

Unprecedented attendance growth highlights the 2017 wrap-up

More than Half a Million at Ars Electronica

(Linz, January 16, 2018) 180,654 visits to the Ars Electronica Center, 100,076 at the Ars Electronica Festival, and attendance of 273,792 at the big “Ars Electronica in Berlin” show—Ars Electronica’s three main activities this past year alone drew more than 550,000 visits. To them can be added a whole series of presentations, talks and workshops worldwide, such as those at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Dutch Design Week in Eindhoven, Digital Design Week in London, Rock in Rio, at Tokyo Midtown and Knowledge Capital in Osaka. “Now that digitization can be felt in every facet of everyday life, the interest in Ars Electronica and the expertise it has amassed over the decades has risen exponentially” noted Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, chairwoman of the Board of Directors of Ars Electronica Linz GmbH and Co KG. “We have observed this in the form of both increased enthusiasm on the part of the general public as well as the growing number of labs, R&D facilities and private firms from many sectors and countries worldwide seeking to work together with us” added Diethard Schwarzmaier and Gerfried Stocker, managing directors of Ars Electronica Linz GmbH and Co KG. “There currently prevails a sense of dynamism that makes us very optimistic about the future.”

+5% – Ars Electronica Center’s Attendance Increases Once Again

The Ars Electronica Center tallied 180,654 visitors in 2017, a 5% increase over the previous year. A high level of satisfaction and the relatively long duration of visitors’ average stay round out this pretty picture. 2017’s top draw was, once again, Deep Space 8K, where a mix of state-of-the-art technology, breathtaking visuals and incisive commentary deliver a one-of-a-kind experience.

There was also strong demand for educational programs last year. 40,700 kindergarten kids (2,200), pupils in all grades and types of schools (33,000), and college students (5,500) attended the Ars Electronica Center last year, and hundreds of apprentices from Wacker Neuson, Fronius, Greiner, KTM, Engel, Rosenbauer and other companies throughout the region visited the Museum of the Future in conjunction with Apprentice Days.

Plus, as an event location, the Ars Electronica Center continues to be a hotspot. Our in-house catering service hosted 180 events with attendance of 27,151 in 2017.

Festival Breaks the 100,000 Mark for the First Time

Year after year, thousands of visitors from throughout the world gather in Linz for the Ars Electronica Festival. Especially large contingents come from China, Japan and South Korea.

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The 2017 festival logged 100,076 visits, and thus topped the corresponding figure in Linz's European Capital of Culture year. Among other record-setting facts & figures were the 1,000+ artists and scientists from more than 40 countries who staged approximately 600 individual events at 12 venues throughout the City of Linz. Moreover, a number of the festival program's highlights were "home-grown" in Linz and Upper Austria—most notably, Markus Poschner's first stint as curator of the Big Concert Night, which was also his public debut as chief conductor of the Bruckner Orchestra, and the CREATE YOUR WORLD festival for young people.

PostCity, the festival's prime location, did its part to enable these proceedings to unfold as fully as possible, to serve as a platform for innovation and consideration of matters of great future significance, and to make a growing impact throughout the regional economy.

273,792 at Ars Electronica in Berlin

"Ars Electronica in Berlin" is the title of a huge exhibition commissioned and financed by Volkswagen AG and produced by Ars Electronica EXPORT in DRIVE Volkswagen Group Forum in Berlin Mitte. Whereas each of the five previous shows staged at VW's high-profile venue in Germany's capital treated a specific theme, this latest collaborative effort—which also included an extensive program of ancillary events to mediate visitors' encounters with the exhibits—was conceived to aggressively promote Ars Electronica itself and what it stands for. The show attracted 273,792 visitors from late July to late October.

Ars Electronica EXPORT conceived and produced a wide array of appearances and presentations worldwide last year, often in cooperation with the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

In Demand Worldwide as a Service Provider and R&D Partner

In addition to its hugely successful festivals and international exhibitions, Ars Electronica is also in demand worldwide as a provider of services and research partner.

Among the Ars Electronica Futurelab's activities was development of a program focusing on digitization and the future of mobility for the Audi Training Center, and creating animated orientation aids especially for urban settings for Japanese telecommunications giant NTT. Since 2014, the Linz-based think-tank has been working together with Hakuhodo, one of Asia's largest advertising & promotion agencies, to come up with new methods of collective brainstorming and creative prototype development. In 2017, the Ars Electronica Futurelab was also hard at work on an impressive array of research projects financed by the European Union and subsidy funds of the Republic of Austria.

Ars Electronica Solutions, among its many projects, designed the new Palfinger World at that company's Salzburg headquarters, Silhouette's most important event of the year, and an eye-catching trade show stand for Fronius. Plus, Solutions carried out major assignments commissioned by three of Vienna's most prominent landmarks: the Giant Ferris Wheel, Hotel Sacher and the Austrian Parliament. The Linz-based crew is currently at work on an exhibition for the European Space Research Institute in Frascati/Rome.

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But the year's most prominent appearance was by the SPAXELS! Spectacular aerial maneuvers by the Linz-based drone swarm got a hundred thousand fans fired up for each day's headliner at Rock in Rio, the world's largest music festival. Justin Timberlake, a high-flying star in his own right, took advantage of the opportunity to post his photo of the SPAXELS.

Austria's Most Important Advertising Prize and Highest Endowed Art Prize

Ars Electronica doesn't only make international headlines! The feedback here in Austria has been thoroughly positive as well, and this was underscored in 2017 by three awards: The KFV-Curatorium for Traffic Safety's Research Prize, the Golden AUSTRIACUS awarded by the Economic Chamber of Austria, and the Bank Austria Art Prize, the country's highest endowed award of this kind.

Goal for 2018: Expanding International Activities, Strengthening Regional Roots

Ars Electronica intends to stay the course in 2018—in particular, by further expanding international activities and assertively opening up new markets and fields of business. “The focus will be on Asia and Australia,” stated Diethard Schwarzmaier. “At present, there's a tremendous sense of optimism in Japan, where we see a great deal of potential for Ars Electronica.”

Furthermore, the intention is to further cultivate this institution's regional roots. Continuing to build bridges to the local economy is part of this; so is addressing topics of great future importance and presenting them to the general public in collaboration with partners and associates working in many different fields and sectors.

The game plan also entails integrating both groups even more intensively in the production of the festival. “We want to redouble our efforts to establish the festival as a platform on which the artistic & creative scene, scholarly institutions, R&D facilities, regional firms and start-ups can get involved in a profitable and inspiring process of exchange with our international partners,” Gerfried Stocker said.

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

The year 2017 in recap: <https://www.aec.at/feature/en/2017recap/>

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