

Ars Electronica Center

Seniors Discover ... What Machines Dream Of

Friday, April 1, 2011, 2-3 PM / Ars Electronica Center

(Linz, March 29, 2011) One Friday a month, the Ars Electronica Center offers a themed tour custom-tailored to seniors. The guides make a concerted effort to dispense with English-language high-tech jargon, and to allow plenty of time for tour group members to leisurely try out the many interactive installations, to pose questions, and to discuss their experiences and impressions. This coming Friday, April 1, 2011, 2-3 PM, the spotlight will be on the new "What Machines Dream Of" exhibition.

Machines of Breathtaking Beauty

What do machines actually dream of when they come to a standstill? If we briefly consider this absurd proposition, then the images and narratives that arise aren't so much about the machines themselves than about our own fantasies, dreams and fears connected with progress and technological development. The "What Machines Dream Of" exhibition is a collection of art-machines that, as opposed to their industrial and commercial counterparts, have absolutely nothing to do with rationality, perfection or efficiency-optimizing logic. But these seemingly senseless and useless devices engender formidable spiritual power and breathtaking beauty.

Franz Gsellmann's World Machine

Emblematic of them is a work by Franz Gsellmann (1910-1981), a farmer from the Austrian Province of Styria. A dream and the sight of the Atomium at the Brussels World's Fair inspired him to construct his World Machine, which he labored on for 24 years until shortly before his death at the age of 71. This project became his main pursuit in life. Serving as its components were all sorts of stuff that Gsellmann bought at flea markets, received for free or found in junk yards. The artist took objects that society had deemed useless and had heedlessly disposed of. He endowed them with renewed meaningfulness and an extraordinary new function as parts of his machine. Object by object, Franz Gsellmann realized the World Machine he had once dreamt of. Shortly before his death in 1981, he declared the construction to be complete. The World Machine is six meters wide, three meters tall and two meters deep.

---

What Machines Dream Of: <http://new.aec.at/center/ausstellungen/what-machines-dream-of/>

Franz Gsellmann's Weltmaschine (in German): [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weltmaschine\\_des\\_Franz\\_Gsellmann](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weltmaschine_des_Franz_Gsellmann)

Ars Electronica Center: <http://new.aec.at/center/en/about/>