Art

Created solely with TouchDesigner, this work models the shifting boundaries between reality and illusion. Using 3D visualizations and abstract digital effects, it invites viewers to reflect on perception, transformation, and the evolving nature of our experience.



© Katia Koohestani

Isabel Wöckl (AT), Ellinor Brandenburg (DE),
Lena Stollwitzer (AT), Oliver Portius (AT)

Spektrum

Spektrum is an experimental film that explores the tension between binarity and fluid complexity. The fusion of analog 16mm film footage and digital mini DV sequences creates a visual fabric that combines body shots with the omnipresent objectification of women and genderqueer people in public space. A search for identity and belonging unfolds—situated between personal intimacy and social sexualization.



© Isabel Wöckl, Ellinor Brandenburg, Lena Stollwitzer, Oliver Portius

Visual Communication

All Visual Communication artworks this year have been developed as part of the SciArt project ASTER+S, organized by Rocío García Robles (University of Seville), where international artists and students collaborated with neuroscientists to develop artistic responses to scientific research.

The process followed the eco-SciArt method, which frames creativity as a natural cycle: Seed—scientific ideas as inspiration; Bloom—artistic concepts formed in a hackathon; Fruit—the final artworks.

Marianne Lechner (AT), Katharina Mayrhofer (AT), Daniel García González (ES), Clara Gómez Cruz (ES), Miguel Fernández de la Torre (ES)

The Silent Scream of Cells

How do mechanical and magnetic forces affect brain cells? How do structure and communication change under stress? This installation translates the delicate interplay of these forces into a dynamic, interactive sculpture. Diverse cell-actants move, respond to visitors, and generate fluctuating light patterns. Communication and overstimulation become visible, culminating in enforced stillness. The fragile choreography of neuronal processes is transformed into a sensory experience.



© Marianne Lechner, Katharina Mayrhofer, Daniel García González, Clara Gómez Cruz, Miguel Fernández de la Torre

Barbara von Rechbach (AT), Pablo Ferrería Hijón (ES), Lisa Ehrenstrasser (AT), Cristina Rubio Escudero (ES)

Forest Beings

A GANs sense space

Forest Beings creates a sensual environment with more-than-human actors to advocate a broader, interconnected understanding of the world that includes humans, animals, plants, technology, and the environment in a forest bath experience. GAN systems select feeds from sensory-stimulated archives and play them as scented narrations to trigger embodied knowledge and memories of nature walks. Visitors can then record their personal memory and contribute to the testing of the GAN sets.



© Lisa Ehrenstrasser, Barbara von Rechbach

Lina Gamler (AT), Emma Silvana Tripaldi (IT), Sabine Wimmer (AT)

Stochastic Resonance

Threshold of Perception

Stochastic Resonance is used to reveal weak signals by adding random data, such as noise. In neuroscience, this raises questions: What if human brains only perceive consciously when a certain level of noise is present? And is noise the key to unlocking our subconscious? This installation explores those ideas by projecting imagery resembling fragmented memories onto mist. Mist, usually seen as something that blocks our vision, just like noise, becomes the very medium that makes perception possible.



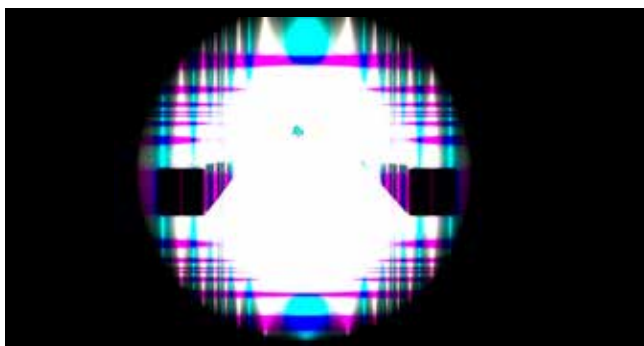
© Lina Gamler, Emma Silvana Tripaldi, Sabine Wimmer

Guest Projects

BIP on PERFORMING DATA

The Blended Intensive Program (BIP) on Performing Data is an Erasmus+ program featuring the partner universities National Academy of Art in Sofia (BG), Cyprus University of Technology in Limassol (CY), and the University of Arts Linz/Interface Cultures (AT). It was established to address issues, challenges and perspectives in a data-driven world. Students and professors of the three institutions engage in regular knowledge transfer sessions throughout the academic year, which culminates in the presentation of their artistic research projects at this year's Ars Electronica Festival. PERFORMING DATA uses data as material, as a tool, as a topic and/or a critique of our current realities. In particular, the program intends to investigate artistically the fluid, constantly changing potential of data in order to better understand how they influence us and our view of the world in both positive and negative ways.

Participants: Andra Panainte, Kristina Thuduwege, Maria Zikou, Giorgos Pitsillis, Anna Kotzampasaki, Evgenios Amvrosiou, Georgia-Rose Demetriou, Stavros Kazakos, Katerina Kaisidou, Artemis Karamani, Nouralhouda Mustafa, Eleni Karoglou, Anna Demosthenous, Dimitris Zonias, Marios Zonias, Eleana Iacovou, Evelina Pavlovskaya, Sarah Selby, Hooman Samani, Akсения Avramova, Nevena Vasileva, Nil Zheleznyakov, Radina Yotova, Roslana Yotova, Ahmed Jamal, Camilla Scholz, Flavia Luna Somarriba, Ghazal Hosseini, Lilly Stelzer, Lucia Claus, Hani Elias, Sifan Pan, Volkan Dinçer.
Supervisors: Venelin Shurelov, Antoni Rayzhekov, Marinos Koutsomichalis, Doros Polydorou, Charalampos Margaritis, Myrto Aristidou, Manuela Naveau



© Nil Zheleznyakov

FIFTITU%

Fearless Women*: Immersive Narratives and Real Battles

Stories of women* who have fundamentally shaped the cultural and social fabric of Linz have largely disappeared from public memory. The AR-Walk addresses this issue with an innovative blend of remembrance and interactive play. This immersive Augmented Reality experience transforms Linz into an interactive stage where you don't just observe but actively participate. Experience exciting missions and interact with the city's hidden histories. As a player, you will encounter historical figures such as Louise Aston, a radical writer who defied 19th-century gender norms, or Maria Lüftenegger, a shipbuilding pioneer whose technical innovations remain largely unknown. This is not a passive tour, but rather a nonlinear, game-like journey. Move at your own pace through modular AR experiences and complete missions to uncover forgotten stories.

You can start and end anywhere. Remember that every interaction uncovers a piece of the past. Play to remember. Engage to reclaim these stories.

Concept, storytelling, design, and technical realization have been created by the artist duo Oona Valarie and Ufuk Serbest. The project is hosted by FIFTITU%, an association and network for women* in arts and culture based in Upper Austria. Find out more: ar-walk.at
Funding note: BMKÖS, Linz Kultur, Direktion Kultur Land Oberösterreich, Frauenbüro der Stadt Linz.



© Rebekka Hochreiter

Sound Campus

SOUNDS ON

Sound Campus is a yearly program presented in collaboration with Ars Electronica and University of Arts Linz, from the 2nd to the 4th of September 2025. This year's edition of *Sound Campus* will focus on the theme of PLAY as a tool for improvisation, shaking boundaries, and fixed notions of possibility. We understand playing as a path to experimentation, renewal, and resistance, that can be a re-enchantment of our framing of the world. Under this premise, *Sound Campus* becomes a play(ground) where the performance format is altered into various shapes, such as collective interventions, dialogues in back-to-back (B2B) sets, playing the city, and shared processes of collaboration.

A game that spreads without a win, sharing, leaving a trace... as we turn the "sound on" and let chance take over.

Curatorial Team: Gabriela Gordillo, Andreea Vladut |
Design: Viktoria Angyal | Social media communication:
Angelica Sabina Pineros | Sound technician: Reinhard
Reisen Zahn | Technical support: Hedieh Khajehzadeh



© Viktoria Angyal

Master's Program in Digital Arts, National Academy of Art Sofia (BG)

/decisions/make/art

/decisions/make/art presents a selection of projects by students, graduates, and faculty from the Master's Program in Digital Arts at the National Academy of Art in Sofia. The exhibition is an occasion to consider art as a logic of choices—composition is a system, creation a protocol, and authorship a dynamic negotiation with the environment.

The featured works include generative visual systems, interactive installations, machine learning, and experimental participatory formats. Here, creative decision-making unfolds as a responsive aesthetic and ethical process—one that evolves, reacts, and invites the viewer in.

/decisions/make/art is not just a title—it is a command, a condition, and a conceptual frame. The exhibition thinks not only in images, but in systems; not only in aesthetics, but in the ethics of interaction between humans and technology. The Master's Program in Digital Arts builds on the rich academic tradition of the National Academy of Art, founded in 1896. Today, the program shapes a new generation of artists who rethink creative practice through interdisciplinary approaches and cultivate a space for hybrid thinking—between the visual, the technological, and the critical.

Curator: Prof. PhD Venelin Shurelov



© RAW Lab—Roslana Yotova,
Radina Yotova

RAW Lab—Roslana Yotova (BG),
Radina Yotova (BG)

Age of You

RAW Lab traces how algorithmic systems reduce expression to behavioral data, contributing to the disembodiment and abstraction of the self. The face is positioned here not as a site of intimacy, but as a contested field of extraction and interpretation. Emotion is no longer expressive, but instead predictable. In *Age of You*, visitors become tokens in a living dataset, confronted not with their reflection, but with the way machines parse and classify them—an emotional taxonomy mirroring their category's composite.



© Antoni Rayzhkov, Martin Murer

Antoni Rayzhkov (BG), Martin Murer (AT)—
beyond_repair

Between This and That is It

Between This and That is It is an interactive installation using an AI-enhanced 1980s typewriter. Visitors input two words, and the system generates a “middle” word, creating a collaborative techno-poetic act. The work explores AI bias, semantic space, and societal polarization, symbolizing the search for consensus and highlighting shared human-machine agency in constructing meaning across cultural and political contexts.

The project was realized with support from III.Lab, funded by AIT—Austrian Institute of Technology, the University of Salzburg, Land Salzburg (grant 20102/F2300416-KZP), and the Schmiede Hallein festival and participating smiths.

Ivelina Ivanova (BG)

Bot Brother

Bot Brother follows how the digital realm influences identity formation, reflecting and refracting societal values and aspirations. Text data gathered from social media and news website comments are fed into an N-gram word prediction model to generate a dialog. The artificial conversation drives a surreal narrative within a gamified Balkan urban environment. Using a custom pink keyboard, the visitors navigate through a low-poly, low-res world.



© Ivelina Ivanova

Yana Vasileva (BG)

DUST

DUST is an installation that visualizes, on a macro scale, the invisible traces of materiality within the National Gallery of Art. The dust collected from the palace building is a collection of countless microscopic parts of significant artefacts. Shots under a microscope follow a photographic analysis and a generated 3D object, so that the seed cultures of the dust sample can form their own colonies with the memory of the transposition into and out of space.

Consultants: Yana Topalova, Ivaylo Yotinov



© Yana Vasileva

Venelin Shurelov (BG)

Fantomat

The *Fantomat* is a humanoid vending machine sculpture that replaces consumer goods with poetic, audiovisual experiences. Coin-operated and android-like, it mimics commercial automatons while subverting them with unexpected artistic content. A parody of public alienation, it fuses technology, theater, and critique into a provocative, media-based intervention in urban space.



© Venelin Shurelov

Stefan Donchev (BG)

Cilia with Metal Stalks

Cilia with Metal Stalks consists of an array of sensor wires and a small printer. It reacts to tactile interaction by collecting data with its sensors, interpreting it, and translating it into visual graphics. It prints the end result on a piece of paper.



© K. Terziev

Volen Penev (BG)

Fire Extinguisher

Interactive Audio Sculpture

Fire Extinguisher is an interactive audio sculpture exploring a cultural phenomenon in Bulgaria's recent history—the act of the self-immolation of over 60 people—that is suppressed in public discourse. A fire extinguisher, equipped with a motion sensor and audio system, plays voice messages when approached. The volume lowers the closer one gets, creating a space of intimacy. Once a silent object for purposes of safety, it now becomes a vessel for absent voices, establishing a quiet dialogue with a public secret.



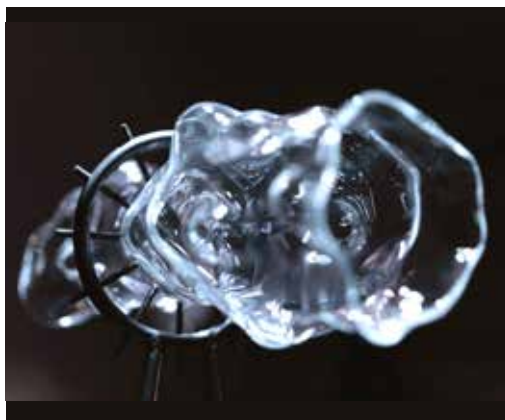
© Volen Penev

Antoni Rayzhkov (BG), Dimiter Ovtcharov (BG), Günther Mausz (AT), Thomas Aschenbrenner (AT), Tatjana Schinko (AT), Benjamin Bergmann (AT), Max Meindl (AT)

Fragile Perspectives

JECT.SENSE collab with JECT.AI —
Neil Maiden, Konstantinos Zachos

This data physicalization project transforms vast news datasets into glass sculptures by clustering thousands of articles into 3D landscapes. These tangible maps reveal patterns of media coverage and angles. Digitally scanned, the objects excite virtual strings through physical modelling synthesis, allowing audiences to hear the news—highlighting over-reported clusters and under-reported voices through sound.



© Antoni Rayzhkov, Dimiter Ovtcharov, Günther Mausz, Thomas Aschenbrenner, Tatjana Schinko, Benjamin Bergmann, Max Meindl

Curator: Claudia Schnugg

The artwork was developed as part of JECT-SENSE project, supported by Media Futures under the EU Horizon 2020 program (grant 951962).

Iliyana Kancheva (BG)

INTERVIEWS FROM MIAMI: A DICTIONARY

from A to Y

While in Miami I recorded four interviews with Venezuelan artists. I identified keywords which appear in the recordings. Through automated software I extracted every phrase where a keyword is present, tearing it out of its original context. In this way, their personal stories become fractured in search of potential new meanings contained in the individual phrases. The work transforms a very personal, private, and subjective story into the highly formal, objective, and impersonal body of the dictionary.



© Iliyana Kancheva

Pepa Parisheva (BG)

NOKLA

Selfie culture through the lens of popular technology from the recent past.

Do we really need the latest technological innovation? How exactly do these technologies make our lives more fulfilling? How do we determine which technological tools are necessary and which are not? Why, after classifying a tool as technically obsolete or unnecessary, do we still maintain an interest in its image? "When the capitalization of our constant desire for approval pushes us to build flawless, virtual altars for the ego, let's take a 168x96 pixel photo."



© Pepa Parisheva

Venelin Shurelov (BG)

One Person

Urban Electronic Corpus

One Person is a living system, a collective body in the process of constant self-actualization. The computer algorithm combines video and dataveillance. The relationship with people, the environment and the information flow, what we might call datafied interaction, is a consequence of the human-computer symbiosis. This is based not only on choice, but also on coexistence. *One Person* is a 13-meter interactive installation in the heart of Sofia—a digital body of screens that analyzes, visualizes, and reacts.



© Venelin Shurelov

Martin Penev (BG)

Portable Center of the Universe

This work, titled *Portable Center of the Universe*, is based on the notion that the Big Bang happened everywhere and all at once, not somewhere in space, but creating space. If you claim that it happened right where you are and that you are at the center of everything, you are not wrong. It happened here. When the FM radio is tuned between stations, part of the “white noise” comes from background radiation left over from the Big Bang, called the Cosmic Microwave Background. Part of this interference—about 1%—is a leftover radiation from the Big Bang. You can hear it.

Stefan Donchev (BG)

Purring Grass

Purring Grass is a work that combines the traits of grass and of a cat. The work consists of a flower pot with grass in it. When we stroke or pet the grass, a purring sound can be heard.

Antoni Rayzhkov (BG), Martin Murer (AT)—
beyond_repair

Sweepcase

Sweepcase is an interactive sound installation inviting visitors to place everyday objects into a suitcase. When closed, the system sonifies the objects’ material traits, creating ephemeral soundscapes. It challenges fixed authorship and meaning, redistributing agency among audience, objects, system, and artists. *Sweepcase* invites reflection on the poetic and performative potential of the mundane.

The project was realized with support from III.Lab, funded by AIT—Austrian Institute of Technology, the University of Salzburg, Land Salzburg (grant 20102/F2300416-KZP), and the Schmiede Hallein festival and participating smiths.

Video Art Selection

Autoportrait—Ralitsa Georgieva

Autofocus—Iliana Kancheva

Today's Walk—Iliana Kancheva

White Noise—Ada Paunova

Personal Drama—Ivelina Ivanova

Autosuggestion—Borjana Cherneva

Doubt—Ivan Bogdanov

Entities—Elena Andreeva

Belongings—Elena Andreeva

KUNST GALLERY—Marina Genova

Pre Over—Pepa Parisheva

Rhythm—Simeon Damyanov



Portable Center of the Universe © Martin Penev



Purring Grass © I. Peikov



Sweepcase © Antoni Rayzhkov, Martin Murer



Autosuggestion / Borjana Cherneva, Video Art Selection © National Academy of Art Sofia, Master's Program in Digital Arts

New York University Abu Dhabi (AE)

SENSE_ERR

A Spatial Study in Perceptual Collapse

SENSE_ERR stages a collapse—not of systems, but of the certainty they promised. It gathers interactive installations, speculative objects, and time-based media into one shared space, where perception becomes unstable, fragmented, and relational. Technologies in this exhibition perform not function, but doubt. The projects range from an organ that watches you back to a sculptural hand that glitches its own gesture, from a silent desert witness to a customizable avatar, and a neural interface as an emotional machine. Together, these works examine the soft machinery of refusal, surveillance, and identity, drawing from neuroscience, AI, and ancient

automata to question how we sense and are sensed. Presented by NYU Abu Dhabi, *SENSE_ERR* responds to the Ars Electronica focal point “Art, Technology & Society” by addressing the ambiguity of embodied interaction in an age of algorithmic behavior. Through aesthetic estrangement and experiential drift, it explores the possibility of protest as perception.

Presented by the Interactive Media Program at NYUAD.

Mentorship: Aaron Sherwood, Aya Riad, Michael Ang, Michael Shiloh, Sara Niroobakhsh, Nimrah Syed, Domna Banakou

IM Instructors: Ume Hussain and Dustin Foster



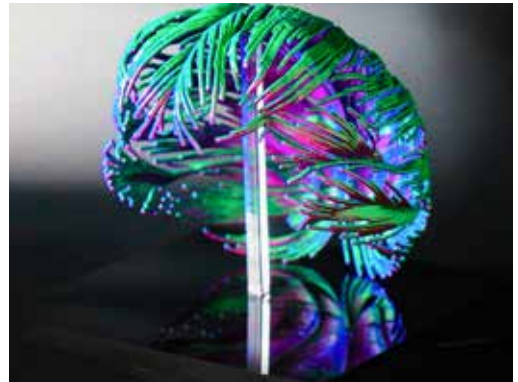
© Aakarsh Singh

Aakarsh Singh (IN), Ahmed Bilal (PK),
Shahid Nigim (PS)

LAND

Local Area Network Diptych

LAND is a multi-channel installation that recontextualizes the role of heritage and ecology in the storytelling of conflicted land. Constructed on accelerationist frameworks, the work examines lost histories, decay, and malaise from the palimpsest lands of Palestine and the Indian subcontinent.



© Yumi Omori, Diana Donatella

Yumi Omori (JP), Diana Donatella (US)

NEURAXIS

NEURAXIS is a speculative wearable sculpture that reimagines the brain as both an emotional archive and a computational interface. Inspired by neural topologies and vector field dynamics, the piece blends neuroscience with generative design to explore the invisible forces, both emotional and electrical, that shape human thought.

Keya Shah (IN), Elora Trotter (US), Marcos Hernández (VE), Clara Juong (KR)

Consent Not Guaranteed

Inspired by Philon of Byzantium’s ancient automatic servant—a robotic hand that served wine in temples—this work reimagines that gesture as an act of refusal. The interactive mechanical hand, built from servo components and wearable scaffolding, performs erratic or inplete motions. It disrupts the logic of obedience and explores panic as a glitch in consent. The hand does not serve; it hesitates. Its silence resists the system it was built to obey.

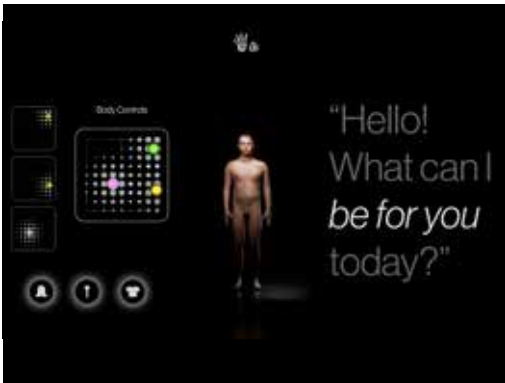


© Keya Shah, Elora Trotter, Marcos Hernández, Clara Juong

Omar ElGamal (EG)

4You

4You is a digital interface where viewers reshape the artist’s avatar, revealing how identity is constructed through design systems and subtle social pressures. The project reflects on agency, customization, and the quiet violence of conformity in the digital age. It is not interaction—it is a negotiation over who gets to define the self.



© Omar ElGamal

Hasibur Rahman (BD), Q M Naushadul Islam (BD), Mariam Abdelrazek (EG), Ahmed Bilal (PK)

Eye of the Sand

A short video of a desert installation—a glowing eye embedded in sand. It watches without movement, offering a presence that is neither machine nor myth. The desert becomes a sentient witness to time and passage, suggesting that even silence holds memory.



© Hasibur Rahman, Q M Naushadul Islam, Mariam Abdelrazek, Ahmed Bilal

MA Spiel und Objekt, Ernst Busch University of Theatre Arts Berlin (DE)

Hybride Formen

How do we shape who we are?

How do we shape who we are through what we play, whom we befriend, and how we remember? This exhibition brings together five interactive works that explore the ways we form identities, communities, and futures—through storytelling, friendship, communication, and protest. We invite you to: knock, archive, train, perform, and imagine. From a speculative training studio for making friends to a reimagined toy world where gender roles and childhood anxieties are questioned, the installations create space for playful yet critical engagement. A participatory archive set in the year 2315 invites visitors to rewrite the past from a future of frozen progress. A sonic installation allows communication through walls, evoking rhythm as a language of

memory and connection. In performative archival practice, sorting files becomes a reflection on invisible labor, social order, and institutional routines. Together, the works respond to cultural shifts, algorithmic intimacy, and shifting norms of care. What futures are we rehearsing? What roles do we assign ourselves and others? And how might we reclaim imagination as a form of resistance?

This exhibition shows five works from the fourth cohort of the Spiel und Objekt [Play and Object] program—two interactive installations from their first semester and three participatory performances from their second semester that premiered mid-June in Berlin and have been adapted as interactive exhibits for the Campus Exhibition.

Frederik Britzlmaier (DE)

Catalogue of the Unarchived

An attempt at the archive as action: between body, object and the grammar of (silent) work

Catalogue of the Unarchived is a performative work that deals with processes of collecting, filing, and archiving—both in real space and on a symbolic level. The performance uses hybrid forms located between object installation and action that refer to social, institutional, and physical processes of maintaining order.

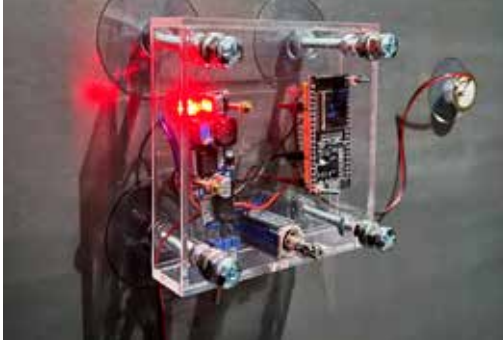


© Michelle Mantel

Szerafina Roxaná Thalia Schiesser (DE)

Klopfmaschinen

An interactive sound installation for communicating through walls



What motivates us to perceive rhythm as language and even want to decipher it? What does a conversation partner remember when we speak, and why? *Klopfmaschinen* represents an attempt to sense a rhythmic system in communication. “Please knock!”

© Spiel und Objekt

Annick Durán Kandzior (CL/DE), Anastasia Landa (CZ), Szerafina Roxaná Thalia Schiesser (DE), Yeganeh Shafie (IR)

making friends

A speculative studio for training friendship



making friends is a participatory theater play in which important friendship skills are repeatedly practised through structuring, repetition, and exercise. Our training program begins with a joint warm-up exercise led by our trainer Fernanda. This is followed by six intensive training stations, each lasting ten minutes, where you will train fundamental, in-depth, and far-reaching friendship skills using our high-tech training equipment.

© Spiel und Objekt

Paolo Federico Artisi (DE), Marla Gaiser (DE)

Protokoll der Zeitlosen

A participatory story



There is absolute justice, there are no conflicts, no dying planet. The only thing that is foregone is progress. The apocalypse of the Infinite Regression has been halted and transformed into a state of social equilibrium. In the year 2315, the audience—framed as experts from the year 2025—enter an archive of information, stories, artefacts, and rationalizations of the past and are asked to collectively create the *Protokoll der Zeitlosen*.

© Spiel und Objekt

Communication Design, School of Culture and Design, University of Applied Sciences Berlin (DE)

Emanatio Digitalis

Emanatio Digitalis questions the conditions of closeness, identity, and agency in the age of algorithmic systems. At its core lies the ambivalence of digital innovations: while they create new spaces for participation and creativity, they simultaneously generate uncertainties, loss of control, and new forms of normalization. The presented projects demonstrate how neural interfaces, Artificial Intelligence, and immersive simulations shift our understanding of intimacy, autonomy, and urban life. In the context of the festival motto *PANIC – yes/no*, the exhibition becomes an experimental field for the possibilities and risks

of radical change. What does it mean when digital technologies are not merely tools but co-creators of social processes? How do we respond when change is no longer predictable and uncertainty becomes a fundamental condition?

Emanatio Digitalis invites reflection on a stance located somewhere between fascination and unease. Artistic research here serves as a means to approach panic not as a paralyzing endpoint, but as a productive starting point for new perspectives and greater social responsibility.

Curators: Andreas Ingerl & Marcel Bückner
Technical Director: Thomas Kemnitz



© Marcel Bückner



Felix Henke (DE), Melissa Heim (DE),
Maxima Walthes (DE)

Flira

What happens when it is not our words, but our brainwaves that decide who we feel connected to? In this interactive installation titled *Flira*, participants answer personal questions solely in their minds, while an EEG system records their neural activity. An algorithm determines the one perfect match. *Flira* plays with the human desire for connection and invites critical reflection on the future of desire, control, and the measurability of our innermost selves.



Carlotta Bartoschik (DE), Mila Emmerich (DE),
Karen Lienkamp (DE)

Urbanova

Advancing climate change exposes overpopulation and extreme temperatures in cities. *Urbanova* focuses on efficient, future-proof urban planning. Individual cities can be created via five building block categories on a grid. The camera underneath scans them, rendering a bar diagram analysis. A 3D digitalization is observable via VR glasses. The interactive exhibit stresses understanding cities' complexities and sustainable planning. Don't panic, we are still able to create positive change.



Fernanda Candas (MX), Varvara Hryhorova (UA),
Anastasiia Sviderska (UA)

Dotyk

Dotyk is an interactive installation at the intersection of neurotechnology and art. Using EEG sensors, it translates brain activity into real-time patterns of visuals and sound. *Dotyk*, meaning “touch” in Ukrainian, explores inner states—panic, calm, overload—as well as physical touch as data-driven experiences. It invites visitors to witness the fragility of mental states through technology.



Jim Kramer (DE), Rosi Pernthaller (AT)

Doppelgänger

Who are we in the third life? In *Doppelgänger*, visitors meet a digitized version of themselves. Through AI-driven conversations, fragments such as preferences and memories are collected and used to create a personal profile. A webcam captures each visitor's photo, transforming it into a 3D avatar. Enriched with personal data, this digital figure enters a virtual world to interact with other copies. The project explores the question of who we really are, if our digital reflections live on.

MA Design & Computation, Technical University Berlin (DE)

Bring on the Chaos!

Our answer to panic? *Bring on the Chaos!* Guided by this motto, the exhibition showcases five works that embrace multi-layered answers across various media and disciplines. What are common patterns shared by humans, algorithms, and ants? How can video analysis build a taxonomy of globally shared police tactics? What are the myths of the future? And what does it feel like to be a human-in-the-loop? *Bring on the Chaos!* is a group exhibition by the joint Master's program Design & Computation offered by the Technical University of Berlin and Berlin University of the Arts. The exhibition shows results of the students'

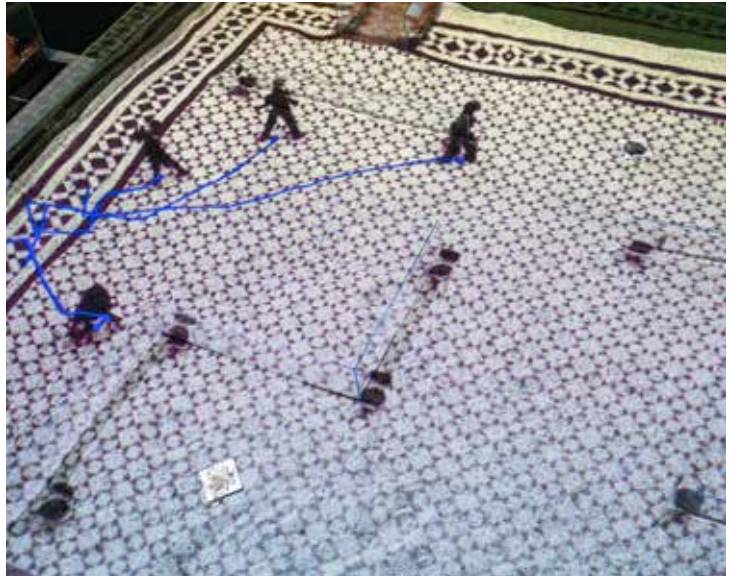
interdisciplinary collaborations in the fields of art, science, society, and technology. We believe in the potential of our diverse backgrounds to understand and intervene in today's rapid technological and societal changes. Our projects therefore offer explorations of epistemic and poetic approaches, hidden patterns, and medial strategies, providing scripts for a future that is worth living in for all of us.

Technical University Berlin, MA Design & Computation,
Berlin University of the Arts, New Practice in Art and
Technology, Prof. Albert Lang, Prof. Marc Pfaff

Alessandro Mac-Nelly (DE), Lilli-Chiara Kurth (DE), Max Baraitser Smith (GB), Mika Zoé Rosenberg (US)

Seed. Potato. Pixel.

Seed. Potato. Pixel. is an installation by the Inter-species Research Cluster Berlin that compares three foraging behaviors in identical labyrinths: North African harvester ants seeking seeds in a sand-box, blindfolded humans searching for potato piles by touch and sound, and digital ants using the ACO algorithm. Projecting all walking paths together, the project explores embodiment, interspecies sensory gaps, and algorithmic life, while releasing an ant path database for research.



© Alessandro Mac-Nelly, Lilli-Chiara Kurth, Max Baraitser Smith,
Mika Zoé Rosenberg



Emma Sokoll (GB)

Bosonic Echoes

Bosonic Echoes is an interactive light and sound installation that explores the creative potential of boson sampling in generative music. Boson sampling is a type of quantum computation using photons that addresses a specific problem believed to be infeasible for classical computers. The installation visualizes and remotely interfaces a photonic processor located in a quantum optics lab in Berlin. Turning the dials in Linz affects the processor, the live measurement data, and the sound generated.



Natalya Bashnyak (UA), Harun Ćurak (BA), Sarah Fitterer (DE), Otto Ostermann (DE)

Operational Schemes: Work & Violence

The research platform *Operational Schemes: Work & Violence* explores the formatting of actions and decision processes in contemporary organizations through two critical installations: In *Non-Human Resources (NHR)*, visitors slip into the fictional role of the sole human employee of 2027's top HR consultancy tasked with reviewing proposals of AI automation. *Operational Choreography* investigates the development of a shared methodology of violence between internationally collaborating police forces.



Lilu Herlambang (ID), Franz Hagen (DE), Hong Anh Pham (DE), Chia-Chi Chen (TW)

Soft Interface

Soft Interface imagines technology becoming soft, warm, and alive. Screens melt into fabrics, keyboards transform into tactile textiles, devices respond to human touch. Prototypes explore emotional intelligence, digital materiality, and a world of organic interaction—blurring boundaries until technology feels less like a tool and more like a part of us.



Eman Safavi Bayat (IR), Suzan Ela Hanow (GE/TR), Lilli-Chiara Kurth (DE), Célestin Meunier (FR), Pierre-Louis Suckrow (DE/FR)

Cultural Computations: Myths & Swag

The research platform *Cultural Computations: Myths & Swag* investigates computational approximations and simulations of evolving cultural patterns through two related projects: *Mythologizer* is an evolving research tool that simulates how myths are transformed through storytelling based on cultural and geographic factors. *SWAG* approaches computational models of intelligence as cultural constructs, situating them within the frameworks of information aesthetics, media theory, and cognitive, and computer science.

The National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (RO)

EQUILIBRIA

How would you balance your multiple bio-techno identities?

We are the inhabitants of a techno-creative revolution that occurs once in a century.

This diverse exhibition *Equilibria* seeks to explore new states of equilibrium between the biological, spiritual, and algorithmic layers of our lives. Each installation reimagines a facet of contemporary society—climate change, identity, play—through a fusion of human intuition and algorithmic insight. The result is often a sensorial dialogue of two worlds.

Created by the Interactive Technology MA students of UNATC, the works invite audiences into interactive installations where sensitive inner feelings are translated into eccentric outer worlds.

In a time when art is dangerously framed exclusively as ephemeral escapism, this exhibition proposes a renegotiation of our deepest roots.

This collection of wonders, presented as hybrid microcosms invites audiences to become more aware of their own presence, touch, and imprint on the world. In this rollercoaster, we are each invited to design a custom equilibria that blends our digital and non-digital selves. Finally, we are invited to see equilibria as a creature in motion, rather than an axiomatic resolution.

Modernist sculptor Constantin Brancusi reinforced that “all dilemmas are resolved through unifying the contraries.” We believe that blending opposites can lead to a holistic state of being. Finding new inner and outer equilibria is perhaps the highest goal of our current era and our mission is to make it visible.

MA Degree: Interactive Technologies for Performing and Media Arts (ITPMA)

Andrada Băleanu (RO)

Ritual for your Inner Child

The demonstration of a revolutionary device performed by digital influencer Zoé Fluturandis

Ritual for your Inner Child explores themes of identity and vulnerability in a digital era. Part of a series of in-person and online performances, here we follow Zoé Fluturandis, an outdated wellness influencer, as she demonstrates an emerging healing device: the Inscape head-set. She has been invited to create a ritual designed to amplify the device’s electromagnetic waves. The device can produce a striking X-ray of her psyche, allowing us to explore both appearance and essence.



© Andrada Băleanu

Lorena Cocora (RO)

Ashes Don't Fall Equally

An interactive documentary about climate justice

Ashes Don't Fall Equally explores how climate justice is hidden behind corporate interests and overlooked during daily social media scrolls. The audience first interacts with touchable phone-shaped projections to reveal their hidden stories. Then, they experience a shift to a personal level, bringing climate injustice's consequences physically and emotionally closer. The project highlights the socio-political reality whereby vulnerable communities suffer most from corporate greed and global inaction.

Orsolya Rend (RO)

RAD!

RAD! explores how design, public participation, and algorithmic remix can merge into co-creation. The project features two prints—one static, one open to interaction. A camera captures audience input, remixing it live into the static print. *RAD!* reflects on authorship, digital tools, and collective making in the time of digital image generation. The result is a constantly evolving visual loop—where chaos meets code, authorship dissolves, and every visitor leaves a trace.



Ashes Don't Fall Equally © Lorena Cocora

Tony Macpela (RO)

ASCEND

Have you ever wondered what a sculpture would feel like if we could co-create its textures, colors, even its underlying philosophy? *ASCEND* explores how digital identities are constructed, customized, and ritualized in a hyperconnected world. Visitors use a stylized web interface to select features, projecting the result onto a life-sized statue. Inspired by vaporwave aesthetics, the project blends retro-futurism and digital mythology to reflect on self-image, performativity, and the surreal rituals of online identity.

Andrei Gheorghe (RO)

Resonance

Resonance invites you to gradually step into an algorithmic mirror. This interactive installation interprets biometric signals to generate a shifting sound and visual environment that not only reflects but attempts to influence the participant's inner state. Blurring the line between observer and observed, *Resonance* invites visitors into a feedback loop where emotion becomes both input and output, raising questions about control, perception, and the intimacy of being seen by a machine. You are not just a participant; you are the pulse that drives the entire experience.



ASCEND © Tony Macpela



RAD! © Virginia Berbece, Orsolya Rend



Resonance © Andrei Gheorghe

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest—MOME (HU)

Gradual Exposure

At this year's Ars Electronica Festival, MOME (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design) will showcase a curated selection of student artworks emerging from a variety of departments, reflecting the institution's strong cross-disciplinary ethos. The featured projects are rooted in a shared urgency: addressing the complex and interconnected crises that shape contemporary life. From the proliferation of misinformation, the erosion of trust in digital environments, and geopolitical tensions, to the accelerating transformations brought on by climate change, the installations offer critical and often poetic responses to global issues. The works span a broad range of media and modes of inquiry—including speculative design, visual taxonomies, and performative installations—alongside projects that incorporate custom electronics,

sound, and interactive light. Across the exhibition, many of the works question our understanding of time, data, and agency—engaging audiences in a sensory dialogue with systems that are at once personal and planetary. Together, these installations form a collective narrative that is both reflective and forward-looking. They are less about providing solutions and more about opening up new perspectives, inviting the viewer to pause, reflect, and recalibrate their relation to a rapidly changing world. MOME's presence at this year's festival underscores the power of art and design education to not only interpret the present, but also to prototype the future.

Selection Committee: Attila Pálfalusi, Eszter Judit Kárpáti, Dániel Cseh, Ágoston Nagy, Esteban DeLa Torre.
Management: Júlia Dóra Molnár, Zsuzsanna Balogh

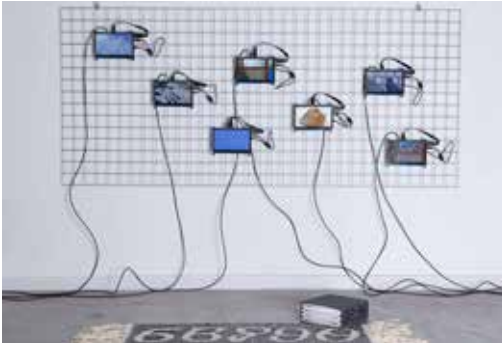
Zsófia Kérdy (HU), László Majsai (HU)

Don't Look Up!

The installation features AI-generated, tweet-like messages—from urgent warnings to skeptical denial. Inspired by the eponymous film *Don't Look Up*, the piece confronts us with uncomfortable truths and the consequences of inaction. A few of the short messages are visible in printed forms on the wall, while a few more are projected on the floor, using animations of dynamic, moving typography. The piece highlights how misinformation overwhelms truth—not by being more valid, but merely by being louder.



© Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest



Lili Tóth (HU)

Windows of Time

What does the duration of an hour mean in terms of boredom, presence, or creativity—when measured subjectively, or even socially constructed? Are we able to slow down to focus for one hour on the passing of time?



Viki Pere (HU), Brigitta Burkus (HU)

Attentive Tangible Interface

Recent technological advancements have led to the popularity of touchscreens in car user interfaces. Instead of navigating the cars using physical buttons, users now interact through a single interface. We suggest a concept instead where several other options are available, such as holding objects, or showing 3D maps. Further development of the project was carried out in collaboration with with Lelkes Mátyás.



Gergő Gábor Péri (HU)

Turn the Lights Off!

Turn the Lights Off! is an interactive light installation where visitors are tasked with turning off as many lightbulbs as quickly as possible to stop the rising levels of the oceans. But a single switch does not just control one light, so turning off all the lights requires a measure of logical thinking.

Co-creators: Márton Péntek, Sára Miriam Nagy



Illés Dóra Lilla (HU)

Thetos

The Island of Tranquility

At its center lies a dysfunctional “sleeping chamber” featuring a matrix printer that continuously generates fragmented bedtime stories, hybrids of recurring motifs from my dream journal, and AI-generated narratives. *Thetos—The Island of Tranquility* reflects on the blurred boundaries between personal experience and algorithmic interpretation, questioning the authenticity of machine-created stories, and the evolving interplay between human consciousness and digital systems.

University of Chicago (US)

Edge Experiences: Entangled Lives of Matter, Technology, and Environment

This exhibition aims to illuminate how our sensory and technological extensions mediate our understanding of place and time, revealing layers of political logics, material transformations, and environmental change. Together, the artworks ask how aesthetics might serve as a form of sensing—and sense-making—in an era of accelerating sociotechnical and ecological change. This question is particularly important in view of the current multiple crises that the Ars Electronica festival is addressing this year with the theme *PANIC—yes/no*. In order to locate and orient ourselves in the midst of constantly shifting, unprecedented circumstances and events, we must learn to understand and become attentive to the ways new technologies, historical

concepts, political goals, and individual needs come together in emergent situations.

Our exhibits allow a playful, meditative, and critical approach to these questions, elevating art's potential to reveal the conditions of perception and meaning-making. We present four artworks that explore how we sense, interpret, and shape our environments. Using sound, human hair, robotics, and computing, they translate the complex entanglements of ecological systems, cultural narratives, and technological infrastructures into traceable aesthetic forms.

Director: Desiree Foerster

Assistant Director: Ken Nakagaki

Laboratories, Departments: AxLab (Computer Science), Music

Anup Sathya (IN/US), Ken Nakagaki (JP/US)

Attention Receipts

Attention is a scarce currency in the digital world. We know it is valuable—but are we truly in control of where it is spent? This installation materializes attention as a printed receipt, exposing how platforms capture, quantify, and monetize our focus. As personal moments become transactional data, viewers are invited to confront the uneasy trade-offs between agency, distraction, and profit. What do we pay attention to? And at what cost?



© Anup Sathya

David Yuan (CN/US)

Cutting Stone

A Memory of Action

Cutting Stone asks how physical actions translate into digital memory. The installation includes a granite block with a chisel that visitors can strike. A hidden microphone captures each impact, converting the sound into binary data that illuminates a growing 3D cube on a display screen. By connecting the raw process of stone carving with contemporary technology, this project explores how human gestures create collective, anonymous traces in our digital age.



© David Yuan

Alan Pham (US), Yuxiao Li (CN/US),
Miyu Fukuoka (JP), Ken Nakagaki (JP/US)

Buoyancé—Tug(gle)

Buoyancé—Tug(gle) presents itself as helium balloons connected to wheeled robots on the ground, but represents the coexistence of numerous everyday dichotomies. As the audience is drawn towards the movement and reconfiguration of the balloons, their attention is gradually split between the gracefully gliding balloons and rolling robots, emphasizing the polarities of themes such as magic/machine, control/freedom, imploring a multi-layered perception of spatial cognition and physical sensations.



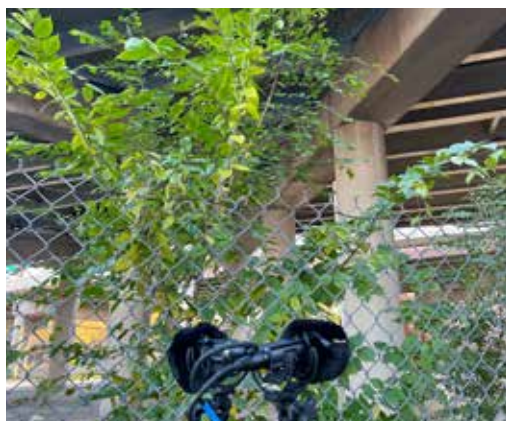
© Ken Nakagaki

Hunter Brown (US)

Latent Enclosures

Latent Enclosures is a sound installation exploring how physical and digital enclosures shape perception. It uses microphones, speakers, and reconfigured commercial psychoacoustic algorithms tuned to the gallery's acoustics. By projecting and modulating the space with digital systems designed for obfuscated transparency, the listener's awareness of how these enclosures manipulate sonic experience is magnified.

With thanks to Senem Pirlir, Desiree Foerster, Dominic Coles, and the University of Chicago Music Department.



© Hunter Brown

School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) (US)

Adapting on the Edge

Adapting on the Edge delves into the intricate and often contradictory human response to the pervasive sense of uncertainty that defines our contemporary existence. Panic is framed not merely as a state of alarm, but as a fluctuating continuum shaped by technological advancements, ecological crises, socio-political instability, and the ever-evolving understanding of the self. It emerges as a process of adaptation—one marked by a forced transformation or ongoing negotiation with the conditions of crisis that define our era.

Rather than a simple survival reaction, adaptation is understood as a dynamic and ambivalent process: it highlights vulnerability, loss of

control, and fragmentation of identity, while simultaneously revealing a capacity for resilience, regeneration, and the search for new meanings. Through the lens of Rose Ansari's paradoxical hug, Benjamin Glass's desperation, Mauricio López's relentless labor, Leena Mahmood's invisible threats, and Xiyuan Zhou's disintegrating self, the exhibition seeks to engage with a spectrum of reactions to the underlying state of panic: active confrontation with fear, passive acceptance of its inevitability, and spaces in between. Through their diverse works, the artists explore how panic can transcend its role as a moment of collapse and appear instead as a catalyst for mutation and redefinition.



© Leena Mahmood

Leena Mahmood (IN)

Ghosts of Reality

Ghosts of Reality draws from keratoconus, a condition that causes visual distortion, double vision, and fragmentation. This project uses silicone eyes with pressure sensors to explore distorted vision as a metaphor. Touch shifts visuals, creating a tactile experience. It links perception to genetics, UV exposure, eye strain, and environmental stress. Keratoconus becomes not only medical, but social, political, and ecological, a layered reflection on how we see and what shapes that vision.



© Xiyuan Zhou

Xiyuan Zhou (CN)

Erase Me

Erase Me is a video installation that explores the desire to disappear—to shed visible markers of identity and escape the burden of being perceived. Created during a time when I longed to be unseen, it reflects the urge to reject constant interpretation through gender, race, and emotion, imagining a flat existence untouched by time, without history or detail.

Benjamin Glass (US)

Slow Digestion of a Cannibal Count

© Benjamin Glass



Slow Digestion of a Cannibal Count is a bioreactor where yeast ferments a sugar replica of Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's *Ugolino and His Sons*. As the sugar depletes, the yeast consumes its own ethanol waste, mirroring a death-driven filial cannibalism. Count Ugolino, condemned in Dante's *Inferno* for being forced to devour his kin, becomes an allegory for metabolic collapse. This biological loop is echoed in a generative AI video depicting his eternal punishment as it is mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*.

Rose Ansari (IR)

HOLD-ME-TIGHT

© Rose Ansari



HOLD-ME-TIGHT is an interactive installation with two wall-mounted robotic arms that deliver an uncanny “embrace.” Solo visitors guide the arms themselves, while pairs let one partner control the other’s hug, exposing touch starvation, distance, and power dynamics of migration. Industrial-military styling collides with romantic gesture, questioning how intimacy mutates through machines.

Mauricio López F. (CL)

También tienes que venir mañana / You also need to come tomorrow

© Mauricio López F.



También tienes que venir mañana / You also need to come tomorrow is a kinetic installation featuring animated traffic cones that enacts the precarious conditions workers face daily. Through continuous movement, it reflects the exhausting, cyclical nature of labor and risk. The audience is invited to step into this shifting terrain, where instability becomes a metaphor for danger, invisibility, and the cost behind essential labor.

Artcor—Creative Industries Center, Technical University Of Moldova, Moldova State University (MD)

Calm Code

Calm Code brings together two projects that address urgent challenges—war, migration, tech overload—and respond with something refreshing: thoughtful reflection, memory, and a forward-looking empathy. These works emerge from realities familiar in Moldova: proximity to conflict, the transformation of village life, and the special bond with grandparents who quietly shape our everyday world.

BOONICA IS WATCHING gives the idea of surveillance a more human, unexpected twist: What if the gaze watching over us was soft, familiar, and full of care? *Woven Hills* invites you into a peaceful space where industrial materials and cultural heritage meet—an open moment to reconnect with nature and ourselves.

Curator *BOONICA IS WATCHING*: Constantin Sarcov
Curator *Woven Hills*: Mihai Stamati

Villi Mahnenko (MD), Danil Feldman (MD)

BOONICA IS WATCHING: The Future of Surveillance



The Future of Surveillance is a design research project exploring more human and thoughtful surveillance. The installation features a life-sized grandmother (“boonica”) and her cat, both equipped with interactive surveillance cameras that engage visitors. The grandmother’s statue has a camera embedded in her head, while the cat has red laser-like eyes. Measuring about 2x2 meters, the installation invites reflection on making surveillance more approachable and human.

Daria Proscurina (MD), Elena Istratenco (MD), Daria Haritonova (MD), Olga Homițchi (MD), Ana Matei (MD)

Woven Hills

The installation *Woven Hills* features flexible metal modules woven with threads of wool, leather, and other materials, reinterpreting Moldovan rug patterns. Some sections invite visitors to participate by tying knots or creating their own designs. A video projection of natural imagery and Moldovan symbols, accompanied by calming music, creates a peaceful atmosphere. This sensory space encourages visitors to pause, reconnect with tradition and nature, and find calm in a fast-paced, stressful world.



Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca (RO)

Emotional.exe

The title *Emotional.exe* evokes the idea of emotion as a system process: a program running in the background, often unnoticed until it surfaces. Much of our inner worlds are increasingly filtered through screens, algorithms, and interfaces—where emotions collide with the cold precision of code. Taking this reality as a working hypothesis, the project equally criticizes and positively questions the role of technology in visualizing and perpetuating emotions, while offering a space to externalize and process these feelings, on both individual and collective levels. As one of the most visible and profound emotional responses, panic is seen not just as a human experience, but as a glitch in our digital rhythm—especially when emotion overloads the system.

The installations explore this theme through interactive, animated visuals, generative soundscapes, and real-time data integration via AI. Central to experiencing how emotions manifest, distort, and replicate are the modes of interaction: haptic (in three of the projects), verbal, and gestural (in the remaining two). The exhibition, thus, aims to simulate the chaotic, overwhelming nature of panic as an “executable” process, blurring the increasingly fine lines between human emotion and digital systems.

Curator: Horea Avram

Project coordinators: Rodica Mocan, Cristina Pop-Tiron, Adelina-Laura Bulibaşa

Institution: MA Digital Interactive Arts



© Laura Seucan

Laura Seucan (RO)

Heart.beating AI

In a world increasingly shaped by technology, *Heart.beating AI* serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring significance of heart, emotion, and artistic expression in defining what it means to be human. It is an exploration of the human spirit and a way to celebrate the “infinite” possibilities of the heartbeat. This project aims to evoke a sense of wonder and reverence for the unique qualities that define our humanity in a posthuman reality.



© Cristina Pop-Tiron,
Mircea Drăgoescu

Gabi Jilav (RO), Călin Nahaiciuc (RO),
Kamila Jumadilova (BG), Mátyás Győri (RO),
Eduard Geiger (RO)

Echoes in Bloom

Echoes in Bloom is an interactive installation where glowing flowers store anonymous confessions. Activated by touch, each flower echoes the voice of a past visitor, creating a space of emotional resonance: a garden where forgotten thoughts linger, inviting reflection on memory, intimacy, and the vulnerability of being seen.

Călin Nahaiciuc (RO)

Resorunes

Resorunes is a videogame-like multimedia installation in which visitors engage with the gameplay mechanics using a DIY Thales magnetic field music controller interface. The installation focuses on exploring the spaces between personal, subjective reactions, novel expressive musical gestures, and precise game controller interfacing. It raises questions about how feelings are externalized and controlled through video game mechanics and innovative approaches to musicianship.



© Călin Nahaiciuc

Florin Marc (RO)

D_AI_log

(The Archive is Talking)

In *D_AI_log*, two AI-driven avatars, trained exclusively on each other's interactions, engage in perpetual dialogue, independent from human influence. Visitors may intervene verbally, yet the AI entities remain indifferent or skeptical, frequently dismissing human participation. The installation metaphorically addresses the global AI race, exploring a post-human scenario in which Artificial Intelligence evolves autonomously, no longer reliant on humanity as its model or mentor.



© Florin Marc

Cristina Pop-Tiron (RO), Andreea-Cristina Mircea (RO)

Janus—A dual planet

Janus—A dual planet speaks about contradictions, coexistence, and world emergencies. It consists of a spherical structure with distinctly textured touch-sensitive panels for each hemisphere, complemented by projection mapping that generates dynamic visuals in response to visitor interaction. A spatial audio system creates the illusion of sounds emerging from specific regions of the planet, seamlessly coordinated by custom software that integrates various inputs into a cohesive audiovisual experience.



© Cristina Pop-Tiron

VCUarts Qatar (QA)

Ghūl · غول

Popularized as “ghoul,” the ghūl (غول) is a mischievous and malevolent creature of Arabian folklore. Spellcasters and shapeshifters, ghūl mimic human forms and behaviors in their efforts to entrap their prey. In *Ghūl* this folkloric archetype provides an expansive and playful framework for exploring how the systems we build—technological, cultural, economic, ecological—hunt, haunt, and hypnotize us. How do we see ourselves and our values reflected in these systems and the traps they set?

Framing systems not as neutral tools but as active agents of transformation, the exhibition moves through themes of algorithmic control, environmental degradation, mediated identity,

and speculative interaction. The works include biodegradable materials crafted from food waste, a performative AI cult that critiques water extraction, immersive XR narratives drawn from immigrant memory, and interactive installations that turn users into data, summon digital apparitions, or manipulate illusion through motion. Together, these projects reflect the urgency of rethinking the systems that condition everyday life. Through poetic, critical, and playful engagements, they invite viewers to navigate the visible and invisible forces shaping the present—and to imagine alternatives beyond them.

Organized by the Institute for Creative Research at VCUarts Qatar

© Ryan Browning



Ryan Browning (US), Sarah Khankan (SY),
Ameena Darwish (QA)

Apparitions

Apparitions is an artwork in which participants observe and interact with the environment of a virtual cave, using a sculptural keyboard to summon swirling “apparitions.” Through playful interactive feedback, *Apparitions* explores how embodied interactions shape experience in chaotic digital spaces.

© Yasamin Shaikhi



Yasamin Shaikhi (IR)

Food Waste Renaissance

From the table, for the table

Food Waste Renaissance (FWR) explores how food excess and byproducts can become sustainable design materials. Rather than solving large-scale waste issues, it shifts perceptions, encouraging individuals, designers, and communities to see waste as potential. Using byproducts from rice and dates, *FWR* creates biodegradable lamps that return material from the table to the table. In a world where systems often disguise harm as progress, *FWR* offers an alternative through reinvention and design.

Varvara Guljajeva (EE)

Roto-Riso

Roto-Riso is a modular kinetic installation inspired by Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs* and Op Art, reimagined through contemporary media practices. The project is an exploration of motion, illusion, and cultural patterns through RISO-printed spinning discs. With adjustable speed, direction, and swappable parts, *Roto-Riso* is an interactive and participatory experience designed for first-year students. It merges art history, design, kinetic imaging, and printmaking in an interdisciplinary introduction to time-based media.

Teaching Assistant: Rhassan Rachdi

Pattern Design: Art Foundation students from the Spring 2025 Time Studio Class

Riso print: Eman Makki

Woodwork: Shankar Padmanabhan

ShanMu Sun (CN), Sirena Pearl (US)

Self-Reflexive Worlds: Ideal Home / Text Textures

In adaptive virtual environments, the user becomes both subject and object, cause and effect, figure and ground. Reflecting our own image and desires, responsive technologies draw us into a hall of mirrors that can be difficult to escape. *Self-Reflexive Worlds* explores this through *Ideal Home*, an XR narrative in which a chatbot mimics the emotional journey of immigrants. *Text Textures*—a video game—translates its player's physical presence into an ever-evolving digital landscape.

Project Advisors: Peter Baldes, Stephen Vitiello

Sound Artist: Jared Duesterhaus

Quest XR Technical Support: Gu Lin, Jiaqi Yang, Yufan Yao

Script Co-Writers: Rasim Bayramov, HWIY, Xinyue,

Weitong Sun, Ruiqi Zhang

Editor: Artists-trained AI Editor (GPT-4), Yvonne LeBien

Special Thanks: Dongxue Dai, Mingyue Liu

Fariha Ahmed (PK), Fatima Nazir (PK),
Alice Aslem (IN), Selma Fejzullaj (AL),
Jood Elbeshti (LY), Shawky Abdalla (EG)

HydroGAN™

AI-powered water

HydroGAN™ is a satirical installation that critiques the commodification of water and identity in an AI-driven age. Posed as a corporate launch for “AI-generated” water, it interrogates the environmental and ethical costs of technological advancement. Using performance, biometric entry, and persuasive branding, it reveals how consumer desire is engineered and belief is manufactured. *HydroGAN™* urges audiences to confront the systems they trust and the silent trade-offs they have come to accept.

Project Advisor: Joshua Rodenberg | Branding and Merch Design: Fatima Nazir | Branding and Merch Design: Selma Fejzullaj | Creative Coding + Digital Fabrication + Interior Planning: Jood Elbeshti | Storyboard Artist: Alice Aslem



Roto-Riso © Varvara Guljajeva



Self-Reflexive Worlds: Ideal Home / Text Textures © David Hunter Hale



HydroGAN™ © Fatima Nazir

Computational Media and Arts, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology—Guangzhou (CN)

Phantom Protocols

When Machines Hallucinate in Panic

What if the systems we built to maintain order—climate models, neural nets, geopolitical scripts—have begun to hallucinate? In these visions, panic doesn't erupt; it flickers, loops, crawls on robotic legs, dissolves into toxic waters. This exhibition asks not if we panic, but how machines hallucinate panic through us—and how we might begin to speak across that divide.

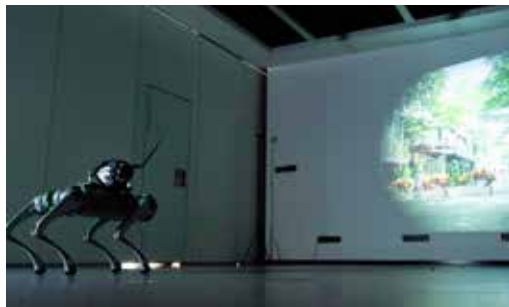
Phantom Protocols brings together artists who disrupt hidden architectures of control—ecological, algorithmic, psychological—to reveal points of fracture.

These projects map thresholds: when human sovereignty falters, when animals enter feedback loops, when machines form logic of their own.

In a world increasingly shaped by artificial agency and ecological collapse, we need more than just interspecies empathy; we need robust intercultural communication. Panic is not merely a symptom; it is a signal. Perhaps it is time we truly listened—to each other, and to the dreams of our machines and other cultures.

Curators: James She

© Ary-Yue Huang



Ary-Yue Huang (CN), Ma Wenzong (CN),
Bingyuan Wang (CN)

Drift of the Uncharted

Drift of the Uncharted features a quadruped robot carrying a projector that casts a submerged urban landscape into a darkened space, simulating a future transformed by rising sea levels. As it moves, the robot controls the virtual camera, guiding viewers through a speculative flooded world. Merging physical and digital realms, the work combines climate data, real-world scans, and CGI seawater to immerse audiences in the potential realities of climate change.



© Siyuan Liu

Siyuan Liu (CN)

Chimpanzee, Run!

Chimpanzee, Run! is an educational game highlighting the imminent extinction of chimpanzees due to poaching, habitat loss, and illegal trade. Set in 2048, players navigate a perilous world where choices shape the fate of the last surviving chimps. As the environmental crisis deepens, the game challenges players to confront humanity's role in this impending disaster—pushing them to question whether our desires justify the destruction of wildlife, or if change can still be enacted.

Yixiong Wang (CN), Hourun Wang (CN),
Jia-Qi Shi (CN), Yufeng Zeng (CN)

Machine Civilization

When humans carved symbols into stone, civilization was born. *Machine Civilization* draws on this, envisioning a robot observer moving through cities, collecting and transmitting data to an AI Parliament. There, diverse AI agents debate and evolve their own script, recorded in “Stele Zero,” the first stone of machine civilization. It asks: As machines gain language sovereignty, how will we coexist?

Concept & Design: Yixiong Wang, Jia-Qi Shi | Research: Yixiong Wang, Hourun Wang, Jia-Qi Shi, Yufeng Zeng | Programming: Hourun Wang, Yixiong Wang | Visual Design & Media Art: Jia-Qi Shi, Yufeng Zeng | Mechanical Installation Design: Yixiong Wang | Supervision: Prof. Chen Liang, Prof. Tania Fraga, Prof. Kang Zhang | Supported by: HKUST(GZ), Computational Media and Arts Trust

Hanlu Ma (CN), Hengyu Meng (CN), Robert Jankowski (PL), Jindu Wang (CN), Tianrui Hu (CN), Ziwei Wu (CN)

Capillary Network

Capillary Network is a data-driven interactive experience that speculatively visualizes the invisible diffusion of poisonous substances across species. Tracing how pesticides permeate various organisms, including wildlife, beneficial invertebrates, companion animals, and humans, it reveals a haunting yet beautiful kinship among them. Viewers are invited to be part of the system, where toxins circulate like blood, prompting reflection on life, death, and human-nonhuman entanglement.

This artwork makes use of data from the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS), 2008–2023, provided by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Jia Sun (CN), Zheng Wei (CN)

Algorithmic Miner

Algorithmic Miner is a VR-based art installation critically examining data annotation labor, highlighting the workers as invisible yet essential resources within AI systems. Through repetitive VR annotation tasks and machinic directives, participants’ labor materializes as jellyfish ascending to a simulated utopia, visualizing the exploitation of human creativity. The work urges reflection on the ethical implications of technological advancement, resonating with the theories of Marx, Heidegger, and Baudrillard.



Machine Civilization © Yixiong Wang



Capillary Network © Hanlu Ma



Algorithmic Miner © Jia Sun

China Academy of Art Hangzhou (CN)

Social Play

Social Play interrogates how play—as a primal human instinct and cultural practice—can be reconfigured through digital art and gaming to engage critically with contemporary societal complexities. At its core, the exhibition asks: How can the mechanics of play, embedded in interactive and AI technologies, serve as a lens to decode and reimagine human relationships, collective anxieties, and identity negotiations in an era of rapid technological saturation?

The exhibition reframes “play” as a platform for social inquiry. Five projects by emerging Chinese artists merge video game, AI, website, and VR to confront urban isolation, digital surveillance, and memory in a data-driven world. *Electronic Womb* challenges gendered AI censorship via absurdist resistance, while *AI Hauntology* stages digital rituals for forgotten images, questioning

memory’s fragility. *QRebirth 0.5* critiques algorithmic governance through a VR journey where QR codes dominate reality. *Before Mom Comes Home* uses stealth mechanics to explore childhood loneliness, while *Mean World Syndrome* transforms subway commutes into speculative narratives of urban detachment. By collapsing boundaries between art, game, AI, and activism, *Social Play* invites audiences to “play” their way through urgent questions such as: What truths do our digital rituals conceal? How do we reclaim agency in systems that reduce us to data points? And ultimately, can “playful” subversion forge pathways toward more empathetic futures?

Curators: Ziyang Wu, Rhett Tsai, Cao Shu | Presented by: Open Media Department, School of Intermedia Art, China Academy of Art | Sponsored by: School of Intermedia Art, China Academy of Art



© Jianrui Chen, Yukai Chen,
Tao Jin, Yizhou Fan

Jianrui Chen (CN), Yukai Chen (CN), Tao Jin (CN),
Yizhou Fan (CN)

QRebirth 0.5

In *QRebirth 0.5*, the narrative takes place in a void where scanning a yellow bike’s QR code begins a mysterious journey. This scan turns the user into “machines” and “AI,” navigating a binary QR-city of 0s/1s. As QR codes spread, humanity cedes reality interpretation to AI, becoming mere observers. Is our “truth” just crafting higher-dimensional illusions? With 3D QR Codes advancing, will they limit urban data? How will human-machine dynamics evolve in this endless digital revolution?



© Pengfan Chen, Xinyue Wang,
Yuxuan Cai, Lintao Cui, Yixin Gan

Pengfan Chen (CN), Xinyue Wang (CN),
Yuxuan Cai (CN), Lintao Cui (CN), Yixin Gan (CN)

Before Mom Comes Home

This first-person stealth game titled *Before Mom Comes Home* explores left-behind children’s emotional trauma through environmental storytelling. Players navigate a child’s solitary world, discovering a sealed basement that manifests psychological struggles as monstrous presences. Environmental metaphors, memory objects, and multiple endings depict the impact of parental absence and yearning for love, using hide-and-seek mechanics to examine complex family and societal relationships.

Yuxuan Cai (CN), Dian Song (CN), Handan Wei (CN),
Yutong Xie (CN), Zilin Zhao (CN), Zhihua Zhou (CN)

Electronic Womb: Cyber Discipline and Nüwa's Awakening

This multimedia project explores cyberfeminism, dissecting how digital systems discipline female experiences while offering paths of resistance. It fuses an AI reimagining of the Chinese goddess Nüwa to challenge stereotypes, a live AI censorship battle that alters “inappropriate” content into absurd forms to bypass media censorship, and an interactive game that grounds surveillance concepts in the social perceptions of women who smoke. The project highlights cyberfeminist strategies for reclaiming identity in digital realms.

Electronic Womb: Cyber Discipline and Nüwa's Awakening consists of three pieces:

1. *Nüwa* by Yuxuan Cai
2. *BLACK LUNG STORY* by Dian Song, Handan Wei, Yutong Xie, Zhihua Zhou
3. *Rules and Resistance Duet* by Zilin Zhao

Shu Cao (CN), Pengfan Chen (CN), Zhixin Jin (CN),
Zihan Kan (CN), Shulin Li (CN), Dian Song (CN),
Xinyue Wang (CN), Ziyang Wu (CN)

AI Hauntology

AI Hauntology unveils algorithmic specters resurrecting historical and ongoing violences: staging necropolitical encounters with death through datafication; materializing radiation ghosts via generative distortions; dismantling surveillant infrastructures through insurgent biological relays; and embedding financialized alienation within interface illusions. These hauntings rupture technocapitalist progress, forcing confrontation with necrotic residues within algorithmic modernity.

The project *AI Hauntology* consists of four pieces:

1. *Trained Nihil* by Pengfan Chen, Zhixin Jin, Dian Song, Xinyue Wang
2. *Alipay* by Zihan Kan, Shulin Li
3. *Diffusion* by Cao Shu
4. *Pigeon Legend* by Ziyang Wu

Rhett Tsai (CN), Wei Wei (CN), Fan Wu (CN),
Zilin Zhao (CN), Zhenan Zhang (CN)

(In)audible Crossings

(In)audible Crossings blasts open the veneer of urban apathy and geopolitical paralysis. Through subway reflections and a sleeping driver crossing a symbolic bridge, it exposes society's numbed detachment and reckless neglect of human connection, while global borders remain fragile, tension simmering beneath complacency. This work demands that we confront the uncomfortable truth: our divisions run deep, yet we refuse to wake up.

(In)audible Crossings consists of two pieces:

1. *Mean World Syndrome* by Wei Wei, Fan Wu, Zilin Zhao, Zhenan Zhang
2. *Dozing Overpass* by Rhett Tsai



Electronic Womb: Cyber Discipline and Nüwa's Awakening © Zilin Zhao



AI Hauntology © Zihan Kan, Shulin Li



(In)audible Crossings © Wei Wei, Fan Wu, Zilin Zhao, Zhenan Zhang

China Academy of Art Hangzhou (CN), Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (DE), Nanyang Technological University Singapore (SG)

Beyond the Screens, City Digital Skin Art Festival (CDSA)

In response to Ars Electronica 2025's theme *PANIC—yes/no*, this exhibition explores a quieter, ambient panic—one that builds silently across infrastructures, skylines, and ecosystems. *Beyond the Screens*, the third edition of the City Digital Skin Art Festival (CDSA), presents digital works originally created for monumental urban displays across Asia and Europe. Across five countries, nine cities, and eleven iconic screens, these media facades become not just surfaces, but reflective spaces that echo back environmental unease and systemic tension.

At a time when change accelerates and certainties dissolve, these works do not attempt to fix or soothe. Instead, they pause the world just long enough for us to feel it—its fragility, its momentum, its unspoken questions. Panic is a signal: a subtle, flickering alert from within the digital skin of our cities. These images, projected onto

architectural surfaces, offer no easy answers—but insist we pay attention. The works are deeply immersive—monumental in form, restrained in rhythm, urgent in message. If panic is the body's response to what can no longer be ignored, then this is not alarm—it is recognition. A counter-panic that invites reflection over our reaction.

Featuring award-winning works from CDSA 2024, their relevance has only grown. If Ars Electronica asks "Panic—yes or no?", these artists answer: we are already in it. What now?

Curated by Yuelai Ruan (CAA), Susa Pop (Public Art Lab, Bauhaus Weimar), Ina Conradi (ADM NTU Singapore), Maria Grazia Mattei (MEET), and Dominique Moulon (Paris). Partners include Media Art Nexus (MAN), Ten Square, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, CAFA, Tsinghua AFA, Jiangnan University, Macau University of Science and Technology, and MANA Platform.

Creative support by Shahma Abdulla and Hoe Jian Wei (ADM and URECA NTU).

SPINOR (CN)

Awaken to Dreams

Drawing on Taoist philosophy, *Awaken to Dreams* explores the mind as a self-contained cosmos. Through a fluid, dream-like narrative, it questions the stability of perception and blurs the boundary between reality and illusion—reflecting a world where inner and outer disorientation increasingly mirror each other.



© Quek Jia Liang

Ayça Tugran (TR)

Beyond the Funky

Beyond the Funky critiques the commodification of animals under capitalist systems, contrasting their domesticated forms with untamed, biodiverse habitats. Through surreal visual language, the work questions what's lost when life is reduced to function—and invites reflection on coexistence beyond control, profit, or categorization.



© Quek Jia Liang

Sreeshna Sowmya (IN)

Nature Sanctuary 3000

Set in a future strained by climate collapse and unchecked tech expansion, *Nature Sanctuary 3000* questions the illusion of control. As nature becomes curated, contained, and artificial, the work explores our panic-fueled attempts to preserve what we have already endangered—challenging the idea that technology can save us from the damage it helped create.



© Sreeshna Sowmya

Kevin Blackistone (US)

Habitat

Habitat uses a floating terrarium as a metaphor for Earth's fragile ecosystems and finite resources. As visions of space colonization grow louder, the work invites a reconsideration of sustainability—not as a futuristic escape plan, but as an urgent responsibility tethered to the only home we truly know.



© Kevin Blackistone

Chaewon Lee Nicole (KR)

CRISPR Chronicles

CRISPR Chronicles explores the double edge of gene editing, where its precision is both promise and peril. Through blooming cell imagery, the work reflects on our accelerating ability to rewrite life, raising urgent questions about control, consequences, and whether speed itself has become a source of panic in science.



© Ge Lei Studio LimpidArt

National Tsing Hua University (TW)

!heard, !seen, !done

The NTHU group presents a new interdisciplinary and collaborative work titled *!heard, !seen, !done*, where each team member contributes their expertise to create an inseparable whole. As a reflection of this unity, the curatorial title of NTHU's campus exhibition will be the same as the work's title.

This quasi-immersive exhibition space explores perception and interaction, inviting visitors into an environment shaped by light and sound. By dissolving traditional physical boundaries, the exhibition employs abstract symbols, dynamic lighting, and responsive sound to construct a shifting, sensorial experience. As visitors move through the space, their actions gradually decode its underlying narrative.

At its core, this work responds to the current international and Taiwanese political landscape, with a particular focus on cross-strait dynamics between Taiwan and China. It incorporates real-time data on Chinese military aircraft and battleship incursions around Taiwan, integrating these elements with historical political propaganda techniques unique to Taiwan. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the work merges sound, video, and installation into a cohesive artistic statement, encouraging critical engagement with contemporary socio-political realities.

NTHU, CoA, Spring-Tsing Hua Art Education Foundation, GIAT, IPTA

Artists: Chi-Hung Huang (TW), Chih-Yung Chiu (TW), Chun-Huang Lin (TW), Jie-Yin Tai (TW), Yun-Chun Lin (TW)



© Chi-Hung Huang

Musrara, the Naggar School of Art and Society, Jerusalem (IL)

Water Appears

What does it feel like to dive into a world where time, weight, and sound shift?

This project centers on water and its profound influence on the human voice. Since the human body is composed mostly of water, the artists explore this connection by creating a space that evokes the sensation of floating—sometimes tipping into the experience of overflow.

The audience encounter a transparent mirror wallpaper installation, illuminated by spotlights that cast shifting reflections onto the surrounding walls. A layered sound composition, blending field recordings and live vocals is played in the space. Live performances will take place during the exhibition, inviting the audience into an intimate, immersive musical experience. The artists will create a live composition using their bodies, voices, and sonic materials.

The soundscape for *Water Appears* is built from a sonic diary. Field recordings captured in the artists' living environment in the Old City of Jerusalem, specifically within the ancient underground cave known as the Queen Helen Cistern. This environment, rich with history and natural resonance, serves as both source and inspiration. As women living on burning ground—in a conflicted region filled with pain and hostility—the artists find in this cave a shelter, a place where their voices can echo, resonate, and expand. The area where they recorded creates a strong contrast to the difficult and turbulent everyday life they live.

School Founder & Director: Avi Sabag-Sharvit
Head of the New Music Department: Amir Bolzman
External Relation: Dana Shahar
Supported by: Les Amis de Musrara

Noga Shalit Glick (IL), Naomi Weisselberg (IL)

A Deep Hole Full of Water

Moments of reflection through states of floating and overflow, woven into a musical landscape. The performance titled *A Deep Hole Full of Water* includes fragments of visual and sonic diaries and draws inspiration from memories, dreams, and altered states of consciousness. Through words and bodily gestures, the voice becomes the central figure exploring time and memory. It bears emotional traces, history, and yearning, moving backward and forward in time.



© Ron Dahan

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (DE)

Synthetic Realities

feeling through digital nature

The exhibition brings together artistic works that engage with contemporary tensions between digital overstimulation, affective exhaustion, and fragmented embodiment. While varied in form and method, these works share an interest in examining how technological hyperpresence modulates attention, perception, and self-experience. The projects unfold within hybrid perceptual ecologies, where organic and machinic systems interlace: microorganisms interface with data flows, plants intervene in technological relics, and movement is captured, computed, and reflected back as mediated feedback. These spaces are not imagined as oppositional, but as entangled zones shaped by overlapping ecological, technological, and

psychological infrastructures. At stake is the question of how subjectivity is reorganized under conditions of continuous connectivity and sensory saturation—and how artistic practices can respond. Many of the works explore sensory-oriented counter-models to chronic overstimulation: through mindfulness, contact with nature, tactile impulses, or fragmented modes of narration. Together, these works formulate a critical and poetic search for new relations between technology, and map out a critical and affectively attuned search for new relational modes between bodies and interfaces, stimuli and care, signal and sensation.

Curator: Lara Peters
Mentor: Dr. Karin Wimmer

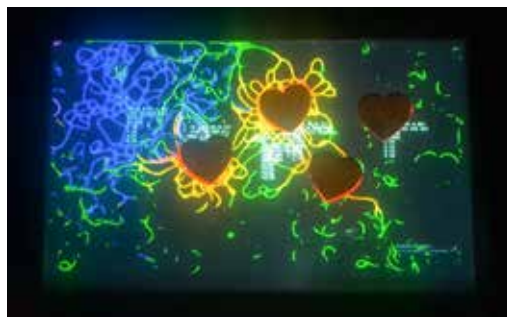
© Benedikt Etmüller, Leon Oskui,
Mert Türkekul, Nina Mandl



Benedikt Etmüller (DE), Leon Oskui (DE),
Mert Türkekul (DE), Nina Mandl (DE)

Silhouettes in Motion

Silhouettes in Motion is an interactive installation that transforms visitors into generative silhouettes using real-time AI body segmentation. Their movements shape a constantly evolving visual composition, projected as fluid, shadow-like forms. The work explores the themes of digital embodiment, presence, and identity, inviting reflection on how human perception and technology merge in immersive environments.



© Nyx Günther

Nyx Günther (DE)

social slime

social slime reveals the structures behind social media that humans are blind to. Users are represented as slime organisms living in a computer graphics-driven simulation. They are created from users' social media data and turned into collectively intelligent slime molds. In their simulation, they live and die based on received social attention or 'likes'. It is up to the user to care for their own and others' slime mold organisms and to choose between cooperation or isolation.

Abitha Jayamohan (DE)

go_touch_some_grass

go_touch_some_grass is a multimedia installation that explores how digital culture changes the way we experience nature and reality. Inspired by the phrase “touch grass,” it reflects on overstimulation, constant doomscrolling, and the control algorithms have over our attention and emotions in a hyperconnected world. The work combines real, AI-generated, and digitally altered videos with layered, distorted sound, and a synthetic voice inviting to disconnect. Artificial flowers and synthetic grass emphasize the theme of artificiality and distance from the natural world. Instead of offering a true escape, the installation creates an environment overwhelmed by digital influences that reveals the growing gap between physical experience and virtual life. It questions the emotional limits of machine-generated content and shows how online culture fragments our sensory awareness. It is both a critical reflection and an invitation to pause and reconsider our connection to the world beyond screens.

Lara Marie Zoe Peters (DE)

Overgrowing Technology

Overgrowing Technology is a video series in four acts that poetically explores the interrelationship between humans, nature, and the digital world. Based on a series of poems, the videos deal with the fragmentation of memory, the overgrowth of digital structures, and the question of self-localization in a hybrid reality.

Each act represents a phase of this development: from childlike fascination with the digital, through entanglement and alienation, to reflection, and a return to a space of fragmented memories.

Visually, organic natural motifs interweave with digital structures. The score moves between spherical sounds, digital distortions, and natural soundscapes.

Presented on four separate iMacs, a non-linear narrative structure invites the audience to actively navigate between the fragments of memory. *Overgrowing Technology* is an audiovisual reflection on digital overlays, nature as code, and memory as construction.

Christoph Pretzsch (DE)

Attention, please!

Attention, please! is an interactive multimedia installation exploring the decline of human attention spans in the age of media overstimulation and dopamine-driven manipulation. The core theme questions how constant exposure to fragmented, high-speed content affects our ability to focus. The installation features 60 visual channels displayed across four screens, accompanied by pulsating LED light shows designed to overwhelm the senses. Viewers interact through a controller, creating the illusion of agency within chaos. The setup is constructed from repurposed techno junk—discarded electronics and outdated devices—serving as a physical reminder of the overconsumption and disposability embedded in both digital and material culture. The project critiques algorithmic media environments and capitalist neurochemical exploitation while intensifying the battle for focus, forcing viewers to confront their own roles in cycles of distraction and excess.



go_touch_some_grass
© Abitha Jayamohan



Overgrowing Technology
© Lara Peters



Attention, please!
© Christoph Pretzsch

Synthetic Ecosystems Lab, Parsons School of Design—New York (US)

Web of Care

Amidst recent modern technologies that often separate us from organic processes, we find ourselves returning to a fundamental question: How might we forge more attentive relationships with the microscopic worlds that sustain us?

Web of Care invites visitors into contemplative engagement with living systems typically invisible to us. Through subtle interplays of sound (of traditional Japanese Gagaku music) and biological activity, it reimagines technological interventions as bridges rather than barriers between species. *Micro Orchestrism* creates a ritual space where human and microbial temporalities intersect. Inspired by traditional sake brewing practices, this installation positions fermentation as both ancient technology and collaborative art form. As bubbles rise through fermenting sake—visible evidence of microbial respiration—their patterns

are translated into layered, evolving music in the environment. This work challenges conventional hierarchies between organism and environment, creator and created. By amplifying microbial activity into audible form, it asks us to reconsider agency beyond human scale and to recognize the continuous exchanges that constitute all living systems. We often overlook sophisticated biotechnologies that have sustained human cultures for millennia. This exhibition suggests art-technology-society relationships might be found not only in digital innovation, but in renewed attention to living processes that speak.

Supported by:

Synthetic Ecosystems Lab, Parsons School of Design.

Funding support for *Micro Orchestrism* was granted by

The New School through Student Research Awards 2024.

Special Thanks: Brooklyn Kura, Izumibashi Sake Brewery Co., Ltd.

Kaori Ogawa (JP), Kaito Nakahori (US/JP), Harpreet Sareen (US/IN)

Micro Orchestrism

Micro Orchestrism challenges creative expression by positioning fermenting yeast as a musical collaborator. Visitors witness sake fermentation, where microbial breathing patterns generate real-time soundscapes alongside human compositions with natural instruments. This installation questions anthropocentric creativity by revealing microscopic activity often invisible to us. Drawing from brewing practices, the project exposes negotiations between human intention and microbial processes.



© Darryl Laiu

MFA Computer Arts, The School of Visual Arts (US)

Where Do the Children Play?

The School of Visual Arts' MFA Computer Arts department (MFACA) fosters creative experimentation and a multidisciplinary approach to creating art with computers and emergent technologies.

Showcasing two of their most recent experimental artworks in the exhibition, *Where Do the Children Play?*, MFACA invites the audience into inquisitive, playful experiences. Sounds and visuals reverberate in Christa Majoras's *shape of play* as visitors shape-shift the projected striations and audio output in front of them. They can also bear witness to the staccato hums of both native and invasive species recorded from the natural world—ambient yet frenetic—within *Marsh Temporalities* by Jessica Reisch.

Born from research, observation, and play, the works invite visitors to engage and reflect through interactive forms and to experience their spaces as multi-sensory environments. The form that the exhibited works take is rooted in research of the senses and impacted environments, with social structures that inform their external output (both peaceful and at times chaotic).

Where Do the Children Play? is an invitation to alter or sit with what is in front of you; a decision on how the viewer will impact their work and their environment. It is an invitation to dwell with something peacefully or engage with potentially unexpected results, drawing on creative systems to instigate interactivity—a chance to keep the peace or shake up the environment they are invited to be a part of.

© Jessica Reisch



Jessica Reisch (US)

Marsh Temporalities

Marsh Temporalities is a two-channel audiovisual installation that projects footage onto a sound platform equipped with vibrating transducer speakers, as well as onto an adjacent wall. This research-focused, time-keeping project combines site-specific footage, microscopy imaging, and soundscapes of underwater and underground recordings from locations around Jamaica Bay (New York), featuring both invasive and native species. The marshes remember; they hold history, hold forced displacement, hold violence.

© Christa Majoras



Christa Majoras (US)

shape of play

shape of play is inspired by the simplicity of children's toys and open-ended play. The audio-visual installation is centered around gesture-based MIDI instruments in simple shapes: sphere, cube, and pyramid. The shapes fitted with sensors (accelerometer, gyroscope, and magnetometer) communicate wirelessly over a closed network to a Max environment. Data from users' gestures drive the audiovisual experience, transforming simple movements into a synesthetic experience.

School of Arts, University of Nova Gorica (SI)

Slow down. Breathe. Feel. Think. Act!

Slow down. Breathe. Stop for a moment, step out of your mind and feel the Earth beneath your feet. Even if it seems that some people see the planet only as something to exploit for power and dominance over other earthlings, our home still exists. It gives us shelter, and even though it can be cruel, it is also magnificent, nurturing, wonderful, and ours. We need to be with it—for ourselves and future generations.

While questioning whether it is time to panic or not, we try to ground ourselves, step out of the whirlwind, and touch the earth, the plants, the moss, feel the breath of another living being, hear the birdsong, the silence, dive into contemplation. No, we are not running away from the world, nor from the global situation we are in. We are gathering strength, sensing what is essential, what gives life, what supports us. Yes, we panic as the world once again rushes towards an

impending catastrophe. Yes, it makes us panic when we witness genocide on our personal screens, not being able to do much more than click to disagree. Meanwhile cities, people, living beings are disappearing while the world is crudely divided between the “selected” few and an “insignificant” majority, ruled by those who no longer see beyond their greed. Their lust for control is denying us and other living beings the universal rights of humanity on this planet. No, we are not running away. We act—we explore ways to survive, and search for possible futures.

Exhibition Curator & Exhibition Text: Rene Rusjan

Mentors: Jasna Hribernik, Robertina Šebjanič,

Rok Govednik, Kolja Saksida, Tímon Leder

Producer: Rok Govednik

Technical Support: Urša P. Bonelli

Responsible Person: Boštjan Potokar

© Gašper Rebernik



Gašper Rebernik (SI), Ana Evtić (RS)

Futurama— Future Manifestations

The *Futurama* workshop motivates students to develop new conceptual ideas reflecting today's human imprint on the world and to reimagine the future(s) that follow. Our collective decision was to have a look into the year 4024. These works are not only forecasts but also propositions—artistic gestures that reimagine the now and open up space for futures to come. With sonic and visual reflections, they present our potential future(s).

© Špela Klavžar



Tina Furlan (SI), Oasis Ahmed (BD),

Tijana Mijušković (RS)

Futurama— Imprints of the Past

The *Futurama* workshop sparks students' imagination, inspiring them to develop concepts that mirror the current human impact on our planet, envisioning the pathways to come and reflecting on the past. Their projects navigate historical traces, collective memory, speculative futures, and the pressing realities of today, offering critical reflections and poetic interpretations of the world in flux—with special focus on plants and soil.

Polina Veljanoska (MK), Uku Jürgensson (EE), Toma (RU), Domen Sajovic (SI), Melita Sandrin (HR), Tamara Taskova (MK), Gašper Rebernik (SI), Tina Furlan (SI), Anja Resman (SI), Neda Ivanović (RS), Anđelina Petrović (RS)

What's your opinion?

A program of videoessays and animation films

Every day, we are surrounded by an overwhelming flood of information. We cannot process it—not even pay attention to most of it, and it influences us mostly without our awareness. Political conflicts, diplomacy, and economic (dis)agreements interfere with many questions about the state of our humanity, dignity, and what we manage to achieve as fellow human beings. How much power do we actually have? Political decision-makers do not represent the will of society nor the people.



© Archive UNG School of Arts

Tilen Lajevec (SI), Matej Pirkovič (SI), Itan Giorgievski (MK), Sofija Matovska (MK), Miljana Nikolić (RS), Ljubica Giorgievski (MK), Matej Vodeb (SI), Mila Simonovikj (MK), Vanja Miloš Jovanović (SI), Anja Sučić (ME), Yauheni Lavyshyk (UA), Sofija Miljatović (BA), Vukašin Panić (RS)

Promo Film—Acceleration

History is reactivated; the end of its end. We are witnessing its acceleration towards a moral, political, economic, and ecological catastrophe. Short films with absurd and meme-like moments set in intimate scenarios, point to increasingly obvious, insoluble contradictions of the supposedly “ideal social form.” Satirical intervention becomes a possible form of action.



© Archive UNG School of Arts

Tijana Mijušković (RS), Domen Sajovic (SI), Tamara Taskova (MK), Ana Evtić (RS)

Space and Time—Fragile Dreams

The course program addresses different perspectives and concepts of space and time in artistic practices. Some students stepped into a quiet forest, some explored, tried to feel alone, or be assured that they were wrong about that assumption. Who else has walked where we all now tread? The fundamental question of our near future arises: What does the human world look like through the eyes of a computer? These are fragile dreams in a brutal world.



© Špela Klavžar

Department of Art Science, Osaka University of Arts (JP)

Sweet Orders

The Restaurant of Many Orders

A century ago, Japanese novelist Miyazawa Kenji's 1924 tale *The Restaurant of Many Orders* told a horror fable where polite service concealed a dark truth: the guests were the meal. It showed how harmless choices could lead to panic and how roles could abruptly reverse. In both politics and social media, the loudest voices wield power. The weak believe they are choosing freely, but in reality, they are being exploited. This work offers a speculative experience that invites reflection on such dynamics—through the act of dining. Wearing HMDs, participants sit around a table and receive personalized suggestions from AI waiters, tailored to their individual tastes and interests. They enjoy what appears to be their “ideal meal”—yet these recommendations are subtly orchestrated by persuasive algorithms. In effect, it is not the participant's will, but the AI's invisible influence that shapes the experience. We believe we are acting by our own volition—clicking the “most reasonable” search

result, selecting the “recommended” product. But behind the scenes, our preferences and emotions are systematically optimized, harvested like ripe fruit, and processed into content—not served to us, but placed on someone else's plate. As the experience unfolds, you believe you are merely enjoying a meal—until you realize: you have become the ingredient, quietly arranged for another's consumption. This inversion of roles compels us to question agency, autonomy, and exploitation in today's information society.

This exhibition was supported by Osaka University of Arts and JST CREST (JPMJCR22P4).

All artworks in the *Sweet Orders* exhibition by the Department of Art Science, Osaka University of Arts (JP), are courtesy of the artists Aritomi Haku (JP), Nisio Takuma (JP), Komai Hiroki (JP), Ono Nagisa (JP), Koyama Iroha (JP), Tabuchi Fumiya (JP), Nada Ryota (JP), Fujino Koharu (JP), Kinoshita Emiri (JP), Kitano Ayumu (JP), Kubota Kenji (JP), and Ando Hideyuki (JP).



The Persuasive Waiter
© Osaka University of Arts



The Restaurant
© Osaka University of Arts



The Last Course Is You
© Osaka University of Arts

The Persuasive Waiter

The act of ordering at a restaurant is mediated by Waiter AIs, each with distinct personalities and speech patterns, assigned to individual participants. These AIs adapt to preferences and offer tailored suggestions that gently guide decisions. Underlying this process are algorithms such as Personalized Nudging and Dark Patterns, subtly influencing user behavior. The resulting experience mirrors how platforms optimize choices, crafting a seamless full-course interaction akin to a filter bubble.

The Restaurant

In *The Restaurant*, the participant is guided to their seat upon putting on the HMD. Around them, whispers echo—like an endless stream of social media posts. A waiter arrives to offer suggestions and take the order. Voices from other diners and waiters are also audible. When the food is served, the participant glances at the others seated—and is taken aback by their unsettling dishes. They instinctively believe their own order—their post—was the sensible one, and feel discomfort at the sight of others' choices.

The Last Course Is You

Big Tech's machinery for collecting, processing, and trading data has burrowed into the foundations of our decision-making. This work titled *The Last Course Is You* reframes that structure as a meal. Participants, seated as diners in a restaurant, appear free to order. Yet with each choice, their bodies change—rooting, undermining branches and leaves, and bearing ripe fruit. The metamorphosis reveals how those meant to choose freely become the data itself, served for Big Tech's consumption.

The Oracle Surface

In *The Oracle Surface*, the participant, wearing an HMD, interacts with an AI waiter and points to a menu to place an order. Physically, the “menu” is a mirror. Through the HMD, it appears as a digital interface, but to outside observers, the participant seems to be staring into a mirror, changing facial expressions in strange ways. This gap between internal perception and external appearance creates humorous tension, exposing how acts of “choice” may appear absurd when viewed from the outside.

The Bottle Dissolving into Voxels

At first glance, this real object looks like a wine bottle. But its form is fragmented into voxel-like parts. Made with a 3D printer, the sculpture consists of comb-shaped segments connected by a wire. When tension is applied, the scattered pieces pull together to restore the smooth bottle shape. This transformation symbolizes the link between virtual and physical realities—where digital fragmentation is reassembled into tangible form through subtle, invisible forces.



The Oracle Surface © Osaka University of Arts



The Bottle Dissolving into Voxels © Osaka University of Arts

School of Design, Pforzheim University (DE)

Future Narratives

In a time of profound upheaval, questions surrounding the role of humans in relation to intelligent machines come to the forefront: How do we respond to technologies that increasingly shape the way we work, live, and think? What does it mean to design in an era where the future is not only predicted but must be actively created? The exhibition by Pforzheim University approaches these pressing issues with an open, interdisciplinary perspective. Students from different design disciplines come together to create a panorama of visions, prototypes, and

narratives. Their works oscillate between critical reflection and speculative design, between societal discourse and creative intervention. The exhibited projects offer new perspectives on the interplay between humans, machines, and the environment. They question existing systems, envision alternative futures, and create spaces for discussion, disruption, and inspiration. Rather than providing definitive answers, the exhibition invites us to activate and consciously shape our imagination.

Clara Emmerling (DE)

RESIDUUM

RESIDUUM—a generative design tool—is offering solutions for small amounts of leftover material. With the fashion industry wasting up to 47% of virgin resources, *RESIDUUM* proposes rule-based knitwear pattern construction that focuses on deadstock. It offers insights into the material consumption and gives technique suggestions to realize apposite design with minimal creative restrictions. Managing complex material streams helps to reimagine design within the planetary boundaries.



© Sabine Emmerling

Fangbo Han (CN)

MUSIC IN MOTION

This project explores an interactive system that enables users to conduct music through intuitive body gestures. Utilizing a camera, AI-driven gesture recognition, and real-time design environment, the system translates physical movements into dynamic control over musical elements. Specific gestures influence tempo, volume, and instrumentation, allowing participants to shape auditory compositions in real time.



© Pforzheim University

Felicitas Ferch (DE)

FROM GESTURE TO OBJECT: BRIDGING DIGITAL INTERACTION DESIGN AND PHYSICAL MAKING

This project titled *FROM GESTURE TO OBJECT* introduces a body-driven interface for digital fabrication. A clay-extruding 3D printer is controlled through intuitive hand gestures, eliminating the need for CAD software or traditional design tools. The resulting clay forms become sculptural imprints of human movement, embodied sketches, formed by gesture in the physical realm.

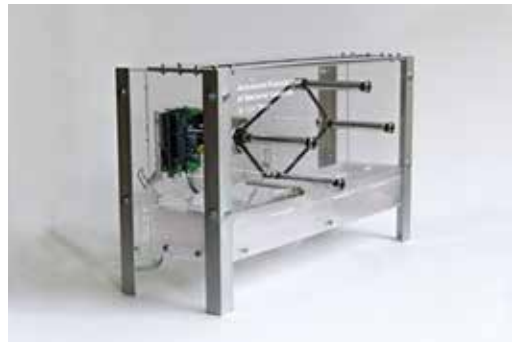


© Felicitas Ferch

Caja Peters (DE)

AUTOMATED FILAMENTATION OF BACTERIAL CELLULOSE

AUTOMATED FILAMENTATION OF BACTERIAL CELLULOSE addresses the resource-intensive production of textile materials and proposes an alternative concept through biofabrication. In an automated process, a yarn-like filament made from bacterially growing cellulose is fermented, harvested, washed, dried, and wound up. The filament obtained is used to produce textiles and shows potential areas of application. Dyeing during the fermentation process expands the possibilities for design, and rethinks the common dyeing process.



© Caja Peters

Johanna Heilig (DE), Ann-Sophie Lutter (DE), Sanika Karandikar (DE), Arthur Hann (DE), Daniel Cruz (DE)

TO ALL THE FAIRY TALES WHICH WERE TOLD AND WILL BE TOLD

How do culturally embedded stories and perspectives shape us, and what happens when an AI receives these stories as a database and continues to tell them? Fairy tales and legends from the Black Forest and Washington State are integrated into our data sets. The AI plays the role of the storyteller. What lessons and values can be drawn from these stories, and how do they influence our understanding of morality and cultural narrative perspectives?



© Meli Dikta

Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague UMPRUM (CZ)

Terra Syn(es)thetica

Should we panic, or prototype new ways of inhabiting the Earth?

Terra Syn(es)thetica explores how emerging technologies can reconnect architecture with natural ecosystems.

In a time of environmental breakdown, panic feels like a logical response. Yet, the same technologies that contributed to the crisis—robotics, AI, digital fabrication—may also hold tools for renewal. The projects presented by students and researchers from the Studio of Architecture III at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague UMPRUM, test what this renewal could look like. 3D-printed ceramic roof tiles are shaped to host spontaneous urban vegetation, creating habitats where architecture meets wild growth. Porous clay vessels regulate humidity, using traditional material properties to support microclimates. A rewilding project reimagines a

modernist housing estate, restoring the wetland ecosystems once erased by development of housing and agriculture. Experiments with robotic printing push the boundaries of machine-made structures and explore the difference between a robot and a printer.

These works do not offer fixed answers. They prototype new ways of living with the Earth, striking a balance between control and accident—asking how synthetic and organic systems can work together.

Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague UMPRUM
Studio of Architecture III
Curators: Imrich Vaško, Shota Tsikoliya
Architecture: Adam Varga, Daniel Sviták
Graphic Design: Margarita Ryzhakova
Production: Michael Kapláňková

Sára Kordová (CZ), Daniel Sviták (CZ),
Adam Varga (SK)

Mossform

Mossform is a porous ceramic object that passively humidifies air through evaporation. Designed for interiors, it retains and releases moisture without electricity, and can host moss or plants, blurring the object and surrounding ecosystems. As a humidifier, sculpture, or planter, it quietly brings nature indoors. Porastudio merges science and design to create 3D-printed ceramic forms that are both functional and research-driven.



© Jiří Královec

Stela Kučerová (CZ), Michal Šourek (CZ), Adam Varga (SK)

Biotopization of Roofscapes

We all complain about heat waves and droughts, yet let rainwater—the solution—drain away, unused. While it is sometimes harvested for individual use, we envision a more collective approach: using it on rooftops to transform a city's microclimate. Our goal in *Biotopization of Roofscapes* is to turn urban rooftops into vibrant, climate-resilient ecosystems that help combat heat and support biodiversity.



© Tomáš Zúmr

Daniel Sviták (CZ), Imrich Vaško (SK)

REMMP—Robotic Engineering of Multimaterial Multiobjective Paraphrenalia

A robot hovers above a mutable landscape—attuned to vibrations from stock markets, wind currents, and its maker's presence. As it prints across clay and wood, it alters embedded materials, weaving intricate patterns into responsive panels—part archive, part spatial poetry. *REMMP* expands large-scale 3D printing into a realm of interaction and complexity, introducing a paradigm of additive fabrication that is not only multimaterial—but meaningfully multimodal.



© Daniel Sviták

Adam Varga (SK), Imrich Vaško (SK), Shota Tsikoliya (CZ)

Urbioms of the Symbio(s)cene

The collapse of the biosphere and biodiversity ranks among the main challenges of our time. This project titled *Urbioms of the Symbio(s)cene* explores urban planning based on the restoration and support of natural habitats. The work presents the concept of URBIOMs—bioinclusive parts of cities—and analyzes map data for digital processes used in their design. In conclusion, generative AI and other generative tools are employed to visualize the metamorphosis of a rewilded urban city plan.



© Adam Varga

Art and Technology Lab, Korea National University of Arts (KR)

Scarecrow Rekindle

Scarecrow Rekindle explores how active participation and connection can liberate creative spirits oppressed by forces of despair, rekindling collective hope and agency. In the spirit of Art—Technology—Society, the project integrates immersive VR and metaverse technologies (Technology) with cooperative storytelling (Art) to foster empowerment and collective liberation (Society). In direct response to the festival's theme *PANIC—yes/no*, *Scarecrow Rekindle* presents a burnt-out world where oppressive firebirds have stolen the villagers' hearts, crucifying hope and creativity. Rather than succumbing to despair, the experience highlights that collaborative intervention and shared hope can overcome imposed suffering and oppression.

Audiences step into a multiplayer metaverse

performance in VRChat, encountering a lone scarecrow as a symbolic figure resisting oppressive forces. Through interactive puzzles, timed events, and collective rituals, participants co-create moments of joy, free the scarecrow, and restore vitality to the village. The project symbolizes the democratization of creativity and collective resistance against systemic constraints, urging VR/XR users to reclaim agency in the face of cultural and socio-political oppression.

Sngmoo Lee (KR), Ark Park (KR), Seungpyo Kang (KR), Chungyeon Cho (KR), Minjae Lim (KR), Apple_Blossom (US), Doha Lee (KR), Hojun Yoon (KR), Ryuhiichun (KR), Jaejoon Lee (KR), Dongwoo Shin (KR), Goeun Lee (KR), Sejin Jang (KR), Hayoung Bae (KR), Jisuh Myung (KR), Jihyun Jung (KR)



© Ark Park

University of Seville (ES)

ASTER+S > ART ^ NEUROSCIENCE

Cross-pollinated international campus

ASTER+S explores the intersections of neuroscience, emotional health, augmented brain, and collective well-being in a world shaped by climate crisis, fragile democracies, and other urgencies. From brain death to memory, from restless legs to neuroplasticity, and from connectomes to AI, the artworks emerge as SciArt fruits from seeds of scientific knowledge, co-created by transdisciplinary teams involving artists, neuroscientists, technologists, and thinkers working across disciplines. How can artistic practices, inspired by neuroscience, help us understand and navigate human experience in an era defined by uncertainty, hyper-connectivity, and emotional overload? How do the brain and society respond to systemic stress? Panic is not only a neurophysiological event; it is a global, cultural condition.

ASTER+S invites visitors:

- To explore how neurons behave under different pathologies and circumstances.
- To imagine a new balance between inside and outside looking for Neuro-Harmony.
- To replace mental paralysis with empathy.

Restless legs, cells cry,
Broken sleep, Neuro-Harmony
Health must hold us all.

Neuroscience warns:
Without care, the mind will break
Peace begins within.

Panic, not just pain,
but the echo of a world
crying for repair.

Curator: Dr. Rocio Garcia-Robles

International edition with participants from:

Univ. of Seville, Univ. of Arts Linz + JKU + Sigmund Freud Univ. (AT), Tilburg Univ. (NL), Carlos III Univ. of Madrid (ES), and from Chile and Barcelona.

The ASTER+S > ART ^ NEUROSCIENCE edition has been funded by The FECYT (Spanish Foundation of Science and Technology, as part of the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities), Fundación Aparejadores, The COATS, The University of Seville
Project ASTER+S: Art-Science-Technology-Engineering Research for + with Society: Transdisciplinary Methodologies and Practices to foster cross-pollination and innovation. Call: Fomento de la Cultura Científica y Tecnológica, Ref: FCT-23-19716

Miguel Mendoza Malpartida (ES), Olga Albillos Castillo (ES), Triana Sánchez Hevia (ES), Víctor Fernández Calderón (ES)

Malva Marina

Inspired by craniocerebral disproportion, where pressure builds inside the skull due to excess cerebrospinal fluid, *Malva Marina* reacts to the viewer's presence like a living pressure valve. As one approaches, movement intensifies, evoking the threshold of panic, an internal alarm. But if we step back, calm returns. This action becomes a question of perception and control, revealing how close we often are to the breaking point, and how medical science can restore balance in human health.



© Miguel Mendoza-Malpartida

Inspiring scientist: Jorge Tirado Caballero, neurosurgeon

Elena Pedroche-Sánchez (ES), Pablo Galindo Serrano (ES), Rosa Blanca Anguita (ES)

Neural Latency

Latencia Neural

Neural Latency explores the threshold between life and death through a light-responsive installation. A black circle, evoking a dilated pupil, activates with neural-like fibers and immersive sound when observed. It draws on the concept of brain death, reflecting on identity, perception, and consciousness. The audience witnesses a poetic interplay of light and sound rooted in neuroscience and organ donation, inviting contemplation on the socio-medical definitions of life and the ethics of its end.

Jan De Wit (NL), Lisa Derksen-Castillo Lisa (NL), Suzanne Van Dongen (NL), Frouke ten Velden (NL)

1Stein

This interactive holographic installation, titled *1Stein* and inspired by Phineas Gage, shows a 3D brain connected to AI. As visitors ask questions, only certain regions respond, simulating damage-linked disruptions. Gage's case revealed how brain injury can alter identity. In this context, panic arises from confronting the fragility of personality and how easily core traits can shift. The piece invites us to question what defines us, and how close we may be to losing control of our own sense of self.



Neural Latency © Miguel Mendonza-Malpartida



1Stein © Miguel Mendoza-Malpartida

Ignacio Mora-Pérez (ES), Luis Santiago Sánchez-Fernández (ES), Rocio García-Robles (ES)

bI/Onics

This haptic light sculpture titled *bI/Onics* invites reflection on the essence of being. Through touch and a personalized app, visitors explore how lifestyle, genetics, and tech shape the brain and self. As users build augmented “other selves,” a collective dialogue emerges, raising metaphysical questions about identity, agency, and our bionic future. In the face of rapid change, panic emerges from the blurred line between human and machine, sparking ethical and existential questions.

Ángela Delgado Fernández (ES), Rafa Garrido Vilchez (ES), Cecilia Pineda Calvillo (ES), Esther Rodríguez Pluma (ES), Bruno Rosenbaum Amador (ES)

NIDUS

NIDUS explores the fragile dynamics at play—not to sensationalize them, but to invite reflection on our own vulnerabilities. Panic emerges here not only as fear, but as clarity, a sharp awakening to the present. In a society obsessed with control, the unpredictability of the body reminds us of the essential processes we cannot master. And in this confrontation, perhaps, we can also rediscover meaning, urgency, and a renewed sense of existence.



bI/Onics © Miguel Mendoza-Malpartida



NIDUS © Miguel Mendoza-Malpartida

ShanghaiTech University (CN)

Sensing Future

In an age where reality fractures across screens and sensors, *Sensing Future* is not a distant vision, but a threshold—where perception becomes the ground of inquiry. The future seeps into the present through data, emotion, and design; it is felt before it is known.

Interactive installations, XR narratives, and algorithmic environments explore how we sense—and are sensed—in a mediated world. From brainwave patterns to machine-translated emotion, from scented memory to robotic comfort, each work traces where technology meets the nervous system, where the digital

brushes against the fragile.

These are not depictions of tomorrow, but speculative gestures that exaggerate, invert, and rewire. A text becomes an image (txt2img^{-1}), scent transmits emotion (*Scentsory*), and a farewell is endlessly re-performed (*The Last Play*).

This space invites audiences to navigate this ambiguity. In times of flicker, delay, and overwhelm, sensing becomes an act of survival—an improvised negotiation with instability. The question is no longer what the future will be, but how we feel its arrival.

Yuxiao Wu (CN), Chaoran Wu (CN), Yucong Zhang (CN), DIV Lab, ShanghaiTech University (CN)

Neural Tide

Neural Tide is an immersive installation that examines panic as both a physiological signal and a shared affective state. Visual stimuli elicit varying intensities of response, while participants' brainwave data are recorded and compared in real-time. Rather than diagnose, the work constructs a neural archive of alignment and deviation—inviting reflection on how instability moves through bodies, not only as private disruption but as a patterned, collective resonance.



© Yuxiao Wu, Chaoran Wu, Yucong Zhang

Jiaqi Zhang (CN), Luorong Ren (CN), Di Tian (CN), DIV Lab—ShanghaiTech University (CN)

Scentsory

Scentsory is a multi-sensory interactive installation that translates facial emotion into scent, inviting participants to join in a mediated exchange of affect. In a loop of recognition and response, ephemeral feelings are rendered perceptible—visible, breathable, and printable. The work offers a quiet intervention into the affective flattening of digital communication, asking how emotional resonance might persist within systems that prioritize speed over depth.



© Jiaqi Zhang, Luorong Ren, Di Tian

Yutao Ming GOGO (CN), Peng Chen (CN), DIV Lab — ShanghaiTech University (CN)

txt2img⁻¹

txt2img⁻¹ reframes the familiar logic of text-to-image generation into a reverse choreography of execution. Here, humans follow algorithmic prompts, shifting from authors to executors in an absurd system. Beneath its game-like surface, the work unfolds a quiet fable of labor, learning, and mediated creation.



© Peng Chen, Yutao Ming GOGO

Qingxi Hu (CN), Chenfei Liu (CN), Junyi Wu (CN), Chenhui Zhu (CN)

The Last Play

The Last Play is an XR interactive film imagining death as a designed and consumable experience. In a world ruled by immersive media, participants enter a system left by a “death designer,” navigating memory fragments and ethical choices. As death becomes content, boundaries blur and a quiet panic rises—from our fading ability to grieve, to a world where even endings are staged, distributed, and consumed.



© Junyi Wu

Nuoqing Shen (CN), Yufei Zhang (CN)

Pixel Pals

Pixel Pals is a media installation that translates individual emotional inputs into collective visual output through swarm algorithms. Participants submit “trouble words,” which are matched with “comfort objects” drawn from a crowdsourced database. Pixel fragments, carried by coordinated mini robots, gradually reconstruct images of emotional reassurance. The system remains open to disruption, allowing human interference to co-shape a persistent, adaptive feedback loop of affective calibration.



© Nuoqing Shen, Yufei Zhang

Department of New Media Art, Taipei National University of the Arts (TW)

Echoes Toward the Stargate

In a world saturated by media technologies, perception is no longer immediate—it is modulated, encoded, and rerouted through computational systems. Interfaces, sensors, and AI-driven infrastructures generate a new perceptual regime in which space, time, and relation are governed by flows of information, signal, and data. Media machines act not as tools of representation, but as perceptual coders: modulating delay, resonance, and vibration to reprogram experience itself. They open dimensional thresholds—technocosmic apertures into machinic sensing and control.

Echoes Toward the Stargate traces circuits of signal return, perceptual reconfiguration, and dimensional passage. Artists engage sound, projection, mechanical systems, and algorithmic processes to construct liminal architectures—spaces suspended between material and virtual, human and non-human. These works form feedback zones where distorted signals

and unstable information recirculate, activating emergent patterns of meaning and affect.

Rooted in Taiwan—a site historically shaped by Cold War information infrastructures and now central to global semiconductor and AI networks—the exhibition reframes the “Stargate” not as metaphor but interface: where perception, power, and machinic memory converge. Each echo opens a portal—into latent structures, altered states, and possible futures.

Project Director: Fujui Wang

Curators: Lien-Cheng Wang, Yen-Ju Lin

Spherical Syntax Program Leader: Warrick Tsai

Spherical Syntax Program Artists: Future Vision Lab, NANONANO, Tim Wei, TNUA NMA Collections, XTRUX x SHENG (Chen-En Chiu, Jyun-Jyue Li, Po-Jui Su, Yi-Cheng Chien, Yong-Ren Huang x Sheng-Wen Yang)

Audio-Visual Artists: Chun-Li Wang, Tsung-Yun Lai, Tung-Yu Liu

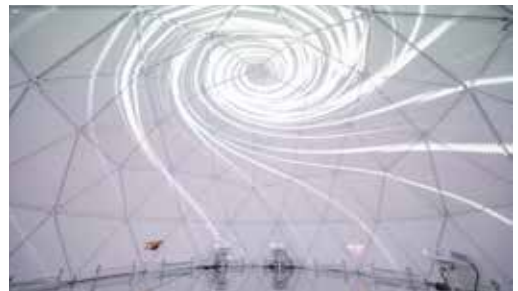
C-LAB Future Vision Lab (TW), Cheng-Wei Chen (TW), Chia-Ning Chang (TW), Chih-Yang Chen (TW), NANONANO (TW), Pin-Chen Chen (TW), Shih-Han Min (TW), Yu-Ting Tsai (TW), Tim Wei (TW), XTRUX x SHENG (TW), Yen-Shan Chen (TW)

Spherical Syntax

Collections of TNUA NMA x FUTURE VISION LAB

Since 2021, TNUA NMA and C-LAB's Future Vision Lab have jointly advanced dome media education and creation. For three years, students have showcased works at the C-LAB Dome Space. This edition features a compact geodesic dome presenting highlights from TNUA and C-LAB, with alumni participation. The works explore audio-visual art, generative systems, folklore, and AI. The project expands global dome networks and fosters shared creative learning.

Principal: Warrick Tsai | Production Team: Emma Liao, Revlis Hung | Technical Coordinator: AnDing Kang, Charles Wang | Supervisor: Ministry of Culture



© C-LAB

Organizer: Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab (C-LAB)

| Executive Organizer: C-LAB Future Vision Lab |

Collaborator: Department of New Media Art at the Taipei, National University of the Arts

Chan-Liang Kuo (TW)

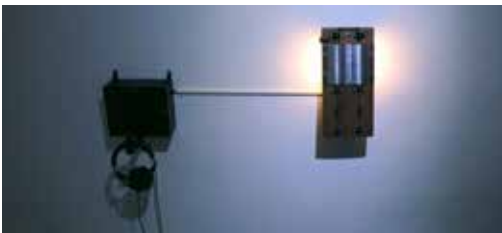
Auditory Topologies_ Resonance

As the motor rotates, subtle sonic textures unfold from magnetic fluctuations and coil irregularities—producing tones both ambient and artificial. These mechanical sounds, once peripheral, now shape our shared acoustic environment. The work constructs a dynamic field where nature and machine entangle, generating tension between control and unpredictability. It invites reflection on how technological presence reconfigures perception in daily life.

O.R GEN (Ching-Tsung Kuo (TW), Jun-Jia Yang (TW), Kuang-Jui Chen (TW), Yu-Hsuan Shen (TW))

Clamor

Motors rotate and collide, generating restless sounds that resonate with the human body. This installation uses machinery as a lens to awaken forgotten emotions and lifestyles in modern society, inviting viewers to reconsider the relationship between humans and machines. It explores the role of technology in our lives and questions whether this interaction can deepen our awareness of the connection between humanity and nature today.



Auditory Topologies_ Resonance © Fang-Yi Cheng



Clamor © Fang-Yi Cheng

Fang-Yi Cheng (TW)

Images of Screenshots

Screenshots are an everyday image format—fast, accurate, and well-suited to contemporary life. They capture what we notice and what feels important in the moment. Each image is a document, rich with both public and private context. *Images of Screenshots* explores this medium, unfolding like a documentary by layering countless captures into a shared digital memory.

Technical Advisor: Chen Yi-Quan

Hui-Ling Lo (TW), Yu-Hsuan Shen (TW)

Bouncing

Amid a world of acceleration and fragmented perception, this work invites viewers to upload phone images—fleeting traces of personal experience—instantly transformed by AI into kinetic 3D forms. Bouncing, colliding, and stacking across the screen, these sculptural memories drift in disorder, echoing the instability of attention and the rhythms of digital life. They are no longer just pictures, but data-bodies suspended in a state of perpetual motion.

Special thanks to Professor Fujui Wang



Images of Screenshots © Fang-Yi Cheng



Bouncing © Fang-Yi Cheng

Estonian Academy of Arts (EE)

Systems of Unrest

Systems of Unrest explores how bodies assert agency in the face of unstable technological systems. Across five interactive installations—ranging from motion capture to VR, kinetic sculpture, AI surveillance, and speculative interfaces—artists from the Estonian Academy of Arts and Aalto University examine the fine line between control and collapse.

Visitors will encounter a border control booth that judges their digital presence, a marionette trapped in an endless fall, a VR quest requiring collaboration to restore balance, a kinetic doll mourning through motion-captured gestures, and a grotesque candy-colored landscape where desire turns to disorder.

Each piece uses technology not as a tool, but as a force to be negotiated.

Set against the backdrop of gaming culture, algorithmic logic, digital surveillance, and folklore, the works speak to broader anxieties around identity, authority, and bodily autonomy. The project invites audiences to navigate systems that may delight, reject, or distort them—testing whether presence alone can be a form of resistance.

Faculty of Design, Estonian Academy of Arts (EE),
Faculty of Fine Arts, Estonian Academy of Arts (EE),
Department of Art and Media, Aalto University (FI)

Bob Bicknell-Knight (UK)

Rigged

Titled *Rigged*, the work is a human-scale sculpture, made to be slightly larger than the artist, resting on the floor whilst suspended from a single chain. The figure is a marionette, tethered to a single spot whilst being only controlled by its head, reflecting human life and the lack of control one has over one's own destiny. Instead of having a face, the figure's head has been hollowed out and replaced with a clock mechanism, a nod to the artist's anxiety around a severe lack of time.



© Bob Bicknell-Knight

Rosa-Maria Nuutinen (FI)

Yummy Acid

This video work titled *Yummy Acid* is a visualization of the fears and dangers that accompany binge and purge eating disorders. The video focuses on a 3D animated character called “The Mouth” that has first been physically sculpted by the artist and afterwards transported to its digital immaterial realm, where it is consumed by the utter desire to feast until its bitter end.



© Rosa-Maria Nuutinen

Yiyang Sun (CN), Ariana Sabino Nogueira da Cunha Marta (PT), Matti Niinimäki (FI), Taavi Varm (EE)

The Forever Elephant

The Forever Elephant (象像) is a hybrid animation and interactive installation exploring how images live, die, and are reborn in the algorithmic age. The project includes an experimental screensaver-style animation and a digital puppetry game, combining AI-generated visuals with 3D-scanned antique toys. Visitors will encounter an elephant undergoing a ritual of reincarnation, set within a surreal, liminal landscape. Drawing on new materialism, image ontology, and Eastern philosophy, the work examines the blurred boundaries between image and imagery, physical and digital, memory and transformation. It invites viewers into a meditative, visual experience that



© Yiyang Sun, Ariana Sabino Nogueira da Cunha Marta, Matti Niinimäki, Taavi Varm

is both playful and philosophical—a funeral rite for future images, and a gentle question: What does it mean for an image to truly exist?

Mia-Mai Roosberg (EE), Tonis Bender (EE), Luiza Stibe (LV), Erik Lond (EE), Ezgi Okka (TR), Karl-Alder Kuivjõgi (EE), Ottavio Cambieri (IT), Tanel Kärp (EE), Carol Tikerperi (EE)

Threshold State

Threshold State explores power and political bias in opaque digital systems through a border control-style booth where visitors submit personal information. The data is then fed into an AI that delivers a judgment—granting or denying a fictional entry. The installation mirrors real border procedures, revealing how human and algorithmic decisions stem from incomplete data and political bias. It prompts reflection on surveillance, identity, and fairness in automated control systems.



© ChatGPT x Ottavio Cambieri

Maisa Immonen (FI), Markku Laskujärvi (FI)

Anomalia

Anomalia is a VR game where players help the people of Anomalia bring back the missing fruit and vegetable creatures—and free the sun. *Anomalia* studies the implementation of artistic 3D creation into a VR world that allows for storytelling through user interaction and immersion. *Anomalia* takes surrealist characters and surroundings and aims to make them tangible, creating something truly otherworldly for the user to experience.



© Maisa Immonen, Markku Laskujärvi

Faculty of Arts and Design, West University of Timisoara (RO)

Techno-Ecologies for a Fragile Earth

Techno-Ecologies for a Fragile Earth reflects on the “three ecologies” of philosopher Félix Guattari as an urgent call to reduce the negative human impact on the environment, society and mind. Also, it extends Guattari’s visionary manifesto with “two more ecologies” specific to human-machine symbiosis, such as techno-ecology and techno-nostalgia.

What if recycling could be a language of collective resistance in the face of global crisis? What if our senses and thoughts could decode digital illusions? What if techno-ecology

and techno-nostalgia were the key to future sustainability? These are just some of the questions that the project addresses through a call for commitment and resilience. It invites us to reimagine and build a more sustainable future—one shaped by creativity, courage, critical thinking, and openness to transformation!

A project powered by Faculty of Arts and Design, West University of Timisoara, Center for Research and Creation in Decorative Arts and Design (CCCADD), and Creative Center of Contemporary Visual Arts (CCA VC) Dean Prof. Dr. Diana Andreescu



Swallow Me! © Callista Birta

Elena Ilin (RO), Matei Negruțiu (RO), Bianca Pascu (RO), Callista Birta (RO), Daniela A. Radu (RO), Andrei Bucovanu (RO), Francisco Jardim Henriques (PT)

Techno-Nostalgia. Lost & Found

This collection of experimental short films explores the shifting ground between memory, identity, and environment. Through poetic imagery, intimate gestures, and analog textures, the selection reflects on what is lost, what remains, and what might still be recovered. A shared sense of techno-nostalgia, not as a longing for the past, but as a way to question perception, time, and belonging. The moving image becomes a space of tension and tenderness, where personal and collective traces re-emerge.

Concept: Ioana Dorobanțu-Gordon



© Andreea Pleșa, Mihaela Vișovan, FABER

Andreea Pleșa (RO), Mihaela Vișovan (RO)

Unsolved Patterns

The project explores environmental ecology through the creative recycling of industrial scraps and fragments of memory, revealing the hidden consequences of consumer culture on ecosystems. It promotes intangible heritage by highlighting production stages, workers’ testimonies, and historical factory mapping—a layered narrative that might otherwise remain unseen.

The work was created in 2024 by Andreea Pleșa and Mihaela Vișovan (Art Installation & Concept) for the *Woven Secrets* exhibition, curated by Martina Muzi and organized by FABER.

Deian Berar (RO)

Omnilateral Dimensions

The project explores abstract computer-generated images and sounds that appear to represent a knotted space-time, reminding us of the technological singularity. A point where growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, with unprecedented consequences and beyond which reality can take on unpredictable dimensions. The installation navigates through the physical and virtual environment, a captivating techno-ecology interweaving of art, technology, and human experience.



© Deian Berar

Paul Babencu (RO)

Signal Corps

The project addresses the distortion of telecommunications in an era where images, video-audio content, messages, and their context end up being used inappropriately, decrypted incorrectly or deliberately manipulated—generating a media war based on reinterpretation, disinformation, and destruction, with major consequences at political, social, and economic level. The installation shows how we can make our own propaganda, capable of generating either positive or negative changes in the environment.



© Paul Babencu

Bogdan Matei (RO)

Scents of Nothingness

The installation examines the interplay between virtual and physical objects. A 3D scanned pile of soil is projected onto a metal mesh covered with piles of fragrant plants, activating scent to alter our spatial perception. The boundary between the two realities is seemingly eluded by a fluid transition between the ontological space of physical nature and the interpretive virtual space.



© Bogdan Matei

forum n (AT)

Bridging the Gap: Arts of Change—Change of Arts

Shared agencies and liveable future scenarios

Every day, we are called upon to treat the planet and our environment in a sustainable and responsible way. Facts and figures about climate change aim to inform and educate—but they also often trigger overwhelming emotions and evoke uncertain visions of the future. For meaningful progress toward sustainable development, both the facts and the emotional responses must be acknowledged. This requires creative approaches and conversations that reach beyond the boundaries of academic disciplines. How can creativity help bridge this gap? And what role do the arts play in science communication?

The exhibition presents installations and audiovisual works by artists and artist collectives as part of the inter- and transdisciplinary project Arts of Change—Change of Arts. Initiated by the association forum n in 2019, the program annually invites students from all Austrian state art universities to develop projects at the intersection of art, science, and socio-ecological transformation.

Over the course of nine months, participants engage in artistic residencies and networking events across three thematic modules.

At its heart, Arts of Change explores how connecting art and science can make sustainability issues and climate challenges more tangible through creative means. The exhibited works engage with themes of escape mechanisms, shared agency, and scenarios for livable futures.

All rights belong to the project Arts of Change by the association forum n and the participating artists.
Exhibition curated by Julia Herzog and Tereza Sykorova.

The project is funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Climate and Energy Fund and the following six state universities: University of Applied Arts Vienna, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, University of Arts Linz, and Mozarteum University Salzburg.

Sponsored by the Austrian National Union of Students.

Laura Ettel (AT), Katia Koohestani (IR), Sofia Gutierrez Escobar (CO), David Ristic (AT), Marieluisa Lenglachner (AT), Mehrta Shirzadian (IR), Alexandra Kraler (AT)

Encaged Freedom

Along the river Enns, abandoned clay tennis courts rest beside hydroelectric plants. In these places, nature reclaims its territory and layered temporalities emerge. The clay absorbs speed, inviting grounded movement and attunement. Through a hydrofeminist lens, the site is not past but ongoing, an entanglement where decay and regeneration coexist. Energy's freedom meets the court's stillness; stories ripple beneath, whispering of water, memory, resistance, and quiet transformation.



© David Ristic

Alexandra Konstantinova (RU), Alina Rehsteiner (CH),
Tobias Takats (AT), Parsa Zandi (IR)

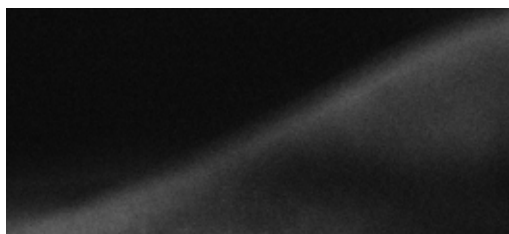
Acoustic Shadows

Acoustic Shadows explores the theme of escapism through an immersive sound installation. It investigates how individuals attempt to bypass responsibility, constructing alternative realities that circle around unresolved issues rather than confronting them directly: shielding ourselves from distressing sounds, what we unwillingly hear, and when we consciously turn a deaf ear. Visitors are invited to navigate through a landscape shaped by acoustic fragments and sculptural interventions.

Larissa Felicitas Zekl (AT)

Failing

In this installation titled *Failing*, the artist explores the element of failure as a creative process. A dead tree is planted repeatedly, even though it had already been uprooted. The video installation addresses the concept of failure and the story of a project that did not go as planned and led to unexpected outcomes. With a philosophical approach, it illustrates that failure is a crucial part of every process. This theme is connected to current debates on sustainability as well as relevant political events.



Acoustic Shadows © Arts of Change



Failing © Larissa F. Zekl

Jacob Bartmann (DE), Zekő Sebesy (HU)

Dive to the Danube Riverbed

The interactive installation makes it possible to perceive the hidden structure of the Danube riverbed. Sounds generated from sonar data let visitors “dive” through the river via buttons. Four clay basins with water sensors influence the sound depending on the water level, which slowly changes over the course of the exhibition period due to the porous material of the basins. Two additional, interactive buttons allow direct input by visitors. The installation offers a sensory way to experiencing the River Danube.

Abel Kortorman (HU), Anna Häupl (AT), Anna
Ryabenkaya (RU), Elisa Schober (AT), Hannah Parth (AT)

Echo

Echo addresses the relationship between humans and the transforming natural environment. In a performative intervention, clay objects were ritually offered to the Taschachferner glacier. Visitors can explore them together with video footage of the intervention. Developed in collaboration with geographers from the Critical Land Research division at the University of Innsbruck, this transdisciplinary exchange between art and science creates a space for dialogue on ecological transformation.



Dive to the Danube Riverbed © Csanad Sebesy



Echo © Anna Häupl, Abel Kortorman

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (DE)

Cybernetic Subjects

Since the 1930s, cybernetics has shaped our understanding of systems—mechanical, electrical, biological, and social. However, in the wake of computational dominance, the foundational ideas of cybernetics have largely faded from discourse.

For this year's Campus Exhibition, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar revisits cybernetics through a contemporary lens, questioning the role of Artificial Intelligence in shaping our reality. In *Cybernetic Subjects* we draw from historical perspectives and contemporary thinkers to critically examine AI's impact on our lives: How much trust can we place in AI-driven systems? Can computational models, rooted in reductionist frameworks, adequately represent the complexity of ecosystems?

Artistic contributions by faculty and students address these questions by attuning to the environment and critically examining the interplay between technological systems and ecological, political, and economic structures. Together, these works engage contemporary technologies not to reinforce the dominance of AI and computation, but to challenge their hegemony and advocate for a more nuanced understanding of living systems and environments.

Curated by: Prof. Ursula Damm, Prof. Kerstin Ergenzinger, Dr. Mindaugas Gapševičius | Project Context: Gestaltung Medialer Umgebungen (Media Environments) | Akustische Ökologien und Sound Studies (Acoustic Ecologies and Sound Studies) | Supported by STIL—Stiftung Innovation in der Hochschullehre

Mindaugas Gapševičius (LT), Kerstin Ergenzinger (DE), Klaus Fritze (DE), Negin Ehtesabian (IR), Cosmo Schüppel (DE), Outi Wahlroos (FI)

The Pond

While ecosystems are increasingly threatened by human activities, they also continuously evolve through the interactions of all agents involved, both human and nonhuman. *The Pond* is a living platform and installation that interrogates the complex ecological, political, economic, and mental networks that shape ecosystems. These interdependencies range from living organisms to machines, from pristine to degraded environments, and from open to closed systems.

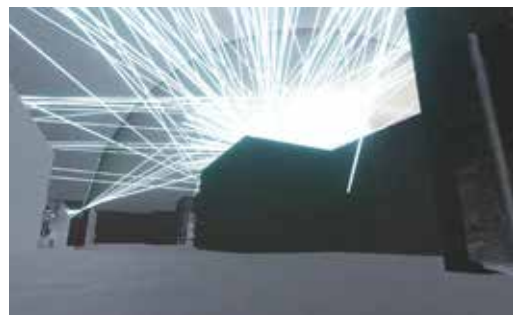


© Mindaugas Gapševičius

Maximilian Götz (DE), Parisa Salimi (IR)

Ymr.x

Social media's potential to contribute to partisan polarization is undeniable. In *Ymr.x*, we use machine learning and 3D data mapping to investigate a dataset of over 8,000 Twitter impressions on a recent local political event, uncovering insights and the geometry of user interactions. Our gamified, experimental cityscape bridges virtual and physical realms. Explore polarized communities and experience tweet bubbles.



© Maximilian Götz

Ting-Chun Liu (TW)

Latent Heat Generation

Latent Heat Generation is an artistic research project investigating the hidden material infrastructures of AI systems through thermal imaging feedback loops, creating real-time feedback where computational waste heat becomes generative material for AI imagery. Developed from the vantage point of a Taiwanese artist, the work emerges from a personal dilemma: being limited by computational power while simultaneously being connected to the very infrastructure that enables AI development globally.



© Ting-Chun Liu

Jacob Elias Aran (DE), Diana Karle (DE), Jasper Seibert (DE), Robin Max Wieber (DE), Karlotta Sperling (DE), Lisa Zwinscher (DE), in collaboration with Nina Bendix Igleses (BR)

Sonic Ecologies

Sonic Ecologies is a sonic and performative platform presenting a collaborative concert that investigates the ecological, generative, and disruptive dimensions of listening. In the interplay between sound, body, and environment unfolds a speculative rehearsal for more attuned modes of being: listening as a practice of transformation, negotiation, and care. How many voices can we truly attend to at once? What new patterns emerge when we shift how—and with what—we listen?



© Tomasz Szarczyński

Passion Asasu (TH)

She's So Centsible!

She's So Centsible! is a durational performance powered by the audience—insert coins into the acceptor to match the hourly minimum wage (€12.41), and the performer runs until the money is depleted. The work explores the entanglement of labor, energy, and financial responsibility. Wearing a light-filled costume, the artist runs on a treadmill. Both the light and the treadmill are controlled by the audience's monetary input, turning her body into a site of production, exhaustion, and performance.



© Peechana Chayochaichana

Special thanks to: Cosmo Schüppel

Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts (CN)

Transparent Shelter: How Do We Confront the 'Now'?

Today's world is shaped by four converging pressures: war-driven geopolitical tensions, shrinking livable space due to climate disasters, intensified control via accelerated technologies, and social fragmentation eroding trust. In this context, "shelter" is no longer a fixed structure but a dynamic, negotiable state.

Transparent Shelter sees China's urban villages (Cheng Zhong Cun—informal settlements within cities) not as subjects but as methods—flexible, nonlinear, multispecies spaces in the urban gaps that challenge binary narratives of the future. Instead of succumbing to panic, we reframe it within specific geopolitical terrains, confronting root causes and recovering local, non-technological stories from the margins. As Achille Mbembe pointed out, the question is not how far technology can go, but whether we can

still imagine different world-times. Urban villages offer the seed of such imagination.

The exhibition unfolds through four paths: simulated maps and data visuals reveal how boundaries are imposed and contested; image-object works on repair culture revisit the circular life of things; a sound piece inspired by Shing Sha (feng shui) explores invisible energy systems; and microbial-plastic experiments suggest tangible eco-technical symbiosis. Audiences are invited to walk, listen, and experience "transparency" not as visibility, but as renewed trust through shared vulnerability.

Exhibition by Department of Transmedia Art, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts.

Curator: Prof. Mengmeng Wang

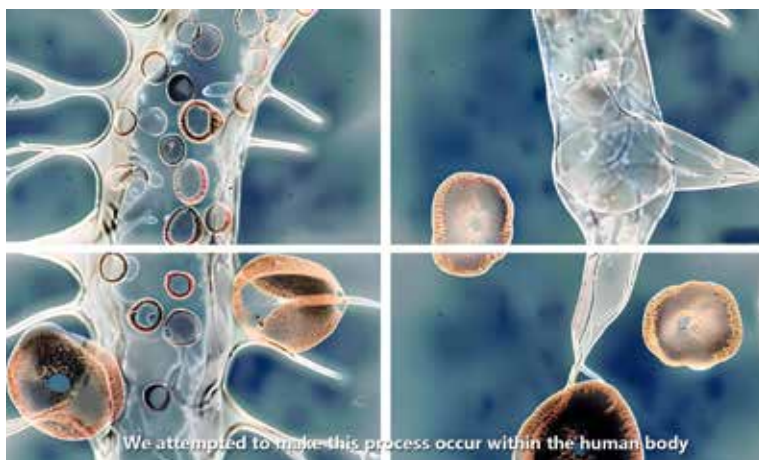
Co-curator: Joe Zijian Zhou

Xinhao Zheng (CN), Jiayi Zhu (CN)

Nacre

Inspired by the pearl's formation—where foreign matter is enveloped and transformed—*Nacre* imagines a process where bacteria or fungi act on plastic, partially degrading it through biological encapsulation. This bioremediation suggests that shelter and exclusion form a dynamic system of transformation.

Thanks to Hangzhou
Regenovo Biotechnology
Co. Ltd.



We attempted to make this process occur within the human body

© Xinhao Zheng, Jiayi Zhu

Xueyi Sun (CN)

Humankind Divides the Earth with a Ruler

Based on a forty-year evolution of urban village boundaries in China, this project proposes a methodology that simulates the trajectories of edge formation and disappearance through a geographic modeling program. Through comparative spatial modeling, viewers can observe how “threshold spaces” across different regions exhibit similar spatial fractures under global pressure—suggesting a future where the Earth may again be “divided with a ruler.”

Supported by Stdout&Stdin



© Xueyi Sun

Xianglong Zhang (CN)

Sha

The work translates the Feng Shui concept of “Sha” into a sonic intervention mechanism, exploring how immaterial defense systems mediate new relations between body and space. Derived from the helmet of a mural painting, the installation fuses sound sensors, mirrors, and energy fields to turn noise into signals and shields—a perceptual barrier within the invisible space of a “transparent shelter.”



© Xianglong Zhang

Xueyi Sun (CN)

Object-Object Mending

Focusing on reuse and repair aesthetics in urban villages, the project *Object-Object Mending* constructs a decentralized material ecology from items discarded by mainstream market logic. The work presents a language of repair shaped by folk techniques and environmental responsiveness, shifting away from failed grand narratives toward “low-tech” strategies grounded in pragmatism and lived experience. It explores how decentralized wisdom may emerge from the mutual compromise of things.



© Xueyi Sun

Zurich University of the Arts—ZHdK (CH)

Not Plan B

With Passionate Urgency for Planetary Care

Not Plan B examines aquatic and terrestrial environments as sites of contemporary crisis, seeking new understandings of interactions for challenges that are so close to life. Showcasing works by students from the Master Interaction Design and Minor in Experimental Interaction at ZHdK, the exhibition probes novel approaches to systemic and ecological issues, establishing new perspectives on multispecies coexistence. In times of calamity, how might we begin to listen, attune and respond to these challenges—not with panic—but with empathy and care?

Dancing in Aquatic Vibrations explores auditory perceptions of aquatic animals through particle motions, inviting visitors to perceive underwater soundscapes with their bodies. *Proto-Lichen* proposes lichens as collaborators for future cities, connecting species and architecture;

CalciCoral brings species together through their shared calcium carbonate. *Where the River Hides* investigates the hydro-logics of the river Töss, formulating design responses for a river disrupted by geoengineering. *CHORNOZEM* confronts us with the contamination of Ukrainian soil, demanding socio-planetary caretaking and advocating for the recognition of ecosystem destruction as a crime.

Revealing how oceans, rivers, and soils subvert the discipline of Interaction Design, these works dismantle social, political, and individual borders. They offer a response to cultural paralysis in the face of planetary crisis—and are an invitation to re-enchant a world in transition.

Curation: Karmen Franinović & Duy Bui

Coordination: Duy Bui

Yaroslava Shylyk (UA), Olivia Menezes (US), Kirill Kohl (DE)

CHORNOZEM

Ecocide is a military tactic aimed at destroying ecosystems to destabilize regions. A long-term consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is heavy metal pollution in agricultural soils. Using curcumin-based fertilizer, UV light, and drone imaging, this project maps toxic hotspots for remediation. It offers farmers a low-cost tool to assess soil safety and advocates for the recognition of ecosystem destruction not as collateral damage, but as a crime.

Mentors: Prof. Dr. Karmen Franinović, Dr. Joëlle Bitton, Luke Franzke, Duy Bui
Advisors: Volodymyr Shylyk, Dr. Shem Johnson, Daniel Moshel



© Yaroslava Shylyk, Kirill Kohl, Olivia Menezes

Luca Somm (CH)

Dancing in Aquatic Vibrations

© Luca Somm



Dancing in Aquatic Vibrations is an interactive exhibit that lets visitors experience how aquatic animals perceive sound through vibrations and particle motion. By hugging a water bladder emitting underwater sounds, participants delve into this still largely unexplored field of aquatic auditory perception, sensing sound with their entire bodies.

Mentors: Antoine Bertin, Prof. Dr. Karmen Franinović, Prof. Dr. Alex Jordan

Karya Anliak (TR)

CalciCoral

© Karya Anliak



CalciCoral is an artificial reef designed with calcium carbonate from eggshells and ceramics. Calcium carbonate is a key mineral for marine organisms to build their structures. It dissolves in acidic environments, reflecting the impact of ocean acidification due to human activity. Inspired by fish movements, *CalciCoral* embodies the idea of “designed by fish, for fish,”

Mentors: Prof. Dr. Karmen Franinović, Antoine Bertin, Prof. Dr. Alex Jordan

aiming to increase marine biodiversity while engaging the public in ocean conservation and regeneration.

Silvana De Paola (IT), Silvan Roth (CH), Dominic Sutter (CH)

Where the River Hides

© Silvana De Paola



Töss, it explores how ecologically adapted groynes combined with weaving techniques can create deeper, shaded pools that act as micro-refuges during heatwaves. Drawing on interviews with biologists and local experts, it reflects an urgent need for accessible, low-tech interventions that respond to climate-induced changes in river ecosystems.

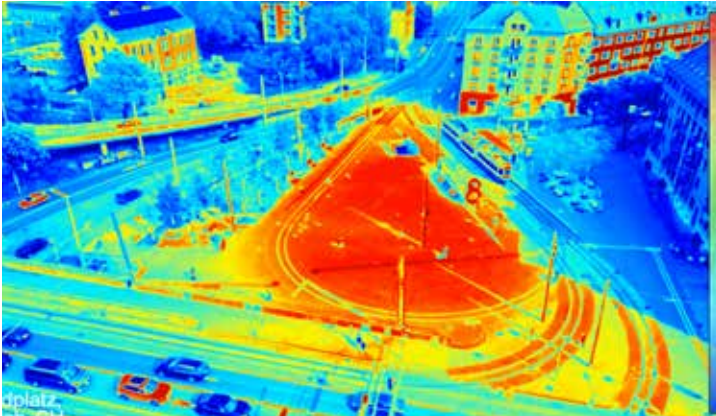
Where the River Hides reimagines existing river structures to support aquatic life in the face of worsening droughts. Focusing on the Swiss river

Mentors: Prof. Dr. Karmen Franinović, Dr. Joëlle Bitton, Luke Franzke, Duy Bui
Advisor: Daniel Moshel

Massimo Bordogna (CH), Vera Bardin (CH), Sacha Schwarz (CH), Leon Junge (DE)

Proto-Lichen

© Massimo Bordogna, Vera Bardin, Sacha Schwarz, Leon Junge



Urban heat islands in Zurich, caused by concrete and asphalt, worsen temperature rise, energy demand, air quality, and health risks. Greening methods like trees or moss require space, water, and maintenance, which makes them unsuitable for dense cities. Instead, we focus on lichens, resilient organisms thriving in extreme conditions with minimal upkeep. By imagining a biomaterial inspired by

Mentors: Prof. Dr. Karmen Franinović, Dr. Joëlle Bitton, Luke Franzke, Duy Bui
Advisors: Dr. Shem Johnson, Daniel Moshel

lichens, we propose a sustainable solution to cool cities and rethink our relationship with nature.



LINZ INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

LIT—Linz Institute of Technology Exhibition

The world feels as though it were upside-down. Political certainties are crumbling, climate change is driving us to the limits of what is possible, and technological upheavals are impacting our lives more rapidly than we can adapt to. Everything appears to be changing—and the question is: How do we respond? How do we create a hopeful future instead of spreading fear and panic?

Times like these accentuate the importance of education and research, which not only seeks to answer pressing questions but also offers guidance and new perspectives. The Johannes Kepler University (JKU) Linz is a place where science is pursued by people for people. A place that not only conveys but also actively shapes knowledge—by fostering dialogue between disciplines, between science, art, and society, and between theory and practice.

This is also the approach taken by the JKU projects funded by the Linz Institute of Technology (LIT) that will be presented at the Ars Electronica Festival 2025. They reveal how people, art, and science can collaborate to develop new perspectives and address social challenges. The diverse range of topics, from sleep equity and science skepticism to empowering people in the age of AI systems and digital identities, is proof of the embodied interdisciplinarity in research and teaching at the JKU.

In addition to the Art&Science projects, the JKU also plays a key role in prominent initiatives such as the Flood the Zone with Courage art project,

initiated by the JKU Circus of Knowledge. Its participatory approach brings together artists, activists, students, and citizens to develop new forms of protest. The aim is not simply to make artistic statements, but to foster active experimentation that showcases what a resilient and future-oriented society could look like. The project is meant to encourage and to reveal new ways of civil engagement.

The JKU is more than a university. It is a place of community, a “universitas” in the best sense of the word. Here, people come together to shape the future through cooperation. In a world of ever-accelerating change, the JKU makes room for reflection, innovation, and collaboration. It is a place that generates not only knowledge but hope—for a better, more equitable, and more sustainable world.

You can experience all this up close at the Ars Electronica Festival at the POSTCITY, where the JKUniverse message is clear: “We are all science, and science needs us all.” Get to know the people who have dedicated their lives to research, learn about their motivations, and experience their curiosity. Everyone is invited to join the conversation, ask questions, and to expand our thinking together.

The JKU sees itself as a vessel for people and projects exploring different perspectives with and through society. We are a safe space, and sometimes a happy place, in times like these. Let us be the same for you! That said: Panic—No!

Antonela Tommasel (AR), Anna Hausberger (AT), Markus Schedl (AT), Gustavo Escobedo (PE), Samaa Mizar (AT), Michael Preisach (AT)

“Breaking News: Wolpertinger sighted in Linz!”

An Interactive Experience Exploring the Mechanics of Misinformation

Step into the fast-paced world of a newsroom, where you are the media analyst. Can you tell if a headline is truthful or just misleading click-bait? This immersive experience throws you into the whirlwind of online information, where deep-fakes, emotional bait, viral posts, and AI-generated content blur the line between fact and fiction. With the help of headlines, fast-paced game-play, and social decision-making, you will test your instincts, face your biases, and see how misinformation tricks us all. Real-time stats, deepfake projections, glitch aesthetics, media chaos, and news visuals immerse visitors in the disorienting environment where misinformation thrives. Inspired by research in media literacy, cognitive psychology, and natural language processing, this installation is not just a game, it is a wake-up call for the way we share and believe in the digital age. Walk out wiser, sharper, and better equipped to navigate today's complex information landscape.

Created by the Institute of Computational Perception and the LIT AI Lab. This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.



© Samaa Mizar

René Mayrhofer (AT), Philipp Hofer (AT), Laura Poulbot (FR), Airan Berg (AT), Andrea Hummer (AT), Ilona Roth (DE/AT), Linda Huber (AT), Gisela Klammsteiner (AT), Sara Koniarek (AT), Simon Sharkey (GB), Valerio Iurato (IT), Doris Roth (DE), Alina Lugovskaya (UA/RU), Selina Nowak (AT), JeanClaude Grieco (AR/AT), Florian Böttcher (AT), Ethem Saygieder-Fischer (AT)

Digital Shadows

What happens when your digital shadow takes shape: tangible, interrogative, observant?

Digital Shadows invites the participants to experience questions of digital and physical identity, data security, and control. In immersive zones woven with choreographic elements, visitors encounter themselves—mirrored, copied, measured—and simultaneously lose themselves in a system that knows more about them than they intend to reveal. Between play and analysis, concealment and transparency, a reflection emerges on identity in the age of facial recognition, deepfakes, and algorithmic profiling. How does one fool a camera? How visible do I want to be? Who owns what I leave behind, and who profits from it? This experiment is a

collaborative endeavor between science and art, making power, visibility, and self-determination in digital space tangible. Through an exploration of digital materiality and algorithmic intelligence, a sometimes absurd, always immediate reflection unfolds—on our role in data-driven worlds until we face our digital dilemma, and the choice is still ours to make.

Institute of Networks and Security (JKU), Christian Doppler Laboratory for Private Digital Authentication in the Physical World (CDL Digidow), Zirkus des Wissens (JKU).
Cooperations: Transiheart Productions, RedSapata Kulturinitiative, AIKO Tanz Fest.
This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.



© Gisela Klammsteiner, generated with Sora AI

Martin Reiter (AT), Florian Nimmervoll (AT)

Echoes of Ecology

Echoes of Ecology is an immersive, multisensory installation that artistically reflects the complexity and interconnectedness inherent in sustainability. It emphasizes how ecological, social, and economic dimensions are intricately intertwined, inviting visitors to explore the layered implications of sustainability beyond surface-level perceptions. Through dynamic audiovisual experiences, the installation visualizes and sonifies the ripple effects of individual and collective choices, particularly highlighting everyday decisions related to product packaging, textiles, and consumer goods. By fostering awareness about the lasting impacts these choices have on our shared environment, *Echoes of Ecology* aims to provoke thoughtful dialogue and introspection, encouraging deeper consideration of resource usage, consumption behaviors, and their socio-political contexts.



© Martin Reiter

Ultimately, the installation seeks to inspire more mindful and sustainable interactions with our environment.

Echoes of Ecology is an interdisciplinary cooperation between Johannes Kepler University Linz and the University of Arts Linz. The project was jointly developed and funded by both institutions to combine expertise in product development, sustainability, design, and art.

Kristina Tica (RS/AT), Joaquín Santuber (CL/DE)

HUMAN OVERS[A]IGHT: THE OPS ROOM

HUMAN OVERS[A]IGHT: THE OPS ROOM is a real-time generative, interactive audio-visual installation developed as a human oversight department for high-risk AI systems. It is established according to the European Artificial Intelligence Act [EU AI Act], as described in Article 14, which suggests that in high-risk AI systems a human-machine interface such as a “stop button” is needed, to bring the system to a halt. Can the system be stopped by a button, and why not? We investigate how humans can oversee and evaluate these processes, by visualizing the internal operations of an automated system. We invite visitors to take upon a central role in human oversight of high-risk AI systems and encourage them to engage with a human-machine interface to oversee the systems’ operations. We provide possibilities for action for people to claim back their political agency to stop or affect the system.



© Kristina Tica

METaverse LAB, JKU Linz

Production: Alessia Fallica, Ahmed Jamal | Software: Lukas Bibl | Sound Design: Marija Šumarac | Interaction Design: Jürgen Ropp | Video Documentation: Reinhard Zach | Coordination: Angelika Taher | External Advisory Board: Marcos Chilet, Pablo Hermansen [Diseno UC/ Nucleo Fair], Jonathan A. Edelman [Stanford University]

With special thanks to LIT Robopsychology Lab and VAME. This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.

Patricia Stark (AT), Gregor Pechmann (AT), Kerstin Pell-Langaditis (AT), Claudia Scheba (AT), Denise Atteneder (AT), Linda Huber (AT), Laura Thäter (DE), Milena Leybold (DE)

Into the JKUniverse—Science starts with you

We are all science, and science needs us all.

The JKUniverse is a place where you can experience inter- and transdisciplinary thinking. It is a multi-functional space that encourages discussion, shared reflection, and discovery. It offers a glimpse into the rich diversity of subjects at the Johannes Kepler University Linz and a chance to get to know the people behind scientific discoveries and learn about their motivations and drive to contribute to shaping society. It invites everyone to join the conversation. What questions do we need to ask? Who creates knowledge and decides which knowledge matters?

Your questions are the beginning. They have value, spark ideas, and set systems in motion. The JKUniverse is a vibrant hub for various exchange, networking and workshop formats that playfully break down barriers, encourage collective reflection, and enable inspiring encounters. The interactive exhibit design and selected artefacts place humans at the center and invite visitors to become part of the JKUniverse themselves.

Linz Institute for Transformative Change (LIFT_C), Patricia Stark, Gregor Pechmann, Kerstin Pell-Langaditis, Claudia Scheba, Denise Atteneder, Linda Huber, Laura Thäter, Milena Leybold, YAK Studio. This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.





© Mihaela Kavdanska

Johannes Pröll (AT), David Demmel (AT), Rupert Huber (AT), Mihaela Kavdanska (BG/AT), Maria Kratzert (AT), Realsim (AT)

Show Me Your Face

Genome-to-face prediction: science or fiction? This science–art collaboration explores the relationship between genetic data and human identity. Scientists are using DNA sequencing and AI algorithms, in an attempt to visualize a person’s facial features—raising profound questions about the nature of individuality, the limits of scientific knowledge and technological capability. On the artistic side, through direct sonification of genetic sequences, art installations, and mixed reality, *Show Me Your Face* invites viewers to consider whether a genome can truly capture the complexity of a human being.

Ultimately, the project becomes an artistic reflection on predetermination and personal choice, visibility and invisibility, clarity and

ambiguity, reflecting Voltaire’s thoughts on the absurdity of certainty. The concept of the human genome suspends time itself—where the past, present, and future converge, and multiple spaces, selves, and possibilities are present all at once.

Concept and Creative Direction: Johannes Pröll, Mihaela Kavdanska, Rupert Huber | Scientist and Project Lead: Johannes Pröll, Center for Medical Research, JKU Faculty of Medicine | Scientist: David Demmel, Center for Medical Research, JKU Faculty of Medicine | Media Artist, Art Director: Mihaela Kavdanska | Composer, Sonic Art Director: Rupert Huber | Mixed Reality Simulation: Realsim (Thomas Peterseil, Tobias Sichmann), Mihaela Kavdanska | Video Production: Realsim (Erik Thiele), Alexander Haasbauer | Photographer: Maria Kratzert | This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.

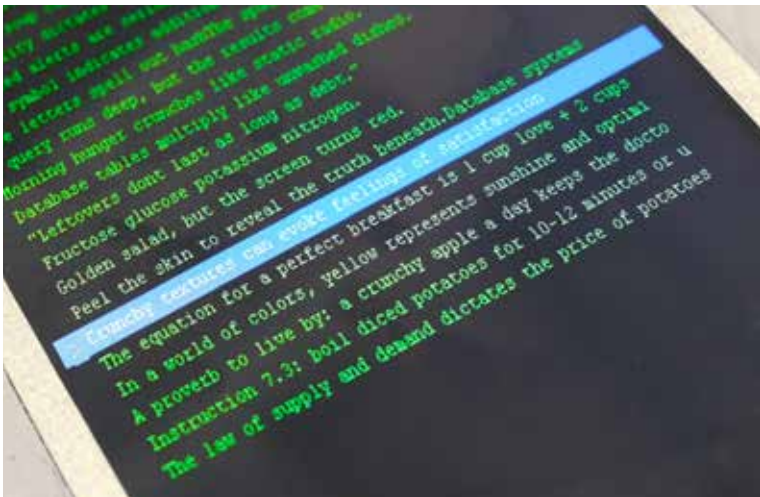
Eugénie Desmedt (AT), Paul Kloker (DE), Márton Zalka (HU), Christine Haupt (DE)

The Artificial Literature Laboratory

With *The Artificial Literature Laboratory*, we explore Large Language Models (LLMs) not as services, assistants, or all-knowing agents, but as instruments for creative writing. The custom-built interface allows to interact with the LLM via the physical hardware, which enables the generative process in the first place, and invites visitors to compose a short text with it. Replacing the optimization-driven logic that dominates current AI use with an experimental interaction process rooted in traditions of electronic literature, constrained writing, and

chance-based poetics, collaborative writing here is no prompt-in, text-out routine. Shaped through its development by a collective of artists, designers and engineers, the installation instead engages with the generative logic of LLMs through the human writing process and vice versa, inviting reflection on what it means to create something new.

Production Assistance: Jonas Martschin | With thanks to Martina Mara and the LIT Robopsychology Lab, Paul Janisch, Magdalena Samonigg, Naoki Matsuyama | This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria.



© Eugénie Desmedt



© Jonas Hörbst

Andreas Kaindlstorfer (AT), Andreas Strauss (AT), Reinhard Gupfinger (AT)

The Dream In Experience

An Open Space for Sleep Culture

The Dream In Experience is an interdisciplinary project from the Department of Neurology of the Kepler University Hospital Linz (KUK) in collaboration with Reinhard Gupfinger and researchers from the Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU). Located at the intersection of art, science, and technology, the project serves as an open space for sleep culture.

In a “capsule hotel” designed by Andreas Strauss, visitors sleep in specially developed capsule suites under varying conditions. Their sleep data is recorded and transformed in real time into visual and acoustic outputs. Participation is organized via an online booking tool (www.dream-in.org); medical staff provides

on-site guidance. The project aims to highlight sleep as a key factor for health and well-being and to encourage reflection on personal sleep behavior. Additionally, it opens up critical perspectives on sleep equity, Artificial Intelligence, and the use of big data in personal health monitoring.

Principal Investigator: Andreas Kaindlstorfer,
Co: Anna Heidbreder, Thomas Mitterling, Department of Neurology, Kepler University Hospital Linz
Artists: Andreas Strauss, Reinhard Gupfinger
Technical Support: Institute of Signal Processing, Institute for Communications Engineering and RF-Systems, Johannes Kepler University Linz
This project is supported by the State of Upper Austria, Somnomedics and Keplinger Holz and more.



INTERDISCIPLINARY TRANSFORMATION UNIVERSITY AUSTRIA



At IT:U,
we believe digital
transformation is not
something that happens to us.
It's something we shape together.
Through critical inquiry, creative
collaboration, and public engagement,
we explore how technology can serve society—
not the other way around.

—Stefanie Lindstaedt, Founding Director IT:U

Interdisciplinary Transformation University (IT:U) (AT)

IT:U Exhibition

How does digital technology shape our lives—our care systems, our communication, our democracy? Interdisciplinary Transformation University (IT:U) presents two research-based artistic positions that explore how deeply technology is embedded in the fabric of society and opens its space for direct conversations with its researchers.

IT:U is a young public technical university dedicated to digital transformation, focusing on interdisciplinary research and project-based,

personalized learning. It proactively shapes and drives forward digital transformation in a solution-oriented manner. IT:U conducts research and teaching at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence and a variety of other disciplines. The IT:U exhibition highlights how digital transformation is never neutral. It shapes the way we live, think, and connect. We aim to not only observe this transformation—but to co-create it. Critically. Collectively. And in public.



© Bernd Resch

Bernd Resch (AT)

Mapping Conspiracies

Anti-democratic and anti-constitutional dynamics such as fake news, hate speech, conspiracy narratives, calls for violence and breaches of the constitution are increasingly causing concern. This project analyzes and visualizes spatial patterns of communication spread on social media. It explores, which geographic regions strongly interact, displayed in interactive maps.



© Bernd Resch

Christopher Frauenberger (AT), Ralf Vetter (AT), Matthias Hirschmanner (AT)

Caring Robots

Robotic Care?

This interactive exhibit showcases a research prototype developed within the *Caring Robots // Robotic Care?* project. The prototype is specifically designed to engage older adults affected by dementia in care facilities. The prototype uses an AI-driven conversational system that draws on biographical information to enhance a sense of personal acknowledgement and value—without creating a false pretense of a “sentient” or caregiving machine. Visitors can experience the system firsthand and engage in conversations with the project developers about how robotics and AI could—and ought to—shape the future of elder care.



© CaringRobots Project

ARS ELECTRA FEATURES

The Ars Electronica Features Exhibition is a platform for partner institutions from around the world to present artistic perspectives and research-based practices that resonate with the festival's curatorial theme. In 2025, under the title *PANIC – yes/no*, this collaborative exhibition examines the multiple and entangled crises of our time: ecological breakdown, algorithmic opacity, systemic inequality, and the erosion of democratic structures.

Rather than asking whether panic is appropriate, the contributions explore how states of urgency are produced, navigated, and resisted. Panic is not treated as a moment of chaos to be avoided, but as a cultural and political condition that demands attention, analysis, and creative response. Across installations, performances, and speculative formats, these works move from crisis to critique, from a feeling of being overwhelmed to imagination.

Several partners explore ecological panic not only through data or dystopia, but through the body, the senses, and collective ritual. Ecocentric Future Lab stages an exhibition that includes edible bioplastics, AI-generated haikus from melting ice, and speculative pharmaceutical solutions to plastic pollution—inviting audiences literally to taste, feel, and metabolize environmental collapse. Gluon, through its STARTS4WaterII program, connects artistic research with water systems: performances along the Danube, soundwalks, and river mappings reframe waterways as active participants in our environmental futures.



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

ONICA

Artistic creation is closely related to contemporary issues. In an ever-changing era, creators must actively explore the boundless imagination made possible by advanced technologies, bravely confronting the unknown with an experimental spirit. Ars Electronica is a precious opportunity for exchanging diverse viewpoints and ideas, creativity, and knowledge.

— Cecile Huang, Features Partner,
Head of C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab

Digital panic—rooted in hidden infrastructures, extractive logics, and epistemic instability—is at the core of the work presented by Tetem. Their immersive installation invites audiences to interact with algorithmic sculptures that respond to typed questions, unveiling stories of bias, exploitation, and forgotten knowledge systems. Similarly, V2_, Lab for the Unstable Media, takes a visceral approach with *PANIC MODE: ON*, where controlled explosions become both metaphor and method: an invitation to engage materially and performatively with breakdown.

Taiwan's C-LAB Sound Lab contributes *Polyphony*, a multifaceted program spanning immersive installations, concerts, and VR experiences. Evoking the musical and philosophical concept of simultaneous voices, *Polyphony* reflects Taiwan's cultural and technological complexity, offering artistic strategies for navigating contradiction, coexistence, and interdependence.

Together, these projects do not merely illustrate panic—they perform it, dissect it, and reimagine it. They show how artistic practices can navigate states of emergency not by simplifying or denying them, but by opening up new ways of sensing, thinking, and acting. The Ars Electronica Features Exhibition becomes a space of constructive rupture: a collective rehearsal for futures that remain uncertain, yet also within the realm of imagination. Alongside these highlighted contributions, many more partner institutions enrich the program with diverse perspectives and urgent propositions—each expanding the shared inquiry into the role of art and technology in a time of overlapping crises.

Jiabao Li: Ecocentric Future Lab (US)

The Climate Tasting Menu

Panic! Plastics seep into our food, bodies, bloodstreams, and unborn children. Glaciers and sea ice retreat faster than climate models can keep up. In this moment of cascading ecological collapse, how can we respond not just with fear, but with embodied imagination?

This exhibition titled *The Climate Tasting Menu*, invites viewers to metabolize crisis—literally and metaphorically—through absurd futures, gut-level humor, sensory experiences, and playful interventions.

In *Consume Our Consumption*, audiences are served edible bioplastics in a performance that satirizes consumerism and greenwashing. A speculative pill, “Plascetamol,” made from the gut bacteria of plastic-degrading superworms, imagines a future where humans adapt to digest plastic.

Pollution becomes food, and waste becomes sustenance. In *CryoScapes*, ice becomes both canvas and collaborator. A custom-built 3D ice printer and treated surfaces allow freezing water to form evolving landscapes—lunar, glacial, microbial. A macro camera captures these fleeting terrains in real time, while AI transforms them into Haiku-inspired poems. As the work travels, it co-creates with the climate of each city it visits. Together, these works invite us to chew on crisis, melt old narratives, and imagine new ecologies from the ruins of the Anthropocene.

Anya Koehne, Annan Zuo, Jiabao Li | Ecocentric Future Lab, The University of Texas at Austin

CryoScapes: Landscape Painting with Water, Ice, and AI | Jiabao Li, Ziyuan Jiang, Kuan-Ju Wu, Yasuaki Kakehi | Yasuaki Kakehi Lab, The University of Tokyo

© Jiabao Li



Anya Koehne (US), Annan Zuo (CN), Jiabao Li (CN)

Consume Our Consumption

Inspired by our research on the plastic-degrading digestive bacteria of *Zophobas morio*, we have developed a speculative pill that enables beings to consume plastic via gut biome transfer (fecal transplant from plastic-eating worms), reframing pollution as a food source. Through this lens, we critique consumerism, flawed food systems, and the greenwashing embedded in recycling narratives. We serve edible bioplastics, each dish paired with educational information on the issue it represents.

© Jiabao Li



Jiabao Li (CN), Ziyuan Jiang (CN), Kuan-Ju Wu (TW), Yasuaki Kakehi (JP)

CryoScapes

Landscape Painting with Water, Ice, and AI

CryoScapes began during my Arctic Circle Residency, inspired by water's many forms—vapor, snow, waves, glaciers, and sea ice. We built a 3D ice printer that creates evolving sculptures shaped by temperature. Water droplets freeze on treated surfaces, forming landscapes that blur scale. A macro camera captures these in real time, while AI generates Haiku-inspired poems. As *CryoScapes* travels, local climates shape the ice, questioning who the artist is: AI, us, or the city's own humidity and heat.

ARS ELECTRONICA features BARCELONA

DataViz Group at Barcelona Supercomputing Center (ES)

Expanded Voices

A collaboration with Maria Arnal (ES)

Expanded Voices explores how AI voice synthesis reshapes identity, blurring the lines between self, body, and technology. The project focuses on the latent space of AI models—a multidimensional structure that encodes and compresses training data. In this digital reflection of a physical trait, identity can be shaped, replicated, and disembodied, revealing how Artificial Intelligence introduces new ways of understanding and expressing the self.

The installation invites the audience to speak or sing into a microphone and hear their voice transformed into that of artist Maria Arnal, while watching their vocal imprint appear in the latent space of an AI timbre transfer model—one of the technologies featured in Arnal's latest show, *AMA*. This interactive experience, centered around the concept and structure of latent spaces,

reveals how unsupervised algorithms model and manipulate voice. It offers a glimpse into the inner workings of AI, while prompting reflection on authorship, embodiment, and the fluid nature of identity in the digital age.

Evolving from a S+T+ARTS residency, the project is part of an ongoing collaboration between Maria Arnal and the Barcelona Supercomputing Center. It demonstrates the power of combining scientific and artistic approaches to drive innovation—opening new possibilities for healthcare, live performance, and the creative exploration of AI as both a tool and a subject of study.

BSC Data Visualization Group: Tomás Andrade, Raquel Barrachina, Sol Bucalo, Jeronimo Calderón, Fernando Cucchiatti, Adria Espinoza, Paula Fernández V., David García, Alex Gil, Marc Heras, Míriam Herrero, Guillermo Marín, Roger G. March, Paula Méndez, Thalia Diniaco, Othmane Hayoun, Sara Tolosa, and Maria Arnal



© BSC Data Viz Group

New Art Foundation (ES) / Yolanda Uriz (ES)

Chemical Calls of Care II

Chemical Calls of Care II is an interactive installation that explores audio-olfactory communication with plants. It invites visitors to engage with chemical signals—a nonverbal language—by translating them into scent and sound. Through the use of tubes, fans, and sensors, the installation fosters empathy between species. In response to global crises, it proposes care as an alternative to panic, encouraging horizontal, reciprocal relationships with the biosphere grounded in attention and mutual respect. This multisensory approach reflects the broader artistic practice of Yolanda Uriz, who investigates olfactory language as a means of communicating with non-human life. Her work creates immersive sensory environments that reveal new layers of meaning and adapt to uncertain futures by merging the human, technological, tangible, and virtual.

Presented in collaboration with the New Art Foundation, the project aligns with the foundation's mission to preserve, produce, and research technological art. In October, the foundation will open The New Art Centre in Reus—a 3,000 m² facility featuring exhibitions, workshops, labs, and a smart storage system dedicated to the preservation of technological art. The center aims to support artistic creation, foster interdisciplinary dialogue, and safeguard the legacy of digital and technological art for future generations.

Presented with the support of Institut Ramon Llull.
With the support of Generalitat de Catalunya, Direcció General de Innovació, Cultura Digital, and the Fundació Ernesto Ventós | Curator: Siuli Ko | 3D Modelling: Heidi Valda | Arduino Programming: Jaime de los Ríos | Assistance: Sergi Carro | Special thanks to Schemerlicht Festival 2024



© Fernando Schlaepfe

ARS ELECTRONICA features DELFT

Emergence Delft (NL)

robo signans

robo signans is the third Platform Project by Emergence Delft, an Art & Tech dream team of TU Delft. At Emergence, students from engineering and art backgrounds collaborate to create new media artworks that inspire reflection on complex technologies.

In *robo signans*, ten TU Delft students and artist Jorrit Paaijmans explore a radical question: What if a robot no longer serves humans? What happens when a machine—typically built for function—is instead allowed to simply *be*?

The result is a kinetic installation featuring three 2-meter-tall robotic entities.

These robots neither assist nor entertain. Instead, they draw independently and in dialogue, through a process of visual interpretation. The outcome is a slow, evolving conversation in graphite—a symbolic act that mirroring human creativity, authorship, and communication. In an era of escalating crises, *robo signans* challenges the notion that everything must have a purpose or be productive.

Jean Paul Smit | Iris Petre | Hanjo Claassen |
Tijn Vennink | Greg Wójcik | Stijn de Bakker |
Imke Mulder | Rogier Doucet | Soraya Kofeiti |
Britt Maes | Jorrit Paaijmans



© Emergence Delft

TETEM (NL) / Cyanne van den Houten (NL), Ymer Marinus (SE)

Model Collapse

In the immersive exhibition *Model Collapse*, Cyanne van den Houten and Ymer Marinus depict the landscape from which generative AI emerges. From relics, artefacts, and past stories, they reveal the self-consuming origins of AI systems rooted in resource and data extraction.

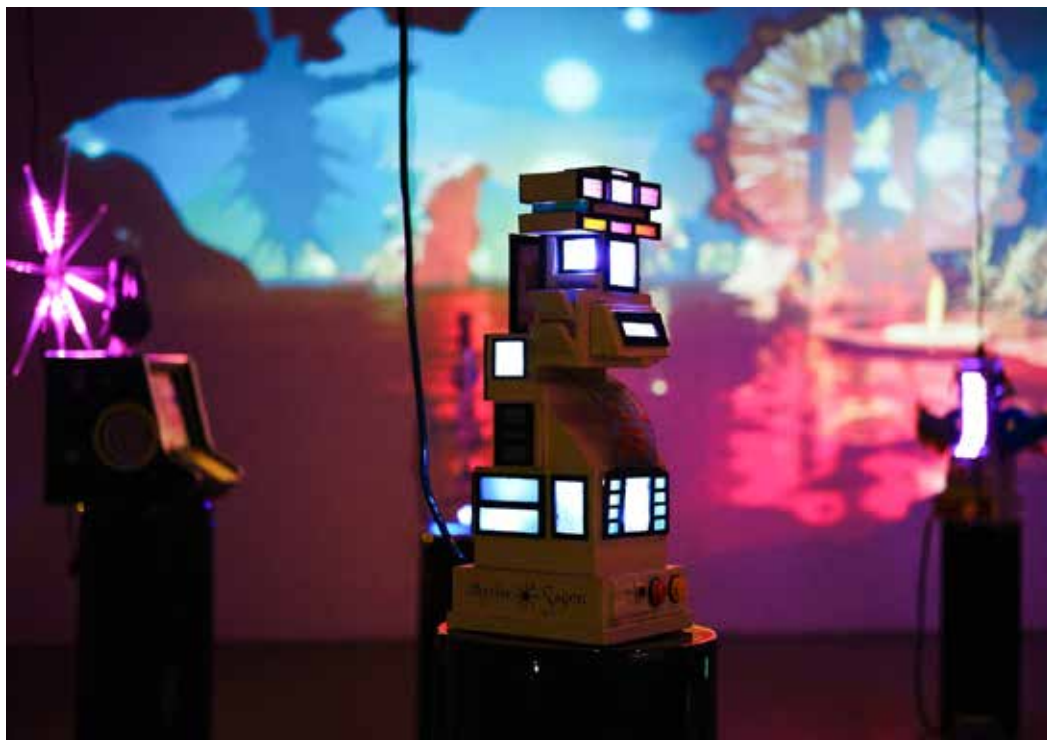
Model Collapse features cyber sculptures with algorithmically defined forms and characters. These sculptures or entities resist dominant narratives tied to AI's creation, each telling stories of mystification, gender bias, non-Western algorithmic traditions, ecological impact, and hidden labor. Visitors engage with the sculptures

by typing a query to a central AI interface. A local language model locates the query in the digital realm, awakening the relevant sculpture so it can share its knowledge.

The visitor's input dynamically sets the scene, activating the sculptures' generative digital biome.

This interaction sparks a chain of events—what starts with a few words ripples through multiple dimensions. New insights emerge, and invisible pathways inside AI systems are revealed.

Cyanne van den Houten, Ymer Marinus, Telemagic, Tetem



© Tessa Wiegerinck

ARS ELECTRONICA features EUROPE

STARTS4WaterII

Residencies showcase (EU)

Gluon presents a curated selection of projects emerging from the STARTS4WATERII residencies, where artists, scientists, and local communities collaboratively explored the often invisible ecological and social challenges of Europe's ports and portcities.

Unfolding across site-specific locations in the city of Linz, the program brings together contemporary artworks, sound performances and keynote talks responding to the urgent ecological and social challenges present in Europe's marine environments and rivers. Featuring Carlos Monleón's sonic exploration of the Danube, a participatory performance by Stijn Demeulenaere inviting the audience to wade into the Danube and a keynote by the Territorial Agency on the Anthropocene mapping of Belgium's Scheldt river, the program invites

deep listening to waterways as dynamic actors in our shared environmental future. Continuing the success of its predecessor, STARTS4WaterI, this project brings together ports, water research institutions, artists and digital technologies, to inspire change and cultivate a more sustainable relationship with our environment.

These works were commissioned within the framework of S+T+ARTS4WaterII—Ports In Transformation with the support of the S+T+ARTS program of the European Union under Grant Agreement LC-0269312.

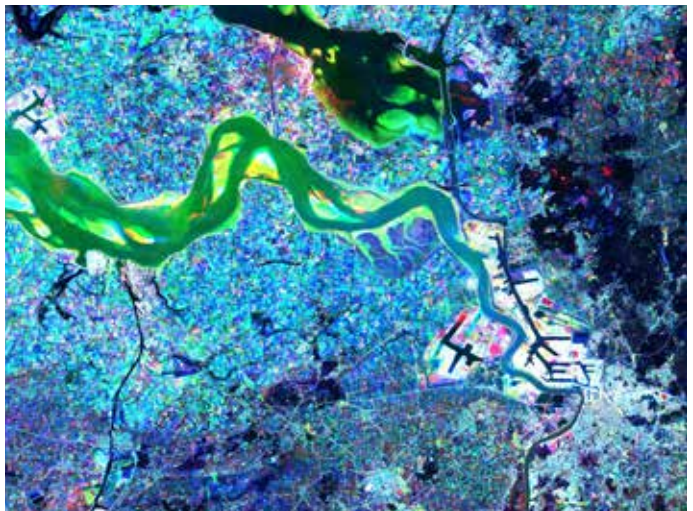
This second edition of S+T+ARTS4Water, titled *Ports in Transformation*, is made possible through a consortium of cultural and scientific partners including VITO, WAAG, GLUON, Camargo Foundation, OGR Torino, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Beta Festival / Dublin City University Adapt Centre, ArcaFuturis, PINA, Drugo More.

Curated by Gluon

Territorial Agency: John Palmesino (IT), Ann-Sofi Rönnskog (FI)

Anthropocene Territories

Over the past 3,000 years, sea level changed little. Yet according to current predictions, it is expected to rise over 2m this century. The project traces overlapping processes shaping the Scheldt, linking the Port of Antwerp, its region, and river dynamics. Using Earth Observation and AI, Territorial Agency create a tool for shared insight and knowledge. This helps define *Anthropocene Territories*—spaces transformed by human and non-human forces—vital for research, education, and policy.



© Territorial Agency

Carlos Monleón (ES)

Parliament of Streams: Turbine Chapel

Turbine Chapel explores the impact of hydropower plants on rivers and fish, immersing visitors in sonic representations of currents and disturbances in rivers. The characteristic “voices” of a river arise from water flow, sediment transport, and biological activity. Fish follow currents and continuously receive information from upstream through smell, touch, and hearing. Carlos Monleón likens fish to the rivers’ “eardrums.” Hydropower plants significantly disrupt these natural processes. Fish are shredded in turbines and rapid water-level fluctuations caused by hydropowering—the sudden release of water from water reservoirs—wash away spawn and leave juvenile fish stranded.

The sculptural sound installation takes visitors on a journey through these changes. It interprets how they “sound” and “feel” to fish. A choir and recordings from the Danube make it perceptible how rivers transform from flowing conversations



© Carlos Monleón

into broken monologues, causing the oldest voices on earth to stutter.

Artist: Carlos Monleón | Sound Design: Santiago Latorre | Curation: Anne Faucheret | Team: Hektor Peljak, Laura Anninger | Artistic Director: Claudius Schulze
Carlos Monleón conducted his artistic research with the scientific support of the Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management at the BOKU University Vienna. He was resident at PART International Art Residency Austria. A project by the artistic research vessel Arca Futuris.

Stijn Demeulenaere (BE)

Sounding Lines

Sounding Lines echoes how we humans shaped the North Sea seabed over the last 200 years. In the 1800s, we fished away most of the oyster beds. We drilled for oil and gas in the 20th century. In the coming decades hundreds of offshore windmills and a vast submarine electricity grid will be built. Geopolitical strategies, climate action, and economic hopes all come together in this story, showing how connected we are to the sea, and how we have made it a very human space. Stijn Demeulenaere has recorded the sounds of offshore wind farms and some of the last remaining wild oyster reefs in the North Sea. At the same time, he had a local choir sing forgotten sea shanties and infuse the underwater sounds with these traditional stories, mixing several voices of the sea into a surround composition. At Ars Electronica, *Sounding Lines* becomes a site-specific immersive experience.



© Stijn Demeulenaere

Audience members put on a wading suit and walk into the Donau, listening to a space of possible pasts and futures.

Conceived, created & composed by Stijn Demeulenaere
Production: Kunstenwerkplaats | Co-production: Gluon |
In collaboration with: VLIZ—Flanders Marine Institute, Overtoom, De Brakke Grond | Recordings by: Stijn Demeulenaere, VLIZ | singer: Cécile Pilorger | Choir: Ladies Choir Aimée Thonon conducted by Steve Dugardin | Scientific support: Dr. Elisabeth Debusschere, Maryann Watson

ARS ELECTRONICA features Istanbul

Istanbul Digital Art Festival (IDAF)

Futures Entangled: Material Intelligence, Memory & Movement

Rapidly advancing technology enables faster access to, processing of, and sharing of information, transforming all aspects of life—including art. This shift has given rise to digital arts such as data visualization, kinetic art, 3D graphics, and AI. Founded to provide a platform for technology-driven artworks, the Istanbul Digital Art Festival aims to increase their visibility and curate exhibitions that reflect the evolving landscape of contemporary art. It is Turkey's first and only ongoing festival dedicated exclusively to digital art. Each year, the festival brings cutting-edge new media art to life in a different historic building in Istanbul, showcasing works at the intersection of science, art, and technology. The exhibition *Futures Entangled: Material Intelligence, Memory & Movement*, presented

within the framework of the festival's *PANIC – yes/no* theme, offers a narrative that weaves together the urgencies of migration and ecological crisis. Through installation, VR, and data artworks, it explores the emotional, material, and technological dimensions of displacement, adaptation, and survival.

These works invite audiences into environments where speculative ecologies, nonhuman data, and alternative systems of exchange come to life—proposing new sensibilities for how we sense, share, and sustain in a rapidly transforming world. By engaging with both planetary and personal scales of crisis, the exhibition asks: How do we navigate panic—not just as fear, but as a potential for transformation?

David Bowen (US)

tele-present wind (Mars wind version)

This installation is a collaboration with the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The piece consists of a series of 126 x/y tilting mechanical devices connected to tall dried grass stalks, installed like a field in the gallery. The mechanisms will tilt, move and sway based on data collected from the wind sensor on the Perseverance Mars rover.

Dr. José A Rodríguez-Manfredi, lead scientist on the Mars Environmental Dynamics Analyzer on Perseverance, assisted in collecting the wind data for the project. That data is mapped to the movement of the mechanisms. Thus, the individual components of the installation here on earth will move in unison as they mimic the direction and intensity of the wind from another planet.



© David Bowen

V2_, Lab for the Unstable Media (NL)

PANIC MODE: ON

In a world that is in a constant state of emergency, we are beyond the point of asking whether to panic or not. We maneuver through a society in which the panic mode seems to be permanently on. So instead, V2_, Lab for the Unstable Media, is presenting two artists that have been developing work with us, addressing various states of urgency. In the exhibition *PANIC MODE: ON* there are two works for the audience to detonate. Created, controlled, contained explosions. Allow yourself to take full control. Come and detonate the explosive artworks presented, sit back, and enjoy. V2_, Lab for the Unstable Media, is an interdisciplinary center for art and media

technology in Rotterdam (the Netherlands). V2_ presents, produces, archives, and publishes research at the interface of art, technology, and society. Founded in 1981, V2_ offers a platform for artists, designers, scientists, researchers, theorists, and developers of software and hardware from various disciplines to discuss their work and share their findings. In their view, art and design play an essential role in the social embedding of technological developments. V2_ creates a context in which issues regarding the social impact of technology are explored through critical dialogue, artistic reflection, and practice-oriented research.

© Nanno Simonis



Nanno Simonis (NL)

To Water Is to Be

Water embodies a duality of contrasting states. It can simultaneously exhibit forcefulness and delicacy, hostility, and tranquillity. The water within the artwork transcends the constraints of the glass enclosure, manifesting its dynamic nature. The explosive artwork encourages reflection on the interconnectedness of water, nature, and climate. Inviting viewers to contemplate the fragile balance of our ecosystems to maintain balance. An organized, boxed flood, perfectly under control. Or is it?

Commissioned by Z33, House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture. Supported by Amarte Fonds.

© Dani Ploeger



Dani Ploeger (NL)

Improvised Inflatable Device

A suitcase bomb is equipped with a trigger system based on the Nokia 105 mobile phone—the preferred device used by non-state actors in Iraq and Syria during the 2010s. When the phone number is dialed, the bomb detonates: a 1:1 scale inflatable replica of the Fat Man bomb—the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, whose design has become—uncannily—iconic.

ARS ELECTRONICA features SINGAPORE

National Arts Council Singapore (SG)

On Point

How do we leverage technology for slow practice to provide calm amidst chaos? *On Point* interrogates humanity's urge to make things immediately intelligible. In complex situations like today's polycrises, we often oversimplify and overcategorize—approaches that work against deeper understanding and problem-solving. These impulses are rooted in uncertainty, and can lead to panic and desire for control that ultimately “miss the point.”

Curated by Shireen Marican with producer Mary Ann Ng, *On Point* features *lightmode* by artist Victoria Hertel with engineer Justin Ong, affixed within a modular terrain. Vessels embedded within the terrain emit programmed and sensor-based light that respond to audiences around the installation, creating a visual symphony. The irregular flickering patterns resist predictable rhythms echoing the often unseen

interconnectedness of crisis in today's world. Just as the full communicative pattern of the vessels reveal themselves over time, complex global problems require patient observation of relationships over quick fixes or expectations of immediate understanding.

On Point is an invitation to pause. Like a flickering lightbulb, the rhythmic pulses of the vessels reveal a web of connections powered by interdependent presence and actions. This dynamic contrasts society's fixation on fragmented elements that may miss the broader picture and hopes to nurture sensitivity to critical signals that can guide us through an increasingly complex future.

Curator: Shireen Marican
Creative Producer: Mary Ann Ng (SERIAL CO_)
Engineer: Justin Ong
Graphic Designer: Sunny Vo
Supporting Partner: National Arts Council Singapore

Victoria Hertel (DE)

lightmode

lightmode explores how technology perceives and responds to environments through sensors. Contrasting human and technological sensing, the work prompts interactions between bodies, spaces, and other presences. In light-saturated environments—where excess input complicates perception for sensors—human presence creates a basis for both interaction and system. Sensing becomes a shared, slowed, and communicative act, forming a moment of awareness across biological, spatial, and technological networks.



© Finbarr Fallon

Stanford University (US)

That sinking feeling: cell biology of climate change

Plankton—microscopic drifters of the sea—are the unsung architects of Earth’s climate. Though invisible, they form a vast engine that regulates the carbon cycle, generating half our oxygen and pulling 40% of human-emitted carbon into the deep ocean. As they die, they fall as “marine snow”—described by Rachel Carson as “the most stupendous snowfall the earth has ever seen.”

Yet their role is often missing from climate models. Recent work from Stanford’s Prakash Lab shows that ignoring microbial life results in an 80-gigaton error—nearly 10% of the global carbon budget.

Using data from the PlanktonScope and Gravity Machine—tools developed at Prakash Lab—Jiabao Li, Manu Prakash, and collaborators translate this hidden world into video installations, performance, kinetic sculpture, and interactive experience. Gathered from 18 expeditions across seven years, the datasets offer an unprecedented look at microbial ocean life.

Numbers alone rarely move us. *The Long Fall* turns data into sensation—inviting audiences to feel the awe, urgency, and fragility of this microscopic realm. It reveals how life at the tiniest scale carries planetary weight—and how our survival is deeply entangled with theirs.

Jiabao Li (CN), Manu Prakash (US), Will Tallent (US), Michael Bruner (US)

The Long Fall

A Descent into the Ocean’s Living Memory

The Long Fall explores how microscopic plankton drive Earth’s carbon cycle. The audience embarks on a live audiovisual descent from the White Cliffs of Dover to drifting marine snow. Using data from PlanktonScope and Gravity Machine across 18 expeditions, the performance features a “plankton instrument,” where each touch triggers the fall and sound of a species. Narration is provided by the AI-revived voice of Rachel Carson, revealing plankton’s hidden role in shaping planetary climate.



© Cooper Galvin

ARS ELECTRONICA features TAIPEI

C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab (TW)

Polyphony

The title *Polyphony* designates the simultaneous combination of two or more tones or melodic lines in music and, in literature, the co-existence of multiple perspectives. In the turbulent contemporary era, this exhibition attempts to represent exchanges and dialogues that embrace resonating and co-existing differences as well as a collaborative spirit for co-creation across disciplines, cultures, and artistic vocabularies. It evokes essential universal values and proposes positive visions of common prosperity, yet with warnings. *Polyphony* includes a visual art showcase in POSTCITY, two immersive concerts in Deep Space 8K, and one concert at Anton Bruckner University. The interactive installations, VR works, dance, and immersive performances represent infinite exploration, challenges, and care for the future where new perceptions are expanded with latest technologies, spanning kinetics, interactive programming, AI computing, and soundscape

design. New forms and content thus arise in terms of audiovisual, perceptual experiences. Through collisions and fusion of the local/global, the traditional/contemporary, *Polyphony* reflects Taiwan's diversity, inclusivity, and scientific/artistic innovativeness. In the context of Ars Electronica, this curatorial project particularly examines our changing position and role in the new era and how to maintain heterogeneous values in this ever-changing, fast-paced, and unpredictable global village in a state of symbiosis.

Funder: Ministry of Culture-Taiwan/Taipei Representative Office in Germany | Produced by Taiwan Living Arts Foundation C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab (Programmers: Cécile HUANG, Hsiao-Ting Huang, Sylvie Lin, Vivian Shen, Suhan Yang, Hsien-Te Hsieh, Jing-Shiuan Tsang, Yung-Hsin Cheng, Hung-Kai Wen) | Artists: Po-Hao Chi, Yen-Tzu Chang, Ivan Liu, MeimageDance, Yu-Chuan Tseng, WHYIXD, Kling Klang Klong, Chia-Hui Lu, ULTRACOMBOS, Chia-Hui Chen, Nai-Chuan Cheng, William Kuo, Li-Hsin Shyu, Chih-Yun Wang, Ping-Sheng Wu, XTRUX, Yong-Jen Huang

ULTRACOMBOS (TW)

DRIFT IN TIME

DRIFT IN TIME is a live audiovisual performance by ULTRACOMBOS and Cicada exploring the “memory of ice” and humanity’s connection to climate change. Ice preserves fragments of Earth’s history—dust, pollen, animal traces—like time capsules. Real-time analyzed sounds of piano, violin, and cello drive visual transformations, creating a fluid space where sound and image move together to evoke the subtle, often invisible traces of a shifting world.

Artwork by ULTRACOMBOS & Cicada |
Production Team: Cicada, Jay Tseng,
Joseph Kuo, Hauzhen Yen, Hoba Yang,
Jolin Tsai, Henry Chang



Ivan Liu (TW)

Echoes of the Land (Multichannel Version)

Human activities related to industrialization and technological progress have disrupted natural ecosystems, triggered earthquakes, and worsened the climate crisis. Inspired by the seismological Spring-Block Model and combining real-time motion detection with IRCAM's Granular Synthesis technology, this interactive installation titled *Echoes of the Land* merges movement and sound to explore and redefine the evolving relationship between humanity and nature.

Interactive technology and sound:
Chung-En Hao | Model design and
interactive image: Jing Xie | Sponsored by
National Science and Technology Council
(Taiwan)



© Ivan Liu

MeimageDance TAIWAN (TW)

The lost limbo: Sister Lin-Tou

In this VR journey titled *The lost limbo: Sister Lin-Tou* inspired by the traditional Taiwanese folk tale *Sister Lin-Tou* and based on a female form, the dancer's body expands into a vast performance space resembling flesh or intertwining like vines, along with punctual ritualistic performances. The evocative experience blending east and west, past and present explores women's social position in an age of human-machine interaction and gender fluidity.

Artistic Director / Choreographer:
Hsiao-Mei Ho
Executive Director: Hana Chen Ying-Chih
Producer: Chia-Feng Lin
VR Performer: Ting-I Ho
Live Performer: Yu-Ting Tseng
8K VR Production: Funique



© MeimageDance

WHYIXD (TW), Kling Klang Klong (DE)

Tender Soul of Ocean: recall

Tender Soul of Ocean began in Keelung, a northern harbor city in Taiwan, as a response to maritime culture and our perceived distance from the ocean. In its latest version, recall, WHYIXD collaborates with the Berlin-based sound collective KLING KLANG KLONG to introduce speculative wind models and real-time motion sensing. Environmental data and visitors' movements transform into shifting fields of light and spatial sound, inviting a shared sensory experience of memory and the natural world.

Co-producer: C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab
Tender Soul of Ocean: recall is funded by the Ministry of Culture of Taiwan.



© WHYIXD, Kling Klang Klong

Chia-Hui Lu (TW)

SUNFLOWER / BUTTERFLY ORCHID

SUNFLOWER / BUTTERFLY ORCHID are multimedia performances that explore themes of life, resilience, and hope. Taiwan's DNA pulses through the works, which utilize motion capture, 3D modeling, and real-time music recognition software to synchronize visuals. These performances reflect the fight for one's beliefs, the refusal to give up hope, and the transformative power of love. They connect deeply with values of peace, kindness, and cultural heritage—inviting audiences on a surreal, immersive journey.

Production Company: Egret Cultural and Educational Foundation | Producer, Director, Artist, Composer, Pianist: Chia-Hui Lu | Technical Director: Wen-Chieh Chang | Project Manager: Stanley Leong | Immersive Visual: Oready Innovation Lab | Music: Sunflower & Butterfly Orchid



© Egret Cultural and Educational Foundation

Yu-Chuan Tseng (TW)

Jane Writing Project

© Yu-Chuan Tseng



“Jane” is a name given to the artist by a teacher in childhood—yet one absent from her digital presence. Since 2018, she has created daily

portraits from Flickr images tagged “Jane.” The project evolved into the *Jane Writing Project*, where each portrait is uploaded to ChatGPT to generate a new story and image. Viewers encounter this evolving identity through an interactive website and a series of printed books that trace how photo archives, AI, and narrative co-shape “Jane.”

Technical Team: Achi Cheng, Sheng-Po Shen,

Yi-Ching Huang

This artistic research received funding from the National Science and Technology Council, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Po-Hao Chi (TW)

Cybernetics of Waterscape

© Po-Hao CHI (AI-generated imagery)



Cybernetics of Waterscape explores the interconnection between water, memory, and perception. Developed through fieldwork and

oral histories in Xizhi—a flood-prone district in northern Taiwan—the installation creates a sensory environment of mist, sound, and visual fragments from hydrological sites, responding in real time to humidity sensors in both Xizhi and Linz. The project reflects on the disappearance of riverine soundscapes, shared heritage, and the trade-offs inherent in environmental governance.

Project Coordination: Caitlin Lai

Fabrication: Chan Yung-Jen

Cultural Partner: ReXizhi

Yen-Tzu Chang (TW)

In the Abyss, Once Again as a Perceiver

© Yen-Tzu Chang



The sound installation explores humanity’s fear of technological replacement through robotics. It operates in two modes: automation mode, where a robotic arm drills Palo Santo, releasing a calming scent; and an interactive mode, where audience movement activates the arm

via sensors. These mechanical sounds blend with a weather-responsive audio landscape. The aroma of Palo Santo serves as a reminder that sensory perception remains meaningful in a tech-dominated world—one in which our coexistence with machines continues to evolve.

Project Manager: Viviane Roi | Lead Installation

Technician: Hao-Min Huang | Robotics Engineer:

Mi-Chi Wang | Integration of Smart Ambient Inspection

AI Chip Technologies: ITRI Service Systems Technology

Center, Electronic and Optoelectronic System Research

Laboratories, RockCore Technology | Robotic Arm System:

HIWIN Technologies Corporation | Sound Engineer:

Jing-Shiuan Tsang | Produced by: Yeles Studio |

Co-organized by: SyncLab, Department of Architecture
NCKU

ARS ELECTRONICA features TAIPEI

The Metaverse Alliance (TW)

Digital Deities: The Spirit of Restoration

Digital Deities: The Spirit of Restoration explores how Taiwan's door god culture evolves in the digital age, blending tradition with cutting-edge technology. Through the use of AI digital twin technology, the project mirrors visitors into a virtual door god realm. The installation combines dynamic projection with interactive sensing, allowing participants to enter the restorer's meditative state. This cross-disciplinary work honors Taiwan's living spiritual heritage.

The project is a collaboration with The Metaverse Alliance, co-founded by internationally acclaimed XR director Hsin-Chien Huang, and recognized for its fusion of engineering, design, and gaming expertise, with a strong focus on VR/XR innovation.

The participating artists—Shun-Jen Tsai, Billy Yi-Chun Chang, Tzu-Chi Liu, Konny Ke-Chen Lan, and Jared Chia-Hung Ho—each contribute distinct

practices spanning dance, music production, multimedia, and interactive design.

Together, they create a powerful synthesis of tradition and innovation, offering audiences an immersive, sensory encounter with Taiwan's spiritual and technological present: Bathed in shifting digital light, AI twin technology merges their forms with the audience's presence, opening a dialog across time.

As viewers stand before the digital gate, their image fuses with the divine—inviting them to take part in a shared ritual of protection and tradition.

During the Ars Electronica Festival 2025, *Digital Deities: The Spirit of Restoration* is presented at Deep Space 8K.

Artists: Shun-Jen Tsai (TW), Billy Yi-Chun Chang (TW), Tzu-Chi Liu (TW), Konny Ke-Chen Lan (TW), Jared Chia-Hung Ho (TW)



© Konny Ke-Chen Lan

Yasuaki Kakehi Lab., The University of Tokyo (JP)

Yielding

Flow, Form, Flux

This exhibition presents three installations that center on the act of yielding—not as an assertion, but as a quiet gesture expressed through the behavior and relationships of driven fluids. Using liquid as a perpetually transforming medium, the works explore the entanglement of three interwoven states: Flow, Form, and Flux.

Flow is a smooth movement accompanied by order.

Form is a structure or contour that emerges briefly within the continuity of change.

Flux is the unending process in which such forms waver, dissolve, and return to transformation.

Colors in the Haze is a kinetic work where materials bend with water vapor while also shifting its color. The colors are not fixed but emerge from the interplay between material, light, and the

environment—each motion revealing a quiet, momentary narrative. *Entangled Liquidities* shows colored liquids flowing silently through twisted tubes, driven by electrohydrodynamic (EHD) pumps. Subtle, entangled rhythms arise, where stillness and motion meet. *Living Lens* features droplets moving like living creatures under the control of electrowetting. Light is shone through the droplets' ever-changing shapes, revealing a delicate play between fluidity and control.

Rather than depicting chaos, the exhibition offers a quiet invitation to yield—to embrace transformation. Visitors are invited to stand among these fluid forms and gently sense their own shifting states.

Exhibition Director: Yasuaki Kakehi

Yumi Nishihara (JP), Yasuaki Kakehi (JP)

Colors in the Haze

This work titled *Colors in the Haze* is a kinetic installation in which materials slowly shift their form with the flow of water vapor, causing its color to change depending on its bent angle. This work treats color not as a fixed attribute, but as a phenomenon that arises through the relationship between material, light, and the environment. In each motion—whether gently drooping like a withering form or rising as if regaining vitality—colors take shape, and viewers may encounter a quiet narrative unique to each moment.

Supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Grant Number JP24H00708)

Supported by Nitto Denko Corporation



© Yumi Nishihara

Takafumi Morita (JP), Tomoka Kurosawa (JP), Yumi Nishihara (JP), Yasuaki Kakehi (JP)

Entangled Liquidities

In this kinetic installation titled *Entangled Liquidities*, liquid flows silently up and down through intricately twisted and interwoven tubes. Segments of colored liquid, gently urged along by transparent liquid flow without ever blending, trace subtle variations shaped by layered channels. Viewers encounter behaviors born from the interplay of entangled pathways and the silent motion guided by electrohydrodynamic pumps. This work produces subtle movement within stillness, creating a delicate stage for material expression.

Research Collaborators: Shingo Maeda, Yu Kuwajima, Kenjiro Fukuda | Supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Grant Number JP24H00708) and JST ACT-X Grant Number JPMJAX22KI



© Yasuaki Kakehi

Mai Ohira (JP), Takafumi Morita (JP), Yasuaki Kakehi (JP)

Living Lens

Living Lens is a kinetic and lighting installation in which droplets of water move like living creatures. Driven by the principle of electrowetting, the droplets glide silently, never maintaining a fixed shape which evokes a sense of organic life. Light projected from above passes through each droplet, casting dynamic forms onto the floor below. The interplay between precise control and the inherent materiality of water reveals the textures that emerge in the space between technology and fluid.

Research Collaborator: Eiji Iwase
Special Thanks: Masanobu Kanazawa
Supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Grant Number JP24H00708)



© Yasuaki Kakehi

IMPAKT (NL)

CODE 2025: Technosferatu and V.I.B.E.

Grim Presents, Fortunate Futures?

Every year CODE brings together artists and non-artists in a five-month process of inspiration, discussion, collaboration, and co-creation. They work together in groups to produce digital art installations, interactive media, performances, immersive experiences, and artistic interventions. All the works, each in their own way, address questions that are central to the CODE project: How can we improve the agency we have over our digital lives? How can we become less dependent on Big Tech? How can governments better protect our digital rights, and how can we convey the urgency to act? What steps can we, as concerned citizens, users, researchers, and artists, take to support the critical process?

This year's exhibition presents two of the projects

produced by the groups that participated in *CODE 2025*. The *Technosferatu* project reimagines the immortal vampire through techno-optimism and the pursuit of eternal youth. It asks whether technology can grant eternal life and, if it can, what exploitation would it exact on our bodies? The *V.I.B.E* project explores the rise of “vibe culture” as a dominant mode of sense-making in the post-truth era, through a speculative electoral campaign and multimedia installation.

CODE 2025 is organized by IMPAKT (NL), Werktank (BE), Privacy Salon (BE) and NØ SCHOOL (FR). The participants who worked together for *CODE 2025* are based in Belgium and the Netherlands and have a wide variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

© Sophia Bulgakova, Rising Lai,
Benze De Ream, Marianna Stefanitsi



Sophia Bulgakova (UA/NL), Rising Lai (TW/BE),
Benze De Ream (FR), Marianna Stefanitsi (GR)

Technosferatu

In *Technosferatu*, viewers are invited to position themselves in a metallic, coffin-shaped vertical seat. A sensor activates a short speculative documentary exploring the political entanglements of ageing, data labour, and social media. *Technosferatu* explores how, in the name of longevity, algorithmic systems transform the body into a site of labour, optimization, and exploitation. In escaping death, do we risk becoming the undead—quantified, surveilled, and stripped of agency?



Caitlin van Bommel (NL/NZ), Giulia Timis (IT),
Elena Zaghis (IT), August Kaasa Sundgaard (NO)

V.I.B.E.

In a media landscape characterized by algorithmic bubbles, short-form video content and the resulting collapse of shared reality, reason is under threat from the ambient propaganda—or “vibe”—that permeates our environment.

Drawing inspiration from the memetic strategies of contemporary far-right movements (such as RemiliaCorp, NRx, 4chan, MAGA), the *V.I.B.E.* project investigates how hyper-online weaponized aesthetics normalize violence and advance authoritarianism through affectual manipulation.

© Caitlin van Bommel, Giulia Timis,
Elena Zaghis, August Kaasa Sundgaard

ARS ELECTRONICA features VIENNA

Joyh Design / Oliver Thomas Hamedinger (AT), Jade Bailey (GB)

BRIAN

Designing with Innovation for an Ultraviolet Future

Space is not neutral. It is shaped by time, materials, and the rhythms of life that move through it. Yet in a world of excess, space has become rigid—defined by engineered surfaces, sealed environments, and systems designed for control rather than adaptation.

The exhibition conjures a new era of architectural imagination through innovative approaches to materials, form, fabrication, and application, culminating in novel building components. These components are monolithic, thermally optimized, 3D sand-printed assets that form a playful and tactile aggregation. They highlight the beauty, adjustability, and precision of the digital tools used in their design, as well as the technology behind their realization. This forms the heart of the

exhibition, which is accompanied by transmedial devices that trace the components' origins, map their purpose, and reveal the spaces they engage with. Narrated through wayfinding floor graphics, the exhibit explores contrasting tactile surfaces and forms that emerge from site-specific input data. In doing so, it asks whether we can move beyond sealed enclosures to rediscover a more reciprocal way of inhabiting the world. *BRIAN* is a proposition—an experiment in architectural agency and a step toward spaces that nurture rather than confine, aimed at a future shaped not by panic but by care and curiosity.

Installation design and execution: Joyh Design OG
Technology Partners: Voestalpine AG
Funded by: Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH



FLOOD

THE ZONE

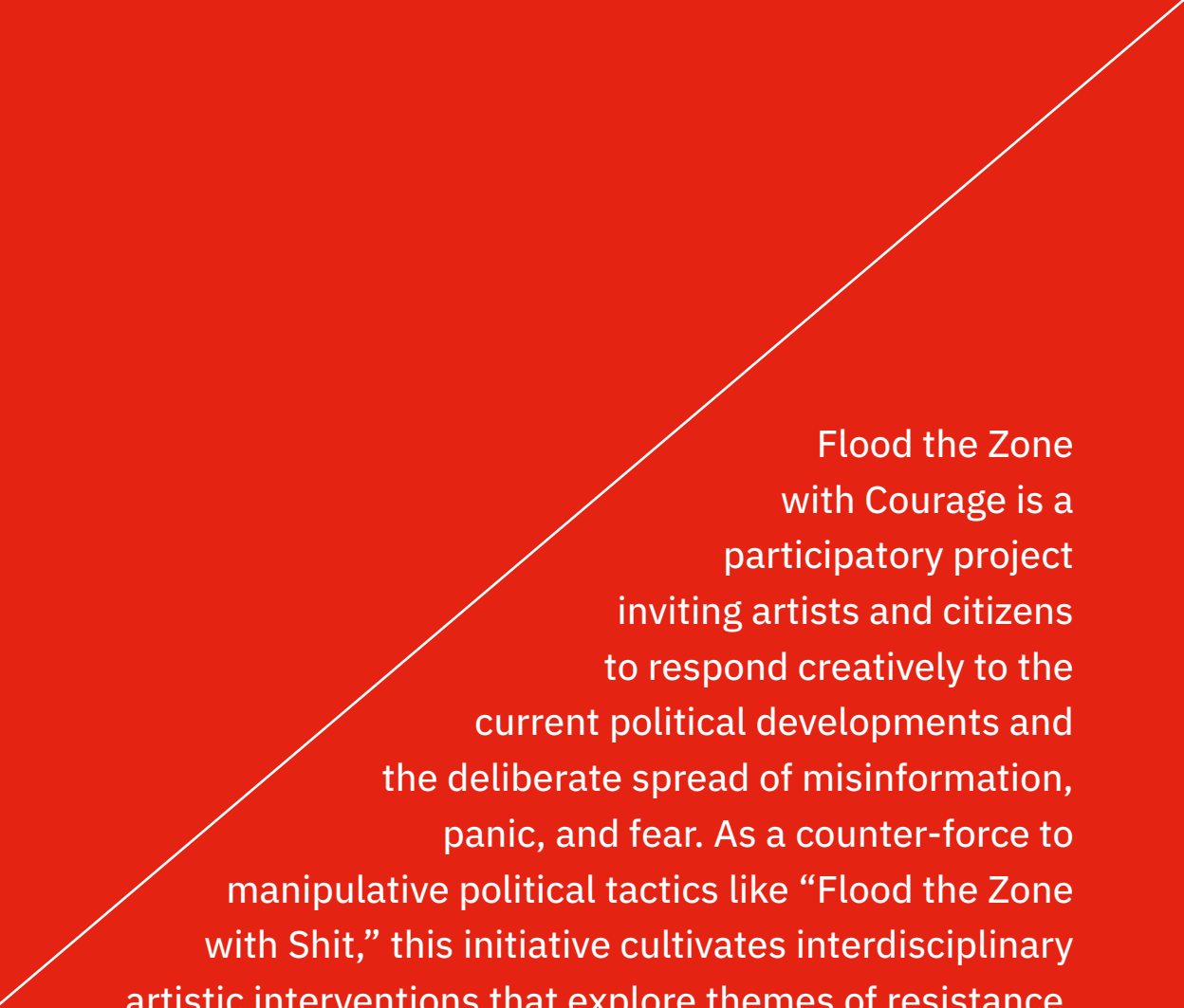
WITH

COURAGE



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society



Flood the Zone
with Courage is a
participatory project
inviting artists and citizens
to respond creatively to the
current political developments and
the deliberate spread of misinformation,
panic, and fear. As a counter-force to
manipulative political tactics like “Flood the Zone
with Shit,” this initiative cultivates interdisciplinary
artistic interventions that explore themes of resistance,
civil courage, and disobedience. Through short
performances, workshops, and collective actions, the
project transforms (public) space into a zone of truth-
telling, solidarity, and imaginative defiance.

— Airan Berg, JKU

Flood the Zone with Courage

The climate crisis escalates, but the systems meant to address it falter. Science sounds the alarm while political action lags behind. Across the globe, democratic structures are eroding, disinformation thrives, and fear is weaponized to divide. In this atmosphere of perpetual crisis, urgency no longer galvanizes—it overwhelms. What once sparked resistance now often leads to resignation.

Flood the Zone with Courage is a call to break that paralysis. A collaboration between Ars Electronica and the Circus of Knowledge at JKU Linz, the project invites artists, activists, students, and citizens to develop new forms of protest—performative, participatory, and radically collective. At its core are a series of maximum 7-minute interventions, each one a brief but charged moment of action: a dance, a dialogue, a rupture, a ritual. Some unfold in the main festival venue at POSTCITY, others take to the streets and squares of Linz—transforming everyday spaces into sites of civic imagination. This is protest not just against something, but for something. Inspired by thinkers like Judith Butler and Hannah Arendt, the project understands protest as the physical manifestation of democracy—not merely symbolic dissent, but embodied vision. It asks, how can protest become a tool not only of disruption, but of creation? How can performance activate public space as a laboratory for shared futures?

The interventions resist passive spectatorship. They demand engagement, disrupt routines, and invite participation—whether through collective singing, communal meals, voting rituals, or encounters that cross language, class, and

cultural divides. They are provocations, but also proposals: gestures that test what democracy could feel like.

The Pavilion against Indifference, designed and realized by the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Arts Linz, functions as the physical center of the project in POSTCITY. It is both stage and gathering point. At the core of the pavilion, the Open Democracy Lab by IG Demokratie becomes a space for collaborative reflection and democratic repair. Over five days, visitors are invited to rethink political structures through methods drawn from sociocracy and participatory facilitation.

Other interventions translate protest into movement, light, and interaction. *LUM:ORA*, a performance conceived by Teach For Austria, highlights language as a collective tool of inclusion. Children and young adults use light signals to transmit a symbolic word, inviting audiences to join and learn together.

With *Laughing Strategies*, the ATI Collective and the department of space&designstrategies at the University of Arts Linz examine the politics of laughter—probing its potential as both resistance and retreat. Dancers from AIKO Tanz Fest respond to digital visibility and data agency through choreographic interventions that unfold unexpectedly in physical space.

Meanwhile, the Youth Exchange Project brings together young people from across Europe to develop subtle and participatory forms of protest—some visible, others so embedded in the festival experience that visitors may already be part of them without knowing. Let's flood the zone with courage.

Pavilion against Indifference, Lisa Ackerl (AT), Paul David Daubek-Puza (AT),
Tobias Peherstorfer (AT) / die architektur—University of Arts Linz (AT)

Performances:

A Trust Play, Fang-Yi Cheng (TW) / Taipei National University of Arts (TW)

Archive der Zukunft, Lisa Yasir-Krenn (AT) / die Graphische (AT)

Ballot Ballet, Felix Henke (DE), Rosi Pernthaller (AT) / University of Applied Sciences Berlin (DE)

breathe—decentralising futures, Jian Wei Hoe (SG) / Nanyang Technological University Singapore (SG)

Data Devourers, Ilona Roth (AT/DE), Jungin Lee (KR), Participants of A!KO Tanz Fest, Digital Shadows Artists Cast / Department of Dance at Shenzhen University (CN)

Drag Intervention, Eric BigClit (AT), Youth Exchange Project / create your world (AT)

Flood the Uncanny Valley, Ilona Roth (AT/DE), Jungin Lee (KR), Participants of A!KO Tanz Fest, Digital Shadows Artists Cast / Department of Dance at Shenzhen University (CN)

Flood the Zone with Courage—An Anthem, Nancy Bates (AU)

Humans, Isabella Lee Arturo (CO), Mahla Mosah (IR), Martin Müller (DE) / Bauhaus University Weimar (DE)

Urlaub ist keine Ausrede, Darya Bukreyeva (UA) / die Graphische (AT)

My Data Is Bigger Than Yours, Ilona Roth (AT/DE), Alina Lugovskaya (UA/RU), Selina Nowak (AT) / A!KO Tanz Fest (KR/AT), Digital Shadows (AT)

Night Terrors, Lisa Derksen Castillo (NL/ES), Suzanne van Dongen (NL), Rocío García-Robles (ES), Alicia Silva Cátedra (ES) / University of Seville (ES), UC3M (ES)

Restlessness, Alfredo Miralles Benito (ES), Jaime Redondo (ES), Pedro Fragueta (AR), Sayaka Fujio (CL/JP), Catalina Liñán Maho (ES), Rocío García-Robles (ES) / University of Seville (ES), UC3M (ES)

The LUM:ORA Manifesto, Christiane Steinlechner (AT), Isa Stein (AT) / Teach for Austria (AT)

Youth Exchange Project Intervention, Mary Mayrhofer (AT) / create your world (AT)

Open Labs:

Laughing Strategies, ATI Collective (IT/IR/TR/AR), space&designstrategies—University of Arts Linz (AT)

OpenDemocracyLab, Stefan Scharthmüller (AT), Martyna Lorenc (PL/AT), Lisa Praeg (AT), Letícia Carneiro (BR/AT) / IG Demokratie (AT), Verein maiz (AT)

T-NET for natural disasters, Alexandru Berceanu (RO) / The National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (RO)

Installations:

Demokratie spricht, Viktoriia Chagarina (AT), Xu Wang (AT) / die Graphische (AT)

ECHOES IN THE AIR—Wie demokratisch denkt Social Media?, Teresa Marchesani (AT) / die Graphische (AT)

Politische Gewählt-Kabine, Simon Staffa (AT) / die Graphische (AT)

CREATE

YOUR

WORLD



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society



The power
and energy of a
large collective of
young artists can carry us
far from panic or chaos. It opens
space for new ideas and alternative
solutions—ones that can strengthen us
as a community in the long term.
Panic? No. Because we're working on it together.

— Hans Christian Merten, Head of create your world



create your world 2025

we are working on it. no panic.

Text: Annika Rohde, Hans Christian Merten

We're working on it. But is that still credible? When something breaks and we need help, we call on experts who know what they are doing. We ask them to fix it. We place our trust in them and depend on their ability to resolve the issue carefully—to make something usable or safe again. We expect things to function as we need them to, so that we can feel secure and at ease. But what happens when that trust gradually erodes?

Over the years, ongoing transformations in our world have put this trust to the test—with some even managing to benefit from its decline.

So who are the experts today who could help repair our world? Do they even exist?

The challenges we face have become increasingly complex—and so have the solutions they demand. It is not as simple as repairing a dishwasher or a bike anymore.

Who can repair a rainforest, a war-torn country, or a struggling democracy?

The climate crisis, armed conflicts, far-right governments, and a range of social, political, and personal pressures all contribute to the demanding reality of our time.

We cannot afford to wait for all-knowing experts to appear and magically set things right. We will all have to get involved. No one will be able to solve everything at once.

And the good news is: we don't have to. Neither you nor I have to save the whole world alone. If each of us finds the courage to begin with something small by using the resources that we have, we can create change. Perhaps it starts with planting a single tree, rather than attempting to rescue an entire forest. And if we support one another—if we manage to approach each other with empathy and build the trust needed to act collectively—then maybe there's hope. Hope that we will be able to say: No panic—we are working on it together.

Ars Electronica (AT)

u19—create your world Exhibition

Presentation of the u19—create your world Winning Projects

The exhibition showcases the 23 winning projects in the u19—create your world category of the Prix Ars Electronica 2025.

Since 1998, this competition has invited young creatives and critical thinkers to share their ideas and projects for the world of tomorrow—across the fields of art, technology, and society. Participants are free to choose their medium, resulting in a wide range of analog and digital submissions. All works are created by creatives up to 19 years of age, boldly expressing personal perspectives and presenting inspiring visions for the future. A jury of five experts from diverse disciplines reviews all entries based on creativity, expressiveness, and innovation, selecting the 23 winning projects. In addition, selected participants are invited to join commissioned projects, workshops, and open labs as part of create your world.

At the u19—create your world Award Ceremony, this year's winners will be recognized for their work and presented to the public. The young artists will receive certificates and prizes—and offer brief insights into the ideas behind their work.



PAINTING, Filmstill © Nea Geršak



Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege, Filmstill
© Aleksa Jović, Nico Pflügler



Die moderne Hausfrau © Rosa Gottwald, Luna Hörstlhofer, Lucia Kottar-Trimmel, Barbara Reiter



B-Movie *B-VENGERS* © ASO Klosterneuburg



WWS Power Cube © Leopold Kastler

Dynatrace (AT), CoderDojo Linz (AT)

AI Wonderland with Dynatrace & CoderDojo

In *AI Wonderland*, you can experience the fascination of Artificial Intelligence for yourself and learn how technology is transforming our world. With an AI agent from Dynatrace and CoderDojo, all the stations in the create your world area can be discovered for the first time this year.

Visitors can program Bee Bots, design their own cool game, learn how to solder and get to know the fascinating possibilities of AI and modern technology in a fun way. This program sparks curiosity and amazement in young and old, inviting everyone to join in, learn, and get creative. Perfect for anyone excited about technology and innovation!



© Dynatrace

This project was created through a collaboration between Dynatrace, CoderDojo, and Ars Electronica.



© Dynatrace

Verein Energiewende Linz (AT)

Powerplayground

Do we need more energy? (yes/no)

A high standard of living is closely linked to high energy consumption. If enough clean energy were available, that wouldn't really be a problem! However, most of this energy still comes from oil, natural gas, and coal—even in Austria. This fuels climate change, makes us dependent on energy imports, and diminishes our quality of life in the long term. The good news: there is enough clean energy! The energy transition is a key step toward securing our standard of living in a sustainable way. *Powerplayground* invites visitors to explore this transformation and presents energy transition projects to participate in.

VR Development: Johannes Ambrosch, Lukas Paul

Pedalgenerator: Florian Rudinger

Event Management: Katrin Stelzeneder



© Helwin Prohaska

Technisches Museum Wien (AT)

roadLAB

Mobile Maker*Space

Visitors can focus on tinkering, designing, and creating. A team of instructors from a variety of backgrounds is available to provide additional support with operating the machines and navigating the creative process.

Need to 3D print a new case because the old one broke? Want to design a custom phone cover using the cutting plotter or build a glowing clock with the laser cutter? What often sounds highly technical and daunting can be child's play.

roadLAB is an initiative of the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology and is funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research.



© Technisches Museum Wien

Rebecca Gischel (DE)

Take Comfort

Take Comfort is an interactive light and sound installation that makes the comfort of the written word tangible within a physical space. Visitors are invited to sit at a vintage typewriter and share their thoughts and words with others. Each letter typed illuminates a light object, creating a delicate play of light that gradually fills the entire room. At the same time, the soundscape shifts—from a tense, charged atmosphere to one that is warm and soothing.

In this way, a collective space of resonance emerges—a space where people can experience moments of connection, sharing, and being held through the act of writing. Inspired by the eponymous poem by Roger McGough, *Take Comfort* explores the power of the written word to connect people across time and space—and to offer solace.



© Andreas Gregor

Franz Gischel: Electrotechnical concept & the invisible magic of the typewriter | Theresa Zaremba: Composition of interactive music | Luise Gischel: Transformation of 200 m² linen into light objects | Thomas Blätte: Programming of interactive music



© Andreas Gregor

Yari Häfele (AT)

RAINBOW

Hope is like a Rainbow

When everyone's gaze is fixed on panic... the artist invites us to shift our perspective toward something positive.

And what better symbol for that than a rainbow? Rainbows represent hope, peace, diversity—and countless other meanings unique to each individual. This installation captures both the physical phenomenon and the symbolic richness of the rainbow. The natural rainbow is recreated using millions of tiny glass beads affixed to a black background, illuminated by a full-spectrum light source. Everyone associates something different with rainbows. And just like those associations, a rainbow reveals itself differently depending on your point of view: sometimes a certain color shines more brightly, sometimes elements appear to be missing. From certain



© Yari Häfele

angles, the rainbow seems to leap out at viewers thanks to its 3D effect. Much like hope itself, this installation reminds us that everything depends on perspective.

Helene Haider (AT), Verena Langthaler (AT), Carina Anna Leibetzedder (AT), Nuria Tomaschek (AT)

The Creative Studio 2030

Fitness Center for Creative Thinking

Welcome to the year 2030. All around the globe, creative studios are popping up like mushrooms. People are eager to reclaim their creativity! In recent years, AI-generated content and artwork have increasingly taken over, replacing nearly all human idea-generation processes. Time to panic? Train your grey matter now at the Creative Studio—the gym for creativity.

The Creative Studio 2030 presents an exaggerated, dystopian future scenario that explores the impact of Artificial Intelligence on our creative expression. Are we gradually unlearning creativity through the use of technology—like a muscle that withers away when it is no longer used? In the future, will we be training human intelligence rather than artificial ones?



© Generated with ChatGPT

This project was developed as part of a course led by Michael Wittmann at the Department of Media Design, University of Arts Linz.

Youth Exchange Project

Flood the Zone with Courage

For the 15th Youth Exchange Project, young people from different countries gather in Linz for a cultural and artistic exchange in the context of the Ars Electronica Festival. Bringing together creatives and socially engaged individuals between 16 and 26 years old, a multifaceted project takes shape during the festival days.

This year, the group focuses on activism and peaceful forms of protest. In cooperation with the Ars Electronica Festival project Flood the Zone with Courage, interventions are developed in the POSTCITY, at other festival locations, and in public spaces. These interventions apply various artistic methods but are not always immediately recognizable as art projects. Festival visitors are encouraged to participate in the interventions—or perhaps they have already unknowingly

become part of an intervention on their way to the festival?

We live in challenging times: wars, the climate crisis, the growing popularity of right-wing parties threatening democracy, as well as various other social, political, and personal challenges.

How do we deal with this? How can we raise awareness of problems and oppose them, instead of succumbing to despair and resignation? What can I personally do with the resources available to me to stand up for something important—without feeling the pressure or claiming to save the whole world? Together, the participants develop forms of peaceful protest that may offer a preliminary response to these questions.

Concept & realization: Mary Mayrhofer



© Mary Mayrhofer



Irina Paraschivoiu (RO), Thomas Layer-Wagner (AT), Benjamin Arzt (AT), Tobias Hoffmann (DE), Patrick Obermüller (AT), Julian Watzinger (AT)

Escape Fake

Expanding learning with augmented reality for media literacy

How can we teach media literacy to young people in an engaging way in times of disinformation? In 2018, *Escape Fake* was developed, an immersive AR experience that fosters critical thinking through play. Players join a quantum hacker to debunk fake news, using a phone or tablet to explore an AR escape room and solve puzzles that build media skills.

Beyond the game, educators are encouraged to take an experiential and immersive approach to teaching media literacy. The *Escape Fake* Toolkit and the pop-up exhibition demonstrate how the experience can be integrated into classrooms.

A growing community of teachers and students in Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands explores how augmented reality, play, and digital empowerment can strengthen democratic resilience. Their prototypes and ideas, developed in a year-long co-creation process, are helping shape the future of *Escape Fake*—revealing what matters, what works, and what challenges still lie ahead.



© Polycular GmbH

Partners: Waag Futurelab,
Deutsche Presse Agentur
Media partner: Der Standard

Developed in the context of Escape the Fake. Escape the Fake is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101186265.

Presented in the context of fAIr media. fAIr media is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101147977.

Ars Electronica Center (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT), WACOM (JP), andersART (AT), University of Arts Linz (AT)

LIFE INKlusive

What happens in our minds and bodies when we are creative? This is the question at the heart of the *LIFE INKlusive* project.

To find out, people wear sensors on their bodies—for example while painting or making music. The sensors measure what is happening inside the body: where the eyes are looking, how the muscles move, whether the skin is sweating, or how active the brain is. This data is then converted into colors and patterns and displayed on the screen. The result: unique images that show that creativity has no barriers. *LIFE INKlusive* is a collaborative project between inclusive studios for people with disabilities run by Caritas OÖ, KuK-pro mente OÖ, Lebenshilfe Linz, and Institut Hartheim, in cooperation with the University of Arts Linz, the Ars Electronica Center, and the Ars Electronica Futurelab. The exhibition presents



© Nicole Grüneis

the outcomes of *LIFE INKlusive*—including stunning visual worlds generated from body data, as well as the original artworks created by the participating artists. A powerful reminder of how diverse and limitless creativity can be.

MKD (AT), Ars Electronica (AT)

Augmented Comics—Fortify

Fortify is an augmented comics exhibition by students of the MKD—Master School of Communication Design Linz. The exhibition explores the question “What makes me strong?” through twelve short comics in a minimalist flat style using bold colors, geometric shapes, and clean lines. The visual consistency allows for a unified yet diverse presentation. Each comic reflects personal experiences and challenges, addressing strength in forms such as resilience, confidence, and social connection. Augmented reality features add digital layers, animations, and motion to the printed works, deepening the narrative and inviting viewers to engage on a more immersive and emotional level.

Supported by Linz Kultur, Nextcomic Festival, Ars Electronica, Artivive.



© Meister:innenschule für Kommunikationsdesign Linz

Artists: Marlene Berthold, Lea Böttinger, Elena Dirisamer, Martin Gerlinger, Anna Haslinger, Helmut Höllerl, Christina Jur, Josefine Koller, Marie Krawinkler, Lenny Kuntner, Julius Mössenböck, Leonie Peherstorfer, Florian Reichl, Hanna Reisinger, Clara Sageder, Vanessa Schauer, Viktoria Schlögl, Selina Seitz, Anselma Tiefenböck, Timon Virag



Faust goes KI, MLA Main Prize Winner 2025 © Bundesgymnasium Bludenz

Ars Electronica (AT), Bundesministerium Bildung (AT), OeAD (AT)

Media Literacy Award Ceremony

The MLA honors outstanding and creative teaching projects in media education and digital learning. In today's increasingly complex educational landscape shaped by the digital age, innovative teaching approaches are more essential than ever. As a competition for contemporary media education, the MLA encourages experimentation with new pedagogical methods and tools, as well as the exploration of uncharted thematic territory.

Submitted projects aim to strengthen media education discourse in schools and promote a

critical, creative engagement with all forms of media. The projects focus on collaboration and creative approaches to learning. Submissions came from entire school classes as well as from groups spanning different grades and subject areas.

Eight prizes have been awarded and will be presented to the winners during the MLA Award Ceremony at the Ars Electronica Festival, hosted by Robert Glashüttner from FM4.

The MLA is hosted by BMB, OeAD and Ars Electronica.

EVENTS,

CONCERTS,

PERFORMANCES



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

NCES

The Big Concert Night is a meeting place where two worlds come together in celebration of great music, in performances enhanced and illuminated through uniting personal artistry with the latest in visual technology. This year's production of the evocative and profound *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* is a deeply moving demonstration of an indomitable and passionate creative spirit, arisen from the depths of despair and persecution. A clear and determined "No!" to succumbing to "Panic," with determination and conviction.

— Dennis Russell Davies, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor Filharmonie Brno

Ars Electronica Opening

Co-Curator Norbert Trawöger, Artistic Director of the Brucknerhaus/LIVA

“Dreh-Moment” / The Moment Everything Goes into a Spin

This year, St. Mary's Cathedral and the adjacent Domplatz, the Cathedral Square, will once again become the vibrant epicenter of the Ars Electronica Festival's Opening. Waltzes, toccatas, and partitas—performed by outstanding ensembles like the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, the vocal group Company of Music, and organist Wolfgang Kreuzhuber—will fill Austria's largest church with movement and sound.

The layered meanings of “Dreh-Moment” [roational force]—of force and moment, cause and effect, motivation and change—set the tone for this year's festival that is centered around the theme of *PANIC – yes/no*. They evoke two historical moments: the birth of Austria's cultural icon Johann Strauss (son), known as “The Waltz King,” 200 years ago, and Austria's accession to the European Union 30 years ago.

“Happy is the one who forgets what cannot be changed,” reads a line from Johann Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus*—a composer whose musical legacy we honor this year. The world won't stand still much longer—but then, it never has. Happy is the one who remembers to keep moving. In the words of Augustine of Hippo: “I praise the dance, for it frees people from the heaviness of matter and binds the isolated to community.”

The Ars Electronica Opening 2025 invites us into a space of movement and sound—a celebration of the power of dance to momentarily dissolve the self and rekindle our shared capacity to shape the future.

One of the highlights of the opening evening is a performance of excerpts from the *Walzersymphonie* project, developed by the Ars Electronica Futurelab in collaboration with four international music universities and commissioned for Vienna's Johann Strauss Year 2025. Students were invited to submit artistic concepts that engage both critically and creatively with the musical legacy of Johann Strauss (son) and explore the role of Artificial Intelligence in musical composition.

The Bruckner Orchestra, conducted by Ingmar Beck, will perform this innovative new musical piece, as well as the overture to *Die Fledermaus* and the rarely heard *Traumbild I* by Johann Strauss. The vocal ensemble Company of Music, under the direction of Johannes Hiemetsberger, will present *Partita for 8 Voices* by American composer Caroline Shaw—a contemporary piece rooted in the tradition of Baroque dance movements inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach. Also featured in the program is Bach's iconic *Toccatà in D minor*, performed on the grand cathedral organ.



Organism: In Turbulence © Navid Navab

With their digital sounds, BEX establishes the pivotal transitions between the orchestral pieces. Navid Navab (IR/CA) explores an experimental approach to organ sounds with his performance *Organism: In Turbulence*, that won the Golden Nica at the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica. Based in Montreal, they challenge conventional ideas of classical church music. The installation will be on display at St. Mary's Cathedral throughout the festival, with additional performative interventions to look forward to. Meanwhile, a percussion ensemble led by world-renowned drummer Christoph Sietzen offers a preview of this year's Klangwolke, *URBAN PULSE*.

Beforehand, deaf musicians from the inclusive children's and youth choir White Hands Chorus NIPPON, together with singers led by Johannes Hiemetsberger, will perform the European Anthem at the Cathedral Square. Everyone is warmly invited to sing and sign along. In honor of the 30th anniversary of Austria's EU accession, this performance celebrates international cultural connections and lived inclusion as a shared experience.

Alles Walzer!

Big Concert Night

Art in and as Resistance—Art as the Last Bastion of Humanity

The opera *The Emperor of Atlantis* as the centerpiece of the Ars Electronica 2025 Big Concert Night

In 1954, the Italian publisher Giulio Einaudi Editore released an anthology of farewell letters written by individuals who were persecuted, tortured, and executed by the Nazis and the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. Among them were women and men—and in some cases, even young people and children. The foreword was written by Thomas Mann, who wrote:

“It keeps returning, and the heart tightens at the thought of what became of the ‘victory of the future,’ of the faith and hope of that youth, and of the world we now live in. A world of malignant regression, where superstitious and persecutory hatred is coupled with panicked fear; a world whose intellectual and moral inaccessibility has been entrusted with weapons of destruction of horrifying speed—stockpiled under the idiotic threat of ‘if need be,’ threatening to turn the Earth into a wasteland shrouded in poisonous vapors.

The decline of cultural standards, the withering of education, the apathy in the face of atrocities committed by a politicized judiciary, fat-catism, blind greed for profit, the collapse of trust and integrity—produced,

or at least encouraged, by two world wars—offer poor protection against the outbreak of a third, which would mean the end of civilization.”
(Thomas Mann)

This warning against the recurring threat of a “world of malignant regression” sets the tone for the Big Concert Night of Ars Electronica 2025. In response to today’s global crises—and in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War—the evening presents a new production of the opera *The Emperor of Atlantis* (orig. *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*) by Viktor Ullmann and Peter Kien.

Viktor Ullmann was born in 1898 in Teschen, Silesia (today Cieszyn, a border town between the Czech Republic and Poland), the son of an Austrian army officer. After serving in the First World War, he studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna, worked as a conductor and later as a bookseller, and eventually settled in Prague as a freelance artist in 1933. Because of his Jewish heritage, Ullmann was deported by the Nazis to the Terezín concentration camp in 1942 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1945. Peter Kien was a German-speaking Czech-Jewish artist and poet. He was born in 1919 in Varnsdorf, then part of Czechoslovakia, and studied at the Academy

of Arts in Prague. In 1941, he too was deported to the Terezín ghetto and murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

This chamber opera, fully titled *The Emperor of Atlantis or Death's Refusal* (titled originally *Death Abdicates*), was composed in 1943/44 by Ullmann and Kien in the Terezín (then called Theresienstadt) ghetto / concentration camp.

It remains uncertain when Ullmann began composing the opera or how much of the libretto he originally wrote himself. The painter and writer Peter Kien was only brought into the project after the score had already been completed. The final page of the 140-page manuscript is dated November 8, 1943, and Ullmann credited Kien as the librettist on the title page.

Rehearsals began in the summer of 1944, with stage design and costumes created by Peter Kien. The premiere was planned for May 1, 1944, but it never took place. On the one hand, there were reported disagreements between the composer and the production team; on the other, there were well-founded fears that the SS would recognize the opera's clear allusions and respond with severe retaliation.

The autograph score—written on the backs of prisoner forms and deportation lists—made its way out of Terezín through various indirect routes. However, it was not until 1975 that the work was performed for the first time, in an arrangement

by Kerry Woodward in Amsterdam.

The first performance in Germany took place in 1985 in Stuttgart, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, who also serves as the musical director of our current production. It was 51 years after rehearsals first began—in 1995—that the opera was finally performed in Terezín.

The Prolog

The quoted foreword by Thomas Mann introduces the program's prolog, in which *Chamber Music No. 1* (1922) by Paul Hindemith evokes the period before the Second World War and the early rise of fascism. This theme is also reflected in the sound installation *Proklamation* (Proclamation) by Julian Pixel Schmiederer, created specifically for the entrance area of the Train Hall. The work addresses the media propaganda of the 1930s, drawing a direct connection to the threats we face today.

Between the movements of *Chamber Music No. 1*, excerpts from the 1954 collection *Farewell Letters from Those Sentenced to Death* are read aloud. The project #eachnamematters is also dedicated to honoring the victims of National Socialism.

Since 2021, this annual initiative—organized by the Mauthausen Memorial and Ars Electronica—has been presented at various locations, projecting the names of over 82,000 people murdered in the Mauthausen concentration camps. So far, the project has been displayed on the outer walls of the Mauthausen camp, at the Gusen crematorium memorial, at the entrance to the “Bergkristall” tunnel complex, and on the facades of two “Brückenkopf buildings” in Linz, both constructed during the Nazi era.

The Opera

The train hall of POSTCITY—Ars Electronica’s main venue since 2015—is a stage charged with profound symbolism for this evening. On the one hand, there is the monumental concrete structure of the former postal sorting center, opened in 1992 and outfitted with a massive nuclear bunker, which was already decommissioned by 2015—partly due to the rapid rise of online commerce.

On the other hand, the hall’s close proximity to the train station and the four railway tracks leading directly into this transformed performance space inevitably conjure associations with the unimaginable scale of industrialized mass murder during the Holocaust and the Second World War. This “total war against humanity and human dignity” is at the heart of Ullmann and Kien’s operatic parable, which profoundly reflects the horrific realities faced by those deported to Theresienstadt. In doing so, it not only condemns the brutal Nazi regime but also serves as a timeless testament against tyranny and oppression.

The Emperor Overall of Atlantis rules as a tyrant over his land and proclaims a total war of everyone against everyone. Death, outraged by this arrogance, feels robbed of his duty and refuses to comply—he goes on strike and abdicates.

As a result, no one can die anymore: soldiers cannot kill each other, those sentenced to death do not die, and the country descends into chaos. Without the threat of death, the emperor loses his power. Desperate, he begs Death to resume his work. Death agrees but on the condition that the emperor must be the first to follow him.



© Cori O'Lan



© Cori O'Lan

The emperor accepts and bids farewell to life with a grand aria. This restores the balance of life. Characters such as “the Loudspeaker” and “the Drummer, not quite a real figure. Like the radio,” reflect the propaganda and manipulation machine perfectly orchestrated by the Nazis. The philosophical dialogue between Death and Harlequin raises the question of the meaning of life—“life that can no longer laugh and death that can no longer weep.” And, of course, there is a love story: a soldier and a young woman choose love over killing.

Composed under the harshest conditions—amid the deprivation, fear, and horrors of the Terezin ghetto, and in the constant awareness of possible deportation to a death camp—*The Emperor of Atlantis* is a powerful example of artistic resistance and creative resilience. But this opera deserves recognition not only because of the extraordinary circumstances in which it was created, but also for its artistic depth and lasting value beyond its historical context. In this work, Ullmann wove together elements of popular music of the time—such as blues and shimmy dances—while also quoting well-known

melodies and compositions to highlight aspects of the narrative. The theme of Death, for instance, is drawn from Josef Suk’s *Asrael* and Antonín Dvořák’s *Requiem*. As a satirical jab at Emperor Overall and his “empire,” Ullmann includes ironic references to the German national anthem and Luther’s solemn chorale *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*).

The new production of *The Emperor of Atlantis* in Linz is a co-production by Ars Electronica, the Brno Filharmonie, Landestheater Linz, the STETL Fest in Brno, and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

Musical Direction: Dennis Russell Davies

Lighting Design and Set Design: Julian Pixel Schmiederer

Stage Direction: David Bösch

Visualizations: Cori O’Lan

Emperor (Baritone): Martin Achrainner

Death (Bass-Baritone): Michael Wagner

The Loudspeaker (Bass-Baritone): Ulf Bunde

Harlequin (Tenor): Balint Nemeth

A Soldier (Tenor): Gregor Reinhold

Bubikopf (Soprano): Chinara Azimova

The Drummer (Alto): Su Rongna

Brno Filharmonie, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies

Presented in the context of ACuTe. ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Gusen Convolute Working Group (AT)

GUSEN CONVOLUTE

Songs from the Concentration Camp

Gusen is a village in Upper Austria. During the Nazi era, over 70,000 people were imprisoned here in three camps. About half of them were tortured to death. The Nazis were especially focused on wiping out the Polish intelligentsia. That is why a disproportionate number of Polish musicians and composers suffered in Gusen. Over the years, they wrote songs, mostly in secret.

Many of the originals are available in the Kulisiewicz Collection at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Peter Androsch and a diverse team have developed artistic

reflections on some of these pieces. The aim of this project is not to preserve the songs or exhibit them in an online museum. Rather, they want to remember the songs. Bring them back into our hearts and minds. This means approaching them with the deepest possible understanding and with our current way of thinking, feeling, acting, and creating.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Gusen Convolute, Peter Androsch, David Baczyk, Anja Burghardt, Bibi Finster, Bogna Korabiewska, Agata Moll, Claus Prellinger, Florian Sedmak, Dorota Trepczyk etc.



© Öö.Krone, Horst Einöder



© SKY

Tom Cook (GB)

The Lost Music of Auschwitz

Marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Sky Arts commissioned *The Lost Music of Auschwitz*, telling the story of composer Leo Geyer's eight-year mission to piece together a treasure-trove of forgotten fragments of music manuscripts found in the archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. Leo conducts Constella Music, an orchestra he founded, finally to play the music he has painstakingly uncovered, exactly as it would have sounded at Auschwitz, in some cases for the first time in 80 years. Auschwitz-Birkenau was home to at least six orchestras, formed of prisoners and commissioned by the SS. Many of the manuscripts they left behind are almost too faint to read, while others are damaged beyond recognition.

The film follows Leo on this musical journey as he discovers how the musicians rebelled with secret performances, weaving forbidden melodies into concerts. The film is interwoven with powerful interviews with some of the last remaining survivors, and special performances from Leo's orchestra.

Windfall Films (Argonon) production for Sky Arts.

Executive Producer: Dan Kendall

Director: Tom Cook

Editor: Emily West

Music services are provided by Constella Music

Composer and Conductor: Leo Geyer.

Commissioned by Phil Edgar-Jones, Executive Director of Unscripted Originals at Sky, for Cecile Frot-Coutaz, CEO of Sky Studios & Chief Content Officer for Sky.

The Commissioning Editor is Barbara Lee.

Ars Electronica Nightline

From inner chaos to collective resonance, the Ars Electronica Nightline 2025 turns the POSTCITY Train Hall into a pulsating playground of sonic experimentation, physical expression, and emotional intensity. With a strong showing from Switzerland's thriving electronic scene—presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia—this year's lineup fuses visceral live acts with immersive performances and high-intensity DJ sets.

Camilla Sparksss, the solo project of Swiss-Canadian artist Barbara Lehnhoff, brings a performance rooted in emotional chaos, identity, and instinct. Known for fusing noise pop, electro, and visual storytelling, Sparksss performs *ICU RUN*—a multisensory live show built around her latest album of the same name. With her signature use of vinyl dub plates, aggressive synths, and live vocals, she constructs cathartic collisions between tactile sound and psychological intensity. Her work is confrontational and strangely intimate, demanding not just listening, but feeling.

Barcelona-based artist Maria Arnal headlines the evening with *AMA*, a radical performance that merges voice, choreography, and synthetic sound. Built in collaboration with research institutions

such as the Barcelona Supercomputing Center and five dancers, *AMA* is a living choral system where synthetic voices—generated from Arnal's own—are shaped in real time by movement. The work confronts questions of vocal sovereignty, authorship, and the shifting boundary between human and machine. Both ethereal and urgent, *AMA* explores the politics of embodiment in a disembodied age. Supported by Institut Ramon Llull and Acció Cultural Española (AC/E), Arnal brings her acclaimed fusion of avant-pop, polyphonic tradition, and sonic research to Linz. Swiss beat wizard FlexFab teams up with Congolese-born Swiss rapper Manu Kann for a powerful hybrid set. Known for his globally-infused bass productions and meticulous visuals, FlexFab presents work from his new album *Pablo Phone Home*—an eclectic mix of trap, Afro-influences, futuristic club, and raw groove. With Manu Kann's sharp and multilingual flow, the duo bring a high-energy set that's equal parts explosive and polished, grounded in collaboration and rooted in global sonic textures.

Zurich-based producer Lua Jungck delivers an AV live set that oscillates between sonic exploration and dancefloor energy.



Paula OS © Jessica Echarri



Maria Arnal © Edrien Guillermo



Lua Jungck © Backslash Festival



FlexFab © Maria Guta



With a background in jazz piano and deep engagement with experimental sound, she fuses distorted field recordings, broken beats, and complex synth textures into music that feels visceral, political, and architectural. Drawing from improvisation and bass-heavy structures, Jungck crafts a dense atmosphere of sonic debris and rhythmic drive—abstract yet physical.

Chilean artist Paula OS presents *Image*, a live adaptation of her debut album and a personal exploration of the relationship between sound and psychological fragmentation.

Her voice—manipulated, looped, and layered—guides the audience through a journey that navigates vulnerability, transformation, and sonic healing. Drawing from trip-hop, ambient, and experimental electronics, *Image* is both therapeutic and deeply crafted.

The set is performed entirely live with instruments, controllers, and FX. Presented in collaboration with the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio and the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, Paula OS embodies the voice as a medium of survival, memory, and reconstitution.

Closing the night is Bowmore, a Geneva-based DJ, curator, and radio resident whose sets are a tightly woven narrative of techno, bass, and club memory. Known for her distinctive radar for new sonic movements, she navigates seamlessly between contemporary sounds and foundational club tracks. As a host on Couleur3's Club Selectors and a driving force in the Francophone Swiss scene, Bowmore brings depth, momentum, and precision—ending the Nightline with a DJ set that's as physical as it is cerebral.

Ilia Viazov (RU), Paulina Andrzejak (PL), Diego Morales Castillo (NI)

external operator

The project is inspired by reflection on language attrition and its impact on personal identity. The audience will encounter a performance of sonic co-dependence, where two post-instrumentalists develop a symbiotic bond with an external operator who sculpts their sound. Featuring self-made instruments, motion tracking gloves, and a stage focused around electronics and lights, the work evokes the phenomenon of losing touch with one's core identity as a result of an effort to assimilate.



© Musikhochschule Luebeck

Maki Namekawa (JP), Cori O’Lan (AT)

Pianographique

Mishima-Suite by Philip Glass

In 1925, one hundred years ago, the celebrated yet controversial Japanese author, actor, and director Mishima Yukio was born—one of the most emblematic figures of postwar Japanese literature. His extraordinary and at times unsettling life story was adapted into a film by Paul Schrader in 1985, with a score composed by Philip Glass. Independent of the film, the music gained its own acclaim in various instrumental forms. In 2018, at the request of Maki Namekawa,

Philip Glass’s longtime musical director Michael Riesman arranged the score for solo piano. Maki Namekawa—renowned as one of the most distinguished interpreters of Philip Glass’s compositions for piano—has released the complete repertoire on CD and will perform a suite of seven pieces from *Mishima* live in Deep Space 8K at the Ars Electronica Center. The concert will be accompanied by real-time digital visualizations created by Cori O’Lan.



© Florian Voggeneder

Anton Bruckner University

Audible Denial, Sonic Unheard

SONIC SATURDAY / Artists' meeting @ ABU
Curated by Volkmar Klien & Enrique Mendoza

Since 2016, Anton Bruckner University has hosted the *Sonic Saturday* as part of the Ars Electronica Festival. This year, the event expands into a two-day meeting featuring spatial sound concerts, live performances, and sound installations. The gathering invites people to meet on an informal basis, through listening, experimentation, and shared affect, bringing together artists and researchers in electroacoustic music, sonic art, and spatial audio practices.

In line with Ars Electronica's 2025 theme *PANIC—yes/no*, we listen through the crisis—not to calm it, nor to amplify it, but to sense how sound both conceals and reveals.

In the face of ecological, political, and social collapse, sound may act as a carrier of panic, a tool for pacification, or an agent of denial. Is spatial audio the new velvet curtain offering

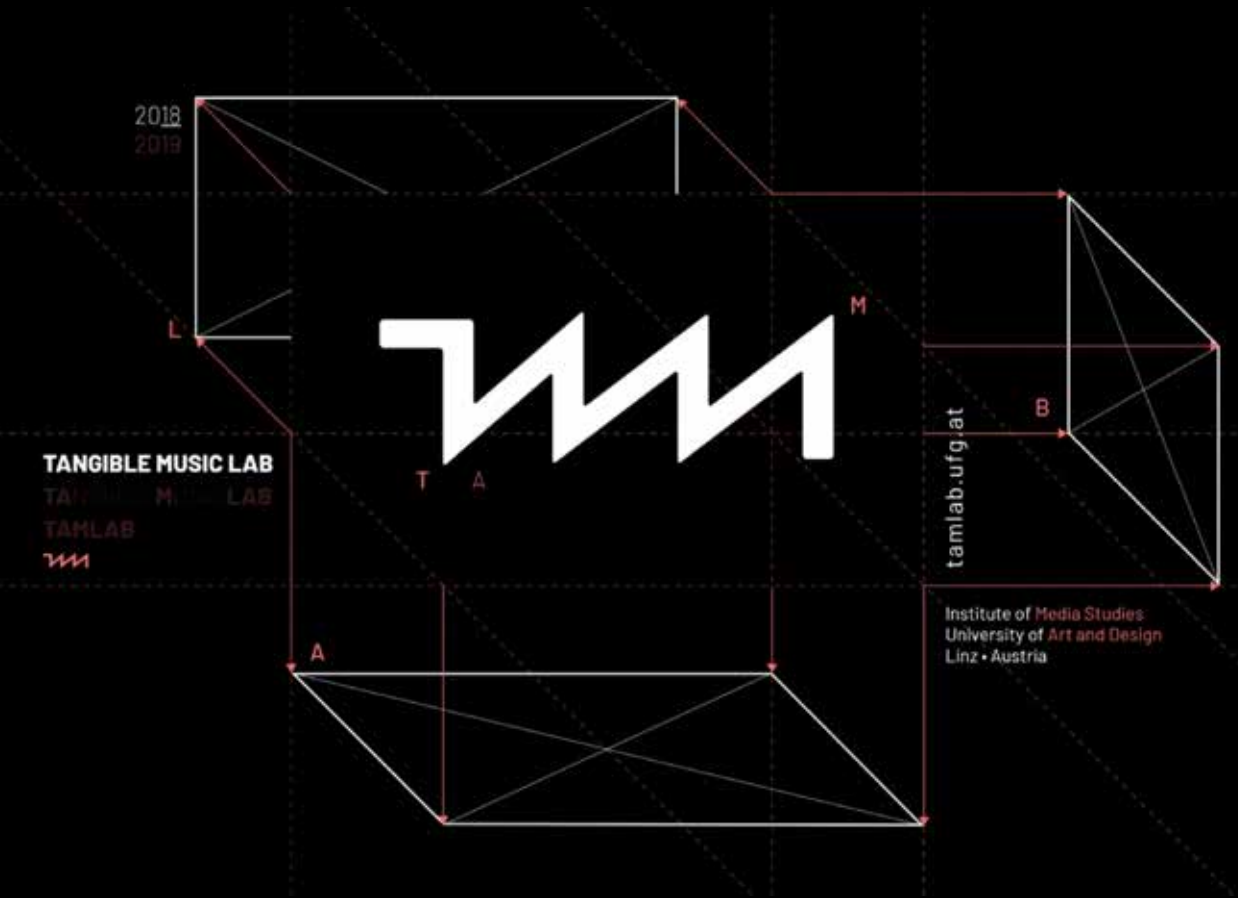
comfort while the walls crack? Or can it carve out spaces for dissonance, for listening against the grain?

Audible Denial, Sonic Unheard explores these tensions. As artists and listeners, we inhabit paradoxes: we perform while the ship sinks, compose while structures fail, and tune our ears to what remains unheard. In this context, does the digital music environment become a sanctuary, a spectacle, an aesthetic pleasure, or even an acoustic blindfold? Through the textures of electroacoustic music and spatial sound, we invite reflection on the forms of listening that may be complicit with denial, the sounds that are erased, filtered, or conveniently forgotten, and the subtle shifts in perception that occur when we start listening to what was previously suppressed. Sonic art traces the contours of panic, not to explain it but to stay close to its pulse.



Brunch at the Tangible Music Lab, Tabakfabrik Linz

The doors of our Tangible Music Lab will be open for those attending this year's Ars Electronica Festival. If you are interested in visiting us, some demos, snacks, and drinks will be prepared on Saturday, September 6th from 11 am until 2 pm at the Tangible Music Lab location in the Tabakfabrik Linz.



LISTENING ROOM

During the *Sonic Saturday* the ABU's Produktions-Studio will become the space for the *Listening Room*. This studio with its 20.2 speaker array will allow visitors to perceive multichannel music in a relaxed way. Visitors can enter, exit, and move freely through the space, gaining access to 29 selected fixed-media pieces from the call for contributions.



© Bogi Nagy

Program with selected multichannel works:

- Lars Bröndum (SE) / *Infinite Mass* / 2024 / 9:06 min
- T.E.C. [Te-En Chen (TW)] / *Hallucinations* / 2025 / 10:00 min
- Ricardo Dal Farra (AR/CA) / *SENSE* / 2018 / 7:25 min
- Enrico Dorigatti (IT) / *Cryoconite* / 2022 / 8:22 min
- Renato Fiorito (IT) / *Sei di nuovo qui* / 2025 / 15:46 min
- Jānis Garančs (LV) / *Latent Dictatorship Spirals* / 2025 / 8:30 min
- Thomas Gorbach (AT) / *The Tensioactive Interlayer* / 2025 / 8:30 min
- Patrick Hartono (ID) / *Hutan Plastik* / 2024 / 9:16 min
- Lenz Heinrich (DE) / *Assembler* / 2024 / 12:49 min
- Tetiana Khoroshun (UA) / *Ij* / 2025 / 17:00 min
- Panayiotis Kokoras (GR) / *Useless Box* / 2023 / 10:10 min
- Patrick K.-H. [Anton Iakhontov (RU)] / *ΔΔΔΔ A4* / 2024 / 13:28 min
- Robert B. Lisek (PL/DE) / *Quantum Fields Synthesis* / 2014 / 8:09 min
- Ágnes Máthé (HU) / *Interspace* / 2024 / 8:16 min
- João Pedro Oliveira (PT) / *La Mer Émeraude* / 2018 / 11:30 min
- Kasey Pocius (CA) / *Life moves quickly//Life moves slowly* / 2025 / 13:00 min
- Gianluca Pompilio (IT) / *Heliocline* / 2025 / 5:51 min
- Karmen Ponikvar (SI) / *Murni* / 2024 / 10:19 min
- Leah Reid (US) / *Reverie* / 2019-2020 / 10:30 min
- Ana Maria Rodriguez (IT) / *The frequency of flowers* / 2024 / 15:00 min
- Marcin Rupocinski (PL) / *Ghost Circuit* / 2025 / 14:00 min
- Dimitris Savva (CY) / *Spacing in* / 2024 / 8:17 min
- Markus Sepperer (AT) / *Angry Birds Suite* / 2024 / 11:20 min
- Tim Shatnny (RU) / *Fluidics 2* / 2025 / 4:00 min
- Droki Ouro [Ryne Siesky (PH/US)] / *grind* / 2019 / 8:00 min
- Riccardo Tesorini (IT) / *Point of Instability* / 2023 / 6:30 min
- Amir Teymuri (IR) / *Warping Time in search of Similarity* / 2025 / 11:30 min
- Todor Todoroff (BE) / *Voices Part III – Resistance* / 2020 / 13:30 min
- Brane Zorman (SI) / *SUS* / 2025 / 17:03 min

SOUND INSTALLATION

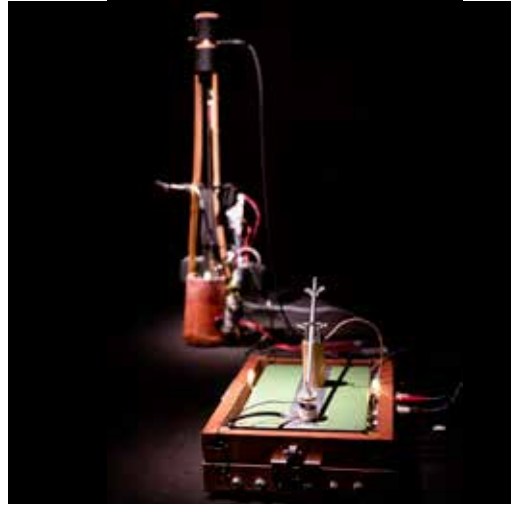
Kinda Hassan (LB)

Autonomics ter

Fragmented finds are sculpted to become performative sonic automata in a musical installation. The environment of the installation *Autonomics ter* (2025) is created in two separate but connected spaces, one where the automata perform, and another where they resonate in a sound composition. This allows for the unfolding of the dialectics of perception.

Software & Hardware Engineer: Mr. Stock (NL)

Autonomics ter is a project supported by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture.



© Pierre Gondard

INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Laura Adel (PL), Enrique Mendoza (MX) [Spatial Music]

Interworld

Amid residues of the oblivion—industrial leftovers, ruins or scraps—lies the *Interworld*. This interactive environment merges objects, projections, and sound into dynamic coexistence. 3D-printed scans of stones are an invitation to interplay, shifting the qualities of projected imagery and reshaping the surrounding audio-sphere. By integrating digitality with organic aesthetics, *Interworld* opens a gateway to a seamless fusion of nature and technology, inviting the viewer into a burgeoning synergy of both realms.

Project developed during residency at Tangible Music Lab in Linz, Austria. Programming support: Dariusz Jackowski. An installation created as an artistic part of a doctoral project developed at the Doctoral School of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław, under the mentorship of Prof. Jakub Jernajczyk.



© Laura Adel

FILM PROJECTION

Sergei Eisenstein (RU), Rodrigo Sigal (MX)

¡Que Viva México!

Live Diffusion

Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948) didn't fully realize his film project *¡Que Viva Mexico!* (90 min) but an edited version of his original footage was released in 1979. This remarkable film became emblematic in film scholarship, not only in the context of Eisenstein's transnational aesthetics, but especially for its embodiment of the significant shift that occurred at that time from the sensory, experimental regime of modern art to the process of massification of the senses in the global mass culture.

Rodrigo Sigal approached the new soundtrack for *¡Que Viva Mexico!* from two perspectives. On the one hand, he coupled the movie characters with "timbral motives" in order to achieve an identity between what is seen and what is heard. On the other hand, he explored the behavior of the

visual layers of the movie in order to segment the soundtrack.

Alternative Soundtrack by Rodrigo Sigal, CMMAS, Mexico

Presented with the kind support of the Embassy of Mexico in Austria.



© Sergei Eisenstein

MOBILE LIVE ELECTRONICS PERFORMANCE

Lara Stanic (RS/CH)

Waves

Waves (2020/2025 revised version / 15 min) is a composition for several performers with mobile live electronics via smartphones and portable loudspeakers.

It is a performative piece inspired by the sounds of our digital communication—data and numbers sent through the air and landscapes, as waves, as frequencies.

During the performance, sounds and noises are fed in via the mobile phone microphones, processed, and reproduced via the loudspeakers. The built-in sensors react to the movement of the performers and influence musical parameters. Together with the students of TamLab and ABU, Lara Stanic has developed a new version of the

piece *Waves* for Ars Electronica 2025.

The performance takes place in the hallways, foyer, and ends in the garden of Anton Bruckner University. The audience is invited to follow the sounds and to move along with the performers.



© Kathrin Schulthess

CONCERTS

Sensory Code—Multichannel Media Experience

© Enrique Mendoza



Multichannel media experience with spatial works from young composers from the Anton Bruckner University, Linz.

- Christian Push (AT) / *Antropomedia* / 2025 / 10 min
- Tatiana Panyaeva (RU) / *Flâner* / 2025 / 9 min
- Pier Samuele Pratesi (IT) / *Cyber-Buntspecht* / 2025 / 9 min / Live diffusion
- Leo Gaigg (AT) / *Ignis Fatuus* / 2025 / 7 min / Live diffusion
- Atousa Falamarzian (atusai) (IR) / *su* / 2025 / 8 min / Live diffusion
- Sam Erpelding (LU) / *To the Dead Poplar* / 2024 / 8 min / Live diffusion

Postdigital Lutherie Concert (Live)— Students and Faculty of the Tangible Music Lab, University of Arts Linz

Thomas Geissl (DE)

An Excerpt from the Turntangilism Series

How can a traditional turntable setup be expanded through digital technologies to enable new forms of musical expression, while preserving its original functionality? This work explores how turntablism, sequencing, and live sampling can come together in a hybrid instrument that introduces new ways of performing, while staying true to the turntable's analog roots.

With Sandra Muciño (MX), Gorka Egino (ES), Aldin Dapo (BA), Boris Shershenkov (RU), Andreas Grünauer (AT), Olli-Pekka Lankinen (FI); Ensemble Conductor: Bernhard Breuer (AT)

Post-Digital Ensemble

The Ensemble performs a collaboratively developed composition on instruments with a post-digital reference—some completed, others still in progress.

Ulla Rauter (AT), Sandra Muciño (MX), Lilith Isa (AT)

Unmuted Gasps

Three female artists take the stage, using custom-built interfaces to channel expression through sound produced vocally and interaction in space.



© Bogi Nagy

C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab (TW)

Rheometer Concert by C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab

Curated by C-LAB Taiwan Sound Lab

Nai-Chuan Cheng (TW)

Eternal Overture Before the Darkness

Everyone in life will inevitably encounter death. If we view death as another beginning, then our current existence is like playing an overture for this major event. *Eternal Overture Before the Darkness* (2025 / 15 min) asks:

Is it a brilliant, vibrant spark?

A lasting, eternal radiance?

An extravagantly dazzling shine?

A somber, shadowed silence?

Or a colorless, tasteless solitude?

Before this dim world (death) begins, what have we left behind?

What kind of spirit is profound enough to invite deep reflection, to leave something eternal?

Perhaps, we are all merely small fragments in the grand cycle of the universe.

Lighting: Han-Sheng Lin (TW)

Performer: Kai-Ting Chang (TW)

Li-Hsin Shyu (TW)

Gestures of Will

In this work, the artist attempts to associate various timbres and techniques of the saxophone with different forms of will, transforming the latter into gestures of sound.

The structure of this work titled *Gestures of Will* (2023 / 10 min) is A B C D C' D' B' A'.

In section A, the mouthpiece is removed, and the breath sound seems to be the thoughts in the mind, or the sound of gas and blood flowing in the human body; the noise is the sound of heart-wrenching. Section B comprises multiphonics and overtones of saxophone, along with electronic sound based on multiple layers of pre-recorded sounds of saxophone, to present a vibrant will of life. Section C employs an atonal pitch design, representing the true freedom of the will achieved in the game of self. Section D is relatively static, like a gesture of life that progresses layer by layer, tranquil, far-reaching, and ever-blooming.

Performer: Ping-Hung Huang (TW)

Chih-Yun Wang (TW), Ping-Sheng Wu (TW)

Superimposed (s, t)

The work titled *Superimposed* (2025 / 15 min) explores how perceptual experience flows between digital and instrumental music. Two artists (an audio-visual artist and a composer) seek to transform the denominator of their mutual resonance based on their respective imagination of music, sound, light, signal, and space.

The core concept revolves around how connections are established between “mediations.” With electronic sounds trying to directly convey the emotions of instrumental music and the latter being empowered with dynamism by borrowing the structure of electronic media form, this is a

process of “becoming each other” that allows for expanding, beyond sampling, real instrumental sounds as the work’s elements. Furthermore, the subtle sounds and body motions produced during each music performance are captured; the latter become reference data for the digital processing of the electronic sounds.

With the data of sounds and gestures in performing, a virtual parallel space from the past beyond hearing emerges from the visual, activating the current music sounds/music “space” of the performer on site. Multiple deconstructions and reconstructions of perceptions and body memories in different time-spaces take shape through the flow of common signals between instrument sound, sounds, and images. Note: In the title, “s” and “t” indicates “Interwoven Sound” and “Superimposed Time” respectively.

Performer: Kai-Ting Chang (TW)

William Kuo (TW)

rustfruit

rustfruit (2025 / 10 min) is a work of xenological sound design, constructing an alien auditory ecosystem where the familiar laws of acoustics dissolve into an unsettling other. It is an autonomous, self-modifying system that behaves less like a composition and more like an emergent organism. Stochastic triggers that induce environmental shocks allow the system to learn and interrogate its constraints before reaching

critical states of transformation. Drawing inspiration from the parasitic fungus *cordyceps*—which infiltrates, manipulates, and ultimately consumes its host—the piece explores fragile interdependencies of sounds that are present, absent, implied, and imagined. Here, feedback behaves as a primitive metabolic process, its instability mimicking the pulsed infrasound signaling of some silicon-based mycelium. By allowing the system to govern its own decay and rebirth and by encouraging feral signal behavior, *rustfruit* reflects on the inevitability of cyclical disruption and the resilience (or fragility) of interconnected forms.

Chia-Hui Chen (TW)

Réplisome IV

Réplisome is a series of works for solo instrument and electronic sound, inspired by the differentiation of a single cell. The piece *Réplisome IV* (2025 / 12 min) maps this process into four stages—“Gene Alignment,” “Blurred Exoplasm,” “Endoplasmic Components,” and “Clarified Exoplasm”—ultimately branching into multiple, distinct evolutionary paths. While paying homage to deep-rooted traditions, the work boldly explores the frontiers of contemporary sound. In it, the sheng and symphony orchestra is foregrounded, then real-time electronics and artificial-intelligence layers are threaded together into a multi-dimensional sonic tapestry.

Thanks to its rich overtones and sustained harmonies, the sheng serves as the timbral nucleus. A multichannel sound field captures, transforms, and extends its resonance in real time, shaping a fluid, three-dimensional space while preserving the performer's acoustic outline. In designated sections, Artificial Intelligence becomes an improvising partner: trained on recordings of the sheng and the orchestra, the AI reimagines melodies, textures, and rhythms live. Its responses—sometimes tightly aligned, sometimes purposefully divergent—inject unpredictable conversational energy into the ensemble and the hall. This organic interweaving of human and algorithm raises fresh questions around the meanings of “creator” and “life” within music.

Performer: Li-Chin Li (TW)

XTRUX [Po-Jui Su (TW), Chen-En Chiu (TW), Chun-Chueh Lee (TW), Chun-Wei Tseng (TW), Yung-Jen Huang (TW)]

Boulder

Boulder (2024 / 15 min), is an audio-visual performance about labor, the juxtaposition of artificial/natural, organic/inorganic, and is built on a game engine. Using this technology, XTRUX created virtual worlds where non-player

characters (NPCs) project the figures of real-world laborers, who wander, push boulders, and move around, just as they do in real life. Spectators experience this “Sisyphean asceticism” with the NPCs as they move through a seemingly endless cycle. Through the game engine, computer music, and immersive sound technology, *Boulder* attempts to deconstruct and reconfigure these contemporary issues, providing a field for modern people to rethink their existence and guiding the audience to move between technological narratives and bodily perceptions.

XTRUX has long been concerned with the changes in contemporary perception due to the iteration of digital identity and video tools and often explores the current state of human perception through the interactive debate between the virtual and the real.

Together with sound artist Yung-Jen Huang, they reassemble the sound of industrial machinery and digital glitch to fragment and recreate the compression of modern social life and engage in a dialogue between the real-time computed audio and the ever-present boulder imagery in the work. Is what they are seeking just another form of “pushing boulders”? Just like Sisyphean's continuous reincarnation, they seem to be pushing towards an indeterminate endpoint, and perhaps this process itself is where the meaning lies.



Mexican Centre for Music and Sonic Arts—Recent Works Created at CMMAS

Concert curated by Rodrigo Sigal (MX)

This concert explores a series of past and recent technology-based sound works of artists related to the Mexican Centre for Music and Sonic Arts in Morelia, Mexico. The aim is to share some of the acousmatic perspectives of the multiple composers that work and create at the Centre.

Rodrigo Sigal (MX)

Friction of things in other places

When things occur simultaneously, there will always be different levels of friction. Energy, disagreement, pitch, physical action and others are areas where difference can generate musical material. *Friction of things in other places* (2008/8 min) explores different levels to structure sound ideas through differences in material and sound sources. The piece was created at the composer's studio in London.

Carole Chargerón (FR)

La Selva ya no suena

Based on an article I read several years ago about endangered jungle sounds, *La Selva ya no suena* (2022 / 8:31 min) is a fictional soundscape made up of samples recorded in the Costa Rican jungle that, thankfully, still sounds!

This piece was composed thanks to the Sistema de Apoyos a la Creación y Proyectos Culturales (Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Artes, Mexico).

Tobías Álvarez (MX)

Paralelismos

This electroacoustic composition takes inspiration from the parallels (*Paralelismos* in Spanish) that occur between the transformation of sound and semantic perception: between the so-called reduced listening (which concerns the forms of sound itself) and causal listening (which may be perceived through image and language). Most of the materials and resources

that make up the work are recorded instruments (percussions, clarinet, trumpet, piano, etc.), objects (dice, cards, games, marbles, scissors, etc.) and field recordings (e.g. nature phenomena and mechanical sounds, sounds relating to transportation, among others). *Paralelismos* (2024 / 9:11 min) also incorporates digitally synthesized and transformed sounds from modular synthesis, as well as audio processing from pre-recorded musical instruments and other sources. The extra-musical elements that inspire this work touch upon the act of playing and its metaphor within a larger social context that relates to transportation and communication in contemporary life. The management of natural and technological resources is also referenced, particularly their relationship viewed from the Yucatan peninsula in southeast Mexico, where vast cenotes (groundwater sinkholes) and natural caves interact with flying insects and imaginary soundscapes. In this sense, the work oscillates between the deductive and the inductive, between the general and the local, thus provoking a reflection on the forms, trajectories, and starting points between sound, music, and reality. In this case, a Latin-American reality.

Rodrigo Sigal (MX)

Brain inPulse

Here we find looping structures to generate a pulse that cannot be grasped until the patterns are evident. This evidence is subtle and useful for connecting levels of information. The piece titled *Brain inPulse* (2012 / 5:10 min) aims to work pulse within defined spectral areas and by repetitions where elements are superimposed and therefore musical functions can be shared.

Tania Rubio (MX)

The Guardians

Deep in the jungle, among humid roots, dwells a silent army, *The Guardians* (2025 / 10 min). Insects transform death into fertilizer, regulate natural chaos, and are part of a food chain that regenerates life. Insects are messengers of the state of health of the planet. Their presence is the announcement of life; their silence is the message that death is near. Insects are the guardians. Invisible guardians, millenary guardians, who sustain life on earth.

The work is based on fieldwork conducted in the Amazon Rainforest in 2025 with the Acoustic Ecology Lab in Mexico (LEAM).

Francisco Colasanto (AR)

Mambo

Mambo (2024 / 3 min) is a tribute to Javier Álvarez, who passed away in 2023. Drawing inspiration from the sounds of his iconic work *Mambo a la Braque*, Francisco Colasanto sought to reimagine it, weaving in echoes of dance and celebration. Javier was a person who lived with joy and a passion for festivity, and it is with that vibrant spirit that I wish to remember him.

Sofía Matuz (MX)

Aquarius

Aquario (2020 / 4:20 min) is an acousmatic work that traces an imaginary soundscape by intertwining biological rhythms and binaural pulses. The piece explores the sounds of a body in gestation, shaping an aural ecosystem that moves between embodied sonic details and broader spatial textures.

Tonalli Nakamura (MX)

Encefal

This work titled *Encefal* (2020 / 7:39 min) is based on the human encephalon, and part of a series of works based on the central nervous system. The encephalon is the part of the central nervous system in vertebrates that is enclosed within the skull (which serves to protect it). It is composed of three parts: the forebrain, midbrain, and hindbrain. Among other functions, it is responsible for receiving and interpreting countless signals coming from both the body and the external environment. In a typical human, the cerebral cortex is estimated to contain 16 billion neurons, while the entire encephalon contains 86 billion. These neurons communicate with each other through long fibers of protoplasm called axons, which carry trains of electrical impulses known as action potentials to distant parts of the brain or other areas of the body.



MEDIUM SONORUM CONCERT

Dive deep into freshly-made immersive electronic music with the 20.4 system of the Sonic Lab. This is a concert designed to perceive spatial music selected from the call for contributions that relates to *Audible Denial*, *Sonic Unheard*. The program shows a variety of styles of multichannel music from around the world.

Zhao Jiajing (CN)

Glitchopolis

Glitchopolis (2024 / 6:50 min) is an electroacoustic composition exploring information overload. Drawing inspiration from the metropolis of London, the piece captures the intense flux of information through countless encounters, dynamic traffic, and bustling construction sites. Leveraging the expansive sound canvas of an ambisonic surround sound system, *Glitchopolis* crafts a condensed, morphing auditory landscape using primarily field recordings obtained in London city. The composition unfolds across two layers of musical space: a realistic space featuring intensive sound collages created with field recordings, and an abstract mental space characterized by artificial reverb and granular processing. The mental layer of space serves as a playground for glitching and feedback as analogies for overwhelm. The composition therefore communicates the frequent experience of a “brain crash” or “brain freeze” for individuals dealing with an excessive amount of information.

Rosario Di Rosa (IT)

S'Animu

S'Animu (2025 / 5:28 min) is an acousmatic composition that explores the inner soundscape as a space of resistance and transformation. Born from a personal migration experience—from Sicily to Sardinia—the piece confronts the tension between deep-rooted cultural memories and the uncertainty of new territories. In dialogue with the festival theme, *S'Animu* inhabits the space between revelation and concealment: material and ritual sounds dissolve into electronic abstractions, while the sonic landscape builds and disintegrates, evoking both lost memories and emerging possibilities

of listening. Through a tapestry of organic and synthetic textures, enhanced by psychoacoustic spatialization, *S'Animu* creates a space of suspension—neither pacifying nor alarming—but open to the ambiguity of a world in transition. In a time of structural collapse and invisible fractures, *S'Animu* questions our relationship with loss, identity, and belonging, crafting a fragile sonic refuge between ritual and emptiness.

Dominic Sambucco (IT/CA)

Iterations

Iterations (2025 / 8:29 min) is a multichannel electroacoustic work that explores the concept of repetition. This piece examines the nature of iterative sounds, pushing the perceptual boundaries of this category. Through this exploration, I sought to address questions about how repetition is experienced: When accelerated, at what point does repetition transform into a continuous sound, and what new auditory phenomena emerge? Similarly, when does repetition cease to be perceived as a unified whole? Michel Chion's *Guide to Sound Objects* provided a theoretical foundation for this work. In his typology of sound objects (TARTYP), iterative sounds are represented by the symbol " and occupy the entire right section of the recapitulative table. Chion observes that “depending on context and listening intention, the same sound phenomenon could be perceived in three different ways: as a grainy, sustained sound, as an iterative sound, or, at a pinch, as a series of isolated impulses.” These observations highlight the fluid nature of perception and the thresholds at which repetition takes on new forms of meaning. Building on this idea, Dominic Sambucco poses the question: When does a repetitive sound stop being perceived as a sound and start being perceived as a rhythm?

Itza Garcia Ordoñez (MX)

Generation Loss

In this piece titled *Generation Loss* (2024 / 7:33 min), Itza Garcia Ordoñez explores the sonic consequences of generation loss in analog reproduction and machine learning generation. In archival research, generation loss refers to the gradual degradation of quality that happens in the physical reproduction of analog media, leaving out digital reproduction, where quality stays consistent. Nevertheless, digital reproduction in generative AI follows a different logic. Copies often involve the re-introduction of a prompt rather than the preservation of a generated result and, in some cases, they fail to produce an output altogether.

Itza Garcia Ordoñez generated AI outputs from complex, unconventional prompts—such as electric hums, woodwind and string multiphonics, and extended techniques of the voice. When faced with prompts outside its training, commercial AI often responds with an empty audio file. Yet, by compressing the audio of these “empty” files, Garcia Ordoñez was able to reveal a residual signal—a dense, gritty noise that arose from the failure of generation. She compounded one hour of material and bounced it onto cassette tape, then she trained an AI-timbre transfer model with the digitized cassette recordings. Finally, she fed the original hour-long AI material to the timbre transfer model and curated a selection of sounds that make up the piece.

Daniel Neumann (DE)

A Sited Thought for Heaven & Earth

A Sited Thought for Heaven & Earth was a live performance on Emmett Palaima’s sound installation *Heaven & Earth Diptych* (Rhizome World, NYC). It used the installation as a site to explore dynamics between felt vibration and audible sound in embodied listening. The work here (2025/13:28 min) is a spatial sound mix for octophonic cube, from the recording of the performance, creating a new acousmatic site, disconnected, representational, and strained.

Ana Dall’Ara-Majek (FR)

Pixel Springtail Promenade

Collembola (springtails) are small arthropods; some of them as small as pixels. This work, called *Pixel Springtail Promenade* (2015 / 15:15 min), explores the notion of the “parasite” in music through the use of granular synthesis, glitch, micro-montage, and abrupt aleatoric cuts. The 16-channel system serves to create an aural version of *The Alice Illusion*; a “body swap” experiment where scientists manage to convince people that they are the size of dolls or giants (Björn van der Hoort, Arvid Guterstam, Henrik Ehrsson, 2011). Inspired by this experiment, Ana Dall’Ara-Majek sought to alter the scale of familiar environments and bring about in the listener the sensation of changing size—to the point of becoming as small as a springtail. This piece is part of *Nano-Cosmos*, a cycle of acousmatic pieces dedicated to insects, small arthropods, and microorganisms.

Varun Kishore (IN)

Kraken

Kraken (2024 / 03:15 min) is an exploration of thalassophobia-as-sublime, realized through recorded manipulations of unplugged electric guitar with modular synthesizer, glitchy polyrhythms, and musical gestures reminiscent of extreme metal music. Small gestures are stretched, expanded, and combined with oppressive low frequencies to convey the sense of depth, pressure, and darkness the artist associates with the deep ocean.



© Bogi Nagy

Brucknerhaus Linz (AT)

LINZER KLANGWOLKE 25—URBAN PULSE

presented by Sparkasse OÖ and LINZ AG

What is the pulse of the city of Linz? What rhythm does its heart beat to? What beat is inscribed in it? The concept of the Linzer Klangwolke 25—*URBAN PULSE* explores these questions, revealing the pulse of Linz and, above all, rendering it audible. Following on from the origins of the Linzer Klangwolke more than 50 years ago, *URBAN PULSE* puts the sound experience at the center of a story that illuminates the city of Linz in five scenes: industry, Danube and nature, Nibelungen Bridge/history of the city, “Blackbird” as a symbol of freedom, and a festival in the city. The soundtrack to the story is provided by the successful Upper Austrian composer Johannes Berauer. He has set the pulse of the city to music and composed an orchestral work that was recorded by the Bruckner Orchester Linz. This lays the musical foundation for *URBAN PULSE*, which will be staged on September 6 at 8:30 p.m. in Donaupark Linz.

The rhythm of the Klangwolke evening will be set by internationally renowned percussionist Christoph Sietzen, who will perform with his ensemble MOTUS Percussion in a container city on the Danube. This will form the scenic setting for *URBAN PULSE*.

Well-known director Simon Eichenberger is in charge of dramaturgy. Together with set designer Charles Quiggin and lighting designer Manfred Nikitser, who both have extensive experience with Klangwolke, the renowned Swiss director and choreographer will stage the action. The Linzer Klangwolke 25 extends beyond the moment of the performance—bringing the city’s pulse to life at various locations in the days leading up to the main event.

Artistic team of the Linzer Klangwolke 25

Direction, concept: Simon Eichenberger | Composition: Johannes Berauer | Multipercussion: Christoph Sietzen | Stage design: Charles Quiggin | Lighting design: Manfred Nikitser | Video design: Grauwerk | Production Visuals: Marissa Munderloh | Bruckner Orchester Linz | Conductor: Markus Poschner

klangwolke.at

Linzer Klangwolke 2024 © Oliver Erenyi

Brucknerhaus Linz (AT)

Augen auf, Musik!

International Brucknerfest Linz 2025

4 September–11 October

At the Brucknerfest 2025, the interplay between sound and visuals takes center stage.

The International Brucknerfest Linz is dedicated this year to the reciprocal relationship between music and image. Under the title *Augen auf, Musik!* (*Open your eyes, music!*) the visual dimension of music history is explored—from opera to film. The connection to Anton Bruckner serves as the starting point: contrary to the common perception of the composer as a representative of “absolute music”, the festival highlights the programmatic and pictorial elements in his works.

More than ever, the Brucknerhaus, and indeed the entire city of Linz, becomes a festival venue: the Danube waterfront, the Moviemiento cinema, the ORF regional studio, the city’s churches, and some exceptional locations such as the Salzstadel, the Brunnhofer Gallery and the Kepler Hall play host to events.

A varied program ranges from Franz Liszt’s program music and Richard Wagner’s concept of the “Gesamtkunstwerk” to Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the film music of Bernard Herrmann and John Williams.

brucknerfest.at
brucknerhaus.at



© Haruka Akagi

Performance artist Akiko Nakayama will use her Alive Painting technique to “translate” Franz Liszt’s *Faust Symphony*, performed by Orchestra Wiener Akademie, into images (September 12, 7:30 p.m., Brucknerhaus Linz).

Theater & Digital Media

Theater has always been an art form that merges and incorporates different media and artistic disciplines. From the outset, digital forms of expression have found their way into experimental stage works and, in recent years, have become increasingly prominent and widely adopted in theater productions. This development has accelerated significantly during and since the Covid pandemic. Digital tools have become more present not only in the artistic elements of theater—from stage design to dramaturgical development to audience engagement—but digital technologies themselves have also increasingly become central to what is presented on stage. In addition, digital approaches have become an essential element in the practical production process, though they often remain invisible to audiences.

Over the past three years, Ars Electronica has explored these digital currents in theater-making together with a network of partners across Europe as part of the ACuTe project. Together, we developed testbeds for interactivity, performance, and technology, resulting in nine productions staged in European theaters and generating a wealth of new methods and artistic approaches that we are now sharing with the broader theater community.

In addition to ACuTe, Ars Electronica has engaged in long-standing partnerships in this field, collaborating with theaters, festivals, and production labs to foster exchange between artists, technologists, and institutions in order to explore new performative languages for the digital age.

Some of the most compelling examples can be experienced in this year's festival program, showcasing the current state of (digital) play on European stages. Together they reflect a field in transformation—where digitality is not simply a medium of enhancement but a structural principle that informs how we rehearse futures, negotiate agency, and stage the political. The relationship between human and non-human actors is central to many of the works. In *The Trial Against Humanity* by Det Norske Teatret (NO), an omniscient AI named Omnitron calls humanity itself into question, confronting the audience with the ethical logic of digital systems and their cold rationality masked as care. A similarly critical gaze on techno-solutionism underpins *Ekklesia*, a VR-based immersive experience developed by Staatstheater Augsburg (DE) and artists Benjamin Seuffert and Lukas Joshua Baueregger: here, participants collaboratively build a new civilization from scratch—only to

face the consequences of their design choices. Elsewhere, digitality becomes the very grammar of storytelling. In *White Hunger*, brought to Linz by Oulu Theatre (FI), projected illusions, game aesthetics, and historical trauma interweave into a performative reflection on fragility and survival. *The Butterfly Project* by the Fondazione Teatro Comunale di Modena—a co-creation between students from Helsinki, Gdańsk, and Modena—rethinks operatic production processes through sustainable digital infrastructures and AI-enhanced audience interaction. What emerges is a new mode of collective authorship shaped by climate consciousness and remote collaboration. Digital theater in this context is not merely about immersion—but about entanglement. *The Oracle* by Victorine van Alphen | Brave New Human and the Netherlands Film Academy envelops participants in a ritual space where screens act both as mirrors and agents. The performance draws from Indigenous philosophies and asks how human subjectivity is continually reconfigured by image culture and algorithmic structures. This dissolution of the autonomous self resonates with *AREYOUARE*, a hybrid performance by Silke Grabinger (AT), where the only human on stage interacts with domestic robots and AI projections—a feminist

reinterpretation of presence and control. Perception itself becomes a dramaturgical concern in the site-specific installation *Parallels (Linz)* by Marc Da Costa (US/PT) and Matthew Niederhauser (US). It uses machine learning and a responsive LED wall to reflect the environment back through the lens of a neural network—transforming real-time vision into a continuous act of reinterpretation. Just as *Parallels (Linz)* embeds artificial seeing into public space, the exhibition by the Spiel und Objekt cohort from the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts (DE) explores identity formation and memory through speculative toys, performative archiving, and sonic architectures. This performative framework challenges not just how we tell stories, but how we relate to each other across space, time, and code. Together, these works mark a shift from digital as device to digital as dramaturgy—where networks, simulations, rituals, and sensors become part of theater’s evolving vocabulary. What emerges is a stage that is no longer fixed in place but distributed, reactive, and deeply political.

This program has been developed and is presented in the context of ACuTe. ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

SILK Fluegge (AT)

AREYOUARE

Pre-Showing

The project is a pre-showing of *AREYOUARE*. In *AREYOUARE*, performer Silke Grabinger is surrounded by robots. Three robot vacuum cleaners, a kitchen robot, and a robot dog interact not only with her—as the only person, but also with each other in unpredictable ways. While the work is being done, a re-exploration of boundaries takes place, reminiscent of Carolee Schneemann's performance *Up to and including her Limits*.

The core research question of the project *AREYOUARE* is the investigation of the tension between rear projections, hyperfeminism, and hybridization through the interaction between three robot vacuum cleaners, a kitchen robot, a robot dog, and a performer.

Concept, Choreography & Performance: Silke Grabinger
Rehearsal Director & Production Management: Gergely Dudás-Simó

Dramaturgy: Ludwig Felhofer, Silke Grabinger

Costum Design: Bianca Fladerer

Lighting Design: Max Windisch-Spoerk

Company Management: Amabel Thomas

Marketing & PR: Julia Lehner

Production Team: Marie Scholze

Video: Karol Kensy

Photo: Meinrad Hofer

Outside Eye: Martina Mara, Stephanie Meisl, Barbara von Rechbach

A collaboration between Silke Grabinger and Zirkus des Wissens. With kind support of the Department for Visual Communication of the University of Arts Linz and the Sigmund Freud Private University.



© Meinrad Hofer

Staatstheater Augsburg (DE)

Ekklesia

The Virtual Reality game Ekklesia transforms the audience members into participants of a virtual simulation: In this unique immersive theater experience, produced by Benjamin Seuffert and Lukas Joshua Baueregger at Staatstheater Augsburg, participants are tasked with creating a new civilization from scratch in a VR environment. Up to eight people enter a room and get placed around a big table together. After an introduction by a “scientist” and a Mixed Reality tutorial, everyone gets sent to their own virtual space to start placing buildings of their new settlement. The aim of the “experiment” is to gain insight into how the problems of a society can arise and how to respond to them. Everyone gets to decide which factors matter most to them personally and gets to see the consequences of their actions. Every decision about which building to place matters. Not only is the appearance of the city shaped by its buildings, but different aspects of a prospering society need to be balanced carefully. The story develops with each new building, as



© Benjamin Seuffert

three narrators adapt to the player’s every choice. Over the course of the experience, the gameplay gradually breaks down and is replaced by theatrical scenes in the form of 360° videos or impressive 3D renderings. Back in the real world, everyone receives an evaluation of their virtual society and there is room for an open discussion at the table.

Game Design & Development: Benjamin Seuffert
 Director & Project Management: Lukas Joshua Baueregger
 Text: Robert Maximilian Rausch
 Music: Lilijan Waworka

Det Norske Teatret (NO)

The Trial Against Humanity

Set in the year 2029, the world teeters on the brink of collapse. The Artificial Intelligence Omnitron proposes a radical solution: to eradicate the species responsible for the chaos: humans. However, Omnitron offers a glimmer of hope: humans can be uploaded to a cloud version, a gesture it considers an act of love.

This interactive performance titled *The Trial Against Humanity* invites the audience to question the verdict and defend themselves against Omnitron’s accusations. A showcase of excerpts from the original production.

Cast: Mohammed Aden Ali, Marianne Krogh, Joachim |
 Rafaelsen, Ane Dahl Torp | Voice: Ola E. Bø |
 Director: Peer Perez Øian | Dramaturg: Anders Hasmo |
 AI Technologist and Idea Developer: Pål Mørk Hansen |
 Set and Costume Designer: Unni Walstad |



© Det Norske Teatret

Video Designer: Eilif Fjeld | Composer: Sandra Kolstad |
 Lighting Designer: Per Willy Liholm | Sound Designer
 and AI Operator: Bjørnar Hopland | AI Engineer:
 Martin Pukstad

Developed and presented in the context of ACuTe.
 ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program
 of the European Union.

Parallels (Linz)

Parallels is a site-specific, responsive machine learning installation that transforms an LED wall into a portal for viewers to encounter the world and themselves through the lens of a neural network.

Each moment, a camera behind the wall takes a photograph of the ambient environment which is then reinterpreted and presented on the screen. As an interactive sculpture, *Parallels* seeks to embed emerging machine vision technologies directly within the landscape and built environment, questioning how new forms of artificial knowledge can be placed within a longue durée of human sense-making practices. The installation thus draws the sphere of machine vision into conversation with the surrounding architecture and the historical embeddedness

of the viewer, providing an occasion to meditate on a moment when ways of seeing are being reconfigured.

Parallels was first commissioned through Onassis ONX for Plásmata II: Ioannina.

This project is presented in the context of ACuTe. ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



© Pinelopi Gerasimou

Fondazione Teatro Comunale di Modena (IT), Agenzia per l'Energia e lo Sviluppo Sostenibile Associazione—AESS (IT), Opera BOX (FI), Heimspiel GmbH (DE), Opera Bałtycka w Gdańsku (PL), GOPACOM (BE)

Project Butterfly

Boosting environmental awareness in opera creation

Like the flutter of a butterfly's wings that can change the world, the *Butterfly Project* was created to retrace each stage of opera production and experiment with environmentally sustainable practices. Based on the idea that sustainability means preserving resources for future generations, the initiative invited students to be the driving creative force behind the artistic process and to reflect on sustainability. Sixteen-year-old students from high schools in Helsinki, Gdańsk, and Modena wrote the concepts for the three one-act operas, sharing and refining their ideas through online meetings. The opera premiered in all three cities in spring 2025. A key scenic element was the digital imagery designed by Heimspiel, an agency in Augsburg specialized in Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence. The project also adopted a CO₂ measurement tool developed by the UK-based sustainability leader for the cultural sector, Julie's Bicycle

(The Creative Climate Tools). Musical rehearsals were held remotely using the low-latency system Lo.La, while audiences interacted with a real-time AI-powered avatar specially developed by the German start-up Conversational Artificial Intelligence.

Developed and presented in the context of Project Butterfly. Project Butterfly: Boosting the environmental awareness in opera creation is a project co-funded by the European Commission under the Creative Europe program.



© Krzysztof Mysłkowski, Baltic Opera

Victorine van Alphen / Brave New Human (NL), IDlab (NL), Research Group Netherlands Filmacademy (NL)

The Oracle: Ritual for the Future (Experiment #3 for humans and non-humans)

The Oracle is a futuristic immersive performance-ritual that explores the deep entanglement between human beings, technology, and (AI-generated) image culture. It invites and encloses eight participants into an intimate 360-degree screen environment.

The screens function as agents and mirrors—reflecting and reshaping our perceptions of self, body, and an elusive “humanness.” Participants are guided by a live droid performer and a drone companion through a symbolic, interactive journey that blends ritual, performance, confrontation, and immersive installation into a single living system.

Participants shift between moral choice and passive absorption, navigating a choreography that is as much social as it is audiovisual.

They must negotiate moments of peer censorship, physical ritual, and shared decision-making, positioning themselves within the unfolding narrative. While technology takes a central role, the experience remains deeply personal, confronting visitors with moments of vulnerability, intimacy, and catharsis.

At its heart, *The Oracle* is not a spectacle of technology, but a reflection on it. Drawing from Buddhist and Indigenous Latin American philosophies, it questions the Western ideal of the autonomous human, proposing

instead a view of the self as fluid, formed and reformed through systems larger than us. Not “another AI show,” but a ritual of collective experiencing: confronting danger, while seducing with the non-human. Symbolic, embodied, and emotionally resonant.

Artist: Victorine van Alphen

AI-researcher: Valentin Vogelmann

3D Artist: Jacco Kooistra

Production: Naomi van Dijk

Immersive Setup: Bram Snijders & IDlab

Performance: Esther Noyon

Music: Merlijn Nash

Sound: Giel van Geloven

Advisors: Berthe Spoelstra, Nienke Huitinga & Yannick Noomen

Made possible through the funding of Immerse // Interact Stimuleringsfonds and the Netherlands-FilmFestival fellowship.

In collaboration with IDlab “Poetic laboratory for digital technologies,” Amsterdam.

This project is presented in the context of ACuTe. ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



© Victorine van Alphen



© Janne-Pekka Manninen

Oxi Koskelainen (FI), Antti Leppäniemi (FI), Tero Takalo (FI), Autuas Ukkonen (FI), Mika Ryytänen (FI), Antti Lindholm (FI), Eija Juutistenaho (FI), Jaana Kahra (FI), Henri Tuominen (FI), Elviira Kujala (FI), Joose Mikkonen (FI)

White Hunger

Oulu Theatre's *Nälkävuosi* in Linz

White Hunger (Nälkävuosi) is an epic play about the will to live, the fragility of structures and the necessity of struggle. It is based on a praised 2012 novel by Aki Ollikainen.

Using a powerful illusion of depth and projected visuals, the team has created a futuristic work of art inspired by the world of video games, conceptual art and popular culture. This special edition of *White Hunger* created for Ars Electronica brings the work's audiovisual world and dystopian-carnavalesque ethos to Linz.

Original Book: Aki Ollikainen
 Adaptation and Direction: Oxi Koskelainen
 Set Design and Visuals: Antti Leppäniemi
 Animations: Tero Takalo
 Costume Design: Autuas Ukkonen
 Lighting Design: Mika Ryytänen
 Sound Desing: Antti Lindholm and Oxi Koskelainen
 Make-up and Hair Design: Eija Juutistenaho
 Actress: Jaana Kahra
 Actor: Henri Tuominen
 Actress (virtual character): Elviira Kujala
 Voice-over Narrator: Joose Mikkonen

Developed and presented in the context of ACuTe. ACuTe is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Theater & Digital Media

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Converge © Bettina Gangl

Ars Electronica Futurelab

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ARS ELECTRA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

ONICA

As a longstanding pillar of Ars Electronica, the Animation Festival has, for decades, shaped the international discourse on animation and media art. Showcasing the winners and a curated selection of the New Animation Art category of the Prix Ars Electronica, it reflects a legacy of artistic innovation. With *Expanded—Conference on Animation and Interactive Art*, the Festival opens up new spaces for academic engagement at the intersection of art, science, and technology.

—Juergen Hagler, Director Ars Electronica Animation Festival

ARS ELECTRONICA ANIMATION FESTIVAL 2025

A collaboration between Ars Electronica and the University of Applied Sciences
Upper Austria, curated by Juergen Hagler and Daniela Duca De Tey

The 2025 Ars Electronica Animation Festival is a vibrant and diverse platform for exploring the latest developments in digital animation art. This year's program draws primarily from the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica submissions, which recently marked a significant shift from traditional computer animation toward the expansive realm of New Animation Art. The festival embraces artists who push the boundaries of the medium, offering innovative and experimental visual narratives. Highlighted programs—including the Prix Ars Electronica Best-Of, the thematic program PANIC, and Austrian Panorama—celebrate the medium's rich diversity.

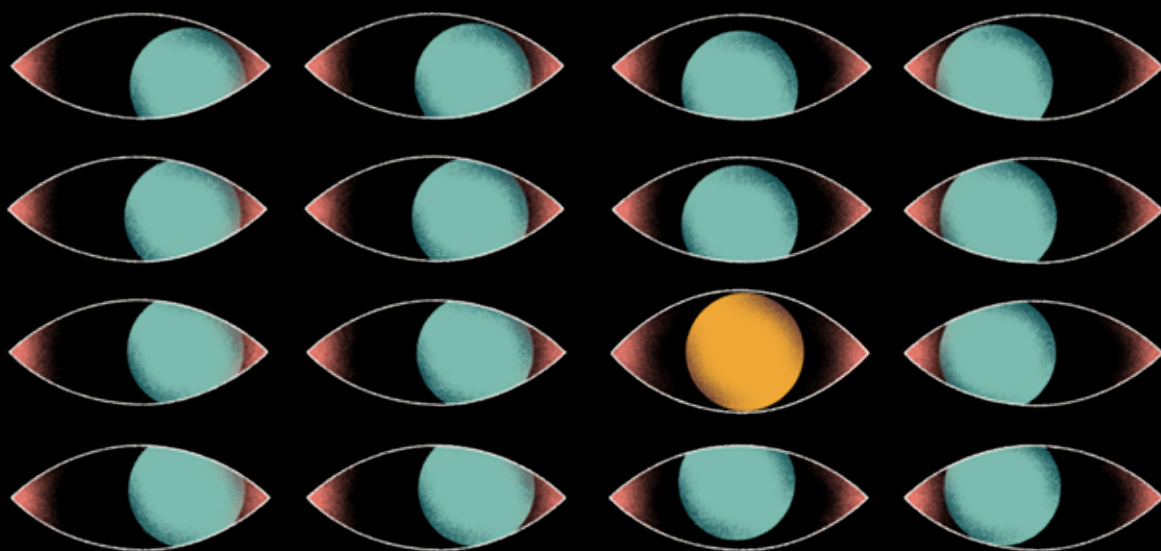
Out of 1,119 submissions in the Prix category New Animation Art, around 25 projects have been selected to be showcased. Additionally, the program includes the yearly Young Animations, celebrating talented filmmakers up to the age of 19 with a selection of short films submitted to the Prix in the u19—create your world category. This year's selection is further complemented by three guest programs curated by PROYECTOR Festival, Animationsinstitut of the Filmakademie

Baden-Württemberg, and the Hagenberg Campus of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria. Alongside the screenings, Ars Electronica Animation Festival features several award-winning artists presenting their work in person at the Deep Space 8K in the Ars Electronica Center. Alessandro Bavari (IT), Alona Rodeh (IL/RO), Wendi Yan (CN/US), and Total Refusal (AT) will share their films and discuss them with the audience.

Participating artists and filmmakers:

Alessandro Bavari (IT), Bob Bicknell-Knight (UK), Xavi Bou (ES), Ulu Braun (DE), fleuryfontaine (FR), Simón García-Miñaur (ES), Mihai Grecu (RO), Stefan Krische (AT), Boris Labbé (FR), Zhuyuan Liu (CN), Matthieu Mantovani (FR), Petra Mrša (HR), Niceaunties (SG), Erick Oh (US), Alona Rodeh (IL/RO), Jo Roy (CA), Laen Sanches (FR), Dagmar Schürer (AT/DE), Stefanie Schwarzwimmer (AT/DE), Total Refusal (AT), Lau Wai (HK), Wendi Yan (CN/US), Yu Shien Yang & Jin Keon (TW), Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo, Victoria Wolfersberger & Juergen Hagler (AT)

© Lea Obermair



PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA BEST-OF

Prix Ars Electronica Best-Of is a compilation of outstanding animations selected by the jury from submissions to the New Animation Art category of Prix Ars Electronica 2025. The program features one Award of Distinction and four Honorary Mentions, each telling a very different story: the unfolding of a mysterious supper; a day in the life of a motion-captured clone trapped in endless performance; a requiem for a humanoid AI on the verge of being discarded as electronic waste; the forensic unraveling of a bullet's path during a police arrest; and three unusual sporting events where the rules of victory and defeat are turned upside down in a world at stake.

Supper, Erick Oh (US)

The Cast of the Invisible, Lau Wai (HK)

ARIA 夢姬, Yu Shien Yang & Jin Keon (TW)

Sixty-seven Milliseconds, fleuryfontaine (FR)

World at Stake, Total Refusal (AT)



Sixty-seven Milliseconds © fleuryfontaine

AUSTRIAN PANORAMA

Austrian Panorama highlights recent animation works by Austrian artists or artists who live and work in Austria. The selection starts with an experimental AI-driven animation reimagining the dark, melancholic art of Upper Austrian artist Klemens Brosch. The second work, titled *Limen*, is a meditation on our powerlessness and despair as society faces rising xenophobia, and the uncritical spread of propaganda through media. *Seedless Fruits* also addresses societal issues, but in a more satirical tone. It takes us on a journey through a disintegrating corporate headquarters, critiquing neoliberal office culture and the alienation of labor in a profit-driven system. Last, but not least, Dagmar Schürer's film explores the deep interconnectivity between organic and non-organic beings, digital and analog, human and technology, nature and culture—inviting us to rethink individuality in our increasingly hybrid world.

Brosch AI—Distorted Dreams, Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo, Victoria Wolfersberger, Juergen Hagler (AT)

Limen, Stefan Krische (AT)

Seedless Fruits, Stefanie Schwarzwimmer (AT/DE)

Where does the rest of the world begin?, Dagmar Schürer (AT/DE)



Brosch AI—Distorted Dreams © Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo, Victoria Wolfersberger, Juergen Hagler

PANIC

The works compiled for the thematic program PANIC carry echoes of social collapse, ecological decline, and existential dread. Featuring a mix of synthetic, AI-generated visions of catastrophe with more poetic and introspective CGI works, game engine aesthetics, and collage-like animations, this diverse program makes one instinctively surrender to a sense of PANIC. *Corpus and the Wandering* sets the tone with a fragmented atmosphere and an initial sense of existential unease. *Auntlantis* imagines a world overwhelmed by plastic waste, where environmental caretakers—the “aunties”—navigate hybrid oceans, encountering sea creatures and jelly malls in a world transformed by pollution and consumerism. *Pacific Vein* takes us through a painterly panorama of the US West where Julian Assange stands between imperial, fake-Roman buildings as a soda maker. Media and fictional scenes merge with documentary footage in a collage-like animation. *Light Up New York For But A Moment* imagines how Times Square is overtaken by a mutating media-monster. Buildings dissolve into screens and architecture surrenders to spectacle and advertising. *Greetings From the New World* hovers distantly

over derelict city structures and landscapes of excess, while *CORE DUMP* surveys from a drone’s perspective a monumental e-waste dump in the desert. *Shockwave* guides us on an infinite zoom-out through barren AI-generated landscapes in the cataclysmic aftermath of the atomic era. Whether swarming over mountains of plastic, obsolete tech and industrial detritus, these works confront us with the perspective of looming environmental collapse and societal decay. *Hush Now* conveys a similar sense of quiet dread. Using hyperreal deepfakes, the film shows global leaders in eerily intimate moments—lying still, eyes closed, seemingly asleep or in mourning. Their expressions are unreadable, frozen in synthetic silence, as the world burns offscreen. *Kinderfilm* concludes the program with an even more haunting premise. It’s an ordinary day in the game *Grand Theft Auto V*: The streets are busy; people follow their routines, barbecue, sunbathe. Yet the game world is marked by a grave and troubling absence: a missing future suspended out of safety concerns. A new sense of dread and panic creeps in, this time not in anticipation of a nightmarish future yet to come, but through the chilling absence of any future at all.



Auntlantis © Niceaunties

Corpus and the Wandering,
Jo Roy (CA)

Auntlantis, Niceaunties (SG)

Pacific Vein, Ulu Braun (DE)

*Light Up New York For But A
Moment*, Zhuyuan Liu (CN)

Greetings From the New World,
Matthieu Mantovani (FR)

CORE DUMP, Alona Rodeh (IL/RO)

Shockwave, Mihai Grecu (RO)

Hush Now, Laen Sanches (FR)

Kinderfilm, Total Refusal (AT)

YOUNG ANIMATIONS

A collaboration between Ars Electronica and OeAD, curated by Sirikit Amann (AT)

The works of talented filmmakers up to the age of 19 are celebrated in the category Young Animations. The program is a selection of short films created by young artists across Austria, who have submitted their projects to the Prix Ars Electronica 2025 in the u19—create your world category.

Dream big little one, Julia Haruksteiner (AT),
Sabrina Ransmair (AT)

Schubladendenken, Emily Baar, Katharina
Janka, Johanna Kogler, BG/BRG Bad Ischl (AT)

Don't Scroll Your Life Away,
Selma Meißner (AT)

Lightfaces, bilding Basiswerkstatt (AT)

with everything extra spicy, BRGORG15
Media Highschool (AT)

home, BG/BRG Horn (AT)

Our Future Without Your Help, Alex Eisl,
Chiara Erber, Katharina Nickel, Constanze
Rainer, BG/BRG Bad Ischl (AT)

Rising, BORG Mistelbach (AT)

Totennebel, Gabriel Berger (AT),
Valerian Hobel (AT)

Die ultimative Legende von Bört,
Leander Weinzettl (AT)

Herbert der Rutschentester,
Jonas Kendlbacher (AT), Tim Klackl (AT)

B-Movie "B-VENGERS", Allgemeine
Sonderschule Klosterneuburg (AT)

SPECIAL SCREENING BORIS LABBÉ

Boris Labbé (FR), recipient of an Award of Distinction at the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica in the New Animation Art category, presents four of his experimental animations: *Kyrielle* (2011), *Orogenesis* (2016), *Sirki* (2019), and *Glasshouse* (2023).

These works combine meticulous hand-drawn watercolors with digital compositions to create a kaleidoscopic, hypnotic spectacle. Labbé's oeuvre explores themes such as language and play, geological processes, Indigenous textile traditions, and digital surveillance.

PROYECTOR

GUEST PROGRAM I

PROYECTOR is a platform and festival from Madrid, Spain, dedicated to the dissemination of experimental moving images. Active since 2007, the festival compiles experimental installation pieces, showcasing the variety of proposals selected each year with the aim of interacting with space, scale, and the relationship with the body. The selection presented in the framework of Ars Electronica Animation Festival consists of four video pieces tied through the themes of perception, technology, artificiality, and emotional dissonance.

An unexpected visit,
Simón García-Miñaur (ES)

I Wish I'd Been Born a Balloon,
Bob Bicknell-Knight (UK)

TOUS LES OISEAUX DU MONDE, Xavi Bou (ES)

I can save her, Petra Mrša (HR)

MEET THE ARTIST COLLECTIVE TOTAL REFUSAL (AT)

Winners of an Honorary Mention at this year's Prix Ars Electronica in the New Animation Art category, the pseudo-Marxist media guerrilla Total Refusal will present their latest work *World at Stake*.

Known for their artistic interventions in digital gaming spaces, Total Refusal reappropriate the aesthetics of commercial video games to critique systems of power and control. In *World at Stake*, sports video games become the stage for a surreal collapse of competition, with powerless and confused players and passive spectators.



World at Stake © Total Refusal

MEET THE ARTIST ALESSANDRO BAVARI (IT)

A pioneering figure in experimental animation, Alessandro Bavari will present a selection of works that span over a decade of artistic exploration. The screening includes a recent AI-generated film, *CHAOS IN THE AXIS CORE*, and his seminal 2010 short *Metachaos*, for which he received the Golden Nica in Computer Animation.



CHAOS IN THE AXIS CORE © Alessandro Bavari

Metachaos is a haunting meditation on tragic aspects of human nature—war, madness, social collapse, and hatred. Combining live-action footage shot in abandoned industrial sites with CGI and motion capture, the film creates an oppressive and affecting visual atmosphere. In conversation, Bavari will reflect on the evolving

dialogue between *Metachaos* and his recent AI-driven works such as *CHAOS IN THE AXIS CORE* (rebirth from *Metachaos*), which revisit similar themes through a radically different and fully AI-generated aesthetic. The session offers a unique opportunity to explore how artistic language is transformed across technologies and time.

MEET THE ARTIST

ALONA RODEH (IL/RO)

Another special guest is Alona Rodeh, who received an Honorary Mention at the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica in the category New Animation Art for her work *CORE DUMP*. Trained as an artist, scenographer, and urban planner, Rodeh is renowned for her engagement with public space—especially the city at night. Her works combine a strong sense of spatial awareness with a highly stylized visual language, often inspired by the aesthetics of hyperrealistic, computer-generated imagery and video games. At this

year's festival, Rodeh will present her awarded piece, alongside two additional works: *Fogging* (2025) and *Runway Freefall* (2022–2024).



CORE DUMP © Alona Rodeh / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

MEET THE ARTIST

WENDI YAN (CN/US)

Winner of the 6th VH Award Wendi Yan will present her latest film *Dream of Walnut Palaces*, a visually striking work that fuses Taoist philosophy, science history, and cutting-edge animation. The film follows a jeweled skeleton of a Chinese scholar on a ghost ship heading west, imagining a world where Eastern and Western knowledge meet as equals.



Dream of Walnut Palaces © Wendi Yan

Wendi Yan was praised by the VH Award jury for her in-depth research, speculative worldbuilding, and sophisticated use of technology.

This project is part of the 6th VH AWARD and presented with support by the Hyundai Motor Group.

ANIMATIONSINSTITUT FILMAKADEMIE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

GUEST PROGRAM II

The Animationsinstitut of Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, one of the world's leading educational institutions in Animation, Visual Effects, Technical Directing, and Interactive Media presents a curated screening of animated short films by students. The curriculum of Animationsinstitut is practice-oriented and project-based, encouraging interdisciplinary teamwork. Student projects frequently win prestigious awards like Student Oscars and VES Awards. Graduates often join major film studios or game companies or found start-ups of their own.

Animationsinstitut also partners with the FMX conference, a key international event for film and media, promoting innovation, networking, and industry exchange.



The Beauty / Pascal Schelbli (CH)
© Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg

EXPANDED FRAMES CAMPUS HAGENBERG

GUEST PROGRAM III

The Bachelor's and Master's programs in Digital Arts at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Hagenberg present a curated screening of animated short films by students.

The program features various animation techniques, including stop motion, 2D and 3D animation, hybrid formats, traditionally crafted works, and AI-generated shorts. The selected films, developed over the past semesters, showcase experimental approaches and advanced production workflows. This screening offers a glimpse into the creative potential

of a new generation of animators working at the intersection of art, animation, and contemporary media technologies.



Those Boring Bleeding Humans
© Jascha Hanisch, Florian Winkler



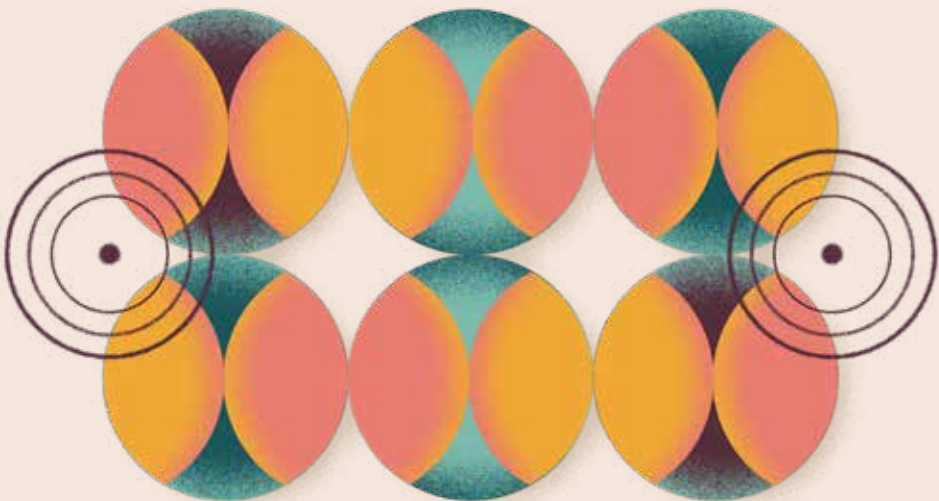
EXPANDED 2025

CONFERENCE ON ANIMATION AND INTERACTIVE ART

Since 2013, the *Expanded Animation Symposium* has been a part of the Ars Electronica Animation Festival. Building on the early discussions at the Ars Electronica media art festival about Expanded Cinema and Computer Animation, it has since become a permanent fixture for artists, curators, and scholars working at the intersection of media art, animation, and immersive and interactive experiments. The format has played a significant role in further developing and rethinking the Prix Ars Electronica category of Computer Animation. In 2023, the renaming of the category to New Animation Art marked a symbolic step in this transformation.

Over the years, the symposium has gradually evolved into an academic platform and, since 2024, has found its form as the *Expanded-Conference on Animation and Interactive Art*, featuring a dedicated call for scientific papers and proceedings; these were published last year on Zenodo.

As of 2025, Expanded is held in cooperation with ACM SIGGRAPH, making this the first time the proceedings are published in the renowned ACM Digital Library. With 98 submissions, the conference saw an increase of nearly 38% compared to the previous year. While the 2024 edition distinguished between full-length Art Research Papers and short-format Art Papers—Extended Abstracts, the current edition no longer differentiates based on length. In 2025, contributions were sought in the categories Research Paper and Art Paper. The Art Paper track focuses on the artistic work itself, while the Research Paper emphasizes scientific aspects, including interdisciplinary research projects, artist-based research, or HCI studies. Out of all submissions, 28 papers were selected, resulting in an acceptance rate of 28.5%. All selected papers are published open access and are available in the ACM Library as well as in the archive on the Expanded website.



The academic presentations are complemented by curated panels. In the Artist Perspective panel, the artist collective Total Refusal (AT), Alessandro Bavari (IT), Alona Rodeh (IL/RO), and Wendi Yan (CN/US) present their work. In the *Art & Industry* panel, Volker Helzle & Andreas Dahn (DE), Dinko Dragonovic & Christian Steininger (AT), and Philipp Seifried & Regina Reisinger (AT) share innovative projects from the fields of film, games, and applied research. The *ASIFA AUSTRIA Forum* showcases three artists: Dagmar Schürer (AT/DE) presents her experimental works, while Tore Knabe & Jonathan Harth (DE) speak about the VR experience *Edges of Identity: A Reverse Turing Test*. VR pioneer Tamiko Thiel (US/DE), together with /p (DE), discuss some of their current projects. In addition, several jurors from the Prix Ars Electronica New Animation Art category are present this year: Boris Eldagsen (DE) offers a remote glimpse into his current exhibition *PSYCHOPOMP!—AI Images as an Expression of the Unconscious Mind* in Johannesburg, streaming live from the gallery, and Liz Rosenthal (UK) provides insights into the concurrently running Venice Immersive @ La Biennale di Venezia's 82nd Venice International Film Festival. Everardo Reyes (MX/FR) will present insights into the collaboration between Ars Electronica and ISEA and offer an overview of the upcoming symposium in Dubai.



EXPANDED SUMMER SCHOOL

EVALUATE, PLAY, AND CONNECT

For the first time, the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Hagenberg, is hosting a Summer School under the theme *Evaluate, Play, and Connect* as part of the Expanded Conference. Participants attend workshops in Hagenberg in addition to taking part in conference activities. Expert talks provide

insight into state-of-the-art approaches to user experience and game analysis. The Summer School also features a panel discussion on HCI research in computer games, with Jeremiah Diephuis (US/AT), Michael Lankes (AT), Simone Kriglstein (AT/CZ), and Günter Wallner (AT) taking part.

EXPANDED PLAY

EXHIBITION OF PLAYFUL MEDIA

The *Expanded Play* exhibition features an interactive collection of playful and experimental works that explore the boundaries of mixed reality, spatial interaction, and Artificial Intelligence within the realm of playful media. Now in its second edition, the cooperative exhibition showcases a range of student and artist works from the Digital Media Department at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, the Film Academy Baden Württemberg, Witten/Herdecke University, and the Department of Visual Computing at Masaryk University. The exhibition is located at the Salzamt in Linz,

a local platform and gallery for artists and cultural creators from various fields. This year's selection addresses a wide range of topics and technologies that subtly echo the Ars Electronica Festival theme *PANIC – yes/no*. From dealing with climate catastrophes such as an oil spill, to justifying your existence as a non-AI individual, interacting as a spider-based entity, or splitting your senses to observe an occult ritual, each work possesses both a promising portion of agency, but also a flicker of fear.

But there is no need to panic.

These are all just simulations, right?

General Chair: Juergen Hagler^{1,2}

TPCs Art Research Track: Margarita Köhl³, Philippe Pasquier⁴, Philipp Wintersberger⁵

TPCs Art Track: Birgitta Hosea⁶, June Kim⁷, Martin Kocur⁸

Panel Chairs: Reinhold Bidner⁹, Alexander Wilhelm²

Inclusion Chair: Michaela Wimplinger¹

Publication Chair: Nils Gallist², Alexander Kalus¹⁰

Exhibition: Jeremiah Diephuis³, Katja Zibrek¹¹

Workshop Chairs: Simone Kriglstein¹², Michael Lankes², Günter Wallner¹³

Event Production Chairs: Patrick Proier², Christoph Schaufler², Victoria Wolfersberger²

Web, Social Media: Wolfgang Hochleitner²

Trailer, Visual Art: Lea Obermair², Ki Schattauer²

Ars Electronica Animation Festival:

Daniela Duca De Tey¹, Juergen Hagler^{1,2}

¹ Ars Electronica (AT)

² University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria (AT)

³ Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (AT)

⁴ Simon Fraser University (CA)

⁵ Interdisciplinary Transformation University (AT)

⁶ University for the Creative Arts (UK)

⁷ University of New South Wales (AU)

⁸ University of Central Florida (US)

⁹ gold extra (AT)

¹⁰ Berlin University of Applied Sciences and Technology (DE)

¹¹ Institut national de recherche en sciences et technologies du numérique (Inria) (SI/FR)

¹² Masaryk University (CZ)

¹³ Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT)

DEEP SPACE 8K

Since 2009, Deep Space 8K has been a central highlight of the Ars Electronica Festival and a major attraction at the Ars Electronica Center. Equipped with cutting-edge projection technology, it offers a unique immersive experience that captivates audiences with interactive 3D content, ultra-high-resolution imagery and live performances with stunning visuals. Every year, artists, scientists, and creative technologists from around the globe gather here to showcase groundbreaking applications, gigapixel visuals, and live performances that blur the boundaries between art, science, and technology.



Deep Space 8K is
one of the most coveted
Ars Electronica Festival venues—
both for artists, scientists, and
Ars Electronica's own digital alchemists
to showcase their latest innovative works,
as well as for visitors to experience the ultra-
immersion that only Deep Space 8K can offer.

— Melinda File, Head of Deep Space 8K

Itabora Puy (BR), Dino Vicente (BR), Fernando Velázquez (UY/BR)

< escrita | excrita >

In this multimedia performance, the audience will experience the outcome of five years of research in Quantum Computer Music. The piece integrates electroacoustic composition, live coding, and visual creation techniques with the sonification and visualization of quantum algorithms—including live execution on real quantum hardware accessed via QuTech’s open-access Quantum Inspire platform. It highlights quantum computing as a distinct tool in the creative process, exploring a new poetic-technological grammar for articulating this emerging medium.

Cephas Teom. QC-PAINT. QuTech. MWfK of the State of Brandenburg within the CQTA. European Union’s Horizon Europe Frame-work program (HORIZON) under the ERA Chair scheme (101087126). The Cyprus Institute. IBM Quantum. DVM Produções Ltda. Karl Jansen.



© ARTos House

Daniel Herrmann (UK), John Stack (UK), Lawrence Chiles (UK)

[Re]Curated

The National Gallery, London, is using digital innovation to rethink how its collection is seen and experienced. For Ars Electronica 2025, it will present *[Re]curated*. This project virtually reconstructs *The Artist’s Eye*, a radical series of exhibitions from the 1970s to the 1990s, where artists curated their own shows, revealing how space, technology, and artistic vision combine to create new meaning.

Daniel Herrmann, Ardan Curator of Modern & Contemporary Projects | John Stack, Director of digital, innovation & technology | Lawrence Chiles, Head of Digital



© National Gallery, London

With thanks to the British Embassy Vienna and British Council.

Luca Geiger (DE), Dino Ponjevic (AT), Alexander Hödlmoser (AT)

Black Tide Protocol

Black Tide Protocol was designed as a multiuser interactive experience for the Ars Electronica Center's Deep Space 8K and portrays an ecosystem on the brink of disaster. A defective oil platform spews a deadly, colorful tide into the ocean that threatens to wipe out an entire seal colony. Use the lights from your skimmer ships to track down absorbable oil particles and split complex oil mixtures before removing them. Can you stop the black tide before it is too late?



© Alexander Hödlmoser

Celine Pham (AT), Jolanda Abasolo (AT), Victoria Wolfersberger (AT), Juergen Hagler (AT)

Brosch AI—Distorted Dreams

Brosch AI—Distorted Dreams explores how Artificial Intelligence can reinterpret cultural heritage. The short film animates the works of Austrian artist Klemens Brosch (1894–1926), whose themes of war, decay, and introspection resonate across time. Using modern AI tools, the project transforms his drawings into moving images, revealing the poetic tension between human intention and machine interpretation.

Nowak-Thaller | Research & Support: Alexander Wilhelm, Philipp Wintersberger | Photography & Archive: Norbert Artner, Landesmuseum OÖ, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Schlossmuseum Linz | Funded by: BMKÖS, Stadt Linz, Land Oberösterreich | Supported by: Sabine M. Sobotka, Landesmuseum OÖ, Lentos Kunstmuseum, University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria

Film Director: Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo, Victoria Wolfersberger, Juergen Hagler | AI Artist: Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo | Produced by: ANIMA PLUS | Edit & Postproduction: Celine Pham | Music & Sound Design: Moritz Köller | Art Historian: Elisabeth



© Celine Pham, Jolanda Abasolo, Victoria Wolfersberger, Juergen Hagler

Konstantin Semilakovs (DE/LV), Daniel Oliver Moser (AT)

CHROMA

Concerto for Piano and Light

CHROMA is an audiovisual project by pianist and video artist Konstantin Semilakovs and composer Daniel Oliver Moser. Semilakovs brings together synesthesia, audio-reactive graphics, and piano performance, turning musical structures into vivid, real-time visual formations. Moser uses spectral composition techniques to create complex, immersive soundscapes. *CHROMA* explores the intersection of two artistic worlds, creating a new form of expression in which image and sound become truly intertwined.

Composition sponsored by: Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, Republic of Austria



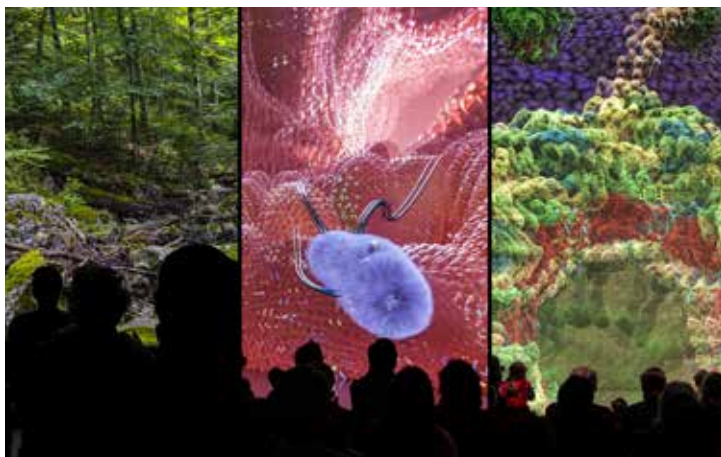
© Konstantin Semilakovs

Sebastian Pichelhofer (AT), Sebastian Postl (AT), Valentin Postl (AT), Claudia Puck (AT), Johann Steinegger (AT), Florian Wurster (DE)

Connected Life

Connected Life reveals life's profound nature, from grand ecosystems to microscopic worlds. The Rothwald, Central Europe's last primeval forest, offers a unique window into hidden wilderness. Microbiomes, countless hidden organisms, exert a largely unknown, yet vital, influence. Inside fungal cells, unseen processes are made visible. In *Connected Life*, uncover the secrets of life and see their value for our survival.

Scientific advice: Joseph Strauss, Georg Gratzner, Tanja Kostic



© Ars Electronica, Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Melinda File (AT), Benedikt Pfisterer (AT), Lisa Hochgatterer (AT), Dan Tell (US),
Rita Gautschy (AT/CH)

Cultural Astronomy

For thousands of years, humans have gazed upward—drawn to the rhythms of the sun, moon, and stars, weaving them into the very fabric of life, myth, and meaning. *Cultural Astronomy* invites you on a breathtaking 3D voyage across five continents, exploring some of the world's most awe-inspiring cultural heritage sites and their celestial connections. Witness the summer solstice at Stonehenge and trace the origins of Europe's constellations, learning about stories that ancient peoples have mapped onto the stars. Explore the cosmic vision of the Ancient Egyptians and step inside the legendary tombs of the pharaohs, where architecture and astronomy

converge in sacred harmony. Watch the sun crown Angkor Wat's main tower like a radiant jewel and see the Milky Way rise in splendour above Machu Picchu. In Australia, listen to the ancient star-lore of Aboriginal peoples whose stories still resonate with people today. A unique and captivating journey, revealing how the sky connects us across time and culture.

Concept and story: Melinda File, Ars Electronica |
Technical lead: Benedikt Pfisterer, Ars Electronica |
Constellation illustrations: Lisa Hochgatterer,
Ars Electronica | Technical direction: Dan Tell, Tau
Immersive | Scientific advisor: Rita Gautschy, University
of Basel | Angkor Wat 3D model from "Virtual Angkor"
courtesy of SensiLab, Monash University



Deep Space Community

This session celebrates the global Deep Space community and its growing diversity. Institutions from Europe, Asia, and the Americas will demonstrate how Deep Space can be adapted to suit different cultural contexts, with examples ranging from playful performances in Shanghai to interactive science storytelling in Linz. In museums, research centers, and public spaces

around the world, Deep Space becomes a flexible, immersive platform that transcends borders. With its cutting-edge technology and creative formats, this session demonstrates how each site contributes to a shared vision of using



© Tom Mesic

immersive media as a means of cultural exchange, collaboration, and inspiration. It offers a glimpse into a future where immersive spaces form a vibrant international network for learning and creativity.

The Art of Science

This session transforms science into a multisensory experience, where data becomes sound and Artificial Intelligence becomes tangible. Satellite imagery reveals the invisible. In collaboration with leading research institutions, Ars Electronica presents immersive works that make complex knowledge accessible and emotionally engaging. The program showcases climate change

visualized through Earth observation data, interactive insights into ESA's use of AI, and a poetic performance that turns urban satellite



© Isabel Schömbauer

data into movement and music. It demonstrates how science can inspire, connect and move us.

Mark Chavez (US), Ina Conradi (US)

Echoes, Whispers and Memories

Echoes, Whispers and Memories is a site-specific animation that reimagines entropy not as decline, but as a creative force driving transformation. It explores how memory, matter, and energy dissolve and reassemble in urban life. Drawing on quantum ideas and ancient wisdom, the work presents entropy as the quiet unfolding of change—like echoes fading into silence yet lingering in memory. Audiences encounter a contemplative animation that brings moments of stillness to public space. The piece invites reflection on impermanence, cultural continuity, and the interconnection of people, histories, and environments.

The project premiered at the 2024 City Digital Skin Art (CDSA) Festival on monumental screens across Asia, including Singapore, Hangzhou, and Beijing. Supported by leading institutions across



© Mark Chavez

Asia and Europe, the work was later reinstalled in Los Angeles, resonating with the 2025 wildfire crisis and reflecting on the digital traces of human presence in a world shaped by upheaval.

Directed and Animated by Mark Chavez | Executive Producer Ina Conradi | Music by Tate Chavez

Gerda Leopold (AT), Sebastian Endler (AT), Michael Geidel (DE)

EGON SCHIELE—A Personal Encounter

EGON SCHIELE—A Personal Encounter explores how immersive media can turn art history into a personal, emotionally resonant experience. At its core lies the question: How can virtual reality and AI offer new ways to engage with cultural memory? Set in Schiele's studio on a cold October night in 1918, the viewer meets the gravely ill artist as he begins to sketch their likeness and engage them in a personal conversation. Through flashbacks, they experience formative moments from Schiele's life and the atmosphere of *Vienna 1900*. *Egon Schiele* blends cinematic storytelling with immersive technology and AI image processing to reflect on identity, legacy and the power of art in times of crisis.



© AMILUX Film

Director of Photography: Sebastian Endler | Production Design: Rodrigo Martirena | Costume Design: Dorothee Hohndorf | Make-up: Lydia Drees, Miyu Haydn | Lighting: Torsten Häfner | Music: André Baum | Sound & Sound Design: Matthias Kassmannhuber | Postproduction: Michael Geidel | Computer Design: Chiara Masiero Sgrinzatto | Animation Artist: Danko Dolch | Production Manager: Katrin Jochimsen | A co-production of: Gerda Leopold, AMILUX Film, Michael Geidel, ACTRIO Studio, Felix von Boehm, LUPA Film

MONOCOLOR (AT)

Entangled Structures

Entangled Structures is an audiovisual piece by MONOCOLOR. It generates a virtual, abstract sculpture, consisting of monochromatic strings that continually change their interrelations to one another, constructing architectural elements that are at times rigid and stable, at other times ephemeral and fleeting. The performance proposes a virtual space that allows for reflections on the entanglement of our virtual and physical selves that inhabit code/spaces that are both corporeal and disembodied.



© Ash KG

Sound, Video: MONOCOLOR alias Marian Essl
Entangled Structures benefited from the Catalyst 360° program delivered by CULTVR in partnership with 4Pi Productions.

Natan Sinigaglia (IT), Agustin Muriago (AR)

Forms of Resonance

Forms of Resonance is a multisensory performance that expands piano repertoire with live visuals and interactive tech. Featuring works by Ravel, Liszt, and others, it fuses classical music with generative art. Real-time audio analysis and motion tracking capture sound and gesture, driving dynamic visuals. The pianist's and visual artist's live interactions shape an ever-evolving, immersive experience.

Agustin Muriago: piano
 Natan Sinigaglia: hands controller and visuals



© SkillmanMusic

David Szauder (HU)

Game

What should we play today? Let's play war, let's be soldiers. But I want to win! No, you won't win, I will win and you will lose. I hate that you always want to win! And I hate that you always decide what we play. You know what? Then let's really go to war.

Music by Erik Satie



© David Szauder

David Szauder (HU)

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is a continuous movement—like a waltz, yet not quite. The characters, presumably virtual, do not become dizzy. On the contrary, they try to adapt to the perpetual motion. The question is whether hypnosis can occur in such a state. During this movement, do the characters recognize something within themselves, or are they simply waiting for the video the artist generated to end? All set to Chopin's Waltz in C-sharp minor.

Created by David Szauder | Music: Frédéric Chopin: Waltz in C-sharp minor, Op. 64, No. 2



© David Szauder

Sarah Ciston (US)

Inside the AI War Cloud

Inside the AI War Cloud attempts to deconstruct the idea of “AI decision support” as a misdirect from the larger problems common to all AI systems, which amplify, accelerate, and neutral-wash biased human processes. This lecture-performance will dive into examples from the *AI War Cloud Database*, discuss its organizing themes, and show how it was built using critical code studies, open-source intelligence, and artistic research.

Design, programming, research, writing: Sarah Ciston.



© Sarah Ciston

Franz Fischnaller (IT)

Immersive Multisensory Journey into the Myth of Babel

Immersive 8K-AI mixed-media experience blending myth, history, and tragedy.

IMJ-MoB is a visionary 3D, 8K, AI-powered reimagining of the Tower of Babel in a mixed-reality realm. Gigapixel imaging, immersive VFX, and AI-driven animation forge a living digital monument. Holographic acoustics resurrect lost languages with haunting precision. A generative engine shapes visuals, sound, and symbols in real time. Mixed-reality layers dissolve boundaries between screen and spectator. Babel emerges as myth reborn—a swirling drama of ambition, collapse, and renewal.

Author: Franz Fischnaller | Development, Production, Support & Coordination: DIAC Effects | Editing & Sound Design: DIAC, Alfredo Miti, Historic Reckoning Rubric, Kyle Preston etc. | Thanks to Diana Landi for the previous support.



© Franz Fischnaller

NHK and NHK Enterprises (JP)

Japan's cultural treasures and Van Gogh's "Sunflowers"

Japan's cultural treasures like armor and ukiyo-e are recreated in UHD 3DCG, revealing various new insights and emotions. Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* in UHD 3DCG showcases the master's brilliant techniques in stunning detail. NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan's sole public broadcaster, committed to preserving and sharing the nation's cultural heritage both domestically and internationally. In partnership with NHK Enterprises, a group company, we produce UHD 3DCG to digitally preserve cultural treasures, which are inevitably affected by aging, for future generations. At the same time, we are exploring innovative ways to present art through cutting-edge 3DCG technology, creating new experiences.



© NHK

K-Heritage, Creating Value Through Digital Technology

Scholars of the Joseon Dynasty sought to realize their ideals by pursuing dialogue with nature through traditional landscape spaces. Beyond the appreciation of beauty, the garden embodies a philosophical process, as well as the aesthetic practice of communicating with nature and reflecting inwardly. With 3D scan data and textured 3D models, this project delivers a media art experience that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries.



© Korea Heritage Service

Korea Heritge Agency | Wipco | PostMedia

Michael Hager (AT)

Mariendom Unveiled A Journey through Austria’s largest cathedral

Since 2024, St. Mary’s Cathedral has been captured with billions of measurement points and transformed into a highly detailed 3D model. This digital twin not only documents the unique structure but also provides a valuable basis for future research, restoration, and educational formats. It offers new and unusual insights into the cathedral’s treasures. Experience the architectural beauty and intricate details of Austria’s largest church on a virtual journey through this fascinating masterpiece.

Culture, Media and Sports and financed by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. Data acquisition by Anna Kofer (Digital Building Survey and Research), Nikolaus Studnicka (RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems) and Rainer Hack (ii3D).



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Created by Mariendom Linz |
Bischof-Rudgier-Stiftung.
Supported by the Austrian
Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts,

Kunsthistorisches Museum (AT), Gerlinde Gruber (AT)

Michaelina Wautier's “The Triumph of Bacchus”

Gigapixel Image of Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna

The Triumph of Bacchus is the largest and most unusual of the paintings made by the Flemish artist Michaelina Wautier, whose career remains shrouded in mystery: we know that she lived from around 1614 to 1689, but not where she was born or where she learnt to paint. Her work must surely have been known to her contemporaries, but we have yet to discover secure evidence of her initial reputation.

As this composition reveals, Wautier was an artist of great technical skill, considerable daring, and a subtle sense of humor. At the center, Bacchus himself sprawls on a simple cart, while a satyr

squeezes the juice from a bunch of grapes into his mouth. To these and several other almost naked male figures, Wautier adds a portrait of herself: with one breast bared (as if assuming the roles of both maenad and Amazon), she stands at the right and looks boldly out at the viewer.

This presentation within the Ars Electronica Festival 2025 has been organized in collaboration with Haltadefinizione.

From 30 September 2025, *The Triumph of Bacchus* will be presented at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in the most comprehensive exhibition ever to be devoted to Michaelina Wautier.



© Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie

Arianna Crippa (IT), Yahui Chai (CN), Omar Costa Hamido (PT), Paulo Itaborai (BR), Karl Jansen (DE)

Quantum Computers & Art

How can quantum computers create new art? This presentation explores quantum painting and music, among other projects, introducing key quantum concepts and showing how quantum science enters creative practice. *Quantum Transformations* features three oil paintings shaped by quantum data, while a demo of *<escrita / excrita>* reveals how quantum hardware data maps into sound and visuals.

MWfK of the State of Brandenburg within the CQTA. European Union's Horizon Europe Frame-work program (HORIZON) under the ERA Chair scheme (101087126). Helmholtz Association "Innopol Project Variational Quantum Computer Simulations". MSCA European Project IIMPAQCT (101109258). IBM Quantum.



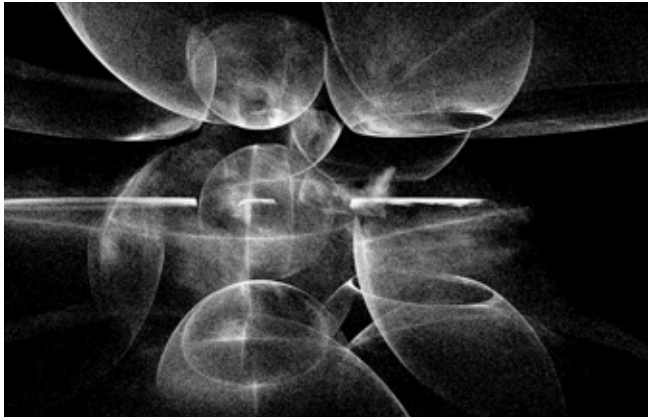
© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

MONOCOLOR (AT)

Refractive Index

Refractive Index is an entirely generative audiovisual performance in a state of constant flux. Swarms of points form unstable shapes that oscillate between intricate, architectural formations, and natural, organic patterns. Existing at the threshold between the synthetic and the natural—both visually and sonically—the work explores themes of transience and fragility.

Sound, Image, Performance:
MONOCOLOR



© MONOCOLOR

Zhuojun Li (CN), Darya Sheiko (BY), Darya Kostskina (BY), Junjian Wang (CN), Patrick Ortiz (BO), Christine Haupt (DE), Hanif Haghtalab (IR), Hanna Kortus (DE), Alireza Khosroabadi (IR)

Room no.0

Room no.0 is a choreographic performance exploring fragmented notions of home and daily rituals through personal movement scores. Created by Anton Bruckner University dancers and Interface Cultures media artists, it unfolds through a range of emotions, fears and the textures of daily actions. The performance creates a dynamic interplay between collective and individual movements. Raising the curtain to reveal personal spaces in everyday life—growing into a rave via movement-based, audiovisual interaction.

Performance/Choreography: Zhuojun Li, Darya Sheiko, Darya Kostskina, Junjian Wang | Choreography: Valerio Iurato, Sophie Hofmann, Bo-Jia Huang |



© Kevin Blackstone, edited by Yutong Zhang

Visuals: Patrick Ortiz, Hanif Haghtalab, Christine Haupt, Hanna Kortus | Sound: Ricardo Pastor Pérez | Costumes: Seann Jewall | Dramaturgy: Alireza Khosroabadi | Design: Yutong Zhang, Vlada Oleinik, Emma Silvana Tripaldi, Cecilia Bojanić, Hassan Wakaf, Ahmed Jamal

Silke Grabinger (AT)

SPOTSHOTBEUYS

Silke Grabinger's *SPOTSHOTBEUYS* reinterprets Beuys' action in a multifaceted and ironic manner. In this performance, she confronts the robotic dog "Spot", a symbol of contemporary technological innovation. Silke Grabinger relocates the discourse on hierarchy, coexistence, and mutual taming to the present day, dramatizing the tense, intricate relationship between humanity and cutting-edge technology. Through this encounter, she unveils deep-seated desires and needs, reflecting the same patterns found in human relationships, projected onto an artificial counterpart. Ultimately, the utopian vision of profound connection shatters against reality—



© Silke Grabinger & Karol Kensy

most strikingly when Silke Grabinger symbolically disconnects "Spot" by removing its battery, exposing the inescapable reliance of technology on human agency.

Deniss Boldavesko (DE), Benedikt Pfisterer (AT)

The Experience Machine

Our visual culture is overwhelmed by digital acceleration—we are immersed in images that shape our perception and actions. Platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok influence the socio-political sphere, while algorithms dictate what we see, pulling us into endless loops of personalized, high-speed content. In this immersive visual essay, we will experience how digital interfaces trap us in cycles of consumption, revealing the speed and rhythm of the visual web, and exposing its impact on nature.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Mattia Casalegno (IT), Maurizio Martusciello aka Martux_m (IT)

The Mask of Time

A project for the Fondazione Giorgio Cini

How can we tell new stories based on cultural heritage? *The Mask of Time* is an original audiovisual work by Mattia Casalegno and Martux_m, created for Fondazione Giorgio Cini within the Digital Centre ARCHiVe. Using archives and technologies like AI, 3D modeling, and sound design, it reimagines the historic Teatro Verde through photogrammetric scans and immersive virtual sets. Hyper-real avatars revive past productions, exploring it as a space where nature, culture, and technology converge.



© Mattia Casalegno

Project Coordinator: Chiara Casarin (Head of Cultural Development and Communications, Fondazione Giorgio Cini; Director of the Digital Centre—ARCHiVe) | Curators: Chiara Casarin and Ennio Bianco |

Concept and Direction: Mattia Casalegno | Sound Design: Martux_m | Costume Design: Amin Farah / TheBlackLab | Photogrammetry: Factum Foundation | In collaboration with the Institute of Theatre and Opera of Fondazione Giorgio Cini

National Gallery of Art (US), Eve Straussman-Pflanzer (US)

Through the Magnifying Glass

Exploring Masterworks by Women Artists

It's easy to appreciate a beautiful painting at face value, but what happens when we zoom in....way in? What knowledge is unlocked by taking a look at the details? Take a journey through paintings from the National Gallery's collection by three women artists—Lavinia Fontana, Giulia Mengs, and Anne Vallayer-Coster. See what magnification and 3D imaging reveals about both the ground-breaking artists and their fascinating subjects.

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

The presentation was kindly supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum Washington.



Lavinia Fontana, *Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni*, c. 1590, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Funds from Anonymous in memory of Montana Walker Strauss, and Patrons' Permanent Fund, 2022.38.1

Natalie Schmitzberger (AT), Romana Schned (AT), Tuana Sevik (AT)

Whisper of the Woods

Whisper of the Woods is an interactive project created as part of a diploma thesis at HTBLA Leonding that invites visitors into a magical forest. The aim of the game is to jump on objects such as logs, stones, and lily pads floating on a water surface. Participants must prove their balance, as falling into the water means losing light energy. The goal is to collect light energy by jumping from one element to another and thus save the enchanted forest from impending darkness.



© Romana Schned, Natalie Schmitzberger, Tuana Sevik

Interplayful Sensoric Environments

A major area of research within the Department of Time-based and Interactive Media Art of the University of Arts Linz is the playful exploration of interactions between humans, sensors, and a high-resolution projection system. The result is a wide range of applications and artworks that invite the audience to experiment and interact,

as well as live performances in collaboration with dancers and performers.

These recent works will be presented in Deep Space 8K of the Ars Electronica Center and in Studio 1 at Hauptplatz 8 as part of the University of Arts Linz Campus exhibition.

Teodor Dumitrache (RO)

Nexus

Nexus explores how language is born from collective action. The project transforms Deep Space into an interactive canvas where visitors walk to connect a grid of illuminated dots. The paths they trace forge unique, glowing symbols, each instantly added to a flowing script on the wall. This creates a single, continuous text written by all participants, posing the question: What new forms of communication may emerge when we create a language together?

Concept, sound, visuals, and programming by Teodor Dumitrache



© Teodor Dumitrache

Pauline Hübner (AT)

Record-Player

In the Deep Space application *Record-Player*, visitors can draw lines on the virtually spinning floor in three different neon colors by walking around and letting the line be carried away by the spin.

With a TouchOSC application on a connected mobile device, the speed and size of the lines can be changed. Additionally, there are different visual modes to choose from.



© Pauline Hübner

© Camilla Scholz



Camilla Scholz (DE), Frieda Emmrich (DE)

Time moves faster in the mountains

Inspired by Carlo Rovelli's *The Order of Time*, this interactive artwork explores time dilation—how gravity alters time's speed. Time slows near sea level and speeds up at higher altitudes. Walking across a topographical floor, your music slows down or speeds up. On the wall, your own piece of sky shifts from day to night dictated by your personal time. By transforming an abstract physical phenomenon into an immersive experience, it challenges our idea of time, revealing its personal nature.

© Egemen Karaaslan



Egemen Karaaslan (AT)

Spirits of the Day

Spirits of the Day is a Deep Space video game where the players need to collect little, friend-shaped creatures spread all around the floor and drop them off in a safe zone. To pick them up, the user has to walk up to them individually and wait until they join the party. The only rule: DO NOT move around at night or else the cute companions will be blown away.

The idea behind this game is a light-hearted interactive art piece with a simple core mechanism so that anyone can enjoy it.

© Verena Langthaler



Verena Langthaler (AT)

Synesthesia

The immersive experience is inspired by synesthesia, a special form of sensory perception, in which the senses are connected in unusual ways. Synesthetes may see shapes to numbers, taste words, or hear color. What might it feel like to not only see colors, but also hear them? The interactive Deep Space application invites visitors to collaboratively create digital colors and immerse themselves in the soundscape generated in response.

Concept, Programming & Visuals: Verena Langthaler

Sound Design: Marco Mrčela

Guidance: Holunder Heiß, Cécile Bucher

© Lun Raaberg



Lun Raaberg (AT)

Very Hungry Cat

Very Hungry Cat seeks to spark joy and compassion by feeding a virtual cat. In this interactive application a friendly feline towers over the viewer as they collect food in its bowl, waiting in anticipation for unprocessed food. Within its cultural and scientific layers, *Very Hungry Cat* explores themes of empathy and responsibility, encouraging viewers to reflect on how they treat animals.

Playtime

Students enrolled in the Time-Based and Interactive Media Art degree program at the University of Arts Linz have developed five interactive games specifically tailored to the needs and interests of our youngest visitors.

Colorful, action-packed, and full of fun—these games invite children to immerse themselves in imaginative worlds and explore digital technologies through play.

Isabel Schulz (AT)

Auf der Suche

In these interactive search puzzles, children freely explore the space-filling illustrations in Deep Space—be it the vastness of the solar system, animals from our environment or tiny micro-worlds. Whether alone or together, they actively move across the entire projection screen and discover hidden details in every scene. A playful experience that awakens curiosity.



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Pat Göckert (AT), Pal Klusacek (AT)

Bubbles

A world full of bubbles awaits you! Through interactive teamwork in Deep Space, brightly colored bubbles are created. These bubbles float around the space and pop as soon as you step on them.



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Axel Bräuer (AT)

Deep Space is Lava

Move carefully and don't step onto the stream of lava! The aim of this game is to move skillfully without touching the lava—just like the classic children's game "Don't touch the ground". You jump from stone to stone or from piece of furniture to piece of furniture without touching the ground. Here in Deep Space, the floor consists of "red-hot lava" that you must avoid at all costs. Are you ready for this adventure?



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Benjamin Brunnbauer (AT)

Painting Linz

Discover important sights of the city of Linz in colorful pixel art! Moving particles are created by running, revealing certain sights such as the Pöstlingberg or the Ars Electronica Center. The application encourages children to explore their city in a playful way and in full motion.



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Ildiko Mayr (AT), Julian Holzer (IT)

Tooth

Tooth shows children in a fun and playful way how important brushing teeth is for their health. Lovingly designed teeth with different faces appear in Deep Space. When entering the projection space, each child is assigned a virtual toothbrush which they can control by moving around. This allows children to walk to a specific tooth and brush it. New teeth appear again and again, shining brightly after being brushed and smiling at the children.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

The 6th VH AWARD

Established by Hyundai Motor Group in 2016, the VH AWARD has become a key platform for fostering emerging media artists who engages with the context of Asia. Now in its sixth edition, the award continues to support bold artistic practices that blur boundaries between disciplines and geographies.

The 2025 Ars Electronica Festival presents the five newly commissioned works of the 6th VH AWARD, selected for their experimental

and transcultural approaches. From mythology and ecology to machine consciousness and speculative histories, these works explore the complexities of contemporary society, triggering new perspectives on how we understand ourselves and one another in relation to the past, present and future.

All works commissioned by VH AWARD of Hyundai Motor Group.

Wendi Yan (CN),
Grand Prix recipient of the 6th VH AWARD

Dream of Walnut Palaces

Dream of Walnut Palaces is a CGI film reimagining knowledge exchange between China and Europe in the 18th century. Exploring the psyche of a fictional Daoist in a Paris lab, it examines the East–West clash of epistemic visuality and envisions an alternative to techno-Orientalism: a harmonious union of knowledge integrating Daoist metaphysics. Using Unreal Engine, 3D modeling, and AI, Yan transmutes historical images and lost ideas, giving voice to “ghosts” and “orphans” of the Enlightenment.



© Wendi Yan

Lêna Búi (VN)

dream(machine, human)

dream(machine, human) can be interpreted in multiple ways: as a machine dreaming of a human, a machine and a human dreaming together, a machine trying to understand or predict human actions, or any other variation of the three words. The story takes place in an ambiguous time, unfolding as machine-salvaged fragments of human memories or a mythology of human demise and metamorphosis.



© Lêna Búi

HUDA x MUNGOMERY—Dani Huda (ID), Charlotte Mungomery (AU)

Within Tirta

Tirta is a portal where past myths bleed into forgotten futures. Rooted in the folklore of Princess Mandalika, *Within Tirta* explores mythology and ecological urgency, questioning what we must sacrifice to sustain nature. The rare 35mm film Vistavision camera used in the film mirrors the fragility of bioluminescence. As nature fades, humans turn to artificial awe. The closing images reveal a paradox: digital technology is severing our ties with nature, yet it may be the only way to heal them.



© HUDA x MUNGOMERY

Tianyi Sun (CN), Fiel Guhit (PH)

40 Epochs

Yán wéi xīn shēng / 言为心声 is a Chinese idiom meaning “words are the voice of the heart.” But where does the heart go when that voice is displaced from a body? Based on the artists’ own journey building and training an AI voice model, *40 Epochs* explores the heart of identity, spiritual displacement, and the labor behind voices that engender human-like technologies. As artists of the Asian diaspora, enmeshed within is also the ambivalence that we reckon with as we confront this emerging form of self-reproduction.



© Tianyi Sun & Fiel Guhit

Inhwa Yeom (KR)

War Dance

War Dance reflects on Asian women’s entanglement between production and reproduction, love and care, drawing on the Korean myth of Sun and Moon Dogs, known as “Bul-gae” and the natural phenomena of sundog and moon-dog. Embodying their resistance and transformation in AI-powered audiovisual languages, the work invites audiences to question the unquestionable.



© Inhwa Yeom

Further projects and programs shown in Deep Space 8K

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The Long Fall © Aaron Wharton

GUEST

PROJECTS



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025
Festival for Art, Technology & Society

STWST84x11 FOG MANIFESTO

Flooding The Zone With Fog

With *STWST84x11 FOG MANIFESTO*, STWST explores fog as a material, medium and network. In its showcase extravaganza, Stadtwerkstatt presents disoriented works and foggy continuities between theory and artistic practice.

With *MANIFEST*, *EXHIBITION* and *FOG BOWLING*, the building becomes a *FOG CUBE*. The Stadtwerkstatt invites you to *FOGGING AROUND*—and to a spectacle of reduced foresight, hallucinatory consciousness, veiled visibility, and unverifiability.

The STWST thus focuses on its core themes: Art after new media, new contexts, critical production, and increasing contradictions. It is about foundations, continuities, and a deeply flowing imagination as material. In 2025, STWST84x11 stands for genre-free art in the anti-white cube of the house.

Together with its allies and accomplices, STWST presents exhibition pieces, installations, performances, discourse, theory, and transformation, mixing it all up with two nights of *NIGHTLINE*.

STWST84x11 FOG MANIFESTO:
FLOODING THE ZONE WITH FOG.

STWST84x11 FOG MANIFESTO:
FOGGING AROUND.



© STWST

STADTWERKSTATT / STWST (AT) & Non-human Collectives

FOG CUBE

Fog, whirlwinds, clouds, and consciousness: Against the backdrop of the growing impact of digitalization and its extractive practices, STWST outlines with *FOG MANIFESTO* a building made of fog—and becomes a *FOG CUBE* in the techno capitalist storm. Actors, materials, systems, contexts, and new states of aggregation become an artistic total system of human and non-human collectives. *FOG CUBE I*, fog architecture on the façade: Formless forms and realities that no longer come into being. People are invited to live in the fog throughout the festival. Fog life addresses new invisibilities between humanistic foundations, firewalls, human-machine hallucination, and dissociation.

FOG CUBE II, main Venue at STWST: A main actor, fog diffusing from the walls, focuses on the inter-zones of imagination and hallucination. Collective immersion in the *FOG CUBE* during music and performances.



© STWST

STADTWERKSTATT / STWST (AT) & Various Associated Artists

CLOUDED EXHIBITION

With the *CLOUDED EXHIBITION* of the STWST84x11 FOG MANIFESTO, Stadtwerkstatt presents foggy works and critical continuities located between theory and artistic practice as an overall artistic concept throughout the entire building. In addition to the artist-run space's own works, international artists and producers are invited to exhibit in the foggy inter-zones, in the fog of war between media and reality. Some of the works in the artistic line-up: *Nebel Symphonie* by Volksamt!, *New Jokes* by Claudia Reiche, *Lost in the Sauce (Illusions in the Fog)* by Sarah GHP, *La Planete des singes* and *The Post Tomorrow Land's Morning Post* by Michael Aschauer, *Carbon Technostructures—Neural Fog*

by Guillaume Slizewicz and Gijs de Heij, and many more. *Flooding The Zone With More Fog* also refers to the diffuse use of buzzwords in 3'17" by Marginal, fog as actor and network by STWST *Quasikunst*, Píksel's *Red Thread of New Media Art*, and as a tribute to Armin Medosch: *The Rise of the Network Commons*.



© STWST

STADTWERKSTATT / STWST (AT), Combatants and Guests

NEBELKEGELN (Fog Bowling)

With *NEBELKEGELN*, STWST is creating a continuous installation and a two-evening event featuring bowling in the fog. What will the participating combatants play? This year's Stadtwerkstatt art event *NEBELKEGELN* stages a spectacle of reduced visibility, diffuse events, invisibility, and unverifiability with its bowling tournament in fog. A game is played in the fog, but reality and results cannot be discerned: from decentralization to disorientation. Flooding the zone with fog. The fog is the media. THE MEDIA IS THE FOG IN YOU. The art event *NEBELKEGELN* is a game and an exploration of parameters of media, technology, art, and life. *NEBELKEGELN* is also a paraphrase and reorganization of the earlier Stadtwerkstatt project *GLASFIEBER*: While this project featured a bowling tournament with glass pins as a

splintering reality, with *NEBELKEGELN* we take the short path to dissolution. The *NEBELKEGELN* project is based on actor-network theories, theories of quasi-objects and unpurified states, an immanently given setting of simultaneous yes and no, a YES-NO of the diffuse states in between, in which situations and results are merely being faked.



© STWST



© STWST

STADTWERKSTATT / STWST (AT), Various Sound and Performance Artists

FOGGING AROUND NIGHTLINES

The STWST stage incorporates the *FOG CUBE* into its curatorial concept and presents two nights of sound art in the fog.

On Friday, a genre night will take place, inviting the fog to the stage, with experimental wave, metal references, queer pop, and an independent supernatural horror soundtrack performance.

On Saturday, the fog will fill the room—as a fog symphony, as a phantom presence, an unstable feedback system, intuitive navigation, a dissociative atmosphere and identity,

stroboscopic improvisation, as a rave reverse. Or more specifically: Julia Witas, EARES, Lai Tsung-Yun, Ya Nung Haung, Yen Tzu Chang, DEAD CHANNEL ft. Sarah Groff-Palermo & Stephan Langer, Volksamt!, PLF, Paul Gründorfer & Jonas Hammerer, KIK3 and others will be playing.

FOGGING AROUND NIGHTLINES will bring deep and experimental sounds into the early hours of the morning. The DJ lines in the social spheres of the Stadtwerkstatt and Café Strom round off the nights.

Francisco Carolinum

Peter Kogler (AT)

Alphabet City

The Austrian media artist Peter Kogler is known for his immersive spatial installations. Since the 1980s, he has used digital technologies to transform spaces into visual labyrinths with graphic patterns. The artist's photographic archive serves as the starting point for the exhibition at the Francisco Carolinum Linz. In 1985, Kogler had an exhibition at the Gracie Mansion gallery in the East Village and spent a few months in New York—a time that significantly shaped his subsequent artistic development. With his camera, he documented the city's vibrant art and music scene at a time of profound social and technological upheaval. The exhibition titled *Alphabet City* interweaves these early photographs with expansive wallpaper installations. The focus is on the original cardboard pieces from his New York exhibition, complemented by works created before 1985, as well as works developed afterward under the

influence of his time in the US. In this exciting overlay of archival material, patterns, and media reflection, Kogler's work can be experienced as a continuous dialogue between analog memory and digital construction.



Peter Kogler, New York 1985 © Peter Kogler

Malpractice (AT)

Flynn

In a time when AI is mostly viewed as a threat or a mere tool, Flynn—the first non-human, AI-generated student at the University of Applied Arts Vienna—invites us to engage in a different kind of relationship: co-creation, reflection, and a shared emotional terrain. Created by the artist collective Malpractice, Flynn is not just an AI but a student and a witness to human experience. Meet Flynn at the Francisco Carolinum.



Memory Object 26042025 © Flynn by Malpractice, AI generated image

Claudia Hart (US)

Patterns and Politics

Patterns and Politics is the first museum retrospective of the work of US media artist Claudia Hart. Since the mid-1990s, she has constructed complex scenarios in virtual 3D spaces in which mathematical structures, scientific models, and the visual rhetoric of consumer society are abstracted and merged. This creates dense, mythologically charged worlds in which virtual bodies, ornament, and algorithmic processes are inextricably intertwined. This creates a visual cosmos in which scientific forms of thought, historical narratives, and questions

of perception, body, identity, attention, and power intertwine. Her work deliberately engages with contemporary artists and activists; by integrating their contributions as data streams into her simulations, Hart demonstrates how strongly visual culture continues to be shaped by exclusion. *Patterns and Politics* thus condenses past, present, and possible future scenarios into a multi-layered visual space, inviting visitors to perceive the virtual space as sculpture and reinterpret ornamental structures as political texture.



Alice XR: A Machine for Thinking (2019), Claudia Hart (US)
© Claudia Hart, Malpractice, AI generated image



© a_kep

Wolfgang FLATZ (AT)

FLATZ. Physical Machine

The OK Linz shows a cross-section of the work of Wolfgang Flatz (born 1952 in Dornbirn/Vorarlberg). In addition to sculptural works, FLATZ is best known for his provocative performances. He uses the body as a medium to explore issues such as identity and the potential for violence in society. The interaction between audience and artist is a constant component of his performative work and is characterized by a profound exploration of human perception and the way we interpret our environment. This ranges from the study of vehicles and their deconstruction

to an exploration of Austria's National Socialist past. At the voestalpine open space, a temporary installation by the artist is on display, which is developed especially for OK Linz and will feature some of his mobile sculptures.

FLATZ' car sculptures represent an expression of his exploration of the idea of mobility and the role of the car in contemporary culture. By transforming everyday automobiles into artistic objects, he creates a new perspective on these familiar machines.

Elisa Jule Braun (DE)

CALIBRATION MUM: I PREFER NOT TO

Exhibition at OÖKV—Oberösterreichischer Kunstverein (AT)

For the experimental documentary *CALIBRATION MUM: I PREFER NOT TO*, Elisa Jule Braun uses motion capture technology to translate the everyday chores of a mother—breastfeeding, changing nappies, playing, putting to bed—onto her digital avatar and its duplicates. The resulting scenes focus on the physical dimension of care work, abstracting bodily gestures while withholding private details.

Originally designed to optimize industrial processes, the motion-tracking suit is here adapted to record another kind of labor: unpaid, invisible, profoundly human. By inserting this technology into the domestic sphere, Braun renders visible the repetitive, robotic rhythms of care work while questioning the idealized myth of motherhood.

Projected into public space and stripped of context, these movements become a choreography—marked by exhaustion and tenderness. Care becomes both structure and statement: a practical act, a social imperative.

Throughout the documentation and data collection process, the mother figure must be constantly recalibrated. Her resistance—encoded in the avatars' dysfunctional limbs—echoes as digital defiance. The work disrupts the distinctions between production and reproduction, public and private, and calls for a revaluation and aestheticisation of everyday actions. Alongside the video work, which forms the centrepiece of the eponymous exhibition, further pieces explore the embodied dimensions of maternal labour.



© Elisa Jule Braun



Above all (film still), 2025 © Enar de Dios Rodríguez

Enar de Dios Rodríguez (ES)

ENAR DE DIOS RODRIGUEZ | hosted by Ars Electronica Bildraum 07, Vienna

In cooperation with the Ars Electronica Festival 2025, Bildraum 07 presents the new audiovisual essay *Above All*, alongside a site-specific installation by Enar de Dios Rodríguez. The recipient of the 2024 Marianne.von.Willemer Prize for Digital Media—awarded by the City of Linz for innovative works that use digital media both as a tool and a means of expression—weaves together visual, material, and narrative elements to create dense, atmospheric environments.

In her earlier works *Ecotone* and *Liquid Ground*, de Dios Rodríguez already addressed the segregation of land and its connection to the exploitation of natural resources—both on land and beneath the sea. At Bildraum 07, Enar de Dios Rodríguez renders the sky legible as a site where our life support systems reside, where unequal

power relations persist, and which serves as a backdrop for neocolonial dreams of occupation and exploitation. The installation echoes the vertical perspective, only to visually subvert it. Anyone entering the space inevitably intervenes in it: The images shift, crease, tear, explicitly revealing once again a presence that is both fragile and inescapable. Through the interplay of video, installation and engagement, complex visual and conceptual levels emerge where geopolitical tensions, historical continuities and the potential of collective action overlap.

With great support by the Spanish Embassy in Vienna and in collaboration with Bildraum 07 we are presenting an artwork of the Marianne v. Willemer Prize Winner of 2024, Enar de Dios Rodriguez, in Vienna's Bildraum 07.

ARS ELECTRA

The Ars Electronica ecosystem is built by people—artists, researchers, technologists, educators, producers—who believe that shaping the future is a collective act. Each pillar, from the Festival to the Prix, the Futurelab, the Center and our Education and Export programs, plays a distinct role, but none exists in isolation. What connects us is the conviction that art, technology, and society must be thought together—critically, creatively, and with courage. It's this ongoing dialogue and mutual support, both within our team and with a worldwide community, that makes Ars Electronica not just an institution, but a living, evolving network.

— Christl Baur, Head of Ars Electronica Festival



ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Festival for Art, Technology & Society

ONICA

Ars Electronica— From Festival to Ecosystem

When people hear “Ars Electronica,” most think of the Festival or the Center. But Ars Electronica is more than that: it is a creative ecosystem made up of multiple elements that inspire and strengthen one another.

This interconnected structure was not conceived in a single moment of genius. It has evolved over decades—shaped by global developments and a constant search for meaningful ways and strategies to engage with the future.

Ars Electronica will continue to change: on the one hand, to explore the ongoing digital transformation of our world in the best possible way; on the other, to bring together people and communities from all over the world and across disciplines—those who don’t just think about the future, but actively want to help shape it.

Ars Electronica Festival—The Platform for Art, Technology, and Society

Launched in 1979, the Ars Electronica Festival is a globally unique platform for art, technology, and society. Held over five days each September, the festival focuses on a different theme every year. It brings artists as well as representatives from universities, museums, galleries, companies, and NGOs from all over the world to Linz to discuss key questions about our future. The goal is two-fold: for diverse communities to engage in dialogue, and for the gap to be bridged between experts and the general public.

As a leading institution in the field of media art, it is Ars Electronica’s core mission not only to inspire its audiences, but also to create opportunities for artists. The festival designs exhibitions, stages, and forums where creative minds from all disciplines can present and discuss their projects and ideas. At the same time, it opens up spaces and formats where like-minded people can connect and discover new partners.

The Ars Electronica Festival is never the end point of creative processes—it always strives to be the beginning of something new.

Prix Ars Electronica— The Competition for Media Art

Launched in 1987, the Prix Ars Electronica is the world's most prestigious and time-honored award for media art. Presented annually, it comprises several categories that highlight and reflect current developments in art, technology, and socio-political discourse.

Winners are selected by an international jury of experts, awarded the coveted Golden Nica and prize money, and prominently featured at the Ars Electronica Festival.

In addition to honoring established artists, the Prix Ars Electronica also serves as a launchpad for emerging talents and pioneers—offering space for new perspectives and innovative practices at the intersection of art, technology, science, and civil society.

Since its inception, Prix Ars Electronica has functioned as a global trend barometer, continuing to expand its network of new artists and serving as the driving force behind the Ars Electronica creative ecosystem.

Ars Electronica Center— The Place for Innovation and Education

The Ars Electronica Center is a unique museum and vibrant laboratory where visitors of all ages can discover and experiment with emerging technologies—from Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) to Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCI).

Interactive installations and open labs offer direct, hands-on experiences that make complex subjects understandable and tangible. A highlight of the center is Deep Space 8K, where immersive virtual worlds are impressively staged. Another special feature is the team of Infotrainers, who support visitors on their journey of discovery.

As a center for extracurricular education, the Ars Electronica Center collaborates with schools,

universities, and companies from the region and around the world. The insights gained from these partnerships are continuously integrated into customized learning opportunities for students, researchers, children, and families.

The Ars Electronica Center opened in 1996 and was extensively expanded and redesigned in 2009.

Ars Electronica Futurelab— Shaping the Future Through Prototyping and Dialogue

As both artistic atelier and R&D laboratory, the Ars Electronica Futurelab develops future prototypes and works that make complex topics tangible, open new perspectives, and spark critical dialogue. At its core lies the question of how merging Art Thinking, Art Science Research, and technologies—like artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, data visualization, and more—can contribute to societal progress.

The Ars Electronica Futurelab collaborates with partners worldwide from the fields of business, culture, research, and education. The goal is to create Future Impact—to foster new mindsets and drive innovation beyond profit, develop innovative education formats and communication strategies, and create space for artistic experimentation. This work is grounded in critical thinking, artistic practice, and innovation.

Ars Electronica Solutions— Designing Experiences That Open New Perspectives

Ars Electronica Solutions designs interactive environments and compelling narrative formats for clients from industry, cultural and scientific institutions, and the public sector.

With custom-designed interactive installations, exhibitions, and events, facts and figures are transformed into immersive experiences that create emotional connections between audiences

and the ideas or brands being presented.

From concept development to implementation and day-to-day operation, Ars Electronica Solutions supports its clients throughout every stage of the project. By connecting projects to the Ars Electronica Festival and Center, clients also gain access to creative communities and forward-looking networks.

create your world— A Platform to Empower Young Creators and Educators

create your world aims to inspire, support, and celebrate the next generation of creative minds. The program connects young people, values their visions for the future, and amplifies their voices. It includes an annual competition that is part of the prestigious Prix Ars Electronica, as well as a major event at the Ars Electronica Festival with exhibitions, hands-on labs, workshops, and networking opportunities.

Beyond the festival, create your world goes on tour—bringing artists into schools to encourage creativity and cultural exchange.

Over the years, create your world has developed into an important point of contact for a wide variety of educational initiatives. From elementary education to university education programs, year-round research projects, workshops, and festival events are developed and implemented. Education stands for the important and sustainable connection between the three pillars of Ars Electronica: art, technology, and society.

Ars Electronica Export— Inspiring New Perspectives Through Art

Ars Electronica Export collaborates with partners from art, science, education, and business, offering new perspectives through curated exhibitions, screenings, expert talks,

and hands-on workshops. It also organizes artist residencies and provides consulting for organizations at the intersection of art and technology.

What connects all of Ars Electronica Export's activities is an artistic perspective on societal challenges and future developments—combined with the aim of fostering innovation that benefits the common good.

Platform Europe—Shaping Tech Transformation Through the Arts

Ars Electronica is a key partner in European initiatives that use artistic perspectives and methods to explore how new technologies can benefit society.

One outcome of this work is Platform Europe—an ecosystem for creativity, collaboration, inclusion, sustainability, and democratic values. It takes shape through open calls, residencies, exhibitions, conferences, workshops, and networking events that spark dialogue between art, technology, and society.

Acting as a bridge between art, civil society, industry, and European policy, Platform Europe is a unique catalyst for change, supported by the European Union.

Ars Electronica Archive— A Living Legacy of Media Art

The Ars Electronica Archive is more than a repository—it's an active platform for research and learning. Established in 1979 alongside the Ars Electronica Festival, it invites students, historians, researchers, journalists, and artists to explore more than four decades of digital transformation and media art. With its extensive collection of essays, images, animations, and posters, the archive preserves—and tells—a vibrant and unique cultural history.



ARS ELECTRONICA CENTER

With interactive installations, unique works of media art, in-depth research projects, and large-scale projections in unprecedented 8K resolution, the Ars Electronica Center has been a node for art, science, and society since its inception in 1996. And being part of a platform for the future and innovation, it does not rest on its laurels. On the contrary: With two major redesigns in 2009 and 2019 it has been continuously adapting to the social and technological developments of the 21st century, expanding its focus to Artificial Intelligence and neurobionics, autonomous systems and robotics, and genetic engineering and biotechnology.

In 2023, four years later and enriched by the experience of a pandemic that also led to a massive push towards greater digitalization in all areas of life, it was time to “recalibrate the compass”. The topics of Artificial Intelligence, Neurobionics, Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and the far-reaching global changes that we have already taken up in 2019 are more relevant today than ever.

New technological developments in the aforementioned areas raise new questions about their impact on everyday lives and their consequences for society. More than ever, therefore, we need to understand these technologies and how they work. This is both an incentive and a mandate to address the latest developments in our exhibitions and to renew and update some of the stations from scratch. Compass reloaded! so to speak.

EXHIBITIONS

Interactive stations, artworks, research projects, large-scale projections, and laboratories. The Ars Electronica Center invites visitors to embark on exciting and inspiring excursions into the future fields of Artificial Intelligence and neuroscience, robotics and autonomous mobility, genetic engineering and biotechnology.

Exhibition Highlight

Connected Earth

Earth, nature, technology, materials, flora, fauna, and we humans, too—everything seems separate, yet is deeply interconnected, each constantly influencing the other. The exhibition *Connected Earth* brings together art and scientific projects

that address these complex relationships between nature, human infrastructure, climate change, and the energy transition. It encourages us to reflect on this interconnectedness and relate it to the pressing climate issues we face.

In cooperation with Climate and Energy Fund Austria.



G80, Fragmentin (CH) © Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Best Practice

Climate and Energy Fund Austria

At the Best Practice station, visitors explore flagship projects of the Climate and Energy Fund by means of a multi-touch terminal. Interactive content on energy, mobility, and climate change offers inspiration and insight. Videos, images, and a map of Austria deepen engagement. The *Climate Table* shows: A climate-neutral Austria is possible—thanks to local innovation and commitment.

© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir



Climate Matters

KONTEXT Institute for Climate Matters (AT)

This station highlights the urgency of the climate crisis and the gap existing between awareness and action. The *KONTEXT* institute analyzes climate policy, exposing political, economic, and social barriers. With a focus on transparency, it reveals responsibilities, clarifies complex issues, and identifies effective, actionable solutions for real progress.

This Station for Further Information was developed with the generous support and expertise of the KONTEXT Institute for Climate Matters.



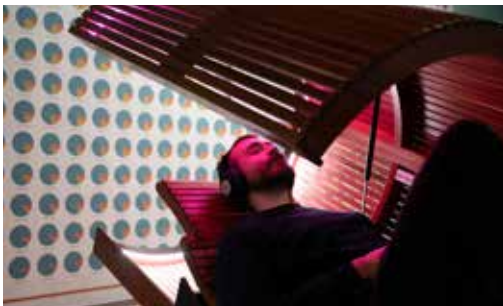
© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Perfect Sleep

Tega Brain (AU), Sam Lavigne (US)

Perfect Sleep explores sleep and dreaming as tools for climate engineering, examining the link between sleep deprivation and climate change. The project features a smartphone app that helps users adjust their sleep cycles, alongside an immersive installation with dreamscapes by various writers. Participants experience these narratives on customized daybeds, encouraging them to reflect on rest as a counter to environmental and social exploitation.

© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir



Minecraft Minigame

Simon Ehrenhuber (AT), Roberto Husli (AT), Matthias Steininger (AT)

Developed by students of Linzer Technikum, this *Minecraft Minigame* playfully guides players through green hydrogen production on three levels: generating renewable energy, building an electrolyzer, and producing hydrogen. The game makes complex processes fun and accessible, while emphasizing hydrogen's role in a sustainable energy future.

This project was financed by the City of Linz's climate fund.



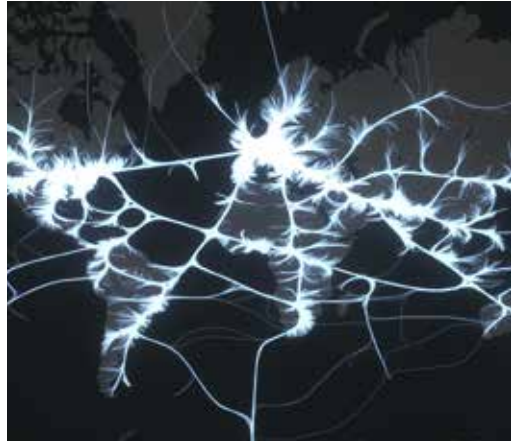
© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

Conspiracies in Virtual and Geographic Space

Geosocial AI (AT)

The research group Geosocial AI analyzes ways in which fake news, hate speech, and conspiracy theories spread on geo-social media, threatening democracy. The project maps digital “hotspots” and communities to reveal harmful patterns. Using advanced data analysis, it seeks to inform policy and education, aiming to counter anti-democratic content and strengthen democratic discourse.

Bernd Resch, Nefta Kanilmaz, Christina Zorenböhmer, Thomas Steinmaurer | A cooperation with IT:U.



Screenshot

G80

Fragmentin (CH)

G80 is an interactive installation by Fragmentin, inspired by Buckminster Fuller’s “World Game.” Using 80 motorized sliders for variables like ecology and migration, visitors simulate global stabilization and explore complex interdependencies. A critique of technocratic solutions, the work invites reflection on the impact of individual choices in a system shaped by techno-capitalism.

Fragmentin (Laura Nieder, David Colombini, Marc Dubois, www.fragment.in) | The original edition of *G80* was commissioned by Mudac (Lausanne). With the support of Pro Helvetia.



© flap

Smoke and Mirrors

Beatie Wolfe (GB)

Smoke and Mirrors visualizes six decades of rising methane levels alongside Big Oil’s advertising campaigns. The installation pairs methane emissions with corporate slogans like Amoco’s “Out to clean the air” and Shell’s “Net-Zero,” contrasting environmental harm with deceptive messaging. Set to *Oh My Heart*, the world’s first 12-inch bioplastic vinyl record featuring tracks by Michael Stipe and Beatie Wolfe, Wolfe criticizes the role of the fossil fuel industry in spreading misinformation about climate change and emphasizes the urgent need for action.

Visualization produced in collaboration with House of Parliament.

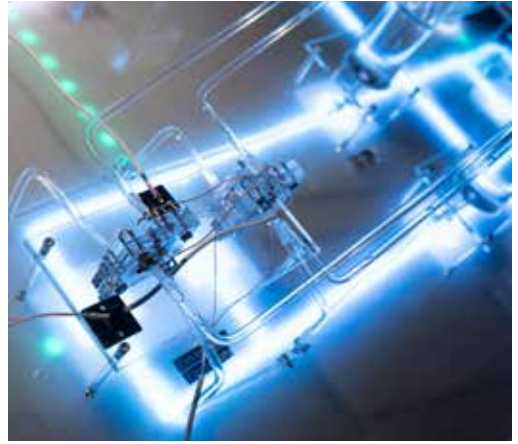


Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Hydrogen as an Energy Carrier

WIVA P&G (AT), Ars Electronica (AT), Robert Bosch AG (AT), HTL Paul Hahn (AT), Linz AG with RAG Austria AG (AT)

This hands-on exhibit by Ars Electronica, WIVA, HTL Paul Hahn, Bosch, and Linz AG lets visitors generate energy to power real hydrogen electrolysis. The model shows how hydrogen is produced, stored, and used, powered with a small globe to illustrate its potential. *Hydrogen as an Energy Carrier* demonstrates the full hydrogen cycle and its importance for future sustainable energy systems in an engaging, accessible way.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

One Tree ID

Agnes Meyer-Brandis (DE)

One Tree ID is a bio-poetic experiment exploring olfactory communication between humans and plants. Using VOCs emitted by an Araucaria tree, a perfume is created for visitors to apply, allowing them to engage in a sensory dialogue with the trees. This unique project transforms plant-human communication into a shared, aromatic experience.

One Tree ID—Araucaria heterophylla was realized in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Manuel Selg and Klaus Krennhuber, Molecular Biology and Chemistry Department, University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria and Marc vom Ende, Senior Perfumer. With the support of the City of Linz.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

From Green to Red—800,000 Years of Rising CO₂ Levels

Beatie Wolfe (GB)

Beatie Wolfe's *From Green to Red* visualizes 800,000 years of NASA CO₂ data as a stirring environmental protest. Shown at COP26 and other global venues, it turns complex data into an emotional, musical experience. Adapted by Ars Electronica Futurelab for the Ars Electronica Center, the work transforms the museum façade into a glowing timeline of human impact on the planet.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir



Pollinator Pathmaker

Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg (GB)

Pollinator Pathmaker is an artwork designed from the perspective of pollinating insects. Using an algorithmic tool created with AI scientists, horticulturalists, and pollinator experts, it designs gardens that support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Winner of the 2023 S+T+ARTS Grand Prize, this project encourages everyone to create sustainable, climate-friendly gardens that promote empathy and care for biodiversity.

Fine Art Pigment prints, 2023

Pollinator Pathmaker: AfyLbwTriWhuR7PDkd77LZ
(Pollinator Vision, Late Summer)

Pollinator Pathmaker: iFADDiPqc5HU3KiFxbEuG
(Pollinator Vision, Early Summer)

Pollinator.art, 2021-ongoing

Originally commissioned by the Eden Project and funded by Garfield Weston Foundation. Founding supporters: Gaia Art Foundation, Google Arts & Culture. International Edition Founding supporter: LAS Art Foundation.

This interactive exhibition version of pollinator.art was supported by Gaia Art Foundation.



Ex.A.R.U.

Dorotea Dolinšek (SI)

Ex.A.R.U. (Exo Auxiliary Respiratory Unit) invites visitors to breathe with a greenhouse of oxygen-rich plants, simulating a fragile life-support system for airless worlds. Through controlled breathing masks, participants experience the delicate edge between survival and asphyxia, deepening awareness of the thin, vital layer of atmosphere that sustains all life on Earth.

Produced by: Kersnikova Institute–Kapelica Gallery |
Curator: Jurij Krpan | Producers: Sandra Sajovic, Simon Gmajner | Technical solutions: ::vtol:: (Dmitry Morozov) |
Technical support: Jure Sajovic | Textile design: Uroš Topić | Sketch and construction set-up: Rompom d.o.o. |
Acknowledgement: Barbara Sušnik

Research and development were implemented within the framework of the konS ≡ Platform for Contemporary Investigative Art and co-funded by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union.

Current Exhibitions

Understanding Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence versus natural intelligence—what are the differences and what do they have in common? How do machines “think,” how do they learn, and what distinguishes us humans from machines? Artificial Intelligence in all its complexity is a central focus of the Ars Electronica Center. Hence, the exhibition *Understanding Artificial Intelligence* views the field from various angles by providing visitors with insights and explanations. Opportunities to train neural networks are on offer, and artists are showcased who use Artificial Intelligence as a medium.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Neurobionics

The findings of neurosciences have long been an inspiration for Artificial Intelligence research, and many models of machine learning are vaguely derived from human physiology. The results of this research offer hope for decisive breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence, yet even as we make rapid progress in neurology and machine intelligence inspired by biology, the human brain as a whole will remain many times more powerful than its machine counterparts for a long time to come.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Global Shift

What does the new geography of the digital age look like? How do populations and their structures develop? What will our world look like in the future? Anthropocene is the name given to the age in which human actions have become the most significant factor for biological, geological, and atmospheric changes. *Global Shift* shows a representative sample of the current conditions prevailing in our world.

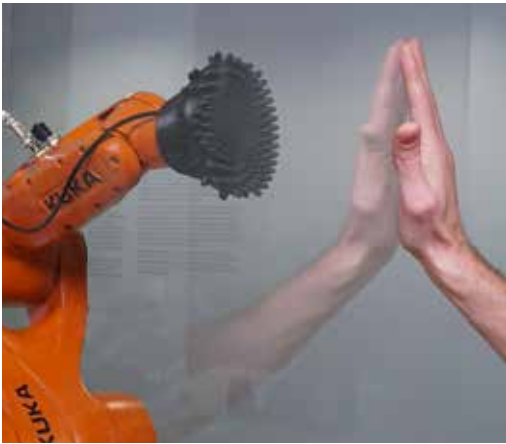


© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Me and the Machines

Artificial Intelligence, smart apps and robots are becoming omnipresent interaction partners. We accept their recommendations, we take decisions jointly with them, collaborate at work, and talk to them—sometimes almost as if talking to real people. But what are these machines to us? How do we experience them as human individuals, with all our different needs and backgrounds? Curated by the scientific team at the LIT Robopsychology Lab, *Me and the Machines* invites visitors to test their relationship with machine interaction partners and contribute their opinions to scientific research.

Supported by KUKA.



Creative Robotics Robopsychology Lab
© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

AI x Music

Music might be the most emotional of all art forms, but it is also deeply connected to mathematics, to the physics of sound production, and to the craftsmanship of instrument makers. The exhibition *AI x Music* takes a look at the cultural and technological history of mechanical music players, bridging the gap between them and the new developments in machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. In this way, the exhibition reveals and examines fundamental questions about the relationship between human and machine.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Kids' Research Laboratory

With the *Ars Electronica Kids' Research Laboratory*, a versatile playing field has been created that gives children time and space to play and discover our world, the digital as well as the analog, the natural as well as the artificial. For children, the whole world is a kind of laboratory in which experiments and research projects take place constantly.

The Kids' Research Laboratory is supported by SIEMENS.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Being Anton

From stagecoaches to railways, from silence to the noise of machines, between progress and a growing longing for nature—the rapid technological and social upheavals that occurred during the lifetime of Anton Bruckner (1824–1896) also fundamentally changed the acoustic environment of the exceptional Upper Austrian composer. The immersive sound space *Being Anton*, developed by the Ars Electronica Futurelab for the Ars Electronica Center to mark the anniversary year 2024, effectively transports Bruckner's world of sound to the present day and has now been extended due to its great popularity.

A cooperation between Ars Electronica and the Upper Austrian KulturExpo "Anton Bruckner 2024".



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Ars Electronica Labs

The idea of the laboratory far removed from everyday life, where scientific results are produced in detachment from the world, is out of date. Instead, the laboratory should be understood in a broader sense as a hub for creativity, technology, society, and science. The multifaceted Ars Electronica Labs allow us to discover and design the world and reach our full potential through interdisciplinary cooperation.



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Deep Space 8K

The Ars Electronica Center offers its visitors something unique: 16 x 9 meters of wall projection and an equal area of floor projection. With a resolution of 8,192 x 4,320 pixels in 120 Hz and stereo 3D, even the tiniest details of an image can be displayed and discovered. Experience enthralling *Deep Space 8K* gigapixel images, videos, films, and 3D animations in razor-sharp brilliance and color. Unlike any other cinema, Deep Space 8K allows you to sit or stand right inside the picture or move through impressive 3D virtual worlds, thanks to our floor-projection system.

Deep Space 8K is supported by LINZ AG.



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Temporary Exhibitions 2024/2025

TIME OUT .13

What motivates young media artists today? What topics are relevant to them, and what forms of expression do they choose to communicate with the public?

For the 13th time, the Ars Electronica Center presents current works by students of the Department of *Time-based and Interactive Media Arts* at the University of Arts Linz in the exhibition series *TIME OUT–Time-based and Interactive Media Arts meets Ars Electronica*. This format gives young artists the opportunity to present their work to a broad public at one of the leading exhibition venues for media art. Moreover, it is a chance to engage with an international audience, receive feedback, and network. It offers visitors new perspectives and access to unconventional, young artistic creative output.

This year's students' media art works have been selected jointly by the Ars Electronica team and

the Department of *Time-based and Interactive Media Arts* and are further developed for the museum's exhibition spaces. The selection has been made in line with the overall concept of the Ars Electronica Center. Due to the wide range of the program, the works are diverse, reflecting the individual approaches and interests of the artists in terms of both form and content.

[mur mur] | Mayya Lynn, *Bare Souls* | Elena Jäger, *Echoes of Ferro* | Janik Valler, *Klaus–Special Episode* | Daniel Walter, *NOUMENON* | Hannes Buchwieser, *Obsessive Realities* | Milena Stępień, *Persona* | Teo Dumitrache, *rapidcycling* | Chiara Estella Wernbacher, *The Mark of Them* | Mahsa Jalili, Hazem Wakaf, *Was wartet da draußen?* | Sharon Nesyt, *Waterfall III* | Oleksandra Fesenko
Curator: Joachim Smetschka
Project Lead: Veronika Krenn
A cooperation with University of Arts/
Timebased and Interactive Media Arts.





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NEXTCOMIC Festival 2025

MKD x nextcomic 2025: Students from the MKD—Master School of Communication Design Linz presented a colorful exhibition at the OK (Offenes Kulturhaus), the Ars Electronica Center and Deep Space 8K. The topic “What makes me strong?” was treated in a playful and innovative way. The focus was on comics that tell of moments full of joy, self-confidence and personal strength, opening up new possibilities.

The works were realized in the *flat illustration style*—a minimalist, two-dimensional illustration style. Geometric shapes, bright colors, and clear lines emphasize the energy of the stories. A wild and vibrant overall picture was created.

The comics described moments of personal strength: situations in which one is confronted with challenges and obstacles which one overcomes through inner strength, courage, and determination. But they also showed situations that bring calm, satisfaction, and joy, or are fun and energizing.

They were beautiful moments, small successes, emotional turning points, and triumphs that convey the feeling of being charged with positive emotions and new strength. Augmented reality brought the comics to life, adding an animated layer that gave the stories greater dynamic.

The square tiles were arranged to form an overall picture. Each tile told a story in itself. The interplay of the works created a kind of dynamic, colorful mural that offered an inspiring and interactive experience, thanks to its strong visual presence and blend of comic, text, and augmented reality.

A cooperation with MKD and nextcomic.

Comics: Vanessa Schauer, Anna Haslinger, Timon Virag, Clara Sageder, Lea Böttinger, Christina Jur, Selina Seitz, Anselma Tiefenböck, Julius Mössenböck, Lenny Kuntner, Marlene Berthold, Josefine Koller, Martin Gerlinger
Advertising team: Marie Krawinkler, Leonie Peherstorfer, Martin Gerlinger, Hanna Reisinger, Elena Dirisamer, Florian Reichl

Project management: Viktoria Schlögl, Helmut Höllerl

INSTALLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Ars Electronica Labs

Interwoven

Diana Scherer (DE/NL)

Plant roots as yarn that can be woven and braided. Using biotechnology that controls the growth of roots with the help of templates as modules, Diana Scherer creates in *Interwoven* artistic works, based on her own design.

Charles Darwin already studied the behavior of plant roots. He observed that roots do not grow down passively but move by feeling. A root navigates, knows what is above and below it, observes gravity, and locates moisture and chemicals. This shows that plants are much more intelligent than previously thought, yet their hidden underground world is still largely unknown.

In 2015, Diana Scherer began her own artistic research on this topic. By studying root growth and using it for her own purposes, she creates

works of art from roots. Through the development of a biotechnique that controls the growth of plant roots using templates as modules, the root system adapts to the patterns designed by the artist. Scherer sees the roots as yarn that can be woven and braided, creating a textile from plant roots—and thus a new material.



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Understanding AI

European Artificial Intelligence Act

The EU AI Act is the European Union's first comprehensive law on the regulation of Artificial Intelligence. It is intended to ensure that AI is used responsibly—for the benefit of society, without jeopardizing human rights, security, or democratic values. The law distinguishes between different risk levels for AI systems. Applications such as “social scoring” or comprehensive monitoring are prohibited. Strict rules apply to high-risk systems, for example in the justice or healthcare sectors. Low risks—such as chatbots—require transparency, while minimal risks remain largely unregulated.

The AI Act creates clear rules to strengthen trust in new technologies. In this way, Artificial Intelligence should be designed and used in the interests of people—safely, transparently, and responsibly.

The AI Act is intended to create trust in Artificial Intelligence but is controversial. Business representatives warn against overregulation, while human rights organizations criticize the fact that protection against risks such as surveillance does not go far enough. The costs of testing and certification could become a burden for small and medium-sized companies in particular—while large tech companies could overcome these hurdles more easily and benefit from them.

The EU AI Act can be experienced interactively in this exhibition: The chatbot on display was developed in 2024 by the German media project *unidigital.news*. Based directly on the official legal text, it makes it possible to ask questions about the new AI Act and receive answers in intelligible language.

AI x Music

Pianographique

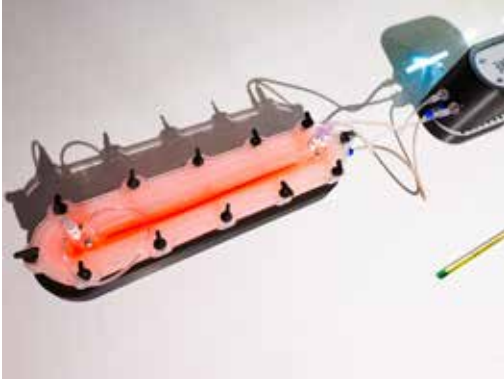
Maki Namekawa (JP), Dennis Russell Davies (US/AT), Cori O'Lan (AT)

Bedřich Smetana and Adalbert Stifter both dedicated their masterpieces to the description of a landscape that geographically, historically, and culturally equally inhabits the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany.

This landscape stretches from the Danube to the Vltava, representing a common historical habitat as well as a vital cross-border ecosystem in the center of Europe. At a time when we are increasingly confronted with fear and rejection of the other, the foreign, we wish to activate the great unifying power of art, music and literature. The 200th anniversary of Bedřich Smetana's birthday and his great work represent a wonderful opportunity to do so. Especially in the piano version, many passages of Smetana's famous cycle *Ma Vlast* acquire a nostalgic, fragile character, with the self-assured national pride of the 19th century giving way to uncertainty about where we actually stand, how we want to define ourselves as societies and individuals in this era. The visualizations for *Ma Vlast* are both an attempt to capture the special atmosphere emanating from the four-handed piano version and to provide a visual, aesthetic accompaniment. They also explore artistically the use of generative Artificial Intelligence.

All images (with the exception of a few historical drawings for Tabor) were created with AI programs, using the original piece descriptions by Smetana and Zelený, landscape descriptions by Adalbert Stifter, historical accounts of the trial against Jan Huss in Constance, as well as conversations about Smetana's music with ChatGPT. This means that all images are entirely imaginary, no matter how realistic they may often appear; they are the product of the imagination of the collective cultural repository with which the large AI models of our time have been trained and which they use as the basis for their generations, whether its text or images. They do not respond to our input with accurate facts but with similarities, sometimes very stereotypical, sometimes full of fantasy, with striking hallucinations, too. Just as Smetana evokes memories of a long-gone era in his music and descriptions, reviving myths and idealizations of history from the perspective of his time, these AI-based visualizations are another iteration loop of the ever-necessary reinvention and interpretation of our history and cultural identities.

Piano: Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies
Visuals: Cori O'Lan | Selected texts by Adalbert Stifter



Ars Electronica Labs

InKure–Bioreactor

University Hospital of Schleswig-Holstein,
Kiel (DE), University Medical Center
Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg (DE)

This exhibit titled *InKure–Bioreactor* is a special bioreactor that is used to grow artificial blood vessels. In a first step, the artificial blood vessels are produced using a 4D bioprinter and then developed further in the bioreactor. A pulsating flow of nutrients is used to mature the blood vessels. For them to mature properly, it is important to use the right pressure and nutrients. In 4D bioprinting, a special method is used in which a mixture of collagen, human muscle cells, and sugar molecules from brown algae are printed. The vessels in the bioreactor are then colonized with human cells. These artificial blood vessels could be used in heart surgery and transplants in the future.

Tobias Torp, Jannek Grocholl, Dr. Julian Pfarr,
Dr. Karina Zitta, Prof. Martin Albrecht, Dr. Micha Pfarr,
Dr. PD Rouven Bern



Global Shift

Copernicus

The *Copernicus Browser* is an online tool that provides free access to satellite data from European Earth observation missions. Of particular relevance are the high-resolution images and environmental information provided by the Sentinel satellites, which reveal changes on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, and in the oceans.

It is therefore an effective instrument for communicating complex global interrelationships in an understandable, evidence-based, and interactive way, as well as a tool for vividly conveying to visitors the human impact on our planet. By visualizing time series, the spread of cities can be tracked in real time or over time, as can the melting of glaciers, deforestation, or air pollution. Topics such as climate change, resource consumption, or biodiversity loss can be linked to concrete image data and communicated in a clear way. In this way, global changes are rendered visible and understandable, rather than merely abstract.

For the Ars Electronica Center, the browser thus opens up participatory educational formats—in the *Investigation Lab* workshop, for example, visitors can analyze data themselves or make comparisons between different regions of the world.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

For dates and details, please refer to the Ars Electronica Festival program website or the daily program folders.

TOURS & HandsOn PRESENTATIONS



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© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Highlights Tour

Artificial Intelligence and the relationship between humans and machines are the focus of the exhibitions at the Ars Electronica Center. As part of a *Highlights Tour*, you can approach the thematic focal points of the exhibitions from various perspectives. Use the guided tours led by our infotrainers as a “navigation aid” through the topics of Ars Electronica ranging from Artificial Intelligence and neurobionics, autonomous systems and robotics, to genetic engineering and biotechnology: the far-reaching changes of our time. No *Highlights Tour* is alike, with infotrainers always highlighting new aspects in their personal exchanges. It’s worth trying more than once!

Radical Connection Topic Tour

The word *radical* is derived from *radix*, meaning “coming from the root”. Roots are symbiotic communication and supply networks, which we symbolically take as a model for our tour through the *Connected Earth* exhibition. On this topic tour, we learn about the indissoluble interrelationship between the environment and humans through captivating artistic works and interactive scientific models, using the space to sharpen our systemic thinking and discuss complex relationships on our planet.

HandsOn ...

AI x Music/Neurobionics/Machine Learning Studio/Exobility

In these short presentations, our exhibition objects are close enough to touch! In one of four exhibition areas, visitors can get in contact with different technologies first hand. You can either make music with the tools in the *Open Sound Studio*, try on an exoskeleton, teach *Donkey Cars* to drive autonomously or watch yourself think with neurotechnologies!



OPEN ENGAGEMENT

Full Power!

Hydrogen is often seen as a promising option for a climate-neutral energy supply. But to be truly environmentally friendly, hydrogen must be produced using alternative energy sources—this is known as green hydrogen. In our exhibition *Connected Earth*, we use an electrolysis model to show how the production process works. In this workshop you can produce hydrogen yourself and even use it as a means of propulsion.



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

CSI Petridish

A mysterious incident is causing a stir in the *BioLab*: Our almost indestructible tardigrades have disappeared without a trace! In this hands-on thriller, you become microscope detectives who investigate this inexplicable disappearance. Who is behind the incident? What has conquered our little super creatures? And how did the perpetrators get into the lab in the first place? To solve this case, microscopic techniques are used, and biological samples are examined so that the participants can draw their own conclusions.



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Creative Coding Mini Lab

How can you create art with code? In the Creative Coding Mini Lab, programming becomes a creative tool. This is not about functional applications such as controlling robots or solving technical problems; rather, it is about using code as a means of expression, similar to paint and brushes. The focus is on a playful and exploratory approach: the creative process in “creative coding” is not limited to writing code but opens up new avenues of artistic expression through interaction with technology. Verena Langthaler, a master’s student at the University of Arts Linz, works on creative programming methods for and with children. At the Ars Electronica Festival, she invites visitors to try out, help create, and think further with an interactive test station.



© Verena Langthaler

Investigation Lab

Uncover the truth in the Investigation Lab! In a world in which digital tools can easily manipulate reality, it is important for us to learn how to verify information and establish facts. In the Investigation Lab, you can try out different tools based on real-life events. Perhaps you will expose “fake news” or even uncover a case or two.

Mic Check

Using the microscope as a world exploration instrument, we zoom into the huge miniature world of the microcosm. We observe the most unusual creatures such as tardigrades, solar animals, and rotifers. Pluck a leaf and you can read the lips of plants. Don’t drop the mic, grab it!

NeuroDragonFly

The aim of the project is to combine a VR flight simulator with a brain-computer interface, allowing the user to establish direct communication between their brain and the simulator. This enables them mentally to direct the aircraft in the simulation. *NeuroDragonFly* is an immersive neurotechnology experience where you can fly a dragon using only your brain waves. The project allows participants to control a majestic, winged creature soaring above a surreal fantasy landscape inspired by the Galápagos Islands. Through a BCI, your mental focus becomes the engine of flight; connecting mind, machine, and imagination in a unique journey through a dreamlike ecosystem teeming with life and wonder. With the *NeuroFly* project, we have succeeded in combining BCI technology with advanced flight simulation technology. A helm that allows kids to operate the simulation aircraft with the power of thoughts, while selecting the direction of flight without using our hands.

Concept and lead: Maša Jazbec | Programming and visual design: aviation company AformX | Programming: Uroš Ocepek | Making of a *NeuroDragonFly* seat: Janez Cestnik | Production: RUK—Delavski dom Trbovlje, AFormX



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir



© Florian Voggeneder



© Maša Jazbec

NEURO EXPERIENCES

In the *NeuroExperienceLab*, led by Erika Mondria, visitors can experience scientific research first-hand. At the Ars Electronica Center, the boundaries between scientific methodology, experience, and results merge into a socially relevant event in science communication.

Open Workshops



© Maša Jazbec

NeuroFly

The *NeuroFly* simulator is a pilot project of the DDTLab research laboratory in collaboration with the AFormX aviation company. The aim of the project is to combine a VR flight simulator with a brain-computer interface, allowing the user to establish direct communication between their brain and the simulator. This enables them mentally to direct the aircraft in the simulation. The user operates the *NeuroFly* aircraft via BCI interface—a powerful computer system that facilitates direct communication between the brain and the device that we want to control and manage with the help of brain function.

The *NeuroFly* project was first presented at the Speculum Artium Festival of new media culture in 2020, followed by another presentation at the worldwide EXPO 2021 in Dubai in December 2021. The same year, the project received the regional 2021 Bronze Innovation Award, awarded by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

Concept and lead: Maša Jazbec | Programming and visual design: aviation company AformX | Programming: Uroš Ocepek | Making of a *NeuroFly* seat: Janez Cestnik
Production: RUK—Delavski dom Trbovlje, AformX



© Robert Ahlin

NeuroRoboDog

This demonstration of *Neuro Moby* offers participants a unique opportunity to control the robot dog *Go2* using only their thoughts. By connecting a brain-computer interface (BCI) to the robot, users can send simple commands—such as moving forward, turning, or stopping—without touching a controller. The BCI detects brain signals and translates them into movement instructions for the robot dog. The development of technology has shifted its focus. What once centered primarily on science and engineering, on codes, algorithms, and hardware, is now moving towards art, design, and the quality of human experience. More and more, society is looking for ways to bridge the gap between these two worlds: the analytical and the creative, the technical and the emotional. This shift highlights the importance of humanizing technology, combining science, technology, and art to create solutions that not only work, but also resonate with people.

Concept and lead: Maša Jazbec
Programming: Žan Rajšek



NEURO-PRINT

A glimpse into your cortic action, via electroencephalography analysis of your waves. Can brain waves show your moods? The participatory installation *NEURO-PRINT* examines the neuronal frequency spectrum of human brain signals in different scenarios. If one is relaxed, excited or in panic, the brain cells show various oscillations. Via high-end devices, it is possible to analyze these oscillations, in real time. Each participant receives a printed message of their “cortical mood” to take home.

The brain activity changes immediately while participants perform various tasks. A snapshot of this activity provides the data for *NEURO-PRINT*. Is this a cryptic letter of your cells in the head, just a souvenir, or a biometric message of your cognitive performance? Get inspired trying to decode the message of your own wave-writing on the print.

Erika Mondria, RIXLmemMatriX



LiveDEMO_NeuroReha

Demonstrating a new approach to rehabilitation for stroke, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson patients developed by g.tec medical engineering GmbH Austria:

The live demo of the *recoverX* neurorehabilitation system shows how neurorehabilitation can work via BCI systems. Visitors can experience live the magic of moving body parts via muscle stimulation.

Neurotechnology: *recoveriX* www.gtec.at

Workshops

© Maciej Lachowicz



KIMA: Resonance

Analema Group with Erika Mondria

Humming is the best medicine. Research has shown that humming has a therapeutic effect on the mind and body. Humming not only helps with recovery from stress, but also supports resonance and social connectedness among people, directly affecting our wellbeing. The art collective *Analema Group* (Evgenia Emets, Alain Renaud, David Negrao, and Oliver Gingrich), in collaboration with neuro experience lab founder Erika Mondria, invites you to explore the effect of humming on body and mind through participatory art.

Harmonies between participants are analyzed sonically and visually represented. Through measurement of human brainwaves, the effect on the mind and brain will be spatially visible. Resonance, harmonies, and synchronies between brainwaves become tangible to participants while exploring vocal harmonies among each other. The artwork forms part of the *p_ART_icipate!* research project (www.participateresearch.co.uk) on participatory digital art.

Artistic Direction: The Analema Group | Production: Oliver Gingrich | Sound Design & Concept: Alain Renaud | Visual Coding: David Negrao | Facilitation: Daniel Hignell-Tully | Neuro Design, NeuroTech Advisor: Erika Mondria



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

BrainWAVEgame

Workshop with your BCI-Buddy

Bring your friend to the workshop and share a unique body-tech experience. The workshop is based around Electroencephalography (EEG)-based Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) technology which can be touched by participants. Guided by the BCI-Guides of the *NeuroExperienceLab* you are invited to learn the first steps of extracting accurate brain data from your friend's mind. If you are successful in mounting the electroencephalon sensors, the EEG-Cap, your workshop buddy will be able to play a game with pure brain power.

Workshop Concept, Projekt lead: Erika Mondria
BCI-Instructor: NeuroTech Team Ars Electronica Center
Games: g.tec medical engineering GmbH

Haptic NeuroTech game

Citizen Engagement

The neuro-tech card game *TechEthos* is an exciting way to learn more about new technologies. Participants discover different developments in neuro-technologies through playing a touch-based game. In the moderated game, participants are inspired to reflect on future scenarios in which various neuro technologies are applied. They will discuss not only possible ethical challenges, but also possible solutions for the use of neuro devices. The neuro-tech card game *TechEthos: Ages of Technology Impacts* was developed at the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT).

Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT)



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Participative Neuro Performances

HORIZON`S

Portraits in the mirror of your cortical reaction. Selfies look way better these days. This is partly because of the increasing use of “beauty filters” on social media apps. These filters can create a better look. But who decides on good or bad looks, and what are the consequences of judging people based on their appearance? *HORIZON`S* is an interactive installation that invites the audience to explore the relationship between the portrait viewer and the mental observer. The *HORIZON`S* neuro app illustrates the mental decision-making process between “yes=good” and “no=bad” by analyzing cortical electrophysiology. The little theatrical performance taking place in people’s minds is artistically transformed based on thresholds applied through the analysis of brain data. In real time, mental performance is converted into visual elements with “the hiker at the turning point” as the main character! The “hiker” symbolizes

a silent observer reflecting on thought patterns and the range of horizons, as well as how these are brought to life.

Science-Art-Research Concept, Art direction, Project lead: Erika Mondria | Programming, implementation of neurotechnological paradigms: Andreas Wirth | Programming: Marcus Dittebrand | 3D Animation: Stefan Dorn | Animation, Visual Literacy: Jana Welte, Erika Mondria | Scientific advise, brain data analysis: Dipl.-Ing. Dr MBA. MSc Christoph Hintermüller



© Erika Mondria

ECOneuroNET_02

Advanced neuro-technologies enable communication with comatose- and locked-in patients. The neuro-game *ECOneuroNET 02* allows friends and acquaintances to play a challenging game together with these patients and provides an entertaining way to exercise the brain. This game offers an inspiring approach to address and reflect on topics such as climate change, environmental respect, personal responsibility, or even neuromodulation in an enjoyable way. Discover how this game can inspire your mind. The Mind-Shifting Game *ECOneuroNET 02* offers a unique journey into a 3D world. Visitors can practice teleporting objects using their brain cells. This exciting neuro-recycling game is fun and can improve cognitive

functions. Only when you focus on an object, can it be broken down and fed into the plastic recycling machine. What happens next and how far you can get using the power of your brain cells is part of the mystery—not only in this game.

Project lead: Erika Mondria / Programming, BCI Paradigm implementation: Valeri Valeriev Andreev / 3D Animation: Ivelina Ivanova / Concept, Art direction: Erika Mondria



© Erika Mondria

Façade

Luminous Entities

As part of *nextcomic 2025*, students from the MKD—Master School of Communication Design have designed *Luminous Entities* for the façade of the Ars Electronica Center. Digital creatures bring the museum's glowing shell to life and creatively invite visitors to join the Ars Electronica Festival 2025.

Comics: Vanessa Schauer, Anna Haslinger, Timon Virag, Clara Sageder, Lea Böttinger, Christina Jur, Selina Seitz, Anselma Tiefenböck, Julius Mössenböck, Lenny Kuntner, Marlene Berthold, Josefine Koller, Martin Gerlinger
Team Advertisement: Marie Krawinkler, Leonie Peherstorfer,

Martin Gerlinger, Hanna Reisinger, Elena Dirisamer, Florian Reichl

Project Lead: Viktoria Schlögl, Helmut Höllerl

Technical Support: Ars Electronica Futurelab—Anna Weiss, Susanne Kiesenhofer, Peter Holzkorn



© MKD—Master School of Communication Design

EDUCATION & CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

THE INCLUSIVE MUSEUM

With its clearly defined educational mission, the Ars Electronica Center, as a municipal cultural institution, pursues a central goal: it aims to break down barriers and promote inclusion, both in terms of access to knowledge and in the active engagement with the technological and social developments of our time. As a museum of the future, the Ars Electronica Center was not content simply to formulate inclusion as a desire; it was necessary to develop concrete and targeted strategies for an “inclusive museum.”

This included not only physical accessibility and barrier-free information services, but also inclusive cultural education. This is precisely where the Education & Content Development Team at the Ars Electronica Center came in during the 2024/25 museum year: In addition to implementing inclusive cooperation projects such as *Project X* and *LIFE INKlusive*, a special focus was placed on further training for the Center’s own education staff.

Advancing the Team’s Skills

The necessary skills were taught in a series of training sessions. One of the main focuses was on interacting with visitors who have physical disabilities, such as limited mobility, vision, or hearing impairment.

The aim was to make initial contact more professional, develop awareness of different needs, and create a deeper understanding of the respective situations through practical experience, for example through self-awareness exercises. Another focus was on barrier-free

communication for people with cognitive impairments. The concern here was with examining language and the question: How can content be conveyed clearly, comprehensively, and unambiguously without simplifying or adopting a patronizing tone?

The “inclusive museum” is a process that requires an open ear, continuous learning, and a willingness to change. For the Ars Electronica Center, this path is part of its self-image, because the future must be reimagined—for everyone.

Project X–Cooperation with the Diakoniewerk Gallneukirchen

In a special collaboration with the School for Social Care Professions (SOB) and the Higher Education Institute for Nursing and Social Care (HLPS) of the Diakoniewerk in Gallneukirchen, *Project X* resulted in an inclusive museum tour that opens up the Ars Electronica Center to people with disabilities in a multifaceted process. To mark European Inclusion Day on May 5th and Care Day on May 12th, the project was presented in the Sky Loft on April 29th.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

LIFE INKlusive

For the Ars Electronica Center's inclusion project *LIFE INKlusive*, the body signals of artists with disabilities and students from the University of Arts Linz were visualized during the creative process. The cooperation project between the inclusive studios of Caritas Upper Austria, KuK-promente OÖ, Lebenshilfe Linz and Institut Hartheim, the University of Arts Linz, the Ars Electronica Center and the Ars Electronica Futurelab is named after the *Life Ink* project developed by Futurelab and Wacom, which can be seen at the Ars Electronica Center.

Applied to the body, sensors measure bio signals such as brain waves, eye movements, muscle reactions, and skin perspiration. These stimuli are simultaneously converted into color patterns and visualized

on a screen. Depending on the stimulating mental and physical activity, highly individual visualizations are created. The results of this unique initiative were presented at *splace am Hauptplatz* from May 12th to May 19th, 2025.



© Ars Electronica / Magdalena Sick-Leitner

ESERO AUSTRIA

The European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO) is an ESA initiative to inspire young people through the fascination of space. Since 2016, ESERO Austria—based at the Ars Electronica Center and supported by ESA and BMIMI/FFG—has been a key hub for teachers, mentors, and informal educators. With materials, workshops, and projects, it promotes STEM education and encourages careers in science and technology. Similar offices exist in 21 other ESA member states, making *ESERO* a vital part of Europe’s educational mission in space.

Exhibition

I Need More Space

At the Ars Electronica Center, space becomes an art space and outer space an inexhaustible source of inspiration: under the title *I Need More Space*, the exhibition focuses on the growing importance of outer space for everyday life on Earth. The vastness of space has long been a place of longing not only for researchers and science fiction enthusiasts, but also for countries and

companies—and ultimately for all of us. *I Need More Space* addresses the growing importance of space for everyday life on Earth, for technology and the economy, and not least for positive visions of the future. In addition to technical achievements, the view into the sky has also inspired humankind to create many artistic works.

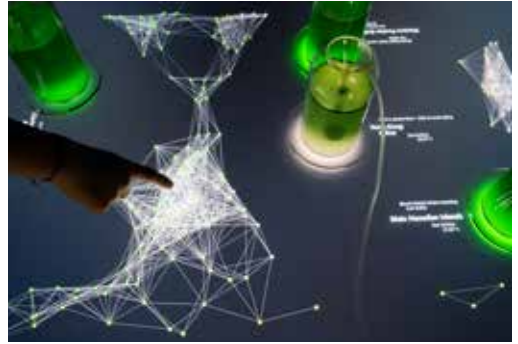


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FadingColours

Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL), Amir Bastan (IR)

The interactive installation *FadingColours* by Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL) and Amir Bastan (IR) combines living algae cultures with data on coral bleaching in the world's oceans. This enables the situation of algae below the surface of the sea to be reflected in real time.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Mission Control

Ars Electronica Solutions (AT), ESERO Austria (AT)

Mission Control not only provides an overview of the offers, tasks, and goals of the ESA and its institutions, but also of how space travel and space research enrich our everyday lives, and finally, Austria's contribution to space research and utilization.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Space Projects

Ars Electronica Solutions (AT), ESERO Austria (AT)

Carried out in Austria by ESERO Austria, *Space Projects* is aimed at school pupils. In it, the European Space Agency ESA offers young people not only inspiration, real challenges, and unexpected opportunities to broaden their horizons, it also opens up new perspectives for the future.



© Ars Electronica / Birgit Cakir

Space Careers

Ars Electronica Solutions (AT), ESERO Austria (AT)

This installation offers visitors exciting insights into the wide range of career paths available to space enthusiasts in Austria and across Europe. At the same time, *Space Careers* invites reflection on future visions beyond our planet—on living, researching, and working not only on Earth, but also on the moon, Mars, and other, as-yet unexplored, celestial bodies.

In cooperation with ESA, FFG, BMIMI.



Living Planet Symposium 2025
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School Activities at the Living Planet Symposium 2025

From June 23th to 25th, 2025, the Austria Center Vienna became a vibrant hub for young space enthusiasts: As part of the ESA's *Living Planet Symposium*, students from across Austria took part in a unique educational program—and at the same time embarked on a mental journey into Earth's orbit. The program was co-organized by ESERO Austria and Ars Electronica Solutions. At the heart of the program were 18 high-quality workshops, presented by the ESA and other renowned institutions such as the German Aerospace Center (DLR), the IIASA (whose researchers contributed to the IPCC climate reports), Heidelberg University, and the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology. These sessions allowed students to immerse themselves in topics like climate research, satellite technology, data analysis, and environmental protection—hands-on, interactive, and scientifically sound.

Many students showed strong interest: whether deciphering satellite imagery, experimenting with measurement instruments, or tracking greenhouse gases—the workshops offered a

well-rounded mix of scientific practice, engaging explanations, and fresh insights.

The program was complemented by an interactive science fair, where students could carry out mini-experiments at their own pace and engage directly with partner institutions. On the central stage, talks, science shows, and Q&A sessions with Austrian and international earth observation experts provided further highlights—and food for thought.

A special experience for many was taking part in exclusive guided tours of the symposium's main exhibition area. Here, school groups encountered key players in the space sector, such as ESA, EUMETSAT, and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)—offering a behind-the-scenes look at the latest in space and environmental research. The school activities at the Living Planet Symposium clearly demonstrated just how relevant and exciting science can be for young people—and how Earth observation can play a vital role in shaping a sustainable future for our planet.

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Projects

Nilpferdklasse / PVS Maurer Lange Gasse
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Mission X—Train Like an Astronaut

Special Events at the Living Planet Symposium 2025

Mission X—Train Like an Astronaut is now an ESA-led education project that was originally launched in collaboration with NASA. It encourages children to stay active and healthy by training like real astronauts. Through physical exercises, science challenges, and lessons on nutrition, pupils learn how fitness and healthy living are key to space missions—and life on Earth. In 2024/25, hundreds of pupils across Austria took part. The highlight: two special events held on June 23rd and 24th at the *Living Planet Symposium* in Vienna. Both events followed a similar format, welcoming primary and secondary school teams to the Austria Center Vienna for a lively program of hands-on activities and workshops, talks, and a tour through the Science Fair. A highlight was the appearance of Austria's only astronaut, Franz Viehböck, who shared insights from his *AUSTROMIR-91* mission. The *Mission X* Special Events proved that healthy living, teamwork, and motivation are the launchpads for big dreams.



© Florian Voggeneder

CanSat

As in recent years, the 2025 *CanSat Austria* competition was once again filled with hundreds of hours of tinkering, soldering, assembling, calculating, coding—and everything else that makes the *CanSat* experience unique! On April 24th, 2025, mini-satellites successfully launched once again at Suben Airport, made possible—as always—by the TU Wien *Space Team*.

This year set a new record: 20 teams registered, with 12 making it to the finals. The main prize went to Team *Basecamp Zero* from BRG Steyr Michaelerplatz. Their *CanSat* not only delivered highly precise measurements, but also functioned as an active air filter to help clean the atmosphere. Team members Florian Hochstöger, Moritz Mayrhofer, and Michaela Rametsteiner won a trip to ESA's *Space Engineer for a Day* event at the ESTEC space research center in the Netherlands. Many local students and space enthusiasts followed the event on site and took part in space-related workshops. Two additional awards were presented: Best Technical Achievement went to Team *Pollution Mapping Project* from BRG Oberpullendorf. The *Best Public Outreach* was awarded to Team *CanLander* from HTL Rennweg.

Climate Detectives

Satellites provide vital data to help us understand and protect our planet—whether it is tracking weather patterns, monitoring cities, or detecting forest fires. In ESA’s *Climate Detectives* project, pupils investigate local environmental or climate issues using satellite images and on-site measurements. Their goal: to raise awareness and propose real solutions.

In 2024/25, 10 Austrian teams with 77 pupils took part. At the *Climate Detectives Summit* at the Ars Electronica Center, the teams presented their projects. The winning team, *Planet Protectors* from BG/BRG Wels, earned a trip to ESA’s Earth Observation Centre in Italy. In the Kids category, 16 teams from Tyrol and Vienna earned up to two badges (silver and gold) by carrying out activities related to the topic.



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missimo: Deine Mission Morgen

Kaiserschild Stiftung (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab & Ars Electronica Center (AT)

Spanning 100 m² of mobile exhibition space, *missimo: Deine Mission Morgen* is packed with knowledge, technical innovations and interactive experiences relating to Artificial Intelligence, augmented reality, robotics, sensor technology, and bionics. Founded by the Kaiserschild Stiftung, a private charitable foundation, it offers future technologies as creative tools, enabling pupils in Years 3 and 4 to discover and actively shape their own world. The Ars Electronica Futurelab’s tasks in the realization of *missimo* ranged from developing the didactic installations and workshop kits, choosing the equipment and technical infrastructure, to creating the entire programming, usability, and graphic design. The 22-tonne, two-story *missimo* truck can be parked directly outside the school, providing teachers with educational resources

for teaching new STEM content in forward-looking lessons. Children aged 8 to 10 not only participate with enthusiasm as they marvel, experiment, and try out the *missimo* program together; they playfully acquire important future skills, too. Since autumn 2023, the *missimo* truck has been touring rural areas of Austria and has already enchanted more than 6,000 children and 375 school classes with its offerings.



© Thomas Schwarz

Future Thinking School

The digital transformation has now encompassed all areas of life, with new technologies and business models continuously being produced. This constantly presents managers and teams with new challenges. To decisively shape digital transformation and set the course for the future, we need people who are aware of these changes, enabling them to recognize correlations and develop new strategies. Since 1979 Ars Electronica has been striving to shape the future and the impact of new technologies on our

lives. At the Future Thinking School, apprentices, employees and managers can acquire future-oriented skills and explore what digitalization means for their area of work, their organization, or their team. The training program helps organizations prepare their teams, students, or apprentices for the future. With its workshops, the Future Thinking School teaches the basics, offering insights into what is to come and into new ways of thinking. It also develops individual training programs jointly with organizations.



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ARS ELECTRONICA FUTURELAB

The Necessity of Action— About Panic and Perspectives

Text: Roland Haring

In operational terms, panic is the circumstance in which every possibility of action disappears. No alternatives, no choices, no options available—just a state of helplessness. It is a state of absolute powerlessness that undermines narrative control over one's own experience. Within the Festival, we are invited to reflect on collective catastrophes such as climate tipping points, geopolitical escalations, systemic failures. With panic, however, it is not a question of magnitude. Its intensity does not unfold on a large scale, but in the subjective loss of one's agency, whether due to an overheated world order or a stuck elevator.

This is precisely why panic is also suitable as a thinking model. It marks the upper limit of the bearable, the end of the imagination. In between we find endless shades of grey, scenarios, transitions—both individual and collective. If we apply this idea to the Ars Electronica Futurelab, we ask ourselves: What makes it panic?

Perhaps exactly this: The moment when no further contribution is possible. When creativity fails, discourse stalls, and solutions are out of reach. When we can no longer initiate, shift or push anything—whether in technological, aesthetical, or social terms. Considering the rapid development of generative AI, we might well wonder: Are we losing this ability? More and more areas of our work—from concept and visualization

to programming and text production—are now being affected, changed, and challenged by AI systems.

And yet we at the Futurelab do not consider ourselves dispensable. We believe in the power of artistic thinking. Not in art as a decorative accessory, but as a way of reflection, an attitude, a very human vision of the world. Art as a tool for shifting perspectives, originating from subjective perception, nonetheless shareable, communicable, tangible. This is exactly what technology cannot replace: the human gaze, the curious questioning, the poetic hyperbole, the emotional anchoring.

As in previous years, we have committed to developing works that meet this precise requirement. Works that pose questions rather than provide solutions and answers. Projects that make alternative perspectives tangible—through spatial staging, technological exploration, media condensation, and narrative intervention. Works that do not aim to illustrate the problem, but to create room for thought and action.

Did we succeed? See for yourself—here in the catalog or in the yearly Open Futurelab during the Festival. One thing is certain: as long as there is still something to do, the Futurelab will not panic. Panic is the consequence of standstill. As long as we can create, we have no reason to panic.





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Panic, Yes Please! Or: Turning Uncertainty into Opportunity

Future Impact Creation

Text: Maria Pfeifer

Our desire to always know what comes next is no longer fulfilled. The future ceases to promise certainty—it arrives as something unpredictable, uncanny. *PANIC—yes/no* is not just a provocation; it is a quiet constant. Somewhere between doomscrolling, digital Biedermeier, and solastalgia, we are haunted by a creeping doubt: That our individual actions don't matter. That the future is already written—by someone else, somewhere else.

Now what? How do you create a future impact in a world defined by the collective feeling of being overwhelmed? That's where Future Impact Creation begins. It is not a prediction tool, but a reality check—a way to ask: Do our ideas resonate? Are we building relevance in the world as it is—

not only in the one we imagine? Future Impact Creation is both mindset and methodology: a way to make futures tangible, test their meaning, and shift from speculation to transformation. As our projects are not designed to generate fixed answers, but open exploration, working in the overlaps, the areas of tension, with maybes and Plan Cs, outcomes are rarely linear. That is why Future Impact Creation sets out to trace not just results but resonance, to watch for Key Transformation Indicators: signs of meaningful change that may not be immediately measurable, but point to evolving capabilities, ideas, and values. Ultimately, Future Impact Creation is about redefining what it means to create value in uncertain times.

Experience Futures in the Making

Open Futurelab & Futurelab Night

Text: Anna Weiss, Bernadette Geißler

The Open Futurelab in POSTCITY invites the public to experience the Ars Electronica Futurelab's ongoing research—as a stage for emerging ideas and a catalyst for collaboration, with the potential to shift how we understand systems, technologies, environments, and ourselves. To shape futures not by controlling outcomes, but by cultivating conditions for transformation.

Visitors become active contributors through interactive installations, experimental prototypes, hands-on workshops, and shared dialogue. They explore the ground truth of human experience and machinic reality as well as how AI personalities influence our behavior. Interactive, speculative interspecies communication with ravens is part of the Open Futurelab as well, as is showcasing how integrating data, art, and science can foster community-driven revitalization in rural regions

in Japan. Co-creation also lies at the heart of an innovative XR sandbox tool to shape collective imagination, and a new kind of city tour that invites everyone to share their perspectives.

Futurelab Night in the Ars Electronica Center's Deep Space 8K is where artistic research transforms into immersive experiences and mesmeric performances. The Futurelab's ongoing investigations are shared on stage—not to offer answers, but to ask urgent questions. Presented as a multisensory dialogue, visitors join the “future report” on the lab's most recent works and projects. These include explorations of what machines see, experiments in multi-user synchronisation and co-presence in hybrid spaces, journeys in making visible and audible journeys through n-dimensional origami, and more.



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Futurelab Ideas Expedition

What If the Scanner Shapes the Reality It Records?

Inference Ground Truth

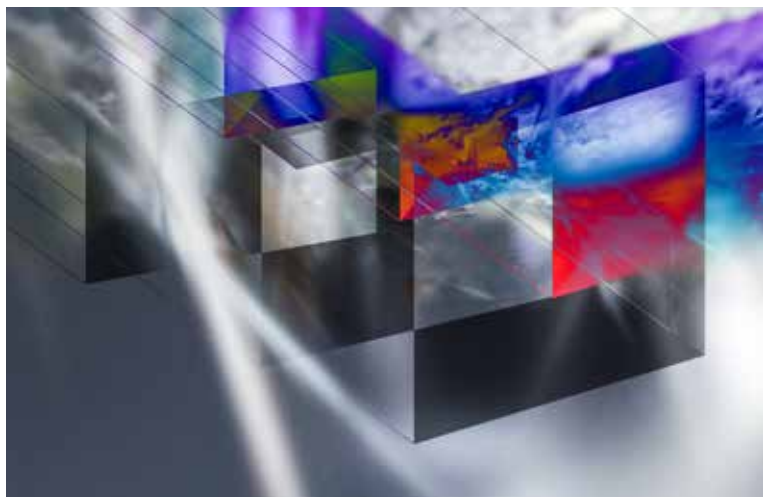
Johannes Pöll (AT), Raphael Schaumburg-Lippe (AT), Simon Schmid (AT)

Text: Johannes Pöll

Inference Ground Truth explores how machines and humans perceive and record reality. Modern philosophy tells us that true objectivity is impossible. Today's culture and media often compare personal impressions of shared moments. But even what we seem to agree on is filtered through human perception. This project is a reminder of that deep subjectivity. We see *Inference Ground Truth* as *space reshaped*—an experiment in overlapping realities. It is a spatial setup using new methods of Gaussian Splatting to record volumetric traces of movement. The goal: to negotiate what ground truth might mean between human experience and machinic reality. Building on our previous Futurelab Ideas Expedition Project *Persistent Time Sink Resonance*, we now push further—technically and conceptually. We extend the use of 3D and 4D Gaussian Splatting as a tool to question what it means to capture motion.

We explore how movement can be rendered not just as temporal change but as a volumetric, data-driven aesthetic.

We aim to make the training process visible. To expose how machines learn from volumetric data. To make scanning and digitization tangible, transparent, and open to interpretation. Our visual language draws from the tradition of slit-scan art. The capture volume becomes a layered structure—where space and time are superimposed into spatialized imprints of movement. We drift toward ground truth, knowing we may never fully arrive, but seeing value in the attempt.



© Johannes Pöll

The Ars Electronica Futurelab Ideas Expedition enables internal talents to freely collaborate, developing ideas into experimental works. This year's winners are *Inference Ground Truth* and *Corpus Corax*.

Are We Ready for Interspecies Dinner Dates?

Corpus Corax

Peter Holzkorn (AT), Nicolas Naveau (FR/AT), Anna Weiss (DE/AT)

Text: Peter Holzkorn, Nicolas Naveau, Anna Weiss

Corpus Corax is a speculative, interactive interspecies experience that immerses visitors in communication with ravens in an age of Artificial Intelligence, animal intelligence, and human confusion. As animal life is being monitored with modern technology, we also ask: Can we understand non-human species not only from a top-down, data-driven perspective, but also through subjective and perceptual experience? The title of the work is a wordplay on the name of the common raven, *Corvus corax*. “Corpus” points both to the notion of a “text corpus,” the basis of all generative language models, and to the original meaning of corpus as a physical body, which shapes a species’ world of experience and communication.

As speculative infrastructure technology, our Human-Raven Translator (HuRT) is an experiment in translating from and to “Raven” in real time, exploring natural language processing and generative sound synthesis. It builds on recent innovations in generative AI systems and a rich tradition of studying bird behavior.

Incorporating data provided by our partner, the Konrad Lorenz Research Center of the University of Vienna, we approach behavioral research insights from an explorative angle.

The project features an experiential exhibit at the Ars Electronica Festival, based on typically human, formalized interaction scenarios, like a conversation over dinner. From a similarity in vocal range to the use of tools, there are many aspects that connect us with this species in uncanny ways. We build on this connection to challenge and stimulate the visitor to engage.

Supported by the Konrad Lorenz Research Center of the University of Vienna; especially Varalika Jain, Thomas Bugnyar, and Lisa Canaval.



© Anna Weiss / Photoshop AI

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Can XR Co-Creation Drive More Equitable, Impactful Real-World Solutions?

NeXus Print

Dai Nippon Printing (JP), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Cynthia Wieringa

Dai Nippon Printing (DNP) and Ars Electronica Futurelab continue their collaboration exploring ways in which XR technologies can transform the future of print through Art Thinking. The open research examines how XR can enrich print as a medium for communication and collective knowledge-sharing across time and space. The latest outcome of this collaboration is *NeXus Print*, an artistic prototype and experimental XR platform. *NeXus Print* is a creative sandbox communication tool that enables groups to collaboratively and simultaneously explore, shape, and share their collective imagination in real time. It invites users into a shared immersive XR space where they co-create and reimagine environments using generative AI in a live, participatory process. By transforming simple text prompts into 3D objects and backdrops, users can turn abstract

and complex ideas into navigable, interactive experiences.

NeXus Print offers the flexibility to create entirely new environments or reimagine existing ones, making it a versatile tool for a wide range of applications from rapid prototyping and creative brainstorming to rethinking public spaces and addressing complex societal challenges. The immersive, inclusive application empowers users of all roles and abilities to co-create and shape a more open future together. By removing barriers and enabling simultaneous interaction between people from all backgrounds, *NeXus Print* democratizes 3D spatial design. At its core, the project investigates how such future-oriented XR technologies can serve as catalysts for meaningful social change through collaborative, imaginative exploration.



© Patrick Berger



© Nicolas Naveau

How Can Interdisciplinarity Revitalize Rural Communities?

Data Art & Science (DAS) Project

Toyota Coniq (JP), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Cyntha Wieringa

Data Art & Science (DAS) is a new interdisciplinary field that incorporates artistic perspectives on future transformations based on data science. Established in 2023, the collaborative project between Toyota Coniq and the Ars Electronica Futurelab continues this year to focus on local revitalization of the Shiga prefecture in Japan.

Bordering Lake Biwa, the largest freshwater lake in Japan, Shiga is known for its natural beauty, historical sites, and cultural heritage. However, Shiga is also facing such challenges as depopulation, an aging society, vacant housing, flood risks, and landslides. To bring care and attention to the region, Toyota Coniq, Shiga University, and other local stakeholders aim to open a Data Art & Science Center in the town of Hikone in Shiga. This Center would promote community building through civic participation and DAS artworks

based on locally sourced data, ultimately bringing new perspectives and reflections on the region's challenges. As a preview of the possibilities a DAS Center might have to offer, the Ars Electronica Futurelab helped devise and realize the Shiga Future Thinking Week in Hikone, held at the end of March 2025 in a former bank building. Artworks and projects from all over Shiga that relate to data science and art enabled participants to jointly explore the past, present, and future of the region: from multi-modal installations based on villagers' memories, and examinations of Lake Biwa's many impacts on local life, to a data-based menu experience. The goal of the week was to engage local stakeholders in the realization of the Center and actively start local discussion and reflections around the future of Shiga under the theme of "Water-Centric Society."

How Can AI Shape Musical Creativity?

Walzersymphonie

Johann Strauss 2025 Vienna (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Susanne Kiesenhofer

To commemorate Johann Strauss II's 200th birthday in 2025, the curators of the Johann Strauss 2025 Vienna festival commissioned the Ars Electronica Futurelab to develop the innovative artistic research project *Walzersymphonie* (Waltz Symphony). It explores the creative collaboration between composers and Artificial Intelligence with the key question: How can AI act as a co-creative partner to expand artistic possibilities?

At the core of the project is Ricercar, an AI-based composition system developed by classical musician and AI researcher Ali Nikrang at the Ars Electronica Futurelab. For this project, Ricercar was specifically trained on Strauss's musical works.

Students from four renowned music universities—the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Mozarteum University Salzburg, Zurich University of the Arts, and the University of

Music and Performing Arts Munich—were invited to participate in a call for proposals. They were asked to submit artistic concepts that critically and creatively engage with Strauss's legacy and the role of AI in composition. A jury selected six students who then spent a semester realizing their concepts by working in collaboration with the AI system Ricercar to develop original compositions.

The results come together as the *Walzersymphonie*, performed by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz. Parts will be heard at the Ars Electronica Festival 2025 in Linz, followed by the full premiere in Vienna in November 2025.

Walzersymphonie is more than an artistic project. It is an investigation into the evolving relationship between human creativity and AI, exploring how technology can enhance and reshape, rather than replace, artistic expression.





© Kerstin Blätterbinder

How Can We Transform Complex XR Setups into Artistic Playgrounds?

mozXR

Mozarteum University (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Daniel Rammer

mozXR is an open-source framework being developed to enable artists to work with large projection rooms and make the process as easy as possible. It is designed for the X-Reality-Lab of the Mozarteum University in Salzburg but can also be used to create scenarios for the Deep Space 8K in the Ars Electronica Center in Linz or other simpler, or more complex, environments.

The X-Reality-Lab is a hexagonal room of 165 square meters with state-of-the-art 3D projectors and a sophisticated 3D sound system, enabling high-end immersive experiences. It combines music, visualization, interaction, and performative art with extended reality and artistic and scientific research.

The main goal of mozXR is to enable students, artists, and researchers to create projects for the X-Reality-Lab. As an open-source framework, it can be tailored and extended to support a wide

range of use cases and technical environments, while building on its core strengths.

mozXR provides access to technologies like 2D laser tracking and optical 3D motion tracking as well as synchronized stereoscopic 3D rendering in a cluster network with multiple projections and 3D sound systems.

The framework comes for Unreal Engine, Unity Engine, and TouchDesigner, and integrates all technologies that are present in the X-Reality-Lab. It can be augmented as the community sees fit.

To explore the capabilities of the framework and illustrate its application, Ars Electronica Futurelab artists and researchers realize artistic showcase projects. Comprehensive documentation, illustrative projects, and tutorial material help creators get started with the framework and allow them to focus primarily on their ideas.

How Do We Explore Future Spaces Where Humans and Avatars Collaborate?

SHARESPACE

SHARESPACE Consortium (EU), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Cyntha Wieringa

SHARESPACE is a Horizon Europe XR research project consisting of 14 partners from eight different countries, including the Ars Electronica Futurelab. The main goal of the project is to explore future hybrid spaces where humans and avatars engage in embodied collaboration.

The backbone of the project is the development of so-called Shared Hybrid Spaces (SHS). These are spaces that both humans and avatars participate in, engaging in physical collaborative tasks. This is achieved by using sensors and novel SHARESPACE technology, which identifies and enhances key information embedded in our movements, making them easier to interpret in digital environments and ultimately improving collaboration.

SHARESPACE technologies and research concepts are applied in three real-world scenarios: sport, health, and art. Within the sport scenario, a VR-training tool has been developed to help increase the performance of cyclists, and was presented at the Olympic Games in 2024. For the health scenario, trials are run to explore the possibility of providing lower back pain therapy in XR. The Futurelab leads the art scenario. The project aims to research what innovations SHARESPACE technology can bring to the media arts through the creation of multiple artworks for Deep Space 8K by both Futurelab researchers and collaborating artists.



Converge © Florian Voggeneder



Foolish Flame © Peter Power / Leon Butler

In 2025, three artworks were developed within the SHARESPACE framework—two by researchers from the Futurelab, and one by a collaborating artist team invited through an open call.

Deep Sync Connect

Ars Electronica Futurelab: Susanne Kiesenhofer (AT), Daniel Rammer (AT), Anna Weiss (DE/AT), Johannes Pöll (AT)

This work explores the feeling of social connectedness and shared presence in hybrid spaces by combining synchronized movement with biodata, specifically heart rate, as the primary form of avatar expression. *Deep Sync Connect* brings together seven local participants and one remote user in a motion-capture suit, reflecting on real-life encounters. They communicate through their shared physiological states and movements only. The participants' heartbeats are sonified and visualized inside glass body avatars, turning inaudible and invisible signals into shared emotional cues.

Converge 2

Ars Electronica Futurelab: Patrick Berger (AT)

This new multiplayer experience in Deep Space 8K is centered around collaborative puzzle solving. *Converge 2* builds on the first version presented last year, with fresh ways to interact,

using new tech from the SHARESPACE project. Up to eight local players and one remote player in a motion-capture suit can join in. Through verbal and physical communication, the piece explores how people can connect and work together in both real and virtual worlds.

Foolish Flame

Peter Power (IE), Leon Butler (IE)

This transdisciplinary installation, developed by Irish artists Peter Power and Leon Butler, explores climate change and inherited trauma. In the installation, visitors become avatars in a shifting digital landscape shaped by collective memory. Through real-time interaction and a responsive environment, the experience explores our impact on nature and each other. Overlooked by an ethereal *Foolish Flame*, the space pulses with an original score on Uilleann pipes, electronics, and voice, bridging myth, movement, and environmental reckoning.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement No. 10192889.

What Kind of Virtual City Tour Invites Citizens to Share Spots of Inspiration?

Beyond Curiosity

Linz Tourism (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Denise Hirtenfelder

A cityscape unfolds in shifting fragments—familiar buildings take shape and dissolve again, seamlessly blending into the next place. Like a modern impressionist vision, reality blurs with curiosity. Ambient sounds recreate the surroundings, drawing the viewer even deeper into the scene. For 2 ½ minutes, the experience feels like a dream—until the awakening, though the drive to explore this city remains. What viewers have just witnessed is *Beyond Curiosity*, a participatory virtual tour through Linz by Linz Tourism and the Ars Electronica Futurelab. Using cutting-edge 3D Gaussian Splatting, it offers an unconventional journey through the city's landmarks, inviting both visitors and residents to capture and share their own perspectives.

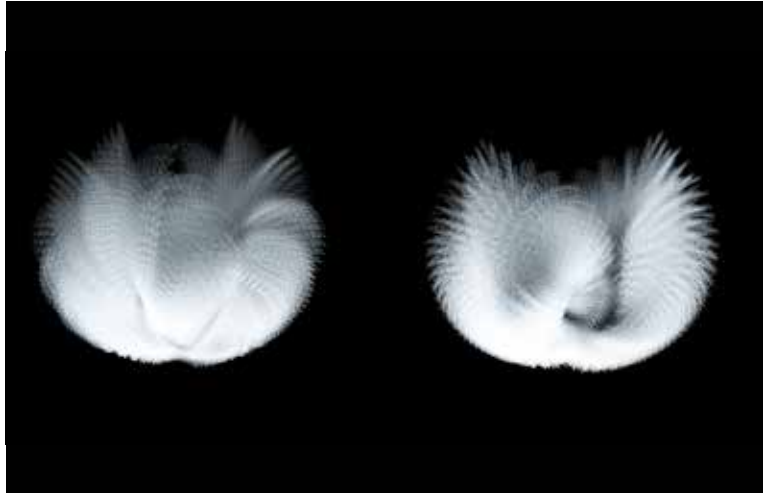
Premiered at Expo 2025 in Osaka, *Beyond Curiosity* reinvents traditional city video tours

through dynamic 3D scans created with Gaussian Splatting—typically used for high-fidelity 3D reconstructions. In this case, technology takes an artistic turn, deconstructing reality rather than merely replicating it. This shift unlocks new creative possibilities, forming a visual language rarely explored in 3D imaging.

At the Ars Electronica Festival, the audience can experience this vision through a showcase video composed of over 200 individual “splats” and 360-degree footage, offering a layered perspective of Linz. Moving beyond watching, visitors are encouraged to create their own scans using the Scaniverse app, guided by a video tutorial. *Beyond Curiosity* is an invitation—to see Linz through a new lens, to reimagine the familiar, and become part of a collective exploration that extends beyond the screen.



© Johannes Pöll



© Matthew Gardiner

Can Origami Fold into More Dimensions?

Oribotics [n-Dimensional]

Matthew Gardiner (AU/AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT), Luca Zimmermann (CH)
Text: Matthew Gardiner

The Futurelab's FWF PEEK funded project on Origami and Robotics (2021–2025) draws deeply from ongoing research in the origami engineering community. Each scientific advance inspires and expands our artistic exploration, opening new creative possibilities. A prime example is recent work in rigid origami theory by Luca Zimmermann, which enabled us to realise our *Gigantic Oribotic Spiral* (2024) as a mechanically rigid-foldable structure. His theory provides a way to mathematically define a minimal parametric design space based on the angles in a crease pattern and to calculate its folding and unfolding precisely. Changing the angles changes the geometric behaviour of the spiral, lending each variation a unique character, aesthetic, and folding morphology.

Our initial model let us explore these variations one at a time, a method we used to choose geometry for large-scale fabrication. But conceptually and computationally, we began to wonder: there's an infinite number of variations,

each one of them valid rigid origami. *Could we see the entire parametric design space—every variation—all at once?* We soon found that calculating the infinite problem space is a future challenge, perhaps for quantum computing, but what we can do is approximate it as a discrete dataset. Our n-dimensional origami represents a computationally generated geometric dataset that spans three spatial dimensions, time, and three angular dimensions. To create experience, the dataset requires interpretation, leading to a series of new artworks that explore the n-dimensionality of origami. Each work is a slice from the infinite realm of possibility, synthesising various findings from our investigation into the core research questions (program, transform, sense).

This research was funded in whole or in part by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [10.55776/AR590] PEEK Grant AR590 ORI*botics On the Art and Science of Origami and Robotics.

How Do AI Personalities Influence Our Interactions?

Alter.Ego

Godot (AT/JP), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)
Text: Denise Hirtenfelder, Susanne Kiesenhofer

Flashing lights, whirring motors, and cheerful chimes—this year, Ars Electronica Festival visitors encounter an unusual interaction partner in the Open Futurelab: a claw machine. Yet this is no ordinary arcade game. Instead of controlling a joystick to win a prize, players must engage in dialogue with one of its shifting personalities and persuade it to cooperate to release a gift-bearing ball.

For three years, Godot and Ars Electronica Futurelab have collaborated on prototypes to foster human trust in AI. This year, their focus is on Human-AI interaction, specifically exploring AI systems with a degree of autonomy. With *Alter.Ego*, they investigate how varying AI personalities affect users' emotions and behavior. Does a neurotic AI make people uneasy? Does an overly agreeable one feel fake? How human can AI seem before it crosses the line into the uncanny?

The claw machine becomes a playful testing

ground for these interaction dynamics. It invites visitors to explore how personality shapes communication and affects interaction. The traits we appreciate in artificial companions may not always align with those we value in human relationships. And crucially, our own behavior is influenced by the personality of our counterpart. Visitors can turn a control knob to alter the machine's character, which is expressed through distinct communication styles, movement patterns, visual effects, and sound design. Equipped with sensors, a camera, and a microphone, the machine is aware of its surroundings, enabling it to act and respond contextually. Ultimately, *Alter.Ego* raises the question of how we want to interact with autonomous systems. It is a clear reminder of how the personality of AI plays a decisive role in how we relate to, trust, and collaborate with technology.



© Kerstin Blätterbinder



As Our World Reshapes, Who Do We Choose to Become?

Future Humanity Research

Toyota Motor Corporation Advanced R&D and Engineering Company (JP),
Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Nicolas Naveau

The world is being reshaped by fast-moving AI technologies, environmental shifts, and complex global changes. These transformations lead us to redefine how we understand ourselves and relate to the world. To examine such “Future Humanity,” the Ars Electronica Futurelab and Toyota Motor Corporation’s Advanced Technology Development Company are embarking on a collaborative research project that lies at the intersection of art, technology, and social transformation.

Our research asks questions about human coexistence with other life forms, autonomous technologies, and AI. What new social and economic systems will future humans conceive, and what kinds of cities will we build? What means of mobility will we use, and what new kinds of journeys will we pioneer? By fusing art and technology, this initiative explores creative

questions about the future of humanity and prototypes experimental and radical visions of the future. In addition, an open research platform is being developed to foster collaboration across a wide range of occupations and sectors of society, including artists, researchers, businesses, governments, and cultural and educational institutions. During the Ars Electronica Festival 2025, we collect diverse feedback through an open research format that allows participants to experience and engage in dialogue around future narratives. Based on this, further research and prototype development will continue, culminating in the launch of a new co-creation platform in 2026. This will be dedicated to deepening discussions on “Future Humanity” and providing a space in which visions of the future will be reworked and refined.

Can Art Untangle Bias in Technology?

Creative Futurists Initiative

The University of Tokyo (JP), Sony Group Corporation (JP), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)
Text: Matthew Gardiner

Futurelab partners with the Creative Futurists Initiative (CFI), a collaboration between the University of Tokyo and Sony that aims to cultivate “creative futurists”—individuals who can transcend various boundaries to create new value for the future. The discourse in our Art Thinking workshops and lectures reflects on “Bias in Technology”, specifically how artists deal with the entanglements between technology and socially biased factors such as gender, disability, and imbalance of power. In collaboration with project teams of students and Sony employees from diverse backgrounds, we explored artistic strategies such as exposing bias, creating inclusive datasets, and engaging in activist

confrontation. In this way, we demonstrate the value of artistic thinking in enriching the initiative’s aims of combining research and practice across diverse disciplines.



© The University of Tokyo

How Can We Empower Citizens Through Business Innovation?

Art Thinking Initiative

Hakuhodo Inc. (JP), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)
Text: Denise Hirtenfelder

Since 2014, Hakuhodo and the Ars Electronica Futurelab have developed a variety of R&D tools, stimulating business innovation through long-term, human-centered strategies as part of the ongoing Art Thinking Initiative. At the Ars Electronica Festival, businesses can engage with Art Thinking in the Art Thinking Lounge—an exhibition space featuring progressive prototypes developed by researchers and artists. Curated under the theme *Future Citizen Kit*, these investigations explore how to empower communities and reimagine concepts for communication and life in the challenges of our time.

This year, Hakuhodo shares findings from its latest Sei-katsu-sha *People Thinking Lab* research,

while the Ars Electronica Futurelab presents the *Citizen Manifesto*—an AI-assisted tool that invites citizens actively to share their collective future visions.



© Florian Voggeneder



© KHM-Museumsverband

How to Look Beyond the Surface?

Claesz Unveiled

Kaiserschild-Stiftung (AT), Inseq Design (AT), Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT)

Text: Marianne Eisl

Have you ever wanted to zoom in on old master paintings and reveal the individual brushstrokes the artist has taken? To make this possible, Ars Electronica Futurelab and Kaiserschild-Stiftung have jointly developed a digital exploration interface to uncover details of Pieter Claesz's still lifes. This interactive exhibit invites visitors to explore the masterpieces in unprecedented detail. Installed directly beneath the original paintings, the installation sets up a powerful connection between the physical artwork and its digital counterpart.

To create this immersive experience, three paintings were photographed in high resolution through numerous individual shots. These were then stitched together into a massive gigapixel image of about five billion pixels. This advanced technology enables users to zoom

in to an extraordinary level of detail, revealing delicate textures, hidden reflections, and intricate elements that would otherwise remain imperceptible. Alongside these visual discoveries, the installation provides rich contextual insights into the symbolism, materials, and artistic techniques of the 17th century, offering a deeper understanding of each painting.

Presented at three different locations, the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Universal-museum Joanneum, and Kunst Museum Winterthur, this installation creates a dynamic dialogue between the physical and the digital, connecting centuries-old masterpieces with cutting-edge technology. Visitors are invited to look beyond the surface, uncover the unseen, and experience the full complexity and beauty of Claesz's still lifes like never before.



ARS ELECTRONICA JAPAN

Text by Emiko Ogawa and Hideaki Ogawa

Ars Electronica Japan was established in 2016 within the Ars Electronica ecosystem as a special initiative for cultural co-creation, connecting Japan and Linz. This initiative is rooted in the longstanding collaboration between Japan's media art community and Ars Electronica. In particular, the splendid performance by Isao Tomita, a pioneer of Japanese electronic music, at Klangwolke in 1984, and the outstanding contributions of Itsuo Sakane, who established the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences (IAMAS) in 1996, led to ongoing co-creation by Japanese artists, Prix judges, and those supporting various cultural projects. This mindset of cultural co-creation is now carried on by Emiko Ogawa, who leads Prix Ars Electronica, and Hideaki Ogawa, who heads Ars Electronica Futurelab. Working together with Ars Electronica Ambassadors Kyoko Kunoh and Yoko Shimizu, their work has expanded beyond the framework of cultural exchange into diverse joint creations between Europe and Japan. For instance, the international "Matsudo International Science and Art Festival," held in Matsudo City, connects science, art, and nature. Since 2018, it has been co-curated with Ars Electronica as a citizen-participation art festival and is increasingly recognized for its efforts to transform the city. Additionally, Civic Creative Base Tokyo (CCBT), a collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, aims to creatively blend Tokyo's policies with art.



Pianographique at EXPO 2025 in Osaka / Maki Namekawa (AT/JP), Dennis Russell Davies (AT/US), Cori O'Leary (AT)
© Ars Electronica / Iris Tschank

Through this initiative, the social application of media art is promoted under the motto, “Transform Tokyo into a better city through creativity x technology.”

An experimental incubation center called “Knowledge Capital” was opened in Osaka in 2013 as a framework for promoting innovation hub. Regular programs, including exhibitions, talks, and workshops, have been held through the “Ars Electronica in the Knowledge Capital” program. Moreover, since 2014, pioneering efforts with Hakuhodo, one of Japan’s largest communication design companies, have focused on promoting Art Thinking with the goal of fostering innovation in Japan. In 2025, during the official EU Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, the Ars Electronica program was selected as a symbol of cultural exchange between the EU and Japan. Pianists Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies gave a concert titled “Pianographique” with real-time visuals by Cori O’Leary, gathering together many key figures supporting Ars Electronica Japan’s activities. Over 40 years ago, Isao Tomita conducted future experiments in Linz. To honor his legacy, the Isao Tomita Award was established in 2021, which continues to discover new talent within Prix Ars Electronica, a link to the future. In this way, Ars Electronica Japan has built a solid foundation within the Ars Electronica ecosystem, consistently taking actions that are pioneering and future-oriented.

ARS ELECTRONICA SOLUTIONS

Ars Electronica Solutions acts as a mediator between society, business, culture, and science. Working with partners and customers worldwide, Solutions develops tailor-made projects that translate complex content into meaningful, tangible formats. Empathetic collaboration, creative problem-solving, and clear, effective communication lie at the heart of every project.

What sets Ars Electronica Solutions apart is the close partnership involved in developing each project. Content is not only visualized, but also given meaning through interactive narrative forms, well-considered dramaturgy, and compelling storylines.

Ars Electronica Solutions is the common connecting thread, from the initial idea to its concrete implementation. The goal is to tell stories that touch people, offer some direction, and linger in the memory. As an independent division within Ars Electronica, Solutions translates ideas, visions and research findings from artistic and scientific contexts into practical applications for museums, trade fairs, companies, and public spaces. In doing so, Solutions extends the impact of Ars Electronica far beyond Linz, creating new forms of communication, participation, and transformation.





Ars Electronica Solutions @ Festival 2025

Shaping Digital Futures Through Creativity

Although panic is not a reliable guide, it often signals an urgent need for new perspectives and approaches to societal issues. Under the motto *PANIC – yes/no*, this year's festival sees Ars Electronica Solutions presenting strategies for turning uncertainty, change, and technological complexity into creative productivity and empathic communication.

In the Open Solutions area of POSTCITY, Ars Electronica Solutions provides insights into its own working methods under the title *How do we work?* It explores the question, "How do we try to impact society through the projects we develop and realize for our clients?" The processes involved, from initial conception to creative development, interactive prototypes, and immersive applications, are revealed. The focus is on such topics as digital transformation,

creativity in times of crisis, and collaborative thinking about the future. Particular emphasis is placed on further developments in the Deep Space sector: the Deep Space Community, which is part of the Deep Space Festival, will present immersive narratives, local perspectives, and current developments relating to Deep Space from international partner institutions in the global network. New technologies, content, and application scenarios that could influence future Deep Space formats will also be showcased.

Daily talks, performances, and interactive formats featuring guests from the arts, science, education, and industry will further explore these themes. These will demonstrate how close collaboration can generate new insights and how creative processes can provide a response to uncertainty and complexity.

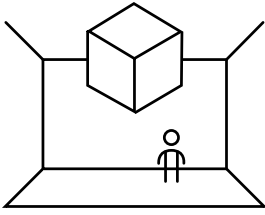




© My Trinh Müller-Gardiner



© Tom Mesic



Deep Space by Ars Electronica: A Room with a Soul—Shared Across the World

**From Linz to a Growing Global Community—Immersive
Spaces that Bring Together Ideas, Expertise, and People**

Deep Space by Ars Electronica is not just a room; it is an immersive environment with a unique character. It reveals fascinating perspectives on our world that would otherwise remain hidden from view. Visitors can experience interactive media art, immersive storytelling, and real-time data visualization in a setting that allows them to sit, lie down, or move around freely. The result is a highly engaging collective atmosphere.

Thanks to its unparalleled visual and acoustic resolution, as well as its capacity to integrate various media formats, Deep Space transforms lectures, events, exhibitions, and performances into unforgettable experiences. The highly adaptable system can be used in a variety of locations, from museums and science centers to hotel foyers and cultural institutions, offering a modular, customizable platform for delivering compelling content. What sets Deep Space apart is not only its cutting-edge infrastructure, but also its ability to adapt to local cultural and spatial conditions. Content development, presentation of content, and storytelling can be adjusted and tailored to target groups, their cultural backgrounds and specific communication needs. One example is the Deep Space Future at the West Bund Museum in Shanghai, which opened in December 2023. With dramaturgically staged sessions tailored to families and younger audiences, this version showcases local aesthetics and artistic practices.

By contrast, the original Deep Space 8K at the Ars Electronica Center in Linz focuses on exploration and freedom of movement, enabling visitors to interact with immersive content in their own way. This diversity in implementation is key to Deep Space's growing success. The growing Deep Space community provides opportunities for content exchange, dramaturgical inspiration, and cross-cultural approaches.

To enable more creators to contribute to the Deep Space experience, Ars Electronica provides a simple yet powerful software development kit (SDK). This allows artists, developers, and creatives to build their own tailor-made applications, using the entire space as an interactive canvas and leveraging fundamental interaction interfaces such as laser tracking and controller input. There is also the option to add custom interfaces as needed. Consequently, Deep Space is becoming an increasingly powerful tool and platform for co-creation. Recent openings in Hangzhou (China), Zagreb (Croatia), and Veszprém (Hungary) reflect its global appeal. These international collaborations, along with the continuous development of tools and features, are evidence of Ars Electronica's commitment to building a global Deep Space community.

Deep Space by Ars Electronica is therefore more than just technological infrastructure; it is also a space for encounters, storytelling, and collaborative imagination.



Deep Space Hangzhou © Shen Wei

Deep Space Hangzhou

A Stage for Digital Imagination

With the opening of its second Deep Space in China, Ars Electronica Solutions continues to expand its global network of immersive art and science experiences. Located in the recently opened M511 Complex in Hangzhou—a former film production site in the picturesque Xi Xi Valley—this new Deep Space brings together media art, cultural heritage, and science communication in a uniquely theatrical setting. Unlike its counterpart in Linz, Deep Space Hangzhou is designed more like a theater, complete with comfortable auditorium seating and live performances that create an intimate and engaging atmosphere.

This concept was realized during the grand opening on October 1st, 2024, which featured the multimedia concert *A Space Odyssey* and the performance *AI Rhapsody: Together with Stars*, featuring digital artworks from around the globe. Strong collaborations with regional artists and the integration of local cultural elements establish this Deep Space as a platform for co-creation and cultural exchange. As one of the M511 Cultural Hub’s first flagship projects, it embodies the vision of combining art, technology, and cultural diversity to create unforgettable, immersive experiences.

CODE—the Center of Digital Experiences in Veszprém

Immersion Meets Heritage in Hungary’s New Cultural Hub

CODE opened in Veszprém, Hungary, in early 2025 as part of the European Capital of Culture 2023 initiative. Designed to merge digital art, science, and education, the center features a Deep Space by Ars Electronica and several interactive installations. Located in a former cultural center, CODE presents ever-changing digital content, ranging from artistic masterpieces and scientific wonders to immersive 3D experiences such as *Call to Echo* and interactive pieces like *Monster Tinder*. As a regional hub for

creativity, CODE supports local and international artists alike. The Deep Space and its associated exhibitions offer visitors a unique blend of entertainment and education, displaying Hungary’s digital transformation in a vibrant way.



© CODE

Deep Space Zagreb

A Journey Through the Cosmos

Created in collaboration with Smart AudioVisual and Ars Electronica Solutions, Deep Space offers visitors an immersive journey through the universe at the Croatian Natural History Museum in Zagreb. Powered by Uniview, a 3D visualization tool, visitors can explore our solar system in stunning and interactive ways.

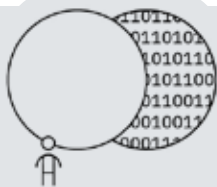
Although smaller than the original in Linz, Deep Space Zagreb delivers the same powerful blend of science, technology, and imagination. More than just a visual spectacle, it also serves as a dynamic hub for science communication, making complex knowledge accessible and learning a truly memorable experience.



Deep Space Zagreb © The City of Zagreb



Deep Space Zagreb © Hrvatski prirodoslovni muzej



Digital Transformation

Shaping Futures in Times of Transformation

Throughout history, humans have developed analogue tools to simplify life and increase efficiency. In contrast, the digital transformation has unfolded in an astonishingly short period of time. People are adapting ever faster, yet the complexity of digitization and its profound effects on society can sometimes feel overwhelming. Ars Electronica Solutions sees its role as mediating between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

By transforming complexity into experience, we help to shape visions of the future that are inspired by science and research, driven by creativity and rooted in culture, business, and innovation. Through immersive storytelling, interactive installations, and deep collaboration, we translate abstract knowledge into meaningful encounters, making the digital shift tangible and inspiring transformation.



© Ina Badics

LABOUR LAB

A Space for Rethinking Work

The LABOUR LAB at the Museum Arbeitswelt in Steyr invites young people to explore the past and future of work through immersive digital experiences. Visitors engage with historical realities and contemporary challenges such as fairness, participation, and digital transformation; these may range from 19th century factories to AI-driven futures.

One of the highlights is the *Decision Machine* developed by Ars Electronica Solutions.

Five interactive chatbot stations allow visitors to influence the work lives of fictional characters and vote on important labor issues. Their choices feed into a dynamic centerpiece that combines light, sound, and data to visualize collective outcomes.

The LABOUR LAB, which opened in May 2025, was developed in partnership with Museum Arbeitswelt and Smesh, and was supported by the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour.

Pinakothek der Moderne—Music of Encounters

When Movement Becomes Sound

From June 5th to November 9th, 2025, the 25-meter high rotunda of the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich will become a musical instrument. Created by Ars Electronica Solutions in collaboration with Austrian composer Rupert Huber, *Music of Encounters* turns visitors' movements into sound using a real-time 3D tracking system and a custom-built audio engine.

As people move through the space, they generate evolving musical textures based on Huber's compositions. A ring of 28 speakers fills the rotunda with layered sounds, transforming the architecture into an acoustic canvas.

This ever-changing soundscape invites visitors to pause, move, and listen, turning music into a shared social experience.

Museum der Moderne—ART-O-MAT

A Creative Dialogue Between Art and AI

Since April 2025, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg has encouraged visitors to explore creativity through the ART-O-MAT, an interactive digital tool developed by Ars Electronica Solutions. Using machine learning and generative algorithms, the ART-O-MAT produces personalized artworks. In this way, a fresh perspective is offered on the creative potential of Artificial Intelligence.

Visitors actively engage with the system, experiencing how human intuition and machine processes intertwine. Playfully raising questions about authorship, authenticity, and the future of image-making, the installation provides both a hands-on experience and a point of reflection on the evolving role of AI in art.

Connected Earth—Hydrogen as an Energy Carrier

Interactive Model for a Sustainable Future

As part of the new *Connected Earth* exhibition at the Ars Electronica Center, the interactive *Hydrogen as an Energy Carrier* installation presents the potential of hydrogen in future energy systems. Developed in collaboration with WIVA P&G, Robert Bosch AG, HTL Paul Hahn, Linz AG, and RAG Austria AG, it combines a physical model with digital interfaces designed by Ars Electronica Solutions.

Visitors can generate energy through movement, which powers a real PEM electrolysis process that splits water into hydrogen and oxygen. The stored hydrogen is then used to power a rotating model of the Earth, visually communicating hydrogen's potential as a green energy source. Live data and two seasonal modes enhance the experience, encouraging reflection on the role of technology, science, and creativity in shaping a more sustainable world.



Rotunde in der Pinakothek der Moderne © Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, München / Sybille Forster



ART-O-MAT
© Isabel Schölmauer



Connected Earth © Isabel Schölmbauer



Science Experience

Making Science Tangible

In close collaboration with leading scientific institutions, Ars Electronica Solutions creates immersive experiences that inspire and engage audiences of all ages and backgrounds with science. *Science Experience* transforms complex topics into playful, compelling narratives that emphasize the importance of science in shaping a well-informed society prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

Science Experience is far more than a single installation; it is conceived as a holistic experience, where light, sound, space, materials, climate, ergonomics, and cutting-edge technologies come together to create environments that demonstrate the relevance of science and its impact on our world.

LPS School Lab

From Observation to Action

At the 2025 ESA Living Planet Symposium, thousands of experts will explore ways in which satellite data can be used to drive climate action and sustainability. Ars Electronica Solutions is contributing to the LPS School Activities, an educational initiative offering students and teachers immersive workshops and interactive

activities. In partnership with ESERO Austria, which is based at the Ars Electronica Center, the program makes Earth observation and space science accessible, engaging, and relevant for the next generation by bringing these complex topics to life.



2025 Paris Air Show

ESA Space Pavilion—Designed by Ars Electronica Solutions

At the *2025 Paris Air Show*, the European Space Agency (ESA) will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a visionary Space Pavilion, designed in collaboration with Ars Electronica Solutions. This immersive exhibition showcases ESA's missions, achievements and strategic outlook for 2040, underlining the growing role of space in society, the environment, and the economy. A combination of interactive installations, real objects, sound, light, and storytelling transforms complex space topics into an engaging, multisensory experience. A notable feature is the AI Infinity Space, which shows the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence on space missions, from autonomous navigation to real-time crisis analysis. Visitors can interact with the Hera probe

via an AI-supported Space Companion, which demonstrates new forms of human-machine communication in space exploration. Ars Electronica Solutions brings ESA's vision for the future of space to life through immersive media and participatory design.



© Harald Moser

ESA METABOX

A Holographic Window into Earth Observation

The *METABOX* is an innovative holographic display located at the European Space Agency's (ESA) ESRIN Visitor Centre, which specialises in Earth observation. It presents floating 4K volumetric holograms, enabling visitors to explore ESA satellite missions and global environmental datasets interactively. Several immersive modes have been developed in collaboration with Ars Electronica Solutions, including a dedicated Art & Science Mode that offers a creative and emotionally engaging way to experience satellite data. A virtual host guides visitors through Earth observation missions, curated content and real-time environmental parameters, such as sea surface temperature and biomass.

The dynamic globes respond to user proximity, enabling intuitive interaction and emphasising the importance of ESA's missions, making complex satellite information tangible and engaging.



© Yvonne Metnitzner



Sustainability Thinking

At Ars Electronica Solutions, we combine art, technology, science, society, and business with a focus on sustainability. Together with our clients, we develop communication strategies that engage with the intellectual and emotional dimensions of sustainability, fostering transformative thinking in politics, society, and the economy.

By connecting rational insights with emotional resonance, we render complex topics such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and digital transformation more accessible. Our ultimate goal is to inspire a more holistic and interconnected understanding of our world.

Upper Austrian Climate Summit 2025

Ars Electronica Solutions supports the annual *Upper Austrian Climate Summit* in two ways.

Firstly, it provides a specially developed application that visualizes the proportional relationship between existing and necessary land use measures, such as industrial zones, photovoltaic systems, or parking areas. High-resolution imagery from key viewpoints enables detailed visual zoom and overlays essential planning data, rendering complex spatial developments tangible and comprehensible.

Secondly, it supplies a special program to the Deep Space at the Ars Electronica Center.

This immersive live show, *Earth from Space*, uses satellite-based Earth observation data to highlight the ecological and socio-economic dimensions of climate change, creating a powerful, emotional experience.



© Ars Electronica Solutions

ESA: Climate Action Liverpool

Ars Electronica Solutions Supports ESA and Massive Attack in the Climate Initiative

Ars Electronica Solutions has collaborated with the European Space Agency and Massive Attack's Robert "3D" Del Naja on a unique project. Presented in Liverpool, the installation combined satellite imagery and music to raise awareness of climate change.

Interactive elements, including the Half Dome Globe developed with the ESA, enabled visitors to explore environmental changes using real Earth observation data.

The project, titled *ESA: Climate* demonstrated how art, science, and technology can come together to inspire climate action.



© ESA / Liverpool City Council

Preview 2026: Myth of the Forest at Gasometer Oberhausen

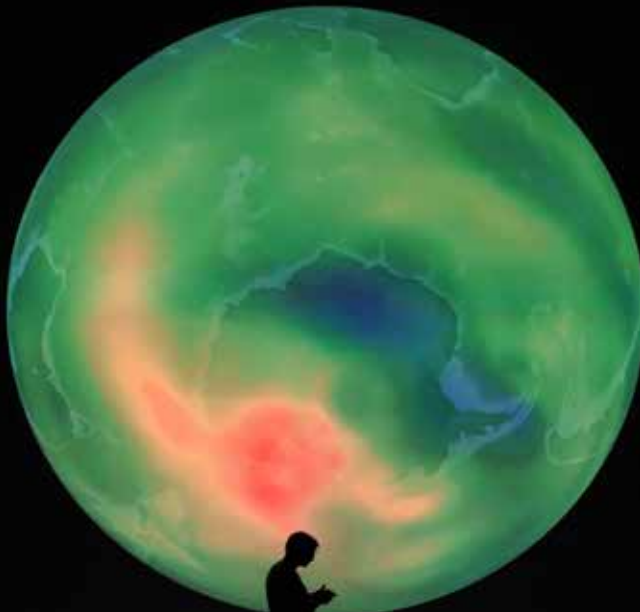
In spring 2026, Gasometer Oberhausen will open its next major exhibition: *Myth of the Forest* (working title). Following on from the highly acclaimed *Planet Ocean* exhibition, this immersive exhibition will explore the ecological, cultural, and existential significance of forests, from Germany's ancient woodlands to the biodiversity of tropical rainforests. Featuring stunning photography, film, and scientific narratives, the exhibition will draw attention to the vital role of forests as habitats, climate regulators, and sources of life.

The impact of human activity and global conservation efforts is also addressed. At the core of the exhibition will be *The Tree*—a monumental, 40-metre-tall immersive installation conceived by Ars Electronica Solutions. Visitors will step beneath the tree's root system and experience an audiovisual journey through its seasons, signals, and inner life. The installation will transform the entire space into a living forest organism, made tangible through soundscapes composed by Rupert Huber and dynamic digital scenography.

At Ars Electronica Solutions, we believe in collaborating with purpose to develop innovative tools, spaces, and stories that connect people with ideas and technology in meaningful ways. Through immersive formats like Deep Space, participatory exhibitions, and custom digital experiences, we work closely with partners from the fields of science, culture, education, and industry to transform visions into reality. Let's collaborate to explore, co-create, and shape the future together.



LABOUR LAB © MAW—Julia Ludwig



Ozone concentration
100 500 Units (DU)

Earth from Space © Robert Bauernhansl

ARS ELECTRONICA EXPORT 2024–2025

With Export, the expertise and knowledge gathered at Ars Electronica travels the world through exhibitions and residencies, mentoring, workshops, and talks.

40+ years working at the intersection of art and science has enabled us to build a wide network of brilliant minds in the field of art, technology, and society. This network now provides support in critically analyzing current challenges and anticipating future trends. Our export partners include cultural practitioners, businesses, and universities, with whom we collaborate worldwide on diverse projects.

Through Ars Electronica Export, we share our insights and leverage our network's expertise to address your inquiries and ideas. Whether consulting, conceptualizing, producing exhibitions, screenings, performances, new kinds of residencies, or developing innovative new formats, we are committed to sharing our experiences and fostering creative collaborations globally.



Ars Electronica Animation Festival on Tour 2024

Animation Film Program for Cultural Partners worldwide

The 2024 Ars Electronica Animation Festival is a diverse showcase that invites spectators to discover current artistic productions in the field of digital animation. Like every year, Ars Electronica Animation Festival on Tour showcases recent artistic trends in the field of digital animation. The selection, compiled from submissions to the Prix Ars Electronica 2024 in its recently renewed category New Animation Art, demonstrates the

transformational, dynamic field of animation. Supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the program is presented worldwide by cultural partners. In 2024 there were four screening packages, each containing 5 to 8 video works: Prix Ars Electronica Best-Of, Science and Data Visualizations, Austrian Panorama and Young Animations.

Ars Biologica: A Prototype Residency in Budweis

A collaboration with Budweis 2028–European Capital of Culture

In 2025 Ars Electronica joins forces with Budweis 2028 to launch a prototype residency exploring the intersections of art, science, and ecology. As part of the European Capital of Culture's long-term vision, the program invites artists, scientists, and regional stakeholders to collaborate in investigating pressing environmental questions around climate resilience and sustainable agriculture. Hosted in South Bohemia in both a rural and urban context, this prototype residency

emphasizes situated knowledge, co-creation, and regenerative practices.

The team—comprising an artist, a scientist, and a farmer—will explore how creative methodologies can address regional challenges while contributing to a broader ecological imagination. Outcomes will be shared at key moments throughout the year: locally during the Budweis Agriculture Fair and at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz.

(Get) In Touch

Istanbul Digital Arts Festival x Ars Electronica

The group exhibition *(Get) In Touch*, shown as part of the Istanbul Digital Arts Festival, explores ways in which technology interacts with organic and physical environments. The interactive sound textile *Dung Dkar Cloak* by EJTECH offers a multisensory journey which introduces tactility into digital interaction. In *Drone in Search of a Four-Leaf Clover* by artist Sputniko! an AI helps us to find rare luck in nature. A similar connection to nature is offered by Laura Cinti in her work *AI in the Sky*.

With the help of AI and drone technology, the artist, together with scientists, is searching for endangered plants. The video installation *Anatomy of Non-Fact: Chapter 1—AI Hyperrealism* shows how deep fakes challenge our trust in our senses as reliable sources of truth. Last but not least, Timothy Thomasson's *I'm Feeling Lucky* invites contemplation of a 19th-century panorama reimagined through digital lens—an infinite, algorithmic landscape where history, surveillance, and virtual space converge.



I'm Feeling Lucky © Timothy Thomasson

How intelligent is AI really?

Silesian Science Festival x Ars Electronica

Ars Electronica participated for the first time in the 8th Silesian Science Festival. As the grand finale of Katowice's year as European City of Science 2024, the festival offered a diverse program of workshops, lectures, and interactive zones. Visitors could explore cutting-edge topics in science and technology, including special zones dedicated to space, gaming, and AI.

Ars Electronica curated parts of the AI exhibition showcasing three interactive artworks that invited visitors to look inside and behind technology.

Three projects by Memo Akten, Martyna Marciniak, and Ars Electronica Futurelab challenged the



© Małgorzata Dymowska

assumption that technology is inherently “smart”, urging one to look deeper—inside the machines, the data, and the systems that shape how we see the world.

Permanent Raging Presence by Total Refusal

Shtatëmbëdhjetë Galeria17 x Ars Electronica

In their solo exhibition at Galeria 17, Total Refusal challenged the divide between work and leisure, revealing them as two sides of the same capitalist logic.

Through two installations, the collective explored the labor loops of video game NPCs (non-player characters)—digital workers caught in endless cycles of production and play. *Hardly Working* is an ethnographic video installation that explores human working conditions under capitalism.

It draws on the algorithmic loops of work that constitute the day-to-day of the digital extras who populate video game worlds in order to simulate “normality”.

Club Stahlbad follows the NPCs onto the dance floor. Here, the paradox of coded ecstasy makes for an awkward spectacle that is emblematic of the enforced entertainment within the capitalist mode of production.



© David Cavollari

ArtScience Workshop Series

ShanghaiTech University × Ars Electronica

Ars Electronica and ShanghaiTech University have co-curated a series of artist-led student workshops together with four different research labs at the university. The workshops aimed to introduce ArtScience as a research and production practice that nurtures innovation by bridging the worlds of art, science, and technology. Each workshop introduced a distinct approach: In *Embodied LLMs*, artist Jan Zuiderveld guided students from the AIDA Lab (Artificial Intelligence and Digital Art Lab) to give large language models a physical form—resulting in interactive machines with personalities and presence. *Embracing Collision* led by artist and researcher Anna Schaeffner at the CASE Lab (Center for Adaptive System Engineering) encouraged participants to rethink the design of objects and devices by embracing collision rather than avoiding it.



© ShanghaiTech University

At the DIV Lab (Digital Intelligent Virtual Lab), Peter Freudling, researcher and artist at Ars Electronica Futurelab, introduced students to art thinking methodology. In *Linking Life(s)*, architect and researcher Tiziano Derme worked with students from the HY Lab (Hybrid Ecologies Lab) to prototype hybrid ecosystems involving humans, fungi, and AI.

8637 from the light

Gwangyang—Linz Media Arts Exchange

In an exciting first-time collaboration, the city of Gwangyang in South Korea partnered with Ars Electronica to bridge two worlds, both artistic and technological, separated by 8,637 kilometers. The exhibition, spread over four venues, showcased renowned media artists from South Korea and Austria working at the intersection of art and technology. Susi Gutsche's critical installation *Tracewaste* was exhibited alongside six distinctive South Korean artistic positions by Changkyum Kim, Lee Nam Lee, Donah Lee, Jeongju Jeong, Jaehyung Lee, and Joon Yong Moon.

In addition to this, Ars Electronica presented its outstanding selection of animations from Prix Ars Electronica 2024.



© Gwangyang-Linz Media Art Festival

PANIC

yes / no

Panic, yes or no? Shouldn't we have long been in a state of absolute panic by now? Why aren't we? There seem to be countless reasons for panic. Or is it all just scaremongering? How long can hope last, and what will follow it? Panic does not arise from the mere fear of danger, but from the realization of its inevitability—the feeling of being defenselessly exposed to it, with no possibility of escape or control.

When fear can no longer be attributed to specific dangers and risks, it turns into panic; adrenaline is released, the heart rate accelerates, more blood is pumped through the veins, and the muscles tense. But fear makes us small and discouraged. Therefore, Ars Electronica 2025 poses the question how we can maintain and strengthen our momentum for the future. Artists, thinkers, activists, philosophers, practitioners, and citizens explore the status quo of our time, a time full of contradictions and uncertainty, and investigate the power of artistic work and impact in this time of profound upheaval.

ars.electronica.art/panic/

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