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## **Bank Austria Bestows Austria's Highest-Endowed Art Prize**

- **Bank Austria Art Prize 2016 awarded to Ars Electronica, united heartbeat and Andrea Schurian**
- **Sowieso! is honored with the Bank Austria Social Welfare Prize**
- **Awards ceremony on February 17<sup>th</sup> at Vienna's Theater in der Josefstadt**

As a mainstay of cultural life in Austria and one of the country's most generous donors of subsidies to fund cultural activities, Bank Austria has awarded the Bank Austria Art Prize since 2010. The country's highest-endowed cultural awards bestow a total of €218,000 in the following categories:

- Support for crowdfunding campaigns in cultural fields: €100,000
- Bank Austria Crowdfunding Prize (selected by the jury) for combining cultural pursuits with a commitment to social welfare: €10,000
- Bank Austria Art Prize (nomination and selection by the jury): €100,000
- Bank Austria Art Prize for Cultural Journalism (nomination and selection by the jury): €8,000

"Art reflects social developments and is an important contribution to a country's social and economic stability. Our involvement in this area is an integral part of our commitment to social responsibility as the largest patron of cultural life in this country," stated Robert Zadrazil, chairman of the board of UniCredit Bank Austria, in his explanation of the company's approach to corporate social responsibility. "Bank Austria is a strong, reliable partner of artists and producers of cultural offerings in Austria. Our art subsidies are meant to provide sustainable support to important cultural initiatives. This is why we subsidize projects and institutions whose outstanding achievements enrich the cultural landscape."

### **New: Special Prize for Successful Crowdfunding Campaigns**

The art prize was reconceived in 2015—above all, to better meet the needs of producers of cultural events as well as to strengthen cultural life on the regional level. This is how the Bank Austria Art Prize has become the most successful crowdfunding initiative in Austrian cultural life, once again collaborating with private donors to deliver more than €330,000 in grants to deserving recipients in the creative scene. The leveraging effect of this tripartite funding approach makes the Bank Austria Art Prize an active "accelerator" of innovative cultural projects.

And for the first time, the jury also singled out for recognition a project from among the most successful crowdfunding campaigns with a €10,000 grant in recognition of its dovetailing of art and culture with social activism in a way that makes an especially important contribution to the betterment of society. The award takes into account quantitative aspects such as business volume as well as qualitative factors like pricing policy, target audience, innovativeness and customer service.

### **Prominent Jurors Select the Prizewinners**

An interdisciplinary jury conducted a multilevel evaluation process to select the prize recipients: **Thomas Angyan** (artistic director of The Musikverein in Vienna), **Christine Dollhofer** (director of the Crossing Europe Film Festival), **Daniel Ebner** (artistic director of Vienna Independent Shorts), **Andrea Ecker** (officer in charge of the Department of Art and Culture, Office of the Chancellor),

**Herbert Föttinger** (director of Theater in der Josefstadt), **Günter Friesinger** (philosopher, artist, director of the paraflow Festival of Digital Art and Media), **Andreas Leisner** (chief dramaturge and deputy artistic director of Tiroler Festspiele Erl), **Johanna Rachinger** (director of the Austrian National Library), **Klaus Albrecht Schröder** (director of The Albertina) and **Robert Zadrazil** (chairman of the board of UniCredit Bank Austria).

## The 2016 Prizewinners

**Ars Electronica** was one of the very first event series to deal with digital art and its possibilities. Launched in 1979 as the successor of forum metall and in conjunction with the International Bruckner Festival including the first Linzer Klangwolke [Cloud of Sound], the festival quickly established itself as one of the world's biggest and best conclaves at which to exchange ideas and showcase projects at the nexus of art, technology and society. Today, in addition to the festival, Ars Electronica includes: the Prix Ars Electronica initiated in 1987, the world's most time-honored media arts competition bestowing the genres' equivalent of the Oscars; the Ars Electronica Center, a facility that opened in 1996, was considerably expanded for Linz's 2009 stint as European Capital of Culture, and is now one of the world's foremost digital art and media art museums; and the Ars Electronica Futurelab, an R&D facility that conceives and implements interdisciplinary projects and prototypes at the interface of art, technology and society. Ars Electronica Linz GmbH is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the City of Linz. Additional information is online at <http://www.aec.at/news/en/>. A video about the recipients of the Bank Austria Art Prize is online at <http://kunstpreis.bankaustria.at>.

The first Bank Austria Crowdfunding Prize goes to **united heartbeat**, an organization that helps musicians who have been forced to leave their homeland. Among its approaches to enabling them to play music again is making available instruments. Its high degree of social commitment put this crowdfunding project at the top of Bank Austria's priority list. Additional information is online at <http://www.unitedheartbeat.at>. A video about the recipients of the Bank Austria Art Prize is online at <http://kunstpreis.bankaustria.at>.

**Andrea Schurian** is the recipient of the 2016 Bank Austria Art Prize for Cultural Journalism. She is the chief cultural editor of the Viennese daily Der Standard, makes cultural documentaries, works as a moderator, and writes news coverage and artists' portraits for cultural magazines and feuilletons. Andrea Schurian is one of Austria's most important cultural journalists. Additional information is online at <http://www.andreaschurian.at>. A video about the recipients of the Bank Austria Art Prize is online at <http://kunstpreis.bankaustria.at>.

## Dovetailing Art and Social Commitment

Bank Austria has made long-term commitments not only to economic success and to culture; this company also shoulders its social responsibility. Providing support to disadvantaged human beings is a matter of tremendous importance to Bank Austria. In light of this background, Bank Austria took action seven years ago by endowing the Bank Austria Social Prize dispensing grants totaling €85,000 annually. Since 2014, one is awarded in each state of the Republic of Austria. Jurors **Michael Landau** (Caritas director, Archdiocese of Vienna), **Christian Moser** (CEO, SOS Kinderdorf Austria), **Robert Zadrazil** (chairman of the board, Bank Austria) and **Roman Jost** (sustainability manager, Bank Austria) selected the following recipients of the Bank Austria Social Prize:

- Vienna: **Sowieso!** – Art workshops for children with disabilities
- Burgenland: **Pink-Up-Help** – Provides cares to 10 refugee families and 20 asylum seekers in Pinkafeld
- Lower Austria: **Fit4life** – Fosters a healthy lifestyle on the part of young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds
- Upper Austria: **AMIGO@WORK** – Businesspeople offer refugees key initial insights into the Austrian job market while their application for asylum is being processed
- Tyrol: **Frauen aus allen Ländern** – Facilitates female immigrants & refugees getting access to educational offerings and counseling
- Vorarlberg: **Köpfe wie Du & Ich – MUT Menschenwürde und Toleranz** – Social work with young people in Lustenau, especially as a means of preventing radicalism
- Salzburg: **Open Heart** – Sponsorship of underage, unaccompanied refugees
- Carinthia: **Hospizbewegung** – Hospice care for children, young people and young adults
- Styria: **Seniorenbetreuung am Bauernhof** – Assisted living on farms for elderly people suffering from mental illnesses such as dementia and depression

#### Queries:

UniCredit Bank Austria Press Relations  
 Matthias Raftl, Tel. +43 (0)5 05 05-52809  
 e-mail: [matthias.raftl@unicreditgroup.at](mailto:matthias.raftl@unicreditgroup.at)

UniCredit Bank Austria Events & Sponsoring  
 Katja Erlach, Tel. +43 (0)5 05 05- 56839  
 e-mail: [katja.erlach@unicreditgroup.at](mailto:katja.erlach@unicreditgroup.at)

**Photos of the Bank Austria Art Prize Gala can be downloaded from <http://kunstpreis.bankaustria.at>. Images may be published free of charge.**

**Videos showcasing the prizewinning projects are online at <http://kunstpreis.bankaustria.at>**