

New Exhibition at the Ars Electronica Center Linz:

Zeit ist Held – Time is What It's All About

(Linz, December 5, 2012) Who's in control of his/her time? Why is it that we always have too little of it, and why does it seem that the older we get, the faster time goes by? In conjunction with work on their master's theses, students in the MultiMediaArt program at the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences confronted these issues and put what they came up with into the form of an exhibition. Thomas Altmanninger, Marlene Eggenreich, Tobias Furtschegger, Friederike Krepela, Vinzenz Mayrhofer and Thomas Mühlberger developed nine interactive scenarios that focus primarily on the relationship between our own personal pursuit of happiness and the way we deal with time. "Zeit ist Held" is running at the Ars Electronica Center Linz from December 7, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

The Invention of Time – Liberation or Compulsion?

Periodic natural phenomena like day and night, the ebb and flow of the tides, and the change of the seasons have forced human beings—or enabled them—since time immemorial to apportion their time and to plan activities like planting and harvesting that are essential to humankind's survival. All cultures without exception have, over the course of their history, developed schedules and more or less precise calendars, which soon came to exert a more powerful effect on people's perception of time than the natural cycles themselves. But it's been modern, industrialized societies in particular that have subjugated their members to an increasingly rigid dictatorship of time. Earlier calendars enabled people to plan their activities in advance and thereby diminished their cares and anxieties, but the time pressure exerted on men and women nowadays actually makes more and more of them sick. Developing the right way—which is to say the healthy way—to come to terms with the time structures that have been imposed upon us thus seems to assume increasing importance. After all, today, time is what it's all about.

Time Structures, Perception of Time, Organizing One's Time

The "Zeit ist Held" exhibition spotlights three main topics: time structures, perception of time and organizing one's time. Spatially separated from one another, they elaborate on the time structures that impact our lives, focus attention on each person's own individualized perception of time, and give some food for thought about personal time budgeting. Instances of substantive overlapping reveal a number of interconnections between the three domains.

Zeit ist Held / The Installations

Lamplighter – Endless Sunsets

The unremitting succession of day and night has always set the beat in everyday life. Nevertheless, little by little as opportunities arose over time, we liberated ourselves from this

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imposed rhythm by artificially illuminating our homes, buildings, streets and cities and utilizing new technologies to bridge or even negate time zones. The webcam panorama visualizes the human effort to achieve global simultaneity. Here, the whole world is presented in real time and at-a-glance. Day and night are juxtaposed and can be controlled interactively at time-lapse speed.

Concepts of Time - Time Down through the Ages

Time has preoccupied human beings since time immemorial. To endow this incomprehensible and invisible phenomenon with some contours with which to fathom it, humankind has come up with various conceptions of the passage of time: cyclically recurring; running in linear fashion to an endpoint; dispersed like atoms. Hand in hand with cultural, technological and scientific developments, human beings' understanding of time has gone through changes.

The Train of Time - On the Fast Track to Synchronized Time

Prior to the railroad's emergence in the 19th century, the time of day at any locality was the real time at that particular place. It wasn't until the increase in mobility and above all the establishment of interregional train service that a global coordinated system of timekeeping was implemented. Today, UTC (Universal Time Coordinated) prevails worldwide. Its prime meridian runs through the English town of Greenwich, the point of departure of all time zones on Earth. The Train of Time is a model emblematic of the synchronization of time induced by technological progress.

Voices about Time - Experts, Observers (and the Media Per Se) Have Their Say

In "Voices about Time," conversations, anecdotes and personal reflections give an account of the character of time. Even Google itself has a say from the point of view of a node amidst the digital media network. Installation visitors are invited to use this work to conduct an experiment and see if they can kick back, relax, and concentrate on the individual voices. The point being: giving one's undivided attention seems to be an almost lost art in this "parallelified" world we live in. Monotasking instead of multitasking as an act of overcoming the now-compulsory simultaneity.

The Pace of Life - How Fast-Paced is Your Life Compared to People in Other Countries

The speed at which we go through everyday life—and life as a whole, for that matter—is influenced by culture and geography. According to American psychologist Robert Levine, the pace of life is essentially determined by five factors: economy, industrialization, population, climate and cultural values. This generative work offers installation visitors the opportunity to compare the pace of their lives in an abstract way with that of people in other countries. At the center of attention is the observer, surrounded by the visualization of the selected country. The higher the degree of correspondence between the pace of one's own life and that of the particular country, the more the boundaries get blurred.

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Life in the Download Progress Bar – Standstill on the Wheel of Restlessness

People in our fast-paced society have practically zero tolerance for having to wait for something. Nevertheless, we are constantly beset by delays, even in everyday digital life. “Life in the Download Progress Bar” refers to the Apple operating system’s symbol for “wait,” which is recognizable only from several steps away. Each individual pixel corresponds to a task performed by the computer and the time taken to do it. Right up close, the installation visitor can recognize the 312 waiting situations in the digital domain that are transferred and applied to 312 carton-pixels in the real-world exhibition space.

Hurry Sickness – Time Pressure as a Way of Life

Temporal structures and social constraints bring forth contemporary issues like stress and the feeling that time is marching relentlessly on. According to psychologists Diane Ulmer and Leonhard Schwartzburd, a diagnosis of so-called hurry sickness is associated with some serious threats—above all to the cardiovascular system. This malaise adversely affects the social relationships of those afflicted by it as well as their self-esteem. Dealing in a personally appropriate and satisfying way with the time structures superimposed on our existence seems to be one of the capabilities that it is most worthwhile to acquire nowadays. A questionnaire has been designed to assess a visitor’s attitudes toward and dealings with time.

WorldSecond – What’s Happening: A Second-by-Second Account

A single second, a seemingly immaterial time span that nevertheless has far-reaching consequences. Jam-packed with events, every second goes into the writing of the history of our world. Four flipbooks offer installation visitors the possibility of investigating the facts that make up a sort of global snapshot. A question-and-answer game about the environment, the internet and humankind puts the player’s powers of imagination to the test.

Moments and Strawberries – Every Second is Precious

“A man traveling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger after him. Coming to a precipice, he caught hold of the root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black, little by little started to gnaw away at the vine. The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. How sweet it tasted!” (From “Zen Flesh, Zen Bones”; English translation by Paul Reps) If one lives in the present, the past and the future are of no concern. Five works illustrate the personal quest for a strawberry moment.

Zeit ist Held (in German): <http://www.zeitistheld.at/>
Ars Electronica Center: <http://www.aec.at/center/en/>

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