

PANIC

yes/no

Festival for Art, Technology & Society
September 3 to 7 / Linz, Austria

Press conference on August 25, 2025, with

Christl Baur, Head of Ars Electronica Festival

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PANIC – yes/no is the title of this year’s Ars Electronica, which addresses the omnipresent uncertainty in the shadow of numerous crises and shows how art can contribute to overcoming them. With numerous exhibitions, concerts, performances, conferences, town hall meetings, and workshops, the festival offers a multifaceted, wide-ranging program. The central venue of the Festival for Art, Technology & Society will be the POSTCITY for the final time.

Crises Everywhere

Ronald Reagan once said that “status quo” is Latin for “the mess we’re in.” In 2025, this interpretation seems more fitting than ever. With Trump’s return, the political world order has faltered, and the consensus on economic cooperation and security architecture has crumbled. Rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence are increasingly raising fundamental questions about the world of work and the education system, not to mention our self-image. The climate crisis is claiming more and more lives, destroying livelihoods, fueling conflicts and migration. Crises everywhere—or so it seems.

Uncertainty as a Constant

What lies ahead is uncertain—and that uncertainty breeds fear, even panic. For good reason: unpredictable developments have repeatedly posed major dangers to us. In such moments, we tend to fall back on what has worked in the past—and fail. Old solutions rarely help with new problems.

Uncertainty as an Opportunity

But how can we overcome our fear of uncertainty? How can we learn to better navigate the

unknown—even grow from it? Ars Electronica 2025 advocates learning from art, which shows us that uncertainty is not necessarily a threat—but above all, a source of hope. Because it means our future is still unwritten and anything remains possible. Even when there might be plenty of reasons to panic.

Highlights at a Glance

The Ars Electronica 2025 program includes numerous exhibitions, performances, and events. Major exhibitions include the Theme Exhibition (POSTCITY), as well as presentations by the winners of this year's Prix Ars Electronica (Lentos Kunstmuseum, St. Mary's Cathedral) and STARTS Prize (POSTCITY).

Program highlights include the Pre-Opening Walk (Tuesday, September 2, 3:30 p.m., starting at the Upper Austrian Art Association), the Festival Opening (Wednesday, September 3, 7:30 p.m., St. Mary's Cathedral), the Prix Ars Electronica Award Ceremony (Thursday, September 4, 7:30 p.m., Design Center Linz), the Big Concert Night (Friday, September 5, 7:00 p.m., POSTCITY), and Futurelab Night (Saturday, September 6, 8:00–9:30 p.m. and 10:00–11:30 p.m. Ars Electronica Center / Deep Space 8K).

The symposium on the festival theme—with an impressive roster of participants—will explore strategies for dealing with panic, whether triggered by war, climate crisis, or rapid technological developments. The focus will be on digital sovereignty, AI, medical and quantum technologies, as well as the role of art in times of change. A special emphasis on education will examine strengthening democracy through civic engagement, innovative teaching methods, and media literacy. As part of the EU project ACuTe, the festival will showcase and discuss how new technologies are transforming theater and performance art—from storytelling and stage design to audience participation.

For local families, create your world will no doubt be the top attraction: numerous open labs invite experimentation and hands-on exploration—with free admission.

POSTCITY and Festival Mile in the City Center

In total, 19 venues in downtown Linz will be activated by Ars Electronica. The spectacular POSTCITY—covering 80,000 square meters—will serve, for the final time, as a stage for ideas, visions, and projects at the intersection of art, technology & society. Other locations include St. Mary's Cathedral, Design Center Linz, OK Linz, Movimiento, Atelierhaus Salzamt, Francisco Carolinum Linz, University of Arts Linz, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Anton Bruckner University, Ars Electronica Center, Stadtwerkstatt, Brucknerhaus, and Donaupark. Four associated venues will also participate: FIFTITU%, the IT:U Pop-Up Store at main square, Kunstraum Memphis, and Turm 20.

Supporters from the Region and Around the World

Once again, the festival is made possible through the support of numerous funding bodies, event partners, sponsors, and cooperation partners from around the globe. The organizers are Ars Electronica and the City of Linz. Historically closely connected, the Ars Electronica Festival is presented in cooperation with ORF Upper Austria.

Event partners include the Anton Bruckner University, International Bruckner Festival 2025, Brucknerhaus Linz, Bruckner Orchestra Linz, Design Center Linz, IT:U Interdisciplinary Transformation University Austria, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Linz Institute of Technology, University of Arts Linz, Landestheater Linz, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, St. Mary's Cathedral Linz, Upper Austrian State Culture GmbH, and the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria.

Key funding bodies include the European Union through Horizon Europe and Creative Europe, the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, the Province of Upper Austria, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Education, and numerous international funding organizations such as Pro Helvetia, Creative Australia, Institut Ramon Llull, Arts Council Korea, and the Chilean Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs.

The festival's mobility partner is Porsche Inter Auto.

Major partners of Ars Electronica 2025 include Hakuhodo, Österreichische Post AG, the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce, Japan Tobacco Inc., the VH Award, Dynatrace, MIC, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Civic Creative Base Tokyo, C-Lab, RISC Software GmbH, Linz Tourism, Johann Strauss 2025 Vienna, Ton & Bild, as well as the Japan CTO Forum.

In addition, Ars Electronica works with Klimabündnis Upper Austria, Linz AG, Culligan Austria, Greiner AG, RINGER, Climate Austria, Green Front, Brotsüchtig, and Bioobst Upper Austria to realize the festival as a certified Green Event and to achieve its self-imposed sustainability goals.

I Events, Concerts, and Performances

Pre-Opening Walk 2025

September 2, 2025 | 3:30 p.m.–Midnight | Upper Austrian Art Association, Francisco Carolinum, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, University of Arts Linz, Atelierhaus Salzamt, Ars Electronica Center, Stadtwerkstatt

The Pre-Opening Walk kicks off the festival week. At the Upper Austrian Art Association (3:30 p.m.), Francisco Carolinum (4:00 p.m.), Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz (5:30 p.m.), University of Arts Linz (7:00 p.m.), Atelierhaus Salzamt (8:15 p.m.), Ars Electronica Center (9:00 p.m.), and Stadtwerkstatt (11:00 p.m.), curators and artists offer exclusive insights into their exhibitions and programs.

In the Ars Electronica Center's Deep Space 8K, pianist Maki Namekawa (AT/JP) and visual artist Cori O'Lan (AT) present *Pianographique*—a suite of seven pieces from *Mishima* by Philip Glass (US). Admission to all venues is free.

Ars Electronica Opening 2025

September 3, 2025 | 7:30–11:30 p.m. | Cathedral Square and St. Mary's Cathedral

Once again, Linz's St. Mary's Cathedral becomes the stage for the official opening of Ars Electronica. The evening begins with Viennese musician Luca Malina (AT), followed by *Visible: "An die Freude"*, European Anthem in Sign Language, hosted by Norbert Trawöger (AT), performed by soprano Erika Colon (JP/VE), featuring the Sign Language Choir of the Parish Community Urfahr-St. Josef (AT), accompanied by Company of Music (AT) under the direction of Johannes Hiemetsberger (AT). Singing and signing along are explicitly encouraged.

The program continues in the St. Mary's Cathedral, where, under the direction of Christoph Sietzen (AT), Nico Gerstmayer (AT), Lorenzo Manquillet (FR), and Jaroslav Letiagin (NO) of MOTUS Percussion preview this year's Klangwolke (Saturday, September 6, 2025).

Next comes a reimagining of Johann Strauss II's musical legacy, created by students from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw), Mozarteum University Salzburg, Zurich University of the Arts, and University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, who composed their works using an AI system developed by the Ars Electronica Futurelab. Excerpts will be performed by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz under Ingmar Beck (DE) in the St. Mary's Cathedral. *Walzersymphonie* is a project of the Ars Electronica Futurelab in cooperation with the participating music academies, commissioned by Johann Strauss 2025 Vienna.

The Ars Electronica 2025 Opening is a guest event within this year's Bruckner Festival. Admission is free.

Prix Ars Electronica Award Ceremony

September 4, 2025 | 7:30–10:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:45 p.m.) | Design Center Linz

The Prix Ars Electronica Award Ceremony takes place for the second time at the Design Center Linz. Stars of the evening include Frode Oldereid and Thomas Kvam (NO), Navid Navab (IR/CA) and Garnet Willis (CA), Paula Gaetano Adi (AR), and Aleksa Jović and Nico Pflügler (AT)—each receiving a Golden Nica for 2025.

Also honored are Sarah Ciston (US) and representatives of the LAS Art Foundation (DE), winners of this year's STARTS Prize; and representatives of Kairos Futura (KE), winners of the STARTS Prize Africa.

Joining them on stage will be representatives of the initiatives *HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation* (RS), the *Antiquake Risk Hunter Community* (TR), and *MoFWaste-The Museum of Food Waste* (PT), recipients of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science.

Additional awards go to evala (JP), winner of the Isao Tomita Special Prize; Domestic Data Streamers (ES), winners of the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity; and David Shongo (KE), winner of the State of the ART(ist) Main Prize.

Big Concert Night

September 5, 2025 | 7:00–9:30 p.m. | POSTCITY, Train Hall

Eighty years after the end of World War II, the Big Concert Night tells stories of despair, resistance, hope, and renewal.

The prologue features three artistic works: *Lost Music of Auschwitz*—music manuscripts re-discovered by British composer Leo Geyer in Auschwitz archives; *each name matters*, a visualization by Cori O’Lan (AT) commemorating the victims of the Mauthausen-Gusen camp system; and *Gusen Convolute*, artistic reflections by Peter Androsch (AT) and other musicians on songs written by Polish musicians and composers during imprisonment in Gusen concentration camp.

The program then presents the libretto by Peter Kien and the chamber opera *The Emperor of Atlantis or The Disobedience of Death* by Viktor Ullmann, both created in 1943/44 in the Theresienstadt internment camp. The opera depicts an absolutist emperor who declares a war of all against all and tries to bend Death to his will. When Death refuses and no one dies, the emperor loses his power—people lay down arms, fall in love, revolt. Finally, Death offers to resume work, but only if the emperor is the first to die.

This new production, part of Ars Electronica 2025, is a collaboration between Ars Electronica, Dennis Russell Davies, the Filharmonie Brno, Landestheater Linz, and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw).

Ars Electronica Nightline

September 5, 2025 | 10:30 p.m.–4:00 a.m. | POSTCITY, Train Hall

Camilla Sparksss (CH/CA) with an intense, multisensory live show, Maria Arnal (ES) with her radical performance *AMA*, the powerful duo FlexFab & Manu Kann (CH), musician Lua Jungck (CH), sound artist Paula OS (CL), and Bowmore (CH) with an energetic DJ set—on the night of September 5 to 6, the Train Hall at POSTCITY transforms into a vibrant cosmos of electronic sound, physical expression, and emotional intensity. At the center is Switzerland’s flourishing electronic scene, joined by international guests. This year’s Ars Electronica Nightline is supported by Pro Helvetia and Institut Ramon Llull.

Sonic Saturday: Audible Denial, Sonic Unheard

September 5 to 6, 2025 | Anton Bruckner University

Since 2016, Sonic Saturday at the Anton Bruckner University has been a permanent fixture of Ars Electronica. In 2025, the format expands into a two-day expert gathering dedicated to spatial sound concerts, live performances, and sound installations. Artists and researchers from electroacoustic music, sound art, and spatial audio come together to listen and experiment.

In line with the festival theme PANIC – yes/no, the program *Audible Denial, Sonic Unheard*, curated by Volkmar Klien and Enrique Mendoza, examines how sound functions in times of crisis: as a carrier of panic, a tool for reassurance, and a means of suppression. It invites audiences to perceive what has not yet been heard—not to explain panic, but to remain close to its pulse.

Futurelab Night

September 6, 2025 | 8:00–9:30 p.m.; 10:00–11:30 p.m. | Ars Electronica Center, Deep Space 8K

Futurelab Night at Deep Space 8K presents artistic research as immersive experiences and captivating performances. The working processes of the Ars Electronica Futurelab take center stage—not to provide answers, but to pose the right questions. The result is a multisensory dialogue, staged as a “Future Report,” that introduces the lab’s current works and projects.

The EU project *SHARESPACE* connects people and avatars in unique virtual experiences—from multiplayer games to climate change installations. The experimental work *Oribotics [n-dimensional]* fuses origami, robotics, and data with visuals and sounds. Also featured are new developments from the Data Art & Science research area, such as *DAS Data Dining*, which explores ways to make complex relationships sensorially tangible. A speculative “human-raven translator”—the generative AI *Corpus Corax*—reports on its encounters with the human species during the festival. In addition, there’s *Walzersymphonie* (partially presented by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz at the Festival Opening): at Futurelab Night, the project transforms into a showcase of human creativity, AI, and a self-playing piano.

II Exhibitions

Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition

September 3 to 7, 2025 | Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz

The Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition is being held for the second consecutive year at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, showcasing outstanding media art projects. A total of eleven works is on view, including the robotic installation *Requiem for an Exit* by Thomas Kvam and Frode Oldereid (NO), winner of the Golden Nica in New Animation Art, and the political robotics project *Guanaxerx* by Paula Gaetano Adi (AR), awarded the Golden Nica in Artificial Life & Intelligence. Also not to be missed is *Organism* by Navid Navab (IR/CA) and Garnet Willis (CA), winners of the Golden Nica in Digital Musics & Sound Art—presented at the St. Mary's Cathedral. During the festival, Navid Navab will offer three performances there.

PANIC: Complex. Absurd. Ominous.

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, Bunker

This major exhibition on the Ars Electronica theme traces the roots of collective panic and envisions alternative scenarios. It examines phenomena such as political and technological spectacles, war, social inequality, human rights violations, constraints on diversity, climate change, artificially created needs, and increasing control. Positioned between panic as certainty and as premonition of crisis, the show also asks whether panic can have a positive dimension — a force that makes us aware of our own vulnerability and drives us to evolve.

Featured works include *Dynamics of a Dog on a Leash* by Takayuki Todo (JP), presenting a robotic dog that strains at a chain, writhes, and ultimately collapses—apparently overheated—first triggering fear and then sympathy, despite our knowing the machine feels neither anger nor pain. Another highlight is the surreal, satirical installation *Sweet Dreams* by Marshmallow Laser Feast (GB), revealing how advertising influences our daily actions while concealing the realities of (food) production. The film *World at Stake* by Total Refusal (AT) probes the fragile

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boundary between individual action and collective passivity, becoming a metaphor for a world in limbo, where action is essential for survival.

The exhibition is facilitated by the European Union as part of the European Digital Deal project.

Platform Europe: STARTS Prize Exhibition

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

This year's STARTS Prize Exhibition regards uncertainty not as a problem to be solved, but as a condition, we must learn to understand. From this perspective, uncertainty is not merely a lack of information but a fundamental characteristic of systems—from climate change to algorithmic governance to quantum technologies.

The exhibition demonstrates how artistic research can inspire new impulses for Europe's digital sovereignty, challenges digital power structures, and opens new perspectives. On view are the winning projects of the STARTS Prize and STARTS Prize Africa 2025, including *Sensing Quantum* by LAS Art Foundation (DE), an artistic engagement with quantum technologies; *AI War Cloud Database* by Sarah Ciston (US), which exposes the tight links between civilian and military uses of AI systems; and *The Wild Future Lab* by Kairos Futura (KE), which envisions Nairobi in 2045, where ecological systems and urban life have been transformed through regeneration and biomimetic design.

The exhibition is facilitated by the European Union as part of the STARTS Ec(h)o and STARTS Afropean Intelligence projects.

Ars Electronica Features

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

Under the Ars Electronica Features label, sixteen partner institutions from around the globe present their artistic perspectives and research-based projects on the festival theme. Rather than seeing panic as chaos to be avoided, these contributions treat it as a cultural and political constellation that demands attention, analysis, and creative responses. They reveal that artistic practices address exceptional situations not through simplification or suppression, but by opening new ways of thinking and acting. The works include installations, performances, and speculative formats in which crisis turns into critique and overwhelm into imagination.

Topics range from ecological concerns—such as edible bioplastics or sustainable water systems—to reflections on digital infrastructures and immersive sound and VR experiences. The C-LAB Sound Lab from Taiwan presents Polyphony, a program of immersive installations, concerts, and VR pieces, while V2_, Lab for the Unstable Media (NL) explores both material and performative approaches to the moment of collapse. Other participants include the New Art Foundation (ES), National Arts Council Singapore (SG), GLUON (BE), the Yasuaki Kakehi Lab at the University of Tokyo (JP), the Ecocentric Future Lab at the University of Texas at Austin (US), and IMPAKT (NL).

Campus Exhibition

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, University of Arts Linz, splace

How do we prepare for a future that is increasingly unpredictable? The Campus Exhibition features projects from 37 universities worldwide, including Stanford University, Osaka University, Parsons School of Design, Korea National University of Arts, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology – Guangzhou, New York University Abu Dhabi, ShanghaiTech University, School of Visual Arts New York, Zurich University of the Arts, National Tsing Hua University, Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Technical University of Moldova, Technical University of Berlin, and China Academy of Art Hangzhou. In addition, fourteen departments of the University of Arts Linz present works by their students.

Spanning POSTCITY, the University of Arts Linz, and the splace gallery, the Campus program explores the role of creativity in times of uncertainty and change. All projects experiment with immersive environments, speculative design, and performative research.

This year, the University of Arts Linz commits itself to the motto *Alles.Immer.Offen*. [Everything. Always. Open.]—placing a series of glass sliding doors on the Hauptplatz to spark dialogues with passersby through unexpected sounds. As Special Featured University, the National Academy of Art in Sofia presents at the splace gallery. In the Brückenkopf buildings, visitors can also discover projects such as *Smile, you're on camera* (Lucia Claus and Hani Elias, GB), which investigates the boundaries of private and public space, or *Tutta Notte Buia* by Alessia Fallica and Martina Pizzigoni (IT), contrasting digital and analog practices.

The Campus Award will be presented for the second time to the most outstanding student project and its enabling institution.

LIT—Linz Institute of Technology Exhibition

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

Featuring seven Art & Science projects primarily funded by the Linz Institute of Technology (LIT) at Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU), along with installations developed in cooperation with the Zirkus des Wissens (Circus of Knowledge) and the University of Arts Linz, researchers and artists present unique (interactive) works designed to encourage reflection, participation, and discussion. Topics range from “sleep justice,” scientific skepticism, and empowering people in relation to AI systems to digital identities. These works embody the interdisciplinarity that JKU lives daily in research and teaching. Especially in times of upheaval, universities play a key role as places for dialogue, offering orientation and perspective. The JKU Universe in POSTCITY invites all visitors to join the conversation and help shape the future.

Patterns and Politics

August 28, 2025, to January 2026 | Francisco Carolinum Linz

Patterns and Politics is the first retrospective of U.S. media artist Claudia Hart. Since the mid-1990s, she has constructed complex scenarios in virtual 3D spaces, merging mathematics, science, and consumer culture, while raising questions about perception, body, identity, attention, and power. Hart repeatedly turns her gaze to what is repressed—honoring forgotten women artists in her Ghost Paintings or digitally deconstructing classical still lifes to expose the fragile hierarchies of the art canon.

IT:U Exhibition

September 3 to 7, 2025 | IT:U Pop-Up Store and POSTCITY

At POSTCITY, IT:U explores how digital technology is changing our understanding of care, our communication pathways, and our democracy. The installation *Caring Robots* by Christopher Frauenberger (AT), Ralf Vetter (AT), and Matthias Hirschmanner (AT) invites visitors to try out an AI-supported conversation system for people with dementia and to discuss the responsibilities and limits of “caring AI.” *Mapping Conspiracies* by Bernd Resch (AT), on the other hand, visualizes how fake news, hate speech, conspiracy theories, and incitements to violence spread via social media—and how they endanger democracy. New this year is the IT:U Pop-Up Store located directly on Linz’s main square.



III Conferences & Talks

Echt jetzt! Wirklichkeiten unserer Gegenwart

Symposium for Political Education

September 3, 2025 | POSTCITY, Education Stage

Our reality has long been multidimensional: in addition to the physical world, digital spaces and virtual communities increasingly shape our lives. Whether it is self-presentation on social media or an avatar in a virtual world—new forms of interaction are emerging, while more and more isolated realities develop. This raises questions for democratic politics: is our social cohesion eroding? How can educational institutions as spaces of encounter build bridges between these different realities? The Symposium for Political Education addresses these questions through lectures, discussions, and exchange formats.

Critical ChangeLab Symposia

Panic as Pedagogy: Learning for Critical Change

September 4 to 5, 2025 | POSTCITY, Education Stage

From climate collapse to algorithmic surveillance to ruptures in established understandings of democracy—young people are confronted with multiple crises at once. Now more than ever, education must prove that it can spark change, agency, critical reflection, and collective action. The two-day symposium's sessions focus on creative practices that strengthen youth participation and aim for systemic transformation. On Thursday, September 4, the theme is Educating an A(ctivist) Intelligence; on Friday, September 5, the focus shifts to Learning to Disrupt: Non-Formal Education for Critical Change.

Keynote speakers: Simona Levi (IT/ES) and Aisling Murray (IE). Panelists include Amil Khan (GB), Ana Maria Salinas Bojaca (CO/DE), Christoph Helm (AT), Mairéad Hurley (IE), Caitlin White (IE), Guadalupe Patricia Del Razo Martinez (ES), Dobrivoje Lale Eric (RS), Federico Bomba (IT), Pedro Russo (PT/NL), Victoria Vesna (US), Andrew Newman (AU/AT), Eva Vesseur (NL), Louise Archer (GB), Josh Harle (AU), Nicoletta Tranquillo (IT), Derrick de Kerckhove (BE/CA/IT), and Sonja Bailer (AT).

The conference is funded by the European Union under the Critical ChangeLab project.

New Pathways: AI, Art, and Collaboration in Citizen Science

September 4 and 6, 2025 | POSTCITY, Education Stage

This two-day conference is dedicated to the socio-political potential of citizen science, education, innovation, and creativity—while also examining the challenges we currently face. Special focus is placed on the education system itself: how can students be actively involved in research projects, how can AI enhance their participation, and how can collaboration with artists open new pathways for community engagement?

Keynote speakers: Katja Mayer (AT), Marisa Ponti (IT/SE), Peggy Sylopp (DE), and Katrin Vohland (DE/AT). Additional speakers: Anna Berti Suman (IT), Christopher Styles (GB), Cristina Nava (PT), Elisabeth Schauermaier (AT), Gefion Thuermer (GB), Aleksandra Berditchevskaia (GB), Dilek Fraisl (AT), Sofie Burgos-Thorsen (DK), Agostina Bianchi (ES), Antonella Passani (IT), Jennifer Kanary (NL), Josep Perelló (ES), Willie Ng'ang'a (KE), Alexandra Albert (GB), Ivana Radović (RS), and Sarah Williams (US).

The conference is funded by the European Union under the IMPETUS project.

Ars Electronica Theme Symposium (I-III)

September 3 to 5, 2025 | POSTCITY, Conference Hall

For three full festival days, experts from art, industry, and science discuss various aspects and strategies for addressing panic in times of transformation. Topics range from current threats such as war and climate crisis to digital sovereignty and advances in medicine and quantum technologies.

Ars Electronica Theme Symposium (I):

Panic in a Global Context: Neuroscience, Culture, and Crisis

September 3, 2025 | POSTCITY, Conference Hall

Part one examines the complexity of the concept of panic—from neurobiological foundations to social and cultural dimensions. Strategies for dealing with panic are presented and discussed, viewing it not only as an individual feeling or medically traceable reaction but as a social phenomenon reflecting global structures.

Neuroscientist Philip Tovote (DE), social neuroscientist Tania Singer (DE), and cognitive scientist and neuroethics expert Marcello Ienca (IT/DE) will give insight into their research. Additional speakers: Natascha Strobl (AT), Emran Feroz (DE), Stephanie Fenkart (AT), Georgina Voss (UK), Thomas Moynihan (UK), Isabella Hermann (DE), Julian Reid (GB/FI), Nathan Coyle (GB/AT), and Fernanda Parente (BR/DE).

The conference is funded by the European Union under the *European Digital Deal* project.

Ars Electronica Theme Symposium (II):

Archipelago of Possible Futures—Breaking Control, Building Democratic Imagination

September 4, 2025 | POSTCITY, Conference Hall

This session focuses on the opportunities panic can offer—understanding it not as an end, but as a starting point for reinvention. Reflection takes place in three steps—Reckoning, Rebuilding, and Reimagining—with discussion of the rise of authoritarian infrastructures, democratic alternatives for Europe, and visions for inclusive technologies.

Speakers and panelists: Sarah Ciston (US), Kambale Musavuli (CD/GH), Klaus Dieter Uhrig (DE), Simone Ruf (DE), Julia Kloiber (DE), Trevor Paglen (US), Marina Otero Verzier (ES), Domestic Data Streamers (ES), Leo Mühlfeld (AT), Paul Keller (NL), dmstfctn (GB), Bettina Kames (DE), Fernando Cucchiatti (AR/ES), Armin Linke (IT), Giulia Bini (IT/CH), Emergence Delft (NL), Robert Meisner (DE), and Oscar Diez (ES/LU). Curated by Francesca Bria (IT/DE) and José Luis de Vicente (ES).

The conference is funded by the European Union under the *STARTS Ec(h)o* and *E-DIH AI5Production* projects.

Ars Electronica Theme Symposium (III): Art and Culture in Times of Uncertainty: From Artistic Practice to Social Action

September 5, 2025 | POSTCITY, Conference Hall

On Friday, the spotlight is on the role of art and culture in times of crisis. Marking the 30th anniversary of Austria's accession to the EU, the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport and Ars Electronica invite discussion on how culture can spur political processes—whether through critical commentary or direct cooperation among civil society, the engaged public, and policymakers. The afternoon focuses on the impact of artistic research in medical contexts: together with EIT Health, EIT Culture & Creativity, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft, physicians, policymakers, researchers, and artists explore interdisciplinary approaches in research, medical technology, and occupational health.

Inputs come, among others, from the artist Paula Gaetano Adi (AR) and Victoria Ivanova (GB), R&D Strategic Lead of the Serpentine Arts Technologies team in London. Keynotes will be given by Irit Rogoff (GB) and Jill Sonke (US). Additional panelists and speakers: Natalie Giorgadze (BE), Marina Otero Verzier (ES), Caterina Benincasa (IT), Marita Muuk-konen (FI), Ivor Stodolsky (FR/US), Simon Weckert (DE), Nancy Bates (AU), Sergio Fonta-nella (CU/US), An-nemie Bertha Marcella Wyckmans (BE/NO), Georg Russegger (AT), Špela Petrič (SI), Mary Maggic (US), Patricia Stark (AT), Andreas Kaindlstorfer (AT), Thomas Tschoellitsch (AT), Rania Islambouli (AT), Aniko Fejes (AT), Miriam Kathrein (AT), Matthias Konrad (DE), Andreas Leithner (AT), and Kyoko Kunoh (JP).

The conference is funded by the European Union under the *European Digital Deal* project and by the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

EXPANDED 2025 – Conference on Animation & Interactive Art **September 3 to 5, 2025 | Ars Electronica Center, Sky Loft**

Since 2013, the Expanded Conference has been a fixture of Ars Electronica and an established platform for artists, curators, and scholars working at the intersection of media art, animation, and immersive and interactive formats. In 2025, the event will be held for the first time in cooperation with ACM SIGGRAPH—all contributions will therefore also be published in the renowned ACM Digital Library.

More than 40 presentations by over 50 international speakers from Europe, Asia, the USA,

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and Australia will be featured. The academic program is complemented by curated panels with international guests from the arts, research, and industry, including Total Refusal (AT), Alessandro Bavari (IT), Tamiko Thiel (US/DE), and others. In addition, jurors from the Prix Ars Electronica's *New Animation Art* category as well as partner institutions such as ISEA will provide insight into their ongoing projects and upcoming collaborations.

STAGED REALITIES

September 6, 2025 | POSTCITY, Conference Hall

Technological developments have always influenced the performing arts—and, in turn, inspired playwrights. Under the title *STAGED REALITIES*, artists, technologists, and researchers will jointly examine how AI is reshaping theater, what consequences it brings for authorship, stage presence, and credibility, and what relevance live performance still—or once again—holds today.

Speakers include Tawny Schlieski (US), AC Coppens (FR), Heather Knight (US), Brigitta Muntendorf (DE), Anders Hasmo (NO), Marcus Lobbess (DE), Stefan Kaegi (CH), Matthieu Lorrain (US/FR), Carla Meller (DE), Nils Corte (DE), Michael Rau (US), Ali Nikrang (AT), Silke Grabinger (AT), Victorine van Alphen (NL), Pablo Palacio (ES), Magda Romanska (US), Nora Krahel (DE), Hermann Schneider (DE/AT), Paulien Geerlings (NL), and Sarah Ellis (GB).

This conference is funded by the European Union under the ACuTe project.

IV Specials

Theater & Digital Media

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, Ars Electronica Center, Hauptplatz, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz

Digital forms of expression play an increasingly important role in international theater productions—a trend addressed by the EU project *ACuTe*, launched three years ago. Together with European partners, Ars Electronica has tested innovative forms of performance, interactivity, and technology, and has also established long-term collaborations with theaters and festivals to explore new performative languages for the digital age. This year's festival will feature several innovative productions, including *White Hunger* (Oulu Theatre, FI), *The Oracle: Ritual for the Future* (Victorine van Alphen, Brave New Human, IDlab, NL), and *Ekklesia* (Staatstheater Augsburg, Benjamin Seuffert, Lukas Joshua Baueregger, DE).

Flood the Zone with Courage

September 3 to 7, 2025 | Ars Electronica Center, Domplatz, Alter Markt

Flood the Zone with Courage is a participatory art project by Ars Electronica and the Zirkus des Wissens of Johannes Kepler University Linz, responding to the paralyzing effect of global crises. Together with artists, activists, and students, new forms of protest and civic engagement are being explored. During the festival, the project unfolds across multiple public spaces in Linz and in POSTCITY—with live interventions, a creative hub called the Pavilion Against Indifference, as well as international protest labs and workshops that connect digital tools with local activism.

Ars Electronica Animation Festival 2025

September 3 to 7, 2025 | Ars Electronica Center, Cathedral Square

The Animation Festival program draws from entries to the Prix Ars Electronica 2025, whose competition category now focuses on the broad field of New Animation Art rather than just traditional computer animation. This year alone, 1,119 entries were submitted, 25 of which will be shown during the festival—supplemented by a Best-Of Prix Ars Electronica, the thematic program Panic, an Austrian Panorama, and the Young Animations series, showcasing filmmakers under the age of 19.

Guest programs will also be presented by the PROYECTOR Festival, the Animationsinstitut of the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, and the Hagenberg Campus of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria. Featured artists include Alessandro Bavari (IT), Alona Rodeh (IL/RO), Wendi Yan (CN/US), and Total Refusal (AT).

Program in Deep Space 8K

September 3 to 7, 2025 | Ars Electronica Center

As part of the festival, the Deep Space 8K at the Ars Electronica Center once again becomes an immersive stage for artists and scientists from around the world. Developed by the Ars Electronica Futurelab, operated by the Ars Electronica Center, and marketed by Ars Electronica Solutions, Deep Space 8K exemplifies the workings of the Ars Electronica ecosystem.

David Szauder (HU) presents *Glitches & Glory*—a fast-paced retrospective tracing the development of machine-generated images from their clumsy beginnings to today's impressively fluid visual language. Other highlights include the visualized piano concert *CHROMA* by Konstantin Semilakovs (DE/LV) and Daniel Oliver Moser (AT), as well as the premiere of *Cultural Astronomy*, an Ars Electronica program supported by Dan Tell (US) and researcher Rita Gautschy (AT/CH) that promises a virtual journey to the world's most famous cultural sites and fascinating celestial imagery.

A special focus on Korean cultural heritage comes in the *K-Heritage* presentation by the Korean Heritage Service, which, among other highlights, brings Seoul's Gyeongbokgung Palace directly into Deep Space 8K. The National Gallery of Art in Washington and the National Gallery in London also provide insights into their collections. Those wishing to experience a whole series of performances in one evening should follow the invitation of *Deep Stage*.

Ars Electronica Ecosystem

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

Forty-six years after its founding as a festival, Ars Electronica has evolved into a unique ecosystem: a platform for artists, a forum for activists and initiatives, a learning space for all ages, a laboratory for social innovation, and a creative partner for companies. At the heart of all these activities lies one central question: how do we want to live in the future—and how can we help shape it?

At this year's festival, Ars Electronica will present itself, inviting visitors to explore its areas and activities and to discuss its goals and impact. The teams from the Ars Electronica Futurelab and Ars Electronica Solutions will present current projects, offer insights into their work, and invite exchange.

The **Ars Electronica Futurelab** will showcase a series of prototypes and current research projects. *NeXus Print* demonstrates an XR platform for collaborative, immersive storytelling; Future Humanity Research is a cooperation with Toyota exploring future relationships between humans, AI, technology, and other life forms. *Alter.Ego* invites playful exploration of the impact of AI personalities, while Life Ink Community uses biosensors to make creative processes in the body and brain visible. *Corpus Corax* speculates on communication between humans and ravens; *Inference Ground Truth* uses Gaussian Splatting to question the definition of objective reality between humans and machines. Toyota Coniq's *Data Art & Science Initiative* employs data-driven art to strengthen local communities, and *ORIBotics** fuses origami with robotics.

Ars Electronica Solutions, in turn, demonstrates how ideas and prototypes become market-ready applications. The team designs interactive experience spaces and narrative formats that translate complex content into immersive experiences. At the festival, one of the featured works is the *Collective Machine*—an installation where visitors make decisions at two voting stations on wages, working hours, safety, and technology, and then see their effects in a multimedia centerpiece. The VR experience *Immerse Yourself in the Past* transports visitors into the working world of the 19th century, making history spatially tangible. Both projects are adaptations of stations developed for the Museum Arbeitswelt Steyr. With *What Does a Satellite Hear?*, the team has also created an installation that transforms data from the Copernicus satellite Sentinel-2 into a soundscape, presented for the first time in 2025 at the European Space Agency's largest Earth observation conference. In the Deep Space 8K as well, Ars Electronica Solutions presents programming: *Deep Space Community* illustrates how immersive spaces can be used worldwide as a means for cultural exchange,

international collaboration, and inspiration. *The Art of Science* showcases immersive works that make complex factual knowledge perceptible through multiple senses.

create your world

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

Climate crisis, wars, political instability, and social divisions—complex crises cannot be solved by all-knowing experts or powerful institutions alone. create your world reminds us that great changes often start small. Instead of waiting for someone or something, the moment calls for first steps and collective action. Whether planting a tree or offering neighborhood assistance—every act, however small, counts.

During the festival, create your world occupies over 2,000 square meters on POSTCITY's first floor, transforming the space into an inspiring playground. Here, young and young-at-heart creators can experiment, tinker, and discuss. Highlights include *Take Comfort*, an interactive light and music installation dedicated to the solace of the written word: typing on a typewriter triggers light displays and music that create a warm, comforting atmosphere. *Rainbow* connects the physical phenomenon of a rainbow with its symbolic and cultural meanings. *Escape Fake* addresses youth media literacy in an age of rampant disinformation: the project explores new learning approaches and features an immersive AR experience, a toolkit, an exhibition, and activities co-developed with teachers and students. In the *AI Wonderland with Dynatrace & CoderDojo*, visitors encounter various tasks and easy-to-grasp explanations on artificial intelligence, with hands-on activities.

Projects honored in the u19 category of the Prix Ars Electronica are presented in their own exhibition. Also on view is the experimental short film *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective), for which Aleksa Jović and Nico Pflügler (Gilbert Gnos Productions) from the HBLA for Artistic Design in Linz received the Golden Nica and €3,000 prize money.

Art Thinking Lounge

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

The Art Thinking Lounge is a prototype by Japanese marketing and innovation company Hakuhodo and Ars Electronica, creating a space in which artistic approaches are discussed as drivers of change. This year, the focus is on “Future Citizen Kits”: the Ars Electronica Futurelab presents an AI-supported *Citizen Manifesto* on the festival theme *PANIC – yes/no*; Hakuhodo showcases research tools that give voice to the “quiet voices” in society; and designer Yuima Nakazato’s (JP) *Fashion Frontier Program* presents fashion projects for a sustainable future in the industry.

WE GUIDE YOU

September 3 to 7, 2025 | POSTCITY, First Floor

Is panic a paralyzing state of emergency or a powerful wake-up call—that is the starting point for a series of guided tours offering insights into the festival’s exhibitions, tailored to different target groups. The program includes 14 different guided tours with multiple dates in POSTCITY—including expert tours with artists, curators, and researchers—as well as five additional offerings at the Lentos Kunstmuseum, four campus tours at the University of Arts Linz, and daily highlight tours at the Ars Electronica Center.