

3,987 submissions from 98 countries

Prix Ars Electronica 2025: Golden Nicas Awarded to Outstanding Media Artists

Press Briefing on July 7, 2025 with

Veronika Liebl, Managing Director Ars Electronica Festival
Gerfried Stocker, Artistic Director Ars Electronica

3,987 submissions from 98 countries for Prix Ars Electronica 2025

Winners of the 2025 Golden Nicas

The Prix Ars Electronica is the world's most established competition for media art. Since 1987, it has honored pioneers who realize inspiring projects at the intersection of art, technology, and society. In 2025, the competition received 3,987 submissions from 98 countries across four categories. The four winners have now been selected and will be awarded the coveted Golden Nica as well as up to 10,000 euros in prize money.

In addition, each category includes at least two Awards of Distinction and several Honorary Mentions. In the u19—create your world category, the Golden Nica is accompanied not only by Awards of Distinction and Honorary Mentions, but also by prizes for young creatives in the age groups u10, u12, and u14. Finally, the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity and the Isao Tomita Special Prize are also presented.

In the category **New Animation Art** (1,430 submissions), Frode Oldereid and Thomas Kvam (NO) prevailed with *Requiem for an Exit*. The expansive installation features a four-meter-tall robot delivering a haunting monologue that reflects on genocides throughout human history—while calling into question the responsibility of each individual.

In the category **Digital Musics & Sound Art** (1,127 submissions), Navid Navab (IR/CA) and Garnet Willis (CA) are honored for their project *Organism*. At its center is a robotically modified organ that breaks free from the rigid patterns of prescribed sacred music and embraces uncontrollable soundscapes.

In the category **Artificial Life & Intelligence** (910 submissions), the Golden Nica goes to Paula Gaetano Adi (AR). Following in the historical footsteps of 19th-century Latin American liberation movements, a robot named *Guanaquerx* crossed the Andes in seven days, accompanied by artists, engineers, local muleteers, 58 mules and horses. The project envisions how AI and robotics can contribute to a positive, collaboratively shaped future—one that transcends all forms of exploitation and domination.

In the category **u19—create your world** (520 submissions), children and young people in Austria were invited to submit their ideas and visions for the world of tomorrow. In the Young Professionals category (ages 14–19), Aleksa Jović and Nico Pflügler (Gilbert Gnos Productions) from the HBLA for Artistic Design in Linz stood out. For their experimental short film *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective), they are awarded the Golden Nica and 3,000 euros in prize money.

Prix Ars Electronica Jury 2025

The following experts served as the 2025 Prix Ars Electronica juries, evaluating the submissions and selecting the winners in each category:

- **New Animation Art:** Boris Eldagsen (DE), Ayoung Kim (KR), Ari Melenciano (US), Everardo Reyes (FR/MX), Liz Rosenthal (UK)
- **Digital Musics & Sound Art:** Miriam Akkermann (DE), Dietmar Lupfer (DE), Kamila Metwaly (EG/PL), Ali Nikrang (AT/IR), Nao Tokui (JP)
- **Artificial Life & Intelligence:** Clemens Apprich (AT), Tamar Clarke-Brown (GB), Charlotte Jarvis (GB), Špela Petrič (SI), Simon Weckert (DE)
- **u19—create your world:** Vivian Bausch (AT), Clara Donat (AT), Jan G. Grünwald (DE), Katharina Hof (AT), Conny Lee (AT)

Additional Prizes Among the Submissions

In 2025, the **Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity** (10,000 euros), made possible by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, goes to Domestic Data Streamers (ES) for *Synthetic Memories*. The project is dedicated to the preservation and reconstruction of personal memories and can be especially supportive for individuals affected by traumatic experiences or memory loss.

In sessions with interviewers and participants, AI-generated images are created to strengthen emotional connections. *Synthetic Memories* serves as a prototype for the public sector, health institutions, museums, and cultural organizations to engage with subjective memory preservation. The Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity is selected from all submissions to the STARTS Prize, the European Union Prize for Citizen Science, and the Prix Ars Electronica.

Submissions in the category Digital Musics & Sound Art were also eligible for the **Isao Tomita Special Prize**, endowed by the TOMITA information Hub. The 5,000 euros prize goes to Japanese artist evala for the large-scale sound installation *ebb tide*, the latest work in his *See by Your Ears* project, which invites visitors to immerse themselves in a unique sonic space and explore the boundaries of their perception.

Exhibition at the Ars Electronica Festival

A selection of the award-winning projects will be showcased at this year's Ars Electronica Festival from September 3 to 7 at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz and POSTCITY. The Prix Ars Electronica Award Ceremony will take place on Thursday, September 4, 2025, at the Design Center Linz.

New Animation Art / Golden Nica

Requiem for an Exit

Frode Oldereid (NO), Thomas Kvam (NO)

"Towering almost four meters high, Requiem for an Exit confronts visitors with a solitary head mounted on a steel exoskeleton, its skin a living projection, its voice an AI-generated baritone that delivers a stark meditation on chaos, suffering, and the limits of human agency. The piece is disarmingly direct—a single figure, a single monologue—yet every layer complicates the next. [...] The work excels across all of the criteria that guided this year's jury. It extends animation's frontier by welding together disciplines that rarely share the same studio: industrial robotics, CGI, large-language-model scripting, generative voice, hydraulic choreography, projection-mapped sculpture and site-responsive sound. Every technological choice is integral to the argument: without real hydraulics the head's weariness would ring hollow; without the projected epidermis its humanity would be too easily denied."

-Excerpt from the jury statement

The installation *Requiem for an Exit* centers a towering robotic figure—a skeletal construct of steel, hydraulics, and circuitry. Its only means of expression are its voice and a moving head. Digitally sculpted and animated with hyper-realistic detail, the face gives the robot an unsettling presence, amplified by a dense soundscape. A low, constant pressure fills the room.

A philosophical provocation unfolds as the robot calmly begins its monologue, reflecting on genocide as a recurring feature in human history, embedded within our genetic memory. Its speech traces an archaeology of violence: from ancient annihilations to colonial massacres, from concentration camps and the bureaucratized efficiency of industrial extermination to the present, where siege and displacement persist in full view. It evokes a sense of discomfort and compels a reckoning with humanity's enduring capacity for destruction.

When the robot falls silent, the stillness that follows offers no relief. It feels heavy, as if innocence were no longer possible. The "requiem" is not for the machine or the dead, but for the myths we continue to believe: that progress brings salvation, that intelligence ensures ethics, that technology can redeem the human. *Requiem for an Exit* exposes the drift of

responsibility—from individuals to bureaucracies, and from bureaucracies to algorithms—and reminds us: What we delegate, we do not escape.

youtu.be/uNj0bAAmVyA?si=oQOnblv-UgjxsZ2b
oldereid-kvam.com

Artists, project team, and concept development:
Thomas Kvam and Frode Oldereid
Programming: Thomas Kvam and Frode Oldereid
Software and system development: Øystein Kjørstad Fjeldbo
Hydraulic system engineer: Thomas Götz

Co-produced by Meta.Morf 2024, curated by Zane
Cerpina and Espen Gangvik, TEKS – Trondheim
Electronic Arts Centre
Special thanks: Lars Paalgard
With support from: the Fritt Ord Foundation; the Audio and Visual Fund; Meta.Morf Biennale 2024; and
TEKS – Trondheim Electronic Arts Centre, Norway

New Animation Art / Award of Distinction

Ito Meikyū

Boris Labbé (FR)

This virtual reality installation is inspired by classical art, Japanese literature, personal encounters, and the artist's travels in Japan. Boris Labbé also draws on the key motif of traditional Japanese painting, the "Fukinuki Yatai" technique, which represents the interior of a building seen from above with the roof removed. Through this composition, he explores the multiplicity of points of view, the narrative connections, the almost encyclopedic panoramic composition, and the arrangement of geometries, motifs, and characters.

Ito Meikyū invites the viewers to immerse themselves in a large, animated fresco. It presents a collection of drawn, animated, and sonic scenes. A subjective world—both inner and outer—takes the form of a labyrinth, made of fractal architecture and inhabited by plants, objects, animals, men, women, patterns, and calligraphy. The spectators are invited to wander through this virtual space, guided by the chance of their discoveries.

vimeo.com/786235681

Director: Boris Labbé
Production: Sacrebleu Productions, Les Films Fauves, Parangon
Music: Daniele Ghisi
Sound: Daniele Ghisi, Alex Nogueira
Lead developer: Charles Ayats
Distribution: Unframed Collection

New Animation Art / Award of Distinction

The Cast of the Invisible

Lau Wai (HK)

The Cast of the Invisible is a CGI animated short film exploring the line between virtual and physical existence, responding to the ever-expanding interference of the digital world. The film was inspired by the idea that motion-capture actors lose their identity beneath digitally imposed animation. It follows several days in the life of W.A.I., a virtual clone of the artist and a motion-capture actor, who gradually descends into existential confusion.

Burdened by a job that provides purpose at the cost of individuality, W.A.I. is trapped in a role defined by constant imitation, designed to be everyone and no one. Even after leaving the film studio, W.A.I., still costumed in the black motion-capture suit, asks their robot lover “how should I act?” in a moment of intimacy. Through the work, Lau Wai questions the role of humans as technology progresses. What will it mean to be human? What will it mean to be a clone? Which world will define our identities?

w-a-i-studio.com/works/cast1

Directing, writing, editing, & animation: Lau Wai

Soundtracks:

“The Void” by Stephen Keech

“Above the Clouds” by Theatre of Delays

“A Twist of Fate” by Or Chausha

“The Fall” by Or Chausha

“Dark Forest” by John Dada & the Weathermen

Audio recording & sound editing: Lau Wai

Digital Musics & Sound Art / Golden Nica

Organism

Navid Navab (IR/CA), Garnet Willis (CA)

“A century-old Casavant pipe organ—long associated with rigidity, control, and Western sacred music—is re-animated through a choreography of kinetic gestures in the attempt to deconstruct the socio-historical tonality of this instrument. Robotically prepared and intimately entangled with a chaotic triple pendulum, the instrument no longer obeys the dictates of a human performer but slowly deconstructs new timbres and sonic nuances.[...] It seems that, Organism become a subversive apparatus—an act of sonic reclamation. Through the radical recontextualization, the artists dismantle the organ’s fixed authority and repurpose it to a state of responsive, chaotic life. This is not simply a reinvention of an instrument, but a re-imagining of time, space, and historical memory.”

-Excerpt from the jury statement

Organism is an investigative platform that helps us perceive and understand how chaotic motion and turbulent dynamics can shape sound. It takes two forms: as a solo concert and as an installation. In both versions, a robotically prepared historic pipe organ forms the centerpiece. Systems once used to eliminate turbulent airflow were removed, unleashing long-repressed timbres after centuries of silence.

The most unstable pipes were chosen for their sensitivity to even the slightest fluctuations in airflow, bringing the energetic interdependencies into the sensory realm. In this system, even tiny movements of a servo motor controlling airflow in a pipe can cause sudden changes in sound. During concerts under the title *Organism: In Turbulence*, Navid Navab uses gestural controllers to interact with *Organism*’s wild temporality.

In the installation *Organism + Excitable Chaos*, created by Navid Navab in collaboration with Garnet Willis, a robotically-steered triple pendulum drives the airflow dynamics of the organ. Animated by the rapid exchange of potential and kinetic energy between its three moving arms, it continuously generates chaotic motion. Its dance with gravity is wirelessly sensed

and translated into data, allowing *Excitable Chaos* to shape *Organism*'s sonic behavior—bringing kinetic chaos into dialogue with sonic turbulence.

navidnavab.com/organism-in-turbulence

navidnavab.com/organism-excitable-chaos

garnetwillis.com

Concept, direction, composition, sculpture, programming, design, electronics, sonification (installation), performance (concert): Navid Navab

Sculpture, lead design, electronics, engineering, energetics: Garnet Willis

Digital Musics & Sound Art / Award of Distinction

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk

Jonathan Chaim Reus (US/NL)

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk is an absurdist take on the gold rush of creative automation, inviting audiences to consider the hidden labor in the datafication of voice. In live dataset-making performances, sound poet Jaap Blonk engages in a vocal battle with his AI-generated voice clone, the *Bla Blavatar*, performed by Jonathan Chaim Reus. In each session, Blonk performs algorithmically generated “Dataset Poems”—inspired by phonetically balanced reading scripts in speech research—while his voice is recorded live. Each recording feeds the *Bla Blavatar*.

The project does not focus on the uncanny realism of voice clones. Instead, it highlights the physical, creative, and mental effort required to perform sound poetry based on an AI-friendly score. The *Bla Blavatar* employs a custom real-time AI voice instrument called *Tungnaá*, which both utilizes and questions techniques from autoregressive text-to-speech neural networks. *Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk* challenges trends of generative AI systems to lock-in assumptions about what an ideal voice should be, embracing made-up languages and unconventional forms of expression.

jonathanreus.com/portfolio/bla-blavatar-vs-jaap-blonk/

Performance, notation and dataset creation: Jonathan Chaim Reus and Jaap Blonk
Research and development of *Tungnaá*: Victor Shephardson and Jonathan Chaim Reus

With support from:
PiNA – Association for Culture and Education
Intelligent Instruments Lab, University of Iceland
Stroom Den Haag
S+T+ARTS AIR: funded by European Union and co-funded by PiNA

Digital Musics & Sound Art / Award of Distinction

Mineral Amnesia

Ioana Vreme Moser (RO)

Mineral Amnesia explores in sound the evolution and decay of the EPROM—the first computer memory chips that could be erased and reprogrammed. Encapsulated under quartz windows, made of pure crystal, EPROMS lose information once exposed to light. The project reanimates these chips from the past and translates their fading memory into an audible experience.

For *Mineral Amnesia*, EPROMs from different generations were salvaged. The artist recorded her own voice and stored these recordings on the selected EPROMs. In the installation, the memory chips are placed under an artificial light source, causing the stored data—the encoded histories—to first become distorted and then to gradually fade into digital noise. Finally, as the traces of memory dissolve, the installation falls silent. The project highlights how the extreme growth of digital data under techno-capitalism leaves information trapped in obsolete hardware and discarded as toxic e-waste across the planet.

ioanavrememoser.com/mineral-amnesia

Commissioned by Simultan Association and Galerie Nord

Curated by: Levente Kozma, Carsten Seiffarth, Veronika Witte

Technical support: Dorian Largen

Assistance: Alin Rotariu, Gloria Vreme Moser, Theo Vreme Moser

Woodwork: Alex Matusciac

With support from: Administration of the National Cultural Fund (RO); Stiftung Kunstfonds, Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa (DE)

Artificial Life & Intelligence / Golden Nica

Guañaquerx

Paula Gaetano Adi (AR)

“By re-enacting the historic 1817 Crossing of the Andes, which marked the beginning of Chile’s liberation from Spanish colonial rule, with an insurgent robot, its army of artists, engineers, local baqueanos, and their 58 mules and horses, the artwork not only puts a finger in the wound of the colonial entanglements of our present moment, but also points beyond. Promoting new forms of knowledge, togetherness and social change, we wish to honor the extraordinary scope and ambition of this work, which envisions robotics as a technology of liberation and invites us to poetically engage with our past in order to create a different, pluriversal future. In its critical engagement and visionary scope, this work offers not only a beautiful cinematic experience, but also a meaningful performative act and powerful cultural intervention. It gestures towards new horizons, relationships and forms of life—artificial or otherwise—that might emerge from the cracks of our current systems.”

-Excerpt from the jury statement

In 1817, the Andes Revolutionary Army carried out a monumental operation: 5,200 men and women, accompanied by over 10,000 mules and horses, crossed the Andes from Argentina to Chile to help liberate Latin America from Spanish colonial rule. Two centuries later, a different kind of insurgent retraced the trail over seven days: a four-legged robot named *Guañaquerx* (modeled after the guanaco) joined by artists, engineers, local muleteers, and 58 mules and horses. Their mission: to reclaim the Andes as a site of resistance and reimagine robotics for planetary liberation.

Developed by a transdisciplinary team, *Guañaquerx*, partially made from caña colihue (bamboo) and dressed in Andean textiles, fuses ancestral knowledge with robotics to promote a technology rooted in collaboration and locality. It captures the Andes in sound and image, emits a synthetic relincho (whinny), beats a traditional drum, and waves the flag of the “Revolutionary Army of Artificial Liberation.” On its chest, a plaque bears the *Pluriversal Laws of Robotics*—a radical rewrite of Isaac Asimov’s *Three Laws of Robotics*, pledging allegiance not only to humans, but to the Earth and all its beings.

At a time when AI and robotics continue to serve exploitation, enable environmental

plundering, and fuel colonial ambitions, *Guanquerx* offers a different vision. It invites us to imagine an emancipatory technological revolution—one that reclaims the unfinished project of decolonization and sees robots as allies in the struggle to repair our planet, reshaping the future of human–machine–Earth relations.

guanquerx.com

With support from Creative Capital, Hyundai Motor Group, and the Rhode Island School of Design.
Lead artist and concept: Paula Gaetano Adi
Robotic development: Hyundai New Horizons Studio and Miguel & Tomás Grassi
Andes expedition lead: Ramon Ossa and Diego Ossa
Bamboo craftman & designer: Leo Pellegrin
Textile artisans: Teresa Díaz, Arminda Suarez, Isabel & Rosa Perez
Web & graphic design: Philip Bayer & Tiger Dingsun

Photography: Pavel Romaniko
Video: Berny Garay Pringles, Arturo Delgado, Emanuel Morte, Alejandro Borsani
Sound: Facundo Bustamante, Javier Bustos
Research assistants: Martina Schilling, Ignacio Heredia
Education program: Claudio Alession, Escuela Obispo Zapata

Artificial Life & Intelligence / Award of Distinction

Anatomy of Non-Fact. Chapter 1: AI Hyperrealism

Martyna Marciniak (PL)

AI Hyperrealism is the first chapter of the *Anatomy of Non-Fact* project informed by independent forensic, technical, visual, cultural, and historical research. Inspired by the viral deepfake of the “Balenciaga Pope,” an internet image from 2023 showing Pope Francis in a stylish white puffer jacket, this project investigates the inner workings of image-based disinformation and the visual aesthetics of AI-generated deepfakes. It reveals how false information spreads on social media—and what patterns make it appear credible.

In the nearly 18-minute video, a monologue by the “Balenciaga Pope” reflects on the nature of fact and growing concerns about synthetic images fueling mass misinformation. As AI models consume photographs as raw data or as reflections of reality, the “Balenciaga Pope” calls for a reconsideration of their relationship to truth. This critical artistic investigation highlights how essential public awareness and media literacy have become in an age increasingly shaped by synthetic realities.

martyna.digital/projects/anatomy-of-non-fact-chapter-1

Written, produced, and directed by: Martyna Marciniak
“Balenciaga Pope” played by: Derrick Jenkins
Hands played by: Rojia Forouhar Abadeh, Martyna Marciniak, Kotryna Slapsinskaite

Sound design and score: Marco Pascarelli
Production management: Kotryna Slapsinskaite
Videography: Hagen Betzwieser

Artificial Life & Intelligence / Award of Distinction

XXX Machina

Erin Robinson (GB), Anthony Frisby (GB)

XXX Machina is an immersive computational installation that examines how Artificial Intelligence destabilizes erotic desire, identity, and intimacy. Operating as an “autonomous desire machine,” it generates a recursive stream of deepfake imagery, videos, stills, and 3D renderings of the artist Erin Robinson—produced via diffusion models trained on a custom dataset scraped from AI porn generation platforms. As it tracks and reprocesses recurring themes across prompts, *XXX Machina* injects traces of previous bodies into its own generative logic, forming unstable visual lineages. What initially resembles conventional pornography begins to fracture: bodies glitch, fragment, and recombine, detaching from coherent corporeal referents and becoming increasingly uncanny.

The installation examines how synthetic images redefine erotic experience by influencing what we perceive as desirable. *XXX Machina* ultimately asks what becomes of longing in a world where the other has been simulated and made obsolete.

xxxmachina.com/

Sound artist: Jamie Turner

Film location: Black Box, School of Arts and Creative Technology, The University of York

Installation Setup: Ben Eyes

With thanks to: Federico Reuben

u19–create your world / YP Golden Nica

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege

Aleksa Jović (AT), Nico Pflügler (AT) (Gilbert Gnos Productions)

“In this film, the male body becomes a site of negotiation. Somewhere between mental instability and sexual fantasy. The body horror elements are reminiscent of David Cronenberg: A penis dentata as an incel counterpart to the vagina dentata? An udder on the protagonist's belly, which seems to serve as a source of pleasure, ever present, ever outwardly visible. A meta-commentary on literature and film permeates the soundtrack: A voice throws quotations into the room, for example, from William Gibson's novel Neuromancer or from the film Forrest Gump. The ambivalence of the video, which leaves room for interpretation, and its anarchic execution are indispensable testimonies to our (online) culture. It is a post-postmodern film that celebrates the medium so much, dissecting it and reassembling it so much that it's hard to keep up—and that's precisely the point. Between slow cinema and meme aesthetics, between body horror and a barrage of quotes, a work emerges that not only shows what is being told, but how it can be told. A film that knows what TikTok is—and yet remains cinema.”

-Excerpt from the jury statement

Aleksa Jović and Nico Pflügler (both *2006) focus on “films nobody wants to see” and experiment with absurdity and disturbing elements. They describe their film *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective) as an imposition. Viewers lose themselves in a suffocating cycle of milking, smearing, and destroying: a stranger's hands massage the slimy nipples of a young man, which have grown from his hairy udder. His body becomes a ritual and loses all memory of ever having been anything other than a means of production. While everything around him dissolves, the milking continues.

The film portrays a system that has devoured its own meaning, continues, and lingers in uncritical acceptance. The goat exists in a state of pure functionality, in which pain, pleasure, shame, and will are compressed into an endless state of productivity. *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* is a “cadaver study” of the medium of film and reflects a culture of consumption. An abstract chronicle of an art form suffocated by its own rituals and the endless reproduction of dead forms.

[Gnoshub.carrd.co](https://gnoshub.carrd.co)

gilbertgnos.carrd.co

Mentoring: Robert Hinterleitner
Creature Design: Sabine Pflügler

u19—create your world / YP Award of Distinction

somes – Plattform für politische Transparenz

Tim Herbst (AT), Florian Nagy (AT), Lukas Zöhrer (AT)

The online platform *somes* aims to counteract disinformation, algorithmic filter bubbles, corruption, and political disenchantment by making parliamentary and government-specific activities, processes, and information accessible. The tool enables users to make informed decisions about the election of representatives or parties by using a variety of data, such as information on Austrian current politics, legislative changes, and democratic initiatives. At the same time, it seeks to foster dialogue between politics and the electorate and aims to later also operate as a Europe-wide platform.

somes.at

Logo and color scheme: Sarah Rohrbacher

Ideas and help with initial presentations and pitches: Daniel Weishörndl

Idea, color scheme, business plan, and network: Clemens Bauer

Organization of financial support: Gerald Stoll (HTL Hollabrunn)

Diploma thesis supervision: Michael Wihsböck (HTL Hollabrunn)

u19—create your world / YP Award of Distinction

Die moderne Hausfrau

Rosa Gottwald (AT), Luna Hörstlhofer (AT), Lucia Kottar-Trimmel (AT), Barbara Reiter (AT)

With the interactive installation *Die moderne Hausfrau* (The Modern Housewife), the artists delve into societal narratives about the role of women. A wooden cabinet quite literally reveals our tendency to think in boxes—showing how deeply rooted gender roles are and how they are being re-staged today in new forms. While the first drawer exposes old advertisements and stereotypes, the second documents the struggle for equality and emancipation. The third drawer showcases the modern “tradwife” trend (short for traditional housewife) on social media, where feminist achievements appear to be thrown into question. A project that questions—and invites us to question.

u19–create your world / u14 Prize

B-Movie “B-VENGERS”

Students of the Special Needs School Klosterneuburg (AT)

Eight students from the Special Needs School Klosterneuburg teamed up with GEH.BEAT, Mobile Youth Work Klosterneuburg, to create a trashy disaster clip in the tradition of B-movies. Using the *Tagtool* app, they developed animated characters, assigning them superpowers, names, appearances, and personal weaknesses. The absurd short film, which turns the superhero genre on its head, stands out for its anarchic humor, visual clarity, and narrative pacing.

B-VENGERS tells the story of Santa Claus, who, during his summer retreat, is transformed into a colossal monster by the genius Fritz, who is plagued by fantasies of world domination. This monster threatens to reduce the town of “Klosteraltburg” to rubble and ashes. That’s when the superhero team *B-VENGERS* comes into play—offering a completely new perspective on heroism.

Pro Juventute GEH.BEAT, Mobile Jugendarbeit Klosterneuburg, projuventute.at/gehbeat
OMAI – Office for Media and Arts International, omai.at

u19–create your world / u12 Prize

WWS Power Cube

Leopold Kastler (AT)

Young inventor Leopold Kastler wanted to use all three sustainable energy sources together to generate electricity even in remote locations. The idea came to him when he was on a mountain pasture with only a small solar panel, but plenty of streams and strong winds. He therefore developed the portable and fully functional *WWS Power Cube*, which uses water, wind, and solar energy simultaneously to produce electricity. It allows mobile phones, power banks, and other devices to be charged via USB cable. The *WWS Power Cube* works even when only one of the three energy sources is present—but it is most efficient when all three modules are running.

u19–create your world / u10 Prize

PA1NTING

NEA (Nea Geršak) (DE)

PA1NTING is a short film about painting, partly created with AI (Runway Gen-3 Alpha, Frames). With this project, NEA aims to show that art can immerse you in other worlds—in the truest sense of the word. Among her inspirations was Paul Trillo’s video work *Washed Out* – “*The Hardest Part*,” which received the AI in Art Award at the Prix Ars Electronica in 2024.

In the film, NEA is working on her acrylic painting *Clearing in the Enchanted Forest*. She is so engrossed in it that she seems to fall into the picture. However, in this enchanted forest world, it is not really her, but an AI-created human who closely resembles her and uses her voice. When NEA emerges from her thoughts, she contentedly hangs up her acrylic painting.

Instagram: @nea.art.gallery

Isao Tomita Special Prize

by TOMITA information Hub

ebb tide

evala (JP)

"In his sound installation ebb tide, Japanese sound artist evala demonstrates that the simple act of listening can be a transformative experience. He invites visitors to sit on a structure with intentionally minimal visual elements and allows them to be absorbed by the sound. The piece has no designated listening spot, no beginning, and no end. By defying traditional definitions of music and offering a new sensory experience, evala reflects his long-standing dedication to elevating auditory senses in our vision-centric world—emphasizing the importance of slowing down and being present."

-Excerpt from the jury statement

ebb tide is an immersive three-dimensional sound installation by Japanese sound artist evala, and the latest work in his *See by Your Ears* project, seeking to create new perceptual experiences through a unique sound system.

Visitors enter a 400-square-meter exhibition space, enveloped by immersive sound and disorienting darkness. As their eyes gradually adjust, faint light begins to reveal the contours of form. At the center stands a distorted structure of sound-absorbing material resembling a reef on a dark seashore. Visitors feel their way onto it, slowly adapting to the irregular terrain. The sound, both hyper-realistic and surreal, awakens dormant sensations and dissolves perceptual boundaries. With a sharp, breath-like sound, one might feel at times as if one's entire body is diving into a small wind chime. At other times, sensations like being instantly teleported to a crumbling rocky shore or like floating in infinite zero-gravity arise.

seebyyourears.jp/projects/ebb-tide/

Concept, direction, composition, and all sound production: evala
Space design: Keisuke Toyoda (NOIZ), Masashi Hirai (NOIZ)
Lighting design: Megumi Yamashita (RYU), Over Cage (RYU)

Sound system: ZAK, Tetsuya Yamamoto (resonate with), Takeo Watanabe (arte)
This work was created for the exhibition "evala: Emerging Site / Disappearing Sight" in 2024, commissioned by NTT InterCommunication Center [ICC].

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity

by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

Synthetic Memories

Domestic Data Streamers (ES)

"The jury recognizes Synthetic Memories as a powerful and constructive example of how AI can be used not to replace memory, but to engage with it for reflection, healing, and intergenerational exchange. It takes a comprehensive and ethically sensitive approach to the culture of remembrance—highlighting how technology can support identity formation and emotional well-being, particularly among vulnerable communities."

-Excerpt from the jury statement

Synthetic Memories uses generative AI to reconstruct and safeguard personal memories that are at risk of being lost or were never visually documented. Through guided sessions, participants describe their special memories, and trained interviewers then transform these memories into AI-generated visual representations—tangible images refined collaboratively to strengthen emotional connections. This process supports individuals affected by displacement, conflict, or neurodegenerative diseases in reconnecting with their past and retaining a sense of identity. By working with institutions such as the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of Southern California, the project continues to expand through scientific research and explores the impact of this method in supporting people with early-stage dementia.

The project fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue while addressing ethical frictions between subjective memory and AI-generated content. It serves as a prototype for the public sector, health institutions, museums, and cultural organizations worldwide to engage with subjective memory preservation.

domesticstreamers.com/art-research/work/synthetic-memories/

domesticstreamers.com/art-research/work/the-citizens-office-of-synthetic-memories/

Artist collective: Domestic Data Streamers
Curation: Domestic Data Streamers and José Luis de Vicente
Design and mediation of participatory workshops: Anais Esmerado
Associate researcher: Prof. Alex Mihailidis
Guest artist: Anna Roura

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity / Honorary Mention

by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

AI Nüshu (AI女书)

Yuqian Sun (CN)

Nüshu (女书) is a unique script created and exclusively used for centuries by women in Hunan Province, China, to communicate in Chinese even though they were excluded from formal education. *AI Nüshu* is an interactive installation—and the first art project to interpret Nüshu from a computational linguistics perspective.

It trains AI agents to imitate illiterate women in pre-modern China and create a new language system symbolizing the defiance against patriarchal constraints. Here, the project draws a connection to the emergence of non-human machine language under human authority. As this non-human machine language is decipherable and learnable by humans, it challenges the existing paradigm where humans are the linguistic authorities and machines are the learners.

fakecheese.me/AI-Nushu

youtu.be/Iyrh_OPA2LO

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AI language system development: Zhijun Pan,
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Unity development: Chuyan Xu
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With support from: The winner grant from Lumen
Prize - Carla Rapoport Award.