

City of Linz honors "Women in MediaArts":

## Rebecca Merlic receives "Marianne.von.Willemer - Award for Digital Media 2020"

(Linz, 15.10.2020) The "Marianne.von.Willemer - Prize for Digital Media" of the City of Linz, endowed with 3,600 Euros, goes this time to Rebecca Merlic. The Viennese artist is being honored for her speculative work "TheCityAsAHouse", which questions the traditional connection between privacy and private property and explores new forms of urban (co)life. "Rebecca Merlic is looking for new ways and strategies to feel at home in urban spaces without having to tie herself to her own 'four walls'," says Linz's Women's City Councillor Mag.a Eva Schobesberger. "'The City As A House' is an exciting artistic contribution to the reflection on how we could use urban space in a different way in the future and how this use can become an added value for everyone." Rebecca Merlic will be officially presented with the "Marianne.von.Willemer - Award for Digital Media 2020" this evening, 7 p.m., in the Sky Loft of the Linz Ars Electronica Center.

### „TheCityAsAHouse“

What would happen if we were to use the infrastructure and services - or in other words, the multitude of possibilities and offers - of our modern cities without at the same time having to maintain, repair, and continually finance any kind of property? Would we feel freer? Would we feel closer to other people? With "TheCityAsAHouse", Rebecca Merlic throws conventional forms of living overboard and speculates on what a completely different (co)life in urban space might look like. The result of this artistic search for clues is a walk-in virtual world consisting of a myriad of images, sounds, videos, and 3D scans that the artist collected during a two-month nomadic stay in Tokyo. This virtual world is not a reproduction of her real model, but a parallel world fed by memories. It is a collection of frozen moments that are pleasant, awkward, frightening, powerful, boring, interesting or fascinating. By means of a game controller, anyone can explore this unique world, find their own paths along which new, improvised narratives are constantly spun by linking places and experiences. At the center of all these narratives is always the question of what it means to feel at home and what conditions are needed to do so.

Rebecca Merlic addresses the transience and uniqueness of this very personal feeling, which we exchange but which we cannot share, despite all the technical and media refinements of our time. "TheCityAsAHouse" avoids ideologically biased criticism of socio-economic imbalances such as exploding real estate and rent prices and precarious employment relationships and pleads for not desperately fighting for a return to stability, overview and order in the midst of urban chaos, but rather looking ahead and taking new paths.

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
christopher.sonnleitner@ars.electronica.art  
ars.electronica.art/press

## "Rebecca Merlic opens a new space for reflections on future urban use" - the statement of the jury

"TheCityAsAHouse" reports on the dissolution of private spaces and the strategy of shifting their conservative use to the space of the city. During a two-month stay in Tokyo, she sleeps in public spaces, on the train, in a love hotel, eats in cheap restaurants and street stalls, washes and grooms herself in bathhouses. The public space in which she moves is supported by navigation with her smartphone and is constantly recomposed according to her personal use. As an architect, she transfers her explorations into a virtual reality that is closely linked to the digital traces of the places she visits. Her work creates an extremely successful new construction of the personal narrative. Rebecca Merlic thus opens up new space for reflections on future urban use, which can also be seen as added value for society!

### Rebecca Merlic (AT)

Rebecca Merlic lives and works in Vienna and Tokyo. She studied architecture at the Vienna University of Technology, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the University of the Arts Tokyo. Her artistic works have been shown at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (2017, 2018, 2020), the Tapered Gallery Tokyo (2018) and the "Athens Digital Arts Festival" (2020) with a solo exhibition. At the Ars Electronica Festival 2020 Rebeca Merlic participated with a solo exhibition in the "Ars Electronica Garden" of the VENT Gallery. Her artistic work revolves around alternative forms of society and the associated questioning and overcoming of socio-economic conventions as well as future forms of architectural production that make use of new technologies.

### The "Marianne.von.Willemer - Award for Digital Media"

With the "Marianne.von.Willemer - Prize for Digital Media" the City of Linz supports women who use digital media for artistic expression. Innovative works are sought that are characterized by the use of or explicit reference to digital media. As far as technical realization is concerned, there is a broad spectrum to choose from - works from the fields of digital photography, digital video, computer animation, generative graphics, digital music, interactive installations, network projects, media performances, media architecture etc. can be submitted. The competition is announced every two years by the Women's Office of the City of Linz in cooperation with Ars Electronica and with the support of dorf TV; the winner receives 3,600 euros. This year's jury consisted of Mag.a art. Dagmar Schink (Management VALIE EXPORT Center Linz), Prof.in (FH) Mag.a art. Dr.in Rosa von Suess (Professor at the University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten, Department of Media and Digital Technologies) and Univ.-Prof.in Mag.a art. Brigitte Vasicek (Professor for time-based media at the University of Art and Design Linz).

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.sonnleitner@ars.electronica.art](mailto:christopher.sonnleitner@ars.electronica.art)  
[ars.electronica.art/press](https://ars.electronica.art/press)

The patron saint of the Linz Prize is Marianne von Willemer, who was born in Linz in 1784. When she was 14 years old, she moved with her mother to Frankfurt am Main where she met Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The latter in turn immortalized Marianne von Willemer in his work "Westöstlicher Diwan", published in 1819. It was not until nine years after Marianne von Willemer's death that it became known that several of the most beautiful poems were actually written by her. Nevertheless, Marianne von Willemer's achievements have received little or no attention to this day.

---

Marianne.von.Willemer – Preis für digitale Medien: <https://www.linz.at/frauen/57564.php>

Rebecca Merlic: <https://rebeccamerlic.myportfolio.com/work>

dorf TV: <https://www.dorftv.at/home>

Ars Electronica: <https://ars.electronica.art/news/>

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.sonnleitner@ars.electronica.art](mailto:christopher.sonnleitner@ars.electronica.art)  
[ars.electronica.art/press](https://ars.electronica.art/press)