culttech

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Art, Technology & Society

CultTech x Ars Electronica Award 2023
App development from South Africa prevails out of 278 submissions

(Linz/Vienna, July 31, 2023) Where culture and technology converge, a forward-looking duet is born that is specially honored by the CultTech x Ars Electronica Award; an award for projects that address cultural needs through technical capabilities. The competition, initiated in May 2023 and jointly conducted by the Vienna-based CultTech Association and Ars Electronica, has now been decided.

2023: 278 projects submitted from 53 countries

Between May 30 and June 26, 278 projects from a total of 53 countries were submitted for the first round of the CultTech x Ars Electronica Award. The international jury, consisting of Lucrecia Vanni (AR/IT), Dmitry Aksenov (RU) and Gerfried Stocker (AT) evaluated the submissions and assigned the Award to a project from South Africa.

Art Meets App secures the main prize

The main prize of 10,000 euros goes to the interdisciplinary collective Art Meets with the *Art Meets App*, which is aimed at art and culture professionals in Africa and creates a digital ecosystem for local and supranational networking. In addition to the prize money, the winners will receive access to the CultTech Accelerator, a three-month program with individual start-up mentoring for tech companies in the cultural sector. The Honorary Mention of the Award receives filmmaker Pavel Ruzyak (CZ) with his project *Filming in the Dark*, which uses innovative AI applications to enable people with visual impairments to make their own films. "Artists have always had ideas for more sustainable and inclusive forms of society. Thanks to new technologies and communication channels, these ideas are experiencing the kind of outreach that is needed to trigger real change. Initiatives like *Art Meets App* demonstrate this impressively", says Gerfried Stocker, Artistic Director of Ars Electronica.

The inaugural edition of this prestigious CultTech x Ars Electronica Award will be accompanied by a roadshow made of two 'AI in Music Expert Meetings'. The first one will happen in Salzburg on August 4th, on the sidelines of the Salzburg Festival, and the second meeting is planned in Linz, on September 7th, at the Ars Electronica Festival (6-10 September). Followed by the Award Ceremony on the same day at POSTCITY. During the roadshow, CultTech and Ars Electronica will be exploring the necessity to launch a one-of-its-kind 'AI 4 culture' research centre in Austria.

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"The application of generative AI in cultural production is provoking a strong interest, as well as legitimate concerns about its impact on authenticity, the essence of creativity, intellectual property, the value of cultural contents, and so on", according to Dmitry Aksenov, founder of the CultTech Association.

CultTech x Ars Electronica Award 2023 – Main Prize
Award for Social Impact Projects in Culture and Technology

Art Meets App / Art Meets   www.art-meets.com

Jury Statement

> *"With 'Art Meets', technology becomes a force for positive social impact, spreading culture widely in the region and contributing to a more favorable environment for artistic exploration and growth. We extend our congratulations to the Art Meets team for their outstanding achievement and eagerly anticipate the profound impact their project will have on the arts and culture landscape."*

Art Meets App is a tool for networking artists, curators, cultural institutions and art lovers in Africa. Geodata, chats, and event information create a social network that connects the cultural scene across cities and countries on the continent. The application was established by the Art Meets collective, which since 2013 has been pushing the basic idea of a digital infrastructure for actors in the cultural sector in South Africa and beyond with diverse projects – exhibitions, videos, podcasts. Around 55 experts from the arts and culture scene from South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana and Ghana contributed to the digital application by sharing their experiences. At the center of the digital ecosystem is the exchange between artists and organizers, between curators and art spaces; via a virtual map, locations and events can be marked and personal contacts can be maintained via the messaging function. In the future, the *Art Meets App* will digitally connect art communities and help users to build professional networks and acquire a sustainable audience. Tammy Langtry, Art Meets: "The project will be launched in South Africa as a testing ground to further research and expand through partner locations in other regions in Africa." For the innovative concept of the *Art Meets App*, the initiators around Tammy Lantry (ZA), Michaela Limberis (ZA) and Precious Mhone (MW) will be awarded the CultTech x Ars Electronica Award 2023 – Main Prize.

Partners/Credits: Duduetsang Lamola (blk banaana), Pyda, Munashe Hilton Matyatya, Thoriso Moseneke, Precious Mhone, Michaela Limberis, Mandla Shonhiwa, Shane Mkhize, Loice Mwai, Micah De Jager, Tammy Langtry, Athini Bashe, Carlin Eloff, AFRI (African Fashion Research Institute).

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CultTech x Ars Electronica Award 2023 – Honorary Mention
Award for Social Impact Projects in Culture and Technology

Filming in the Dark / Pavel Ruzyak (CZ)

Jury Statement

> *"[...] This project empowers visually impaired youth to create movies using AI and cinematography. It fosters inclusivity, cultural inclusion, and independence for individuals with special needs. The project aligns with our vision of involving audiences in art and culture and demonstrates the positive impact of technology for society [...] It showcases how technology can empower marginalized communities and bridge gaps in the arts. The team's dedication to social impact is commendable."*

Producing a film without being able to see it? That's exactly what Czech filmmaker Pavel Ruzyak is calling for. His project *Filming in the Dark* aims to create the technical possibilities that people with visual impairments need to make the visual medium inclusive even in its production phase. This requires innovative technical solutions: One of them is a special camera that, with the help of AI, operates a chatbot that describes objects in the image in speech and provides assistance via a loudspeaker. In this way, video recording becomes an interactive work and visual impairment becomes irrelevant, as the camera – as well as appropriate hardware and software design – becomes a co-producer through communication with the person filming. The new camera technology should enable people who cannot see to produce audiovisual content – for their own social media presence or YouTube channel, for example.

Credits
Concept, methodology: Pavel Ruzyak
The project is developed within Osvěta z.s. Prague, an association working with visually impaired young people.

About CultTech Association

CultTech Association is an innovative platform that brings together culture and technology, aiming to bridge the gap between these two domains and promote cutting-edge ideas, projects, and collaborations. The association members include an investment fund and a startup accelerator program – CultTech Accelerator – that brings together expertise and networks from across the startup, tech, culture and art scenes in Europe and beyond. The organisation is headquartered in Vienna and was founded by investor, startup founder, and technology entrepreneur, Dmitry Aksenov.

More information about the "CultTech x Ars Electronica Award for Social Impact Projects in Culture and Technology" can be found here.

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