

71,000 Visits to Planet B:

Ars Electronica 2022

953 artists, researchers and activists – 337 cooperating partners –
439 employees – 425 events – 11 locations – 5 days

“Anyone who came to this year’s Ars Electronica and heard 24-year-old Neirok Leem from the Marshall Islands knows two things: first, that we haven’t the foggiest idea of what the climate crisis is going to mean for us. And secondly, that the changes we are to make will have to be at a fundamental level,” said Gerfried Stocker. “But those who visited the festival also experienced that this truth is reasonable and doesn’t cause people to fall into panic or resignation. On the contrary – all over the world, artists, researchers, activists and students have long been doing everything they can to initiate the necessary change. The determination and creativity with which they are doing so is encouraging,” continued Stocker, looking back on the past five days.

A Massive Collaborative Project

953 people from 76 countries were involved in the program of this Ars Electronica. 11 locations in the Linz metropolitan area were used, a virtual art gallery was set up, and all major conferences were streamed along with a series of talks and presentations. 337 cooperating partners contributed to the festival and made 425 events possible. The Ars Electronica team temporarily numbered up to 439 employees.

Many Attractions for the Public

After the festivals of 2020 and 2021 with their heavy online emphasis, Ars Electronica was largely held on location in Linz again and met with a great response. Despite disappointing weather, 71,000 visits were counted at 11 locations over the course of the past 5 days. Among the sold-out crowd-pullers were the “Sh4d0W” performance offered several times a day, the Futurelab Night, the Deep Space presentations by the curators of the Louvre in Paris and the director of the Vatican Museums, and the two concerts by Laurie Anderson (US), who performed her “Songs for Amelia” with Dennis Russell Davies (US), the Brno Philharmonic (CZ) and Rubin Kodheli (US). In addition, the Ars Electronica Center was truly overrun; after an August that set a record with 15,509 visits (excepting 2009, when Linz was the European Capital of Culture), the Museum of the Future counted more than 8,000 visits in the past five days alone.

A New Kind of Job Search

It was an experiment – and it worked. The “Job Buffet,” held for the first time in conjunction with the Upper Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), was intended to give employers and job

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seekers a chance to get to know one another and engage in conversation on completely different terrain. Saturday, September 9, was the day, and representatives from 14 companies — including Ars Electronica itself — mingled at the Uni-Center. It resulted in interesting discussion taking place on equal terms, which will lead to a number of specific job interviews this week.

(Open) Festival University

The very public finale of the Festival University was exciting. After excursions throughout Upper Austria, workshops and lectures with top experts from the Ars Electronica cosmos — including Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker (DE), Franz Fischler (AT), Laurie Anderson (US), Diana Ayton-Shenker (US), Rashaad Newsome (US), Alex Verhaest (BE) and Karl Markovics (AT) — the 200 students from 70 countries were invited to a model international environmental & climate court trial. This field trial was chaired by Mathis Fister, Professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law at Johannes Kepler University Linz, and publicly negotiated the questions of whether water should be a private or public good, whether nuclear energy can be considered green, and how to define the status of “climate refugee.”

258 Media Representatives from 31 Countries

The media interest in this year’s festival was also very high. 258 media representatives from 31 countries were accredited for Ars Electronica in Linz and reported for Wired Japan, Der Spiegel, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine, BBC, Arte, La Repubblica, Nikkei, Focus, Deutschlandfunk, Bayerischer Rundfunk, heise, Leonardo, Yahoo Japan News, vdi-nachrichten, N1, Technology Review, artouch, Kunstforum.de and Neural.it.

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