

New exhibition in the Ars Electronica Center

The Alchemists of Art and Science

(Linz, October 25, 2016) In which fields do we want high-tech and automation to continue making inroads and which ones do we see as no-go areas? What ought to remain in the private sphere and what should be in the public domain? How do we propose to keep climate change at bay? And what do we want our cities to look like? Configuring a future habitat that's fit for human beings demands creativity, openness, courage and optimism—as well as trailblazers reconnoitering new paths and deriving insights from their explorations. An exhibition showcasing these “modern alchemists” opens on Wednesday, October 26th at the Ars Electronica Center.

Issues of Great Future Significance

The economic and social consequences of climate change, the stubborn crisis of a global economy addicted to growth, ongoing automation and the progressive disintegration of the myth of a performance-oriented society, humans and machines increasingly being linked up with each other in networks as well as the accompanying abstraction and growing complexity of everyday life, and an immense loss of trust in our political leaders—the world that we've created is currently in a state of upheaval, and almost seems as if it's in the process of breaking down. Now, of course, it can be maintained that such shifts are nothing out of the ordinary; after all, constant change is the most outstanding feature of both nature and human societies. Unprecedented indeed, however, are the extent to which these changes are occurring and their speed—and the feelings of overload and helplessness they evoke on our part.

Alternative scenarios call for ...

So, how should our cities and streets be designed so as to constitute a livable environment for us? How do we want traffic to flow through them in the future, and what are our vehicles of choice? How do we want to limit climate change, and which of its consequences might we even be able to take advantage of? In which areas do we want to positively encourage technologization and automation, and where is this undesirable? And what is to be the future dividing line between private and public domains?

... modern alchemists ...

There are plenty of possibilities to configure our future the way we want it to be. What this takes—and what's amply available—are creativity, openness, courage and optimism. Whether in our immediate vicinity, in nearby regions, foreign countries or distant continents—wherever you look, there are modern “alchemists” with experiments, projects and visions demonstrating how this can be done. They're artists, scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and activists forming new alliances, working together, and bringing innovative perspectives to bear in tackling current problems. The pioneers often focus their efforts on the nexus of art

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and science, and no longer feel an exclusive allegiance to either one or the other community; instead, they think in terms of both together.

... and new strategies!

The outcomes of their work include futuristic methods of production and 3-D printing, new concepts for rapid prototyping, and innovative strategies for visualizing scientific data. A selection of superb examples of such prototypical visions of the future can be seen in the new exhibition running at the Ars Electronica Center, "The Alchemists of Art and Science." One is by Hiroshi Sugihara (JP), who experiments with generative fabrication processes designed to produce complex objects in one piece—in this case, robotic animals whose movements appear uncommonly fluid. Innovative production procedures are likewise the stock-in-trade of Jessica Rosenkrantz (US) and Jesse Louis-Rosenberg (US), whose approach brings together design, simulation and digital fabrication. Each of their "Kinematic Dresses" consists of thousands of interlocking components that are turned out by a 3-D printer and then unfold into their respective final form. "Can you hear me?" by Christoph Wachter (CH) and Mathias Jud (CH) examines the issue of surveillance and data protection. A Wifi communications network set up in the heart of Berlin's government ministry and foreign embassy quarter makes it possible for anyone to submit pointed queries to American (NSA) and British (GCHQ) intelligence agencies. The exhibition also features wearables that measure cosmic radiation, articles of clothing grown from fungi, a 3-D-printed lamp that users can create at home with a laser scanner and an app, devices to reduce the wearers own CO₂ output, and prototypes of interactive windshields. "The Alchemists of Art and Science" opens on Wednesday, October 26th at the Ars Electronica Center Linz.

Credits: Stones, Masses / Quadrature (DE) // RoBoHoN / Tomotaka Takahashi (JP) // Ready to crawl / Hiroshi Sugihara (JP) // Interface I documentation / Ralf Baecker (DE) // Single Stroke Structures / Yasuaki Kakehi (JP) and Takahiro Hasegawa (JP) // Florence / Helene Steiner (AT) // Floraform / Jessica Rosenkrantz (US), Jesse Louis-Rosenberg (US), Nervous System (US) // MycoTex - Neffa / Aniela Hoitink (NL) // Beyond Prototyping / Jussi Änglesevä (FI) // Phytowalkers / Yasuaki Kakehi (JP), Junichi Yamaoka (JP) // Loopers / Yasuaki Kakehi and Michinari Kono // Kinematic Dress / Jessica Rosenkrantz (US), Jesse Louis-Rosenberg (US), Nervous System (US) // Implant / Eric Dyer (US) // CHOZUMAKI / Nelo Akamatsu (JP) // "Can you hear me?" / Christoph Wachter (CH) und Mathias Jud (CH) // Anarchive 6 / Masaki Fujihata (JP), Anne-Marie Duguet (FR) // CIID Showcase / CIID Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design (DK) // Obscurity / Paolo Cirio (IT) // Ghost Cell / Antoine Delacharlery (FR) // Cosmic Bitcasting / Afroditi Psarra (GR), Cécile Lapoire (FR) // The Culture Series / Afroditi Psarra (GR)

Alchemists of Art and Science exhibition:

<http://www.aec.at/center/en/ausstellungen/alchemists-of-art-and-science/>

Ars Electronica Center: <http://www.aec.at/news/en/>

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