Prix Ars Electronica 2016:

E-mails to the NSA, a game entailing a life-or-death decision and a pioneering woman of media art are among the 2016 Golden Nica winners

(Linz, May 10, 2016) Artists from France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Austria and Great Britain are this year's recipients of the Prix Ars Electronica's Golden Nica grand prizes: Boris Labbé in the Computer Animation/Film/VFX category, Christoph Wachter and Mathias Jud in Interactive Art +, the P2P Foundation founded by Michel Bauwen in Digital Communities, Jonas Bodingbauer, a 17-year-old native of Linz in u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD, and Jasia Reichardt, the prominent art critic and curator, has been singled out for recognition as a Visionary Pioneer of Media Art. The Prix Ars Electronica received a total of 3,159 entries from 84 countries this year. Submissions by category: Computer Animation/Film/VFX: 1,327; Interactive Art +: 896; u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD: 637; and Digital Communities: 299. The Golden Nica statuettes will be officially presented to the prizewinners at the annual Ars Electronica Gala on September 9, 2016.

Computer Animation, Film, VFX

Golden Nica

RHIZOME / Boris Labbé (FR)
http://www.borislabbe.com/

„Rhizome is a very complex and complete piece of artwork, blending complementary techniques in a post-digital painting-like visual poem." (Statement der Jury)

The Golden Nica in the Computer Animation / Film / VFX category this year goes to France. In his black-and-white animated film, Boris Labbé has created a constantly changing universe of dynamic figures. They appear to be graceful little geometric sculptures whose shapes and component structures undergo incessant metamorphosis, queuing up one after the other to form a never-ending chain. The more of these creatures emerge, the more distant they become from the observer, who ultimately has feeling of peering into a presumably infinite space full of microscopic beings. At the epicenter of this cosmos is a whirlwind sucking everything that moves into its core and thrusting it aloft.

Award of Distinction

Peripheria / David Coquard Dassault (FR)
http://coquarddassault.tumblr.com

„This work has been awarded for its own subtle but strong way of storytelling, cinematography, artistic direction and technical achievement which are extremely successful in every level and angle." (Statement der Jury)

David Coquard Dassault's dystopian animated film is set in a huge, abandoned high-rise housing project. Off camera, one hears children's voices and a few conversational fragments; on screen, there's a roaming pack of dogs that have taken this neighborhood previously inhabited by humans as their turf. Nevertheless, a rosy future doesn't await them here either—doors slam shut and seal off their only way out; others get trapped in an empty swimming pool and are left to a fate of certain starvation. But suddenly the plot takes an unexpected turn and casts an entirely new light on this entire sequence of events.

Award of Distinction

Nosaj Thing / Cold Stares ft. Chance The Rapper + The O'My's / Daito Manabe (JP), MIKIKO (JP), TAKCOM (JP), ELEVENPLAY (JP), Rhizomatiks Research (JP)

http://www.rzm-research.com/works/nosajthing_coldstares

„An outstanding music video that introduces innovative technologies from 3D scanning, motion capture and drone controlling, adding a layer of sensitive notion with live recorded choreography and augmented reality. Japanese artist Daito Manabe and his creative collective has come up with a complex artistic concept that introduces the switch between the real and the virtual, blurring the line between human and machine interaction and data analyzation." (Statement der Jury)

Artist Nosaj Thing and musician Chance the Rapper collaborated on this music video. "Cold Stares" repeatedly switches between reality and illusion as it goes about dealing with the meaning of life and personal remembrance. The two figures on screen are dancers— alternately real-world protagonists and computer-generated figures in an abstract environment.

Interactive Art +

Golden Nica

„Can you hear me?" / Christoph Wachter & Mathias Jud (both CH)

Edward Snowden's disclosures shined the spotlight of public attention on Berlin's federal government district, revealing it to be the site of extremely intense surveillance and espionage by numerous intelligence agencies. So this is precisely where Christoph Wachter and Mathias Jud wanted to set up a temporary installation on the subject of power and powerlessness in the Digital Age. On the roof of the Akademie der Künste—right between the listening posts in the American and British Embassies—they set up improvised antennas and installed an independent Wifi communications network, the range of which included the Reichstag, the Office of the Federal Chancellor and the Swiss Embassy. Anyone with a Wifi-capable device could join the network and chat, send text messages and share files. Personnel of the embassies and German government agencies were cordially invited to join in too. Plus, anyone who wished could send messages to the intelligence organizations on precisely those frequencies on which the American NSA and the British GCHQ were listening in. Thus, instead of covert surveillance, there emerged a collective conversational sphere in which all participants had the same rights. This anonymous, independent network was used by

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thousands of people for 33 days, during which more than 15,000 messages were delivered to the NSA and GCHQ. The content even included secret information from a parliamentary commission investigating the internet, material that ended up on Wikileaks.

Award of Distinction

OpenSurgery - a do-it-yourself surgery robot for domestic laparoscopy / Frank Kolkman (NL)

„[...] Frank Kolkman's surgical robot presents a potentially accessible and cost-effective alternative to the expensive professional healthcare services, particularly relevant to the public in the US where the gap between those who can afford health insurance and those who cannot is rapidly widening. But more significantly, this critical and conceptual work, which creates new conditions for interaction within the highly regulated and controlled sector of health care, raises important questions about inequality, ethics and the lack of access to essential health services for a growing number of people around the world." (Statement der Jury)

Frank Kolkmann's "OpenSurgery Initiative" examines the question of whether do-it-yourself surgical tools are a suitable alternative to professional health services that are far too costly for many people. His idea is based on the great number of YouTube videos showing how US citizens with no health insurance are doctoring themselves. Frank Kolkmann has designed a surgical system for home use, all the components of which can be ordered online and assembled at home. The aim of Frank Kolkmann's "OpenSurgery Initiative" is not so much to create a fully functional robot that can perform actual operations but rather to initiate a discussion about the tense interrelationship between socio-economic factors and ethical values in the field of medical care.

Award of Distinction

Parasitic Symbiotic / Ann-Katrin Krenz (DE)

„The milling machine, as a technological intervention, appears to invade the tree, much like the often aggressive intervention that humans perpetrate on nature. At the same time, this parasitic machine encodes marks derived from a poem about unity and oneness - a non disturbing act of love - that becomes integrated in nature." (Statement der Jury)

Technology's advance to the point of utterly pervading our world seems to be occurring increasingly at the cost of nature. "Parasitic / Symbiotic" by Ann-Katrin Krenz focuses on precisely this tense interrelationship. In it, she applies milling tools to the trunks of trees, using them to engrave an encoded text—a romantic poem about being at one with nature—into their bark. Like parasites, the equipment clings to the trees and inflicts damage on them, albeit in such a moderate form that it poses no serious threat to them. At the same time, this (parasitic) intervention gives rise to something new, which unfolds as the outcome of a (symbiotic) connection between technology and nature.

Digital Communities

Golden Nica

P2P Foundation
http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Main_Page

„P2P Foundation" is a new generation of communities that help to build communities. It is dedicated to advocacy and research of peer to peer dynamics in society. Established ten years ago, it evolved into one of the main drivers of the ‚commons transition'." (Statement der Jury)

This digital community launched in 2005 by Michel Bauwens is dedicated to advancing the social potential of peer-to-peer technologies. As a decentralized and self-organized non-profit organization, it analyzes, documents and promotes peer-to-peer strategies that seem to be well-suited to facing the challenges and problems of our times in ways that display great future promise. The focus is on three key traits: sustainability, openness and solidarity. Since its inception, the community of the P2P Foundation has input over 30,000 entries that document the history and development of the peer-to-peer movement. One of the very first articles about the crypto-currency Bitcoin was published on the P2P Foundation's website. The P2P Foundation Wiki has been accessed more than 27 million times, and is thus the platform that has assembled the world's most massive collection of knowledge about P2P.

Award of Distinction

Refugee Phrasebook
http://www.refugeephrasebook.de/

„Refugee Phrasebook is an open collaborative project to provide important vocabulary to refugees, helpers, and citizens. Together with a global network of volunteer translators, editors, designers, printers, publishers, lawyers, doctors, etc. and with partner institutions in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, Refugee Phrasebook develops sustainable communication tools to share useful phrases, icons, links and important information." (Statement der Jury)

"Refugee Phrasebook" is an open community project for man and women throughout the world who are refugees, helpers or people interested in them. The book is a collection of relevant information about various everyday activities—that is to say, tasks, errands, stuff to do, etc. Adapted to local needs and facts & circumstances on the ground and distributed with free licenses, the aim of "Refugee Phrasebook" is to foster communication between refugees and helpers. Volunteer translators, graphic artists, physicians, publishers, attorneys, editors and various institutions in Germany, Greece and The Netherlands are involved in this project.

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Award of Distinction

SAZAE bot
https://twitter.com/sazae_f

„Is it a crowd that acts as their collective self that is intelligent, or is it the machine that acts like a human? The SAZAE bot asks us questions of the boundary of self and others, and the collective consciousness of a community. SAZAE bot even did a TED talk!" (Statement der Jury)

A bot (short for robot) is a computer program that can automatically perform certain repetitive tasks without having to rely on instructions from a human user. The SAZAE bot is just such a program. The bot went online in summer 2010 and has been active on Twitter ever since. It presents itself as a parody of a manga figure that's extremely popular in Japan, Sazae-San, the chief protagonist of the manga series of the same name that's been running on Japanese TV without interruption since October 5, 1969. (According to the Guinness Book of Records, it's the world's longest-running television series.) The SAZAE bot reacts to tweets and retweets. Its followers appreciate, above all, its witty remarks. Then, in 2014, Hitoyo Nakano was "born" and the anonymous human user behind the SAZAE bot assumed a purported identity. Since then, the SAZAE bot has been controlled via Google Forum, where anyone can post tweets as SAZAE bot completely anonymously. This isn't just a site for exchanging opinions and jokes; here, people also arrange face-to-face meetings and other activities in the real world—for instance, handing out candy around Christmas, balloon takeoffs, guerilla actions, attending the Ted Talk or making a live appearance at the UN|COMMONS conference in Berlin.

u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD

Golden Nica

Die Entscheidung / Jonas Bodingbauer (AT)
http://jonasbodingbauer.jimdo.com

The Golden Nica in the u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD category goes to Jonas Bodingbauer, a 17-year-old Linzer. He developed "*Die Entscheidung*" [The Decision], a game for two competitors: one plays a person who's just found out he has cancer; the other plays the malignant tumor, and has to assemble credits to nurture its growth. Not until the game is well underway does the person playing the tumor find out that the person with cancer has good recovery chances if the illness—the tumor, that is—doesn't grow. Thus, whether the person with cancer lives or dies depends on the decision of the person playing the tumor. Inspired by the famous Milgram Experiment, Jonas Bodingbauer's game is designed to be, not least of all, a critique of many computer games, the object of which is massacring virtual figures or even destroying whole countries.

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Award of Distinction

Blackout / Jasmin Selen Heinz, Tanja Josic, Emily Poulter (alle AT)
https://vimeo.com/130924820

Three young ladies from Vienna, 18-year-old Jasmin Selen Heinz and 17-year-old Tanja Josic, are being honored for their socially critical experimental film. In impressive images, "Blackout" inquires into the meaning of life. The filmmakers have rendered a world in which there's no longer any place for individuality, the human body has to be perfect, and the most important criterion is how a person "functions."

Award of Distinction

Flucht / Dimitri Teufl (AT)

Dimitri Teufel, a 13-year-old boy from Salzburg, used Lego figures and the stop-motion technique to make this six-minute film consisting of 2,592 individual shots. "*Flucht*" (Fleeing) tells the story of a family who had to flee their homeland. Following an eventful sea journey organized by paid human traffickers, they arrive in Austria, where they receive a friendly welcome. Dimitri Teufel put more than 55 hours of work into this film; now, his reward is an Award of Distinction in the u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD category.

Netidee Special Prize

kameleon.ws / Ulrich Formann, Kilian Hanappi und Simon Wesp (alle AT)
http://www.kameleon.ws

This is the first time that the Prix Ars Electronica is awarding a special prize. Netidee (Net Idea) is meant to single out for recognition works that take an innovative approach to elaborating on the future of the internet, or showing how it can serve as a driving force contributing to regional development. Netidee is an initiative of Internet Foundation Austria. The 2016 prize goes to "*kameleon*" (Chameleon), a project by three Viennese schoolboys: Ulrich Formann, Kilian Hanappi and Simon Wesp. They've developed a way to imprint T-shirts with an individualized design, and to sell them via a webshop that functions completely autonomously. The motifs are generated by a computer program capable of learning, whereby each design is based on current events. Once a shirt is sold, a new design is created and the previous one is no longer available. Thanks to generative design, each garment is one-of-a-kind, a unique object with its own story to tell. In addition to using sustainably produced fabrics, the on-demand production makes a loud-and-clear statement against glutting the market with mass-produced merchandise. The webshop will be launched on June 15, 2016.

Visionary Pioneer of Media Art / Golden Nica

Jasia Reichardt (PL/UK)

The prominent art critic and exhibition curator Jasia Reichardt is this year's Visionary Pioneer of Media Art. Her groundbreaking work and all that she has done on behalf of media art is

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being honored with a Golden Nica. The name Jasia Reichardt is, above all, indelibly linked to a trailblazing exhibition that ran in 1968 at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts and then at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and the Exploratorium in San Francisco. "Cybernetic Serendipity" was the title of this much-publicized show in which, instead of human artists, the spotlight was suddenly on computers, machines and algorithms. Astounded visitors could sing into a microphone and thereby inspire a computer to create a piece of music, observe a hydraulic ear that turned towards any new source of sound in the exhibition space, watch a drawing machine paint impressive pictures, admire cybernetic sculptures activated by blue light and deactivated by red light, and experience how the image screened by a conventional TV set could be manipulated and distorted with magnets. Under Jasia Reichardt's direction, artists worked together with mathematicians, engineers and technology specialists to jointly create a completely novel form of presentation long before everyone was talking about cooperation between art and science in light of their tremendous potential for innovation. Numerous interactive exhibits gave visitors a close-up look at what Jasia Reichardt was getting at: the enormous potential inherent in new technologies, and the question of how humans and machines might someday coexist and work together. Jasia Reichardt didn't showcase machines and programs only as tools performing a task; rather, she featured them as an integral part of the creative process. Jasia Reichardt was born in 1933 in Warsaw. She and her parents fled from the Nazis and lived from 1946 on in England. She attended the Old Vic Theatre School in Bristol, and was than active as an art critic and curated exhibitions. Until 1963, she was assistant director at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and, from 1964 to 1976, director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery. She currently lives in London.

Prix Ars Electronica: http://www.aec.at/prix/en/
Interviews and features auf dem Blog: http://www.aec.at/aeblog/en/

ATTACHMENT

Computer Animation, Film, VFX / Honorary Mentions

Nataša Teofilović (RS) / 7001
https://vimeo.com/145548469

James Cunningham (NZ), Media Design School (NZ) / Accidents, Blunders and Calamities
https://vimeo.com/149596663

Yusuf Emre Kucur (TR), Bahadır Dağdelen (TR)/ Void / Bio-Inspire (FullDome Performance)
https://vimeo.com/148626927

Mike Pelletier (CA) / Coordinated Movement
http://mikepelletier.net/Coordinated-Movement

Yves Netzhammer (CH) / Die Gegenwart sucht ihren Mund in der Spiegelung der Suppe (The present searches for its mouth in the reflection of the soup)
http://www.netzhammer.com
http://netzhammer.com/die-gegenwart-sucht-ihren-mund-in-der-spiegelung-der-suppe/

ZEITGUISED (DE) / geist.xyz
http://www.zeitguised.com/geistxyz

Antoine Delacharlery (FR) / Ghost Cell
http://www.antoinedelach.com/

Tonko House – Robert Kondo (US) & Daisuke 'Dice' Tsutsumi (JP) / Moom
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vg4yFnlQSg

Saman Kesh (IR), Skunk / Never Say Never
https://vimeo.com/101266603

Theo Tagholm (UK) / Simulacra
https://vimeo.com/123006429

Arash Nassiri (IR) / Tehran-Geles
https://vimeo.com/100315857

AlteredQualia (SK) + Fractal Fantasy (AT/CA) / UNCANNY VALLEY
http://fractalfantasy.net/uncannyvalley

Interactive Art+ / Honorary Mentions

Mat Collishaw (UK) / All Things Fall
http://matcollishaw.com/works/all-things-fall/

Robertina Šebjanič (SI), Slavko Glamočanin (SI) / Aurelia 1+Hz / proto viva sonification
http://robertina.net/aurelia-1hz-proto-viva-sonification/

Kyle McDonald (US) / Exhausting a Crowd
http://exhaustingacrowd.com/

Louis-Phillippe Demers (CA), Bill Vorn (CA) / Inferno
http://billvorn.concordia.ca/robography/inferno.html
http://www.processing-plant.com/web_csi/index.html#project=inferno

Jennifer Lyn Morone (US) / Jennifer Lyn Morone™ Inc
http://jenniferlynmorone.com

Prokop Bartoníček (CZ), Benjamin Maus (DE) / Jller
http://allesblinkt.com/jller
http://prokopbartonicek.com/jller

Martin Molin (SE), Wintergatan (SE) / Marble Machine
http://www.wintergatan.net/#/m.m.machine
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvUU8joBb1Q

onformative (DE) in collaboration with Christian Loclair (DE) / Pathfinder / generative approach for conceptual choreography
http://onformative.com/work/pathfinder
https://vimeo.com/111361109

Yoichi Ochiai (JP) / Fairy Lights in Femtoseconds
http://digitalnature.slis.tsukuba.ac.jp/2015/06/fairy-lights-in-femtoseconds

!Mediengruppe Bitnik (UK/CH) / Random Darknet Shopper
https://wwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww.bitnik.org/r/

unknown fields division (UK/AU) / Rare Earthenware
http://www.unknownfieldsdivision.com

Richard Vijgen (NL) / Architecture of Radio
http://www.architectureofradio.com

Digital Communities / Honorary Mentions

Clone Zone
http://clonezone.link/

Scifabric / Crowdcrafting
http://crowdcrafting.org

D-CENT (Decentralised Citizens ENgagement Technologies)
http://dcentproject.eu
http://tools.dcentproject.eu

Enspiral
http://www.enspiral.com

HACKberry
http://exiii-hackberry.com/

Quipu Project
http://www.quipu-project.com/

Radwende – der Radweg ist das Ziel
http://www.radwende.de/

SafetiPin
http://safetipin.com

Social Street
http://www.socialstreet.it/

Trade School
http://tradeschool.coop/

Watch the Mediterranean Sea
http://watchthemed.net/

u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD / Honorary Mentions

Simon Heppner (geb. 2006) / Meine Webseite
http://simon.heppner.at

Fabian Krautgartner (geb. 2002) / Skateboard Ladegerät

BIOKoSMoS Projektgruppe / BIOKoSMoS – BioInk für die Kunst

http://www.biokosmos.org
http://www.sparklingscience.at

Fachstelle beteiligung.st / COPY/PASTE
http://www.beteiligung.st/jugend/Site/beteiligung-jugendhomepage/Film-beTEILigt/COPY-PASTE

Niko Kremsmair (geb. 1997), Christian Pausch (geb. 1997), Robin Krah (geb. 1997), Josef
Niederbrucker (geb. 1997), Markus Meister (geb. 1997) / Elektrofahrzeug „Scorpion"
http://www.htl-sbg-racing-team.at
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckqg5MLdcuE
http://www.facebook.com/fichtenelch.scorpion

Zeia Gholam (geb. 1997) / Guilt
http://www.youtube.com/gurg90
http://www.facebook.com/gurg90

Lena Krautinger (geb.1998), Safia El Maataoui (geb.1998) / Kim's Life
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb-TZgxtgQE

Felix De Montis (geb. 1997), Johannes Eschner (geb. 1997) / reflecty
http://reflecty.co
http://www.youtube.com/c/reflecty
http://twitter.com/reflectyco

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Kasper Helml (geb. 1999) / Salam Saeculum
http://soundcloud.com/luicaspar/salam-saeculum

Timo Lins (geb. 1997), Emil Bruckner (geb. 1998), Noel Kurtaran (geb.1996) / Teem

Daniela Kubesch (geb. 1998), Alina Groer (geb. 1998), Leo Mühlfeld (geb. 1998) / the best is yet to come

u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD / Honorary Mention & Special Prize – netidee 2016

Ulrich Formann (geb. 1996), Kilian Hanappi (geb. 1996), Simon Wesp (geb. 1997) / kameleon.ws
http://kameleon.ws