

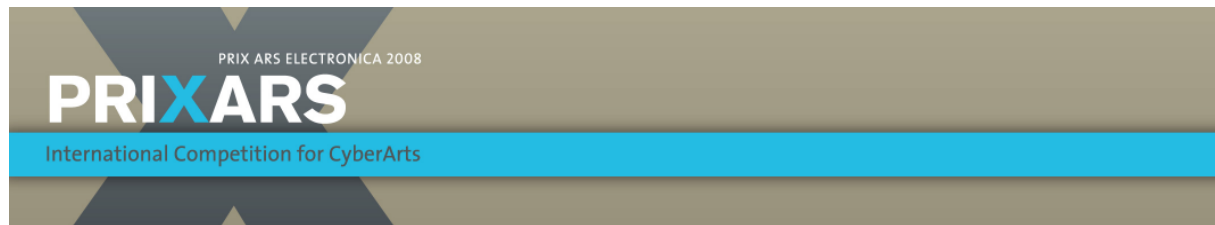
The Golden Nica goes to ...

The 2008 Prix Ars Electronica Prizewinners

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Press Conference
 Tuesday, 17.06.2008, 10:00
 Ars Electronica Center
 Graben 15
 A-4020 Linz



The Prix Ars Electronica 2008

3,075 works from 62 countries were submitted for prize consideration to the 2008 Prix Ars Electronica. The jury made up of top international experts convened April 18-20—three days long and practically 'round-the-clock—to assess the entries and select the best for Prix honors. Beckoning 2008 winners are six Golden Nica statuettes, an award from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Media.Art.Research and prize money totaling 115,000 euros. The official awards ceremony will be held as always in conjunction with the Ars Electronica Gala on September 5, 2008 in the Main Hall of the Brucknerhaus.

Seven Categories

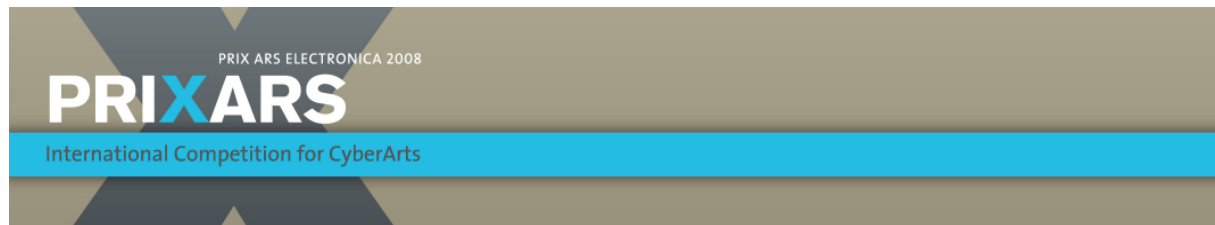
All seven categories of this year's Prix Ars Electronica competition reflect the great diversity of contemporary media art, though perhaps none quite so distinctively as the Hybrid Art category launched last year. Broadly defined by intention, Hybrid Art focuses on efforts transcending boundaries between art and science, remixes and mashups of discrete genres and artistic forms of expression. The other 2008 Prix Ars Electronica categories are COMPUTER ANIMATION / FILM / VFX, INTERACTIVE ART, DIGITAL MUSICS, DIGITAL COMMUNITIES, u19 – freestyle computing and the Media.Art.Research Award.

World's Highest Endowed Competition for Media Art

Since its very inception in 1987, the Prix Ars Electronica has been the world's most important showcase of excellence at the interface of art, technology and society. And the spectrum of participants each year displays corresponding diversity, ranging from internationally renowned artists (Karlheinz Stockhausen, Lynn Hershman, Toshio Iwai / Ryuichi Sakamoto, Chris Cunningham / Aphex Twin) to Oscar prizewinners (John Lasseter, Chris Landreth) to up-and-coming young creatives (Graffiti Research Lab). With the competition being staged annually and due to its global reach and the thematically

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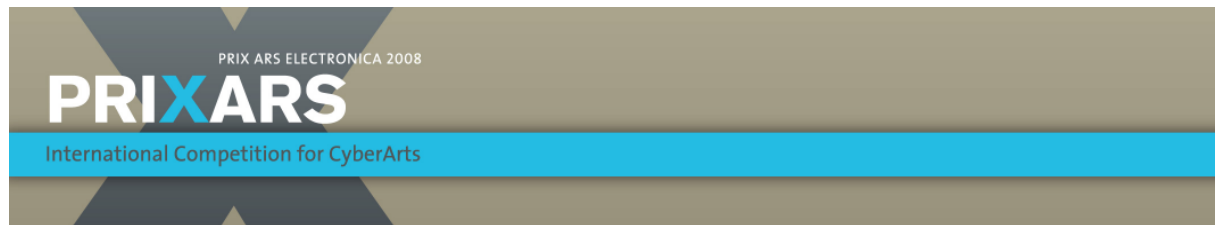
wide-ranging nature of the submissions—a total of 37,542 since 1987—the Prix Archive is now able to provide detailed insights into the development of media art, its openness and diversity and all of its major currents. With 115,000 euros in prize money, it is also the world's highest endowed competition in the media arts.

Organizers and Sponsors

The Prix Ars Electronica is produced by the Ars Electronica Center Linz and the ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria Regional Studio. Collaborating partners are the Brucknerhaus Linz and the OK Center for Contemporary Art. The Prix Ars Electronica is supported by the City of Linz and the Province of Upper Austria. Lead sponsors are voestalpine and LIWEST. Additional sponsors are KulturKontakt Austria, Pöstlingberg Schloßl, Casinos Austria and Sony DADC.

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Golden Nicas 08

Computer Animation / Film / VFX

Madame Tutli-Putli

Chris Lavis, Maciek Szczerbowski. (Directors), Jason Walker (Special Visual Effects) (CA) / National Film Board of Canada

www.nfb.ca/madametutliputli

Madame Tutli-Putli rides the night train. Her baggage includes all her worldly possessions and just about every ghost from her past. The steam locomotive-driven journey becomes a commutation between fantasy and reality during which ever-more-peculiar fellow travelers ensconce themselves in the elderly lady's compartment. Madame Tutli-Putli, a stop-motion film made under the aegis of the National Film Board of Canada, blew the jury away with its technical brilliance, exquisite treatment of details and touching plot. Their response was the 2008 Golden Nica.

Digital Musics

Reactable

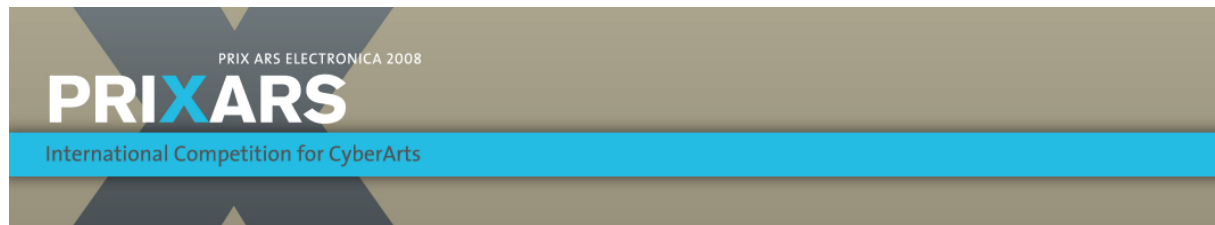
Sergi Jordà (ES), Günter Geiger (AT), Martin Kaltenbrunner (AT), Marcos Alonso (ES) / Music Technology Group, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain

<http://reactable.iua.upf.edu/>

The reactable is an intelligent musical instrument specially conceived for multi-user performances. There's room for several players at this round table; visible on its surface are geometric figures, each of which symbolizes a specific sound. Moving the figures back and forth, rotating or interlinking them modifies the sounds they produce. With its highly intuitive, user-friendly interface, the reactable can be played by anyone—from little kids to professional musicians. But this is not just some music-making toy; the reactable is a genuine instrument and, accordingly, it takes some practice to get the most out of it. Proof of this was recently provided by Scandinavian artist Björk, who used one on her

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latest world tour. The reactable has been singled out for recognition with the 2008 Golden Nica in the Digital Musics category.

Hybrid Art

Pollstream – Nuage Vert Helen Evans (FR/UK), Heiko Hansen (FR/DE) / HEHE

<http://www.nuagevert.org>

Pollstream – Nuage Vert transforms clouds into projection surfaces. As such, these indefinable, constantly and chaotically changing products of the condensation of water vapor become media bearing political ideas and messages. Or aestheticized symbols of environmental pollution caused by carbon emissions. Pollstream – Nuage Vert was developed in collaboration with experts in laser technology, computer science, electrical engineering, energy generation and air quality monitoring. Development commenced in 2002 and concluded in February 2008 with a performance in Helsinki that impressively demonstrated how art is capable of encompassing an entire city—its public sphere, its industry and its inhabitants—and unfolding sociopolitical relevance. Pollstream – Nuage Vert is the recipient of the 2008 Golden Nica in the Hybrid Art category.

Interactive Art

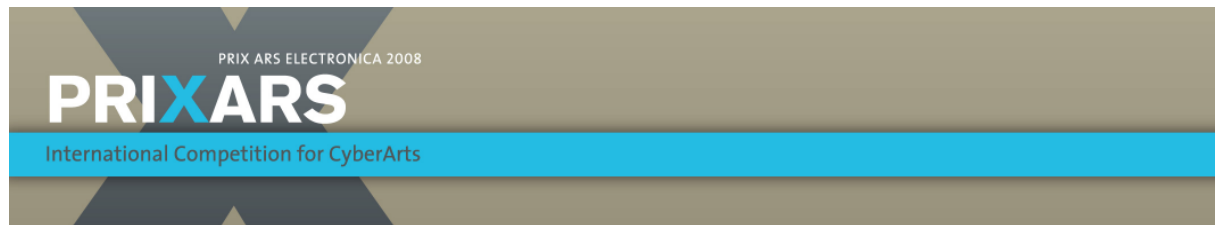
Image Fulgurator Julius von Bismarck (DE)

www.juliusvonbismarck.com/fulgurator

Image Fulgurator is amazing to behold—due in equal measure to its ingenious concept and its simple technical implementation. It makes it possible to manipulate photos and to do so at precisely the moment they're being shot. This subversive witchcraft functions with any camera—as long as the flash is in use. The Image Fulgurator is synchronized with the flash to project some random message onto the subject being focused on at the

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moment the picture is snapped. Almost invisible to the naked eye, this ghostly image comes to the fore on the photo that eventually emerges. The Image Fulgurator receives the 2008 Golden Nica in the Interactive Art category.

Digital Communities

1kg more

www.1KG.org

In rural regions of China today, there are more than 400,000 elementary and secondary schools, almost all of which are suffering from notorious shortages of personnel, textbooks and other teaching materials. "1kg more" deals with this problem in a way that is as uncomplicated as it is unusual. This wiki doesn't just call attention to existing shortcomings; it also calls upon travelers to China to pack just one more kilo into their luggage—desperately needed teaching material—and to deliver it where it's needed. "1kg more" thus makes simple yet effective use of the quotidian mobility of an enormous number of people, and has this quickly made it China's fastest growing and most effectively networked NGO. Now, it's being honored with the 2008 Golden Nica in the Digital Communities category.

Media.Art.Research Award

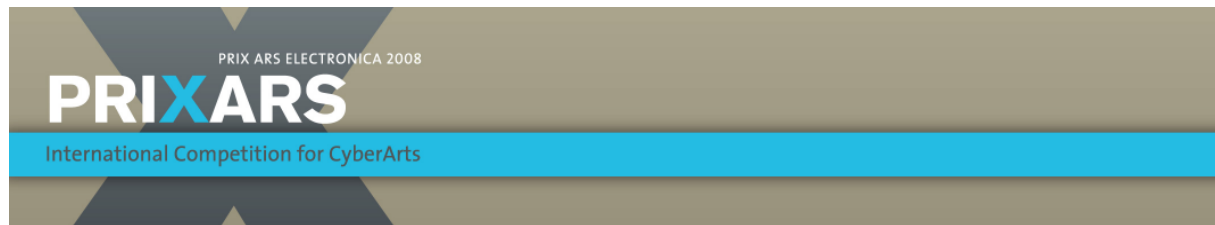
Interact or Die!

Arjen Mulder (Rotterdam, V2 Publishing / NAI Publishers, 2007), co-edited with Joke Brouwer

Interaction is an essential characteristic of all life forms. Interaction takes place between two creatures, and between a creature and its environment. Networks, (inter)relationships and structures form; recollections and assessments drawn from past experience coalesce. Ultimately, interaction is an essential precondition for every social organization. Functionality and practicability are the central criteria of any and all forms of interaction; they determine whether particular forms of interaction remain operational

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or are abandoned. Interactivity, in turn, is the method of bringing such behavior into a specific form and, at the same time, a particular approach to dealing with it, whereby attention is focused in equal measure on human activity as well as processes taking place in nature and technology. The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute has singled out INTERACT OR DIE! for recognition with its 2008 Media.Art.Research Award.

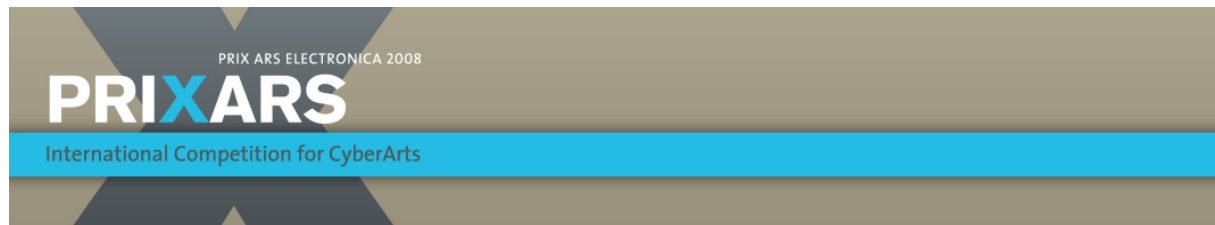
u19 – freestyle computing

Homesick
Nana Susanne Thurner

Bickering parents and a little girl who's shocked by this quarrel and seeks refuge in her sister's room—so much for the back-story of this animated film by 15-year-old Nana Susanne Thurner from Bad Leonfelden. To produce it, she had to draw countless images by hand, scan them into her computer, and then assemble them before real backgrounds. The result is an atmospherically intense short film that tells of a child's emotional universe. The 2008 Golden Nica in the u19 – freestyle computing category goes to Homesick.

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Distinctions 08

Computer Animation / Film / VFX

Kudan

Taku Kumura (JP) / Links DigiWorks inc.

<http://www.linksdw.com/kudan.html>

Taku Kimura's KUDAN tells the story of a man who receives a peculiar packet from the mailman one day: a helmet that morphs him into the "Kudan." This transformation into a half-steer, half-man opens up a whole new perspective for him on the world in which he lives. He finds himself in a seemingly endless forest full of gigantic trees whose roots are all interconnected and entwined. Each of these trees is a human being who, in turn, is interrelated via "words" with all other human beings. Then, suddenly, the man makes a horrifying discovery: he sees mysterious creatures starting to saw on one of the tree's roots. And not just any tree—the tree of his son. The father takes up a desperate fight to help his boy ... In a most impressive manner, Taku Kimura relates the essential significance of communication, by means of which an individual is capable of connecting up to others. Or not doing so. Taku Kimura's KUDAN receives a 2008 Distinction.

Computer Animation / Film / VFX

Musicotherapie

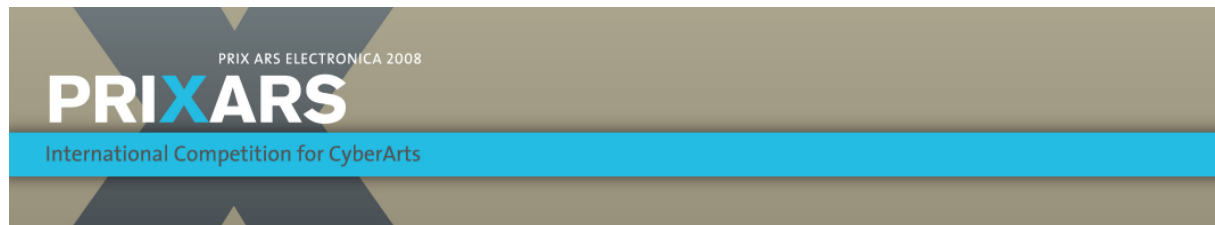
Amael Isnard, Manuel Javelle, Clément Picon (FR) / Supinfocom

<http://www.musicotherapie-lefilm.com>

The protagonist in Annabel Sebag's surreal animated film is a chimpanzee who is very much willing to work but is extremely sensitive to noise. His efforts to do his job as a physician are thwarted by an all-too-present background blare. A host of fellow-creatures—the fly in his office buzzing in circles above his head, the octopus rummaging

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around in the kitchen, the TV-viewing lion—and every single act performed by the patients he treats make noises that blend together into a “symphony of everyday life.”

Digital Musics

the benchmark consort
Hans W. Koch (DE)

www.hans-w-koch.net

“the benchmark consort” is an unusual performance in which commercially available laptops turn into musical instruments. The music lineup consists of a piece entitled “more&more,” software whose name essentially describes what it does. Once it’s installed, more&more unavoidably places excessive demands on even the fastest computer, which then produces sounds as a reaction to the overload. Every one of the benchmark consort’s musicians has the same software installed on his/her laptop, and their collaboration constitutes an orchestra of a very different sort. Thus, Hans W. Koch’s “the benchmark consort” reconfigures the computer as a musical instrument in a highly unconventional way and his efforts have earned him a 2008 Distinction.

Digital Musics

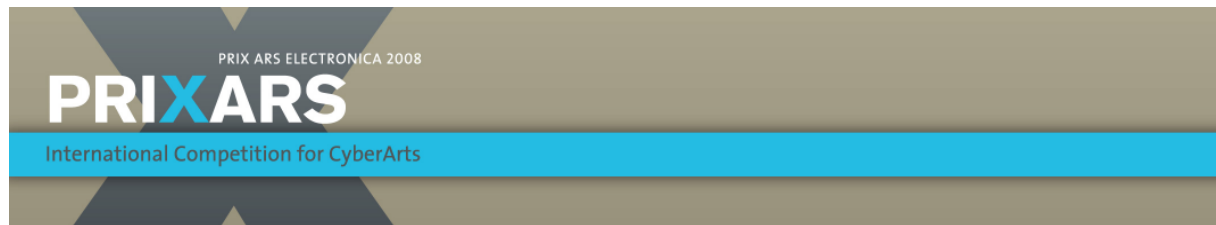
Core Sample
Teri Rueb (US)

www.terirueb.net/core_sample

Core Sample is a GPS data-based audio tour that deals with the history and landscape of Spectacle Island in Boston Harbor. This tiny piece of land that was degraded to Boston’s garbage dump for almost a century was recently reopened to the public. The island’s past—buried under a thick stratum of clay—is no longer visible, and it’s future is not yet evident either. But Core Sample makes both audible. Visitors can borrow a small computer including an attached set of headphones and, thus equipped, set out on an

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audio tour of the island. Depending on the visitor's specific location, he/she has access to a GPS-customized selection from among over 250 sounds. Statements by past and current island residents, workers and scholars augment the acoustic experience. Teri Rueb's Core Sample is being honored with a 2008 Distinction.

Hybrid Art

Bleu Remix
Yann Marussich (CH)

www.yannmarussich.ch

Yann Marussich's Blue Remix is an impressive live performance created in cooperation with physicians and chemists. For one hour, the artist remains motionless in a seated position while a blue fluid oozes from his mouth, his nose and the pores of his skin. Blue Remix received a 2008 Distinction.

Hybrid Art

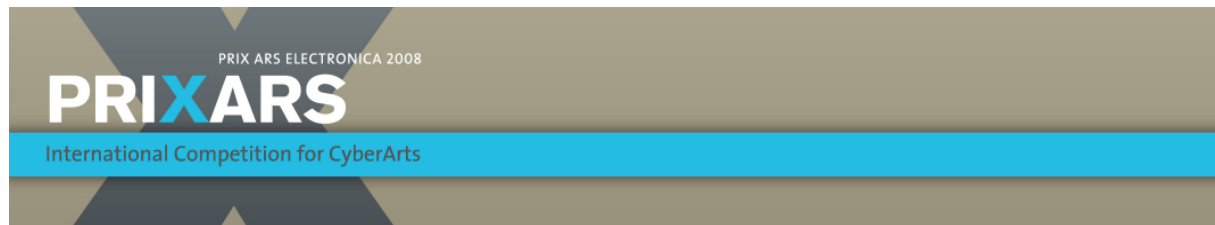
micro.flow
Julius Popp (DE)

www.sphericalrobots.org

"micro.flow" focuses on human intelligence and the question of how our brain processes information. Two fluids are pumped into a container; however, these fluids cannot blend together. "micro.flow" uses a camera to observe the reaction within its own interior and thereby comes to understand not only the characteristics of the two fluids but itself too.

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Interactive Art

a plaything for the great observers at rest
Norimichi Hirakawa (JP)

<http://counteraktiv.com/wrk/ap/>, <http://counteraktiv.com>

"a plaything for the great observers at rest" opens up to the observer a variety of different perspectives on our solar system, and does so without the observer changing his/her location. Just like moving our eyeballs, it's possible to switch between a geocentric and a heliocentric point of view. It's a matter of the "core of the world" ...

Interactive Art

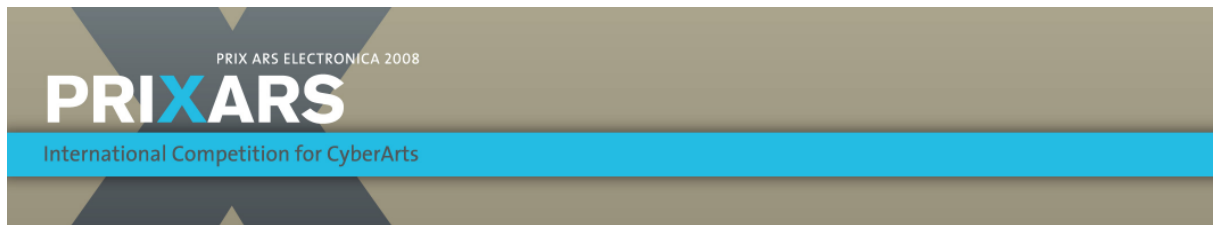
Absolut Quartet
Jeff Lieberman, Dan Paluska (US)

<http://bea.st>, <http://plainfront.com>

The Absolut Quartet is an invitation to enter into a creative dialog with a robot orchestra. There's a trio of robots, and the human user makes it an even quartet. The latter gets things started by composing a motif and inputting it via the Internet; this lays the musical groundwork for a unique three-minute concert by the user's robotic bandmates. The performance is recorded and saved to memory in a Web gallery. Absolut Quartet makes the Internet an interface that enables users to conceive works of art in the real world and store them in the virtual one. Moreover, the complexity of the robotic instruments is truly impressive: for instance, a six-meter-long marimba (a subspecies of xylophone) that's played by 40 two-armed robots firing tiny rubber balls with astounding accuracy at the instrument's wooden bars. Or a tonal array of 35 wineglasses made to reverberate by a robotic finger flitting above them. Via Internet, the human creator can take in the performance of his/her piece. Absolut Quartet receives a 2008 Distinction.

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Digital Communities

PatientsLikeMe

www.patientslikeme.com

PatientsLikeMe is a website serving chronically ill men and women all over the world. The diagnosis and the course an illness takes, treatment methods and their success are documented here in detail, whereby each patient sketches his/her own illness profile, which is then made available to all other fellow-sufferers. PatientsLikeMe also hosts numerous discussion forums designed to enable patients to engage in mutual exchange. PatientsLikeMe thus combines information offerings with social interaction.

Digital Communities

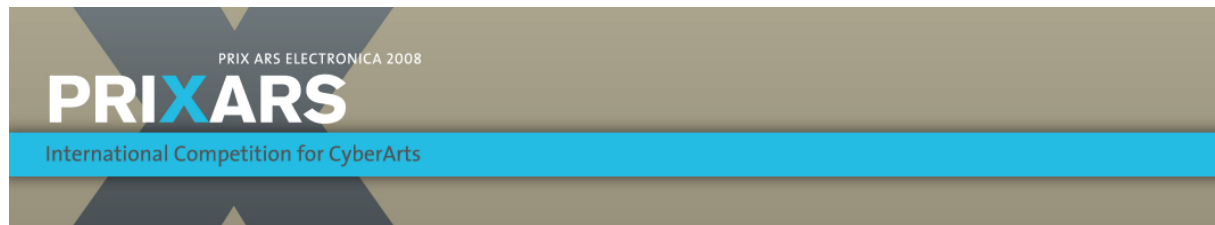
Global Voices Online

www.globalvoicesonline.org

In this age of a globalized communications society, there are simply no events or issues that do not become the subject of commentary by millions of critics worldwide. It's impossible to pay heed to them all. Global Voices is the attempt to channel this permanently swelling flood of information. Here, an international team of bloggers seeks out and comments on all the information that is sufficiently newsworthy to merit such treatment—especially when these stories aren't being sufficiently played up by establishment mass media.

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u19 – freestyle computing

uterus = raum= universum
Susanne Legerer

On an ultrasound image, we can examine the interior of the uterus, and make out its dimensions, its translucence and its outer limits. This project investigates analogies between this microcosm and the gigantic macrocosmic space of the universe. The image-generating technologies—the ultrasound procedure and the Hubble Telescope—are scrutinized and compared on the auditive level. The world is reflected by a grain of sand just as the universe corresponds to the uterus. The uterus, a highly socially charged female transformation space, becomes a reflection of the universe.

u19 – freestyle computing

eEx Network Discovery
Emanuel Jöbstl

Emanuel Jöbstl's eEx Network Discovery is a program that can graphically depict networks and save the resulting information for future use. It registers all the computers and devices with which a connection is established—whether input manually or via network scans.

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