

Museum Arbeitswelt x Ars Electronica Solutions

LABOUR LAB opens in Steyr

Today, May 20, 2025, at 7 p.m., the LABOUR LAB will open at the Museum Arbeitswelt in Steyr, an educational and experiential space designed to inspire young people to help shape a fair and solidarity-based working world. The concept, design, exhibition architecture, and interactive elements—from touchscreens and analog stations to animations—were realized in close collaboration with Ars Electronica Solutions. SMESH OG was also involved. The project is funded by the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labor.

Accompanied by Mitzi, the virtual factory cat, visitors to LABOUR LAB use modern technology to travel back to the 19th century, to the era of the labor movement and the founding of trade unions, and from there to the present day to discuss digitalization, AI, and socio-ecological developments. What makes this exhibition special is that it is designed as an exciting puzzle rally that encourages visitors to get involved.

Decision-Making Machine as a Highlight

One highlight is the Decision-Making Machine, designed and implemented by Ars Electronica Solutions. Visitors can shape the working world of the future according to their own ideas at five stations arranged in a circle, encountering topics such as wages, working hours, co-determination, and safety.

Each station is equipped with a screen and an interactive voting tool. Fictitious "works council members" appear and act like chatbots. Students configure the *characters* by communicating with them directly and responding to predetermined answer options by physically throwing balls into tubes, thereby making decisions. First, they decide where and how the person should work, and what their everyday work should look like. Then, the questions become more specific: Should AI-supported surveillance be approved? Should carpooling be encouraged in the company? The answers from all stations are displayed in real time with LEDs and sound, converging in an elaborately programmed centerpiece that evaluates the results. This

creates a space for joint reflection on the question: How do we want to live and work together in the future?

“At LABOUR LAB, visitors are not passive passengers—they must organize themselves as a group, consult with each other, and act together to move forward. The rooms only function through collaboration and combine exhibition, play, and knowledge transfer into a collective experience. Thanks to the collaboration with ARS ELECTRONICA SOLUTIONS and SMESH, we were able to translate complex content not only into atmospheric spatial images, but also transform it into tangible, interactive experiences through the exciting use of technology. For a sustainable communication of the digital transformation in the world of work, it is precisely this combination of sensory design and active engagement that is needed,” says **Stephan Rosinger**, Artistic Director Museum Arbeitswelt.

LABOUR LAB at the Museum Arbeitswelt

Opening: May 20, 2025, 7 p.m.

Regular Opening Hours:

Wednesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, and public holidays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Museum Arbeitswelt

Wehrgrabengasse 7 | 4400 Steyr

About Ars Electronica Solutions

Ars Electronica Solutions designs and implements interactive, multisensory experiences. Since its founding in 2011, this Ars Electronica division has developed creative, customized concepts for exhibitions, brand worlds, trade fairs, and events. The company focuses on creating tailor-made solutions in close collaboration with clients.

<https://ars.electronica.art/solutions/de/>

About Museum Arbeitswelt

Housed in two former factory buildings from the 19th century, the Museum Arbeitswelt (Working World Museum) in the industrial city of Steyr is the first and only museum of work in Austria dedicated to the experiences of working people from the Industrial Revolution to digitalization and beyond.

www.museumarbeitswelt.at

About Studio SMESH

SMESH is a multimedia agency working in the fields of 3D design, visualization, virtual reality, augmented reality, animation, and moving images, implementing interactive tools and special applications on the web.

www.smesh.studio