

Strong partner in the region, successful player around the globe:

Ars Electronica in Linz, Vienna, Berlin, Seoul, Moscow, Beijing and Tokyo

(Linz, January 8, 2019) An uninterrupted run at the Ars Electronica Center in Linz, the festival's worldwide name recognition, exhibitions in several major cities and project commissions around the globe have boosted sales and earnings to an all-time high: 2018 was a very successful year for Linz's Ars Electronica. The group found success in deepening its regional roots as well as in further internationalization, thus reaching its 2018 strategic goals.

"Ars Electronica has become a leading export for the city of Linz; last year alone it was active in 36 countries across five continents. Exhibitions in Beijing, Seoul, Moscow and Berlin underscore the international significance of Ars Electronica, founded 40 years ago in Linz. Thanks to profits from worldwide project contracts, Ars Electronica has attained a cost recovery rate of over 60 percent, uniquely high for a cultural and educational institution. In its latest report, the Auditing Office of Linz confirmed this finding and praised the excellent work done by Ars Electronica both financially and in terms of content," proudly states Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, Chairwoman of the Advisory Board and City Councilwoman for Cultural Affairs, in her appraisal of the cultural flagship's successful balancing act and of Linz's positioning as a UNESCO City of Media Arts.

Gerfried Stocker, Artistic Director of Ars Electronica, sums it up: "We have succeeded in further expanding our international activities and making prominent appearances around the globe. At the same time, our activities at the Linz headquarters are attracting ever greater international attention—with 105,000 visitors to the festival we have set a new record."

Commercial Director Diethard Schwarzmaier notes that last year was a great financial success as well: "Despite declining public funds, we were able to increase earnings by 1.2 million euros to a total of 16.7 million euros, an all-time high."

Ars Electronica Center and Festival as a magnet for visitors

A decade after Linz's Capital of Culture year, the Ars Electronica Center still enjoys a consistently large influx of visitors. 176,923 people visited the museum and participated in its events. Deep Space 8K was the most popular, but the museum's educational programs were also in great demand.

The Ars Electronica Festival set a new record with more than 105,000 event attendees and is currently regarded as the gold standard for innovation in art, technology and society. 1,357 artists, scientists, developers, engineers, activists and entrepreneurs from 54 countries contributed their artwork, presentations, lectures, concepts, visions, concerts, prototypes and products—all enriching the program for the latest festival year, its most wide-ranging to date. 396 local and international cooperating partners and sponsors supported the five-day event in Linz, which has been named the UNESCO City of Media Arts. Advance press credentials were issued to 402 media representatives from 40 countries.

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Linz's Ars Electronica is a leading export

Owing not least to the constantly growing international attention that the festival attracts, Ars Electronica receives an ever-rising number of collaboration requests and commissions from all over the world. Last year alone, the festival made presentations in multiple major cities around the globe. In collaboration with the Hyundai Motorgroup, exhibitions took place in Beijing, Seoul and Moscow. And on behalf of Volkswagen AG, Ars Electronica is currently showing at the DRIVE, prominently located in the center of Berlin, having already attracted 160,938 visitors.

Ars Electronica Futurelab researches and develops for partners from all over the world

Ars Electronica Futurelab's creativity and scientific expertise have been in high demand for years. With its prototypical productions and interactive futuristic projects, the Linz think tank has long made a name for itself worldwide. In 2018, the Futurelab entered into a new research collaboration with Rosenbauer on the topic of swarm intelligence; designed the new SAP Pavilion in Walldorf (Germany), developed the "Art Thinking Program" for Bandai Namco (Japan); continued its development for NTT; welcomed visitors (along with its partner Hakuhodo) to a major "Future Innovators Summit" in midtown Tokyo; received a commission from NHK to conduct research on "8K Future Projects"; opened the eighth entry in the series "Ars Electronica in the Knowledge Capital" in Osaka; began a collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane (Australia); worked alongside students at the Media Lab Helsinki; and handled the multimedia staging of a piano concert featuring Maki Nameka and Dennis Russell Davies in Abu Dhabi. Regionally and in Austria, the Futurelab created an Innovation Lab on the topic "Robotics in Construction" for the Upper Austrian Economic Chamber; contributed an interactive production to the musical "Lazarus" at the Musiktheater Linz; and developed interactive installations for the exhibition "Silent Night 200" at the Salzburg Museum.

Ars Electronica Solutions is doing good business

Innovative products made by Ars Electronica Solutions were also met with great interest. In 2018, the team designed ESA's new visitor center in Frascati near Rome; supplied interactive pavilions for the Umdasch Group's 150th anniversary celebration; re-staged the famous Sacher Eck in Vienna; created a new "Experience World" for Liwest; held a spectacular mixed-reality drone race at the commissioning of the new blast furnace at Voestalpine in Linz; developed the spatial design and several interactive installations for Palfinger's appearance at the IAA; handled the multimedia accompaniment for the events of the Austrian EU Council Presidency in the Austria Center Vienna; presented the STARTS Prize at the ICT Conference 2018; staged the closing event of the European Heritage Year for the Federal Chancellery; and put on the exhibition "Out of Control - What the digital world knows about you" for the Vienna Chamber of Labor.

Sales and revenues at all-time high

In the course of examining and evaluating Ars Electronica's business development, the Auditing Office not only found absolutely no grounds for complaint, but also noted that, thanks to the expansion of commercial activities and of cooperation and partnerships, the addition of additional sponsorship funds and the acquisition of EU funding, revenues had

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been greatly increased, thereby securing and improving the basis for its artistic work. Diethard Schwarzmaier also notes that commercial activities increased significantly in 2018: “Sales from the project business increased by 11 percent to a total of 8.8 million euros. A profit of 1.4 million euros was generated, which was used to ease the financial burden on the organization’s public service divisions.”

2019: Linz headquarter reinvents itself; Ars Electronica turns 40

The year 2019 will bring two further milestones. At the end of May, the Ars Electronica Center will open a completely updated permanent exhibition as well as a newly designed floor which will serve as an open laboratory for workshops. This investment project will be financed by the City of Linz and Ars Electronica itself: Linz recently increased its city-council-approved 1.5 million euros by a further million and is now contributing 2.5 million. Ars Electronica itself is bringing in a further 1.5 million euros, raising total investment to 4 million euros.

The festival in September will celebrate the 40th anniversary of Ars Electronica. “Our 2018 strategy was a great success,” note Gerfried Stocker and Diethard Schwarzmaier: “In 2019 we want to stay on this course and further strengthen the leadership we currently hold in a number of international fields, while also increasing our regional activity.”

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