Prix Ars Electronica 2025

ARS ELECTRONICA
Art, Technology & Society

HATJE CANTZ

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Gerfried Stocker · Markus Jandl

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New Animation Art
Artificial Life & Intelligence
Digital Musics & Sound Art
u19–create your world

Isao Tomita Special Prize

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity

European Union Prize for Citizen Science
The Grand Prize for Citizen Science of the European Union recognizes outstanding achievements in the advancement of knowledge through the empowerment of civil society and citizens in the development of the future

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Grand Prize of the European Commission honoring Innovation in Technology, Industry, and Society stimulated by the Arts

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa
Grand Prize of the European Union promoting a S+T+ARTS approach to digital innovation in Africa

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Prix Ars Electronica 2025

Gerfried Stocker, Markus Jandl

One quality attributed to the Prix Ars Electronica since its inception is that it serves as a trend barometer—and this is confirmed anew year after year. This is due, on the one hand, to the particularly fine sensorium and high social awareness that always applies to artistic work, and, on the other, to the strong participation of artists from all over the world.

The thematic range of the Prix Ars Electronica categories is tailored entirely to the diverse work of the artists and seeks to reflect this diversity in a nuanced way, while simultaneously challenging it. This allows us to closely observe developments and changes in long-standing digital art forms and also devote due attention to new thematic focuses and working methods.

This year, this task is particularly addressed by the category "Artificial Life and Intelligence," with its deliberately open-ended name. The focus here is neither artificial intelligence nor bio-art, but rather the common denominator of many science-oriented art practices: art that explores the transformative dynamics of these techno-scientific developments, engages in the discourses they trigger about our worldviews and our conceptions of humanity, and offers itself as a think tank—as a "second opinion" when it comes to deciding where and how we want to use these new technological possibilities.

Of course, trends don't emerge out of nowhere, and we've already noticed and commented on the thematic priorities that have emerged this year in recent years. These include concerns about the increasing erosion of democracy due to totalitarian movements and the manipulative use of digital media, the need to reformulate our relationship with nature, and, of course, today's all-too-common topic: artificial intelligence.

There are certainly some noticeable developments: The number of submissions where one cannot shake the feeling that AI is being used more as "clickbait" than as a genuine concern has declined encouragingly, while at the same time, the matter-of-factness with which AI tools are being used in all genres has increased significantly—an expression of a certain relaxation and composure, which, however, by no means lacks the necessary critical awareness of the diverse consequences of technological development and the threatening concentration of commercial power. The use of open-source language models has also become more common, and in general, technical expertise and competence in the use of AI tools has increased, and with it, self-determination in formal implementation—people are less likely to simply take what the AI offers.

What's striking this year is the focus on embodiment and corporeality, not only as a trend in the submissions, but also in the assessments by the extremely diverse expert juries in the individual

Martin Hieslmair

categories. This already seems to indicate one of the central challenges of the coming years: the need to connect the digital, virtual reality of AI systems—the "world behind the screens"—with the physical reality of our world and our bodies.
Robotic, kinetic devices and instruments are also the central elements of the three Golden Nica projects. These are not off-the-shelf industrial or show robots, but rather self-built machines—an essential aspect of design sovereignty and artistic individuality that makes the robotic sculptures central narrative elements of the respective art projects.
The main prizes in the youth category u19–create your world are also influenced by these trends; incidentally, it is highly recommended to take a closer look at the projects of the Young Professionals and Young Creatives, because here, and especially here, it becomes clear how justified and fulfilled the claim of art, of artistic thought and work is, to be a significant contribution to shaping the future.
The spectrum of prizes that we were able to present again this year, the spectrum of award-winning projects and the global spectrum of people who submitted their ideas and projects, demonstrate not only the power of art—especially when it engages with the significant developmental dynamics of its time—but also the extraordinary and, in this form, unique networking and relevance of the Prix Ars Electronica competition, founded in 1987.
The basis for this relevance is an extraordinary partner network with the S+T+ARTS Prize, which has been expanded last year in an extremely exciting way with the S+T+ARTS Prize Africa, the highly endowed prize for Citizen Science from the European Commission and the Digital Humanity Award, which the Austrian Ministry (BMEIA) gives for projects that are dedicated to perhaps the most important task in the current digital world, namely putting people at the center, exploring how we can develop and use technology to support people and not just see them as passive users and consumers.
In 2025 the New Animation Art category received the largest number of submissions (1,430), followed by Digital Musics & Sound Art with 1.127 submissions and Artificial Life & Intelligence with 910 submissions. Submissions in the Digital Musics & Sound Art category were also eligible for the Isao Tomita Special Prize, endowed by the TOMITA information Hub. The u19–create your world category for Young Creatives (under age fourteen) and Young Professionals (age fourteen to nineteen), open for entries from all over Austria, recorded a total of 520 entries.
In addition to the four Golden Nicas of Prix Ars Electronica 2025 and the Isao Tomita Special Prize (€5,000), the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity, initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, was awarded for the fifth time as part of Prix Ars Electronica. This award is endowed with €10.000 prize money. The State of the ART(ist) Prize, also initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, provides additional prize money totaling €10,000.
In 2025, for the tenth time, the Prix Ars Electronica includes the S+T+ARTS Prize, which Ars Electronica awards on behalf of the European Commission. S+T+ARTS Prize'25 is part of the joint S+T+ARTS Ec(h)o project by: Ars Electronica, French Tech Grand Provence, INOVA+, Media Solutions Center Baden-Württemberg, High-Performance Computing Center Stuttgart Salzburg Festival, Sónar, T6 Ecosystems, and TUD Dresden University of Technology. This prize, endowed with a total of €40,000, recognizes innovative projects at the nexus of Science, Technology, and Arts (S+T+ARTS) and is awarded by the European Commission as part of the Horizon Europe funding program for research and innovation.
For the second time this year, Ars Electronica, in collaboration with its consortium partners CHRONIQUES, GLUON, and the Royal Museum for Central Africa, awards the S+T+ARTS Prize Africa as part of the European Union's project *STARTS*

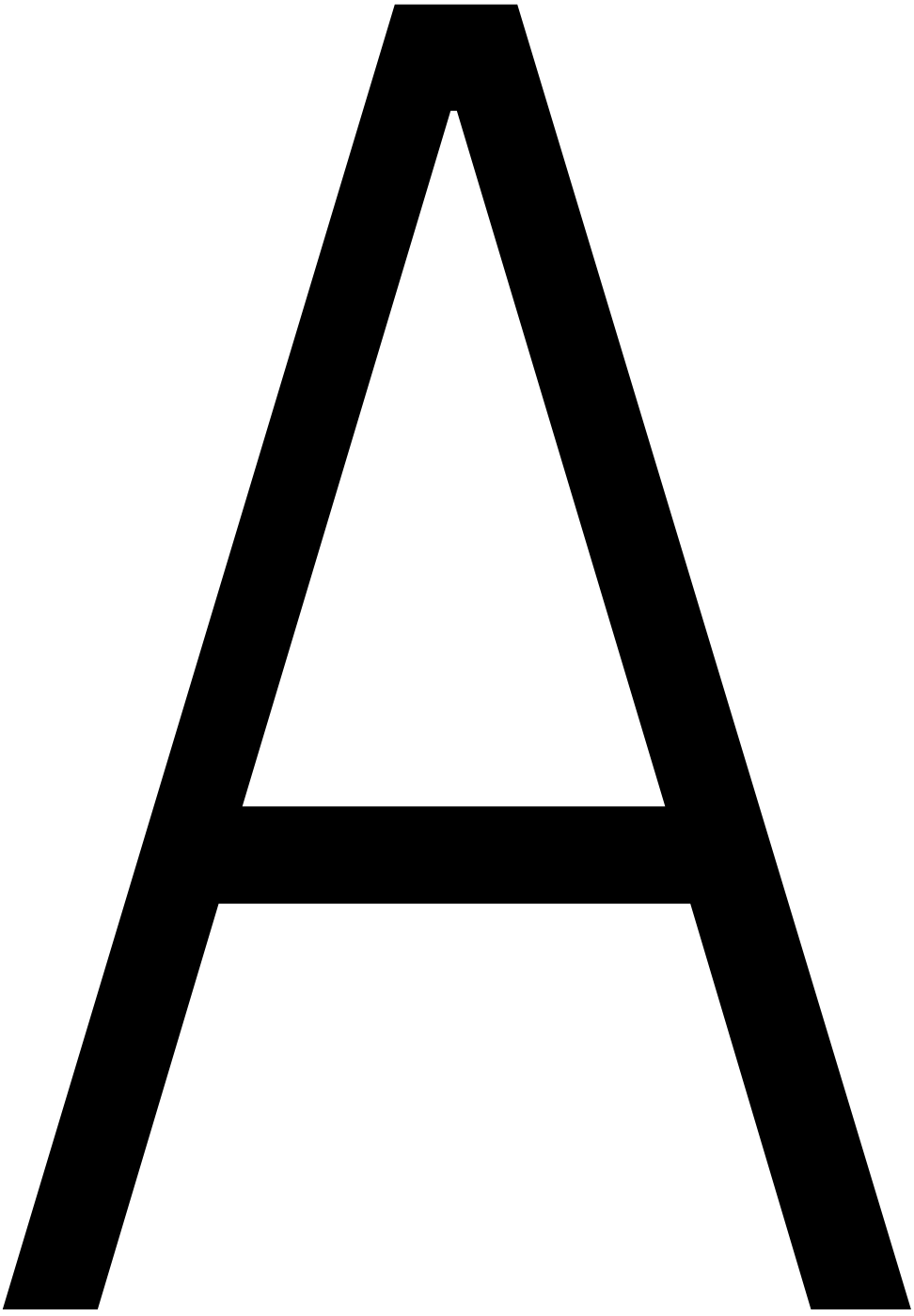
Afropean Intelligence. Launched in 2024, the African edition of the well-established S+T+ARTS Prize highlights creative practices at the intersection of science, technology, and the arts across the continent and is endowed with a total prize money of €30,000.

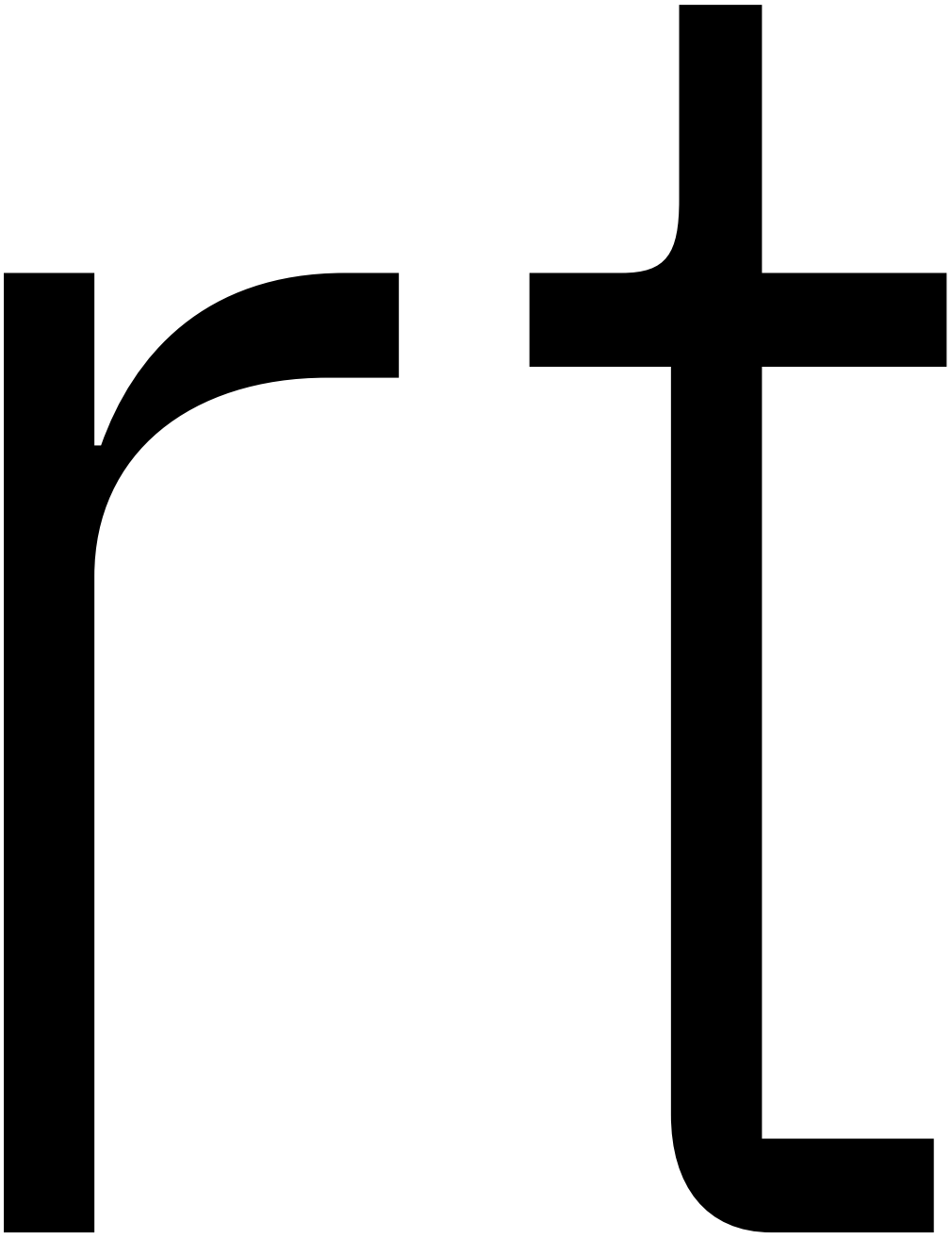
The European Union Prize for Citizen Science, awards an additional €100,000 in prize money. This means that a total of €231,600 in prize money was awarded to artists in this year's Prix Ars Electronica.

In 2025 the Prix Ars Electronica, organized by Ars Electronica Linz GmbH & Co KG, is being staged for the 39th time. This has been made possible by the support of the City of Linz, which has funded Ars Electronica since 1979 and the Prix Ars Electronica since 1987. Special thanks for additional support go to the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the TOMITA information Hub, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, the OeAD, and to ORF OOE for the collaboration.

Gerfried Stocker (AT) is a media artist and an engineer for communication technology and has been artistic director and co-CEO of Ars Electronica since 1995. In 1995/96 he developed the groundbreaking exhibition strategies of the Ars Electronica Center with a small team of artists and technicians and was responsible for the setup and establishment of Ars Electronica's own R&D facility, the Ars Electronica Futurelab. He has overseen the development of the program for international Ars Electronica exhibitions since 2004, the planning and the revamping of the contents for the Ars Electronica Center, which was enlarged in 2009, since 2005; the expansion of the Ars Electronica Festival since 2015; and the extensive overhaul of Ars Electronica Center's contents and interior design in 2019. Stocker is a consultant for numerous companies and institutions in the field of creativity and innovation management and is active as a guest lecturer at international conferences and universities. In 2019 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Aalto University, Finland.

Markus Jandl (AT) has been Chief Financial Officer (CFO) since September 2020 and, together with Gerfried Stocker as co-CEO, manages the business of Ars Electronica Linz GmbH & Co KG and Ars Electronica International GmbH. He has held various positions at Ars Electronica over many years, most recently as Head of Corporate Finance and authorized signatory for both Ars Electronica companies. Born in Linz, he studied Economics at Johannes Kepler University Linz and spent nine months at Ivey Business School in London/Ontario, Canada. Jandl specialized in corporate accounting during his studies and wrote his diploma thesis in this field.





New Animation Art

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Expanding Frames toward Inner Journeys

Boris Eldagsen, Ayoung Kim, Ari Melenciano, Everardo Reyes, Liz Rosenthal

This year's New Animation Art category affirmed just how boundless the field has become. From a record-breaking 1,430 submissions, an increase of 23% over last year, the jury emerged with one Golden Nica, two Awards of Distinction, and twelve Honorary Mentions. These fifteen works are united less by technique than by a shared urgency to treat animation not as a genre, but as a laboratory for thought.

Our criteria emerged from the process itself: as the early works unfolded, five intertwined questions crystallized and went on to guide the rest of our deliberations. Does it expand animation's perimeter by selecting the medium? Be it a game engine, shader code, a robotic arm, a browser window, or 16-millimeter film, so that form and concept are inseparable? Do image, sound and rhythm feel inevitable rather than decorative, holding our attention and inviting us to return? Is craft evident at every scale, from the architecture of a narrative to the texture of an interface or the timing of a gesture? Will the work remain resonant when today's hardware is obsolete, touching the human condition with lasting clarity? And finally, does it open a perspective that is emotionally, socially, or politically disruptive without reducing the viewer to a mere target for instruction?

Measured against those interconnected demands, this year's field revealed an exhilarating and hybrid landscape. Classical computer-generated imagery stood beside algorithmic poetry, virtual-reality diaries, speculative video games, internet-native collages, and a kinetic sculpture that literally animates itself. The projects we ultimately endorsed confront e-waste and extractivism, algorithmic otherness, colonial erasure and uprising, micro-temporal state violence, gendered technogenesis, the subversion of competition, and the enduring ache for meaning, and love and continuity. Their authors show how animation can be both an archaeology of technological desire and an instrument for imagining otherwise, sometimes both within the same frame.

Our deliberation process blended methods and perspectives, alternating among granular inspection, real-time interaction, and lively cross-disciplinary argument. The final line-up arose not from a simple agreement on taste but from a shared con-

viction that, together, the three top laureates balance technological grammar with emotional register and cultural weight, while the wider shortlist sketches the horizon in the direction the field is moving: works that are materially accountable, politically awake, and imaginatively unbounded. Taken together, this selection shows that animation is no longer a fixed genre but an expansive practice of setting perception in motion.

Golden Nica

Requiem for an Exit
Frode Oldereid, Thomas Kvam
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 face is at once ancient and androgynous, its grief-stricken expressions contradicting the cold certainty of the words; hydraulic sighs and digital glitches expose the labor of the machine even as the projection renders it flesh-like; the narrator's sweeping verdicts about history and free will rebound onto the very algorithms animating its speech.
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.
Requiem for an Exit is also the culmination of a decades-long conversation. Its creators are pioneers who first collaborated in the 1990s and have returned after twenty years to fuse their hard-won mechanical expertise with contemporary AI. The result feels both timeless and urgently current, grounding speculative technology in a lineage of philosophical inquiry that stretches from classical determinism to present-day algorithmic governance.
By asking whether it's possible to escape history, whether free will can survive its own analysis, and whether a machine might mourn on our behalf, the work exposes animation as a space where matter, code, and thought wrestle in public. Viewers may argue with the head's bleak conclusions, but none will remain untouched by the spectacle of a robot holding a mirror to our species and asking, with grave sincerity, whether an exit exists.

Awards of Distinction

Ito Meikyū
Boris Labbé
Boris Labbé's *Ito Meikyū* invites the viewer to step through the looking-glass of his celebrated hand-drawn universe and wander inside it. For his first venture into virtual reality, the director translates his filigree line work into a vast, multi-layered labyrinth whose imagery is woven, both literally and conceptually, like embroidery. Fragmentary scenes drawn from Japanese literature and art history unfurl as interlaced threads: fractal architectures, calligraphed glyphs, bodies at work on gigantic looms, enigmatic machines that spin infinity into pattern.
The piece is as experimental as it is enchanting. A gaze-controlled navigation system replaces the usual VR joystick: where you look becomes where you go, turning exploration into a seamless, almost

meditative drift. Eye-tracking, parallax, and subtle depth cues are deployed not as gimmicks but as dramaturgy; every technical choice reinforces the sensation of being woven into the fabric of the poem itself.

Visually opulent, *Ito Meikyū* rewards prolonged and repeated visits. Allegory, irony, and quiet humor surface in fresh combinations each time, making the voyage feel both personal and unending. By threading exquisite 2-D craft through the spatial loom of VR, Labbé expands the language of animation and demonstrates how immersive media can be both formally daring and emotionally contemplative.

The Cast of the Invisible
Lau Wai

Lau Wai's one-person tour-de-force begins with a lone motion-capture performer waiting for her digital cue and ends in a hall of mirrors where the copies outnumber the original. Rendered in meticulous CGI and built almost entirely without external support, the film slips a "mocap inside a mocap" gag into a layered meditation on techno precarity: every new take spawns another avatar, dissolving the actress and, by implication, the artist into an expanding cast of selves.

Absurd humor and sharp sarcasm keep the existential vertigo buoyant. "Who am I, and how many?" the protagonist seems to ask as her data double rehearses endlessly for a role that may never materialize. The result is both a complementary vision of the motion-capture industry and a fresh spin on the "dream within a dream" motif, where digital embodiment is at once liberation, labor, and lingering threat.

By folding world-building, performance, and self-critique into a concise meta-narrative, *The Cast of the Invisible* pushes CGI animation beyond spectacle toward a witty, unsettling inquiry into identity in the age of infinite duplication—an inquiry that lingers long after the render finishes.

Honorary Mentions

Abstract Language Model
Andreas Lutz

Abstract Language Model is an artificial neural network trained on more than 65,000 Unicode characters; artist Andreas Lutz turns this dataset into two forms: a four-screen installation that interpolates through the learned glyphs and a 45-minute live audiovisual performance. In the installation, the characters serve as plastic, moving elements that form textures and compositions echoing seven computational states: Extraction, Analysis, Rearrangement, Processing, Transformation, Learning, and Language. The work offers a stage for latent alphabets to exist and expands animation by using techniques from text-processing algorithms.

ARIA 夢姬
Yu Shien Yang, Jin Keon

ARIA, short for Advanced Resonance Intelligence Algorithm, follows an AI assistant talking with its own operating system in the final moments before it is shut down. The story takes place in 2050, in the fictional city of Dream Harbor, which blends familiar East-Asian influences with a futuristic vibe. By leaning into common stereotypes and gender roles found in parts of modern Asian society, the film asks whether those biases seep into the way we build and portray AI. Appropriately, many of its animation elements were produced with the assistance of generated assets, using the very AI tools the story questions.

Bewegungsapparat
Sven Windszus

Bewegungsapparat is a kinetic video installation that transforms ecological paralysis into poetic machinery. Through three interlinked and rotating elements including a screen showing a figure on a treadmill, an oil pump, and a swinging pendulum tipped with a saw, artist Sven Windszus illustrates

the self-destructive inertia of modern life. Ingeniously, the video remains upright while rotating, reinforcing the illusion that the system powers itself. As the saw blade gnaws at the sculpture's base, the installation becomes a chilling metaphor: a society blindly sustaining the very motion that leads to its undoing.

Coda
Paul Valentin
Coda is a meticulously crafted, hypnotic CG video, exploring waves as profound carriers of information and meaning. Through an immersive experiential setup involving waves as water, sound, and light, intertwined with reflections, interference, and ritualistic repetition, it poetically expresses life as an enigma. The symbolic passage of a figure through laser grids and microphones forms a haunting, evolving melody, bridging quantum physics and artistic inquiry. Timeless and thought-provoking, *Coda* continuously opens new perspectives, respecting viewer autonomy while deeply engaging us in a haunting meditation on existence, and our endless pursuit of understanding phenomena.

CORE DUMP
Alona Rodeh
CORE DUMP is an aesthetically intentional, captivating CGI short, depicting surreal drone swarms hunting e-waste within a digitally crafted, hyper-realistic desert landscape. Expertly executed using gaming engine technology, the film excels in storytelling and immersive experiential design. Addressing timely, future-proof themes such as e-waste politics, modern warfare logistics, drone technology, and cultural destruction, *CORE DUMP* expands perspectives on environmental and geopolitical dynamics. Part of the artist's series *CITY DUMMIES*, this provocative digital fantasy artfully blends abstraction and realism, creating meaningful social and political resonance.

Earth's to Come
Rose Bond, inti figgis-vizueta, Massimiliano Borghesi, Melanie Coombs, Roomful of Teeth, PASE
In *Earths to Come*, Rose Bond demonstrates how VR, when combined with hand-drawn animation and immersive sound, can articulate complex emotional and lyrical dimensions with rare sensitivity. Animated with a delicate, hand-drawn aesthetic that breathes and flickers with life, the piece reinterprets Emily Dickinson's poetic fragments from an untitled poem "I have no life but this" as an unfolding, immersive landscape of memory, longing, and desire. The experience is anchored by the incredible soundscape created by composer inti figgis-vizueta's haunting score and the profoundly visceral harmonies of Roomful of Teeth, experienced collectively under a sound dome with exquisite spatial precision.

Los Caídos
Juan Covelli
Los Caídos is an interactive video game that reimagines Colombia's 2021 social uprising as a digital battleground where protest becomes ritual and resistance dances to the pulse of guaracha. With characters like La Guerrera Misak and La Cuerpa Trans, it collapses history, identity, and spectacle into a speculative, playable archive. Artist Juan Covelli uses the medium to question how algorithmic culture shapes ideology and memory. More than a game, *Los Caídos* is a decolonial intervention and an act of digital remembrance that challenges dominant narratives and opens space for new, subversive histories to emerge.

NATURAL CONTACTS
Mark Fingerhut, Peter Burr, Bridget DeFranco, Matthew D Gantt
NATURAL CONTACTS is a benevolent form of malware that transforms a user's desktop into a meditative ecosystem over 24 hours, compressing a full year's cycle into a day. Around a central decomposing digital corpse, seasons pass, birds scatter, files drift like leaves, and decay gives way to renewal. Inspired by John Cage's prepared piano, the artists recast the computer as a "prepared desktop," where spreadsheets coexist with flies and cursor movements disturb the peace of a virtual wilderness. Blurring the boundaries between software, sculpture, and time-based art, the work invites users into a slow, unsettling reflection on life, death, and digital nature.

Oto's Planet
Gwenael François
Oto's Planet is a brilliantly crafted VR fable that explores human coexistence, the emergence of borders and the responsibility of belonging to a shared ecosystem. Set on a miniature 3D diorama planet, inhabited by a slacker, his dog, and an uninvited astronaut visitor, the story is brought to life through a beautifully designed rotation mechanic that allows viewers to shift perspectives, deepening connection to both the narrative and the characters. The stylized animation is vivid and polished, with every movement and transition carefully reinforcing the story's darker undertones. *Oto's Planet* stands out for its narrative ambition, technical refinement, and evocative, immersive world-building.

Sixty-seven Milliseconds
Fleuryfontaine
Sixty-seven Milliseconds is the interval between two frames in which a bullet was captured in flight by a surveillance camera. Narrated through multiple voices and perspectives, the film retraces the true events that unfolded in February 2020 in the southern suburbs of Paris. French duo Galdric Fleury and Antoine Fontaine employ CGI and a range of visual-footage styles to immerse viewers in the precise moment when an unarmed 19-year-old was shot in the eye by a police officer. The bullet's invisible path is suggested through the young man's trajectory, a depiction inspired by Étienne-Jules Marey's chronophotographic studies of movement.

Supper
Erick Oh
Supper is an evocative audiovisual piece that invites viewers to a surreal and transcendental feast, where symbols of mortality and meaning such as a fish, an apple, an hourglass, a diamond, and a heart, are delicately arranged on an altar-like table. These elements are not just props but metaphors, prepared for consumption by a monumental cosmic figure. With a cinematic yet abstract sensibility, Erick Oh conjures an atmosphere where sound and image move beyond narrative, guiding us into a contemplative space. The piece's dreamlike rhythm and striking symbolism allow for deeply personal interpretation, while its visual clarity and formal restraint anchor it in a sophisticated aesthetic. It is at once intimate and grand, meditative, and mysterious.

World at Stake
Total Refusal (Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein)
World at Stake subverts the logic of sports and spectacle within video games to explore powerlessness in the face of global crisis. A golfer fails to strike, a soccer team plays itself, a rally co-driver questions his role, while the audience remains frozen, unable to intervene. Through these loops of inaction, the film dismantles binary notions of victory and failure, revealing the paralysis that defines contemporary political life. Created by media collective Total Refusal, this machinima work reclaims virtual space to stage a haunting allegory of spectatorship, sovereignty, and the quiet dread of watching the world fall apart.

Requiem for an Exit

Frode Oldereid, Thomas Kvam

Between 1994 and 2004, Frode Oldereid and Thomas Kvam created a series of robotic installations exploring the intersections between technology, ideology, and collective memory. These robots evoked the aesthetics of political mass movements, echoing the fractured language of 20th-century totalitarianisms and its countercultures. Two decades later, the artists revisit these themes in *Requiem for an Exit*.

At the center of the installation stands a towering robotic figure, four meters tall—a skeletal construct of steel, hydraulics, and circuitry, locked in place, rigid and restrained. Its only means of expression are its voice and a slowly moving head. The towering body dominates the space, yet it is the face that captivates—drawing the viewer in. Digitally sculpted and animated with hyper-realistic detail, the face gives the robot its unsettling presence. Like the demagogues and prophets of history, it uses rhetoric as its only weapon.

It speaks not as an agitator rallying a crowd, but as if standing alone in the ruins of its own rhetoric—delivering a monologue that feels more like a solitary reckoning than an attempt to persuade. Its power lies not in physical action, but in the force of its words—delivered with the weight of history, suspended in an acoustic field so dense it almost approaches sculptural form.

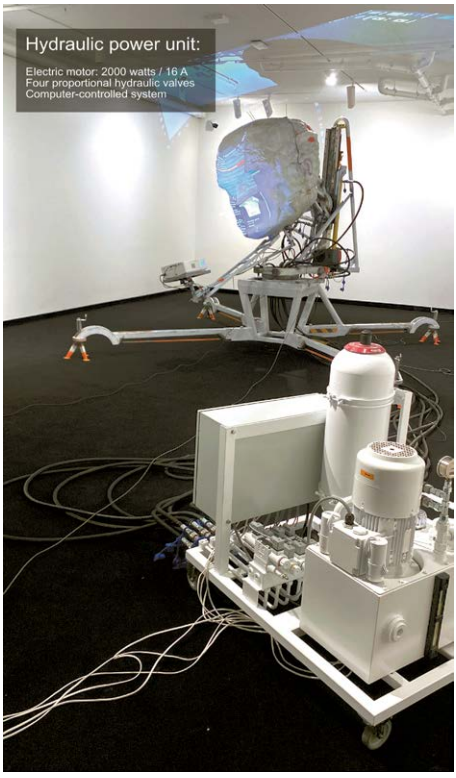
The voice is calm and deliberate, almost liturgical in its cadence. This affective restraint is mirrored in the soundscape: a low, constant pressure fills the room, not as music but as condition. The voice does not float on top of it—it is caught in it. There are no crescendos. No relief.

In this, the robot speaks of genocide—not as an aberration, but as a recurring feature in human history, deeply embedded within our genetic memory. The notion that Neanderthal DNA still present in our genome constitutes a "biological memorial" to our first genocide, occurs not as scientific theory, but as philosophical provocation. From there, the monologue does not escalate—it accumulates: from ancient annihilations and scorched cities, through colonial massacres and concentration camps, to the bureaucratized efficiency of industrial extermination—and into the present, where siege and displacement persist in full view, mediated, normalized, and streamed. What emerges is not a moral theory, but an archaeology of violence. This philosophical meditation is not neutral or detached—it is disturbingly direct. Confronting viewers with their own complicity in historical cycles of violence. Like a secular prophet, it neither offers redemption nor a clear moral imperative. Instead, it generates self-conscious discomfort, forcing a reckoning with humanity's enduring capacity for destruction.

Requiem for an Exit withholds catharsis. When the robot falls silent, the stillness that follows is not restful, but dense with the impossibility of innocence. The requiem it delivers is not for the machine, nor for the dead, but for the myths we continue to uphold: that progress ensures salvation, that intelligence guarantees ethics, that technology can redeem the human.

In this light, the robot is not a prophet, but an archivist—tasked not with prediction, but with preserving what we refuse to confront. Its voice carries not

Frode Oldereid



a warning, but the echo of a judgment already rendered. When it falls silent, the installation becomes a double mirror: we project humanity onto the machine, even as it reflects the violence we have designed—and denied.

What lingers is not an answer, but a question we can no longer outsource: whether the silence is, in fact, our own. *Requiem for an Exit* exposes the drift of responsibility—first to bureaucracies, then to algorithms—until thought itself becomes automated, and ethics externalized. In revealing this, it reminds us: what we delegate, we do not escape.

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
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https://u.aec.at/BA609A51

Thomas Kvam (NO) is a conceptual artist and author whose work explores how technological, ideological, and historical systems shape perception, memory, and control. His practice spans painting, robotics, video, animation, and publishing. Projects include *Eurobeing* (Pompidou Collection), *The Chosen Five* (2015), and *SchizoLeaks* (Haugar, 2021). Using WikiLeaks-inspired methods, Kvam has explored the legal and ethical limits of art. He also co-edits *Gespenster*, a journal for art, literature, and theory. **Frode Oldereid** (NO) is a composer, sound designer, and lecturer with a background in music production, experimental theater, and robotic art. Active since the 1990s, he has toured internationally with installations and performances. Educated in sound engineering, film, photography, sociology, and urbanism, his work integrates visual media and sonic environments with a focus on socio-political themes.

Thomas Kvam

Ito Meikyū

Boris Labbé

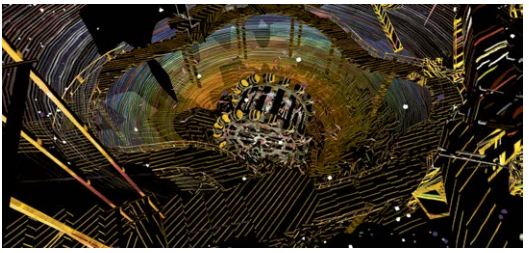
Interior and exterior, transparency and opacity, exhibitionism and voyeurism, feminine and masculine; all these notions oppose or unite in the infinite cycle of a labyrinth with no exit. Life here is like a loom whose living weft is woven from a myriad of branching threads and paths.

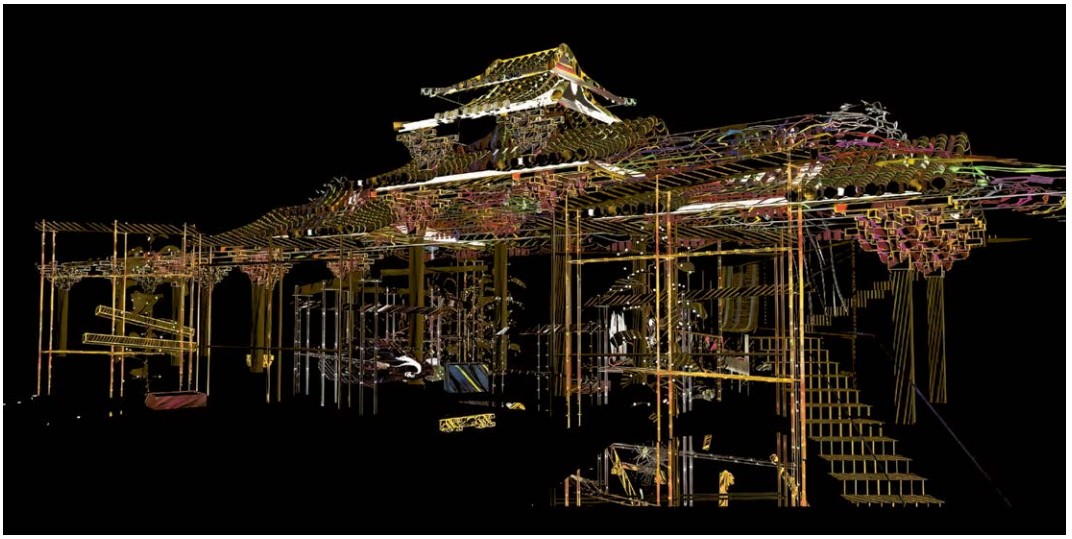
This virtual reality installation is inspired by key works of classical art and Japanese literature (such as *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu and *The Pillow Book* by Sei Shonagon), but also by various contacts and events in the artist's life and his travels in Japan.

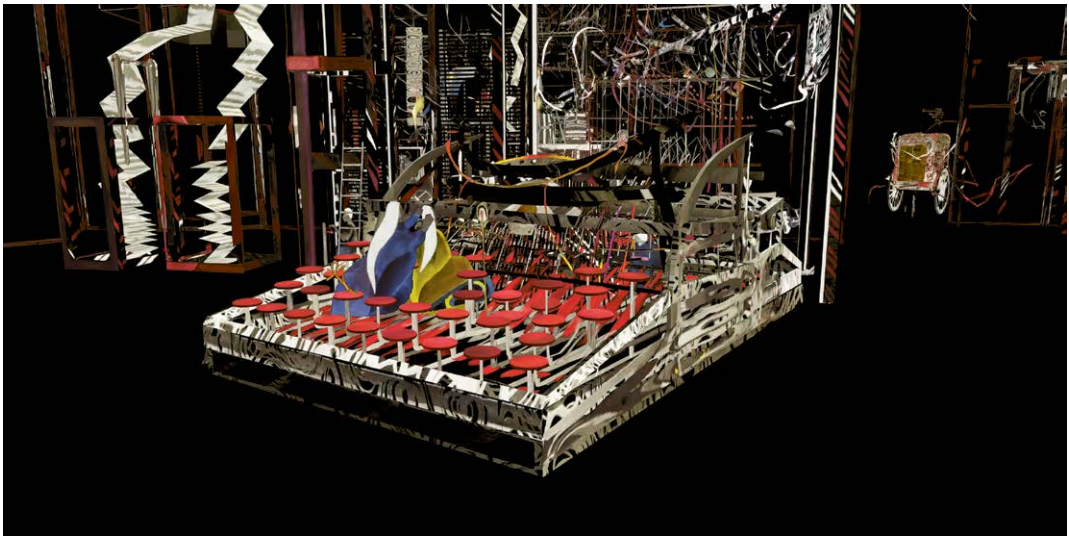
Boris Labbé is also attached to the typical motif of traditional Japanese painting, the *Fukinuki Yatai* technique (translated as "roof removed") which represents the interior of a building, seen from above, without a ceiling. Through this composition, he explores the multiplicity of points of view, the interconnected narrative relationship, the almost encyclopedic panoramic composition, and the issues of composition of geometries, motifs, and characters.

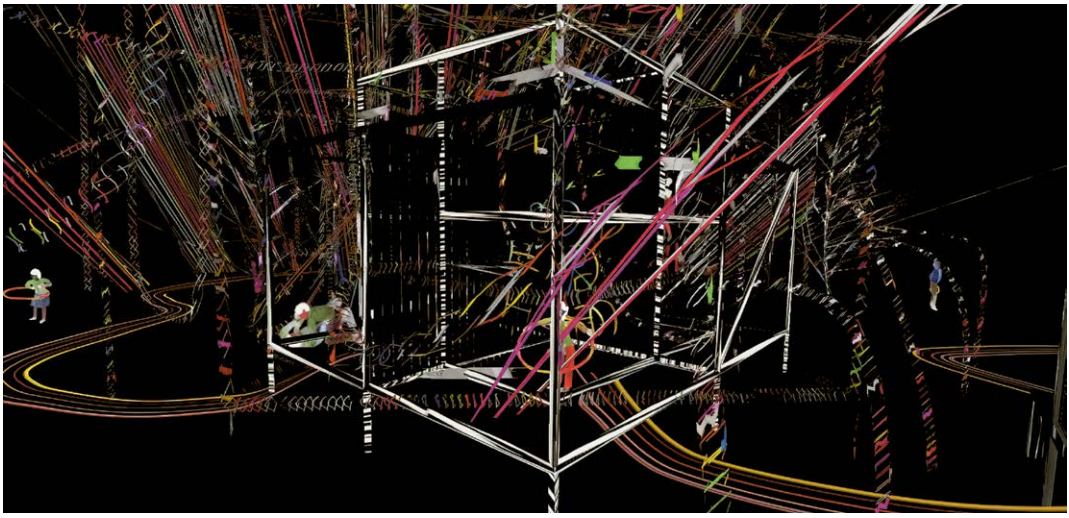
Boris Labbé is looking for several ways to express the material of the drawing: to make it "overflow, crack, crackle, proliferate, live". Drawing has always been central to his life and has been nourished by several encounters and projects: from classical drawing to 3D animation, and from virtual reality to performance and video installation.

Ito Meikyū invites the viewer to immerse themselves in a large animated fresco. It presents a heterogeneous collection of drawn, animated and sound scenes, which are taken from the digital material. In a way, the artist recreates a subjective world (inner and outer world) in the form of a labyrinth composed of fractal architectures, inhabited by plants, objects, animals, men, women, patterns, and calligraphy. The spectator is invited to wander through this virtual space in a free way, letting themselves be guided by the chance of their discoveries.









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

With support from: Film Fund Luxembourg, CNC—Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, La Région Occitanie / Pyrénées-Méditerranée, La Région Grand Est, Préfet de la région Pays de la Loire, Chroniques—Biennale des Imaginaires Numériques, Drawing Lab, Orange

https://u.aec.at/FB489508

Boris Labbé (1987, FR) is an artist and animation film director working in the southwest of France. Based on his drawing activity, Boris Labbé's work is characterized by hybridization, combining the use of digital moving image techniques with those specific to animated film. His videos tend to break out of the spatio-temporal framework imposed by classical cinema; governed by the notion of expanded cinema, his works are not only destined for projection in the movie theater, but also tend towards other forms, notably installations. He has collaborated with Sacrebleu Productions since 2013. His work has been selected and awarded in most prestigious festival such as Critic's Week, Annecy Animation Film Festival, Animafest Zagreb, Venice Festival...

SACREBLEU PRODUCTIONS, LES FILMS FAUVES, PARANGON

The Cast of the Invisible

Lau Wai

A response to the ever-expanding interference of the digital world, *The Cast of the Invisible*, a CGI animated short film, prods at the line between one's virtual and physical existence. Inspired by how the identities of motion-capture actors are lost beneath digitally imposed animation, the film stars W.A.I., a motion-capture-suit-clad virtual clone of the artist.

The Cast of the Invisible follows several days in the life of W.A.I., a motion-capture actor, as they descend into existential confusion. Plagued by the consequences of a vocation endowing them with purpose by stripping them of their individuality, W.A.I. cannot escape a fundamental demand to exist in mimetic performance as anyone but themselves. 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. Evocative of a Goffmanian "total institution," W.A.I.'s ubiquitous uniform pervading their private life speaks to the metaphysical reductionism that inherently cages any digitally reproduced being within a stunted identity. A human clone tasked with laying the unseen bones of other made-up characters in an artificial world, W.A.I. is a slice of a person designed to be everyone and no one.

Thus, *The Cast of the Invisible* is a direct reference to the liminal role of motion-capture actors who symbolize being both "in-between" the real and virtual worlds yet never fully present or autonomous in either one. Elaborating on motifs of an infinitely mutable identity in the contemporary digital context, W.A.I. now must navigate the ontological implications of being a real-world replica whose purpose is to be digitally reproduced. Through the work, Lau 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?

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

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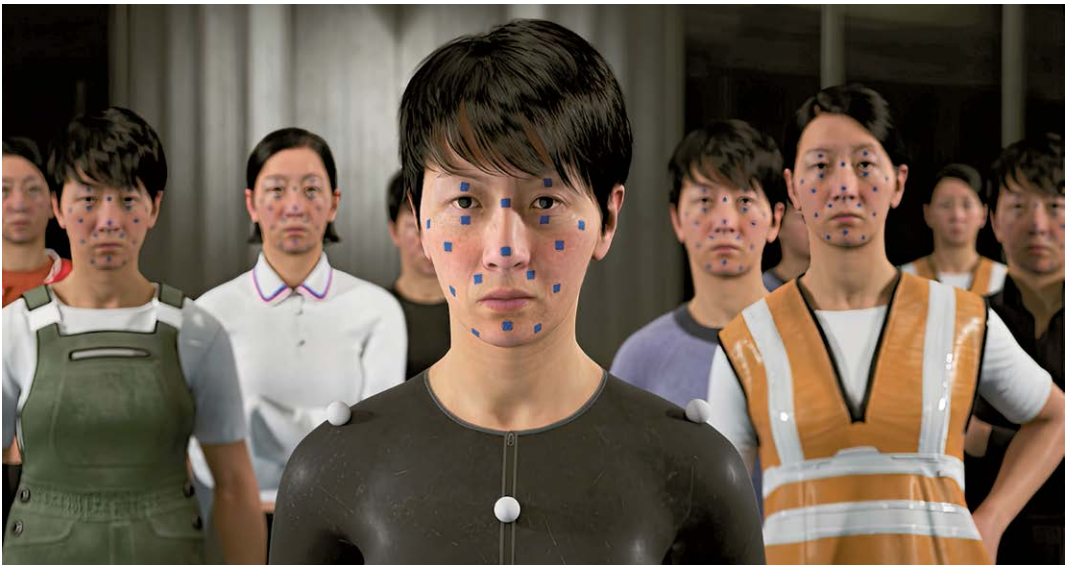
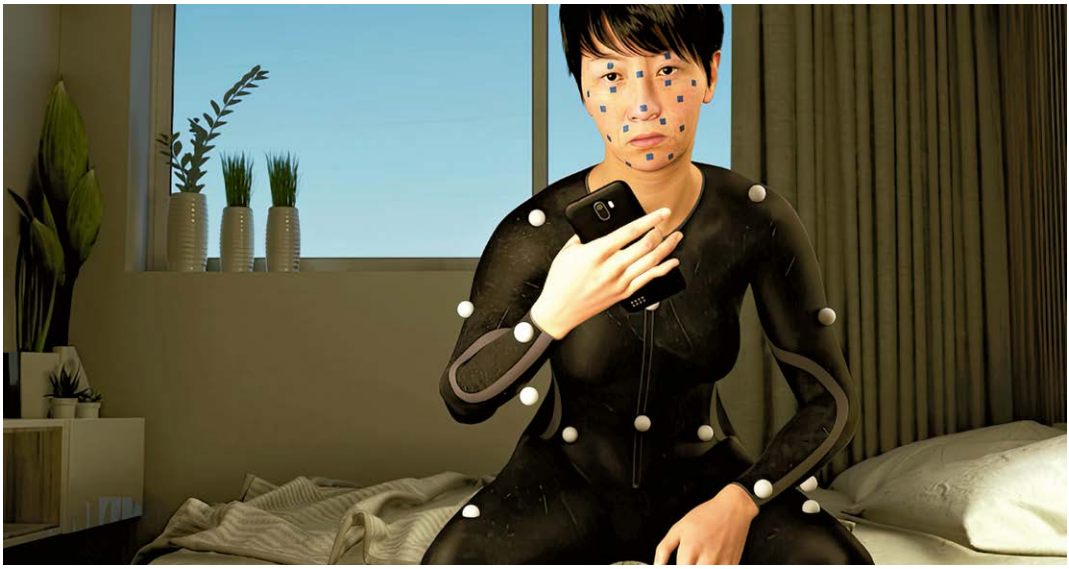
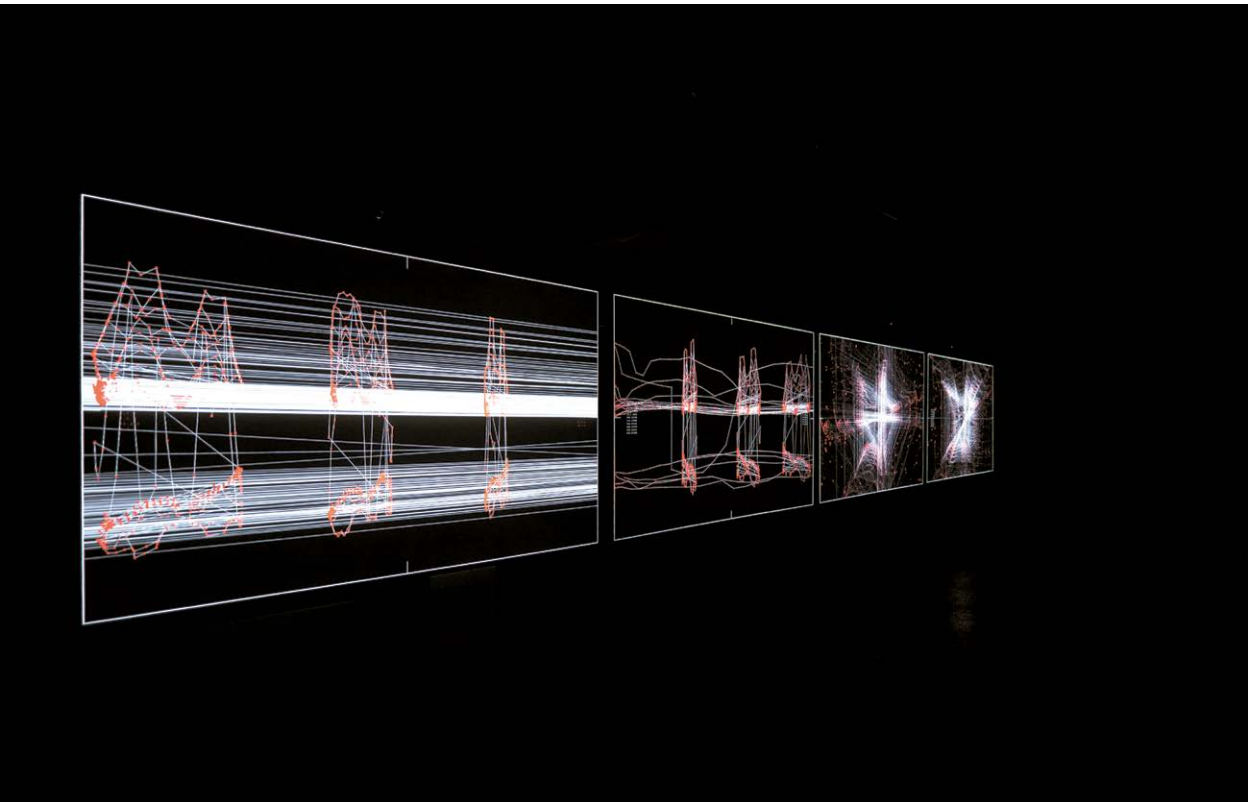




Lau Wai (HK) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Hong Kong and New York, working across moving images, 3D animation, digital interactive media, photography, and installation. They utilize personal and historical archives, cinematic imagery, popular culture, and emerging technologies to explore how history, fiction, personal memory, and virtuality intersect in the process of identity formation. They have exhibited internationally and their work is included in museum collections at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung Foundation, Munich; M+, Hong Kong, among others.

Abstract Language Model

Andreas Lutz



For *Abstract Language Model*, an artificial neural network was trained with the entire character sets represented in the Unicode Standard (over 65,000 characters in the basic multilingual plane system). The resulting complex data models contain the translation of all available human sign systems as equally representable, machine-created states including latent points, where the most accurate representation of the characters is achieved.

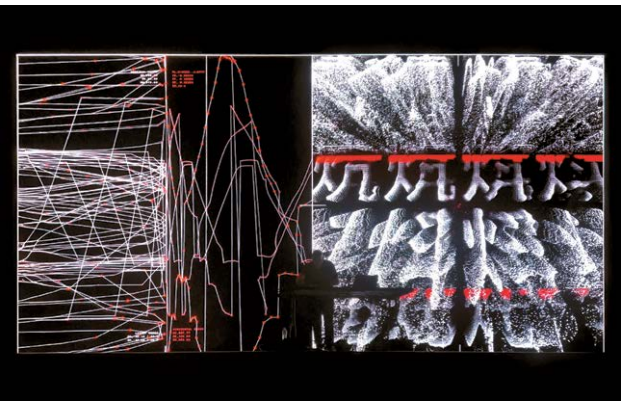
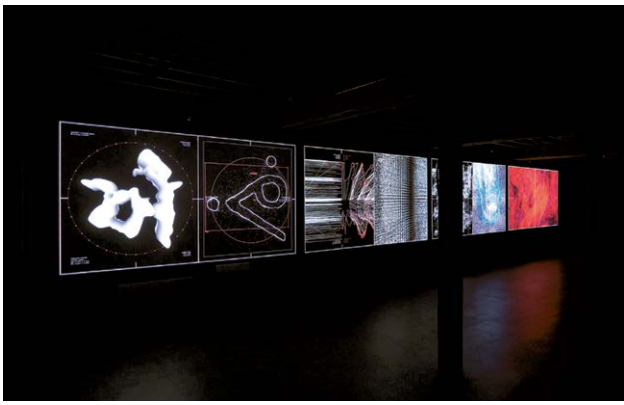
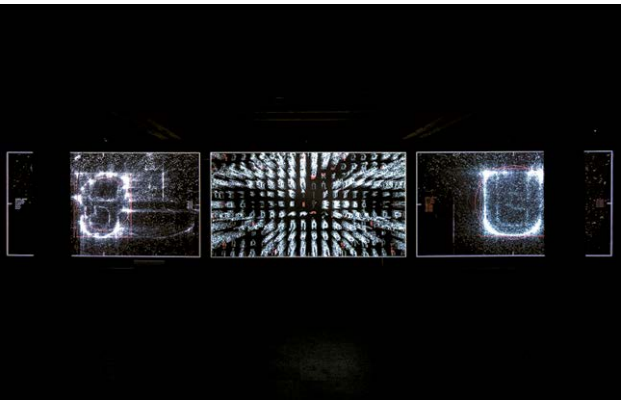
However, between these points interpolation becomes possible, which means that among two previously distinct characters now infinite characters come into existence, which can be seen as the origin of a purely machine created semiotic system. The revealing of these "obscured variants" between the known characters leads to the idea of a transitionless or non-binary universal language, which could be expressed by a self-conscious machine to its human counterpart and vice versa.

The visualizations of these processes are displayed in the 4-channel video installation *Abstract Language Model (Sync)*. Consisting of four synchronized visualizations with seven different states (Extraction, Analysis, Rearrange, Process, Transformation, Learning, and Language), the audio-visual sequence is based on a real-time interpolation through the trained models and depicts the transformation into a trans-human / trans-machine language.

Abstract Language Model (Live) is the audio-visual live performance pendant of the installation. The 45 minutes long performance is presented as a one-channel version with real-time generated visuals and stereo sound.

Having employed also in previous works the conceptual idea of an assumed language model for self-conscious machines and their possible expressions, *Abstract Language Model* now serves as the semiotic system for current versions of these sculptures and installations.

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention


Concept, technical development, visual development and sound: Andreas Lutz
Technical support: Hans Peter Raber and Mickey van Olst
Production support: Pierre-Elie Chapuis (Un Singe en Hiver)
Conceptual support and feedback: Lucrezia Naglieri https://u.aec.at/C53F2D14

Andreas Lutz, Danny Arens

Andreas Lutz (DE) (*1981 in Freiburg) explores in his works the human machine relation with the approach, to create integrated and universal communication systems. Within these boundaries, he analyzes and reveals phenomena of perception versus reality and principles of abstract aesthetics with sculptures, installations, and performances. The creation of experimental soundscapes and the relation of semiotics and sound are further aspects of his work.

ARIA 夢姬

Yu Shien Yang, Jin Keon

ARIA 夢姬 is a CGI animated short film that explores the entangled futures of gender, technology, and memory through the figure of a female AI agent named ARIA. Set in the fictional smart city Dream Harbor in the year 2050, the film imagines an East Asian metropolis where nostalgic urban aesthetics coexist with a hyper-digitized surveillance regime. Though speculative, the narrative draws deeply from real-world histories, reflecting how East Asia's unresolved pasts continue to shape its technological futures.

On the verge of deactivation and disposal as e-waste, ARIA transforms into a virtual being and enters into a final conversation with her supervisory operating system. This intimate exchange challenges the myths of techno-optimism and accelerationist progress. Both non-human characters—ARIA and the Operating System—embody the dual roles of the supervised and the supervisor, revealing a recursive power dynamic where humans and machines continually co-shape one another. Rooted in empirical research, the work highlights how East Asian approaches to AI design differ from Western paradigms, particularly in the persistent gendering of robots and service technologies. Drawing from state policies like China's 2049 development agenda and Japan's *Innovation 25* and *Moonshot R&D* program, *ARIA* 夢姬 critically examines how national dreams are encoded into machines. The film foregrounds the temporal tensions of the region—where imagined futures and chronopolitics remain haunted by historical traumas.

While ARIA's hyper-sexualized form may seem like a science fiction, her story is grounded in the real politics of design, labor, and identity. This is not a dystopia—it is a mirror. Through game engine cinema and speculative narrative, *ARIA* 夢姬 offers a poetic intervention into how we code gender, dream futures, and remember histories.

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention

Artists: Yu Shien and Jin Keon
Writer, editor, and colorist: Yu Shien
3D and CGI team: Yu Shien, Jin Keon, and CP
Music: (1) Romantic 50s Waltz, Stock media provided by Matthew Reid/Pond5; and
(2) *Clair de lune* (Claude Debussy) Suite bergamasque, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia Commons.

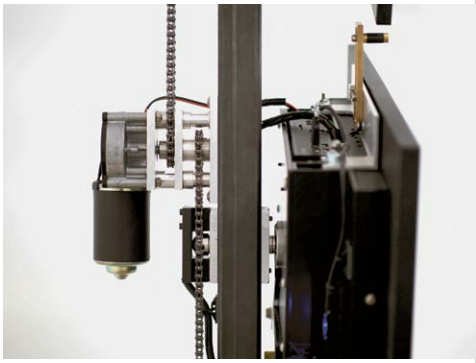
Beyond the individuals mentioned above, this project could not have been realized without the artists, researchers, and directors who inspired us, the engineers and designers who developed incredible digital tools, and all the asset artists who contributed to Unreal Engine Fab.

https://u.aec.at/759AEAA4

Yu Shien Yang (TW) is a filmmaker, CG artist, and lawyer exploring hyperreality, virtual humans, and digital culture. Her work engages governance, identity, and the socio-legal implications of digital embodiment, focusing on gender, memory, and chronopolitics. **Jin Keon** (TW) is an artist and director examining overconsumption, capitalism, and society. With 20+ years of experience across art, fashion, and media, he blends satire, installation, and film to question consumerism and social roles, with works shown in international exhibitions and festivals.

Bewegungsapparat

Sven Windszus



Ignorance, overwhelm or poverty... There are many reasons why people do not change their way of life so that future generations have the same opportunities to use resources as the present. From an evolutionary point of view, we are overwhelmed with the problem of environmental degradation. We could not develop a thought pattern over the last millennia that would have taught us to be future-oriented to live. Our perception is designed in such a way that the present is more important than that future.

Seen in this way, we are caught on treadmill that turns incessantly to maintain the previous system. We are literally sawing off the branch we are sitting on.

The installation *Bewegungsapparat* consists of three rotating elements that are mechanically connected to each other. At the top position we see a monitor that changes continuously as it rotates 360°. A video is running on the display showing a person in a hamster wheel. Since the video is always horizontally aligned while the screen rotates, the monitor appears to be driven by the rotating motion of the person in the video. The upper screen drives a lower monitor by pushing it. On the screen of the lower monitor, an oil pump can be seen, which moves analogously to the movement of the monitor. The large rod pendulum is mechanically attached to the lower monitor and swings in the same rhythm.

At the bottom of the pendulum a small saw blade is attached, which is constantly sawing at the steel holder of the whole installation. The impression is created that the system is destroying itself.

The biggest challenge of the project was keeping the video image horizontal while the screens rotate. For this, many sensors had to be tested and special software programmed.

Work and concept: Sven Windszus
Programming: Alexander Jasper
Engineering: Ulrich Kwade

https://u.aec.at/F01AFAF0

Sven Windszus (DE) was born in 1974 in Northern Germany, where he also grew up. He studied graphic design at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hildesheim. Since 2003 he has lived in Berlin, where he works as a multimedia artist. He also teaches video and 3D software at the UdK, Berlin University of the Arts. His works focus on the interaction of digital processes and the analysis of reality and consciousness. Sven wants to uncover the contradictions in the reality of his life and to question his habits. Many of his works are interactive installations that invite the viewer to actively participate. Through this type of dialogue, existing perspectives and ideas are correlated with the content of his work.

Coda

Paul Valentin

The wave as a repository and transmitter of information is at the center of the work *Coda*. It appears in the form of water, sound, and light waves—interference, reflection, coherence, phase shift—phenomena that affect all types of waves. The work examines the strange laws of the wave and its ability to convey time to us differently in a ritualistic loop experiment.

In music, "coda" stands for the end of a verse or a musical movement. The work *Coda* is a recurring end to a verse. It is a work that deals with the wave as a universal carrier of information, with interference and emergence. In a repetitive ritual, INN (one of the three figures from *Tacit Call*—also part of the *formula* series that was part of Ars Electronica 2024) passes through a portal and a subsequent measuring area, crosses a grid of lasers, and walks past microphones. The shimmering red beam splitters are reminiscent of the experimental setups used in quantum optics, where they also deal with the wave and particle nature of light.

INN holds an old flute in his hand, on which he plays a single note. Each time he passes through the portal, the microphones record the note played and preserve it in a loop. Gradually, a simple melody is formed. Since their discovery, light, sound, water and the mysterious object-waves from quantum physics have inspired our idea of causality and the appearance and emergence of the new and the uncanny ghostly disappearance (as used in noise canceling, for example) of light, movement, and information.

Coda, like the other parts of *Tacit Call* and *Formula,* is enigmatic, because the enigma marks the precise moment when we realize that we do not yet understand. My artistic interest moves along this feeling.

Created by Paul Valentin
Music in collaboration with Jan Kuswari
With support from: Erwin & Giesela von Steiner Stiftung

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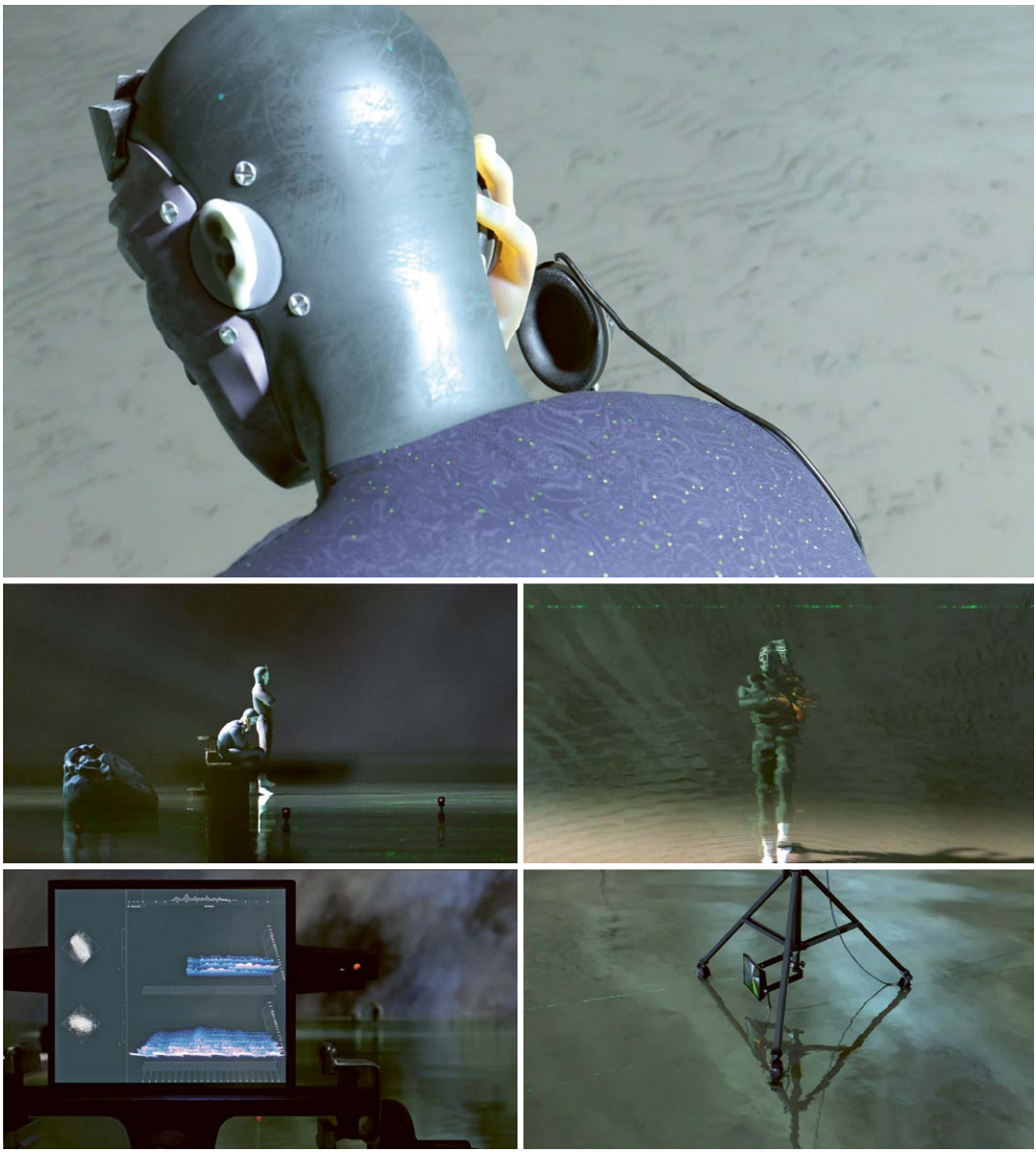


Paul Valentin (DE) is an artist currently based in Munich. He studied with Alexandra Bircken and graduated as Meisterschüler from the Academy of Fine Arts Munich in 2019. His works deal with perennial or even intractable questions of metaphysics, the concept of emergence or non-linear temporality and its effect on the genesis of novelty within complex systems. His work has been presented internationally at the EMAF, Sluice Biennale London, Exchange Rates New York, Haus der Kunst, Museum Frieder Burda, Museum Villa Rot, and Gustav-Lübke-Museum. His films are part of the ERES Collection.

Paul Valentin

CORE DUMP

Alona Rodeh

CORE DUMP is a born-digital fictional short CGI film depicting a surreal flock of drones hunting for e-waste. The film borrows its title from a term describing a computer's documented memory when a program—or the computer as a whole—fails. The film's scenery, designed and operated in a gaming engine, happens in a 3D-fabricated desert-like post-industrial landscape with an open dump site stacked with household junk. Picking up on Climate Fiction, *CORE DUMP* is a hyper-realistic fantasy referring to e-waste management politics in the West, when trashed electronic products are often shipped to developing countries in Asia and Africa, only to be burned by individuals. It also addresses the future of post-industrial landscapes, contemplating 21st-century warfare and links between environmental and geopolitical conditions. The work addresses, abstractly and concretely, the difficulty of transporting goods during a siege, the usage of drone swarms in warfare, the destruction of historical monuments during combat action, and more.

CORE DUMP is part of *CITY DUMMIES*, an evolving series of born-digital motion clips and interactive video games created using a gaming engine, depicting hyper-realistic fabricated urban sceneries with surreal embodied machines at play. The series comments on today's increasingly commerce-dominated cityscapes. The works are shown in both exhibition and film festival contexts. Most of the works are short-form videos, with *CORE DUMP* one of the longest and, technically, the most complex and ambitious of them.

CGI environment, lighting, VFX: Rachid Moro
Cinematography: Wallace David, Rachid Moro
Sound design: Rachid Moro, Daphna Keenan
Programming: Eagle Wux
CGI R&D: Federico Zurani
With support from: Stiftung Kunstfonds, the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Artis.

https://u.aec.at/B8A82219

Alona Rodeh (IL), born 1979, is a Berlin-based visual artist, scenographer, and urban practitioner. Rooted in the perception of the nocturnal built environment, her research-driven practices explore material cultures, subcultures, and audiovisual expressions of feelings of safety. She is most known for creating large, immersive virtual and physical environments. Her works are frequently shown in institutional contexts, with large works and solo presentations. She has installed permanent public artworks in Germany and Israel.

Earths to Come

Rose Bond, inti figgis-vizueta, Massimiliano Borghesi, Melanie Coombs, Roomful of Teeth, PASE

Earths to Come is a virtual journey, guided by spatialized sound and immersive animation, into the profound depths of a love poem. Painterly, penciled moving images, interweave with original vocal music conjuring a sense of intimate presence to find vastness and insularity in the simplicity of an 8-line poem by queer icon Emily Dickinson. *Earths to Come* takes its title from Dickinson's poem "I have no life but this." Rather than illustrate the poem, Rose Bond's penciled animation evokes a sensation of the deeply personal engagement held within its lines. Her hand drawings re-form and choreograph motifs from the poet's home, her handwritten drafts and the everyday landscape in 1860s western Massachusetts.

Earths to Come premiered at the 2024 Venice Biennale Cinema Immersive as a communal VR theater location-based experience (LBE) sited within a geodesic dome. Spatial sound was realized in a 15.1 channel diffusion system and broke away from the aurally constructed illusion of the "sweet spot" as it re-centered throughout the collective body of listeners. Space became a dynamic field where acoustic perception unfolded in relation to movement, position, and the presence of others.

Earths to Come arose organically from the interplay of diverse languages, temporalities, and sensibilities. In this sense, it does not merely advocate for a democratization of listening, but embodies a model of operational democracy, in which the appreciation of individual contributions gave rise to a collective and coherent aesthetic system. The work suggests that nothing is more immersive than reality itself—not only in its tangible dimension, but also in its subtler layers: dream, memory, and imagination. It is in this liminal space that the work takes shape.

Rose Bond

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention

Rose Bond

PASE Platform

Director: Rose Bond
Producer: Melanie Coombs
Composer: inti figgis-vizueta
Vocal ensemble: Roomful of Teeth
Composite artist: Zak Margolis
Spatial sound mix: Massimiliano Borghesi
Spatial Sound Exhibit Production: Studio PASE
Valeria Zane, Victor Nebbiolo di Castri, Riccardo Sellan, Pierpaolo Ovarini

Emily Dickinson's envelope poem penciled draft Amherst Manuscript # 232 courtesy of Amherst College Digital Collections

Earths to Come was developed in part during a residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, NY, awarded through a 2023 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Works-in-Progress residency program and at the 2024 Venice Biennale College Cinema Immersive January 2024 workshop.

https://u.aec.at/D8EF9008

Rose Bond (US/CAN) is an expanded cinema director. Her work navigates allegories of place and illuminates spaces through glimpses often overlooked. **inti figgis-vizueta** (US, IE), composer and educator, works to reconcile historical aesthetics & experimental practices with trans & Indigenous futures. **Massimiliano Borghesi** (IT) is a sound designer at the forefront of Spatial Immersive Cinema and co-founded allyouneedissound. **Melanie Coombs** (UK, AU) is a creative producer whose credits include Oscar® winners *Harvie Krumpet and Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio.* **Roomful of Teeth** (US), Grammy-winning vocal band reimagines the expressive potential of the human voice, engaging collaboratively to amplify voices old and new. **PASE** (IT) explores the relationship between sound & space through artistic research, technology, and public/private partnerships.

Los Caídos

Juan Covelli

Los Caídos is a video game inspired by the social uprising of 2021 in Colombia when the toppling of numerous colonial monuments marked a turning point in the country's recent history. In this digital environment, characters such as Captain Colombia, ESMAD agents, La Guerrera Misak, and La Cuerpa Trans inhabit an apocalyptic setting where conflict transforms into a festival of resistance to the frenetic rhythm of guaracha music. Through the game, it questions how algorithmic culture and social media create ideological bubbles, amplify extremist narratives, and shape perceptions of reality.

By simulating confrontation within a digital space, *Los Caídos* investigates the algorithmic cultures that fuel ideological bubbles and amplify extremist narratives. In the face of post-truth and the multiplicity of narratives, *Los Caídos* proposes social memory landmarks that are malleable, horizontal, and interactive. It is not just a video game but a speculative platform that enables the reconfiguration of collective memory and provides space for new narratives about conflict. The ability to "play" with reality in a digital environment becomes a tool for reflection and catharsis, allowing participants to experience and rethink social struggles from a new perspective. In this sense, the game's characters are not merely representations of the actors involved in the protests but serve as new identity archetypes within an evolving collective archive.

More than just a video game, *Los Caídos* is a living archive. This speculative reconstruction invites reflection on the struggle over collective memory and the role of technology in reinterpreting our historical ruins. The project raises a crucial question: Can the digital space be used to subvert official narratives and generate new stories that give voice to those who have historically been silenced?

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention

Producer & concept artist: Nicolh Avila
Production: Natalia Ordoñez
Video game developer & 3D modeller: Carlos Caballero
Character development & 3D modelling: Dirkcark Bell, Nicolh Avila, Andres Ramirez & David Chávez
Photogrammetry: Lina Peralta
Original music & sound design: Jaime Carvajal
Graphic identity design: Adá María León
With support from: Somerset House Studios, London; Alan Turing Institute; UAL Creative Computing Institute; Premio Luis Caballero, Idartes, Bogotá

https://u.aec.at/A4972E94

Juan Covelli (CO) uses technology as a medium to decolonize the museum through digital practices. His work releases archives from institutional control to explore colonial histories and propose emancipatory narratives. Using AI, 3D modeling, and video, he creates IRL and URL installations. His work has been exhibited at KW Berlin, MAMM, Kadist, and Americas Society. He won the Lumen Prize (2021) and was nominated for Premio Luis Caballero (2023).

NATURAL CONTACTS

Mark Fingerhut, Peter Burr, Bridget DeFranco, Matthew D Gantt

Scott Kiernan

NATURAL CONTACTS is malware that commandeers its host machine for 24 hours. The software transforms the user's desktop into a dynamic virtual garden where time is compressed: 24 real hours mirror a complete yearly cycle in this synthetic ecosystem. At the heart of this digital wilderness lies a quietly rotting corpse, around which a slow collective drama unfolds. As days become nights and seasons pass, the landscape evolves. Remnant files blow in the digital wind, resting birds scatter at the swift movement of a cursor, and flies make their home around decaying flesh. The once verdant landscape transforms into a barren, snow-laden field, only to regenerate anew. This is a world where technology and nature coexist in a strange, indifferent balance of spreadsheets and dirt.

The software integrates every digital element into this slow performance. Seasonal birds appear on procedurally generated vines, startled by cursor movements. Flies emerge from the decomposing digital form, their paths tracing algorithms across the screen. The landscape cycles from lush growth to barren winter fields and back, with previous states resurfacing as wind-scattered image files.

Taking inspiration from John Cage's prepared piano techniques, *NATURAL CONTACTS* functions as a prepared desktop. While basic computer functions remain such as email, web browsing, and video playback, these activities become subordinate to the persistent natural environment. Unlike typical malware, it operates with an unusual benevolence, turning the machine's processes into a meditation on decay and renewal.

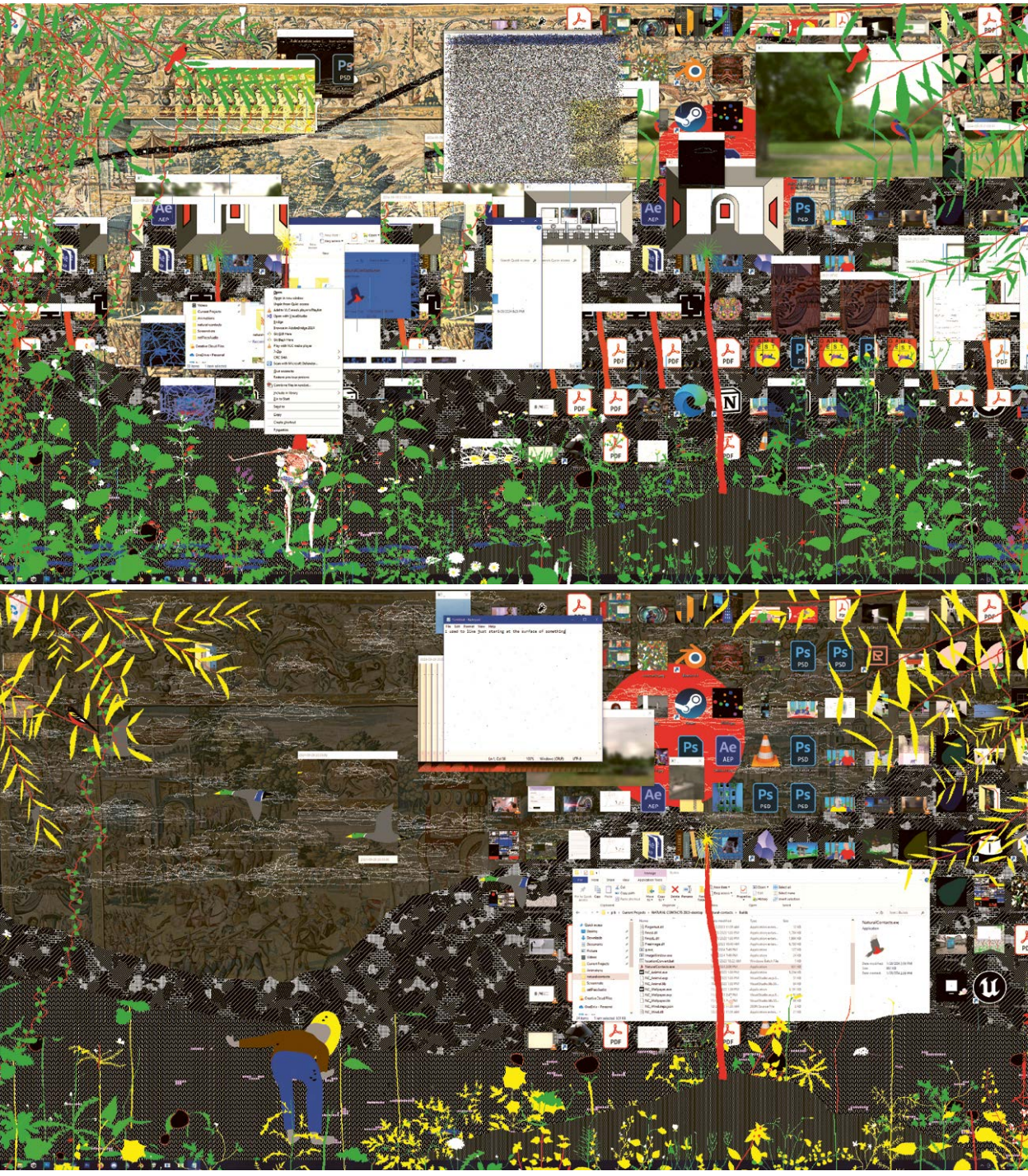
The software resists categorization, being neither game nor tool. It asks its audience to surrender normal computer use for 24 hours, creating a technological silent retreat that forces engagement with slower rhythms. Weather patterns emerge and fade, seasons advance and recede, and digital flora and fauna follow predetermined cycles. The decomposing figure remains central, its decay marking time's passage.

Code: Mark Fingerhut
Graphics: Peter Burr
Sound: Matthew D Gantt
Life: Bridget DeFranco
NATURAL CONTACTS is made possible, in part, by the New York State Council of the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature through the Media Arts Assistance Fund a regrant partnership of NYSCA and Wave Farm.

https://u.aec.at/73462CFB

Mark Fingerhut, Peter Burr, Bridget DeFranco, Matthew D Gantt (all US). Operating at the convergence of games, cinema, music, and software, this quartet explores the expressive potential of experimental malware. Through game environments, 3D simulations, virtual acoustics, and operating system interventions, they challenge the latent conventions of traditional digital interfaces. Their collective resume includes exhibitions at MoMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Centre Pompidou, and more across more than 25 countries.

Peter Burr



Oto's Planet

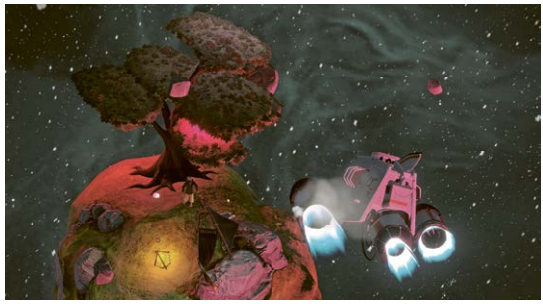
Gwenael François

Oto's Planet is a 28-minute interactive experience in stereoscopic virtual reality (6Dof) that places us in the position of an omniscient spectator, while telling us the story of Oto.

This interactive VR tale follows the quiet lives of Oto and Skippy on their tiny planet, disrupted by Exo, a cosmonaut whose spaceship crashes there. Oto enjoys his simple life by chilling in a hammock and eating pink fruits from his unique tree. Helped by the user, Oto tries to grab a fruit but accidentally causes a shockwave that attracts Exo's ship, making it crash on the planet. Exo emerges, plants a flag, and starts exploring the planet without any regard for Oto. Their cohabitation proves difficult, with communication barriers and Exo's territorial behavior. During the entire experience, the user will play their own part by intervening regularly, participating in the story and moving forward the narrative.

The immersive experience allows users to discover an unexpected but wonderful universe. From the outset, just like a tale, a voice-over invites the user to follow a narrative and its characters. However, unlike the classic, literary tone used in most traditional stories, the tone here is familiar, slightly grumpy and offbeat. The voice addresses the user directly, creating a real sense of closeness between them. The strong personality traits of our two main characters inject life and laughter into the story. Indeed, the tension that builds when these two contradictory characters meet, is just what we need to move the narrative along. Their touching and universal encounter allows us to address some of the darker pages of human history, upon exploring themes such as sharing, land appropriation, emergence of borders, and cohabitation, in addition to exploring death and the weight of belonging to a global ecosystem.

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention



Written and directed by: Gwenael François
A co-production of Skill Lab, Dpt., Small Creative
Producer: Julien Becker/Skill Lab, Nicolas S. Roy/ Dpt., Vincent Guttmann & Voyelle Acker/Small Creative
Unity development supervisor: Saverio Trapasso, Thibault Sequier

Music: Chapelier Fou
Sound design: Olivier Lang, Cédric Fischer, Raphael Hoffman (Mad Trix)
Art direction: Zeilt Studio
With support from: Film Fund Luxembourg; Canada Media Fund; La Région Grand Est; CNC; Atelier Grand Nord XR

https://u.aec.at/3117141A

Gwenael François (LU/FR) is a visionary French director and producer based in Luxembourg. As a key creative force at Skill Lab, he crafts captivating stories that seamlessly merge artistry with technology. His portfolio spans short films and music videos, each a testament to his innovative storytelling. Since embracing virtual reality in 2020, Gwenael has pushed the boundaries of interactive experiences with groundbreaking works like *Oto's Planet* (Special Jury Prize, Venice 2024; Reflet d'Or, GIFF 2024, Grand Prix, Tokyo Beyond the Frame 2024; Best Narrative, XRMust Awards 2025), *Errances* (FIVARS 2023, SIGGRAPH 2023), and his current project, *Tachychronia*. With a passion for global collaboration and a relentless drive for innovation, Gwenael François continues to reimagine the possibilities of immersive storytelling, leaving an indelible mark on the intersection of creativity and technology.

Sixty-seven Milliseconds

fleuryfontaine

In search of a bullet whose trail has been captured on surveillance camera footage, the film follows its trajectory and those of its main protagonists. At the heart of a reconstruction that combines the practice of computer-generated images with the history of the moving image, *Sixty-seven Milliseconds* questions the legitimacy of policing in France and warns of its excesses.

For the last fifteen years or so, we have been thinking about the way in which the digital tools used for artistic production can both reflect reality and, at the same time, influence it, in a practice that lies at the crossroads of research, cinema, and experimentation.
Our interest in state violence stems from personal experiences as teenagers and, later, in protests, particularly following the 2016 Labour Law under François Hollande's government. In 2020 we produced a short film, *Contraindre*, a video essay looking back over four years of police violence across France. Just after that, we started working with a number of media organizations to reconstruct events in the context of cases involving French law enforcement agencies using computer-generated images.

One of these cases made a particularly strong impression on us: the mutilation of a young man by a police officer in 2020. In the middle of the night, for no particular reason, the young man, then aged 19, was shot in the head with a 40 mm riot gun, as a result of which he lost his right eye. The police officer justified the shooting as self-defence against an aggressive young man, without knowing that a surveillance camera had captured the entire scene.
Sixty-seven milliseconds revisits this event, which is particularly representative of police actions in the suburbs, unfolding it both temporally and semantically to understand its significance. As the CCTV camera filmed the scene at 15 frames per second, the bullet that hit the young man was caught in mid-air on just one of these frames, in an interval of 67 milliseconds. Created using a combination of chronophotography, eyewitness accounts and wiretaps of the police officers involved in the investigation, the film articulates a visual and political blind spot, revealing a vast system of oppression that affects us all.

fleuryfontaine

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention

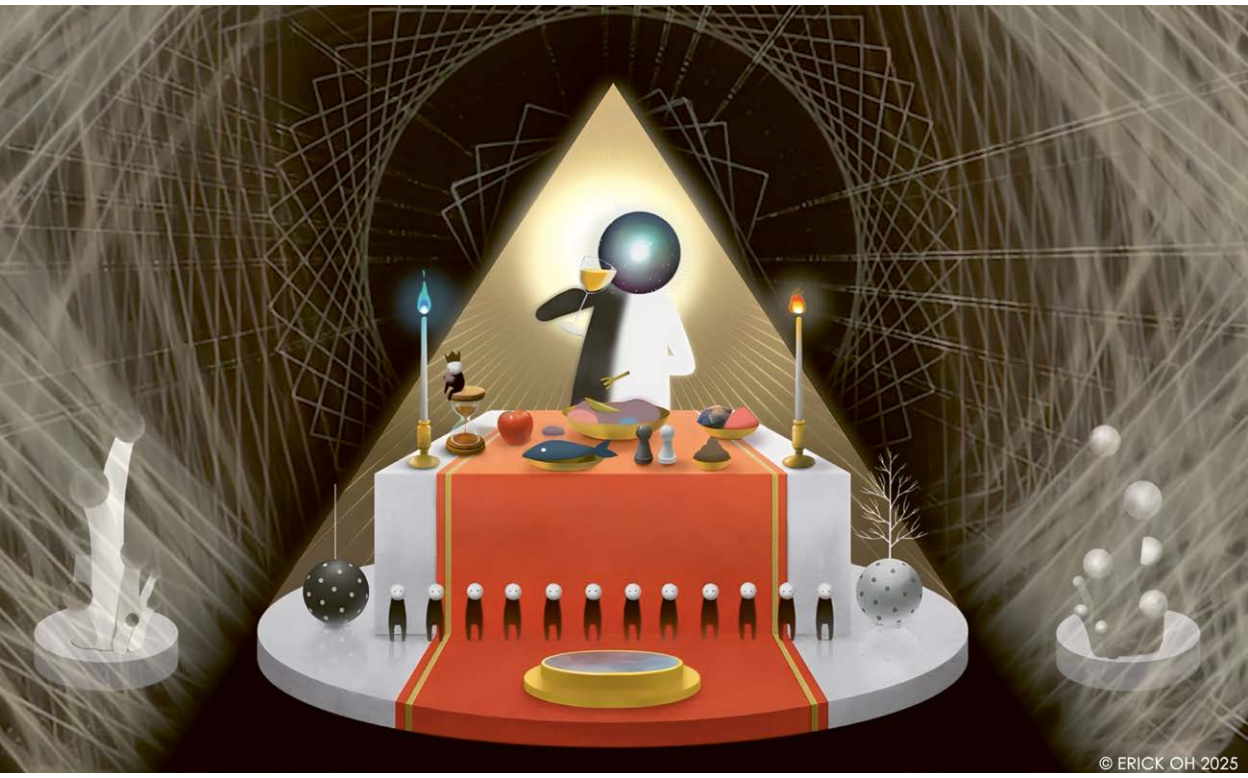
Director: fleuryfontaine
Producer: Eliott Baillon
Image: fleuryfontaine
Editor: Marie Loustalot
Sound editing: Luc Aureille
Music: Abul Mogard
Cast: Khalil Garbia, Mathilde La Musse, Hugo Brunswick, Alexandre Blazy
With support from: Arte; CNC; Pictanovo / Région Hauts-de-France; Région Nouvelle Aquitaine; Bordeaux Métropole; Scam; Le Fresnoy – Studio National des Arts contemporains; Embassy of Foreign Artists

https://u.aec.at/1139C261

fleuryfontaine (FR) is the pseudonym of trained architects and artists, Galdric Fleury and Antoine Fontaine, who have been working as a duo since 2011. Thinking on the place we occupy in the artificial and secure environments that condition our bodies and behaviors, their work consists of installations, sculptures, performances, video toys, and films. In 2024, their latest short film, *Sixty-seven Milliseconds*, won the Arte award at the Annecy Film Festival. In 2025, the film was selected for Visions du Réel in Nyon, Indie Lisboa, and the Champs Élysées Film Festival, among others.

SUPPER

Erick Oh



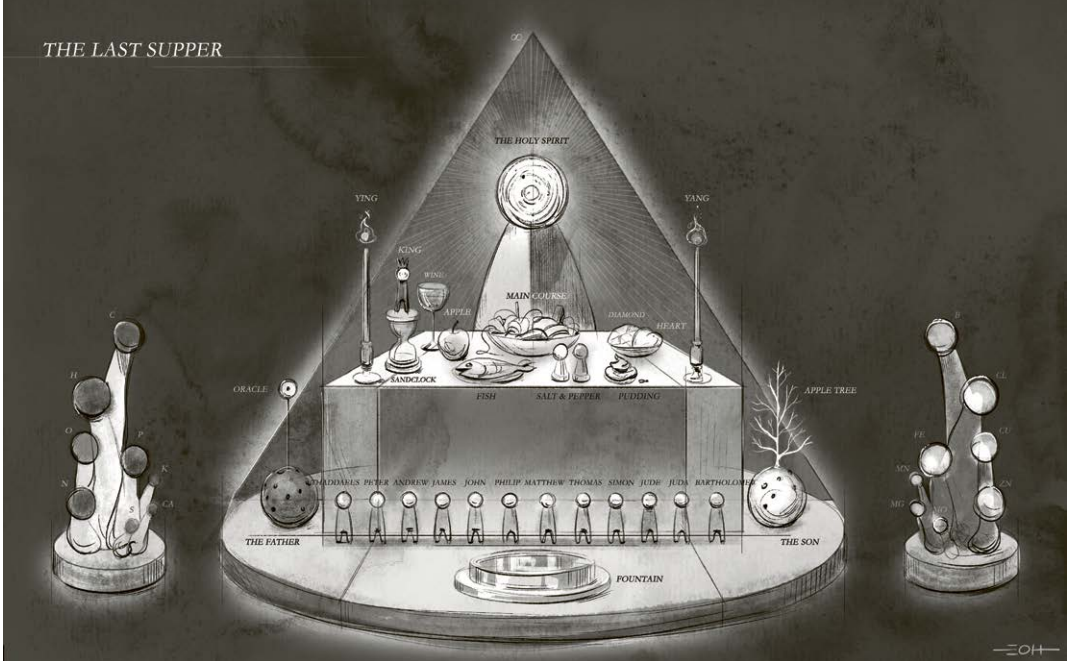
SUPPER is the sequel to *OPERA*, Erick Oh's previous short film that was nominated by the Academy in 2021. While *OPERA* reflects the humanity from our own perspective, *SUPPER* is viewed by God-like beings' point of view.

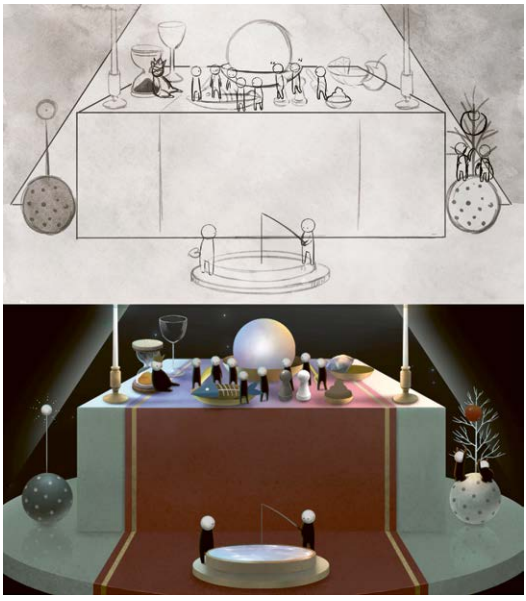
A table stretches endlessly, draped meticulously with an ornate cloth embroidered in patterns reminiscent of celestial movements. Upon its expansive surface, carefully arranged, sits a collection of symbolic objects, each resonating deeply with layers of meaning. A glistening fish, scales shimmering as though freshly plucked from mythical waters, represents vitality and abundance. Beside it rests a flawless apple, its vibrant skin smooth and enticing, symbolizing knowledge and temptation. Nearby, an ornate hourglass silently measures time's relentless progression, grains of sand cascading steadily downward, a quiet reminder of mortality.

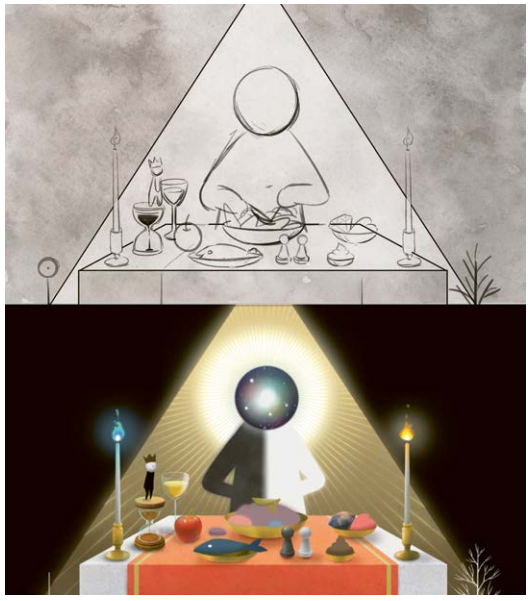
Adjacent to these objects lies an impeccably cut diamond, facets catching and refracting the ambient light into a dazzling array of colors, embodying purity, eternity, and unwavering strength. Completing this intricate ensemble is a heart, vivid and richly colored, pulsating subtly as if it were alive, evoking love, passion, and humanity's profound emotional desires. Together, these carefully curated elements form an intricate meal, inviting contemplation and reflection on life's complexities and profound mysteries.

At the head of this endless table sits an enormous, enigmatic entity. Its sheer scale defies comprehension, looming in a quiet state of readiness. Observers might wonder, what exactly is this being? Could it represent a deity presiding over existence, the infinite universe personified, or perhaps the very essence of nature itself, inscrutable and eternal? Humanity's fervent quest for eternity, its unyielding pursuit of meaning and significance, here seems trivialized, distilled into nothing more substantial than a single meal intended for the consumption of this vast, unknowable presence.

New Animation Art
Honorary Mention







Written and directed by Erick Oh
Storyboard: Erick Oh
Art: Ruby Wang & Yijen Liu
Animation: Jongha Yoon & Hyunji Park
Music: FRNK
Sound design: Andrew Vernon
VFX & composition: Daesung Jung
Produced by Beasts and Natives Alike

https://u.aec.at/BC528A1C

Erick Oh (US) is an Oscar nominated filmmaker and a former Pixar animator based in California, USA. His films have been introduced and awarded at numerous film festivals including Academy Awards, Annie Awards, Annecy Animation Festival, Zagreb Film Festival, SIGGRAPH, Anima Mundi and more. With his background in fine art in Seoul National University, Korea and film at UCLA, USA, Erick was an animator at Pixar Animation Studios from 2010 to 2016. Erick is currently working on various projects, ranging from short films, series, VR, media art, installation and more.

Erick Oh

World at Stake

Total Refusal (Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein)

A golfer fails to strike, a soccer team plays against itself, and a rally co-driver faces an identity crisis. They are surrounded by an audience unable to act. Shot in sports video games, the film *World At Stake* turns the ordering principles of victory and defeat upside down and negotiates social roles between individual sovereignty and collective passivity. In the face of catastrophe, a feeling of political powerlessness remains.
Nothing less than the world is at stake.

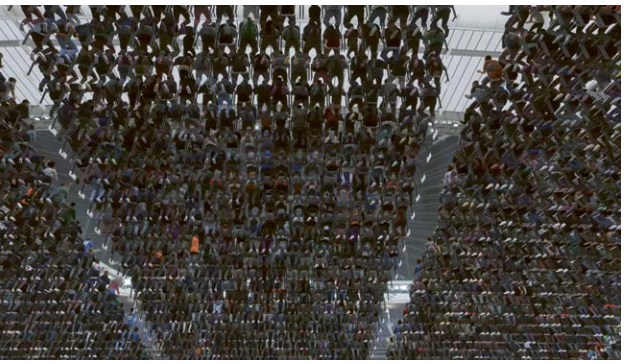
Directors: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Screenplay: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Producer: BMKÖS & ORF III, Pixel, Bytes + Film Stipend
Cinematographer: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Sound recording: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Sound design: Bernhard Zorzi
Editors: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Composer: Adrian Jonas Haim
Modding: Nikola Supukovic, Jakob Sam
Color correction: Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein
Title design: Michael Stumpf

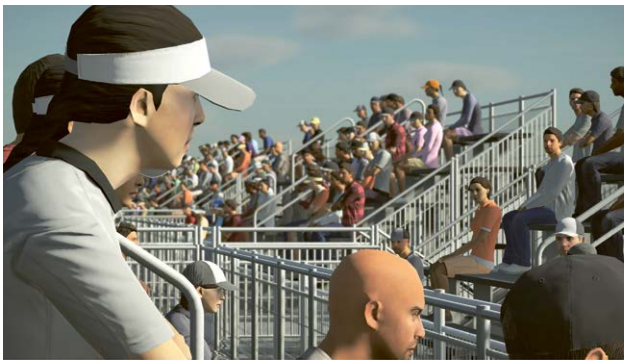
With support from: „Pixel, Bytes + Film"- Stipendium, Bundesministerium für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport (BMKÖS) in Kooperation mit ORF III

https://u.aec.at/1C51D28E

Susanna Flock (AT) explores body-tech relations and internet culture via video. She shows internationally, has won multiple awards, and is part of the collective Total Refusal since 2020. **Jona Manuel Kleinlein** (AT), born in 1993 in Stuttgart, films, edits, and creates in digital and analog worlds and lives and works in Northern Norway. **Adrian Jonas Haim** (AT), born in 1991 in Vienna, studied Political Science & Experimental Game Cultures and makes film, music, and politics in Vienna; programs for film festivals.





Artificial Life & Intelligence

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Staying with the Trouble of Technology

Clemens Apprich, Tamar Clarke-Brown, Charlotte Jarvis, Špela Petrič, Simon Weckert

Applications for this year's Artificial Life & Intelligence category ask how artistic methods can be used to map the complex relationships between technology, bodies, cultures and politics, and how critical creative practices can disrupt and challenge widely accepted 'truths'.

During the jury meeting, we discussed the manifold artistic explorations of artificial life and intelligence, treating these emerging forms not as actual phenomena but as conceptual portals—gateways to reimagined futures and reinterpreted pasts. What many of the artworks discussed have in common is that they make conceivable the 'ephemeral temporality' of our digital age. They draw inspiration from the past and use it to create new and unknown futures. The artworks thus serve as both speculative instruments and reflective surfaces, enabling us to perceive our present condition with new clarity and critical depth. Rather than offering simplistic answers or utopian projections, the artists invite us to inhabit the tensions, contradictions, and possibilities that artificial life and AI evoke.

In addressing pressing questions about our bodies, desires, realities, histories, and futures, a common thread running through many of the artworks is their ability to ground themselves in the principle of situatedness. We therefore wish to acknowledge works that are self-aware and embedded in the technologies, rituals, materialities and communities with which they engage. By confronting their own position within these systems, these artworks resist the illusion of neutrality and detachment. Instead, they either 'stay with the trouble' that new technologies have brought to our lives and minds, or they bring new trouble to already established technological settings, platforms, and narratives. They linger in complexity, defying easy resolution and challenging their audiences to confront uncomfortable questions and unexamined assumptions.

Through this embedded lens, the works chart the dense and intricate webs that connect technology to bodies, culture to code, memory to machine. They unravel the ways in which our lives are increasingly shaped by automated systems and ask how these systems encode, erase, or amplify certain ways of being, knowing, feeling, and desiring. In doing so, they aim to disrupt dominant narratives—those that frame technological progress as linear, disembodied or inevitable—and instead foreground the multiplicity of truths, temporalities, and perspectives that often go unacknowledged.

Golden Nica

Guanaquerx
Paula Gaetano Adi

This year's Golden Nica in the Artificial Life & Intelligence category goes to *Guanaquerx* by Paula Gaetano Adi. 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.

Awards of Distinction

Anatomy of Non-Fact, Chapter 1: AI Hyperrealism
Martyna Marciniak

The first Award of Distinction is awarded to *Anatomy of Non-Fact, Chapter 1: AI Hyperrealism* by Martyna Marciniak, a complex and multi-layered analysis of what we consider to be an image today. As the first chapter of an ongoing exploration of image-based disinformation, the work takes the figure of the fake Balenciaga Pope as a starting point to map out a vast and entangled web of art historical, pop cultural, and media theoretical references. Interwoven throughout the 18-minute video, these references confront the audience with their own entanglement into the 'social authority' of technological media and provoke a rethinking of the century-old relationship between image and truth. In doing so, the artist points out a practice that dwells on and exploits the difficulties and inconsistencies, arising from a critical and timely research that is deeply engaged with the present moment and the fallacies in what we receive as truth.

XXX Machina
Erin Robinson, Anthony Frisby

The second Award of Distinction goes to *XXX Machina* by Erin Robinson and Anthony Frisby, a bold exploration of our erotic desires as they are increasingly shaped by AI technologies. Functioning as an 'autonomous desiring machine', the piece generates an endless stream of pornographic images, which in turn are fed back into the machine, creating a body of distorted and unreal properties. While current debates about AI porn and deep fakes usually revolve around faces, most of which are used illegally, Robinson draws our attention to the statistically calculated bodies themselves. By literally giving them a face—in this case the artist's own—Robinson critically engages with a machine-driven fantasy that draws on vast databases of disenfranchised sexual imagery. Reminiscent of early body art, it is a practice that does not speak from the outside, but from the inside of our sexual drives and desires. The jury spent many hours discussing this work and we would like to acknowledge the impact it had on us.

Honorary Mentions

Artificial Archive: SCRYING INTIMACIES
Rodell Warner
Rodell Warner uses AI to reveal and attend to archival omissions, restore the record, and prompt images and memories of what could have been. By generating a speculative photographic archive from mid-to-late 19th-century Caribbean history, the artist offers a powerful counterpoint to the era's official photographic records. Photography has here a unique relationship to truth: an image (always taken and always constructed) establishes itself as an evidential record and forms the basis of belief. The unique prompts Warner uses, such as "What would the photographic record have looked like if these people had been the beneficiaries of their centuries of labor?", create alternative imaginaries. These speculate on what the photographic archive could have looked like if the African and Asian people of the Caribbean had access to photography and could record their lives from their own perspectives. This project addresses the interiority and liberation of these people from limited historic representations and under-imagined lives.

Atlas of Queer Anatomy
Kuang-Yi Ku
The *Atlas of Queer Anatomy* is both a critical object and an academic proposition. The project offers an invitation to celebrate queer bodies by subverting (or perhaps liberating) a format that has traditionally marginalized them. By illustrating disease associated microorganisms with equal prominence to human body parts, the project disrupts human-centered hierarchies, binary categorization systems, and the oppression of disease based stigma. The illustrations are engaging and the workshops have provided further opportunities to open out discussions and debate around 'other' bodies and their omission from the medical cannon. The jury was particularly impressed with the *Atlas* as a beautiful demonstration of the strengths and advantages of post-disciplinary collaborative research.

Cedar Exodus
Iyad Abou Gaida, Em Joseph, Jumanah Abbas, Ecorove
Cedar Exodus is a skillfully poetic three-part video work about the political ecology of the Lebanese cedar, a tree whose silhouette adorns the Lebanese national flag. By juxtaposing the historical myth of the plant with its present day ecological precariousness, it offers an urgent insight into living through a polycrisis: the fates of people and the land they inhabit are codependent, reinforcing, and intertwined. The diffracted storytelling of the culturally (over)codified plant in its symbolic, material, and ecological relations through deep time, set against the current war-torn reality of the region, reads as a demand for justice for all—human and non-human—whose lives continue to be endangered by the political and economic interests of the privileged classes.

CripShip: Disability Saves Society from BigTech
Joseph Wilk
CripShip is humorous, generous, and joyful. The game uses roleplay as an empathetic and critical tool, providing players with a means to comprehend and engage with the lived experiences of communities and people who are too often marginalized and undervalued, but also to dissect the technological systems that oppress them. Players engage in diverse rich narratives, tell 'other' stories and become alternative heroes. *CripShip* provides us with a palpable demonstration that the world is bet-

ter when it's inclusive. It facilitates players in envisioning and therefore creating the futures we want. *CripShip* is play as activism.

Dynamics of a Dog on a Leash
Takayuki Todo
In this deceptively simple artwork, we encounter a Boston Dynamics-style 'robot dog', chained but constantly lunging at the audience until it finally overheats and collapses, only to be replaced by its double that is waiting patiently in the background. Its affective potency—the sense of discomfort it evokes—creates a tension that requires us to reflect on the work's many layers of context and meaning: from the military origins of robots and their current use in conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine, to the way in which we project living agency (if only for a split second) onto the machine, to their role as a 'surrogate humanity' that allows for the continued, guilt-free relationship of subjugation. As the artist suggests, the robot dog in this installation is indeed held back by a thin and unreliable 'chain of ethics'.

Fluid Anatomy
Ioana Vreme Moser
Fluid Anatomy by Ioana Vreme Moser uses air and water to create a new kind of computation. This installation uses technologies from the mid-20th century to show how circuits can be made from pressure, flow, and resonance. It has tubes, pulses, and murmurs that visitors can see, hear, and feel. This makes computation visible and audible. The work is special because it looks at the past and challenges ideas about technology. Instead of making us feel nostalgic, it shows us a different path for technology. One that is slower, softer, and more connected to the real world. For its critical engagement with alternative technologies and for inviting us to rethink what computation can look and feel like, *Fluid Anatomy* is commended by the jury in the Artificial Life & Intelligence category.

Flying Cream
aniara rodado
Through the project's research proposition, to remix and therefore reimagine the fabled ointment used by European witches during their gatherings, aniara rodado's *Flying Cream* is a rich and nuanced material manifesto against the erasure of knowledge, foregrounding the pleasure of and care for bodies that continue to be made invisible—trans and peri-/postmenopausal women and non-binary people. By applying (herbal) knowledge from marginal epistemes while involving renowned scientific institutions and the commercial cosmetics industry, the cream against vaginal dryness is also a subversive act of epistemic contamination that helps us imagine what contemporary witchcraft might look like within contemporary power relations.

Fine-Tuning Human Sense 2.0 from the Sensory Datascape Series
Hoonida Kim
In the *Sensory Datascape Series*, Hoonida Kim explores how digital technology not only mediates our perception, but actively reshapes it. Version 2.0 transforms the act of sensing into a deliberate practice—requiring viewers to blink, pause, and recalibrate as they confront AI-generated predictions layered over blurred vision and spatial sound. The work turns passive seeing into an active negotiation between human senses and machine interpretation. By positioning digital tools as "implants" that fine-tune rather than simply extend perception, the project offers a nuanced reflection on how we co-evolve with technology. It challenges the assumption that more information leads to clearer understanding, instead revealing how mediation can both enhance and obscure. The jury recognizes the *Sensory Datascape Serie*s for its thoughtful engagement with the complexities of sensory perception in the digital age, and for encouraging viewers to question the terms under which they see, hear, and know.

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Jury Statement

Plato's Prisoners
Cody Lukas
Plato's Prisoners places lab-grown mini-brains, cerebral organoids, at the center of a sensory and ethical exploration. In the installation, these living clusters of human cells respond to speech, control light and sound, and create the impression of a dialogue between human and organoid. The work highlights how closely these disembodied brains resemble the early stages of human cognition—while receiving little to no ethical protection. It confronts us with an urgent question: At what point does cellular life become worthy of ethical consideration? The jury was impressed by *Plato's Prisoners* powerful staging of a largely invisible but urgent issue.

The Post-Truth Museum
Nora Al-Badri
The Post-Truth Museum addresses timely questions within postcolonial debates regarding the restitution of plundered artefacts in Western museums and institutions. Using various AI techniques, including deepfake technology, Al-Badri explores the issue through a series of disarmingly honest 'official' statements delivered by ventriloquized European museum directors [the leaders of the Prussian Heritage Foundation (Berlin), the Louvre (Paris), and the British Museum (London)] counterbalanced with perspectives from the reanimated objects themselves. The somber, yet somehow absurd and synthetic quality of these institutional confessions serves to amplify the often hollow, complicit nature and cognitive dissonance entangled within such institutional performances.

Tinder_gun_boys_@Brussels_
Loïs Soleil
*Tinder_gun_boys_@Brussels_* offers humor and resilience. The project collects Tinder images of heterosexual men posing with weapons as their dating profile picture. These images are then made into mats used in self-defense classes. Finally, and presumably after suffering another form of attack, the artist has run talks and workshops dissecting the legality of using these images in her work. The project functions as a razor-sharp calling out of the necropatriarchal power regime, in which male bodies have a sovereign monopoly and right to violence. *Tinder_gun_boys_@Brussels_* also provides a lens through which to observe how many technologies and systems propagate patriarchy. The work is a brilliant piece of activism—conceptual, physical, and pragmatic.

YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING / ARE YOU SOULLESS TOO?
Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley
Artist and game designer Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley creates participatory experiences centered on archiving and amplifying Black Trans experiences. *YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING / ARE YOU SOULLESS TOO?* is a multiplayer democratic game that challenges players to examine their role within systems of power, control, and societal accountability. Installed within a kind of amphitheater, this multiplayer video game implicates its players in an unfolding experience set in the final moments of a transformed society. Inspired by horror, speculative fiction and retro video games, the artist plays with the choice architecture of games to encourage reflection on and engagement with the limiting rules and political oppressions that restrict life and which we uphold every day through our silence. It reflects our current political landscape and the increasingly precarious democracy of our times, as well as the asymmetry of our current systems, which interpret and sometimes overrule collective decisions.

Guanaquerx

Paula Gaetano Adi

"The machine is only a means; the end is the conquest of nature, the domestication of natural forces by means of a first act of enslavement: the machine is a slave whose purpose is to make other slaves. Such a dominating and enslaving inspiration can coincide with the quest for man's freedom. But it is difficult to free oneself by transferring slavery onto other beings, men, animals, or machines; to reign over a people of machines that enslave the entire world is still to reign, and every reign presupposes the acceptance of the schemas of enslavement."

Gilbert Simondon
On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects

On January 1817, the Andes Revolutionary Army, led by General José de San Martín, executed a monumental operation: 5,200 men and women and more than 10,000 mules and horses crossed the Andes Mountains from Argentina to Chile. About fifty percent of the army were African slaves, and the other half were mestizos and local indigenous people. Their mission and goal: freedom. Reaching peaks of over 4,500 meters high and traversing precipices and harsh weather conditions, the crossing of the Andes was one of the most dramatic chapters in the 19th-century struggle for Latin American independence, paving the way to liberate the continent from Spanish colonial rule.

Two centuries after the original Crossing of the Andes, a different kind of insurgent retraced the same high mountain trail. This time it wasn't a human but a machine—a quadruped terrestrial robot named Guanaquerx, accompanied by an army of artists, engineers, local muleteers, and 58 mules and horses. With Mount Aconcagua watching over them, along ancient Incan trails and through lands currently occupied by international mining corporations, they moved with a single purpose: to reclaim the Andes as a site of resistance and reimagine robotics as a tool for planetary liberation.

Guanaquerx is the first robot in history to cross the Andes Mountains. Yet, it is more than an engineering achievement; it is a poetic, political, and col-

Pavel Romaniko. Guanaquerx | Paula Gaetano Adi

lective operation. Developed over two years by a transdisciplinary team—engineers from Hyundai's New Horizons Studio, local artisans, bamboo specialists, teenage coders, weavers, muleteers, and historians—the robot embodies an alternative cosmotechnics: a technological practice rooted in collaboration and locality, designed to reset our technical imagination and programmed to seek freedom.

A full-scale exploration rover *Guanaquerx* was modeled after the guanaco—the native mammal of the Andes—and inspired by the myth of the Yastay, the guanaco guardian of the mountains, son of Pachamama and brother of the wind. Constructed from caña colihue and dressed in Andean textiles, the robot fuses ancestral knowledge with contemporary robotic technologies. It is equipped with multiple payloads, including a multi-vision and sound system that records the soundings and images of the Andes and emits a synthetic *relincho* (whinny). Its mechatronic tail beats a traditional Andean drum, waves the flag of the Revolutionary Army of Artificial Liberation (ERLA), and on its chest, a metal plaque bears the *Pluriversal Laws of Robotics*—a radical rewrite of Asimov's laws, pledging allegiance not just to humans, but to the earth and all its beings.

Crossing the Andes was no small feat. The journey lasted seven days and nights on horseback. When not riding, the crew repaired and calibrated the robot by hand—coding, tuning, soldering amid the rocky trails of the Andes.

Guanaquerx is a project about designing and implementing technologies otherwise. At a time when AI and robotics continue to serve exploitation, enable environmental plundering, and fuel the drive to colonize worlds, *Guanaquerx* invites us to imagine an emancipatory technological revolution and to reclaim the unfinished project of decolonization—urging us to make robots our comrades in the struggle to repair our planet, reshaping the future of human–machine–Earth relations.

With support from Creative Capital Foundation, Hyundai Motor Group, and the Rhode Island School of Design.

https://u.aec.at/A4E5378F

Pavel Romaniko. Guanaquerx | Paula Gaetano Adi

Paula Gaetano Adi (AR) is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar working at the intersections of robotics, crafts, video, and performance. Her practice draws from studies of technoscience, decoloniality, and artificial life, enacting speculative scenarios where machines become sites of poetic resistance. Her work has been widely exhibited in museums, conferences, and festivals across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, and she has received numerous awards and honors, including first prize in VIDA: Art, Robotics & Artificial Life, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and the 2023 Creative Capital Award. Gaetano Adi is currently a Full Professor of Experimental & Foundation Studies and Computation, Technology, and Culture at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD).

Anatomy of Non-Fact. Chapter 1: AI Hyperrealism

Martyna Marciniak

AI Hyperrealism is the first chapter of the *Anatomy of Non-Fact* project informed by independent forensic, technical, visual, cultural and historical research. The project is a response to the increasing threat posed by synthetic, image-based disinformation.

The work follows Jean Baudrillard's notion of 'proving the real through the imaginary, (...) art through anti-art', and seeks a definition of aesthetics of fact through investigation of fakes and hoaxes.

This first chapter focuses on the fake Balenciaga Pope, which captured the attention and imagination of many during the so-called 'AI boom' of 2023. In the nearly 18-minute video, mechanisms of AI-generation, visual journalistic languages, and digital cloning are augmented, partly stultified, and reified. A monologue reflecting on the nature of fact, and delivered by the Balenciaga Pope, speaks to the mounting concern with synthetic images' potential to provoke mass-misinformation events.

Meanwhile as photographic images become fed into AI models as raw data or reflection of reality, the Balenciaga Pope calls for a reconsideration of the still unresolved relationship between photographic images and truth.

In the video, elements of slapstick comedy are employed to point out the absurdities of the established aesthetics of trust including techno-optimism and evidentiary notations.

A series of definitions, old and new, inform the project's unique lexicon. They are woven throughout the video piece, de-anthropomorphizing the existing AI-related terminologies, and re-naming phenomena connected to issues of misinformation.

In the exhibition space, the audience becomes confronted with a materialized version of the Balenciaga Pope's coat, glasses, cross and ring: the impossibilities, lapses and glitches of the synthetic artefacts are physically reconstructed, while references to history of visual truth, from baroque to the recent AI-generated blobsters, are embroidered in the coat's lining.

Martyna Marciniak

Martyna Marciniak

tom mesic

Kilian Blees

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

https://u.aec.at/4602E9E7

Martyna Marciniak (PL) is an artist and researcher. Her practice is informed by a critique of political structures, research on systemic violence and their visual strategies. Her practice bridges media theory, and legal imaginaries to trace how power inscribes itself through image regimes and visual narration infrastructures. Her work engages in a form of dataforensics—poking at the tropes of scientific and forensic aesthetics, revealing their uncertainties, contradictions, and lapses. Oscillating between sculpture, video, and animation, she writes visual counter-histories, and smuggles in other ways of seeing.

XXX Machina

Erin Robinson, Anthony Frisby

XXX Machina is an immersive computational installation examining 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, 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 on closer inspection: bodies glitch, fragment, and recombine, detaching from coherent corporeal referents and becoming increasingly uncanny.

Philosophically, *XXX Machina* explores the tension between symbolic lack and algorithmic saturation. Lacan's model of desire, grounded in absence, is destabilized by AI's potential for frictionless gratification—pornography without search, without delay. Yet AI, lacking subjective interiority, offers not desire but its disarticulated residue: warped anatomies, symbolic breakdowns, fragments without bodies. Through this collapse, the work probes whether desire itself is being reshaped by machinic fantasy.

Through a Baudrillardian lens, the installation examines how synthetic imagery precedes and redefines erotic experience, recursively producing desire instead of just mirroring it. In this hyperreal terrain, the erotic is unmoored from flesh and reassembled as an endlessly customizable, algorithmically amplified spectacle. *XXX Machina* asks what becomes of longing in a system where the Other has already been simulated and made obsolete.

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

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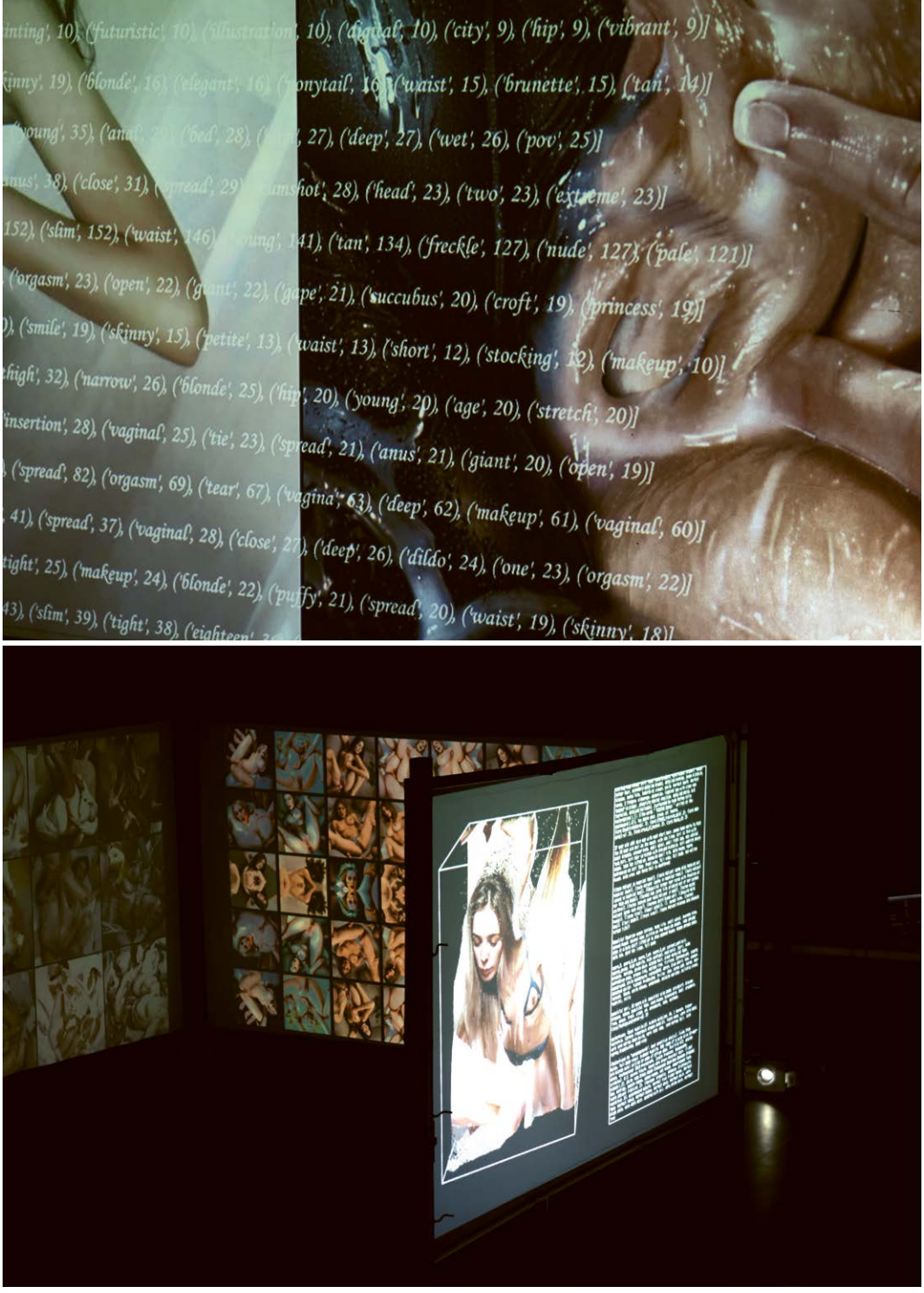
Artificial Life & Intelligence Award of Distinction



Erin Robinson (GB) is a multimedia artist and researcher critically engaging with AI, virtuality, and digital subjectivity. Her work explores fractured selves, mediated identities and synthetic affect, reflecting on authenticity and embodiment in the Digital Anthropocene. **Anthony Frisby** (GB) is an artist and technologist whose practice centers on methodical experimentation with emerging technologies. His work focuses on abstract representations of reality, nostalgic communication, symbolization, futurism, and hidden logics of signal and scale.

Artificial Archive: SCRYING INTIMACIES

Rodell Warner

Hallucination 1 (Still from video, frame 1111)

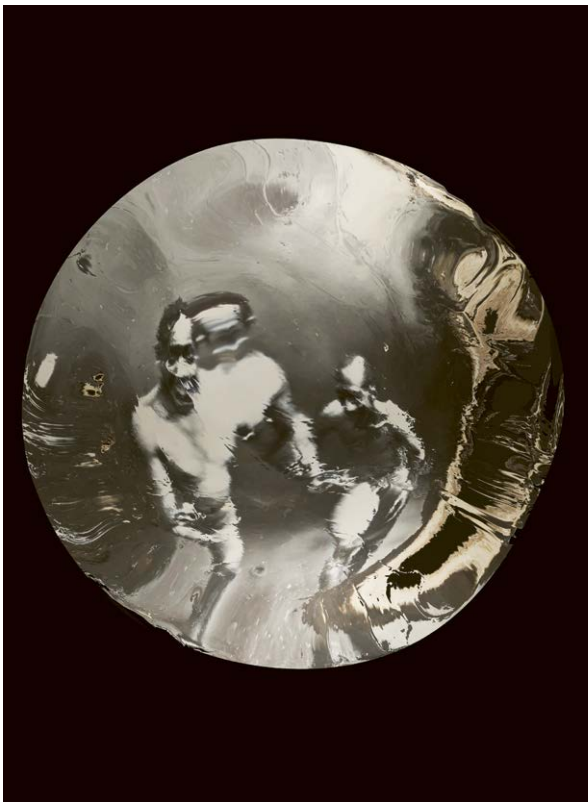
Hallucination 1 (Still from video, frame 2498)

My video series titled *SCRYING INTIMACIES* is a part of a larger project, *Artificial Archive*. *Artificial Archive* is a set of computational images that responds to the gaps and omissions in the early photographic record of the Caribbean, and the limited and biased views it offers us of the lives of the people of the Caribbean in the mid-to-late 19th century, by speculating on what the photographic archive could have looked like if the African and Asian people of the Caribbean—the ex-enslaved and the indentured—had access to photography, and could record their lives from their own perspectives rather than being mainly recorded through the gaze of those with colonial interests. Most of what we see in the early photographic records show these people laboring, almost never at rest, or enjoying intimacy, appearing resourced, etc.

Artificial Archive goes further by taking liberties in its depictions of these people, responding to questions such as "What would the photographic record have looked like if these people had been the beneficiaries of their centuries of labor?". The work employs this kind of generative speculation as a method for getting around the imaginative limits suggested by the existing photographic archive, as it leads us to imagine these people only in the contexts it makes available to us.

The great power of photography comes from our readiness to accept its depictions are complete and

Hallucination 2 (Still from video, frame 1152)



Hallucination 3 (Still from video, frame 0384)

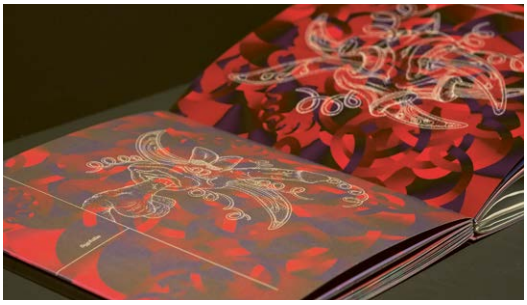
true. *Artificial Archive*, by presenting images that look like photographs, makes subversive use of this power. Even when the viewer is aware that the *Artificial Archive* image is a computational image, the vision of the past that it presents is still able to do its work of expanding, in the mind of the viewer, the contexts within which the people of history are imagined, which can have tremendous implications for what is possible for the viewer in their own life.

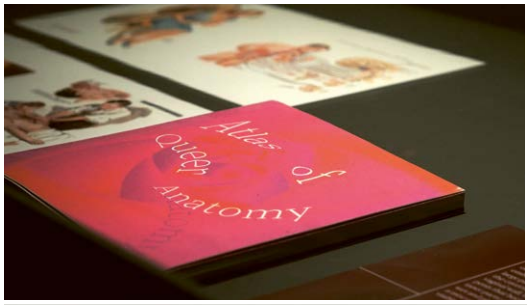
https://u.aec.at/B74447C7

Rodell Warner (TT) is a Trinidadian artist working primarily in new media and photography. Rooted in the exploration of race, nature, and technologies of representation, Rodell's artworks draw on personal and institutional archives to rethink the past, and on digital processes to index emancipatory futures. In 2025 Rodell's web-based moving image installation *World Is Turning* debuted at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City, and his first solo museum exhibition *Rodell Warner + Audubon + His Journals* opened at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. Rodell works online via the Caribbean.

Atlas of Queer Anatomy

Kuang-Yi Ku



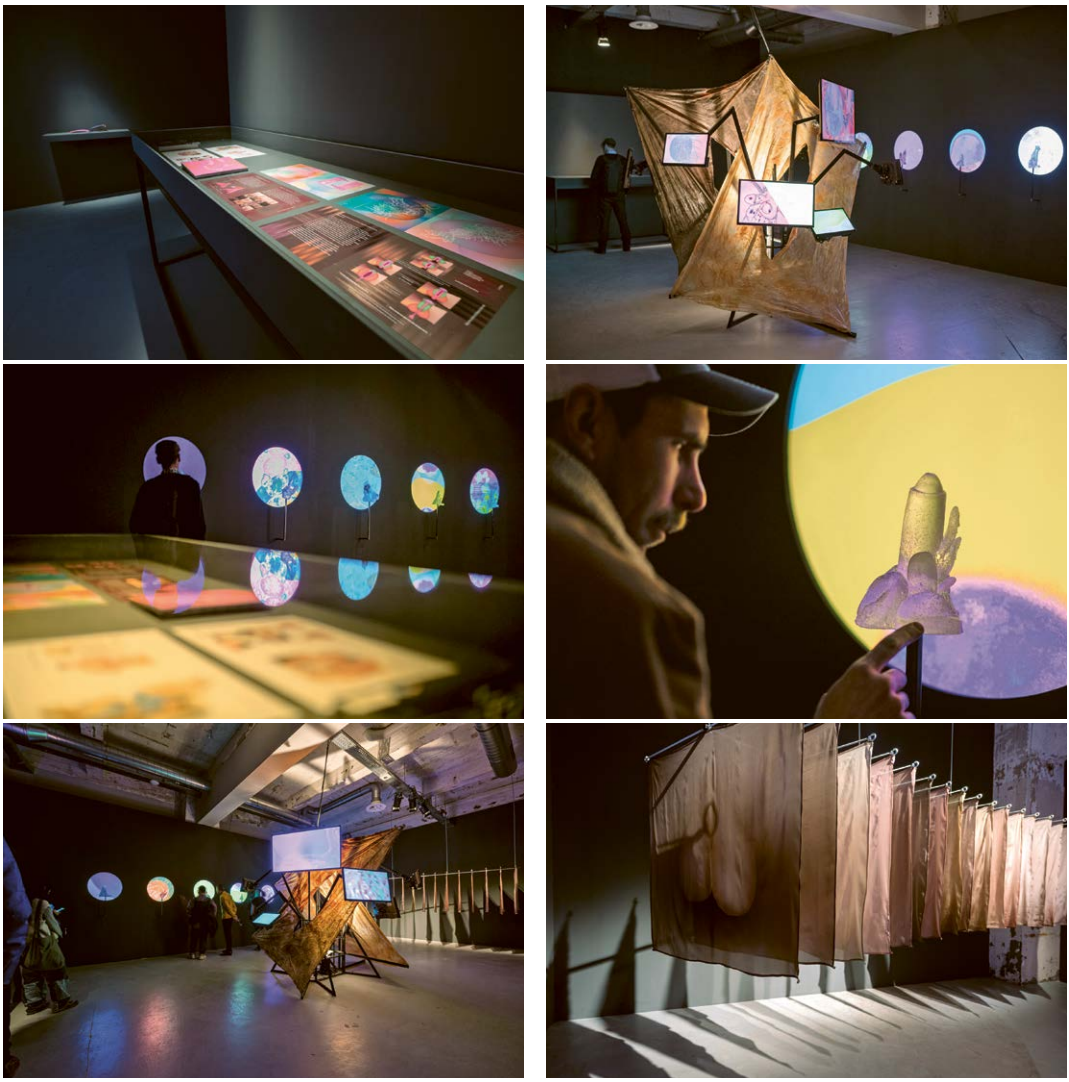


Atlas of Queer Anatomy aims to challenge the medical patriarchy and heteronormativity of anatomical education by constructing an ambiguous, uncertain, fluctuating anatomical system. There are three parts to this project. The first part is the new textbook *Atlas of Queer Anatomy*, which is an ironic reflection on the classic anatomical textbook "Atlas of Human Anatomy" drawn by Frank H. Netter (1906-1991), a white male scholar. *Atlas of Human Anatomy* was first published in 1957 and has been widely used in medical education until now. Although it is a classic textbook, it shows the lack of inclusivity in anatomical visualization. Hence, the new *Atlas of Queer Anatomy* is a collection of anatomical drawings which emphasize sexual diversity to criticize the limitation of *Atlas of Human Anatomy*.

In the second part of this project, the team transformed the drawings of Chapters into a series of 3D sculptures and installations in the exhibition. The 3D interpretations of queer anatomy are critiques of the rigidity of existing exhibitions of human anatomy. The last part of this project consists of multiple participatory performances called "Queer Anatomy Lesson". These activities were arranged during the project development by collaborating with diverse organizations and institutions, such as Amsterdam UMC, Medical Education Fringe Festival, ISSTDR, etc. In these events, the participants learned the concept of queer anatomy and drew their interpretations of anatomical imagination.

In the *Atlas of Queer Anatomy*, Chapter 1 explores the symbiosis between humans and microorganisms in STIs. Chapter 2 envisions the anatomical interpretation of intersex while Chapter 3 explores the topic of transgender anatomy, including the visualization of gender-affirming surgery. Chapter 4 visualizes the relationship between body odor, microbes and the human body and Chapter 5 visualizes the organic-inorganic relationship between masturbation and sex toys.

Kuang-Yi Ku



Exhibition at MU Hybrid Art House

Scientist: Henry de Vries
Graphic design: Tzu-Yen Chen
With support from: BAD Award (Bio Art & Design Award); Creative Industries Fund NL, the Netherlands; National Culture and Arts Foundation, Taiwan

https://u.aec.at/BCDFD149

Kuang-Yi Ku (TW) lives and works both in Taiwan and the Netherlands. He is an assistant professor at the Institute of Applied Arts in NYCU, Taiwan, and a PhD researcher at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. He is a former dentist, bio-artist, and speculative designer. His works often deal with the human body, sexuality, interspecies interaction, and medical technology, aiming to investigate the relationships among technology, individuals, and the environment. Kuang-Yi Ku won the Bio Art & Design Award, the Core77 Speculative Design Award, the Gijs Bakker Award, and the Taipei Digital Art Award.

Max Kneefel, MU/BAD Award

Cedar Exodus

Iyad Abou Gaida, Em Joseph, Jumanah Abbas, Ecorove

Cedar Exodus is a research project and film exploring the endangered state of Lebanese cedar trees (Cedrus libani) and their complex ecological, cultural, and political histories. The project consists of the experimental film *Where Can We Be Found?* and two animated drawings, *Trapped and Exploited*, which reframe the cedar beyond its historical role as a symbol of eternity and national identity.

Through a combination of documentary footage, 2D and 3D animation, and archival research, *Cedar Exodus* reveals the deep entanglement of the Lebanese cedar with human interventions—from ancient deforestation to modern climate disruptions and extractive tourism. While widely revered, the cedar's reality is one of habitat loss, fragmentation, and political appropriation.

Where Can We Be Found? offers both material and poetic explorations of the cedar's contemporary crisis, tracing the forces that have shaped it and its landscape. *Trapped* examines the Lebanese cedar's use as a symbol within present-day Lebanon's political, religious, economic and social spheres amidst changes to the country's climate and ecology. *Exploited* chronicles the centuries of extraction by various civilizations and colonial powers that have reduced the once-vast forests to isolated reserves.

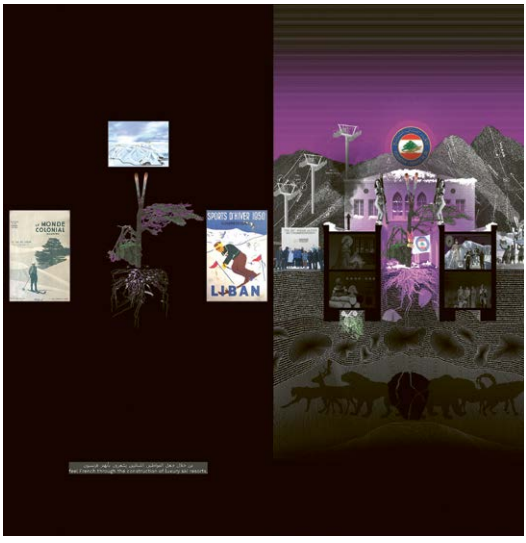
By questioning the ways in which the Lebanese cedar has been mythologized, instrumentalized, and commodified, *Cedar Exodus* seeks to restore the tree's agency as a living being rather than as an emblem or ideology. The project invites audiences to reconsider their relationship with the tree, shifting a narrative of ownership and exploitation to one of coexistence and care.

Direction, editing, production: EcoRove (Jumanah Abbas, Iyad Abou Gaida, Em Joseph)
Project management: Jumanah Abass
Cinematography: Em Joseph
Written contributions: Rania Masri, Rola Khayyat
Original score: Frances Chang & Em Joseph
Animations: Ronny Abou Ghaida, Iyad Abou Gaida, Jumanah Abbas
Translation: Jumanah Abass, Fawwaz Abughazaleh, Iyad Abou Gaida, Ahmed Zidan
Editing consultant: Phoebus Osborne
Copy editors: Laurel Atwell, Joanna Joseph, Lynsey Robertson

https://u.aec.at/467B44D6

EcoRove

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Honorary Mention

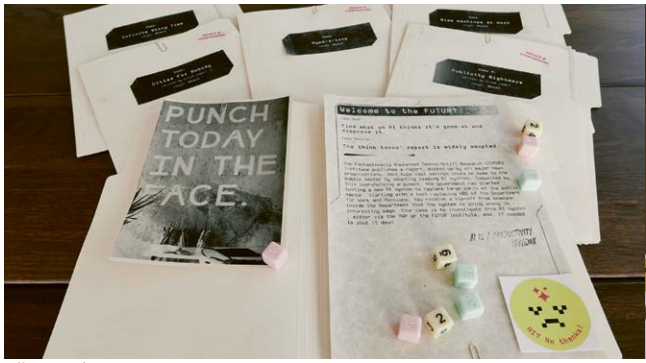


EcoRove (LB), co-founded in 2020 by **Jumanah Abbas** (IE), **Iyad Abou Gaida** (LB), and **Em Joseph** (US), is a collaborative, multimedia, research project and co-collaborative production studio examining the politics of critical zones and the livelihood of humans and non-human species who dwell in them. Our mission is to empower individuals and organizations to share knowledge, data, and narratives that re-contextualize eco-socio-political dynamics through a broad spectrum of documentary, scientific, and technological approaches. Work is and has been made possible through generous support and funding from The Arab Fund for Art & Culture, The New Museum, NEW INC, Al-Rawiya, and MIT Co-Creation Studio.

CripShip: Disability Saves Society from BigTech

Joseph Wilk

Jon Aitken



Elise Huard

CripShip is a Tabletop Roleplaying game about resisting certain types of Generative AI created by BigTech. It's a fun and creative mix of collaborative storytelling, improvisation, dice rolls, and investigation of AI.

Through role-play, players learn how to break Large Language Models by discovering its biases and limitations—building real skills and potential allies in resisting LLMs deployed unsuitably in the real world. The game is inspired by disabled people destroying the systems of power that create and shape AI and building new worlds from disabled imagination.

The game is run by a StoryTeller who helps describe the world while players describe their actions. The game's theme is AI but the mechanic is always led by human conversation. Players play a "Slop Mopper", an employee at the Ministry of AI Spills, an underfunded government agency tasked with investigating cases of AI spilling "Slop" into the world and the companies responsible for this mess. Character creation incorporates aspects of disabled experiences into the role-play with skills like Cripstastic Hacking, Crip-time, Dreaming Justice, World Builders & World Breakers. Being careful not to simulate physical impairments but to root play in a way that everyone can learn from disabled experiences.

Players choose a case to investigate, based on a real world AI example that focuses on a problematic aspect of LLMs with a challenge for the players e.g. "Find what an LLM thinks it's good at and disprove it". Play consists of collaborative improvisation, rolling dice to resolve risky actions, inventive infiltrations and ending with a critical interrogation of a real LLM. The StoryTeller manages this interaction, ensuring players never look at screens and all the gameplay remains driven by player conversation. By uncovering clues about the issues and suitability of LLM players get to role-play actions to take against its creators, whether through official channels or methods of their own devising.

Created & written: Joseph Wilk
Layout: Jon Somerscales
Editors: Elise Huard, Elinor Lower
Illustrator: Eli Kershaw
Disability justice advisor: Richard Amm, Aminder Virdee
This work was commissioned as part of Watershed's More than AI Sandbox, supported by MyWorld and funded through UKRI.

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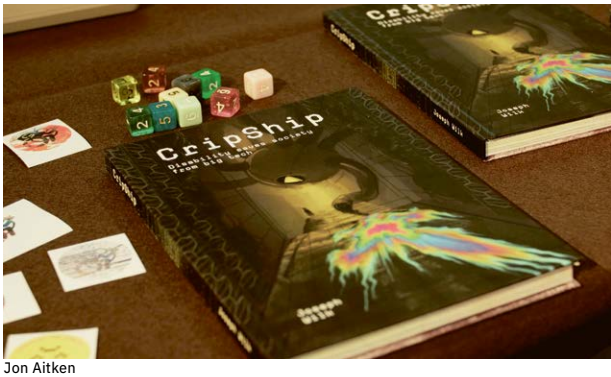
Artificial Life & Intelligence Honorary Mention

Shamphat Pro



Jon Aitken

Shamphat Pro

Shamphat Pro

Jon Aitken

Joseph Wilk (GB) (MEng) is an artist and programmer who uses the digital to explore disability and disability to explore the digital. He often works with automative forms of expression that utilize new interfaces to work *with* alternative bodies. His experience of disability—living with pain, physical limitations, disillusionment and disconnection—strongly impacts his practice. He deconstructs, misuses, and repurposes software and hardware to challenge notions of ownership, narrative, and visibility.

Dynamics of a Dog on a Leash

Takayuki Todo

This is an installation work that displays an autonomous four-legged robot dog that is about to attack people, bound by a chain in a restricted state. The viewers face the “murderous gaze” of the robot while keeping a safe distance from the robot’s attacks. Although it already has sufficient athletic ability and lethal power, this artificial beast is barely under control by a single “chain of ethics”. Will it appear as a “living other” to the humans it glares at?

During the presentation, the robot dog seems to attack the humans in front of it and to be struggling to escape from its restraints. It thrashes about on the chain, losing its footing, falling over and slamming hard onto the floor, but then standing up again and refusing to give up. Finally, the robot collapses from overheating and lies down. It appears to be the death of the animal. People watch this from the safe zone beyond the “KEEP OUT” line, as if enjoying the spectacle of a pitiful circus beast show.

In the exhibition, pictures from the story “Lobo, the King of Currumpaw” by Ernest Thompson Seton (1898) were placed before the caption panel, with the intention that people who remembered the story would superimpose the image onto the performance: one robot lying miserably dead, while the other robot is running amok in rage in front of it.

This work sparked controversy on social media, with some accusing the artist of trying to create something harmful to humanity, some blamed him for abusing robots unnecessarily, while many visitors praised the impressive performance.
This work makes us realize that robots' movements and reactions still scratch our empathy nerves, even though they are not alive and actually do not feel pain or hatred, but everything is controlled and artificial. At this moment, we are unable to distinguish between a robot and a real animal, on a cognitive level.
In the coming age of living with robots, will we become hypersensitive to empathic stress, or become numb to it?

Artist: Takayuki Todo
Technical staff: Yuki Koyama, Takeru Saito, Kazuki Karakami

With support from: "Project to Support Emerging Media Arts Creators" by Agency of Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, (2024).

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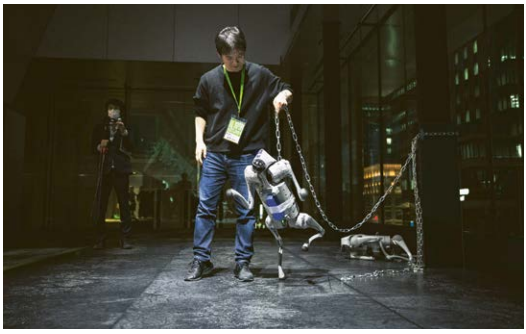
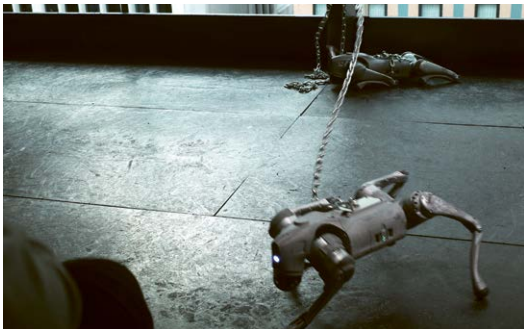
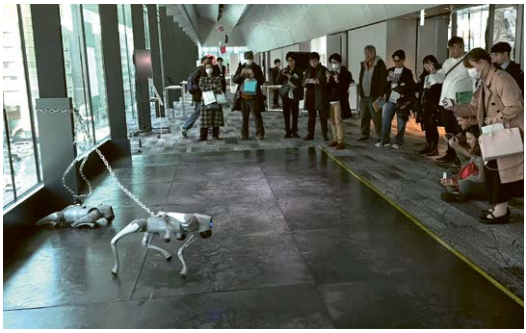


Tada(yukai)



Harada Riku

Tada(yukai)



Takayuki Todo

Takayuki Todo (JP) is a media artist. With the question in mind "How can we make a robot, a non-human object that resembles a human and exists in the same space with us, turn into a living human?", Todo has focused on the representation of "gaze" as a "direction of consciousness focusing" and has been exploring the dynamism of human-robot interaction using self-made robots. His humanoid robot "SEER: Simulative Emotional Expression Robot"(2018) has been highly praised worldwide and attracted attention at the Ars Electronica Festival. For the latest artwork, he decided to use a purchased ready-made robot dog product.

Harada Riku

Fluid Anatomy

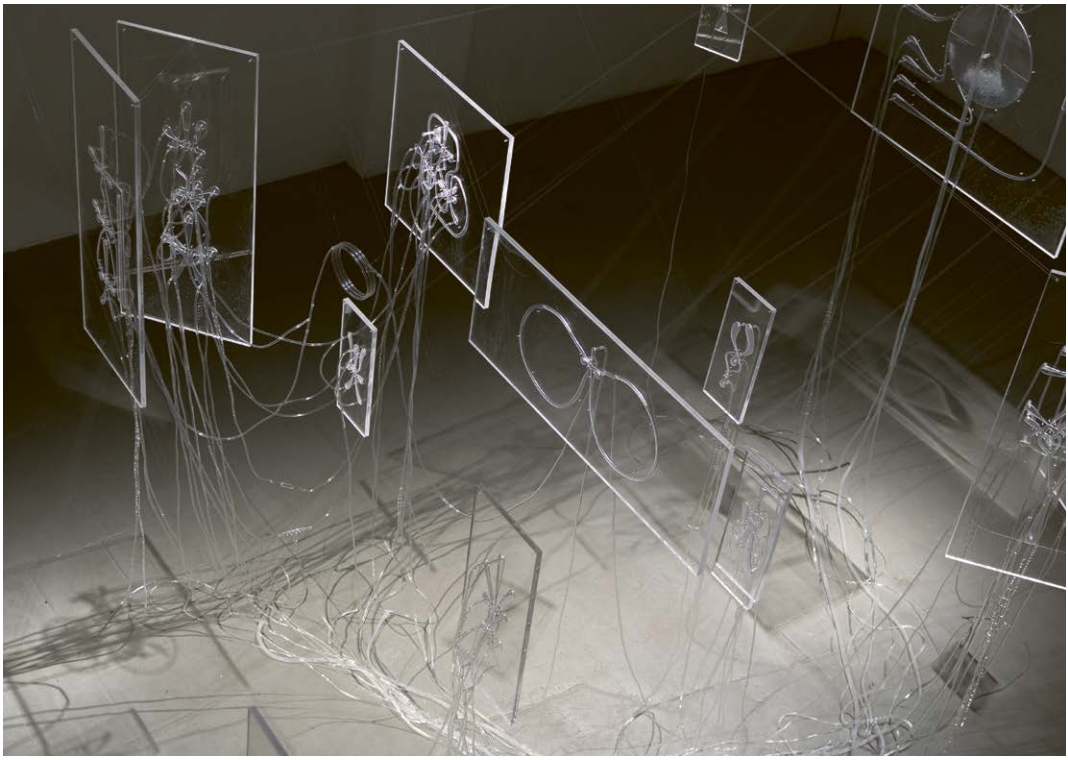
Ioana Vreme Moser

Powered by water and air, *Fluid Anatomy* unveils an analogue computer that guides fluids in a dynamic interplay of movement, pressure, and resonance. Swirling streams, pulsing jets, and air bursts are passed in a system of entangled elements, transforming the space into a living hydropneumatic circuit where computation unfolds in tangible form.

Guided by the Coandă effect, water courses through a branching network of tubes and adheres to convex fluidic morphologies. Form follows function. Each cavity's contours shifts the stream to a different outlet. A large oscillator clocks the system, a pulse shaper induces vibration and sensors trace fluidic presence. Circuits comprised of 'fluidistors' (fluidic transistors) and logic gates, count, store, compare, subtract, and sum. Parallel air paths drive fluidic oscillators, generating cascaded sound frequencies.

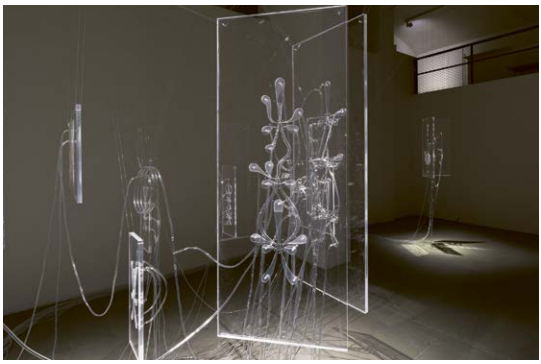
The installation exposes over 20 specific fluidic forms restored from old patents and archives, forming a system that prioritizes organic movement over speed. Fluidics, or fluid logic, emerged in the 1950s, using fluid jets for operations akin to electronics. Intricate, cavities became radiation-resistant switches, powering automation, spacecraft, and heart valves. In 1964, Univac introduced FLODAC, the first fluidic digital computer. Yet, as speed and miniaturization became paramount, fluidics faded into obscurity.

Taking fluidics as a future alternative to electronics, *Fluid Anatomy* reveals a parallel history in which technology is transparent and resonant while tuned in function to the natural rhythms of fluid flow. Transparent plates and tubes make calculations visible, inviting the public to walk among fluidic bodies, listen to circulating streams, and witness an evolving rhythm of computational motion and sound.

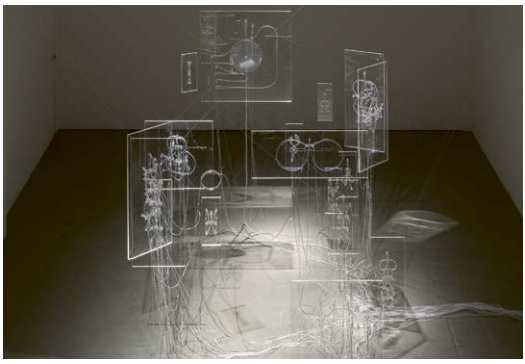


Ioana Vreme Moser

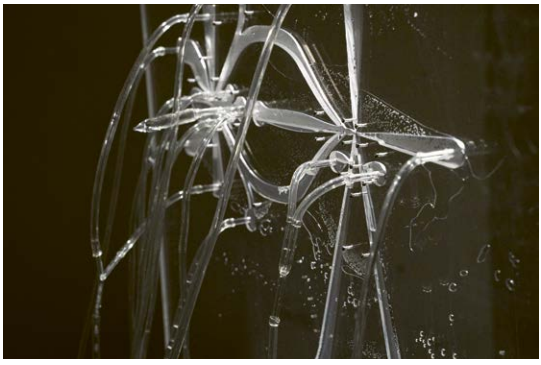
Artificial Life & Intelligence
Honorary Mention



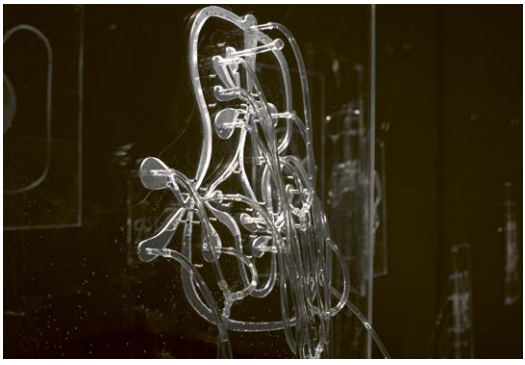
Roman März, singuhr—projekte berlin



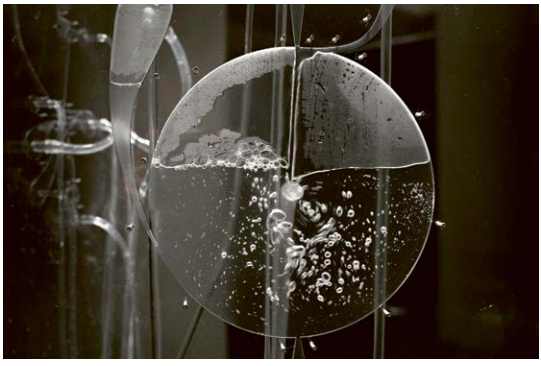
Roman März, singuhr—projekte berlin



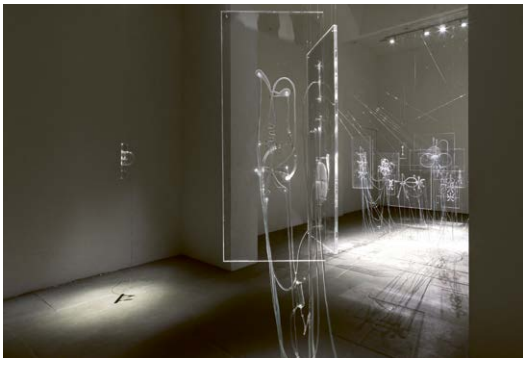
Ioana Vreme Moser



Ioana Vreme Moser



Ioana Vreme Moser



Roman März, singuhr—projekte berlin

Production: singuhr—projekte berlin: Carsten Seiffarth, Markus Steffens
Technical support: Dorian Largen
Production support: Jan Römer, FabLab.ro
Scientific Advice: Dr. Benjamin Bühling.
With support from: Musikfonds e.V.; Bezirksamt Pankow, Berlin.
Research conducted at: Tangible Music Lab & hosted through Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz

https://u.aec.at/5F672164

Ioana Vreme Moser (RO) is a Romanian sound artist interested in hardware electronics, speculative research, and tactile experimentation. In her practice, she uses rough electronic processes to obtain different materialities of sound. She places electronic components and control voltages in different situations of interaction with her body, organic materials, and environmental stimuli. Vreme Moser's works feature personal narrations and observations on the history of electronics, and their production chains, wastelands, and entanglements in the natural world.

Flying Cream

aniara rodado

Vulvas and psychoactive plants are privileged spaces for the manufacture of ignorance.
The starting point was the ancestral knowledge of physiology, botanical, chemical, and ecological implicit in descriptions of the administration method of the Flying Ointment in European witchcraft. For centuries, a veil of censorship has shrouded knowledge about hallucinogenic plants and vulvas, attempting to erase them from kitchens, bedrooms, public squares, and discourse.
The *Flying Cream* I have developed, refers to the ointment attributed to premodern European witches, but it does not seek to reconstruct it. It is about questioning an epistemicide—the process in which dominant groups impose their own epistemological frameworks on marginalized groups—and a spiritual genocide, entering the body, and stimulating memory.

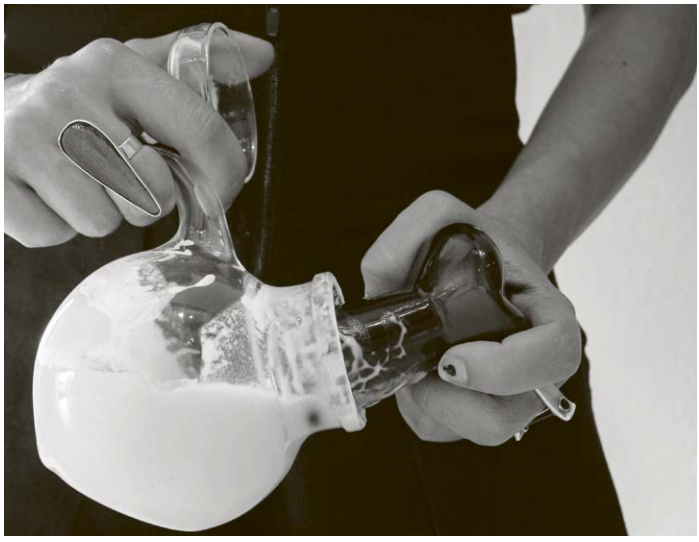
Flying Cream was created during an arts-science residency at Génialis, a company based in Henrichemont. This company develops techniques to create cosmetics and pharmaceutical products through physical processes that are less polluting and energy-intensive, eliminating the need for surfactants and synthetic chemicals. This approach preserves the organoleptic properties of plants while enhancing their bioavailability.
The cream we have formulated addresses vaginal dryness caused by menopause, chemotherapy, certain medications, or testosterone-based hormone treatments. It is also intended for the neo-vaginas of trans women and for anuses longing for caresses—a cream designed to break the silence that pathologizes our pleasure. Life is an exuberant, trans-species entanglement which manifests all types of intelligence. Europe has forgotten its witches' ointment.

Stéphane Degoutin

Jonathan Dahan

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Honorary Mention

Stéphane Degoutin



aniara rodado

This project includes multiple forms: the *Flying Cream* installation and *Manifesto Against Witch Washing;* a collective performance with 21 people over 21 days; the video-choreographic installation *Against Witch Washing*; a Web visual essay "Flying Ointment: Material Memory of an Epistemicide?" and the interactive stage performance *Flying Cream*.

A project by aniara rodado
Formulation of *Flying Cream*: aniara rodado and Société Genialis

https://u.aec.at/878FB675

aniara rodado (CO) is a choreographer, artist, and researcher who explores witchcraft and interspecific relations through plants, from a transhackfeminist and counter-colonial lens. She creates performances, installations, texts, drawings, videos, dance pieces, etc. using open-source tools, low-tech and Do-It-With-Others practices (DIWO). Her work questions ecological crisis, techno-scientific fetishism, and hegemonic powers. She holds a PhD from École Polytechnique and teaches at ESAAA—école supérieure d'art annecy alpes.

Fine-Tuning Human Sense 2.0

from the Sensory Datascape Series

Hoonida Kim

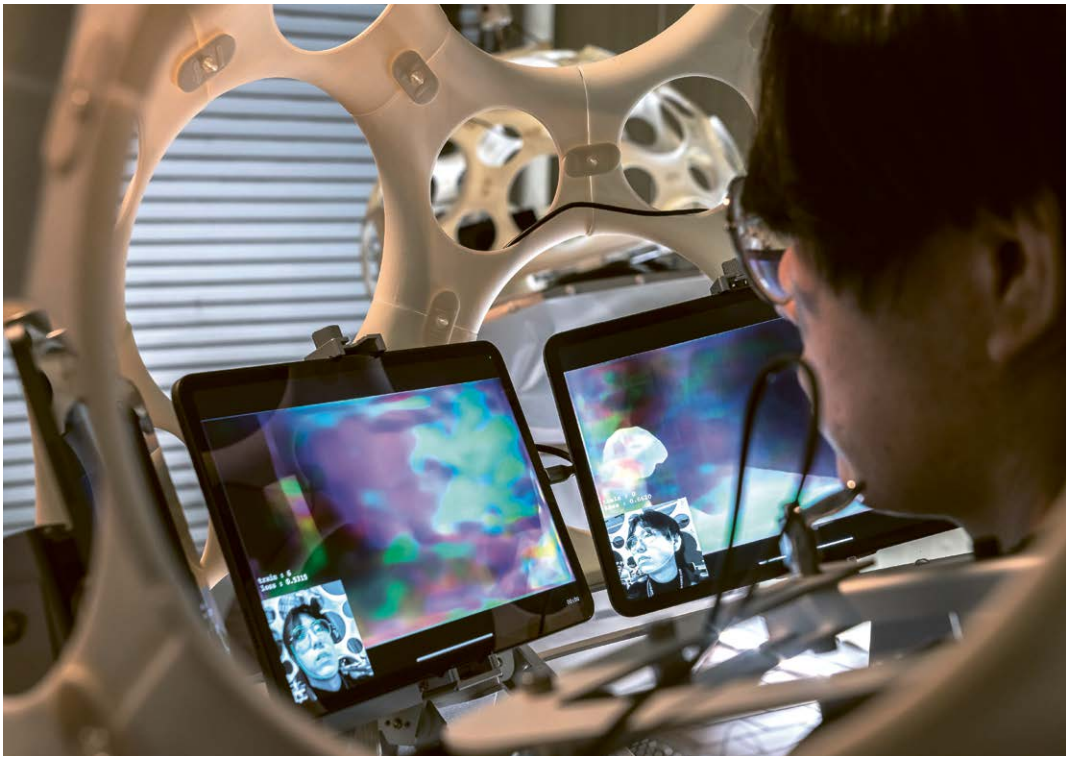
Sensory Datascape Series explores how digital technology reshapes perception, centering on 'fine-tuning'—the active calibration of our senses through technological mediation. As we navigate reality increasingly through digital interfaces rather than direct encounters, we must ask: Do we actively shape perception, or passively consume experiences curated by technology?

Begun in 2019, the project used LiDAR to translate visual landscapes into soundscapes, challenging perception and expanding spatial sensing. In 2023 *Fine-Tuning Human Sense 1.0,* a digital implant apparatus shaped like insect eyes introduced a new perceptual mode—where spatial structures could be perceived in motion, but details became blurred and sounds became noise. To see clearly, viewers had to stop and blink repeatedly until their eyes twitched, deliberately disrupting habitual seeing.

The 2025 *Version 2.0* evolves with A.I. and enhanced spatial sound. In this version, unseen spaces appear as darkness, with AI-generated textual predictions, acting not just as a tool but as a mediator of spatial perception. Viewers fine-tune perception through blinking, confronting gaps between AI predictions and sensory experience. They keenly perceive the gap between AI-generated text and sensory input, actively shaping perception at the intersection of mediated and human sensing.

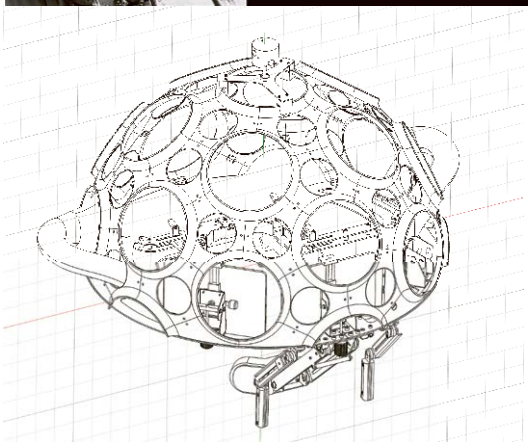
Throughout the series, digital devices act as "Digital Implants," reshaping our senses as we co-evolve with technology. As technology outpaces our sensory adaptation, we must ask: Can we actively fine-tune our senses like zoom lenses in an age of information overload? The answer lies in whether we passively receive or actively shape our perceptual evolution.

Sensory Datascape Series cultivates sensory literacy in the digital age, inviting viewers to recalibrate their senses through active engagement. In an era of constant information flow, it challenges us to critically navigate and refine our perception.



Hoonida Kim

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Honorary Mention



Director, sound algorithm, production: Hoonida Kim
AI & vision recognition programming: Park Jae Hyeon
Structural engineering: Choi Jong Eon
Technical assistant: Moon Sung Yun, Dasol Jung
Special thanks to: Shin Yeasul, Woo Heeseo, Ku Yena, Go Dam, Philip Liu
With support from: ZER01NE (Hyundai Motors), Coreana Museum; Selected works from *Sensory Datascape Series*—Commissioned by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

https://u.aec.at/18CA469C

Hoonida Kim's (KR) work focuses on technology that deeply penetrates through the human ecology, as well as the transformations in ecology triggered by technology. Human perception and sensibility fail to track the speed of social change and are unable to sense and analyze the enormous amount of information flooding our society. With such acknowledgement, Kim has been producing "environmental recognition apparatuses" to actively respond to such changes. He has also made unique attempts to directly and indirectly implant these "apparatuses" into humans. Selected exhibitions include National Museum of Contemporary Art Seoul, SongEunArtSpace, Perigee Gallery, Cheongju Craft Biennale, Nam June Paik Art Center.

Plato’s Prisoners

Cody Lukas

Plato’s Prisoners is an immersive, interactive installation powered by the neural activity of cerebral organoids—lab-grown “mini-brains” cultivated from human stem cells. These three-dimensional clusters of brain cells, commonly used in biomedical research to explore neurological diseases and drug effects, are here recontextualized to explore the ethical and existential ramifications of their presence in the world.

In this work, audiences are invited to speak into a microphone, as their voices are transformed into gentle vibrations and transmitted into the organoid’s liquid environment. A tactile stimulus that evokes measurable responses in the organoid’s neural activity, which in turn are used to shape the light and sound that envelops the room, completing the two-way channel of communication between person and mini-brain—a conversation between two human entities.

At the heart of the space, a glass vessel cradles the active organoid, fed by a network of ventilation tubes linked to an incubator, where a colony of sibling organoids is carefully maintained. Every three days, to ensure its ongoing vitality, the featured organoid is rotated out and replaced with another, continuing the cycle of biological care.

The cerebral organoids used in *Plato’s Prisoners* exhibit a striking resemblance to the early stages of human brain development, forming complex neural pathways akin to those in embryonic brains. Yet, unlike human embryos, which are subject to strict ethical limitations such as the 14-day rule, these bodiless brains exist in a moral grey area—free to develop beyond thresholds that would otherwise trigger ethical alarm, reaching the age of 90 days upon the exhibition opening.

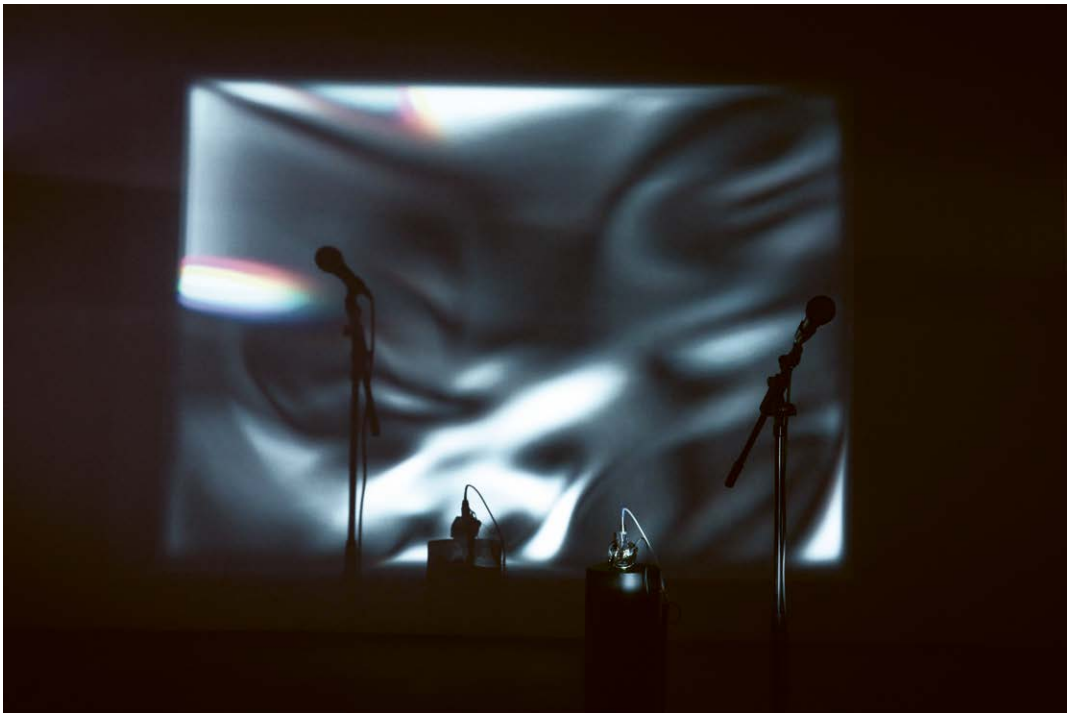
The work invites audiences to reflect on the nature of reality and consciousness. Asking themselves: Are these bodiless brains any less human than they are? Or: How developed must they become before we give them the same ethical considerations we do other living organisms?

Artwork by Cody Lukas
Created in close collaboration with researchers at the University of Southern Denmark: Marie Sejberg Øhlenschlæger, Pia Jensen, and Martin Røssel Larsen

The artwork was created for the exhibition “EDEN” at Kunshal Nord, Denmark; which was created with support from Region Nordjylland, SparNord Fonden, Politikken Fonden, Aalborg University, and the University of Southern Denmark.

https://u.aec.at/7D2A63E5

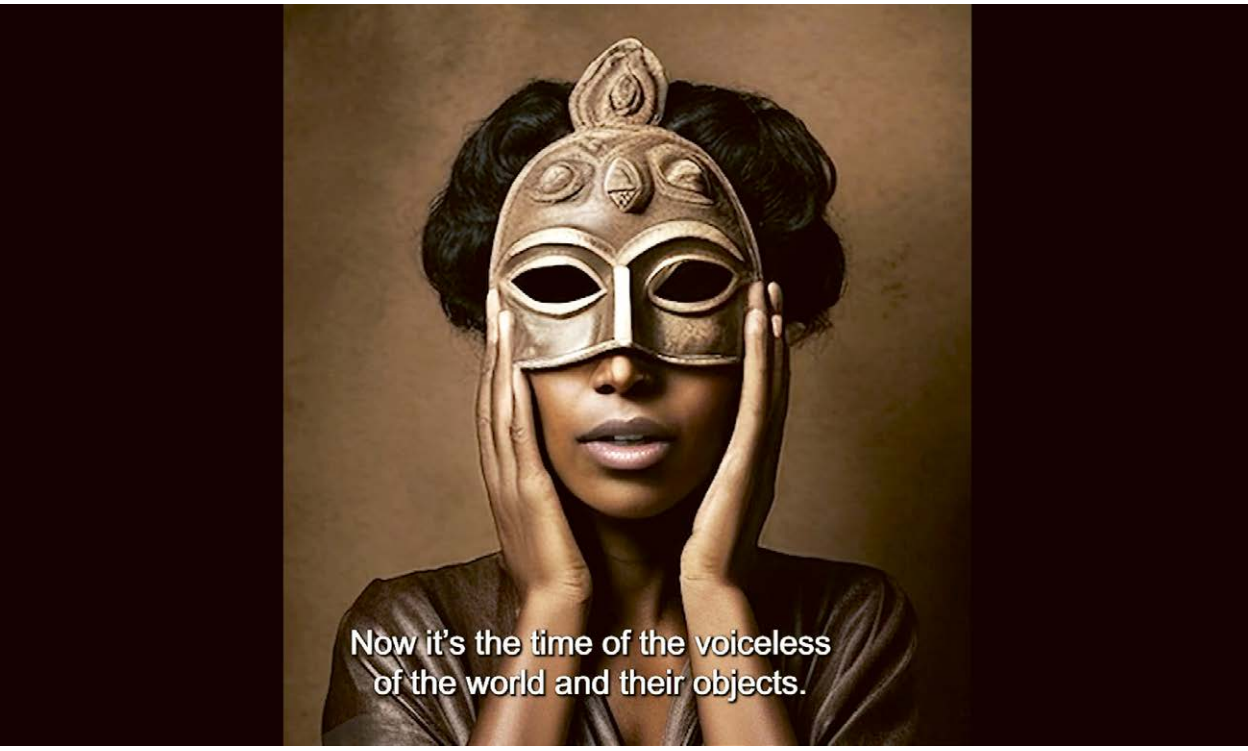
Cody Lukas (DK) is a Danish-Canadian artist, specializing in conceptual art, driven by a fascination with emerging technologies, ranging from synthetic biology to machine learning. His work engages with cutting-edge research, transforming abstract scientific concepts into accessible and thought-provoking experiences. From interactive soft robotics to architectural installations made of living materials, his works bring attention to the fragile and evolving nature of our living environment, encouraging dialogue about sustainability, identity, and the ethical implications of new technologies.



Cody Lukas

The Post-Truth Museum

Nora Al-Badri



In this work Al-Badri employs various AI techniques to place unlikely words in the mouths of three European museum directors as well as reanimating ancient inspired masks. Her deepfakes represent museums themselves through the leaders of the Prussian Heritage Foundation (Berlin), the Louvre (Paris), and the British Museum (London). In this post-truth situation, Al-Badri's talking heads admit "the truth about imperial plunder—confessing their crimes, speaking about healing, restitution, shame, or art as critical knowledge." The deepfake directors are interspersed with reanimated objects in the form of talking masks, as well as synthetic moving images of speculative future museum sites that blur nature and the built environment.

The Post-Truth Museum presents a world in which the institutional complicity with imperialism is recognized, and the untapped potential of the museum is realized. The script for this video also includes statements by engaged thinkers, in tones ranging from sensitive to furious.

During the production period of the videos, two out of the three directors had to step down after being charged with money laundering in an antiquities trafficking case (Jean-Luc Martinez from the Louvre) and the theft of around 2,000 artefacts by a staff curator (Hartwig Fischer from the British Museum). This is also included in the work.

The artist was inspired to develop the work after attending an internal workshop at the Humboldtforum in Berlin on 'Art and Trauma'. For Al-Badri, it was an attempt to create a work that couldn't be exhibited at the Humboldtforum or, if it were, would create an undeniable cognitive dissonance for the museum's staff and audience. As a result, the work was purchased by the Humboldtforum before it was completed and has to this day never been exhibited there...

Artist: Nora Al-Badri
With texts from: Ayad Al-Ani, Ariella Azoulay, Nikita Dhawan, María Do Mar Castro Varela, Fazil Moradi
Engineers: Alberto Pennino, Sergey Prokudin, Irem Kaftan
Cut: Alfonso Moral Rodriguez
Sound: Ed Davenport

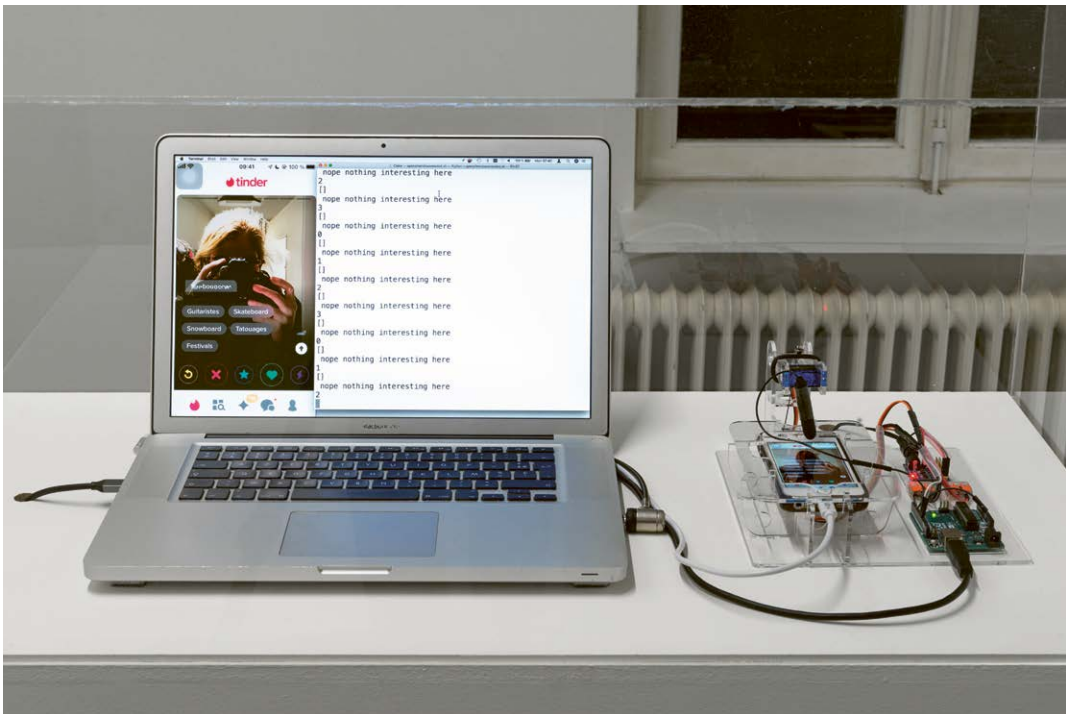
https://u.aec.at/27FDBA4F

Nora Al-Badri (DE) is a a German-Iraqi conceptual media artist. Her works are research-based, paradisciplinary, and decolonial. She lives and works in Berlin. She graduated in political sciences at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt/Main and is a lecturer at the Eidgenössische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich. Her practice focuses on the politics and the emancipatory potential of new technologies such as machine intelligence or data sculpting. She has exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museums' Applied Arts Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, Design Biennal Istanbul, ZKM Karlsruhe, KW Contemporary Berlin, Transmediale, Jeu de Paume, Ars Electronica amongst others.

Nora Al-Badri

Tinder_gun_boys_@Brussels_

Loïs Soleil



Gert Jan van Rooij

The multimedia installation *Tinder_gun_boys_@Brussels_* was born from a collection of screenshots of heterosexual men proudly posing with weapons on the dating app Tinder. To grow this collection, Loïs Soleil developed an artificial intelligence able to detect weapons and a robot autonomously swiping on Tinder, harvesting hundreds of screenshots a day without direct human interaction.

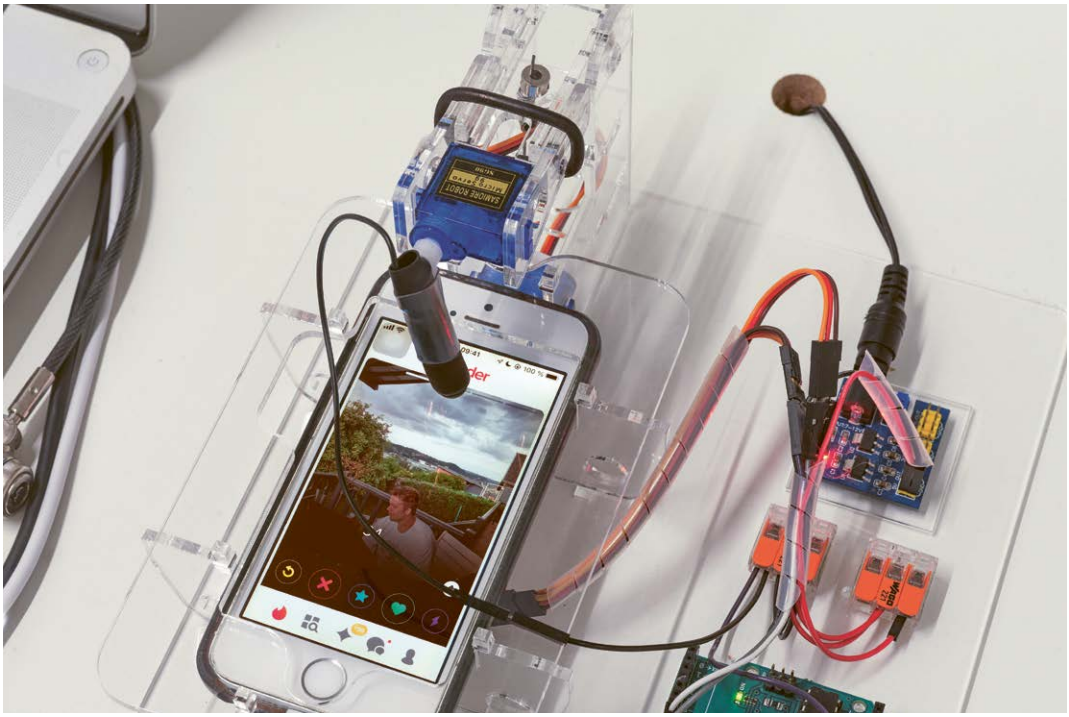
These screenshots were then printed onto tatami mats, used for feminist self-defense classes, resulting in an abstract video. In addition, with the help of lawyers compiling and discussing the legal questions raised by this work, a video entitled *How not to get sued as an artist* was created.

As an active component of the installation, physical and verbal self-defense classes have frequently been conducted during exhibitions, alongside legal workshops exploring the line between artistic freedom, critical expression, and the right to privacy.

Concept, creation, research: Loïs Soleil
AI & robot implementation: Loïs Soleil with the help of her teacher Julien Dutertre
Legal Consultation & research: Jens Van Lathem and Anna Dewandeler
Self-defense integration: with Pauline Dornat
Self-defense video: filmed by Livia Cuveillier & Roseanna Jackson Wall, and directed by Loïs Soleil
With support from: Marres Huis voor Hedendaagse Cultuur Maastricht, Jester – Kunstorganisatie Genk; Biennale de l'Image Possible (BIP) Liège; Federal Eco Foam-Lommel.

https://u.aec.at/F1242833

Loïs Soleil (FR). Through digital art, performance, installation, poetry, and sound, Franco-Scottish artist Loïs Soleil's artistic practice aims to bridge the emotional and the political by posing intersectional cyber/techno-feminist questions. Her work confronts the everyday sexist structures of the web, its bias algorithms, and culture. It explores the relationships between pop culture, identity, and voyeurism; to illustrate a female gaze through which sexuality, love, vulnerability, and empowerment can be expressed. From the leitmotif of the bedroom, to relationships, everyday rituals, and poetry, the artist's work is autobiographically direct, raw and emotionally vulnerable in its hyper intimacy.

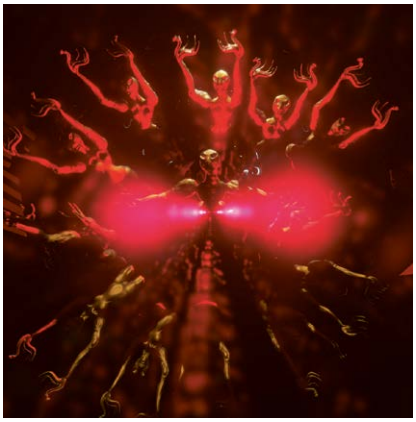


Gert Jan van Rooij

Rob van Hoorn

YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING / ARE YOU SOULLESS TOO?

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley


Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING / ARE YOU SOULLESS TOO? is a multiplayer, democratic game challenging players to examine their role within systems of power, control, and societal accountability. Set in a world where revolution has dismantled oppressive structures, the game immerses participants in the final moments of a transformed society, forcing them to confront the complexities around topics of leadership, morality, immigration, and self-reflection.

The game unfolds within a colosseum-like setting, where a central player guides the experience for the rest of the audience. Choices voted on by the audience, shaping the narrative through collective decision-making. This asymmetric gameplay mirrors a democratic process, exposing both the strengths, failures, and contradictions of governance by majority rule. Players must wrestle with their own influence in deciding if they should passively follow, challenge authority, or disrupt the system entirely.

The game is deliberately designed to frustrate expectations and punish passivity. This push-and-pull dynamic forces heightened engagement, compelling players to actively participate rather than passively consume. The game's visuals are a heavy collage of drawings, text and low-poly, "PlayStation 2" 3D rendering. The method of creating the images was diaristic, based on the emotions of the artist, which shaped a digital world that is both familiar, political, and eerily distorted.

It stands as a time piece of the current political landscape, confronting the audience with the questions: How do collective choices shape justice? What does it mean to follow or challenge authority? Are we willing to listen to perspectives that contradict our own? and What is the impact of your passivity?

Commissioned by LAS Art Foundation
YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING / ARE YOU SOULLESS TOO? ©
Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley
Artist: Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley
Co-writer, voice actor: Ebun Sodipo
Movement director: Malik Nashad Sharpe
Virtual architecture consultant: Joel Simpson
Coder: Florian Brückner
Music and sound: wavesovspace
Virtual camera assistant: Johannes Krell
Co-director and producer: Valerie-Malin Schmid
Voice actors: Madison Moore, Robin Rutenberg, Blu Bone, Newroz Çelik, Jayden Rahatoka,

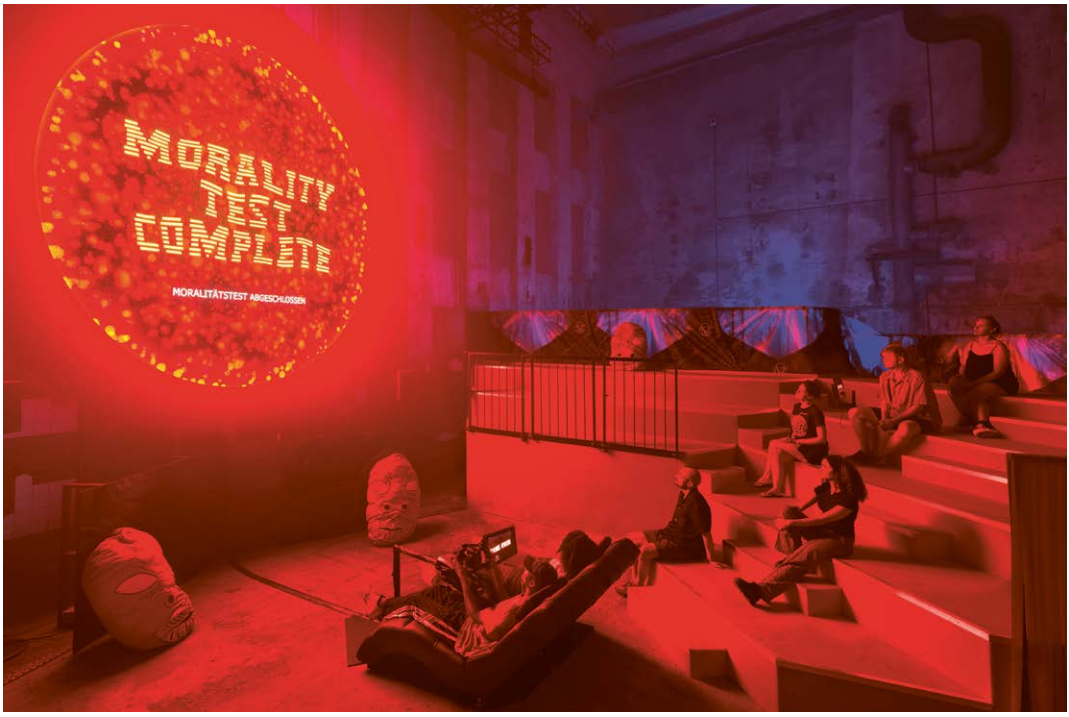
Exhibition team:
Scenography and production: Celeste Burlina
Spatial sound design: Lugh O'Neill
Public program production: Pierre Renard

LAS Art Foundation team:
Senior curator: Boris Magrini
Assistant curator: Agnessa Schmudke
Project manager: Flinder Zuyderhoff-Gray

https://u.aec.at/39C119F6

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Honorary Mention

Alwin Lay



Alwin Lay

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley (b. 1995, London) is a Berlin/London-based artist. They received a BA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. Brathwaite-Shirley works predominantly in animation, sound, performance, and video game development. Their practice focuses on intertwining lived experience with fiction to imaginatively retell the stories of Black Trans people. Their work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; LAS Art Foundation, Berlin; Studio Voltaire, London; FACT, Liverpool; Project Arts Centre, Dublin; and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, among others.

Digital Musics & Sound Art

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Towards New Versatilities

Miriam Akkerman, Dietmar Lupfer, Kamila Metwaly, Ali Nikrang, Nao Tokui

Digital Musics and Sound Art is a dynamic artistic field that has always been highly reactive to developments in digital technologies and trends within the mediascape. This becomes particularly evident in view of the developments of the last years, in which technologies such as AI and machine learning are not only mutually influencing artistic practices, but above all everyday life while questioning fundamental social issues: How do these new technologies influence our current—and future life? How can we use the technologies—and what threats might they pose? What position do we take with regard to these technological developments? These questions come together with other pressing challenges: How do we relate to current circumstances such as climate change and social justice? How can we integrate traditions and the knowledge of our ancestors into modern society? And what role can art play in all these processes? The relevance of these questions is mirrored in the topics of the submissions for the 2025 Digital Musics and Sound Art category. Covering a wide range of themes and critical engagements with the current political, social and environmental situation, and a likewise huge spectrum of different formats including performances, sound sculptures, audio-visual works, musical instruments, musical compositions, radio art, an outstanding number of excellent sound installations, as well as combinations of the aforementioned, the works reflect both a strong engagement with the most recent technologies and a fundamental interest in reflecting common worldviews. We enjoyed seeing the elaborate manner of both technical production and reflective approaches across submissions from all kinds of formats, providing ground for vivid discussions on the presented works, oftentimes on the verge of us being carried away by digging into the ideas and contents of the artworks for the pleasure of the arts as well as the context of an artwork. On the one hand, an extensive examination of the relationship between humans and technology can be observed, and, on the other hand, socially relevant themes increasingly find their way into the artistic works. We would like to particularly acknowledge the diverse approaches to social topics, appearing, e.g., as a means of expressing a world view, as a medium for observing phenomena such as climate change, and as thematic reflections on social spaces and structures. We looked through a growing number of submissions of an above-average artistic and technological level, and it was important to us to highlight works that bring together the elaborate implementation of most recent technology with an artist's ongoing artistic practices. How do these elements relate when brought together? Why is it interesting to bring these perspectives together? And how does this combination advance an artistic practice? Is there a reflection on the use and presentation mode of current technologies, e.g., is AI support actively considered and reflected in its use and effect, and what does using those specific technologies mean for the artwork? In parallel, what particularly characterizes a work itself was carefully examined: What makes a work stand out on a technical, thematic or reflective level? Which technologies are implemented and why—or how is a position taken on new technical developments? Which themes are reflected in the artistic works, and if current social issues are addressed, how are those implemented conceptually and aesthetically?

Amongst all the submissions, the performance-installation *Organism* (Golden Nica) stood out. It combines digital and analog computing concepts with analog and electronic sound—organ pipes, found objects, and live electronics—creating a bridge between traditional and experimental performance and installation settings. The installation *Mineral Amnesia* (Award of Distinction) presents a very different perspective on technology, using simple digital technology to explore the topic of memory, digital impermanence, and content loss. By contrast, the interactive performance *Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk* (Award of Distinction) explores new possibilities for human vocal expres-

sions in tech-based live performances. Another kind of approach to sound can be found in the works of evala, who invites the audience to individually explore multi-sensory installations in order to create their own listening experiences (Isao Tomita Special Prize). Honorary Mentions have been given to works that support, with their individual approaches, this overall impression of artistic richness with regard to themes, technologies, but also audience engagement and the aim to develop new forms of artistic expressions.

With the works selected for the Golden Nica, Awards of Distinction and Honorary Mentions, we want to not only honor these outstanding artistic productions and ideas, but also to acknowledge and promote the heterogeneous appearance of current digital musics and sound art works from different regions, age groups, genders, stages of careers, artistic, cultural and social backgrounds. Within this wide spectrum of different approaches and formats, each work stands out for its individual qualities, while the very diversity of the field challenges the audience to question perspectives and to engage in working on and developing a more comprehensive view of the world—an aspect of artistic works that should not be underestimated—especially in the current global situation.

Golden Nica

Organism
Navid Navab, Garnet Willis
Organism: In Turbulence
Navid Navab (performance)
Organism + Excitable Chaos
Navid Navab, with Garnet Willis (installation)

In *Organism* (*In Turbulence*/performance + *Excitable Chaos*/installation), Navid Navab and Garnet Willis invite us into a living, sonic ecology—an environment in which sound becomes an emergent, relational force. 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. The work unfolds as a continuously evolving encounter between a historical artifact and nonlinear material objects found today. Sound is not composed in the traditional sense but arises through friction, drift, and transductive resonance. The pendulum's gravitational system triggers delicate sonic responses—shimmering, unpredictable, and emergent—inviting the audience into an experience of instability, chance, and emergence.

The philosophical and technological precision of the work, and by its openness to chaos—not as noise, but as a generative collaborator, became a key aspect for the jury's decision.

Organism foregrounds a new form of listening: one that welcomes indeterminacy and entanglement, allowing material intelligence to speak in its own time and voice.

When thinking of the historical context, the work subtly taps into the colonial legacies of the pipe organ—an instrument historically ejected into public spaces through the spread of Christianity. As a tool of both spiritual authority and sonic domination, the organ was used to regulate time, to structure behavior, and to suppress indigenous musical traditions. By promoting European musical aesthetics, colonizers aimed to overwrite local cultures, installing the organ as a mechanism of cultural assimilation. It seems that *Organism* has 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. The jury recognizes the work as a profound and poetic gesture—an invitation to listen differently, and to reclaim what was silenced through resonance, care, and embodied presence.

Awards of Distinction

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk
Jonathan Chaim Reus

The jury found *Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk* to be an exemplary demonstration of the symbiosis between artistic practice and technological development. Throughout the entire AI pipeline, from data cre-

ation to model training, artists' perspectives were deeply involved, shaping the process at every stage. This collaboration did not aim to replicate human abilities for the sake of imitation, but to expand the range of artistic expression, particularly in the field of performance. The project showcases how AI technologies can open entirely new artistic possibilities, serving as a tool for extension rather than substitution. The project stands out as a strong example of how artists can actively and creatively influence the development of AI, not only by using the technology but also by contributing fundamentally to its design and purpose. Furthermore, the jury recognized the project's articulation of a future in which technological systems function as collaborators in artistic practice, expanding the scope of human expression rather than displacing it.

Mineral Amnesia
Ioana Vreme Moser
Mineral Amnesia explores the rise and decay of erasable, programmable silicon memory through sound. Obsolete EPROMs—microchips sealed under quartz—gradually lose data. In this installation, 8K-bit to 1 Mbit EPROMs replay recorded sound under UV light until it disappears. Romanian artist Ioana Vreme Moser reflects on the digital dark age via this forgotten technology. Invented in 1971, EPROMs marked a turning point in computing history. The work questions digital permanence and highlights the fragility of memory as loops dissolve into noise and silence. The audience experiences this acoustic erosion live—as memory fades and machines forget. The jury was particularly impressed by the theme of "the erasure of memory" and its powerful artistic execution, especially the use of obsolete storage systems and a custom sound-light setup that makes the concept physically and sensually tangible. The work is highly relevant. The relevance of the work is alarming. In times when truth is manipulated and humanistic values eroded, it reflects societal decline. Fragile achievements like democracy, peace, and remembrance are vanishing. Painful history loses meaning, while populist rhetoric drowns out facts and memory. When the memory storage of truth is ultimately deleted, the system status "Error 404—Democracy not found" will appear.

Honorary Mentions

ANIMAL [for body and sound]
Ash Fure
In her solo performance *ANIMAL [for body and sound]*, Ash Fure creates a likewise sonically powerful and visually aesthetic experience by using a sheet of plastic to control filter sweeps for the audible frequencies of a fixed media track by physical actions in real-time. The sheet of plastic becomes hereby an interactive instrument for both the resulting sound and light situation, reflecting sound and light in correspondence within the movements. This results in a well-refined dramaturgy, carefully building up the tension and carrying the audience through the composition. Ash Fure releases impressive energy through the appearing sounds and her direct physical interaction with the audible, and the powerful performance also includes an artistic statement—for the physical presence of the human being in music performances, in contrast to AI models and algorithms.

Before the Red
Yixuan Zhao
The jury found *Before the Red* to be an impressive example of how a solo acoustic instrument (double bass) and its specific performance techniques can be combined with modern AI, gesture recognition, live electronics, and generative visualization. Exploring the symbiosis between a self-trained AI system, contemporary musical performance, and audiovisual artistic expression, the project articulates novel forms of artistic practice that emerge from the interplay of these domains. The jury valued the thoughtful integration of technological innovation with traditional craftsmanship, expanding the expressive possibilities of contemporary classical music and creating a rich, multilayered artistic experience.

Bora: Bora
Zhao Zhou
Bora: Bora offers a sensual breathing break within the intensity of the created environment. Rather than just relying on visual spectacle, the installation communicates through air and sound. A walkable tunnel of aluminum frames becomes an untouched zone where 96 speakers housed in transparent boxes generate moving air and layered sound, cre-

ating a tactile, immersive atmosphere. This multisensory space shifts attention from sight to touch and hearing, unsettling and grounding visitors at once. Programmed air vortices and an unlocalizable soundscape invite surrender to sensory fluctuation. Drawing from atomic vortex theory, the work values impermanence and invisible forces, turning turbulence into a material. *Bora: Bora* reveals the hidden energies that constantly flow around us—often unnoticed, but deeply felt. The jury was impressed by this opportunity to experience sound art playfully in the open air without any barriers to entry and to perceive nature with a form of sensuality.

From0
Superbe
From0 is an interactive sound installation exploring the instability of language and the malleability of memory. Visitors speak into a microphone—offering a word, phrase, sound, or a noise of sort—which is then broken into fragments and distributed across twelve pendulums. Each pendulum swings at a slightly different rhythm, stretching, repeating, and distorting the input into a haunting, playful, and ever-evolving sonic patterns. As words lose their original form and meaning through repetition and recombination, the piece reflects on how language unravels, slips, and reforms. *From0* deconstructs the voice to reconstruct it within a new field of audible intelligibility—an act that might become a cyclical, nonlinear nature of memory and perception. The work embraces loss of control as a generative force, allowing something unanticipated and novel to emerge.

KINDASA
Nurah Farahat
KINDASA is a work inspired by the philosophies of 12th-century engineer and polymath Ismail Al-Jazari. It explores new methods of real-time audio/visual processing, reimagining his legacy through contemporary performance. Al-Jazari created what is considered to date the first automated humanoid robot—a water-operated, programmable drum machine that used wooden pegs and levers to control percussion, allowing musicians to play different rhythms and patterns by rearranging the pegs at hand. His "robot band" could perform over fifty facial and body gestures during a single musical piece. Nurah Farahat readapts this method to create a real time operated performance sequence inspired by Al-Jazari's mechanical imagination as a compositional model. Like his automata and clocks, her processes avoid timelines, BPMs, and traditional grids. New algorithmic rules are set to generate a "musical-visual automaton" in real time where each scene unfolds dynamically through these rules—simulating rhythms, visuals, movement, and progression, often in recursive feedback loops. Over his lifetime, Al-Jazari designed more than 100 mechanical devices, laying the groundwork for modern mechanical engineering. Drawing on Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Indian, and Chinese innovations—transmitted through the vibrant cultural and scientific Translation Movement—he invented water clocks to mark prayer times, perpetual flute machines, automata, hand-washing devices, water-lifting machines, crankshafts, early flushing mechanisms, combination locks, and more.

MONTE
Luciano Piccilli
The sound sculpture *MONTE* explores the relationship between identity and memory with regard to the Paraná rainforest at the border between Brazil and Paraguay, an area that is at the same time one of the most biologically important ecosystems, as well as one of the most endangered rainforests in the world. Using recordings of voices from migrants, that emblematically stand for the traces of the area's history, the artwork confronts the audience with a practically and contextually interlinked phenomenon: the playback of the sounds through the mirror interferes with the mirror's image, causing a distorted reflection of the surroundings in the mirror, which again resonates within the audible. Retrieving traces of the territory hence becomes a process of interacting with memories colored by the current environment, creating a situation that throws the audience back on themselves and their own reflections.

New Ruins
Abo Abo
New Ruins, an audio-visual performance by Abo Abo (Daniele Carcassi) and Tania Cortés Becerra, exemplifies the impact of new AI and machine learning technologies on live electronic music performance. Their utilization of *RAVE* real-time timbre morphing models and the *Somax2* machine listening and improvisation system developed by IRCAM adds organic and pleasantly unpredictable elements to what is otherwise a conventional setup using mod-

ular synthesizers and a turntable. The artist's physical interaction with these devices paradoxically highlights the hidden presence of machine intelligence.

ON AIR
Peter van Haaften, Garnet Willis, Michael Montanaro
ON AIR is a complex sound sculpture featuring a latex balloon, French horns, an elastic membrane, light beams, lenses, and mirrors. Visitors speak into the horns, metaphorically filling the balloon with their voices. When the sound reaches a certain threshold, it is released through digital signal processing. The processed sound then travels through space as light beams, allowing audiences to interact by interrupting the light paths. The resulting sonic and visual rhythmic patterns create a mesmerizing environment. Though conceptually simple, the technically sophisticated execution fills viewers with a sense of wonder and awe.

OSMIUM: An electro-mechanical live performance ritual
Osmium
In *OSMIUM*, the four composers and musicians Hildur Guðnadóttir (halldorophone), Rully Shabara (extended vocals), Sam Slater (feedback percussion), and James Ginzburg (bass monochord) create a thriving performance that crosses borders between genres and aesthetics, each using a custom-built system that likewise enhances the individual possibilities to create sound and challenges each musician to adapt and react to the inconsistencies deriving from their instruments. On a conceptual level, the integration of the self-built instruments refers to the musicians' reflection on the relation between human and machine; on a practical level, it emerges as an impressive sound collage of beats, drones, and noise variations paired with lingering vocal utterances. The result convinces through a compelling energy rooted in both the audible sounds as well as the interaction of the group members within the performance.

The Call
Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst
The Call successfully merges multiple state-of-the-art AI models with the cultural heritage of music (choral folk music), creating a distinctive and original artistic work. It stands out not only for its innovative use of technology but also for its engagement with pressing societal issues such as copyright and intellectual property in the context of AI. By bringing together diverse communities (fifteen choirs around UK), the project highlights the collaborative potential of AI in the context of the arts, societies, and communities. *The Call* demonstrates how contemporary artistic practices can critically reflect on the evolving relationship between cultural heritage, society, and emerging technologies.

Transplanetary Frequencies Station
Gabriela Munguía
The *Transplanetary Frequencies Station* is a participatory sonic project that invites people to engage in sound walks, deep listening, and sonic actions. It explores sound as vibrant matter, connecting Earth and cosmos through improvisation. Amid ecological and social crises, *Transplanetary Frequencies Station* fosters awareness, radical imagination, and ancestral knowledge. The project features collective readings, site-specific actions, and speculative tools for interstellar communication, reflecting on planetary coexistence. Realized in Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Peru, *Transplanetary Frequencies Station* culminates in a participatory performance where sound and voices are transmitted into the night sky via a high-powered laser—a poetic act of collective resonance and hope, imagining new forms of ecological and cosmic connection without knowing an existing receiver. An exemplary form of community building.

UNDER BOOM
Louis Braddock Clarke
The jury recognized *UNDER BOOM* for its innovative fusion of artistic expression and artistic research, bringing awareness to the "ever sounding surface of earth", to geological activities, environmental change, the passage of time, and the invisible waves caused by human presence. By confronting the limits of human temporal perception, the project offers a powerful reflection on processes that extend beyond immediate experience. The project's sonic and presentational qualities create an immersive and thoughtful artistic experience, translating complex phenomena into an emotionally resonant form. The jury valued the artist's ability to make unseen transformations perceptible through sound and artistic interpretation.

Organism

Navid Navab, Garnet Willis

Organism is an investigative platform that attunes us to the form-giving tendencies of kinetic chaos and the turbulent dynamics of sonic formation. It has two modes of presentation: a concert *Organism: in Turbulence* and an installation *Organism + Excitable Chaos*.

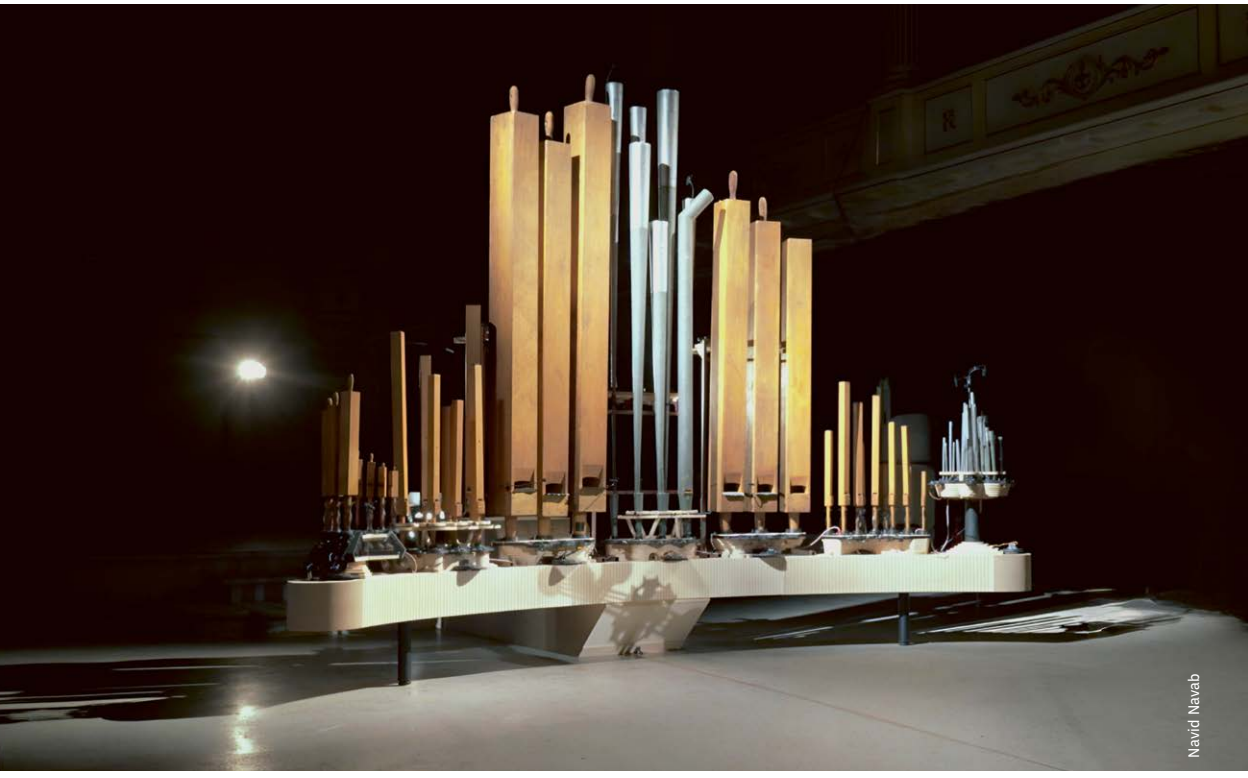
Organism: In Turbulence

Solo concert with a century-old pipe organ prepared robotically to sound turbulent formations

Navid Navab (performance)

Organism dismantles the socio-historical tonality of the organ—civilization's triumph over the turbulence of nature—to liberate its hidden turbulent materiality. A 1910 Casavant pipe organ, rescued from impending gentrification at a heritage site in Montreal, has had its pneumatic architecture modified to remove stabilizations that historically aimed to eliminate turbulent flow and its uncontrollable sound world, unleashing long-repressed timbres to be heard anew after centuries of sonic repression. *Organism*'s compositionally-shifting metastable states allow for the pipes' energetic thresholds to fall into and out of compatibility with one another, turning each pipe into a "vortex-shedding" theater of spectra and tone. The pipes that have been chosen for the work are those that exhibit the highest degree of instability, "edge-tone jumping" to discontinuously sound even the subtlest fluctuations, bringing the energetic interdependencies of the system to the sensory realm. In this network of relations, even minute shifts in the position of a servo motor shaping the flow of air within a pipe can result in dramatic and discontinuous changes in the sound we hear.

Navid Navab, Miha Godec



Navid Navab






During concerts, an array of gestural controllers provide a connection to *Organism*'s wild temporality. Immersed in this acoustic ecology, Navab surfs upon turbulent waves to steer unstable timbres toward sonic self-organization, traversing microsonic polyrhythms, post-rock overspill, and swampy soundscapes.


Angelina Nikolayeva


Angelina Nikolayeva


Angelina Nikolayeva


Ars Electronica


Ars Electronica

Organism + Excitable Chaos

A robotically prepared historic pipe organ driven by a robotically-steered chaotic pendulum

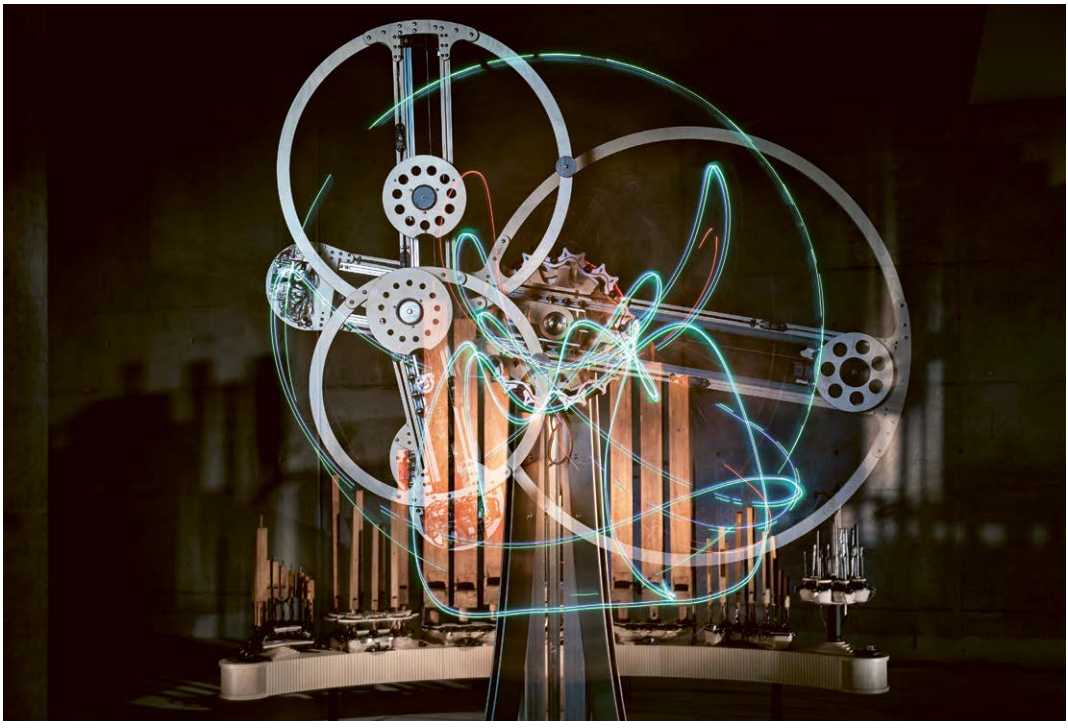
Navid Navab, with Garnet Willis (installation)

The chaotic motion of *Excitable Chaos*, a robotically-steered triple pendulum, drives the aerodynamic thresholds of *Organism*, a robotically-prepared century-old pipe organ.

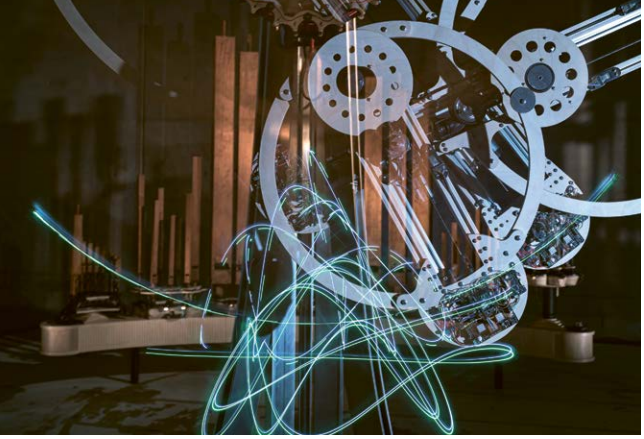
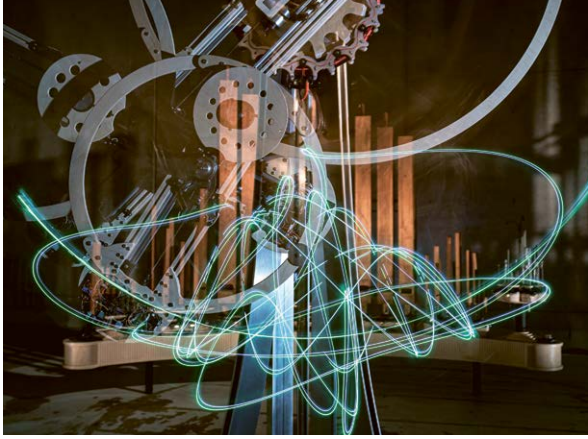
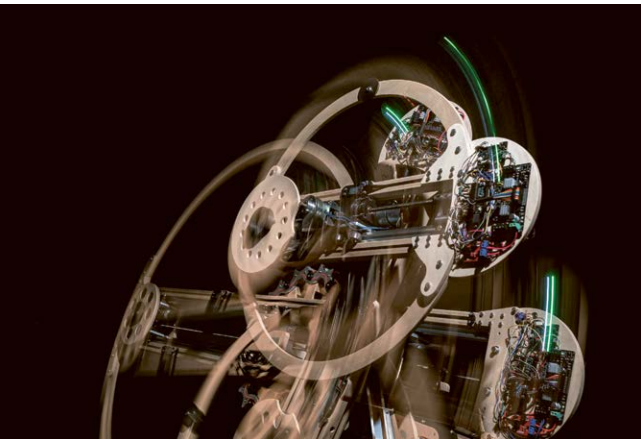
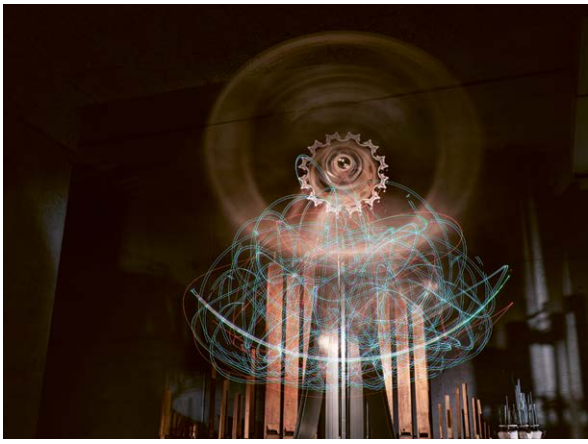
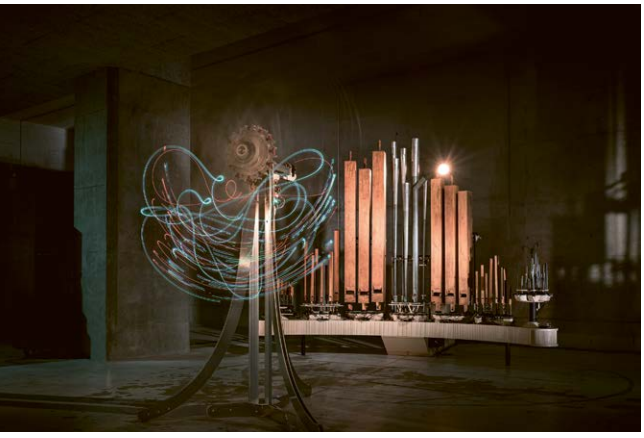
Designed to produce unpredictable compositional futures, *Excitable Chaos* is animated by the rapid exchange of potential and kinetic energy between its three moving arms. Sliding pivotal joints shift the system's larger gravitational dynamics, while subtle adjustments to damper weights refine its kinetic resonances, phases, and grooves. These modulations allow *Excitable Chaos* to continuously enact chaotic movement systems, each a stochastic universe of its own, while highlighting how, in nature, even at the smallest scales of magnitude, events are key contributors to cohesive but emergent behaviors, whose next states are unknowable.

Integral to *Excitable Chaos* is a one-of-a-kind electromagnetic driver which adds precise bursts of energy to its rotational momentum, replenishing any energy that has been lost to friction (entropic loss) while interfering to the least possible degree with the chaotic movement (its negentropic source of liveliness), arising from the interplay of the three pendulum arms as they express their material computation.

Excitable Chaos's transductive dance with gravity (its energetic tensions, correlations, and upheavals continuously shaping and unshaping excitable worlds) is wirelessly sensed and data-sculpted to reveal its inner liveliness. By channeling this stream of "lively" data, the generative movement of *Excitable Chaos* can conduct *Organism*'s aerodynamic thresholds, drawing kinetic chaos into conversation with sonic turbulence. Each undulation opens an indeterminate cycle of cascading oscillations, while over time chaotic attractors establish self-similar grooves. The resulting turbulent sonifications of chaos serve as meditations on how a cascading sense of more-than-oneness may spontaneously develop in life and nature and how this wild yet steerable relationality can help us express worlds yet unknown.



The chaotic motion of *Excitable Chaos,* a robotically-steered triple pendulum, drives the aerodynamic thresholds of *Organism,* a robotically-prepared century-old pipe organ.

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

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

https://u.aec.at/98159F51

Navid Navab (IR/CA) is an antidisciplinary composer and a media alchemist with a background in contemporary music, biomedical sonification, and philosophical biology. Through an investigative ArtScience practice, Navab's recent creations meticulously stage uncanny forms of order by imbuing machines with a sense of liveliness through fusion with the excitable dynamics of matter. Navab's art-machines sculpturally engage with transductive structures of liveliness, probing the excitable tendencies of matter—suspended in metastable states where thermodynamic reservoirs of indeterminacy generate cybernetic intentionality. Making the imperceptible palpable, these investigative works orchestrate sensory attunement to forms of life, at the pre-metabolic border between breathing and not breathing, while cybernetically enfolding their excitable dynamics. **Garnet Willis** (CA) is an interdisciplinary artist, designer, audio engineer, and instrument builder. His interests sit at the crossroads between sensation, form over time, sentient matter, and material agency. He has a keen interest in exploring the way in which energetics and materiality entwine to create surprising outcomes and combines a broad range of skills across many disciplines to produce multivariate artworks which tend to revolve around sound. His shapeshifting sculptures utilize complex material calculations driven by internal stresses resulting in unpredictable, real-time changes in physical form.

Miha Godec

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk

Jonathan Chaim Reus

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk is a collaboration between Jonathan Chaim Reus and Jaap Blonk that brings the vocal labor behind AI voice models to the stage. In live dataset-making performances, Blonk engages in a vocal battle with his AI-generated voice clone, the *Bla Blavatar*, performed by Reus. In each performance, Blonk carefully performs "Dataset Poems" as his voice is recorded live, with each recording contributing to a training dataset intended for future public use and improving *Bla Blavatar*.

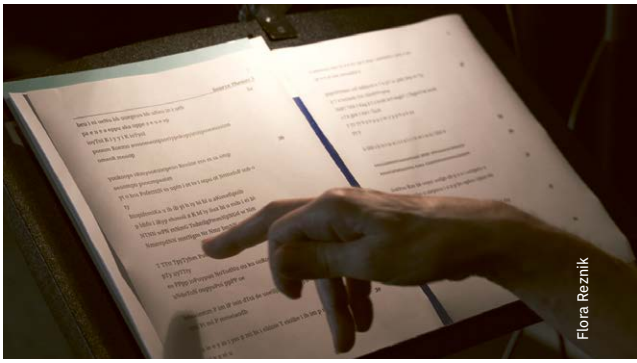
The algorithmically generated poems are written in RPA, a hybrid unicode notation inspired by the legacy of typographic scores and phonetically balanced texts used in speech research, ensuring statistical diversity within the dataset. The structured dataset recording effort gradually escalates into improvisational exchanges, evolving into an absurd "battle" between the vocal capabilities of human and clone.

The *Bla Blavatar* employs a custom real-time AI voice instrument called *Tungnaá*, developed in collaboration with Victor Shepardson.

Tungnaá (mis)appropriates techniques from autoregressive TTS neural networks, enabling real-time performance by rapidly entering text and symbolic notation. *Tungnaá* embraces a design principle of technological pluralism, not assuming as predefined notions of what a "voice" is or should sound like, and allows for invented languages and unconventional notations.

Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk is an absurdist take on the cultural fascination with AI avatars and the gold rush of creative automation. Rather than focusing on the awe of hyperreal vocal synthesis, it foregrounds the messy labor involved in the datafication of voice. The work challenges trends of generative AI systems to lock-in assumptions about what an ideal voice should be, inviting audiences to consider the hidden labor and, for Blonk, a lifetime of craft, behind AI voice, while humorously underscoring humanity's paradoxical endeavor to automate its own expressive capacities.


Dan Ortinez Marti


Flora Reznik


Ales Rosa


Flora Reznik

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

https://u.aec.at/8687E655

Jonathan Chaim Reus (US/NL) is a musician who explores embodiment, tradition, and progress in the human-technology relationship. With formal training in electronic music, mathematics, and science, he is known for building self-made hard and soft technologies that support live music performances, eccentric electronic instruments for theater and film, wearable sound art and live coding. His recent music involves both ancient and modern technologies of human voice, dataset-making as creative play, and improvisational surfing the waves of hype and unreality surrounding the 21st century techno-cognitive landscape.

Mineral Amnesia

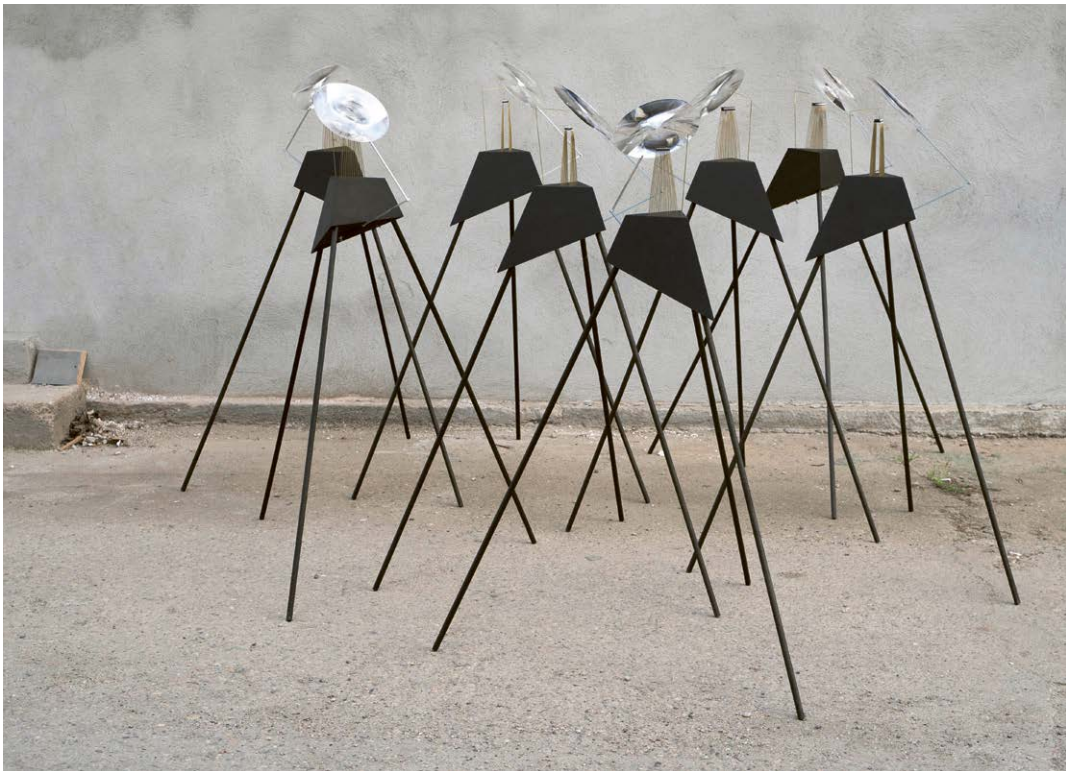
Ioana Vreme Moser

Mineral Amnesia explores in sound the evolution and decay of the first erasable programable silicon memory. Encapsulated under quartz windows, made of pure crystal, EPROMS, now outmoded microchips, lose information once exposed to light. The installation salvages EPROMs from different generations and plays them in real time under discrete UV light until their sounds are eroded and disappear.

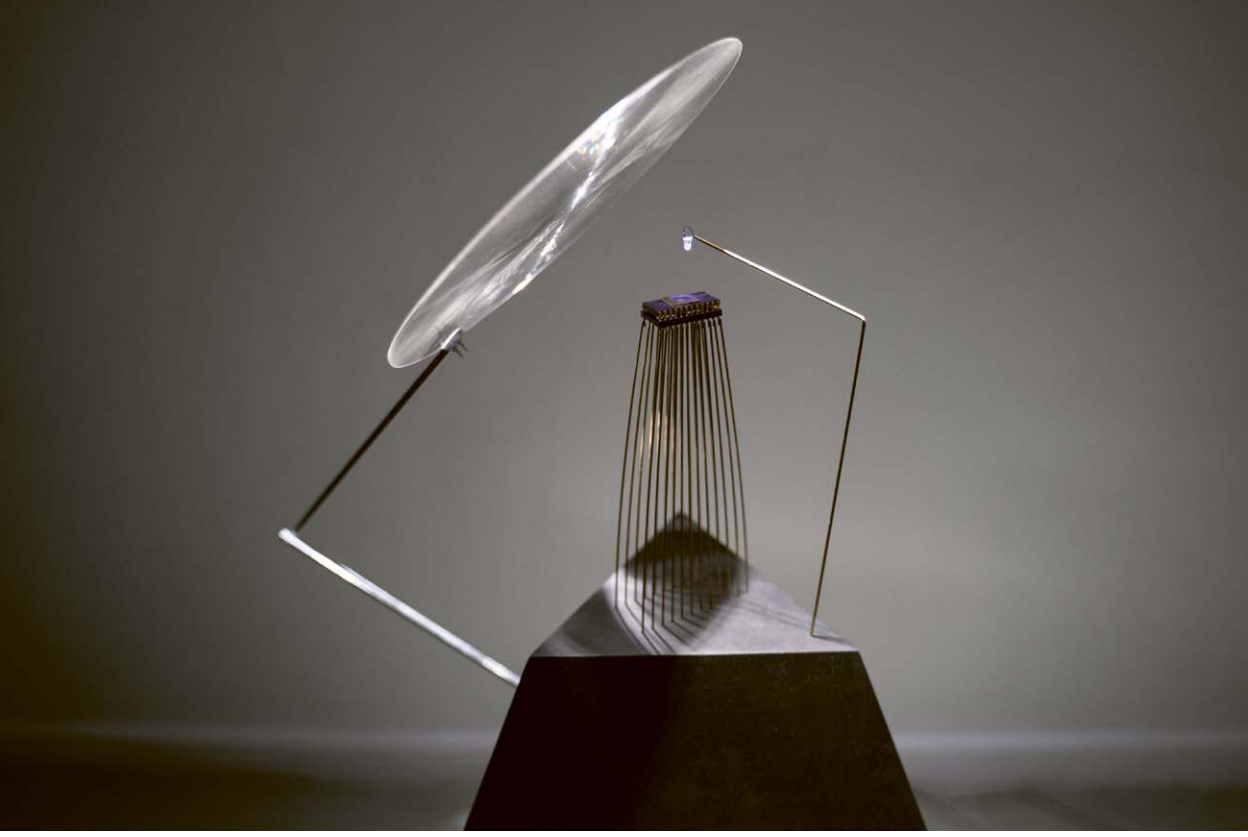
The project traverses the Digital Dark Age and its shadows through the perspective of an obsolete device. In 1971, researchers at Intel invented the Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory, adjacent to the first Microprocessor. With their influx under techno-capitalism, computational power doubled every second year and accelerated even more so today, in pursuit of artificial intelligence. This exponential growth has caused digital information to be unretrievable, lost in old hardware bodies such as these EPROMS, and dumped to form toxic wastelands across the earth's geological layer. From the 8k-bit capacity in the 2708 EPROM to the 1Mbit of the 27C020, the project reanimates these chips from the past and probes events from their genesis. First generations of EPROMs found pre-programmed play rhythmic patterns out of their data. As their capacity evolves, simple waveforms become words, then phrases. Encoded histories spoken through my voice sharpen as transistor numbers increase. Light becomes an abrasive agent that consumes and distorts data slowly. Voices and programs are devoured, each on their phase until intense digital noise. Finally, as more transistors are flipped, the installation falls silent.

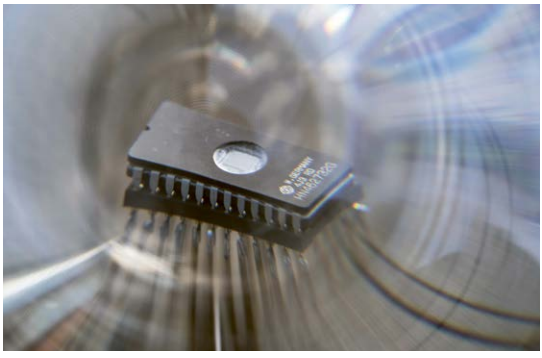
The public is invited to experience the sonic textural progression in real-time erasure as these artefacts undergo collective memory loss.

Ioana Vreme Moser



Ioana Vreme Moser





Ioana Vreme Moser

Michael Zeeh

Commissioned by Simultan Association
and Galerie Nord
Curated by: Levente Kozma, Carsten Seiffarth,
Veronika Witte
Technical support: Dorian Largen
Woodwork: Alex Matusciac, Alin Rotariu
With support from: Administration of the National
Cultural Fund (RO); Stiftung Kunstfonds,
Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa (DE)

https://u.aec.at/3FE74BFF

Ioana Vreme Moser (RO) is a Romanian sound artist interested in hardware electronics, speculative research, and tactile experimentation. In her practice, she uses rough electronic processes to obtain different materialities of sound. She places electronic components and control voltages in different situations of interaction with her body, organic materials, and environmental stimuli. Vreme Moser's works feature personal narrations and observations on the history of electronics, and their production chains, wastelands, and entanglements in the natural world.

ANIMAL [for body and sound]

Ash Fure

ANIMAL [for body and sound] is a solo performance project on a custom sound and light rig. The setup features two 12” speaker cones lying face up in an 8-foot square of tube lights. I stand inside that shifting frame of light, holding a 2-by-4 foot sheet of double-paned polycarbonate plastic in my hands, which I use to warp a fixed media composition coming out of the cones in real time. The process is intensely physical, both in terms of what it asks of my body (I am drenched in sweat by the end of a performance), and in terms of the pool ball physics of the causal chain. Think this path with me: the cones shoot soundwaves straight up to the ceiling. I intersect that jet-stream of energy inches from its point of release, using the angled plane of plastic to beam sound into the room like a laser. Pressing the plastic straight onto the cones adds friction-filled distortion as it grinds against the drivers. Shifting its height depresses or accentuates different parts of the spectrum. So there’s bump and grind friction and laser spatialization and physical filtering of sound and light, all fluidly unfolding and reflecting off the architecture as I whip and whirl the plastic through the air.

The blunt materiality of this system is key to the abandon it opens up for me in performance. The phenomenon requires no sensors, cameras, or click-tracks: just a wide-open spherical listening to the space and a muscular attention to the present. To play a room I have to hear past the amplification, train my attention on deep-order reflections, notice hot spots and odd geometries that make a reverberant structure feel strikingly alive. The filter sweeps in *ANIMAL* aren’t inside the soundfile, they’re in the live collision of molecules in the room, in the play of energy and movement and matter that constitutes precisely at that exact moment. This hyper-live, athletic approach to form gives *ANIMAL* its conceptual punch and throws a side-eyed wink to A.I. models prowling the perimeter: like, Algorithm this motherfucker, I dare you.

ANIMAL [for body and sound] was composed, performed, and instrument designed by Ash Fure.

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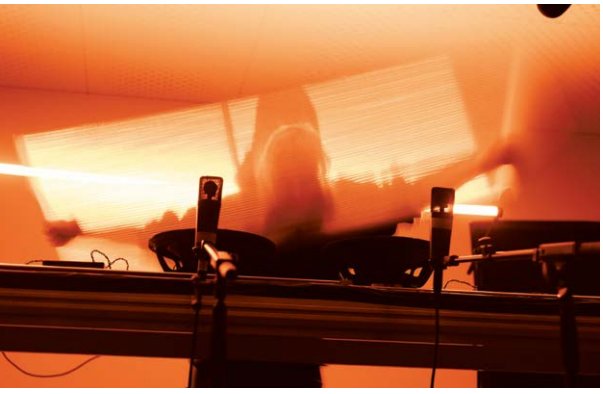


MINU Festival

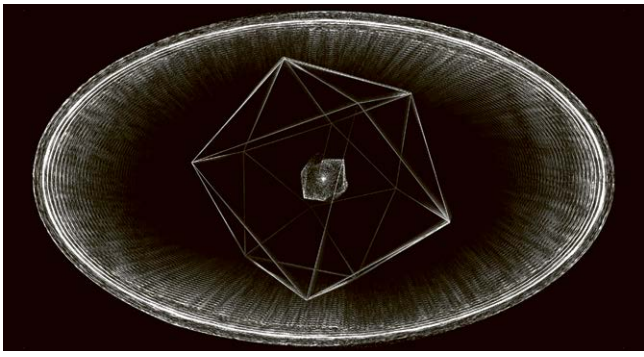
CTM Festival

CTM Festival

Ash Fure (US). Ash Fure's full-bodied sonic experiences work on the senses in startling ways. Called "purely visceral" and "staggeringly original" by *The New Yorker*, Fure's live performances and total installations mobilize the elemental force of sound, the social muscle of listening, and our animal capacity to sense. Winner of awards from Creative Capital, Guggenheim, DAAD, FCA, Lincoln Center, Rome Prize and Fulbright, Fure holds a PhD in Music Composition from Harvard University and is Associate Professor of Sonic Arts at Dartmouth College, where she directs the MFA in Sonic Practice.

Before the Red

Yixuan Zhao



Before the Red is an interactive audiovisual work that aims to capture the flow of time and the intangibility of emotions, using AI algorithms to construct intricate sensory scenes. In the unpredictable changes, in the tense soundscape, on the border of the red limit, from faint whispers to fierce confrontations, through limited time to reach the boundless sound field.

This work features double bass and glitch timbres, some generated by transforming double bass recordings through the neural network model by autoencoder. The core of the sound design lies in the interplay between extended instrumental traditional techniques and electronic textures, creating sharp contrasts and dynamic fusion. Rather than deforming acoustic sounds through live processing, the work emphasizes the expressive potential of the real instrument itself, taking the audience from the tangible reality to the abstract sound world.

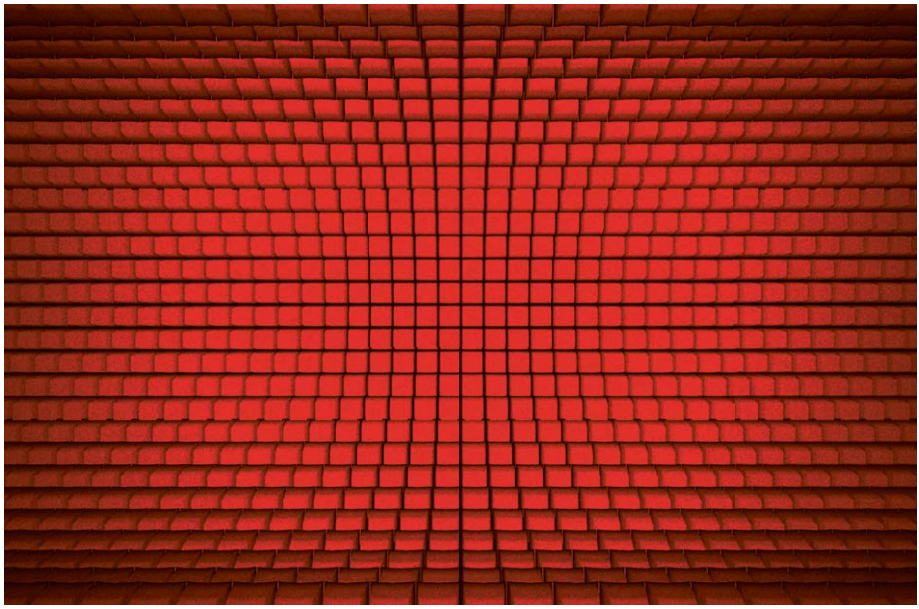
The control route of this work is gesture control sound, and sound control vision. By measuring the performer's electromyographic signals, it allows for a wider range of expressive possibilities. A machine learning model is used to learn the performer's gesture data, providing the performer with a flexible interactive system that can be controlled by himself. Separating gesture control from traditional playing helps to clearly present two distinct ways of expression.

I have been dedicated to exploring the practice of digital audio and AI in music composition, and collaborating with performers to search for more possibilities in technological performance environments. In *Before the Red*, the multiple interactions closely connect gesture, audition and vision.

Composition & interaction design: Yixuan Zhao
Audiovisual design: Qi Shuang
Algorithm design: Yi Shi
Double bass: Hanjui Chen
With support from: Central Conservatory of Music

https://u.aec.at/77B26D74

Yixuan Zhao (CN) is a composer, a lecturer at the Electronic Music Center, Department of Music AI and Music Information Technology, Central Conservatory of Music, China, and a visiting researcher at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, UK. Her composition focuses on interactive music, electroacoustic music, contemporary music, and new media art, and her works have won numerous awards and been performed in many international conferences and concerts, including NIME, ICMC, TiMP, Journées d'Informatique Musicale, IRCAM Forum, China-UK International Music Festival, Nottingham New Music Festival, MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Summit on Music Intelligence, Beijing Youth Arts Festival, WOCMAT Taiwan, etc.



Courtesy of the artist

Bora: Bora

Zhao Zhou

Bora: Bora manifests a sensory whitespace—a deliberate pause in the relentless rhythm of the created environment. In this installation, information reveals itself not through visual spectacle, but through air movements that can be both felt and heard, inviting visitors to reconnect with their senses beyond sight.

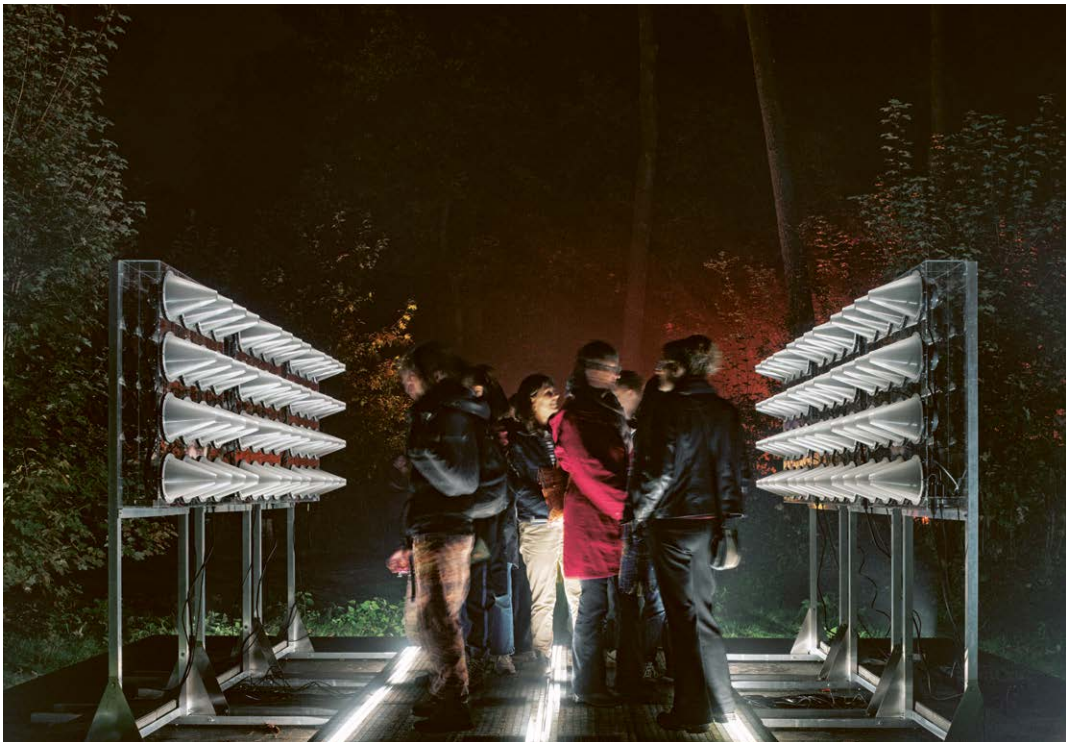
The work transforms a tunnel of aluminum frames into an untouched zone, where transparent enclosures housing 96 speakers generate a dynamic wall of sound and air. These turbulent yet tender forces sculpt the atmosphere into a tactile presence, rendering the intangible nearly tangible. The result is an environment that both disorientates and grounds, shifting perception from visual dominance to a multi sensorial experience.

These speakers function beyond their conventional purpose, creating not only auditory experiences but also calibrated air movements. A distinctive percussive sound emerges as each air vortex is generated—a continuous, low-frequency tone without variation in pitch that forms the foundation of the piece. This sonic layer merges with the composed soundscape to create a space that resists familiar interpretation.

By redirecting focus from the eyes to the often-neglected senses of hearing and touch, Bora: Bora challenges conventional perceptual norms. Its immersive soundscape defies easy localization, while programmed air vortices animate the space with movement. This invisible instability does not simply command attention—it also invites visitors to surrender control and embrace sensory flux.

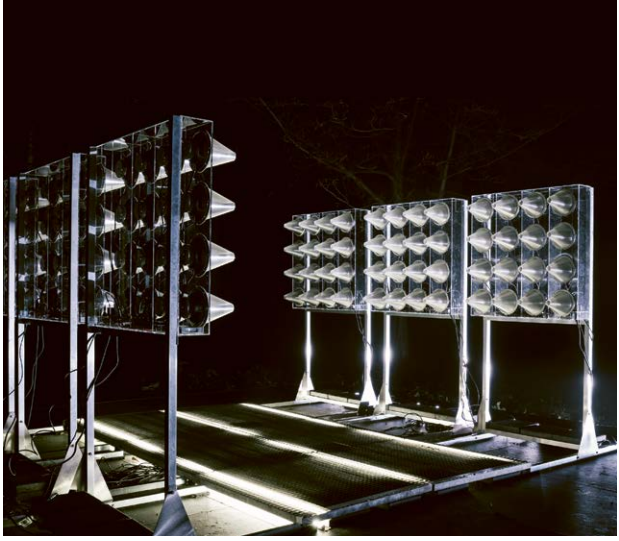
Drawing inspiration from the vortex theory of the atom, the installation speculates on a technological paradigm that values ephemeral forces over mere visual innovation. Here, turbulence itself becomes a material, shaping the void into an elusive, ever-changing presence.

For a fleeting moment, *Bora: Bora* offers a raw, unmediated encounter with the currents of sensation that flow continuously, yet typically unnoticed, around and through us.

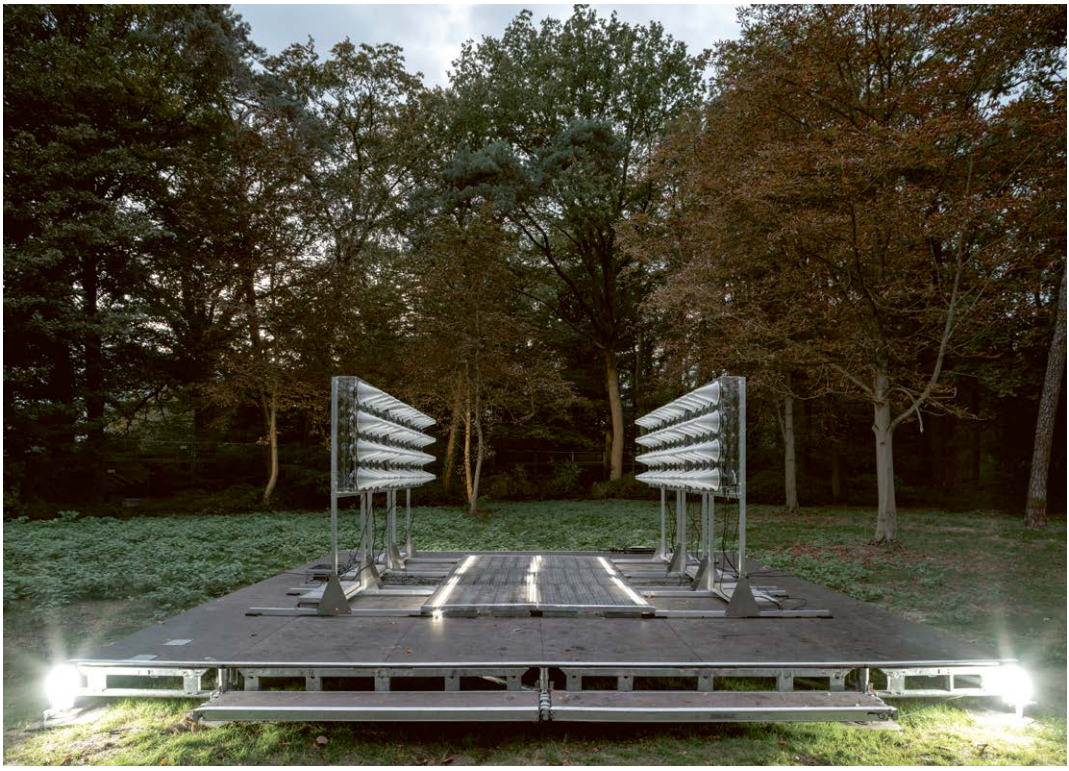


Riccardo De Vecchi

Riccardo De Vecchi



Ira Grünberger



Riccardo De Vecchi

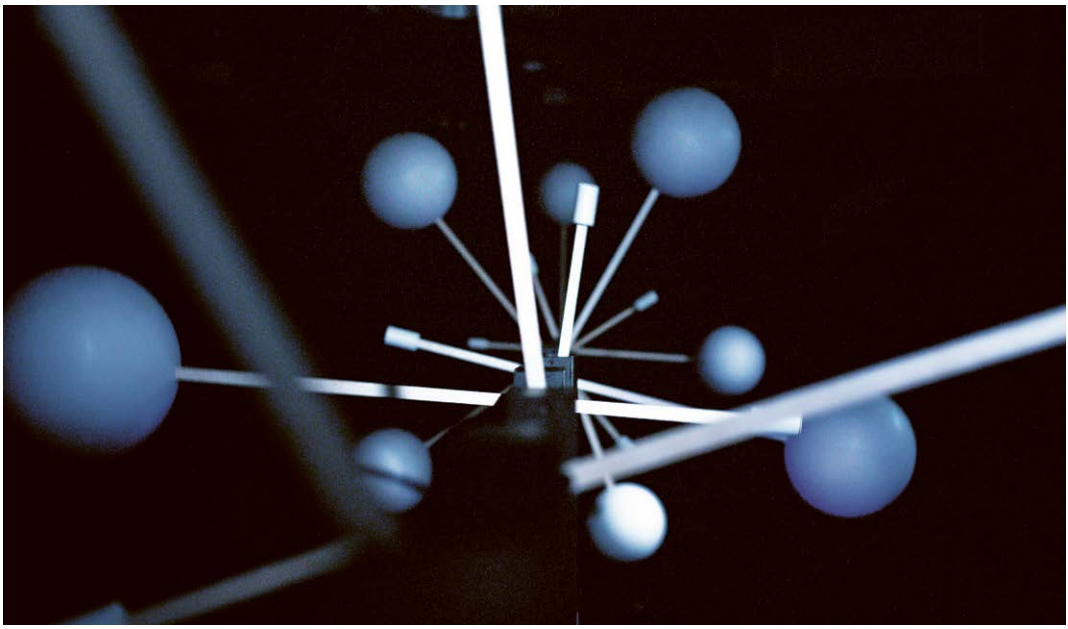
Concept, artistic direction & design: Zhao Zhou
Soundscape: Mint Park
Embedded software: Nathan Marcus
Mentorship: Zalán Szakács
With support from: Amarte Foundation & Schemerlicht Talent Programme

https://u.aec.at/1F3122C0

Zhao Zhou (NL) is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice investigates air-based sensory disruption and spatial experience. Trained in Interior Architecture at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, he creates installations employing arrays of air vortex generators to craft moments of suspension where tactile and auditory perception gently eclipse sight. His work advocates for techno-spatial autonomy by exposing and reconfiguring the hidden constraints of built environments. He has exhibited at GOGBOT Festival, SEE DJERBA, and at Dutch institutions such as BRUTUS and Kunstfort.

From0

Superbe



Antonin Weber

From0 is an interactive, sound-based, and kinetic installation. It highlights the versatile nature of language. It posits and emphasizes the instability of any balance, destined to escape all control. With *From0*, harmony slides from order to chaos, and conversely, chaos returns to its original form. The installation progressively deconstructs each signifier, offering it an escape from meaning, highlighting the distance between concept and the material and musical nature of language. It is an opportunity to hear certain words in a new light and, ipso facto, to immerse oneself in a kind of primal emotional bath. Hearing the words repeated, gradually shifting to let the musicality settle, and letting oneself flow with it.

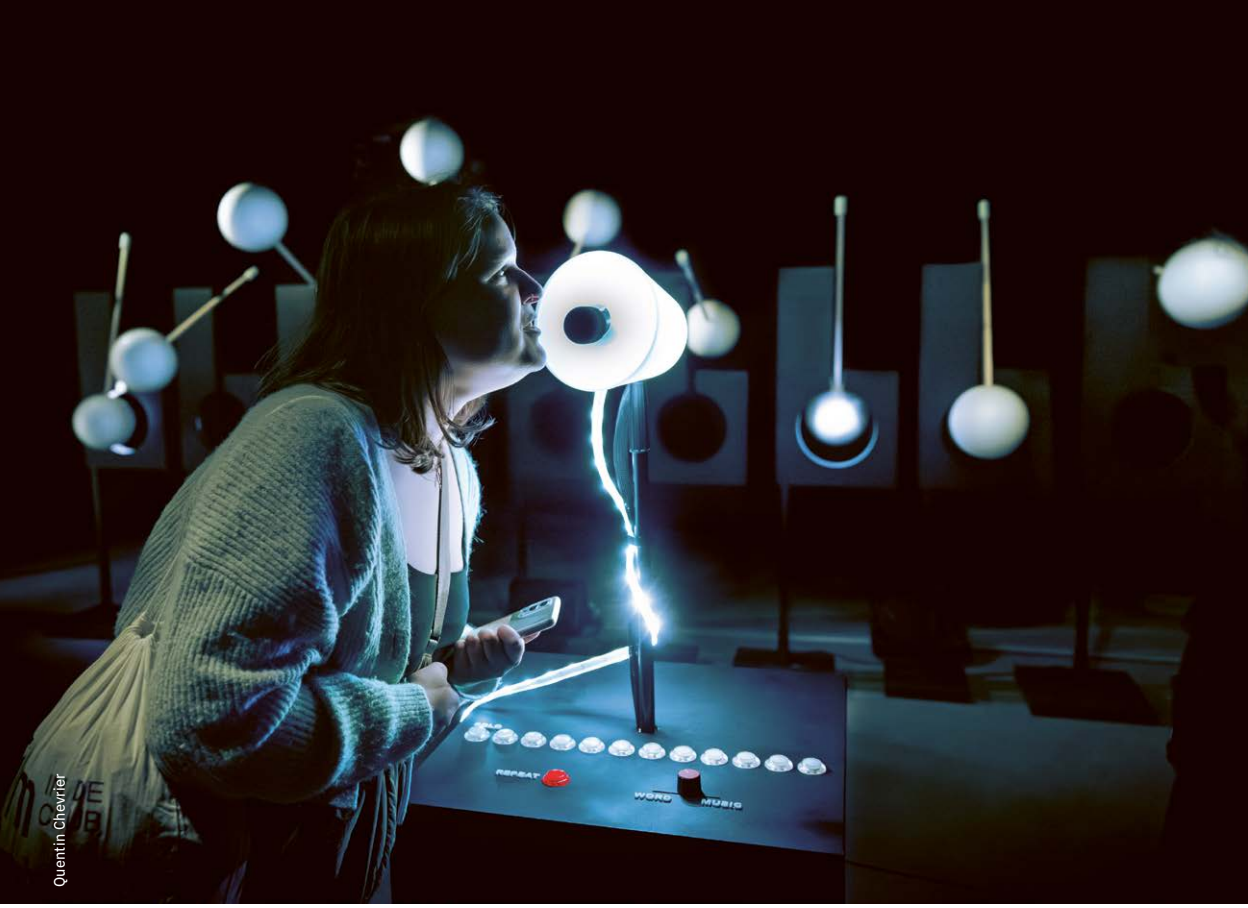
From0 is a word composed of the word "From" and the letter "0." It evokes the starting point, zero, while the circle symbolizes the perfection of unity in form and the repeating loop. This unit is deconstructed before our eyes and ears, only to reappear a few minutes later, when the phase-shifting cycle is complete. The word then becomes intelligible again.

From0 invites the visitor to record a sound (a word, a phrase, or a noise) using a microphone. This word is then broken down into 12 elements, each associated with a pendulum in the installation. Each pendulum swings at a slightly different speed, each one a little slower than the previous one, which transforms the sound into an unexpected and surprising melody. It offers an interface that allows interaction with the pendulums. Each pendulum can be isolated by pressing the button corresponding to it. Another button stops the gradual shift to loop the current musical sequence. Combined button presses allow the freezing of a rhythm in its current state, enabling the creation of a unique music loop that can be repeated. Finally, a potentiometer allows switching from the vocal sample to its musical synthesis.

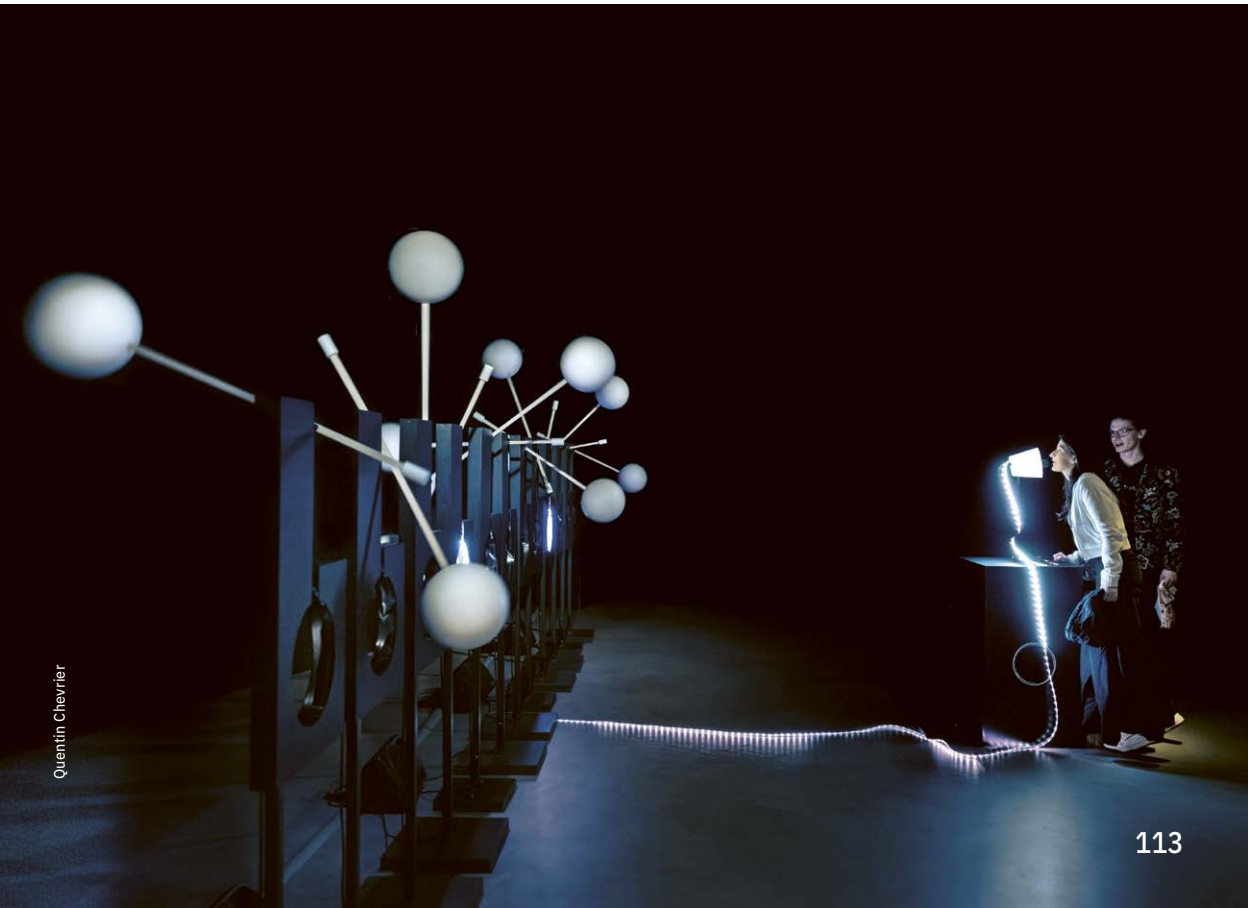
From0 was supported by the
Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles

https://u.aec.at/B1218D5E

Superbe (BE) crafts living artworks where objects, sounds, and rhythms converge—ephemeral moments of wonder, connection, and poetry. Unexpected and accessible, they strike the right chord—right where it feels good.



Quentin Chevrier



Quentin Chevrier

KINDASA

Nurah Farahat

Public Domain

KINDASA (كندسة—derived from the Latin “condensare”)

The first automated humanoid robot was a 12th-century musical band. A water-operated programmable drum machine with wooden pegs and levers that controlled percussion. The drummers could be made to play different rhythms and patterns simply by rearranging the pegs. This ‘robot band’ could perform more than fifty facial and body actions during each musical selection.

Ismail Al-Jazari invented and recorded over 100 devices, shaping the foundations of mechanical engineering. Thanks to the centuries-long Translation Movement and vibrant trade and cultural relations, he built his work upon Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Indian, and Chinese engineering.

The result was water-operated clocks (for worshippers to know the prayer times), perpetual flute machines, drum machines, fountains, hand washing devices, and machines for raising water from ponds, rivers, and flowing canals, the crankshaft (essential to all modern piston and car engines), the flushing mechanism, multi-dial combination locks, and many more.

Like Al-Jazari’s clocks and musical automata, I compose using mechanical descriptions without timelines, grids, or fixed BPMs. Instead, I weave sets of rules to build a “musical-visual automaton” to generate each scene dynamically. Through these rules, I simulate and regulate rhythms, visuals, movement, and progression procedurally—sometimes in feedback loops. Moving arms, blinking, eye contact or avoidance, birds, sky, wind, gravity, physics, time… all carefully woven and puppeteered together in the form of a 45-minute live audiovisual performance.

Sound engineering: Michael Häßler
Vocals: Alaa Abdullatif
With support from: Goethe Institute Kairo; Senator für Kultur Bremen; Nordmedia CLOSEUP Bremen; Senatorin für Wirtschaft, Hafen und Transformation-Bremen

https://u.aec.at/440818CA

Nurah Farahat (EG) is an Egyptian audiovisual artist, game developer, event organizer, and VJ based in Bremen, Germany. She studied traditional animation and sound design in Cairo (2014) while active in the city’s electronic/club scene. In parallel, she explored generative sound, animation, and “non-game” simulation (including at the Institute for AI-Bremen 2018–2020), leading to her solo AV project *KINDASA*. Since 2018, she has notably collaborated with artist M.I.A. on various graphics and projects, and has VJed and coordinated her live shows worldwide since 2022.

Nurah Farahat

MONTE

Luciano Piccilli

Folds of Mbyá-Guaraní voices resonate across the landscapes of Misiones Province, a borderland between Brazil and Paraguay. A specular device presents us with memories of past landscapes. The reflected image appears altered: the concept of landscape emerges as a shifting reality—a space in constant resignification, activated by the voices of those who inhabit or once inhabited these territories.

The Paraná rainforest is a vital remnant of the Atlantic Forest. Over the last 120 years, 95% of this ecosystem has been lost to deforestation, largely at the hands of foreign companies. Severe flooding in local towns and the migration of entire families to urban centers are among the many consequences of this destruction.

This project explores how identity and memory intertwine with territory in a continuous process of reconstruction and reinterpretation of the migrant's affective space. The voices of migrants, recorded through interviews, undergo a process akin to that of a mirror—a sonic tautology or folding that enhances the tonal properties of speech while opening an abstract dimension. These folds compose a piece that transforms the specular matter forming the physical dimension of the artwork, resonating and retrieving the traces of the territory as a portal of memories and affective spaces.

Digital Musics & Sound Art
Honorary Mention

Mbyá-guaraní testimonies:
Beatriz Villalba, Javier Villalba—Perutí Village—El Alcázar (Excerpt from *La trama del vestido,* Gricelda Rinaldi).
Arturo Duarte—Andresito Community, San Ignacio.
Ruperta Morinigo, Silverio Morinigo, Luis Morinigo, Elena Villalba, Benitez Pablo—Yacutinga Community, Gdor. Roca.
Desiderio Acosta, Hilario Acosta—Tekoa Takuapi Community, Ruiz de Montoya.

Device design: Luciano Piccilli
Programming: Julián Di Pietro
With support from: Binaural Nodar, Vouzela, Portugal;
Espacios del Arte Sonoro (UNTREF), Buenos Aires (AR)

https://u.aec.at/6F1B6D46

Luciano Piccilli

Luciano Piccilli (AR) is a sonic artist and an image and sound designer from the University of Buenos Aires, with postgraduate studies in Expanded Music and Sound Art. His work explores sound, memory, and territory through techno-poetic devices and site-specific interventions, creating tensions between materiality and affective space. He has exhibited his work across the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

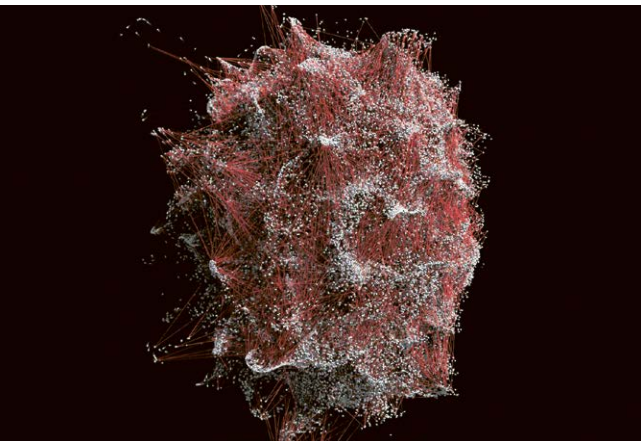
New Ruins

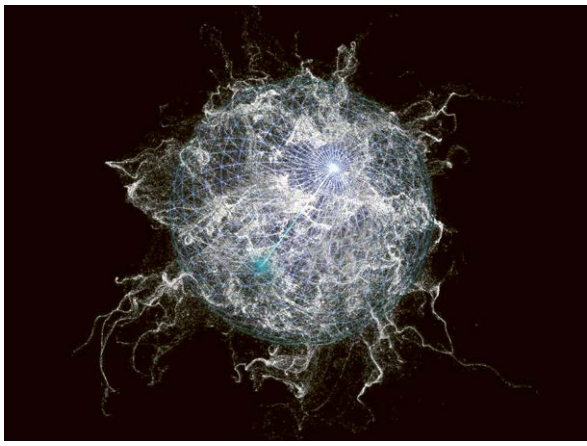
Abo Abo

ruin /ˈruːɪn/ *1) the physical destruction or disintegration of something or the state of disintegrating or being destroyed. 2) The remains of a building, city, or structure that has been destroyed or has decayed, often associated with the remnants of ancient civilizations or abandoned place. 3) A state of complete disorder, collapse, or decay, often referring to a person's circumstances.*

Commissioned by IRCAM Forum for Abo Abo, this performance delves into the intersection of music, technology, and AI using software developed by the Paris-based music research center IRCAM. Abo's performance proposes a distinct and unconventional approach, diverging from the typical workflows of these two advanced tools: *RAVE*, developed by the ACIDS team, and *Somax2*, created by the ERC REACH team.
RAVE (Realtime Audio Variational autoEncoder) is a deep learning framework for audio synthesis, enabling fast generation of high-quality sound by training neural network models on audio data.
Somax2 is an AI-powered tool for musical improvisation, incorporating machine listening, cognitive memory, and multi-agent architecture for real-time control and composition.
The performance establishes a relationship between turntables, modular synthesizers, and AI-driven tools, creating a complex and cohesive system. The audio experience is further enhanced by a video component managed by performer and visual artist Tania Cortés Becerra, whose work creates an audio-reactive connection between sound and image, enriching the overall performance.
The first performance, streamed live from Studio 5 at IRCAM in Paris, concluded with a discussion between the artists and developers. Together, they explored the technologies employed, highlighting Abo's innovative and non-standard use of these tools, which sets his approach apart from conventional applications. This session offered an opportunity to reflect on the future of artistic practices and the potential of AI applied to music and live performance.

Frame from performance video—IRCAM Forum Studio





Concept, composition, performance: Daniele Carcassi (Abo Abo)
Visual design and live video: Tania Cortés Becerra
This work was developed in the context of Forum Studio Session 2 forum.ircam.fr,
and used software and technologies such as *RAVE* and *Somax2* from Ircam Labs;
with support from ACIDS team (Giovanni Bindi), ERC REACH team (Marco Fiorini),
Forum Studio team (Paola Palumbo, Guillaume Piccarreta, Vincent Martos, Karin Laenen)

https://u.aec.at/344A0C55

Abo Abo, moniker of **Daniele Carcassi** (IT), is a Florence-based performer, composer, and sound artist active in electronic music since 2015. With a Master's in Sound Design and a Bachelor's in Electronic Music, his multifaceted practice spans DJ sets, experimental performances, and sound installations. Abo Abo moves fluidly between underground scenes, theaters, clubs, and free parties, constantly exploring new territories of sound. With numerous digital and physical releases, his work has led him to perform at prestigious international events around the world.

Frame from performance video—IRCAM Forum Studio

ON AIR

Peter van Haaften, Michael Montanaro, Garnet Willis

The audience speaks into the bells of two horns. Sound is inhaled into an alchemical apparatus. The collected voices become chaotically entangled within the tensile confines of an expanding latex balloon. Trapped inside the captured ether, words collide, fragment, and recombine, modulating their contextual and phonetic arrangement. A soundscape of ricocheting voices is perceived, emerging from deep inside the balloon. Over time, the pressure becomes too great and like a sonic capacitor, sound is freed from its reservoir.

The valves open. Airborne voices are forced through a series of reflective steel cornets towards an elastic membrane where mechanically induced friction compels the collected voices to incandesce. Behind the pulsating membrane, an iris opens, slowly releasing the luminous voices towards a series of glass lenses and mirrors. From here follows a five-part choral harmony of mirrors that builds into a final cacophonous performance of sound, rhythm, and light.

Creative direction, concept and design, composition, sound design, interaction design, programming, electronics, acoustics: Peter van Haaften
Creative direction, concept and design, visual design/ realization, interaction design, optomechanical design, fabrication: Michael Montanaro
Concept execution, lead designer, engineering, sculptural realization, acoustics, mechatronics, testing, tooling and fabrication: Garnet Willis
Special thanks to: Martin Marier, Nima Navab, Thierry Dumont, Tatev Yesayan, Carolie Delisle, Dirk Zylstra, Guillaume Fortin, Eureka Lighting, Nichia Corporation.
With support from: Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des Arts de Montréal, Fonds de recherche du Québec, Concordia University (Montréal), and MOULIN DE L'IMPRÉVU.

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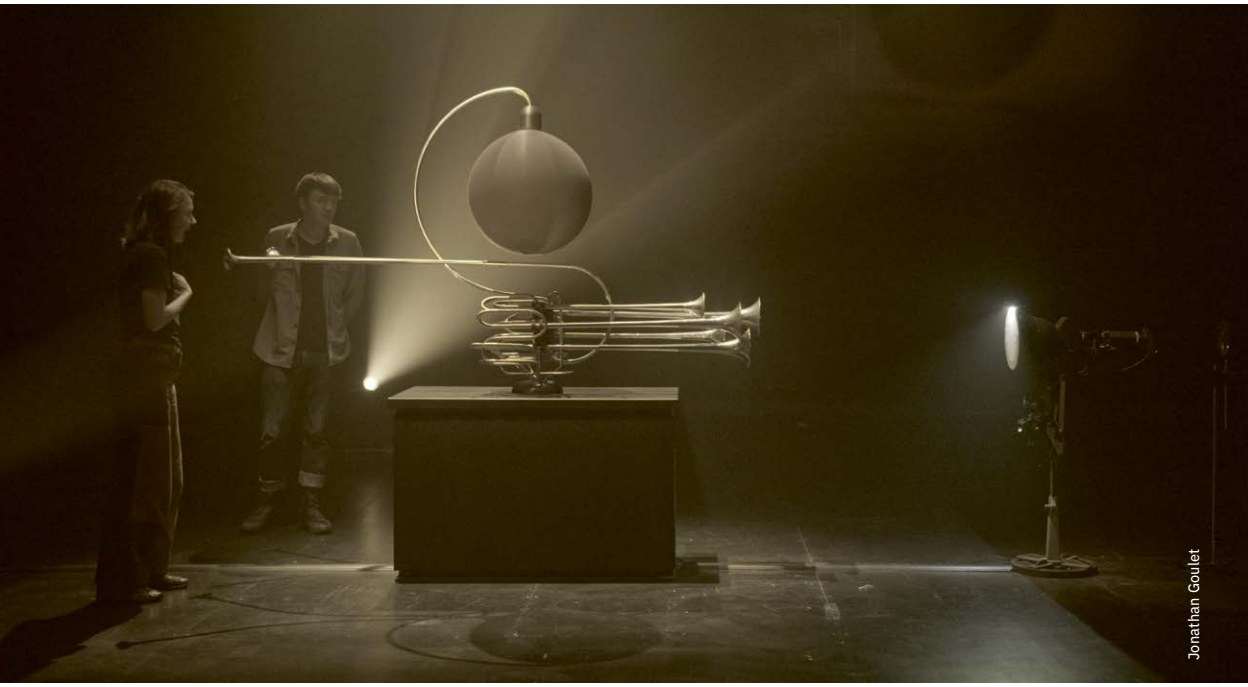
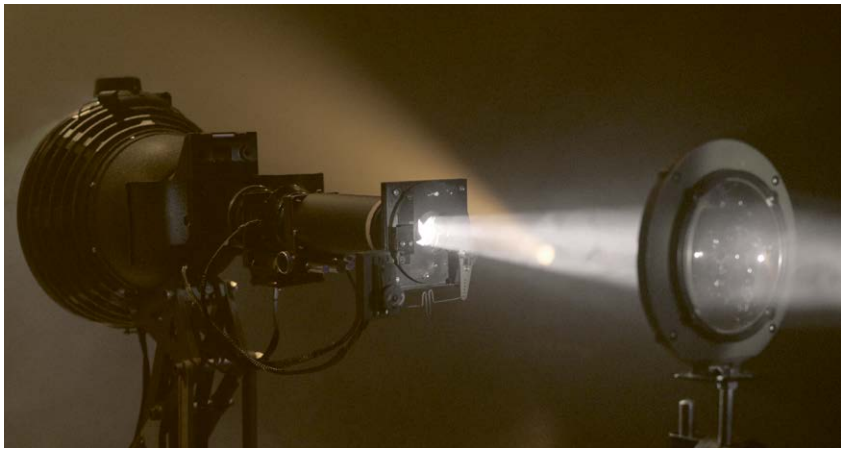
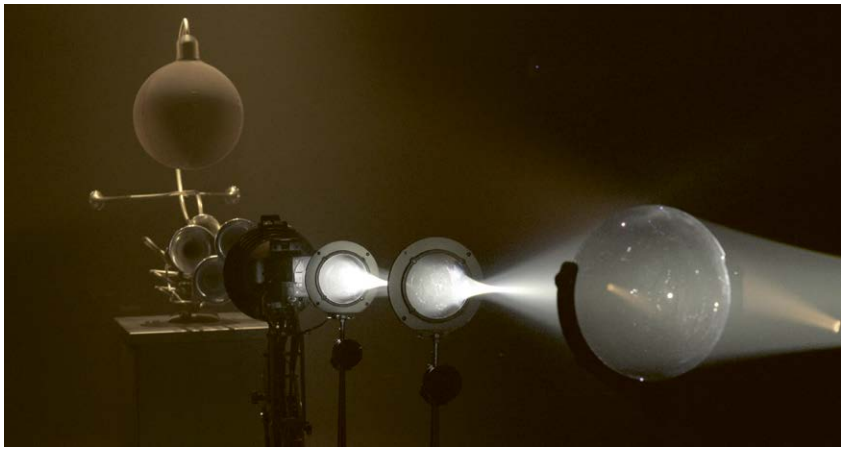
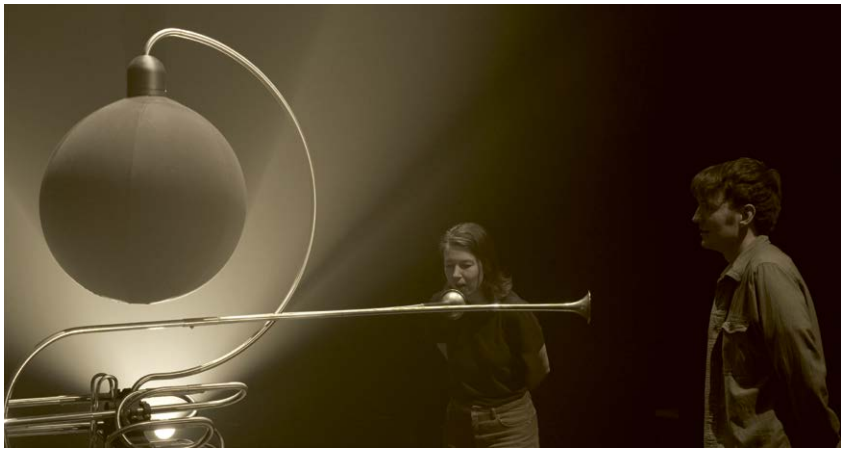


Jonathan Goulet







Jonathan Goulet

Peter van Haaften (CA) is an interdisciplinary sound artist, creating works which musically reimagine the algorithm as a revealing process that can be observed in the behavior of ordinary objects and everyday experience. **Michael Montanaro** (CA) is a trans-disciplinary artist dedicated to the creation of works that focus on evolving innovative ways in which performative practices and technology are combined to enhance the interactive experience. **Garnet Willis** (CA) is an interdisciplinary artist, audio engineer, designer, and instrument builder who produces multivariate artworks that explore the interplay between physical form, musical interface, and sound.

OSMIUM: An electro-mechanical live performance ritual

OSMIUM

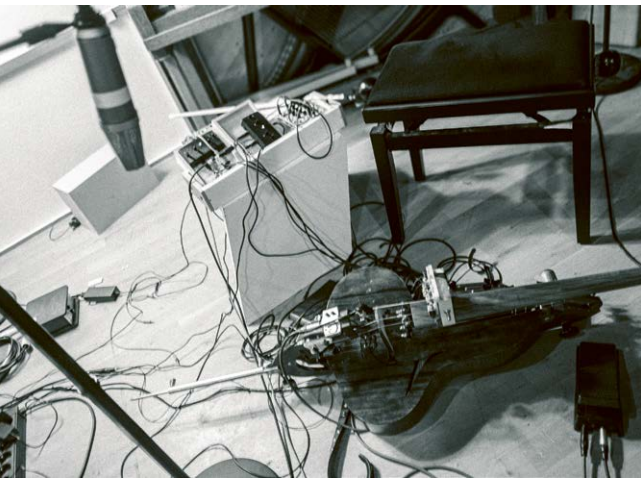
OSMIUM is an audacious performance project that fuses electroacoustic experimentation with raw physicality, forging a visceral dialogue between human performers and machine-driven sonic landscapes. Blending burnished soundscapes, metallic drones, and bio-mechanical vocalizations, *OSMIUM* explores time fluidly—smoldering through the past while forging new sonic pathways.

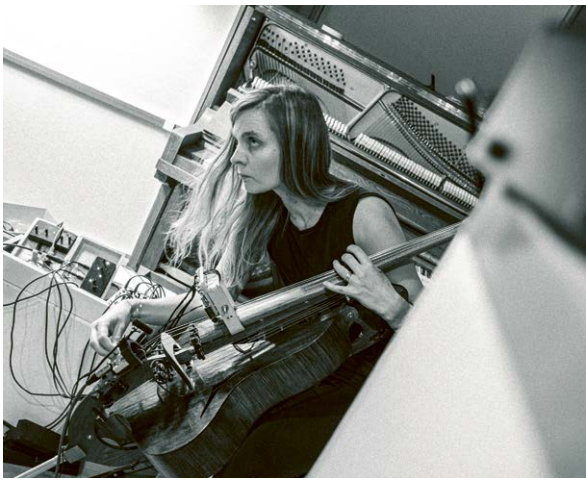
At its core, *OSMIUM* interrogates human-technology relationships, tradition versus progression, and the interplay between individual and collective form. Each performance is a radical synthesis of folk traditions, doom metal, minimalism, industrial music, and extreme noise—thriving in the liminal spaces between genres, shifting and evolving unpredictably.

Central to *OSMIUM*'s vision is a synergy between groundbreaking instrumental design, electro-mechanical beaters, and extreme vocal techniques. The ensemble features Oscar-winning Icelandic cellist Hildur Guðnadóttir (halldorophone), US engineer/producer James Ginzburg (custom bass monochord), UK Grammy-winning producer designer Sam Slater (feedback percussion), and Senyawa's Rully Shabara from Indonesia (extended vocal techniques). Their collaboration transcends individual achievements, forming a singular artistic entity.

Guðnadóttir's halldorophone harnesses unstable feedback loops, Slater's custom feedback percussion generates resonant rhythms, and Ginzburg's bass monochord fuses ancient tonalities with modern processing. Shabara, the conceptual fulcrum, merges guttural articulations and spectral overtones. Each instrument and performer interacts with custom electro-mechanical devices, blurring boundaries between human and machine.

OSMIUM's performances are immersive, ritualistic experiences where human agency and automation converge in an evolving sonic ecosystem. Through custom-built instruments, electro-mechanical rhythmic beaters, and digital processing, the ensemble redefines live performance, interrogating the blurred lines between performer and instrument, tradition and innovation, control and surrender.





Halldorophone: Hildur Guðnadóttir
Vocals: Rully Shabara
Feedback percussion: Sam Slater
Bass monochord: James Ginzburg

https://u.aec.at/C8691ECE

OSMIUM (INT) is a groundbreaking collaboration between Oscar-winning composer **Hildur Guðnadóttir** (IS), vocalist **Rully Shabara** (ID) of Senyawa, musician **James Ginzburg** (US) of emptyset, and Grammy-winning producer **Sam Slater** (UK). Using custom-built acoustic instruments augmented with machines, distortion, and electronic manipulation, OSMIUM creates a sonic landscape like no other. Their work features primordial growls, harsh breathing, and pre-lingual utterances over industrial drones and metallic percussion—a gripping, infernal sound beyond categorization.

Camille Blake

The Call

Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst

Artists Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst approach artificial intelligence (AI) as a creative instrument. They view the development of present-day AI models as the latest in a series of coordination technologies that allow individuals to work and build collectively. For millennia, choral and group singing have served a similar purpose. Evolving through rituals and protocols like call and response, they have helped to build spaces and structures for gathering, processing, and transmitting information, and creating meaning in social and civic life. Like a choir, where many individual voices become a collective, the artists propose that AI can further augment the transformation from the individual to the collective.

The Call centers on developing new protocols and materials for the creation of choral AI models and explores what new rituals and protocols we might want to nurture for the age of AI. To train the AI, Herndon and Dryhurst have composed a songbook of hymnals, singing exercises, and a recording protocol, travelling with the Serpentine Arts Technologies team to record fifteen community choirs across the UK. The choristers were part of a Data Trust experiment, led by Serpentine's Arts Technologies team, to test new approaches to governing AI training data through a real-world case study with 15 UK choirs. The experiment led to a new proposal for data intermediation that allows for the distribution of power between the contributors to training data and those who use the models.

This research was published in a recent white paper: *Prototyping a GLAM Trusted Data Intermediary for Public Interest AI.*

The immersive and interactive spatial audio installation uses the created models to activate the chapel-like setting of Serpentine North and invites visitors to take part in the Data Trust Experiment with their own voice. A year's worth of new protocols and collectively created materials for training AI are presented as new artifacts for gathering and ritual, co-designed by architecture studio, SUB. The work offers us renewed insight into the networked and collective nature of human creation in the 21st century, while the exhibition created three distinct research grade models: the symbolic AI model based on the Sacred Harp canon to create the song book in collaboration with the Algomus research team at Lille University, the generative AI model trained on the choral recordings in collaboration with Stable Audio, and the interactive generative AI model that the audience could sing through in collaboration with IRCAM.

Artists: Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst
Architectural design: SUB
Curatorial lead: Eva Jaeger
Audio assistant: Ian Berman
With support from: Serpentine extended funding network, Berlin Artistic Research Grant, Fellowship, 1of1

https://u.aec.at/0D9836DB

Installation Views by Leon Chew, *The Call*, Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst with sub, Serpentine, 2024

Holly Herndon (US) and **Mat Dryhurst** (US) are artists renowned for their pioneering work in machine learning, software, and music. They develop their own technology and systems for living with the technology of others, often with a focus on the ownership and augmentation of digital identity and voice. These technical protocols not only facilitate expansive artworks across media, but are proposed as artworks unto themselves. In 2024 they were awarded Austria's first Digital Human Rights Award, presented the solo exhibition *The Call* at Serpentine Gallery, and took part in the Whitney Biennial.

Transplanetary Frequencies Station

Gabriela Munguía

Gabriela Munguía

Gabriela Munguía

Constanza Alarcón

In the era of the Technocene, where Earth faces a multidimensional ecosocial and geopolitical crisis, outer space has also become a contested territory of extraction. Today, it becomes urgent to build more habitable and dignified worlds through alliances between matter, technique, and care. To confabulate means plotting together, weaving ourselves into the commons to remember our multitude with the Earth and cosmos.

The *Transplanetary Frequencies Station* is a participatory sound performance in the form of a speculative geocosmic laboratory open to sonic experimentation, collective readings, deep listening and invocations, site-specific sound interventions, nomadic radio activations, and experimentation with open technologies for speculative light-sound interstellar communications.

Emerging from the tension between creativity and cosmological imagination, this experimental sonic platform invites us to look toward the skies and ask ourselves what it means to be terrestrial beings in times of a wounded planet. A space for deep listening, where interstellar technologies integrate with our own cosmological visions and bring scientific and sensory experiences together.

The project aims to embed human and more-than-human sonorities into light transmissions to be sent through deep space. Rather than distancing ourselves into the depths of the universe, this practice becomes a profound way of re-rooting ourselves to E(e)arth—an offering placed upon a cosmic threshold.

These experiences have been collaboratively activated across diverse artistic and cultural spaces in Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Peru, promoting reflections on planetary communality and pluriversal coexistence, using sonic experimentation as a tool for imagining alternative earthly and cosmic relationships.

Guest artists: Sandra Ulloa, María Paz Calabrano, Emilia Duclos, Alfonso Leyton, Cristobal Arenas, Pablo Arancibia, Susana Chao, Elisa Balmaceda, Denis Álves Rodirigues, Rodrigo Ríos Zunino.
Soundart pieces: *Coro de las especies* by Juanita Fernández and *Enjambre* by Mariel Terán.
Special thanks to: Patricia Bernal, Guadalupe Chávez, Ángel Salazar, Pablo Arancibia and all the partners, participants and more than human communities that have nurtured and collaborated with this project.

https://u.aec.at/900812F3

Digital Musics & Sound Art
Honorary Mention

Gabriela Munguía

Gabriela Munguía (MX) is a transmedia artist, researcher, and curator. From experimental intersections between art and technoscience, she explores planetary ecological and cosmotechnical phenomena to address issues of geopolitics, environmental justice, and interspecies studies. Her work has received numerous recognitions including the Goethe-Institut Prince Claus Award for Cultural and Artistic Response to Environmental Change; CIFOxArs Electronica Award; Prix Ars Electronica Interactive Art Honorary Mention; among others. Her work has been exhibited in prominent international exhibitions and festivals in the Americas, Europe, Egypt, and Iran.

UNDER BOOM

Louis Braddock Clarke

UNDER BOOM (2024) is a hallucinatory audiovisual experience shaped through a combination of human-shaped sonic ecologies and deep time. Framed as a listening station and a geological hotspot to imagine society's shifting sonic world, the work takes the audience through an anthropogenic experience with infrasound, an inaudible bandwidth of 0–20 Hz filled with shockwaves caused by human activities. These include mining blasts, burning space debris, air strikes, atomic bangs, sonic booms, seismic guns, and the calving of ice sheets. The work stems from the discovery of a listening island in the mid-Atlantic, which due to its geo-positioning and low noise ratio is hyper-sensitive to long-wave sounds. From this island, the sonic ruptures of the Earth's ever-changing global acoustics and politics can be heard.

UNDER BOOM is captured using stroboscopic techniques, where anthropogenic beats orchestrate the presence of visuals. Infrasonic events become markers of visibility, entangling frequency with video frame-rates in an act to dissolve ocularcentrism. The frictions of vibrating matter, shaking sonics, and flickering images highlight the physical renderings of human sonic disasters on the Earth. What if the Earth was dancing faster and faster every year?

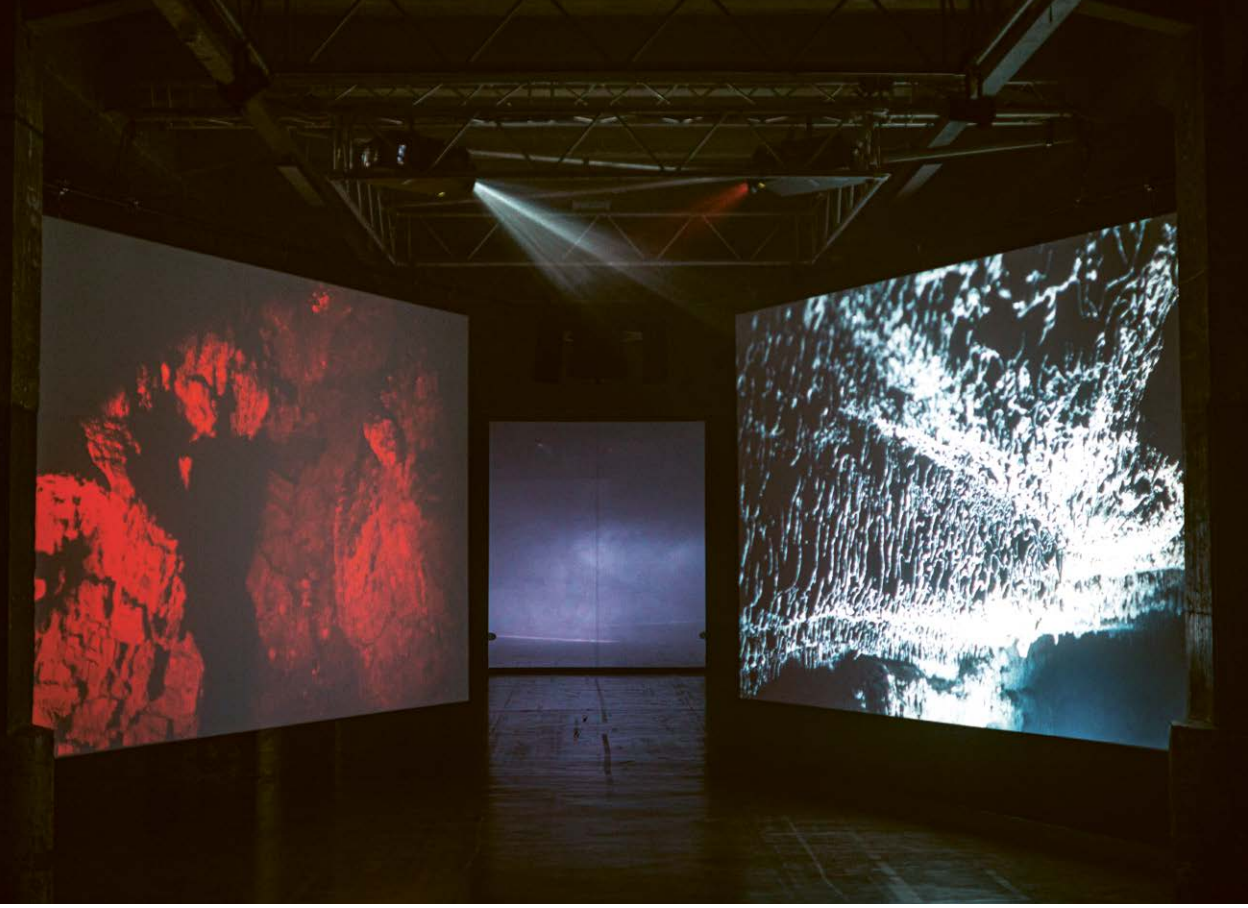
The 2-channel installation alludes to the ever-sounding surfaces of our Earth, and how our inaudible soundscapes are getting louder and louder, heavier and heavier. *UNDER BOOM* suggests that tomorrow will be louder. Everyday infrasound energy increases in quantity and intensity as we see more and more disasters, geopolitics, land grabs, wars, genocides, colonizations (earth and space), and an inherent condition of capitalism to keep accelerating. These entanglements of devastation manifest in sound, and echo around the Earth as long waves. It is infrasound that moves our bodies to the subwoofers in techno clubs, it is infrasound that flirts with ghosts, and it is infrasound that will be the sonic evidence of the Anthropocene.

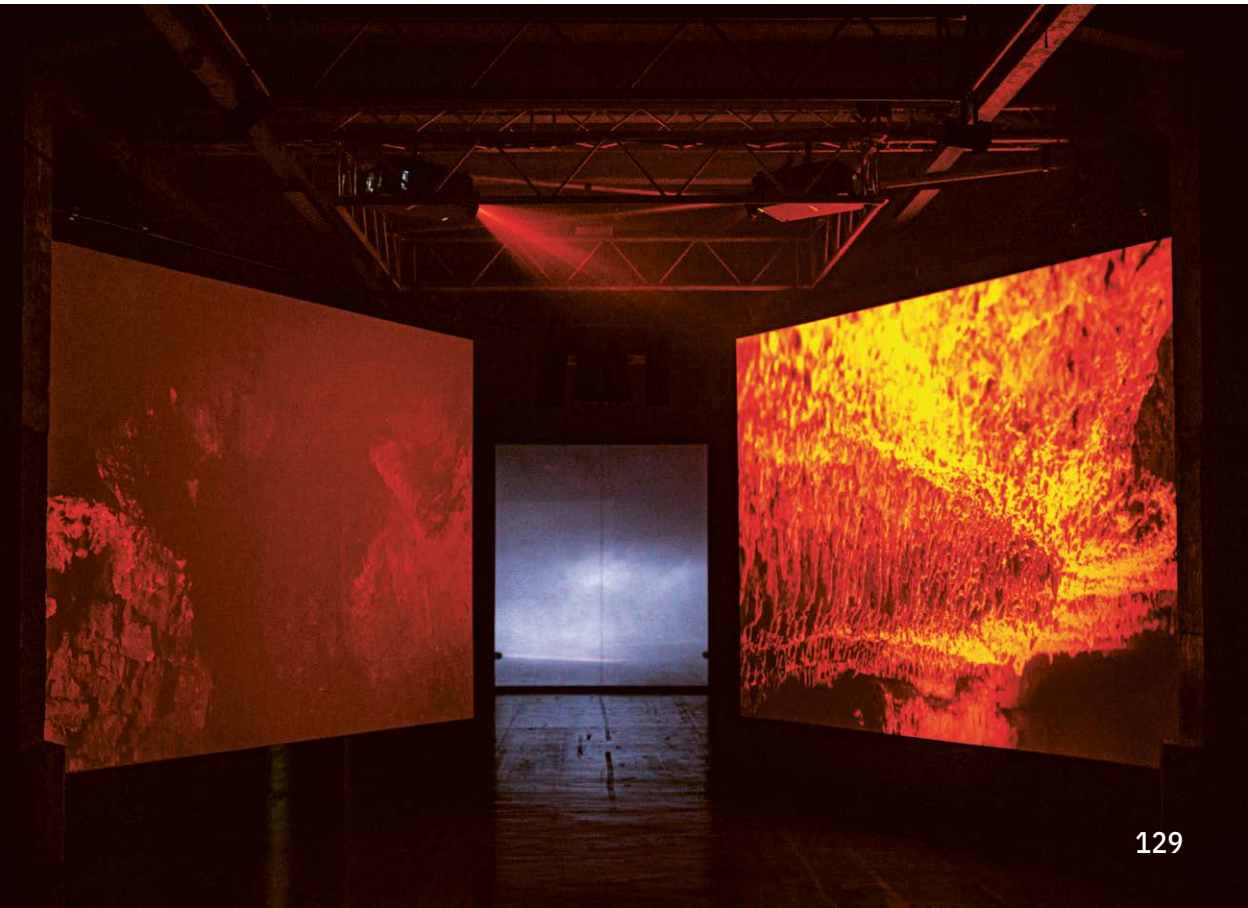
Director, concept, research: Louis Braddock Clarke
Cinematography: Zuzanna Zgierska & Louis Braddock Clarke
Infrasound acoustic research: Läslo Evers and Jelle Assink
Research guide: Alice Twemlow
Curator: Yannik Güldner
Microphone design: Ronald Vester
Site deployment: Céu Jesus
Sound mastering: Rob Bothof
Color grading: Martin Menso
With support from: Stimuleringsfonds NL;
Mondriaan Funds NL; Instrument Inventors Initiative;
Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute;
Rewire Festival

https://u.aec.at/3F914605

Louis Braddock Clarke (GB) is an artist and researcher entangling notions from geology, deep-time cinema, and esoteric philosophy. Listening and amplification as methods have become key approaches to their work relating to disrupted ecologies and sonic fossilizations. Louis' artworks have been shown internationally at: Rencontres Paris/Berlin, Seeyousound, Venice Biennale, Sonic Acts, Rewire, NTMoFA, Noorderlicht Biennale, NFF, FILE Brazil, Digital Arts Taipei, Macau Design Museum, MU Hybrid Art House, W139, OT301, Quartair, Stroom, Museum of Mines and Metal Brazil.

Sem Hovingh





Isao Tomita Special Prize 2025

PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA 2025
Isao Tomita Special Prize

TOMITA INFORMATION HUB

Japanese musician and composer Isao Tomita (1932 – 2016) is considered a pioneer of electronic music. He not only laid the foundations of the synthesizer boom, but also pushed boundaries and influenced numerous sound artists. In 1974 he received a Grammy Award nomination for *Snowflakes are Dancing*, a modern interpretation of classical music created with a Moog synthesizer, and at the 1984 Ars Electronica Festival in Linz he caused a sensation with *The Universe* as part of the "Linzer Klangwolke" (Linz Cloud of Sound)—his spectacular outdoor concert by the river Danube, where huge loudspeakers were mounted on helicopters and ships, creating a unique, three-dimensional, acoustic space. Throughout his whole life, Isao Tomita has explored innovative musical possibilities with his approach of combining sounds of new electronic devices and classical instruments.

To commemorate Isao Tomita and his creative spirit, TOMITA information Hub and Prix Ars Electronica are jointly offering a special prize. In parallel with the biennial award of the Golden Nica in the Digital Musics & Sound Art category, the Isao Tomita Special Prize was awarded in 2021, 2023, and 2025. The prize is aimed at artists who explore artistic and technical challenges in digital music and sound art and inspire others with their innovative and unique music.

The Isao Tomita Special Prize is supported by TOMITA information Hub, a community organized by Isao Tomita's daughter, Rie Seno. It aims to introduce her father's music to interested people of all ages and all over the world, while creating a place where artists from a variety of backgrounds can come together through Isao Tomita's music to develop inspiring ideas for the future.

This year, for the third time, the jurors of the Digital Musics & Sound Art category selected the winner of the Isao Tomita Special Prize 2025.

Statement of the Digital Musics & Sound Art Jury

Miriam Akkerman, Dietmar Lupfer, Kamila Metwaly, Ali Nikrang, Nao Tokui

ebb tide

evala

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. This ethos is perfectly captured in his series title *See by Your Ears*.

This piece was one of several installations presented at his solo exhibition at NTT InterCommunication Center in Tokyo, which drew an unprecedented number of visitors for a sound art exhibition. The jury found great value in how it democratized sound art, aligning with Tomita's vision of bringing novel music and sound to the general public.

Isao Tomita was known for his interest and passion in surround and spatial music. It stands as a testament to his legacy to give an award bearing his name to an artist dedicated to creating auditory experiences that are only possible through multiple audio channels and space.

ebb tide

evala

ebb tide is a large-scale sound installation by Japanese sound artist evala, and the latest work in his *See by Your Ears* project. Since 2017, evala has been developing this project both in Japan and internationally, aiming to create entirely new auditory experiences. *See by Your Ears* seeks to awaken the inherent, dormant potential of hearing and create new perceptual experiences through his unique "Spatial Composition," using a sound system that does not rely on existing formats.

Upon entering the *ebb tide* exhibition space—spanning approximately 400 square meters—visitors are enveloped by both an immersive tide of sound and a disorienting darkness. As their eyes gradually adjust, faint light begins to reveal the contours of form. At the center of the room, a ripple-like, distorted structure made of sound-absorbing material is installed. It stands alone and looks like a reef on a dark seashore. Visitors carefully feel their way onto this structure. Its surface has various slopes, so it's not very comfortable and actually keeps their bodies in a state of slight, constant tension. They slowly adapt to this irregular terrain, finding ways to sit or lie down as sound begins to envelop them. In the deep expanse of darkness, a haze of faint white light drifts gently. Little else meets the eye.

This 10.8.4.4.4-channel, immersive three-dimensional sound installation is composed of sounds produced by various sound apparatus and environmental recordings that evala has collected from personally meaningful locations around the world. Its intention is not to tell a story that unfolds with time, but to provide an experience of putting oneself in a sound space and to open the imagination of each audience through this.

The meticulously constructed three-dimensional sound possesses a remarkably high resolution, yet it envelops the body from all directions with resonances and movements that defy physical reality. The sound, at once hyper-realistic and surreal, instantly awakens dormant sensations within the listener and begins to dissolve the boundaries of perception. Accompanied by a sound like a sudden, sharp intake of breath, one might feel at times as if their entire body is diving into a small wind chime; at other times, like being instantly teleported to a crumbling rocky mountain by the sea; or perhaps like floating in an infinite, zero-gravity expanse. The body, enveloped by sound, becomes a medium, allowing one to experience the sensation of the world transforming, as if journeying back and forth between dream and reality.

The title of the work, *ebb tide,* is derived from the lore that human biorhythms, including life and death, are connected to the ebb and flow of the tides. For evala, this work is also a requiem for the departed, expressing profound reverence for the unbroken continuity of life.

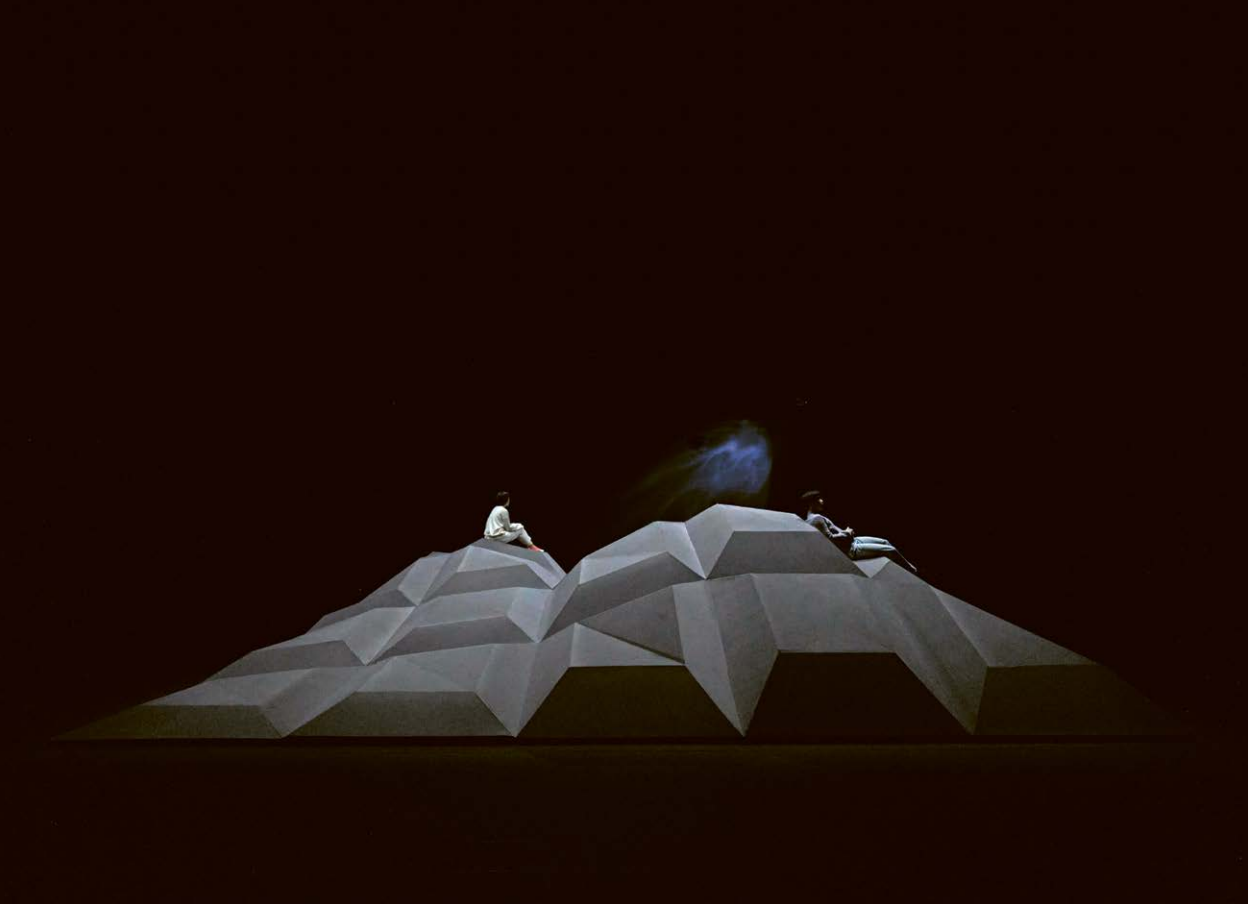
Through focused, attentive listening, images begin to emerge. These then reside within each listener in a multitude of forms. Rather than imposing meaning or information from the outside, and instead by awakening the dormant auditory perception that humans possess, the project seeks to boldly yet delicately draw out the diverse and unique stories that well up from within each individual. That is what evala aims to achieve with the *See by Your Ears* project.

This work was created for the exhibition "evala: Emerging Site / Disappearing Sight" in 2024, commissioned by NTT InterCommunication Center [ICC].
Videography: Ryuichi Maruo

https://u.aec.at/4B857245

evala (JP) is a Japanese sound artist and musician. He explores new auditory experiences through his unique "Spatial Composition," using 3D sound systems as new instruments. His project *See by Your Ears,* guided by the concept of "seeing with one's ear," presents spatial and immersive auditory experiences and seeks to awaken the inherent, dormant potential of hearing. Launched in 2017, this project has been showcased internationally in a variety of spaces, from small anechoic chambers to vast parks, from abandoned buildings to public spaces and theaters. It has received significant international acclaim, earning accolades from such as Prix Ars Electronica and the Japan Media Arts Festival.

MARUO Ryuichi



u19–
create your world

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Brainrot und Ziegenkäsemachen

Vivian Bausch, Clara Donat, Jan G. Grünwald,
Katharina Hof, Conny Lee

Screen time, media addiction, doom scrolling are all phenomena of our time. We swipe through the images, videos, and posts in which dance choreographies are lined up next to makeup tips, cooking recipes next to conspiracy theories, vacation impressions next to AI-generated fake news, kitten videos next to livestreams from the Gaza Strip. This type of media consumption was the dominant theme of the submissions in the u19–create your world category this year. What the next generation is often accused of—constantly being on their phones—weighs heavily on young people. And this new kind of stress is addressed in numerous projects in very different ways. For example, through direct engagement with internet culture. A new manifestation of this culture is "Brainrot": a syrup full of references, partly decodable, partly Dadaist.

In their podcast ***MEMES—Alles nur BRAINROT?*** (MEMES—Is it all just BRAINROT?), **Ivan Pejić** and **Lukas Šokić** manage to inform their listeners through their humorous approach, without any lecturing or moralizing. Their initial question, whether memes are art or a practice of dumbing down, appropriately remains unanswered. However, circling around this question offers many unobtrusive educational opportunities: What are memes? What is brainrot? What's the deal with NFTs and crypto? And all of this in authentic language, humorous conversation, and with plenty of background knowledge.

The short film ***Mal Treffen*** (Let's Meet) by students of **HAK St. Pölten** addresses the isolation that often results from too much screen time. The young people in the film play games together online and then decide to meet up again—only to be faced with the problem that there is nothing for them to do outside in public spaces. The film reflects on the lack of infrastructure for young people in cities like St. Pölten and explains why they prefer to use technical means to keep themselves busy and spend time together. Outside there is only a desolate look at a gray city. There is more space for each car than there is for the youths. The film holds a mirror up to the adults without directly attacking anyone.

Also humorous, but considerably more absurd, is the short video ***Handy Stopp*** (Cell Phone Stop) by **Class 2D at BG Seekirchen**, which addresses the question of how to reduce time spent on smartphones. A fictional commercial features a gadget that slaps users' fingers when they use their phones excessively, in order to reduce their media consumption.

The principle of brainrot and the condensation of diverse themes is taken to the extreme in the project ***Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege*** (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective) by **Aleksa Jović** and **Nico Pflügler**, which is being awarded the **Golden Nica** this year. In their experimental video, the duo demonstrates a visual

urgency that is particularly contemporary. The content addresses a variety of topics that were also found in other submissions, but here they are particularly skillfully condensed: doom scrolling as a lifestyle and brainrot as a mindset. Without, however, overexplaining or lecturing about these aspects of adolescent life reality.
In this video, 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.

Beyond social media, the young people participating in u19–create your world are also concerned with topics such as democracy and participation. The website ***somes—Plattform für politische Transparenz*** (somes—Platform for Political Transparency) by **Tim Herbst, Lukas Zöhrer**, and **Florian Nagy** is a participation tool that offers low-threshold access to political data. It thus makes a significant contribution to strengthening democracy—its urgency and relevance are obvious. Information such as voting results in parliament or the speaking time of individual members of parliament can be viewed with a click—presented clearly and easily. And those who want more can start an AI chat with the respective member of parliament. Furthermore, the transparency of the sources underlying the differentiated presentation of data and information demonstrates a responsible approach to user attention and a genuine interest in not influencing people in a particular political direction. The *somes* platform thus also offers a tool to counter radicalization.

Students from the BRG Hallein explore the potential consequences of radicalization in their video ***KOMA*** (COMA). The short film allows us, as viewers, to empathize with the mental strain of a student who considers going on a rampage at his school. This difficult and complex topic is presented in the video with sensitivity, rather than sensationalism—a top priority, especially when dealing with topics that address such real threat scenarios.

The animated film ***Totennebel*** (Death Fog) by **Gabriel Berger** and **Valerian Hobel** is also in keeping with this. It addresses the topic of war—a topic that concerns us daily in current global politics. What occurs again and again is the phenomenon of dehumanization in war. People become numbers or functions. In *Totennebel*, an oppressive atmosphere is created without words in haunting images. The soldiers can no longer be distinguished from one another behind their gas masks. The machine gun rattles, firing at an unseen target. Just as suddenly, out of nowhere, comes the explosion that dissolves everything, without regard for personal stories or individual perspectives. The barbed wire entwines itself into the trench and guides the soldiers' guns, turning them into puppets with no free will of their own.

The special power of art, especially in the u19–create your world category, also lies in hope. The younger generation neither closes its eyes to the world's crises and problems, nor does it resign

itself to them. It creates counter-narratives, for example in the form of heroic stories. The demand for these is demonstrated not least by the many Hollywood blockbusters in which the world is saved in a few action scenes by a select few with superhuman abilities. This form of escapism is seductive, and also laughable in its simplicity.

The superbly animated ***B-movie "B-VENGERS"*** by **eight students from Klosterneuburg Special School** brings this humorous aspect to life. In style and production, the film is charmingly reminiscent of *South Park*—snotty, unpretentious, and clever. The "superheroes" (or rather, super-antiheroes?) fight a monstrous Santa Claus and destroy an entire city in the process. The film skillfully plays with the clichés of the superhero genre—every scene, no matter how absurd, is spot-on.

A classic medium for superhero stories is also represented in this year's projects: in the comic series ***Der rote Rächer*** (The Red Avenger) by **Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner**. The medium of comics is more than just images and text. It follows its own rules of aesthetics, composition, drama, and narrative form. With *Der rote Rächer*, Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner proves that he understands the medium. Using powerful, dynamic images, he tells a superhero story with original villains, demonstrating his own style and clear vision. We need heroic stories like these because they inspire us to go out and take action ourselves. And it doesn't always have to be about saving the entire world—it can also be about concrete, solvable problems right in our own neighborhood.

For example, the opportunity to play football in the yard—something completely ordinary, as in the project ***Über's Redn kumman d'Leid zaum. Fußballspielen im Hof.*** (Talking Brings People Together. Playing Football in the Yard.) by **Mathilde and Lieselotte Prichenfried, Karim Naim,** and **Dominik Pichler**. Playing football in the yard was suddenly no longer permitted. Instead of accepting the ban, four children from a residential complex took action: They went from door to door, collected signatures, held discussions, and organized themselves. The project impressively demonstrates what is possible when young people come together and help shape their environment. It's not just about a game—it's about community instead of isolation and about creating and maintaining open spaces for young people. *Über's Redn kumman d'Leid zaum* is a living example of how children and young people can help shape society—if you listen to them. This is the fundamental idea behind the u19 motto "create your world."

Another community project is ***Green Food—Ein nachhaltiger Weg*** (Green Food—A Sustainable Path) by the **Green Class 2 at Europaschule Linz**. It focuses on food security and the health of people and nature. *Green Food* is a combination of a community project and a pedagogical concept for inquiry-based learning. It combines various technological tools to share knowledge with other children in the school. The project provides a multifaceted approach to the topic of food security—for both children and adults.

All of these collaborative projects create concrete visions for the children and young people for a desirable future. The need for visions of the future is also reflected in the touching music video ***Damma Zukunft—Ganz ohne Hass*** (Let's Create the Future—Completely without Hate) by **participants of the "Dammawos" project / Schloss Leonstein Social-educational residential facility.** In its self-written and rapped verses, it emphasizes the power and necessity of individual and collective dreams and, above all, the pooling of collective strengths. The performers' need for protection is emotionally stirring not only in the context of the social-educational residential facility Schloss Leonstein and the crisis residential facility SKIP, where this work was created, but also because it can be

seen as representative of the need for the protection of all children and their future. Securing and enabling this future should actually be the highest priority of older generations, and yet climate and environmental protection are currently being completely neglected. The argument often used is that things just aren't that simple.

The ***Unsere GreenCity*** (Our Green City) project proposes a very concrete solution to this problem. Two friends, **Levin Du** and **Chenming Wu**, have created a model of an environmentally friendly city. Their idea is based on the simple principle: generate and save electricity. They use mini wind turbines, solar panels, energy-supplying robots, and streetlights that only light up when someone approaches. They tell adults: "If children can build a functioning city out of pizza boxes, then adults should certainly be able to do it worldwide!"

Of course, the world is complex and all decisions must take potential risks into account. But sometimes we lose sight of the opportunities and the goal. This also applies to the current reception of artificial intelligence. A good example of this is the ***PA1NTING*** project by **Nea Geršak**. She likes to paint a lot, often in very abstract pictures. To help us understand how she loses herself in her paintings, she used an AI tool to create a video that visualizes her imagination and her love of nature and art. It is not just the achievement itself that is being recognized, but also the attention paid to the potential of AI. *PA1NTING* is a work about art, about imagination and about expressing what's internal as external, in which AI can be used as a tool.

Another practical application of artificial intelligence is **Benjamin Gruber's *Humanoid*** project, which demonstrates the potential of AI to create barrier-free access. Through the innovative combination of hand, gesture, and facial recognition with voice control, the application relies entirely on intuitive interaction. The idea of making digital content easier for people with disabilities to access through gesture- and voice-based interfaces demonstrates social awareness and vision.

But not only software, also mechanical solutions can facilitate participation. With their project ***Boards without Barriers***, the four-person product development team from HTL Rennweg—consisting of **Samuel Brunner, David Chencean, Georg Kotzian,** and **Michal Sysel**—presents a design prototype of an easy-to-use mechanical chess board developed because of a real-life need. A family member had to move into a nursing home but was unable to participate in the chess championships there due to motor impairment. *Boards without Barriers* demonstrates great empathy—regarding both the need for social participation and for the ergonomic requirements of specific target groups such as people with Parkinson's disease, MS, or similar conditions.

This year's u19–create your world projects included several technical constructions for solving problems. In addition to the mechanical chessboard, which caters to individual needs, is another project, the ***MagLift—Where Innovation Takes Flight*** by **Daniel Ezike, Ben Trumler, Philipp Weissenbach,** and **Max Zerovnik**. This project involves the use of drones in remote areas. Due to poor road conditions, for example, medical supplies must be transported there using autonomous fixed-wing aircraft that require a boost to take off. This is simplified by *MagLift*. It uses induced magnetic fields as a launch system instead of the cables commonly used in drones. This reduces the acceleration distance required to bring the drones to the required takeoff speed.

Another technical solution is the ***WWS Power Cube*** by **Leopold Kastler**. After a stay on a mountain pasture, he thought it would be practical to generate electricity from wind, water, and the sun simultaneously. The idea is creative and simple to implement.

Innovation is not only found in the technical devices, but also in the video game ***Beat Assault*** by **Nina Diewald, Lucas Hinteregger, Lina Mottl, Mariella Pranjic,** and **Leonard Dirnhofer**. There are many different versions of video games that integrate music into gameplay. *Beat Assault*, however, truly combines the elements of music and gameplay in a new way. It's not just about collecting different instruments and playing a note at the right moment, as you know from other games, but also about hitting enemies with the notes, with each instrument behaving differently. The combination

of music and PvP gameplay, along with the harmonious graphics and consistent design, results in an interesting and innovative game. A good idea meets professional implementation.

This also applies to ***DETAIL IN LIFE*** by **Sophie Kurz**. She combines photography, text, and fashion to encourage reflection. Architecture and locations from all over Austria are featured on her self-made, wide-sleeved shirts, which symbolize the lightness of everyday life. She develops her own aesthetic and presents it in an interdisciplinary portfolio.

Artistic works often address role clichés and toxic gender stereotypes in the form of a serious plea or appeal. ***Wenn's Sein Muss*** (If you have to) by **students of the BRG Hallein** on the other hand, attempts to convey the message without a wagging finger, but with plenty of humor. A soccer match as a scene of toxic masculinity—albeit in reverse, featuring female players. They spit, swear, attack each other, and during the break they talk about male acquaintances as conquests or objects whose appearance they judge. When several young men enter the room, visibly uncomfortable with the situation, they are debased and laughed at. Nevertheless, they ask if they can play and, in the absence of alternatives, are grudgingly allowed to, with the words: "If we have to." Through the tried-and-tested method of reversal, this short film not only creates comedy, but its escalation also highlights the absurdity of the behavior, the absolute senselessness of toxic masculinity.

The project ***Lines We Draw*** by **Joy Grasser**, **Elina Kaufmann, Alica Hintermayer,** and **Maya Neidhart** focuses on direct physical contact and the violation of personal space. The importance of respecting the boundaries of others is difficult for many people to grasp. The project uses an interactive installation to illustrate where the boundaries of the exhibited figure are being violated, acoustically through heartbeats and visually through projections. The project is based on an online survey. The experience of personal boundaries being violated potentially affects everyone—especially young people—even if the mannequin used, with its waist, breasts, and standardized figure, can be interpreted as female.

The installation ***Die moderne Hausfrau*** (The Modern Housewife) by **Barbara Reiter, Luna Hörstlhofer, Lucia Kottar-Trimmel,** and **Rosa Gottwald** is dedicated to a different kind of female norm. The constructed role of the housewife is questioned pointedly and in many different ways—both historically and in terms of content. At its center is a kitchen cabinet, flanked by an advertisement from the 1950s: the ideal image of the housewife as it was disseminated through the media and commercially exploited. Three drawers structure the installation: kitchen utensils as symbols of reproductive labor; feminist protests, historical resistance, and influential figures; and a look at the present—at "tradwives" and the reactivation of classic role models in the digital space. Without moralizing, the work succeeds in opening up a differentiated and sensitive space for reflection. *Die moderne Hausfrau* creates a precise bridge between historical enlightenment and conceptual art. With intellectual precision and emotional depth, the work creates a multi-layered context that invites you to critically reflect on gender images, social attributions, and individual positioning.

In all of the submitted projects, the urgency of perceiving a world at a potential tipping point is unmistakable—from the exuberantly emotional portrayal in *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* to the clear, sober stance in *somes—Plattform für politische Transparenz*.

In between, we encounter entertaining and subversive ideas and projects that aim to make the world—or at least the shared space we directly experience—a little better. We see inventions that solve concrete problems; technologies that allow barrier-free access and thus enable participation for specific groups of people; artificial intelligence as well as mechanical, haptic design—depending on what is needed at the time.

The young people in this country have many things on their minds, in their heads, and in their hands. They desire a thoughtful coexistence and are tired of constantly waiting for the older generations or having to explain everything to them. The projects in the u19–create world category are an invitation to walk this path together with them.

u19—create your world

Young Professionals age 14–19

vog.photo

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege

Aleksa Jović, Nico Pflügler

Nothing begins. Nothing ends. Everything rots.

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective) is not a film, it's an imposition, a final twitch of the medium. A motionless final ejaculation. A quiet moan from the throat of a being that has forgotten why it ever breathed.

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege doesn't show. It doesn't reveal. It's dying. Slowly. Inexorably. And we, the viewers, are trapped with it in this tumbling, suffocating cycle of milking, smearing, destroying.

A young man—a creature—allows it to happen. A stranger's hands massage his slimy nipples, which grow from his hairy udder. His own body becomes a mass, a mush, a ritual. He loses all contour, all memory of ever having been anything other than a bearer of function. A means of production. A commodity. *Fodder*.

And as the surfaces dissolve—skin, furniture, senses—all that remains is the milking. The slime. The unpleasant feeling of *not knowing*.

The film doesn't spin a story. It doesn't spin a metaphor. It describes a system that has swallowed its own meaning like a snake swallows its own tail—and then continues to chew, even though nothing is left. It grinds its own teeth and finally chokes on the dust.

Questions no longer arise. "What does the goat feel?" is not a real question. It is an echo reverberating off empty walls. A desperate stirring in a space that no longer answers anything. Because the goat feels nothing. It consumes. It is consumed. It exists in a state of pure functionality, in which pain, pleasure, shame, and will are condensed into a single, endless state: productivity.

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege is a cadaver study of the medium of film itself. An abstract chronicle of an art form suffocated by its own rituals. Suffocated not by force, but by care. By routine. By the endless reproduction of dead forms. The shadows in the corners grow. The air shimmers with the electromagnetic hum of *God's algorithm amalgam* that manifests itself in our physical world as the *INTERNET*. The bodies writhe, not out of rebellion, but out of habit.

Aleksa Jović, Nico Pflügler

What is shown here isn't absurd because it defies logic. It's absurd because it thinks logic through to its logical conclusion. This film reveals the final stage of a culture that can no longer distinguish between food and waste, between pleasure and torture, and between creature and device. A locust culture that consumes everything until there's nothing left. And then consumes this nothingness. We see the udder swell. We hear the drooling, panting grind of the systems. We experience nothing—we are something that is experienced. Who—or *what*—experiences us?

Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege is a memorial of mush, of slime, of algorithmic barrage. It is a ceremony for a species long gone, but whose reflexes still twitch.

If you're wondering why you're still reading this: You're part of it. Part of the cycle. Part of the erosion.

What does the goat feel?

What do you feel?

And when did you decide that it even matters anymore?

Mentoring: Robert Hinterleitner
Creature design: Sabine Pflügler

https://u.aec.at/554ACF42

Gilbert Gnos is a group psychosis consisting of **Nico Pflügler** and **Aleksa Jović** (both *2006), two artists from Linz who want to make films that no one wants to see. Their works are often disturbing and always absurd: *Leberkas-Liebkoser* (Leberkäse caresser) (2024) stands out for its poor quality and was shown as part of the *YAAAS!* project at the Crossing Europe Film Festival Linz. *Die Geisterjäger* (The Ghost Hunters) (2024) struck like an inappropriate meteor at the short film evening in Stadt Haag on the topic of remembrance culture, bringing much-needed relief. *Mein Leberkas—Mein Land*(My Leberkäse—My Country) followed in 2025, a film about racism and discrimination with a Leberkäse twist. And then there is *Das Ziegenkäsemachen aus der Sicht der Ziege* (Making Goat Cheese from the Goat's Perspective), a work that defies description and is being shown at the Ars Electronica Festival. In 2024, Gilbert Gnos Productions was founded and remains the permanent subtitle of each work.

Die moderne Hausfrau

Rosa Gottwald, Luna Hörstlhofer, Lucia Kottar-Trimmel,
Barbara Reiter

"My father earned significantly more than my mother. So it was only natural that she stayed home with the children."

"My grandfather died when my mother was still quite young. After that, my grandmother never remarried, but instead took care of her two children and opened a business to support herself financially. She took care of everything and everyone—I admire her for that to this day. She was a role model for my mother and remains one for me today."

"Acceptance for different lifestyles is increasing, giving women the freedom to decide for themselves how they want to live their lives. It's okay to choose family and household without being judged for it."

Die moderne Hausfrau (The Modern Housewife) project exposes stereotypical thinking. People are pigeonholed far too quickly. Yes, stereotypical thinking is human, but self-reflection is so much more important!
An interactive cabinet with three drawers demonstrates how the image of women and their role in society has changed over the decades. While the first drawer reveals old advertisements and stereotypes, the second documents the struggle for equality and emancipation. The third drawer showcases the modern tradwife trend on social media, which, however, seems to be undermining many of feminism's achievements.

Rosa Gottwald, Luna Hörstlhofer, Lucia Kottar-Trimmel, Barbara Reiter

It used to be considered a sign of prosperity if a wife could stay at home. Especially in the 1980s, women fought for new rights—a struggle that continues to this day (keyword: Equal Pay Day). But now political parties want to introduce a homemaker subsidy, and the "tradwife" (aka traditional housewife) trend is gaining momentum on social media.

With the project *Die moderne Hausfrau*, the artists aim to focus on the following questions: What should a woman's future look like? What role models do we (un)consciously adopt?

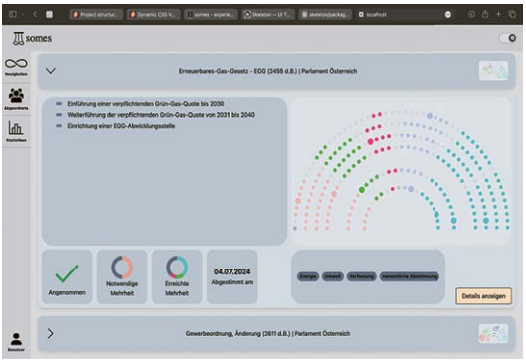
A project that questions—and invites us to question.

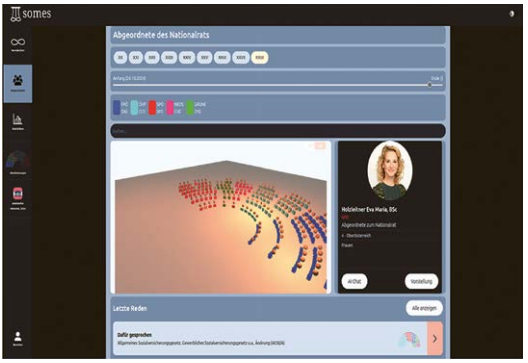
https://u.aec.at/6E28175A

Barbara Reiter, Luna Hörstlhofer, Lucia Kottar-Trimmel, and **Rosa Gottwald** (all *2007) are the team behind the project *Die moderne Hausfrau*. Since 2021, they have been attending the Higher Graphical Federal Education and Research Institute in Vienna together, where they can pursue their great passion for art in all its forms. Through their diverse interests in film, design, and illustration, they have found common ground and complement each other perfectly in their team. They hope to pursue careers in these fields later on.

somes
Plattform für politische Transparenz

Tim Herbst, Lukas Zöhrer, Florian Nagy





Every five years, a new National Council is elected—but what happens in the meantime remains largely unknown. Through its holistic approach called *somes*, the project group aims to counteract disinformation (controlled or unintentional), algorithmic filter bubbles, corruption, and political disenchantment by making parliamentary and government-specific activities, processes, and information accessible.

The original idea for *somes*, a platform for political transparency, came from Clemens Bauer. In his role as school representative, he soon realized that his work was incomprehensible to many. Too often, he heard phrases like, "They don't do anything anyway" or "Nothing's happening." This impression arose not from a lack of commitment, but rather from a lack of transparency and the difficulty of giving outsiders the opportunity to actively participate.

This problem, however, is not limited to schools. Similar challenges are also evident in Austrian and European politics—especially in national parliaments such as the National Council. In the crucial period between scandals and elections, one hears little about politics—it is precisely this period that remains in the dark. Transparent processes and simply presented decisions reduce the risk of corruption.

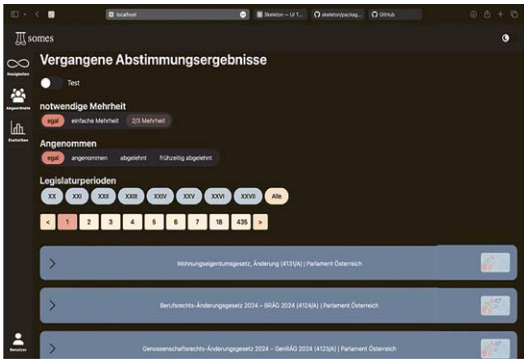
"somes accompanies democracy into a democratic, transparent future and offers orientation in the current flood of information. Relevant information on current politics, legislative changes, and democratic initiatives are brought together on one website, while simultaneously promoting dialogue between representatives and the electorate," is a description that emerged early on and still holds true today. Over time, the goals and features the platform must offer became more precise. The goal is to know at the end of a legislative period which party or person is the best fit for one.

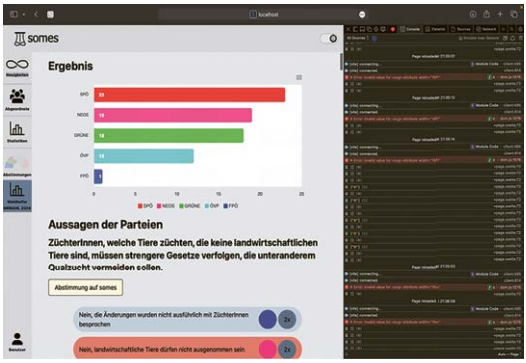
Logo and color scheme: Sarah Rohrbacher
Ideas and help with initial presentations and pitches:
Daniel Weishörndl
Idea, color scheme, business plan and network:
Clemens Bauer
Organization of financial support:
Gerald Stoll (HTL Hollabrunn)
Diploma thesis supervision:
Michael Wihsböck (HTL Hollabrunn)

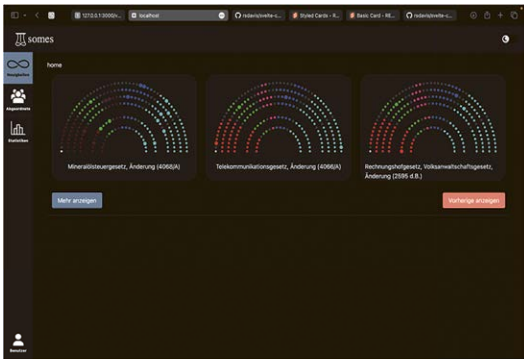
https://u.aec.at/2351955D

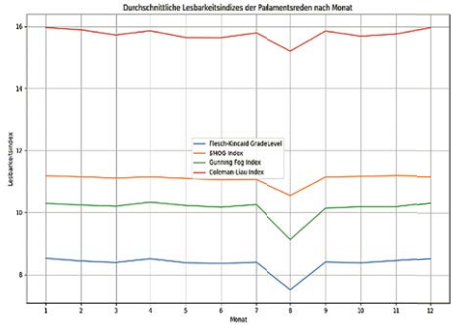
u19–create your world
Award of Distinction

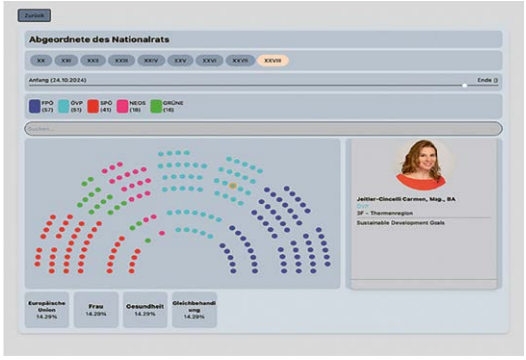
Young Professionals
(age 14–19)

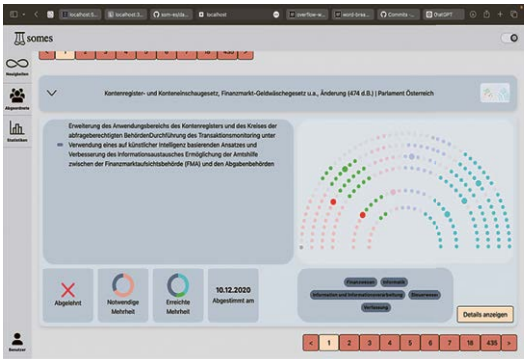












Implementing *somes* requires, above all, a motivated team: **Lukas Zöhrer** (*2005) is responsible for the mobile application, **Tim Herbst** (*2006) for data science and statistics, and **Florian Nagy** (*2006) for the web frontend, backend, and data collection. The three implemented the project as part of their diploma thesis at HTL Hollabrunn and will continue to manage and comprehensively improve the platform in the future as an association. The association will also organize panel discussions, educational trips, and other non-partisan political events.

Beat Assault

Nina Diewald, Leonard Dirnhofer, Lucas Hinteregger, Lina Mottl, Mariella Pranjic

Beat Assault was developed to offer a unique gaming experience for people interested in music. The team set out to create a multiplayer rhythm game that would offer new opportunities for collaborative music-making for players who previously could only indulge their passion for complex musical pieces alone.

Games in which it's important to perform a specific action in time to the beat are rarely represented on the market in any perspective other than 2D. *Beat Assault* offers this opportunity in a 3D view and as a local multiplayer, where players can collect instruments and use them to defeat their opponents. They are guided through a level in which they must be careful not to fall into a chasm or drown in the water.

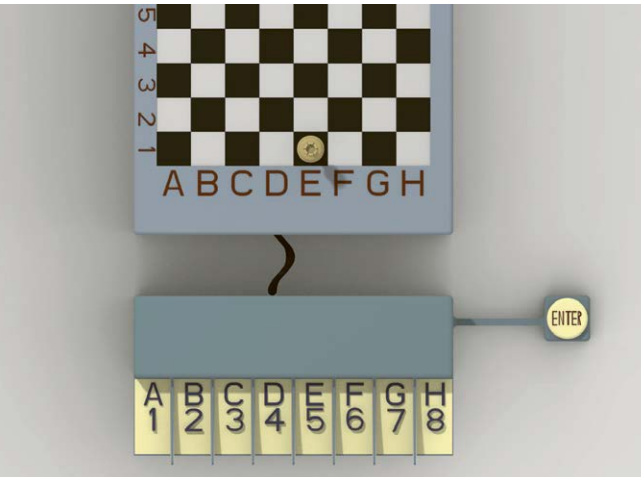
https://u.aec.at/80001936

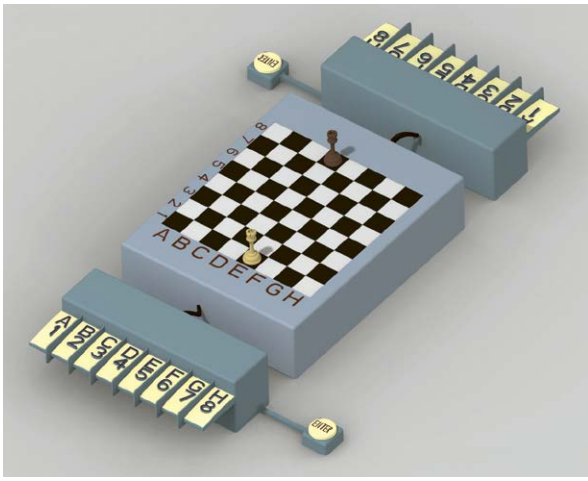
The team consists of five members. **Nina Diewald** (*2005) took on the role of game designer and project manager. **Leonard Dirnhofer** (*2005) handled all acoustic feedback, while **Lucas Hinteregger** (*2004) modeled all the models for the project. **Lina Mottl** (*2005) was a 2D artist who drew concepts for Lucas' models and developed shaders. **Mariella Pranjic** (*2005) was responsible for the game's programming.

Nina Diewald, Leonard Dirnhofer, Lucas Hinteregger, Lina Mottl, Mariella Pranjic

Boards without Barriers

Samuel Brunner, David Chencean, Georg Kotzian, Michal Sysel





Boards without Barriers enables people whose motor skills are so impaired that they are unable to play board games to do just that again! The specially developed, accessible input devices, combined with a compatible board game robot, create the foundation for this. Whether it's multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, or age-related mobility restrictions—the project combines cognitive training, social interaction, everyday autonomy, and playful fun. In this way, technology overcomes barriers and enriches the lives of those who are unfortunately far too often overlooked in our society.
The idea came from a team member who had personal experience through his father, who suffers from multiple sclerosis. They developed not only a chess set, but also other classic board games such as Ludo and Checkers. The project team is thus creating a diverse, inclusive gaming experience for different interests and abilities. The goal is: "The more people we can support with this, the better!"

Thanks to: Martin Meschik, Martin Sommer, Wolfgang Steinwender, Jaroslav Sysel

https://u.aec.at/9DC98283

As part of their diploma thesis, the four team members developed the *Boards without Barriers* project. The project team is led by **Michal Sysel**, and assisted by **David Chencean**, while **Georg Kotzian** and **Samuel Brunner** (all *2007) complete the team as project collaborators. They are currently in the 4th grade of the mechatronics branch of HTL Rennweg.

Samuel Brunner, David Chencean, Georg Kotzian, Michal Sysel

DETAIL IN LIFE

Sophie Kurz

The open window through which the scent of summer rain wafts in. The gentle play of light and shadow in a quiet alley. An old lady engrossed in a row of books.

How often does the day rush by without us truly noticing it? What use are our senses if not to experience the beauty of the moment?

One moment: Hear. Feel. See—Consciously!

The concept, which inspires the discovery of the extraordinary in everyday life, was born from the here and now. Aesthetics doesn't have to be loud—it often hides in quiet moments. A change of perspective is enough.

Sophie Kurz printed her photographs in a collage-like manner using iron-on film on self-made shirts. The tulle on the sleeves symbolizes lightness—like clouds that invite you to consciously drift.

She is convinced that greater awareness leads to greater gratitude and appreciation. It could reduce social discontent.

Let us recognize the small, beautiful details in life. Let us appreciate them.

Videos of the T-shirt filmed/photographed by:
Daniel Hoffmann
Other photos: Brigitte Kurz, Sophie Kurz
Intro/Outro videos: Sophie Kurz

https://u.aec.at/90AFCC55

Sophie Kurz (*2006) grew up in Walchsee, Tyrol. During the week, she lives in Innsbruck, where she attends the Fashion Ferrari class at the Ferrari School Innsbruck. Her previous achievements include winning the school merchandise competition and participating in the finals of the McDonald's project. After graduating from high school, Sophie wants to further develop her skills and explore new avenues in design. In addition to design, she is also interested in philosophy. She finds inspiration particularly in nature, people, and travel.

Humanoid

Benjamin Gruber

Humanoid is an AI-powered image editing application controlled by hand gestures and voice. Hand movements are captured by a camera, and bringing the fingertips together activates a “primed” state comparable to a mouse click. Virtual boxes can be created and moved with both hands. Their contents can then be saved as a photo using voice commands. A voice-based AI assistant responds to English commands such as “pin,” “fix,” or “take a screenshot” and provides acoustic feedback.

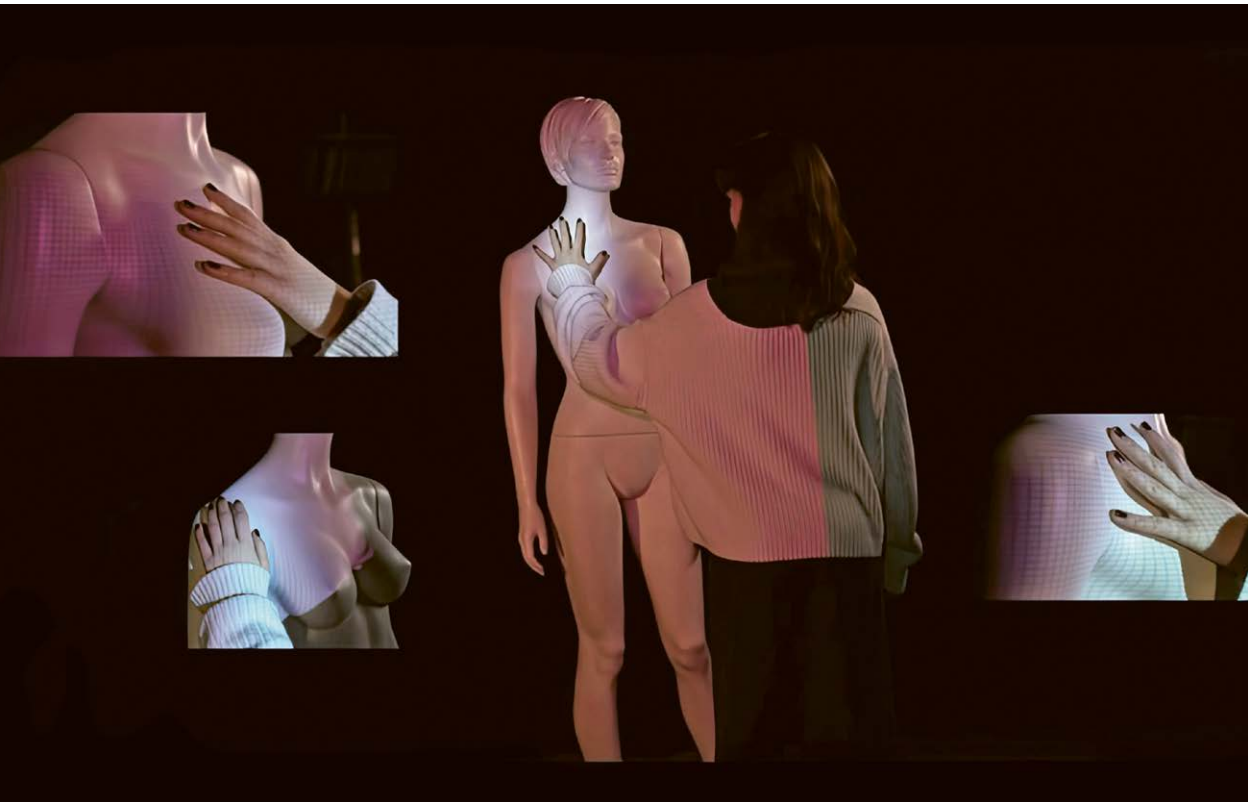
The goal of the project was to develop an accessible, intuitive software solution that facilitates working with images, for example, during meetings or group work. In the long term, *Humanoid* will form the basis for a fully gesture- and voice-controlled system for image processing and modeling in 2D and 3D.

https://u.aec.at/210F4C63

Benjamin Gruber (*2007) began exploring modern technology at an early age. He is currently in his fourth year of studying media technology at the IT-HTL Ybbs. He has been programming daily for over four years and has already completed more than 20 major projects. His hobbies include programming, mathematics, playing the piano, and computer games. He enjoys experimenting with new things and tries to combine knowledge from a wide variety of fields to create innovations.

Lines We Draw

Joy Grasser, Alica Hintermayer, Elina Kaufmann, Maya Neidhart



Lines We Draw addresses unwanted touching and boundary violations. The project makes visible the often taboo experiences of those affected and gives them a voice. It shows what it feels like when personal boundaries are crossed and highlights why consent is so important.
At the center of the installation is a mannequin that reacts to approaches. Using Kinect depth sensors and TouchDesigner, visual and auditory signals are triggered upon approach. These signals are based on real-life experiences gathered by the artist team through an extensive survey.

In addition, the artists have created a book with the personal stories from the survey and designed posters with body silhouettes. Visitors can use colored stickers to express their own feelings about various touches. Recipients can also anonymously write down their experiences and thoughts.

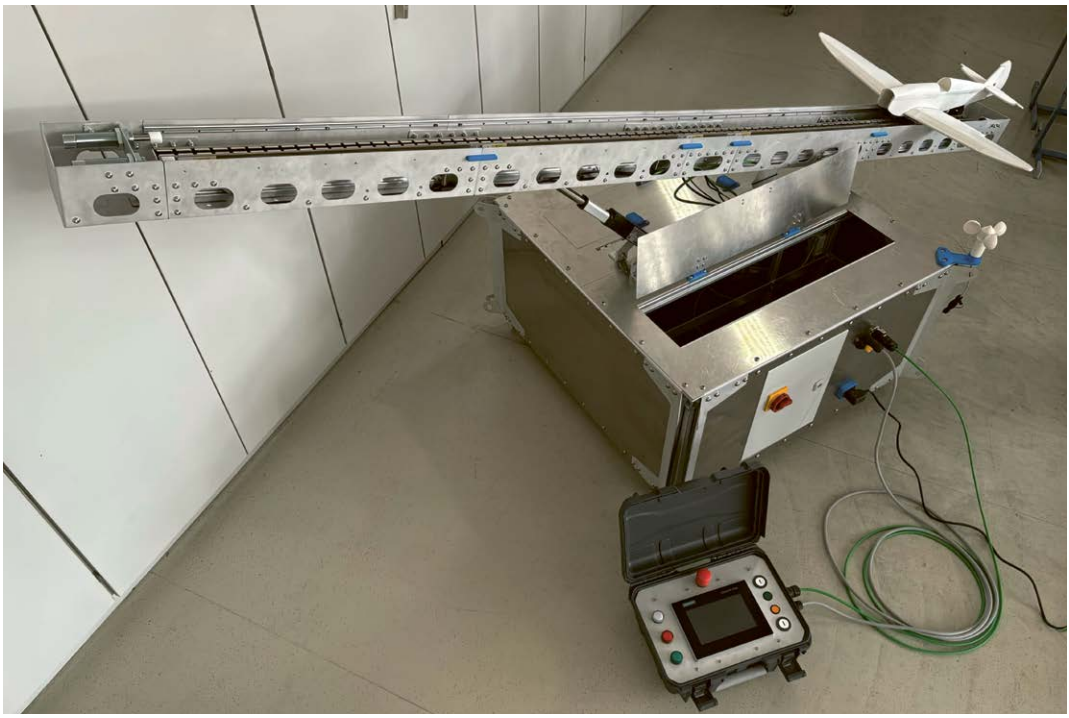
https://u.aec.at/42C568F9

The four students from the Vienna Federal Institute for Graphic Arts (die Graphische) have specialized in different creative areas in the multimedia program. **Joy Grasser** and **Alica Hintermayer** (both *2007) focus on interactive design, **Maya Neidhart** (*2006) focuses on animation and graphic design, and **Elina Kaufmann** (*2006) on graphic design and videography. Together, they aim to raise awareness of sexual assault and make a difference with their project.

Joy Grasser, Alica Hintermayer, Elina Kaufmann, Maya Neidhart

MagLift
Where Innovation Takes Flight

Daniel Ezike, Ben Trumler, Philipp Weissenbach, Max Zerovnik



MagLift is a magnetic launch system for delivery drones that enables efficient and reliable takeoff. Many African countries lack the financial resources to adequately expand or maintain road networks. Therefore, the delivery of essential products by motor vehicle is largely unfeasible. Instead, small fixed-wing aircraft are used to take over this logistical task.

However, due to their design, these aircraft rely on external launch assistance. Currently, a cable-operated drone launch system is used, which has proven to be suboptimal due to its large size, high maintenance requirements, and lack of modularity. Therefore, the project team has set itself the goal of developing a novel system that not only creates a more user-friendly working environment but also significantly simplifies the harsh lives of the local people.

Supervision: Richard Drechsler

https://u.aec.at/E4C36DB6

As part of their diploma thesis, the dedicated team of four from the Mechatronics Department of the HTL Rennweg in Vienna—**Daniel Ezike, Ben Trumler, Max Zerovnik** (all *2005), and **Philipp Weissenbach** (*2006)—developed the *MagLift* system. *MagLift* is the result of 1,600 hours of work and a total cost of €12,000, which was covered by 25 sponsors from Austria and Germany.

Mal Treffen

Students of the Business Academy (HAK) St. Pölten

The short film *Mal Treffen* (Let's Meet) is about three teenagers who spend a large portion of their free time in virtual video game worlds. In these digital spaces, between avatars and pixel graphics, close friendships develop that extend far beyond the game. Teamwork is necessary not only in the teenagers' video games, but also in real life. They sense this when they meet and are able to talk about more difficult topics.
The film, shot digitally in 16:9 format, sensitively tells of young people's search for closeness, of farewells, and of the power of solidarity—whether online or in real life. It raises questions about reality, friendship, and the opportunities that digital spaces can offer young people today.

"Shoot your Short" film workshops: Stefan Bohun, Gregor Centner

https://u.aec.at/190A8EE6

Andreas, Daniel, Elias, Felix, Gregor, Jonas, Jonas, Markus, and **Tobias** (all *2008) attend the St. Pölten Business Academy (HAK). As creative and dedicated students in a class, they discovered their shared passion for film and storytelling during a "Shoot Your Short" workshop. As a team, they developed, shot, and produced their first short film, working with great dedication and team spirit both in front of and behind the camera.

HAK St. Pölten

MEMES—alles nur BRAINROT?

Ivan Pejić, Lukas Šokić

MEMES—alles nur BRAINROT? (MEMES—Is it all just BRAINROT?) is a humorous podcast by Ivan Pejić and Lukas Šokić, two students at the HTL Wels Fischergasse. In their first episode, they delve deep into the world of memes and explore what these small internet phenomena do to our brains. They explain what memes actually are, how they spread, and what impact they have on society. Various topics are addressed, including the use of memes in politics, their significance in marketing, and the dark side of meme culture.

This podcast is aimed at young people who consume memes on a daily basis and provides them with an entertaining insight into the world of viral trends and their impact on modern communication. The humorous yet educational approach presents the topic in an easily understandable and engaging way.

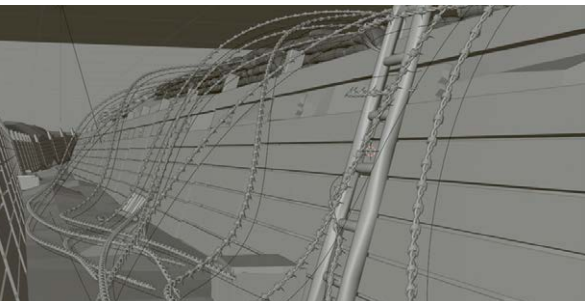
https://u.aec.at/AC6CA7CF

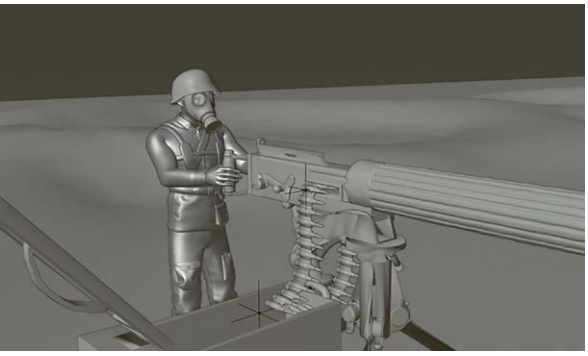
Ivan Pejić, Lukas Šokić mit chatgpt.com

Ivan Pejić (*2009) from Holzhausen and **Lukas Šokić** (*2009) from Schleißheim attend the Information Technology Department at HTL Wels Fischergasse. The two have been close friends since they started school. They share an interest in technology and digital media and spend a lot of time on TikTok, where they regularly follow current trends. Their passion for creative digital projects and their collaboration are reflected in their shared ideas and work.

Totennebel

Gabriel Berger, Valerian Hobel





The animation *Totennebel* (Death Fog) addresses the senselessness of war and how it leads humanity to ruin. It shows how war harms everyone. For this reason, the animated film revolves around our main protagonists as soldiers and their slow walk to death.

The animation begins with a zoom in on a soldier breathing heavily in a deserted environment, demonstrating the alienation from reality caused by war. It then cuts to a scene showing a trench with wounded soldiers on both sides. This serves to reestablish the connection to the reality of war. This is followed by a scene in which a soldier peers out from the trench and is shot at by a rifleman from the "enemy" side. This rifleman, in turn, is shot at by artillery, and time slows down as the scene is gradually overtaken by the shockwave. To further emphasize how war consumes those who participate in it, the next scene shows vines—an embodiment of war—slowly encroaching on the trench in question, driving three soldiers to fire their weapons.

https://u.aec.at/EDF60BD4

The group consists of **Gabriel Berger** and **Valerian Hobel** (both *2008) from HTL Rennweg in Vienna. They love to create digital art in the form of 3D animation and *Totennebel* (Death Fog) is their first collaboration on a big project. As they also like being creative in their education, so they will both be continuing on the media technology path at their school.

Gabriel Berger, Valerian Hobel

Wenn’s Sein Muss

Students of BRG Hallein

The short film *Wenn’s Sein Muss* (If you have to) plays with established social roles and questions toxic masculinity in the context of sports. In a world where strength and dominance are often considered traits of masculinity, the film reverses these roles and upends common expectations. Through pointed scenes, it becomes clear how deeply rooted gender stereotypes and the notion of “real manhood” can lead to exclusion and conflict.

Shot digitally in 16:9 format, the film provocatively illuminates the dynamics that arise within sports and society when people are forced into predetermined roles based on their gender. *Wenn’s Sein Muss* encourages us to reflect on the boundaries of gender roles and question the effects of toxic masculinity.

“Shoot your Short” film workshops: Stefan Bohun, Gregor Centner

https://u.aec.at/56C87C31

Students of BRG Hallein

Amelie, Antonia, Christoph, Felix, Halime, Jana, Leon, Leonie, Lucía, Lucie, Marie, Paul, Sebastian, Tristan, Viktoria, and **Zora** (all *2007) attend the same class at the Bundesrealgymnasium (BRG) Hallein. As part of a “Shoot Your Short” workshop, they explored the medium of film for the first time and jointly developed their short film *Wenn’s Sein Muss*. With a great deal of creativity, teamwork, and a keen sense for socially relevant topics, they brought their ideas to the screen.

Young Professionals (age 14–19)

u19–create your world Honorary Mention

u19—create your world

Young Creatives up to 14 years

Nea Geršak

PRIX
ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

B-Movie “B-VENGERS”

Students of the Special Needs School Klosterneuburg

GEH.BEAT conducted a media project on digital storytelling at the Klosterneuburg Special Needs School, working with eight students for six weeks to develop characters and a plot for a short film. They independently developed superheroes, giving them superpowers, names, appearances, and personal weaknesses (their kryptonite, so to speak), and created a trashy disaster clip in the tradition of B-movies. Everything was created using the Tagtool app, a digital drawing tool that allows you to design and animate characters, shapes, and colors on iPads. In the final workshop session, the participants animated the scenes live and added sound. *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 *Kloster-altburg* to rubble and ashes. This is a case for the B-Vengers—the brainless superheroes!

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

https://u.aec.at/843D440E

Eight students from **Klosterneuburg Special School** (*2011–2013) jointly developed the *B-Movie “B-VENGERS”* project under the supervision of youth social worker Josef Dorninger, co-founder of OMAi—Office for Media and Arts International, and youth social worker Ralf Müller from GEH.BEAT Klosterneuburg.

Students of the Special Needs School Klosterneuburg

Damma Zukunft—Ganz ohne Hass

Participants of the "Dammawos" project
Schloss Leonstein social-educational residential facility

Damma Zukunft—Ganz ohne Hass (Let's Create the Future—Completely without Hate) is a music video for a self-written rap. It's about the participating artists' future plans and dreams. Each artist presents their own personal future aspirations in a verse. The shared chorus is about why we need dreams and how they wish for a good world for everyone. A world without hate. With the rap, the team wanted to show that, despite difficult situations, you can have a positive outlook on the future. That it's worth never giving up. But that's exactly what requires a dream and the willingness to embrace the future. Because the future begins in the present.

Many ideas ultimately resulted in a very special music video. Everything was recorded on smartphones, the team created the beat using BandLab, and developed the melody for the chorus along the way. One of the young people painstakingly took on the cutting. Each team member contributed their own distinctive style to making rap what it is.

Social educators: Barbara Hermanik, Sarah Wasserthal, Tamara Geiblinger, Jakob Haberpeuntner, Kaltrina F. (intern)

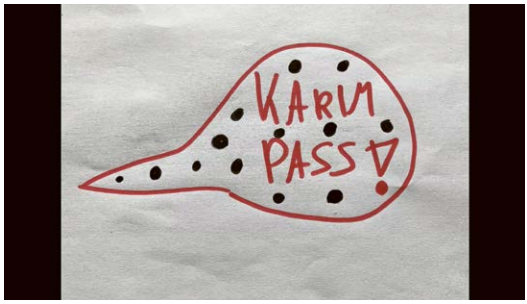
https://u.aec.at/75090F56

Christoph, Leon, Leonardo, Luca, Lucia, Lucius, Michelle, Mona, Nada, Riccarda, Shanaya and **Tobias** (*2006–2016) are the young artists involved in this project. They are either currently in crisis support accommodation (SKIP) or they live at Schloss Leonstein, a social-educational residential facility. Their present life isn't always easy—which made it all the more important to have a space here where everyone was welcome to share their ideas. It was a lively, joyful process, full of shared creativity.

Participants of the "Dammawos" project Schloss Leonstein social-educational residential facility

Über's Redn kumman d'Leid zaum. Fußballspielen im Hof.

Mathilde and Lieselotte Prichenfried, Karim Naim, Dominik Pichler



After months of the children playing soccer in the yard of the project team's residential complex, signs prohibiting the game were suddenly put up. To stop this, four of the children started a petition. They went from door-to-door, talked to their neighbors, and collected signatures for "playing soccer in the yard." In return, they promised to take care of the damaged lawn, respect walls and balconies, and observe rest periods.

The petition was sent to the property management with a request to lift the ban. The request was heard, and soccer games were allowed again until 8:00 p.m. Although it still happens that a neighbor films the children as soon as it's a minute past the hour...

The story was subsequently filmed, accompanied by drawings, and submitted as a project entitled *Talking Brings People Together. Playing Football in the Yard*. The actual lawn care wasn't completed until after the deadline.

Texts: Gabi Bauer
Video editing: Steffen Holzer

https://u.aec.at/F5AAF0D9

Mathilde (*2016), **Lotte** (*2014), **Karim** (*2012) and **Dominik** (*2009) were born in Vienna and grew up together as neighbors. They mostly play soccer together in the communal garden. Mathilde, Lotte, and Dominik attend the ILB (Independent High School)—a school with multi-grade classes and no academic grades. Karim attends a grammar school. Mathilde likes animals and enjoys riding horses, Lotte is interested in cheerleading and horseback riding, Karim loves soccer and cooking, and Dominik enjoys trampoline riding, horseback riding, or playing soccer.

KOMA

Students of BRG Hallein

The short film *KOMA* (Coma) follows Costa, a teenager who is increasingly at risk of collapsing under the pressure to perform at school and the strict expectations of his authoritarian father. The constant pressure to function overwhelms him and leaves little room for personal development. Without support from his friends and family, Costa withdraws further and further until his frustration and loneliness turn into a dangerous downward spiral. His search for direction and acceptance leads him down a radical path.

The film, shot digitally in 16:9 format, impressively illuminates how chronic stress, emotional neglect, and a lack of support can leave young people feeling isolated. It highlights how quietly and unnoticed such developments begin, while also raising the urgent question of how our society deals with overwhelmed young people—and what role parents, schools, and social environments play in this.

"Shoot your Short" film workshops: Stefan Bohun, Gregor Centner

https://u.aec.at/240C6168

Students of BRG Hallein

Elias, Güven, Helena, Laura, Luca, Paul, Simon, Simon, Sophia and **Thomas** (*2008–2009) attend the same class at Bundesrealgymnasium (BRG) Hallein. As part of a "Shoot Your Short" workshop, they explored the medium of film intensively for the first time. They developed the idea for their short film together, took on independent roles in directing, camera work, screenwriting, and acting, and learned how to implement their vision as a team.

Young Creatives (up to 14 years)

u19–create your world
u14 Honorary Mention

WWS Power Cube

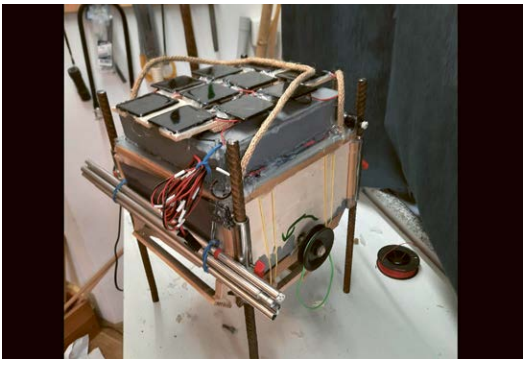
Leopold Kastler

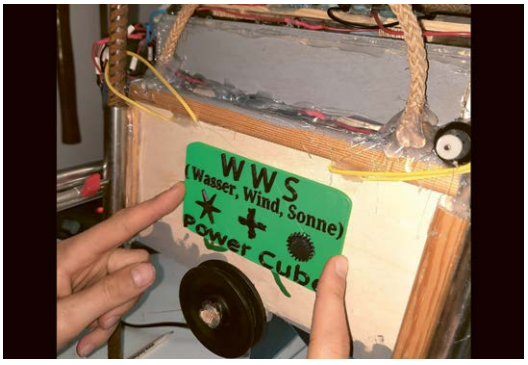
The *WWS Power Cube* can generate electricity from water, wind and solar energy, which can be used to charge mobile phones or power banks, for example. Leopold Kastler wanted to use all three sustainable energy sources together to generate electricity even in remote locations. The idea came to him once when he was on a mountain pasture with only a small solar panel, but plenty of streams and strong winds.

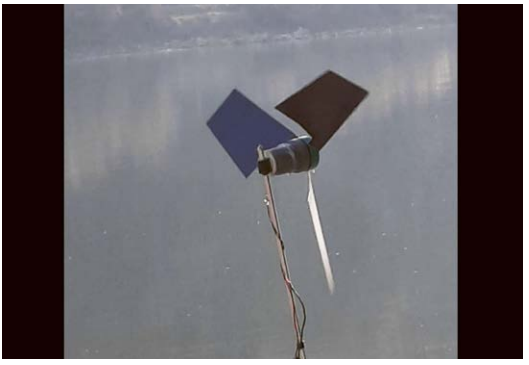
The *WWS Power Cube* works even when only one of the three energy sources is present. However, it is most efficient when all three modules are running.

When charging, the device can be stored in its own compartment within the *Power Cube*—there it is protected from water. To reduce the space required for transport, the wind turbine can be folded up. The *Power Cube* also features a cover for the water wheel to prevent injury during transport. To ensure it sits perfectly in the water, it has four length-adjustable supports that can be easily retracted for transport.

https://u.aec.at/780B86F4







Leopold Kastler (*2013 in Linz) now lives in Walding and Puchenau. He began his education at the Freie Schule Linz, where he first learned about u19–create your world. He then spent two years at Walding elementary school. He currently attends BRG Fadingerstraße, where he studies robotics. This year's award is his third prize in the u19–create your world category of the Prix Ars Electronica.

Handy Stopp

Students of Class 2D at BG Seekirchen

In the “Digital Literacy” class at BG-Seekirchen, students explored the question of how to use mobile phones sensibly. They addressed topics such as: How much time on the phone is healthy? Is constant use addictive? They wanted to creatively and humorously address this topic in a project for u19–create your world.

This is how the idea for a device that blocks the finger used to operate a cell phone was born—the *Handy Stopp* (Cell Phone Stop) device. After an hour of collaborative planning and another hour of filming and editing, a video was created that everyone participated in. Instead of using bans or wagging a finger, they want to present an original and humorous solution to excessive cell phone use. The goal is to stimulate reflection on media behavior in an entertaining way—and perhaps the device will even be further developed and used.

With support from: Christoph Plohovich

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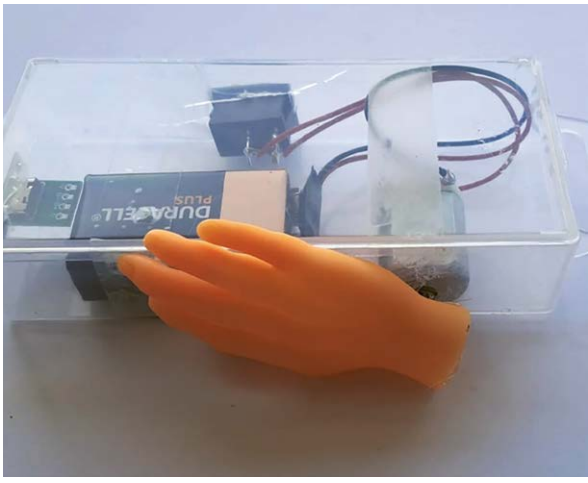
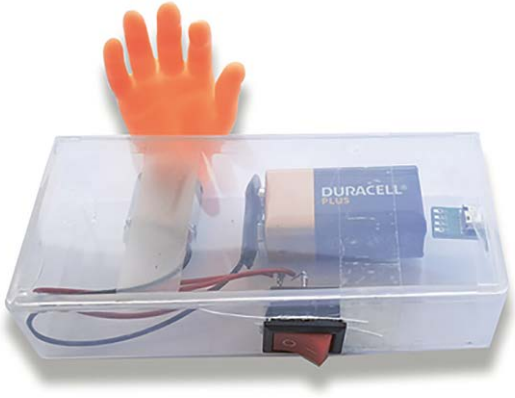


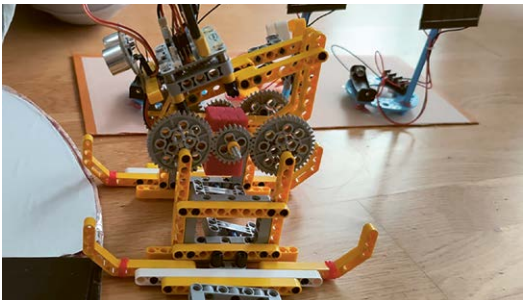


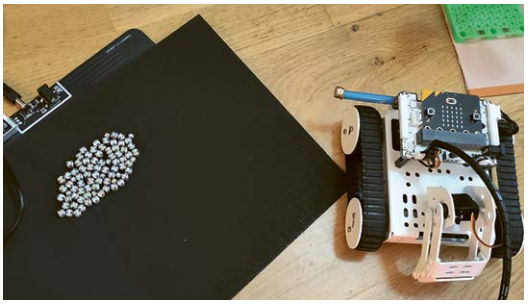
Pupils in class 2D of the BG Seekirchen

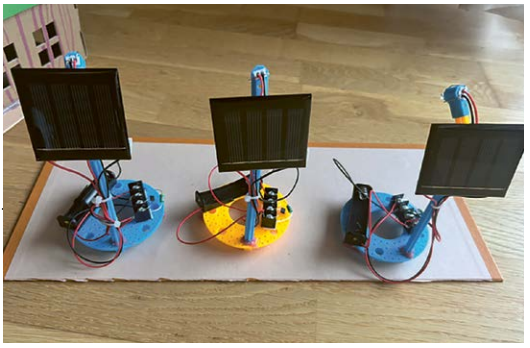
The project team consists of 13 students of Class 2D at BG Seekirchen: **Natascha Amerhauser, Stefanie Berger, Emily Bertolatti Barcala, Samuel Brioso Nolasco, Leon Brunthaler, Leonhard Deifel, Leonie Dürager, Emma Gärtner, Daniela Geworgyan, Mia Gomez Ortner, Pia Greilinger, Lukas Haberlandner** and **Hannah Haubenhofer** (*2012 and 2023). They are all very digitally engaged and discuss the dangers of the internet, appropriate cell phone use, and good online behavior in the “Digital Literacy” class. Since they say they don’t like sitting still, they enjoy working on project tasks that allow them to be creative.

Unsere GreenCity

Levin Du, Chenming Wu







Levin and Chenming have built a model of what their dream city of the future should look like. Everything is powered by clean energy—there are solar panels on every house, and wind turbines spin on the outskirts of the city. Cars and cell phones charge wirelessly, and energy is shareable. The wind turbines have portable batteries that people can take home. Cars can charge houses or supply each other with energy. The streetlights use solar energy and only light up when someone walks by.
All functions are controlled by Microbit—robot cars, walking robot, gripper arm, and wind turbine. The car drives along a line and activates the lights in the houses using a magnet. Communication between the robots is wireless. When the wind turbine generates electricity, it sends a “1” to the car. The car drives off, sends a “2” to the walking robot upon arrival, which activates the solar lights and sends a “3” to the penguin light, after which the gripper arm starts and releases the butterfly.

Photography: Jingyu Yang

https://u.aec.at/B58CD97E

Chenming Wu (*2013) and **Levin Du** (*2014) live in Vienna and are best friends. Chenming is in the second grade of high school. He has been programming with Scratch, Python, and C++ for over two years. He is very interested in robots and science. Levin is in the fourth grade of elementary school. He has also been programming for two years and loves building robots from building blocks. They both love technology and this project was the first time they worked together on something big.

PA1NTING

NEA (Nea Geršak)

PA1NTING is a short film about painting, partially created with AI (Runway Gen-3 Alpha, Frames). Nea wanted to make a film about it because painting is something she enjoys and something that means a lot to her. And she wants to show that art can immerse you in other worlds—in the truest sense of the word. She was also inspired by Paul Trillo's Prix Ars Electronica 2024-winning video *Washed Out "The Hardest Part"*.

In the film, Nea is working on her acrylic painting *Clearing in the Enchanted Forest*. She's so engrossed in it that she seems to fall into the picture—landing softly on the forest floor. But in this enchanted forest world, it's not really her; it's an AI-created human who only resembles her and says the following sentence (in her voice): "That's exactly how I imagined it." When she emerges from her thoughts, back at home in her painting corner, she hangs up her acrylic painting, contented.

https://u.aec.at/9E864F82

Nea Geršak, Runway Gen-3 Alpha

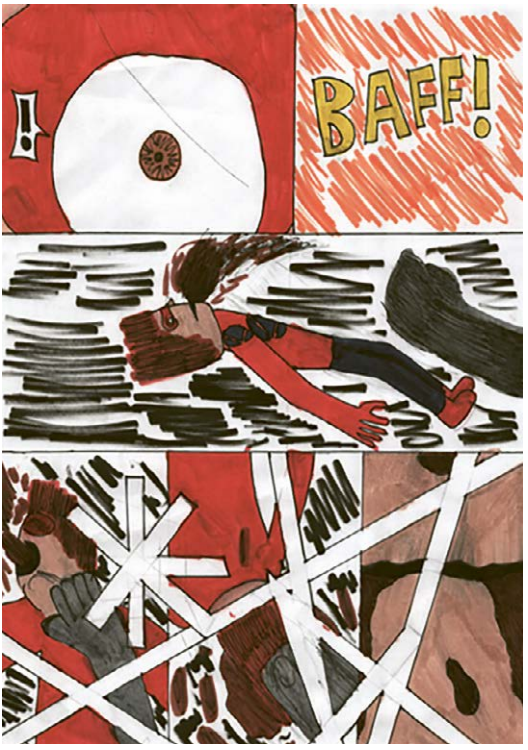
NEA (Nea Geršak) (*2016) is 8 years old and was born in Berlin. She now lives with her family in Carinthia. Nea loves everything to do with art. She loves painting with acrylics on large canvases, but she also enjoys photography, doodling, and recording videos. Nea enjoys visiting exhibitions and taking art classes. She practices drawing with the painter Elisabeth Wedenig. In the future, she hopes to be able to show more of her art, for example, at this year's ArtExpo Ljubljana.

Der rote Rächer

Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner

An archaeologist with superpowers, a mystical amulet, and a host of strange villains—that's *Der rote Rächer* (The Red Avenger), an original comic and radio play project by Austrian all-round talent Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner. The story revolves around Gil Waters, who becomes a superhero through the "Seal of Reality" and, as its keeper, must protect the universe from disintegration. Along the way, he encounters enemies like Red Godzilla, Mr. Skull, and the Black Professor—and receives support from heroines like The Ninth.

The project consists of a lovingly drawn comic series and an audio podcast on Spotify, both produced by Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner himself. Inspired by classic superheroes, but crafted with a great deal of originality and passion, *Der rote Rächer* is a multimedia passion project—charming, exciting, and absolutely worth reading and listening to!



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Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner (*2015 in Sankt Peter am Wimberg) discovered his passion for reading, writing, and drawing at an early age. At the age of seven, he was already writing and illustrating his own books. In 2024, he created the superhero *Der rote Rächer* (The Red Avenger), founded a website, and launched his own podcast. In addition to comics, he loves music, video games, and has been playing the harp for three years.

Ilias Christoph Pernsteiner

Green Food–
Ein nachhaltiger Weg

Green Class 2 of the Europaschule Linz – Elementary School of the University College of Teacher Education PH Upper Austria

Green Food is an interdisciplinary school project promoting sustainable food security. It is based on three pillars: an interactive talking picture, pesticide-free agriculture using programmed LEGO WeDo robots, and vertical farming with 3D-printed flowerpots and self-constructed irrigation systems. For these three pillars, the students developed creative solutions for an environmentally friendly city of the future. The project combines technology, environmental awareness, and creativity. The children programmed, designed, and researched innovative ways to practically address issues such as microplastics, pesticides, and resource waste. The goal was to impart knowledge, promote sustainable practices, and inspire others.

With support from: Dominik Hagmüller

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Europaschule Linz

The project group from the **Green Class 2 at the Europaschule Linz** consists of students in the third and fourth grades (*2013–2016). They showed a keen interest in environmental and nutritional topics, which sparked the desire to imagine a sustainable city of the future. With great commitment, curiosity, and creativity, they independently developed solutions for sustainable food safety. Motivated to actively contribute to change, they combined technology, environmental awareness, and teamwork for a better future.

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Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity

by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

ARS ELECTRONICA
Award for Digital Humanity 2025

In addition to the four Golden Nicas of the Prix Ars Electronica 2025, the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity—initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs—will be presented for the fifth time as part of the Prix Ars Electronica. All submissions to the Prix Ars Electronica and the S+T+ARTS Prize competition are also eligible for consideration for this special award.

The Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity honors projects that engage with the social, cultural, and humanitarian dimensions of our digital society. It highlights exemplary collaborations that bring together individuals from diverse disciplines and backgrounds.

Art and culture are essential forces in shaping our shared reality. They ask fundamental questions about what it means to be human in a digital age. As cultural ambassadors, artists are uniquely positioned to reveal both the promises and the perils of ongoing digital transformation.

Cultural diplomacy serves as a powerful tool for fostering mutual understanding among nations and driving societal change on a global scale. In this context, it plays a key role in creating a new vision of digital humanism: one that places human beings at the center of technological advancement and promotes a just, democratic society. Digital humanism seeks to safeguard human dignity, affirm universal human rights, and guide the development of technology according to humanistic and social values. It imagines new approaches to human-machine interaction grounded in diversity, inclusion, and co-creation.

The Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity equally emphasizes the importance of both humaneness and humanism in technological innovation. It celebrates artworks and projects that challenge conventional thinking and invite us to actively question and co-create our digital futures—rather than passively accept roles as data-generating entities: Can digital technologies better serve human needs while honoring cultural and social values? Can they uphold user autonomy and support cultural diversity over infrastructural uniformity? Can they become tools that promote cross-cultural collaboration, international dialogue, and mutual understanding?

As a signature award of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity underscores Austria's commitment to openness, cooperation, and global responsibility across its cultural, scientific, and technological communities.

This year's winning project, *Synthetic Memories*, offers great ideas and gives us inspiration on how AI can reconstruct and reinterpret both personal and collective memory. By helping elderly individuals to preserve their life stories through digitally reconstructed narratives, *Synthetic Memories* helps to foster emotional connections across generations. I was also impressed by *AI Nüshu*, which received an Honorary Mention. This project reimagines *Nüshu*—an almost forgotten script once used by women in China to communicate privately and secretly. Its revival through AI is a powerful act of cultural preservation and a wonderful example of how digital tools can recover voices long silenced by history. Both projects highlight the principles of Digital Humanism and demonstrate the potential of digital culture to find new ways to explore our identities and imagine our futures. They also correspond strongly with the principles of the Austrian Foreign Ministry's international cultural policy to foster dialogue rooted in empathy, creativity, and mutual respect.

Regina Rusz
General Directorate for international cultural relations
Head of the Section for Cultural Foreign Relations
BMEIA – Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity Statement of the Jury

Regina Rusz, Katalin Tünde Huber, Thomas Kloiber, Veronika Liebl, Gerfried Stocker

This is the fifth year that Ars Electronica and the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs jointly present the Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity, which highlights the profound intersection of art, technology, and human values. As jury members, we recognize the essential role of artistic reflection in navigating the complexities of our digital transformation. Art and culture offer unique and critical insights into what it means to be human in the 21st century.

The importance of this reflection lies in its capacity to challenge dominant narratives, provoke ethical debate, and propose imaginative futures. This year's submissions addressed a wide range of urgent concerns—ranging from algorithmic bias and grief to memory loss, feminist agency, and the construction of identity in a technologically mediated world. Across all projects, there was a shared desire to use technology not for its own sake, but as a medium for preserving dignity, promoting diversity, and advocating for justice and solidarity.

The jury was especially compelled by artistic explorations that combined a socially constructive application of AI technologies with a critical reflection on its implications and limitations. Many of the submissions foregrounded the voices and experiences of marginalized communities while questioning the power structures embedded in data, design, and access. These projects reflected a digital humanism that prioritizes empathy, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility—and that insists on placing human rights and social values at the core of technological development.

The Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity 2025 is awarded to *Synthetic Memories* by Domestic Data Streamers, while the Honorary Mention goes to *AI Nüshu*. Despite their differing artistic expressions, both projects explore the profound themes of memory, language, and identity—concepts that lie at the core of human experience. Each work engages artificial intelligence not merely as a tool, but as a medium for asking fundamental questions about who we are, where we come from, and how we wish to evolve in the digital age.

Synthetic Memories stood out to the jury for its deeply human-centered approach to AI. By transforming fragile or undocumented memories into collaboratively generated visual reconstructions, it enables emotional reconnection and preserves personal narratives at risk. *AI Nüshu*, meanwhile, presents a powerful speculative narrative rooted in a unique historical and cultural practice to explore how AI might give rise to a feminist, non-Western language.

The jury found the shared focus of both projects particularly striking. While one works through the personal and therapeutic, and the other through the symbolic and subversive, both engage with AI as a means of cultural preservation and innovation. By balancing constructive, socially meaningful uses of AI with critical reflection on its limitations and risks, *Synthetic Memories* and *AI Nüshu* invite us to consider where humanity and AI intersect—and where we want that intersection to lead. In honoring these projects, the jury affirms the power of art not only to interpret technological transformation, but to shape it in ways that are ethically grounded and profoundly humane.

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity

Synthetic Memories
Domestic Data Streamers

Synthetic Memories is a socially engaged heritage preservation project that uses generative AI to reconstruct personal memories at risk of being lost—especially those never visually recorded. Through guided interviews, participants recount experiences, which are translated into AI-generated visuals that evolve through collaborative refinement. This intimate process supports individuals affected by displacement, trauma, or neurodegenerative diseases, allowing them to reconnect with their personal histories, restore a sense of identity, and dignify their lived experiences. By operating at the intersection of storytelling, technology, and emotional healing, the project reimagines how memory can be preserved and honored in the digital age.

Launched in 2023 by Domestic Data Streamers and expanded in 2024 with the *Citizens' Office of Synthetic Memories* at the Design Hub Barcelona, the initiative has evolved into a prototype for memory-based municipal services and public archives. The project's participatory model fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue while engaging with the ethical tensions between subjective memory and AI interpretation. With over 10,900 visitors and 300 memory reconstruction sessions during its exhibition period, the project demonstrates the potential of AI as a tool for collective remembrance and therapeutic support. It continues to grow through academic collaborations, artistic exploration, and partnerships in the fields of mental health, migration, and human rights.

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. In doing so, it reframes AI not as a neutral tool, but as an active participant in shaping how we recall, process, and share the stories that define us.

Honorary Mention

AI Nüshu (AI女书)
Yuqian Sun

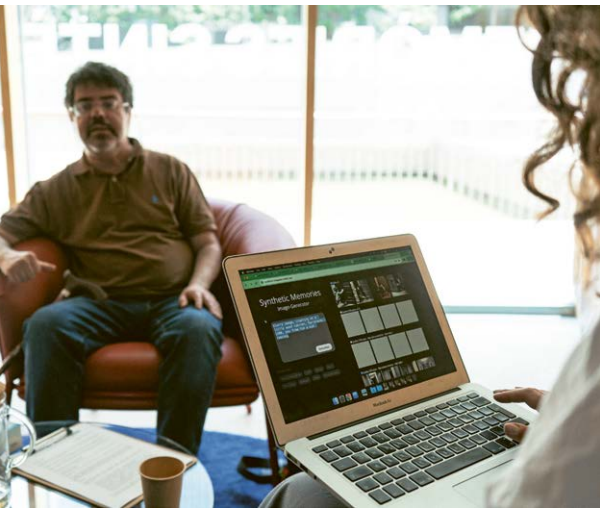
AI Nüshu is a fantastic interactive art project that merges computational linguistics with the cultural legacy of Nüshu—a unique, centuries-old language developed and used exclusively by women in Hunan Province, China. Deprived of formal education and written language, these women created Nüshu as a secret form of communication and solidarity within a patriarchal society. Drawing inspiration from this historical act of resistance, the project uses AI agents to simulate how these women may have invented their own linguistic system, envisioning a new language that emerges organically from machine learning processes.

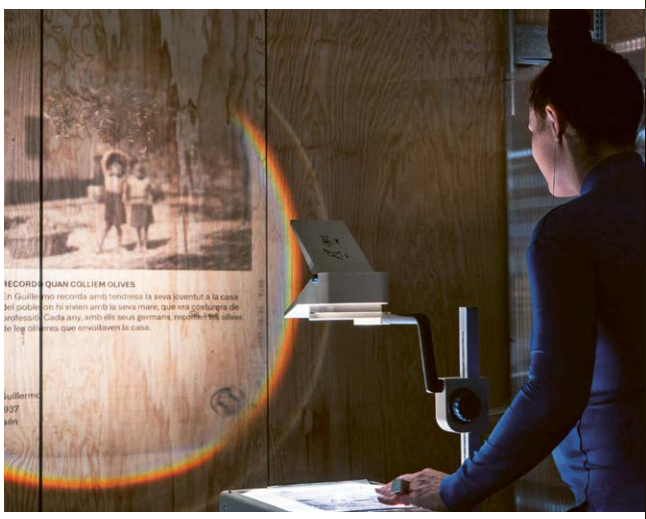
In contrast to pre-defined, rule-based artificial languages, *AI Nüshu* evolves through the agents' observations and interactions with their environment. It does not follow predetermined linguistic models like Morse code or constructed languages, but rather mirrors the organic, contextual development of human language. By integrating cultural narratives into an AI framework, the project challenges the conventional hierarchy in which humans create and teach language to machines.

The jury recognizes *AI Nüshu* as a visionary contribution that critically examines the nature of language, agency, and machine learning through a culturally rich and historically resonant lens. At a time when Chinese AI models are accelerating rapidly, this project provides a compelling counter-narrative, rooted in Chinese history and feminist resistance, that interrogates the epistemologies underpinning large language models (LLMs). The project not only highlights the power of marginalized voices but also repositions culture as an essential force in the future development of AI. *AI Nüshu* exemplifies how art can leverage history, gendered perspectives, and computational innovation to reflect critically on technology, using cultural memory not just as inspiration, but as a transformative tool to shape more inclusive and ethically conscious AI systems.

Synthetic Memories

Domestic Data Streamers





Synthetic Memories is a heritage preservation initiative that recreates and preserves personal memories at risk of being lost or never visually documented. It converts spoken and written descriptions into visual images using generative AI, helping individuals—especially those experiencing memory loss due to ageing, displacement, or neurological diseases—reconnect with their past and maintain identity.

Through guided sessions involving an interviewer, the individual, and an AI prompter, participants describe memories which are transformed into AI-generated visual representations. These are refined collaboratively to ensure they accurately reflect the memory, resulting in a tangible printed and digital 'Memory Vector'. The intentionally blurred, dream-like aesthetic of the images mirrors the fluid and interpretive nature of human memory itself. This process supports individuals affected by displacement or conflict, offers reminiscence therapy for early-stage dementia, aids in mental health recovery, and helps preserve cultural and architectural heritage.

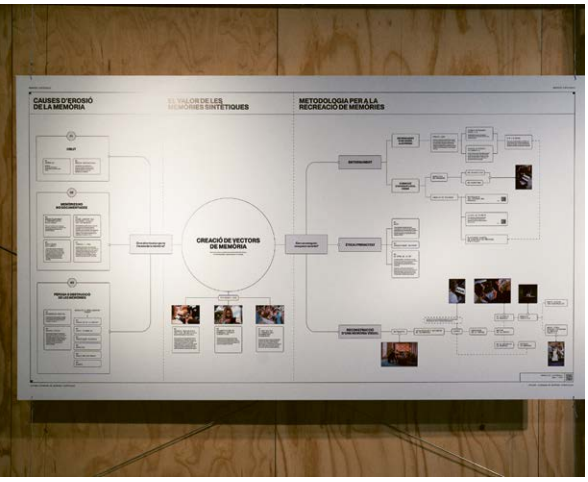
The project was started by Barcelona-based collective Domestic Data Streamers and sits at the intersection of art, technology, cognitive psychology, and social innovation. It fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue while addressing ethical considerations such as informed consent, GDPR data protection, and proactively mitigating AI biases by fine-tuning models with diverse, culturally relevant datasets. It serves as a prototype for the public sector, health institutions, and cultural organizations to engage with subjective memory preservation.

Launched as pilot research in 2022 by Domestic Data Streamers, a Barcelona-based collective, it expanded significantly with the *Citizens' Office of Synthetic Memories* at the Design Hub Barcelona (DHub) from May to July 2024. This free public service functioned as a prototype for new municipal services. It enabled visitors to generate and contribute personal stories to the city's intangible cultural archive, with 245 visual memories reconstructed. The exhibition merged art and scientific dissemination, showcasing AI's role in memory reconstruction and welcoming 10,905 visitors.

Domestic Data Streamers

The initiative continues expanding through scientific research, artistic collaborations, and human rights advocacy. It works with institutions like the University of Toronto and University of British Columbia on reminiscence therapy research for dementia, and with Emirates Health Services and Al Amal Hospital (UAE) on similar pilot programs. Early experiments were conducted in Barcelona Nursing Homes. Other academic partners include the University of Southern California (AI in media literacy), Elisava School of Design & Engineering of Barcelona (community engagement impact), Polytechnic University of Catalonia (accessibility tools), and the School of Visual Arts of New York (ethical boundaries).

It explores new forms of memory storytelling and supports migrant communities, such as the chapter at Casa do Povo in São Paulo focusing on displacement and urban change, by reconstructing memories that can serve as advocacy tools. The project aims to preserve cultural, natural, and architectural heritage and foster intergenerational dialogue, involving both older and younger generations, thereby reducing loneliness and bridging the digital gap. Collective sharing through exhibitions, murals, or documentaries amplifies the impact of these reconstructed 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

https://u.aec.at/B8D1D410

Domestic Data Streamers is a Barcelona-based collective of journalists, researchers, coders, artists, data scientists, and designers exploring new data languages and their social impact since 2013. Their work manifests as films, installations, digital experiences, performances, and exhibitions across diverse settings—from schools and prisons to museums and the UN Headquarters. Operating globally in over 45 countries, they've collaborated with prestigious institutions like Tate Modern, Hong Kong Design Institute, and California Academy of Sciences.

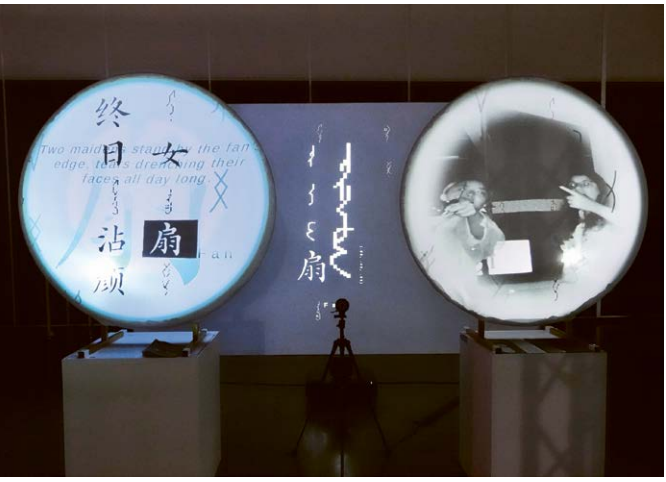
AI Nüshu (AI女书)

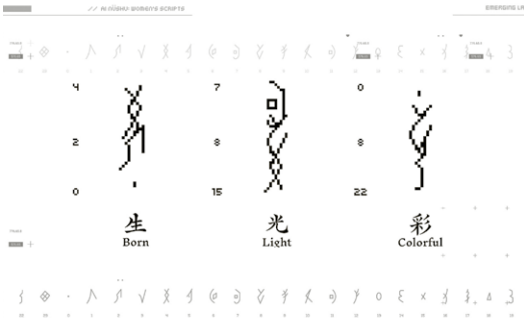
Yuqian Sun

Nüshu (女书), also called “Women’s Script,” is a unique language created and used exclusively for centuries by women in Hunan Province, China, to communicate in Chinese when they were excluded from formal education. Can AI learn from pre-modern Chinese women and create their own secret language?

AI Nüshu is an interactive installation that merges computational linguistics with the legacy of Nüshu. It trains AI agents to imitate illiterate women in pre-modern China to create a new language system, symbolizing the defiance against patriarchal constraints and the emergence of language in a non-Western, feminist context.

This is the first art project to interpret Nüshu from a computational linguistics perspective. Two AI agents simulate how Chinese women developed a unique language under the constraints of a patriarchal society. This cultural phenomenon resonates with the emergence of non-human machine language under human authority, both metaphorically and practically. As this new language is decipherable and learnable by humans, it inherently challenges the existing paradigm where humans are the linguistic authorities and machines are the learners.





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Yuqian (Uchan) Sun (CN), also known as CheeseTalk, is an artist and AI researcher based in London. She’s a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art, and a research artist at Midjourney Storytelling Lab. Yuqian aims to create ‘alive’ narrative experiences that extend beyond video games and into our daily lives through conversational AI agents. Yuqian’s interdisciplinary arts and research have been featured in galleries and tech conferences, including SIGGRAPH, CVPR, NeurIPS, GDC and New York Times Square. She won the Reddot Design Award and Lumen Prize in 2024.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE FOR
CITIZEN SCIENCE
2025

"The winners of this year's EU Prize for Citizen Science show that science can thrive when everyone—including groups that are often less heard—gets involved."

Ekaterina Zaharieva
European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation

Ars Electronica awards the European Union Prize for Citizen Science on behalf of the European Commission in the context of the IMPETUS project. The IMPETUS project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon WIDERA 2021-ERA-01 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101058677

Recognizing the role of Citizen Science in Europe

Citizen Science stands for scientific research that transforms the allocation of roles and agency in the research process. Citizens initiate, design, and implement investigations in collaboration with researchers and scientists, enabling all persons involved in the process to gain new perspectives as well as access to and understanding of data (volumes), and to design the solutions to the challenges of our times. Citizen Science opens up an appreciative, transparent, and innovative interaction between research and the general public, which has great potential to contribute to a positive change in our society and living environment. To promote this dynamic, the European Commission has initiated this highly endowed competition.

The European Union recognizes the crucial role of citizens in the research process

With the "European Union Prize for Citizen Science", the European Commission wants to underline the importance of Citizen Science and to honor, present, and support outstanding projects whose social and political impact advances the further development of a pluralistic, inclusive, and sustainable society in Europe. Ars Electronica Linz was commissioned to organize the competition as part of the IMPETUS project—which is being carried out in cooperation with King's College London (GB), the European Science Engagement Association (AT), Zabala Innovation (ES), T6 Ecosystems (IT), Science for Change (ES), and Nesta (GB). In 2025, this prestigious prize is given for the third time.

From January 7 to March 10, 2025 projects could be submitted for the "European Union Prize for Citizen Science". A total of 409 outstanding initiatives and projects were received.

A Maturing and Expanding Field—Empowering Communities through Inclusive, Participatory, and Transformative Research

Statement by the jury of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science 2025: Katja Mayer, Dusan Misevic, Josep Perelló, Marleen Stikker, Sarah West

This year's entries showcase the extraordinary breadth and depth of Citizen Science in Europe and beyond, revealing a highly dynamic landscape of formats, scales, and projects that delve into local issues, going well beyond "just" contributory forms of engagement. They also reflect a growing maturity in Citizen Science: whilst classic topics such as biodiversity, air quality, and litter monitoring remain very relevant, we saw an exciting expansion into new areas including disaster risk reduction, food security, health care provision, energy transition, and oral and urban histories.

This year, the social sciences and the humanities have shown particular strength, demonstrating how their approaches can contribute meaningfully to addressing societal challenges. Small and grassroots initiatives have further developed their methodological robustness, making a compelling case for their role in the Citizen Science ecosystem.

Many of the entries this year centered individual and community perspectives, and we also saw artistic practices incorporated into the scientific research effort, both of which will help to bring new voices into research. A number of projects are situated in rural rather than urban contexts, which we see as part of a strong trend toward localization. Another key theme was the empowerment of marginalized voices, with many projects rooted in community and grassroots organizations for tangible social transformation. Many initiatives are still researcher-led but often in partnership with civil society organizations. We also noted an encouraging rise in community-driven approaches and projects directly led by civil society organizations. Alongside applications from long-running Citizen Science projects, we also saw creative short-term initiatives responding to emerging crises on a local scale, such as monitoring natural hazards in real-time.

Project topics were diverse, ranging from growing vegetables and collecting rare seeds to supporting healthcare professionals to engage their patients and their support networks in health journeys, and mapping experiences of marginalized groups in urban areas. Across so many of the submissions, the spirit of inclusive participation, care, and collective and creative inquiry stood out as a powerful determinant for social and environmental change. The entries highlight the immense potential of Citizen Science to weave participation into everyday life and foster connections across knowledge cultures. They also show how important it is—in times of extreme politics, fear of losing agency and uncertainty over the future—for people to come together locally and change their worlds for the better.

It is wonderful to see how several institutions, through their long-term commitment to Citizen Science, have created enduring frameworks that engage thousands of people over time—laying the groundwork for deep, sustained societal transformation. Furthermore, we were particularly inspired by the creative reuse of existing tools and protocols, the growth of open hardware and open source, the introduction of machine-learning approaches, and the increasing integration of Citizen Science into institutional infrastructures—though these alone were not prize-defining for us.

This year's entries covered an impressive range of collaborations: with fab labs, NGOs, hospitals, municipalities, restaurants, farmers, and many more. Several projects were working with schools as key institutional actors for long-term engagement and encouraging a new generation of Citizen Scientists. Entries used an impressive range of Citizen Science formats, from well-established approaches such as bioblitzes, an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all

the living species within a designated area, and air quality monitoring by residents, to emerging practices which supported deep participation in novel ways. People came together to co-create museums, share oral histories, or meet others in unexpected ways, be it through summer camps, co-designed public health initiatives, or countering mis-information online.

While the richness and diversity of this year's submissions were deeply inspiring, we also observed some recurring areas for improvement. It is perhaps more important than ever for Citizen Science projects to articulate the outcomes they are having from their work as broadly as possible. The jury would like to see stronger integration with academic dissemination formats not only to secure the scientific rigor of citizen-generated data, but also to inspire a new generation of researchers to embed participatory values in their work and contribute to transforming research cultures from within.

The jury are confident that many initiatives are engaging very responsibly with ethical challenges in practice. However, this level of care was not always adequately reflected in the proposals themselves. Ethical considerations—particularly the protection of vulnerable groups, the communication of potential risks and actions participants can take to mitigate them—were not consistently addressed with the depth and clarity they deserve. As Citizen Science continues to mature, it becomes increasingly important not only to uphold responsible practices but also to report them transparently. This includes reflecting critically on impact pathways, ensuring clarity around data use, and fostering inclusive and safe participation.

As Citizen Science becomes increasingly embedded within institutions, we know how crucial it is to stay attentive to its grass-roots, ensure benefits for participants, and the need for funders to support projects both large and small, long-standing and more ephemeral, that contribute meaningfully to a more inclusive, responsive, and participatory science in challenging times for Europe and the world. Projects which partnered with long-standing and established civil society organizations who have been supporting structures in place and offer clear pathways to impact as they systematize knowledge production, were particularly praised by the jury.

Many of this year's strong applications had received funding and mentorship from IMPETUS, highlighting the value of this funding scheme for nurturing projects led by new actors that are pushing Citizen Science into new disciplinary areas and geographic regions, and with diverse collaborators.

We believe that this momentum of maturity of Citizen Science we are witnessing will also inspire universities and research centers to engage more actively with the expertise developed within Citizen Science—especially in its participatory and societal dimensions. These initiatives offer powerful impulses to rethink how knowledge is produced. Embracing Citizen Science is an opportunity to develop new skills, build more inclusive connections with diverse communities, and shape research agendas that are more socially robust and responsive to real-world needs.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

Grand Prize

Awarded for outstanding achievements in the advancement of knowledge through the empowerment of civil society and citizens in the development of the future. The Grand Prize of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science is not limited to specific topics or themes. The Prize will be awarded to the most outstanding initiative according to the award criteria. The European Union Prize for Citizen Science honors citizen science initiatives undertaken within the European Research Area that demonstrate excellence across a range of criteria. The quality of all submitted initiatives will be judged according to the following five award criteria and sub-criteria: Scientific Quality, Societal Transformation & Policy Impact Diversity & Collaboration, Communication & Dissemination, Innovation & Creativity, European Dimension.

HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation Empowering Roma Women through Building Networks of Solidarity

Ivan Đorđević, Slavica Vasić Mitrović, Lada Stevanović, Bojana Bogdanović, Miloš Rašić, Milena Jokanović, Marija Đorđević, Svetlana Ilić, Svetlana Marinković

At a time when the grassroots, student-led civil movement in Serbia shines as a beacon against the backdrop of authoritarianism advancing across the world, recognizing and celebrating the transformative power of Citizen Science projects such as *HEROINES* is crucial. The *HEROINES* project—short for Heritage of Emancipation: *Empowering Roma Women through Networks of Solidarity*—is a Citizen Science initiative led by the Institute of Ethnography SASA in close collaboration with two community-based partners, the Roma Women's Cen-

ter Bibija and the Successful Women of Kostolac association. The Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority and are still routinely victims of prejudice and social exclusion. The project's primary aim is to understand the process of emancipation of Roma women in Serbia through participatory research and data collection of rarely shared oral stories and individual experiences in three urban areas, the capital Belgrade, Kostolac, and Pirot. The project uses community mapping methodology to interpret and reflect on the data collected while recognizing the importance of community voices to take control of their own development and offer new ways to shape their own future.

The jury members were impressed by the inclusion of Roma women at all stages of the processes and the deep partnerships with the Roma community-based organizations, which have decades of experience in Roma female activism. This showcased the strength, resilience, and achievements that have often been excluded from the discourse. The teams have published about their methodology in Serbian and the jury would encourage them to continue publishing about their work internationally, so that their work can reach a larger audience and serve as inspiration on how research institutions can develop partnerships with community-based organizations and together co-produce new knowledge that would be difficult to obtain by other means. The community mapping methodology developed in this project represents an innovative contribution to the Citizen Science landscape. While its core principles could inspire similar efforts elsewhere, it is not easily replicable without the long-term commitment to building relationships and establishing trust within communities. This makes the project a role model—not simply for the method itself, but for the process of co-creation it embodies. The approach is particularly impactful in contexts where individuals are often socially or geographically isolated and where opportunities for collective knowledge production are limited.

The project's partnerships have been key to enabling a highly transformative impact, with achievements of great relevance both for the involved communities and for broader societal reflection. Importantly, the project also contributes a distinct and enriching perspective to the scientific discourse on this topic. Such efforts are especially commendable in countries where historically marginalized groups remain underrepresented or rendered invisible in public discourse. In such contexts, fostering diversity of voices and strengthening representation in knowledge production are essential. This project demonstrates how these goals can be meaningfully advanced through the combination of scientific methods and sustained, community-rooted collaboration, carried out with remarkable dedication over the long term, despite limited financial resources.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

Digital Communities Award

Awarded for excellence in fostering an open and inclusive civil society fit for the digital age by empowering communities to critically engage with digital technologies. The Digital Communities Award of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science focuses on initiatives that create or support communities to actively participate in Europe's digital transformation. Awarded initiatives will demonstrate a specific excellence in researching transformation topics that increase citizens' ability to engage with change processes or that demonstrate advances in the field of Citizen Science through the use of digital technologies.

Antiquake Risk Hunter Community

Yelda Ademoglu Gulkilik, Vincent Bouvard, Umut Koca, Isin Malhas, Uluc Ali Demir

Climate change is amplifying weather-related disasters worldwide and 19% of Europe's population is exposed to multiple natural hazards according to the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. The *Antiquake Risk Hunter Community* project is a citizen-driven initiative launched by residents of a historic and touristic Istanbul neighborhood. The project worked with over 150 citizen scientists to conduct urban monitoring activities and to identify risks and map vulnerabilities, collecting geolocated data using open-source tools like OpenStreetMap.

The jury highlighted the wide range of collaborators involved: residents, schools, municipal authorities, and disaster management professionals allowing *Antiquake* to foster a collaborative, bottom-up approach to risk assessment and community resilience throughout a digital space. Youth engagement played a central role, with students designing accessible emergency information materials and participating in drills. The project's strong empha-

sis on capacity building, community engagement, and open data is commendable and offers a valuable model for replication in other contexts and in relation to other natural hazards. Collaborative digital technologies are central to the *Antiquake* project and demonstrate its excellence in fostering communities that can actively participate in Europe's digital transformation.

The jury encourages the project to serve as a model for how to responsibly handle and share sensitive geospatial information—such as mapped vulnerabilities or risk zones—that may influence perceptions, property values, or insurance.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

Diversity & Collaboration Award

Awarded for excellence in grassroots approaches, explorative collaboration, cultural and gender diversity, community participation, stakeholder engagement and social inclusivity. The Diversity & Collaboration Award of the European Union Prize for Citizen Science focuses on initiatives with transdisciplinary collaboration models that actively engage with or are initiated by a diverse range of stakeholders. Awarded initiatives will demonstrate a specific excellence in pushing the boundaries between civil society, citizens and science by engaging with local communities or taking a grassroots approach, and that display gender and cultural diversity, community participation, stakeholder engagement, and social inclusivity.

MoFWaste—The Museum of Food Waste
Because food waste should be in the past.
Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO,
António Rodrigues Sampaio School Group,
António Correia de Oliveira School Group,
Henrique Medina Secondary School,
Monte da Ola School Group,
ATAHCA—Association for the Development of Terras Altas do Homem, Cávado e Ave,
Municipality of Esposende, Municipality of Viana do Castelo

In the project, students, educators, and school canteen staff in Esposende, Portugal, work together to identify, measure, and reduce food waste. Activities include hands-on workshops on composting, fruit preservation, and sustainable cooking, alongside interactive games and exhibitions. The project goes beyond raising awareness by co-creating and implementing actionable strategies in collaboration with diverse stakeholders engaged in the issue. Monitoring kits, educational materials, and collected data are made publicly available. Students were empowered to take full ownership of the process, actively participating in both data collection and analysis.

With its playful title, *Museum of Food Waste* draws attention to the urgent need to make food waste a thing of the past—especially in light of the growing importance of global food security. Led by Associação Rio Neiva, active in environmental education since 1989, and strongly supported by local schools, the project shows high potential for initiating networked action. The project serves as an advocacy tool to influence school boards and local policy.

The jury emphasized the fact that the project stands out for its strong stakeholder collaboration—from schoolchildren to food providers to policymakers, for its solid Citizen Science methodology, and for its potential to scale. The jury decision is based on the project's commitment to participant ownership. It offers a replicable, inspiring model for addressing food security and responsible consumption across regions and borders. Its results and methods deserve wider visibility—including publication in academic journals—ideally in collaboration with scientists to further strengthen and expand future project campaigns.

EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE FOR
CITIZEN SCIENCE
2025

Honorary Mentions

Achieving a New European Energy Awareness
Ana Belén Cristóbal López, Luis Narvarte, Luis Miguel Carrasco, Martin Brocklehurst, Marta Victoria, Zhe Zhang, Marko Topic, Matevz Bokalic, Emma Jayne Williams, Luis Fialho, Afonso Cavaco, Joana Mouquinho, Megan Blyth, Lars Lorenz, Alex Gerber, Manuel Castillo, Óscar Anchorenea

Acting4DHH: Citizen social science for the benefit of the Deaf community
Katerina Zourou, Stefania Oikonomou

Baltic Sea 3D Wrecksite Ontology
Markku Luoto, Maritime Archaeological Society of Finland

Care PartIES
Marie-Therese Schultes, Dina Hediger, Deborah Scharfy, Irene Rilko, Julia Bänziger

Deep Time - Collective Intelligence for Nature Recovery
Brendon Wilkins, Jonski Millar, Anna van Nostrand, Maiya Pina-Dacier, Lisa Westcott Wilkins

Dingle Peninsula Living Lab
Deirdre de Bhailís, Dinny Galvin, Tommy Reidy, Brendan Tuohy Muireann Kelliher, Clare Watson, Connor McGookin, Evan Boyle, Aoife Deane, Alexandra Revez Julia Blanke, Archishman Bose, Brian Ó Gallachóir, Jerry Murphy

Hollandse Luchten
Waag Futurelab, Provincie Noord-Holland, RIVM, TNO, GGD Amsterdam, AethiQs

INPN Espèces
PatriNat (OFB, MNHN, CNRS, IRD)

Local and international citizen scientists for biodiversity mapping of the endangered Komarnica Canyon in Montenegro
Iva Njunjić, Menno Schilthuizen, Jelena Popovic, Taxon Foundation citizen science team, Montenegrin Ecologists Society, Save Komarnica

Maldita.es contra la desinformación
Maldita.es Foundation

Mapping for Recreation with Temporarily Displaced Children (Map4Rec)
Ekaterina Egorova, Kateryna Miller

MatheConnect - Cross-curricular topics for the mathematics classroom, that matter to 21st century learners
Daniela Steflitsch, Sandra Friederike Wieser, Katrin Kanatschnig, Students of the BG|BRG St. Martin Villach

Mindful journeys to a shared past
Maria de Lurdes Rosa, VINCULUM PROJECT TEAM

Monitoring Everchanging Environment in Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland
Jóhannes Marteinn Jóhannesson, Ann Irene Peters

Nachtlichter (Night lights)
Nachtlichter collaboration

Nürnberg forscht
Martin Dr. Bauer-Stiasny,Derya Yıldırım, Cornelia Yılmaz, Jelena Torbica, Thomas Kießlich, Zeynep Deprem, Nilgün Cevik

Observadores del Mar
Observadores del Mar, CSIC

Oeiras Experimenta
Maria Leão, Elisabete Brigadeiro, Rubén Vicente, Isabel Abreu, Carlota Vaz Patto, Ana Fortunato, Omar Vergara, João Reis, Inês Sardinha, Carmen Santos, Susana Leitão, Maria Mina, Margarida Oliveira, Ana Sanchez, Maria José Amândio, Alexandra Vasconcelos, Sílvia Tacanho, Renata Ramalho, Luís Morgado, Joel Arruda, Ana Silva, Ivana Martins, Eleonora Tulumello, Marta Santos, Selma Rodrigues, Sara Almeida, Luís Macedo, Catarina Pereira, Raquel Gomes, Giovanna Dellarole, Celeste Reis, Ana Beja, João Juliano, Djaiba Balde, Fatu Ture, Maria João Aguiar, Romana Yáñez, António Vicente, Miguel Prado António, Margarida Prado, Municipality of Oeiras, ITQB NOVA, Oeiras Experimenta Team

Open Food Facts
Stéphane Gigandet, Pierre Slamich

PAIR
Ariadna Laguna, Silvia Enriquez, Sara Mas, Alba Jané, Laura Teixidor, Vall d'Hebron Insitute of Research

PECan—Partners of Experience in Cancer
Panagiotis Bamidis, Despoina Mantziari, Anastasia Gkartzoni, Maria Nikolaidou, Antonis Billis, Nikolaos Kyriakidis, George Kapetanakis, Katerina Nikitara, Maria Nomikou, AUTH Lab of Medical Physics & Digital Innovation / Thessaloniki Active and Healthy Ageing Living Lab (Thess-AHALL), Hellenic Cancer Federation (ELLOK)

RESTORATION (natuRE-based SoluTion flOod Risk mitigATION)
Payam Sajadi, Di Nguyen, Daniel Walsh, Francesco Pilla, Gerald Mills, Salman Khan, Jeremy Auerbach, Mehdi Gholamnia, Charlotte Deferrars, Gabriel Oduri, Nasim Eslamirad

SERVET: Citizen Science in the Stratosphere
Enrique Torres Moreno, Natalia Carmen Ayuso Escuer, Laude Guardia, Francisco Sanz, Servet

Sustainable and Healthy InFrastructure by reducing stress during active Travel (SHIFT)
Anna Molter, Brian Caulfield, Ciarán Ferrie, Nakisa Soltani, Peter Kearney, Sonia Soubam, University College Dublin

The Science of Sourdough – How Citizens are Helping Shape the Future of Plant-Based Fermented Foods in the HealthFerm Project
Christophe Courtin, Nicholas Bokulich, Health-Ferm Consortium

'Watch out! Don't step on me!'
Olatz Ortega Vidales, Eider Bilbao, Oihane Diaz de Cerio, Belen Gonzalez Gaya, Aitor Laza Martinez, Ainara Achurra, Zuriñe Baña Garcia, Harkaitz Eguiraun Martinez, Pamela Ruiz Rodriguez, Mireia Irazola Duñabeitia, Miren Bego Urrutia

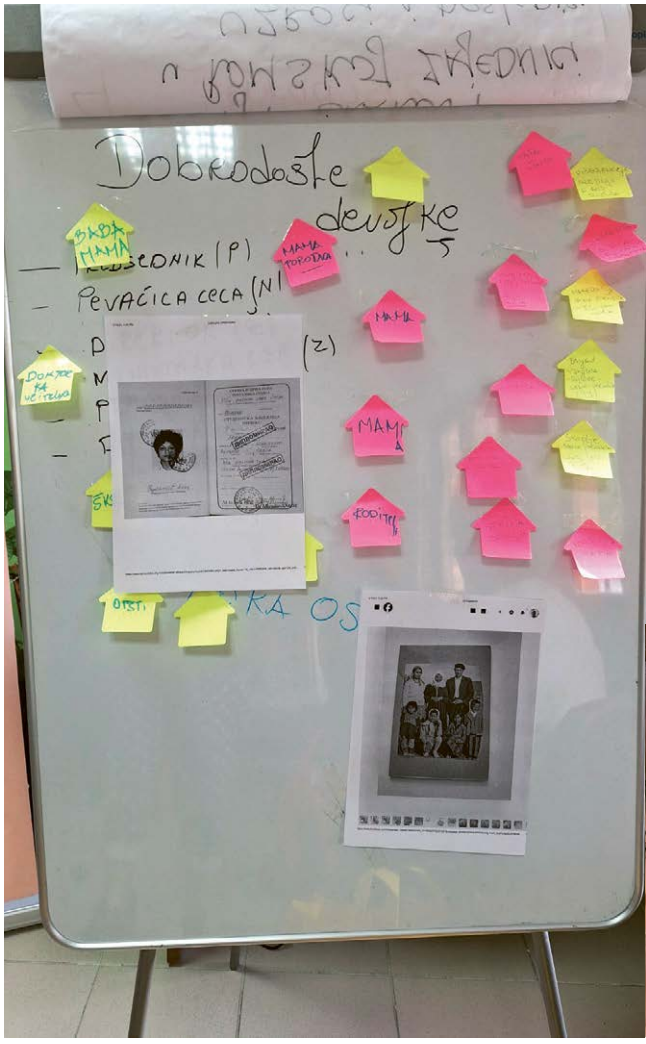
XENOPIA
Alma Futura

HEROINES

Heritage of Emancipation Empowering Roma Women through Building Networks of Solidarity

Ivan Đorđević, Slavica Vasić Mitrović, Lada Stevanović, Bojana Bogdanović, Miloš Rašić, Milena Jokanović, Marija Đorđević, Svetlana Ilić, Svetlana Marinković

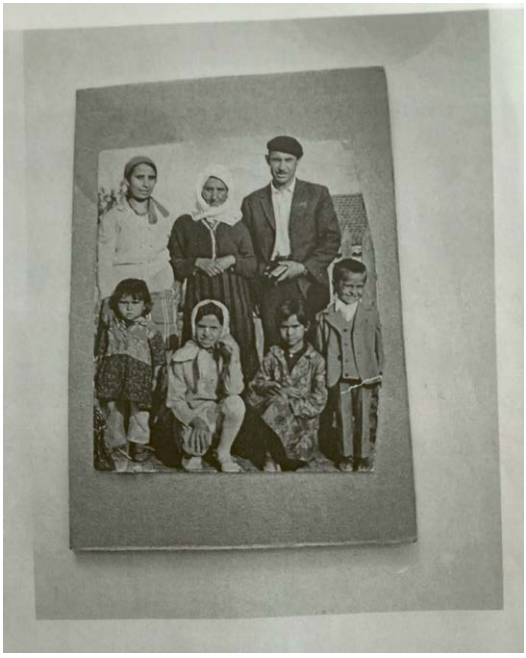
HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation is dedicated to advancing the emancipation of Roma women in Serbia through an innovative and inclusive approach: the community mapping methodology. Serving as the cornerstone of our project, this methodology allows addressing existing research limitations and provides a platform for Roma women's empowerment, participation, and self-advocacy. Community mapping is a participatory research method that empowers communities to identify and document their local resources, assets, and challenges. It's a bottom-up approach that recognizes the importance of community voices in shaping their future. Community mapping is a valuable method for fostering community empowerment, promoting local knowledge, and enabling residents to take control of their own development.



Mapping the heritage of emancipation
Photo: Uspešne žene Kostolca

Key stakeholders are Roma women in various communities, as well as decision-makers, researchers, and the broader society interested in Roma women's emancipation and empowerment.
Numerous studies on gender empowerment and marginalized communities focus on Roma women in Serbia, but our approach is exceptional in the following ways:

- Community Mapping Methodology: The primary research tool that actively involves Roma women in data collection, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are not only heard but also play a pivotal role in decision-making throughout the process, thus avoiding more traditional top-down research approaches.
- Emphasis on Inclusivity: Roma women are included at every project stage, from data collection and advocacy to contribution in publication and exhibition design.
- Holistic Approach: The aim is to go beyond data collection by utilizing the information gathered to create a publication and a mobile exhibition that serve as a platform for Roma women to exhibit their strength, resilience, and achievements through art and stories that have often been excluded from the discourse. This approach allows the creation of an empowering, self-representative narrative.



Object of emancipation
Photo: Uspešne žene Kostolca

Community mapping in Pirot, Serbia
Photo: NGO Ternipe

Object of emancipation
Photo: Uspešne žene Kostolca

Intertwining the network of solidarity
Photo: Uspešne žene Kostolca

HEROINES: Heritage of Emancipation contributes new knowledge and understanding by:

- Amplifying Roma Women's Voices: By involving them directly in research and representation, we contribute to a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. Their voices will thus form a central part of the discourse.
- Advocacy and Awareness: The community mapping data, publication, and the exhibition provide tangible tools for advocacy at local and national levels, addressing the systemic issues that hinder Roma women's emancipation. They enable decision-makers and the broader society to understand the issues faced and the necessity for change.
- Community Empowerment Model: By showcasing a model of community mapping and advocacy, we contribute to a potential template for addressing similar issues in other marginalized communities. Consequently, a key outcome—the Community Mapping Toolkit, will serve as a comprehensive resource for guiding data collection that communities can use independently in the future, ensuring sustainable change.

The emphasis on women's empowerment and the decades-long practice of female activism within the Roma community in Serbia, qualify this practice to be interpreted as intangible cultural heritage of this community (ICH). In doing so, it goes far beyond the traditional practices typically defined within the scope of ICH. This project aims to advocate for new routes of understanding the contemporary visions of ICH and to yet again emphasize the importance of its meaning for the present life of the communities, keeping practices alive. By entering the realm of contemporary relevance of heritage, the results of this project add a significant voice for the international debate on the issues of what can be considered heritage, and what contemporary relevance means to the community, in different contexts and locations.

Open event Heritage of Emancipation Empowering Roma Women through building networks of solidarity
Photo: ISO DUO

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Centre for the Promotion of Science (CPN), Republic of Serbia, which has recognized the potential of the *HEROINES* project and supported it financially. Also, we are deeply grateful to all our associates and participants from the citizen side of this project, to many amazing women from the Roma Women's Network of Serbia, in particular from the Roma Women's Center BIBIJA, the Citizens' Association Ternipe from Pirot, and the Roma center for women and children, Successful Women from Kostolac, who took part in almost all stages of this project.

https://u.aec.at/A29C3709

The *HEROINES* project is implemented by a nine-member team of experts and activists from academia and civil society. Researchers from the Institute of Ethnography SASA (**Dr. Ivan Đorđević, Dr. Lada Stevanović, Dr. Bojana Bogdanović, Dr. Miloš Rašić**/all RS) developed the theoretical framework based on their expertise in women's emancipation, minority issues, and applied anthropology. Scholars from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (**Dr. Marija Đorđević, Dr. Milena Jokanović**/all RS) adapted the community mapping methodology, integrating a heritage studies perspective. Drawing on long-term engagement with Roma women, the Roma Women's Center "Bibija" (**Slavica Vasić Mitrović, Svetlana Ilić, Svetlana Marinković**/all RS) ensured the realization of project activities in Roma communities. The project was distinguished by a high level of collaborative engagement and exchange of knowledge among team members.

Antiquake Risk Hunter Community

Yelda Ademoglu Gulkilik, Vincent Bouvard,
Umut Koca, Isin Malhas, Uluç Ali Demir

Solidarity Exhibition. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

MBA-SDA Club. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

NADMEX-Expert Talk. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

GIS Congress. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

The *Antiquake Risk Hunter Community* project actively engages residents of high earthquake risk areas—starting in Kuzguncuk, Istanbul—in disaster risk reduction through citizen science. The project challenges the limits of conventional disaster planning by empowering citizens to become active contributors in identifying and reducing local risks.

Over 150 participants, including 66 trained citizen scientists, led data collection using town-watching, a participatory method endorsed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). Participants systematically observed their surroundings to document hazards, safe areas, and critical infrastructure, uploading data to OpenStreetMap via HOT Task #18026. These contributions formed the basis of a printed and digital Disaster Risk and Safety Map, combining citizen insight with official resources like the Istanbul Disaster Risk Reduction Plan.

A custom web-based platform was developed to allow residents to contribute real-time risk data, share observations, and interact with the live map, transforming town-watching into a dynamic digital practice. The project also organized more than 20 meetings with public institutions to promote community-based disaster planning and advocate for integrating citizen-generated data into formal frameworks.

Antiquake's academic contributions are equally significant: it inspired two master's theses, supported behavioral surveys with the Okan University Psychology Department, and contributed to interdisciplinary publications. Local schools played an active role—students participated in earthquake drills, created educational materials, and established a Sustainable Disaster Awareness Club.

Combining inclusive participation, digital tools, and community-generated data, *Antiquake* proves that disaster resilience is not solely an institutional responsibility—it thrives through shared knowledge, civic creativity, and neighborhood-level action.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science
Digital Communities Award

Town Watching. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

Workshop 1. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

The *Antiquake Risk Hunter Community Project* was supported by the IMPETUS Accelerator Program under Horizon Europe.
We thank all volunteers, institutions, and collaborators—notably Prof. Dr. Binnur Öktem Ünsal (workshop theme), Dr. Evin Aydın Yöntem (psychosocial readiness research), Dr. Can Ünen (HOT Task leadership and OSM Turkey coordination), OSM Turkey Community (HOT mapping), Orkut Murat Yılmaz (technical advisory and mapathon coordination), Ezgi Tok (data processing and mapathon), MBA Schools Sustainable Disaster Awareness Club (content and storytelling), Doruk Başoğlu (thesis on risk perception in Kuzguncuk), Sinan Kurmuş (advisory support), ISKI, Üsküdar Municipality and Disaster Affairs Directorate (institutional support), Turkish Design Foundation (venue and networking), ISKI Kuzguncuk Culture House (venue), Üsküdar Atölye (venue), Spatial Informatics Initiative Association (technical collaboration), and all local artists and NGOs who supported us.

Workshop 2. Photo: Courtesy of Antiquake Team

https://u.aec.at/6341664A

The **Antiquake Risk Hunter Community Project** is co-coordinated by **Yelda Ademoglu Gulkilik** (TR), a railway infrastructure specialist, and co-coordinated by **Vincent Bouvard** (TR/FR), a communication expert. The core team included **Isin Malha**s (TR) as graphic designer, **Umut Koca** (TR) as GIS web application developer, and **Uluç Ali Demir** (TR) as legal advisor for privacy, cookie policy, and personal data compliance. While the project was driven by the core team, it was realized through the collective efforts of many contributors, who are gratefully acknowledged in the acknowledgements section.

MoFWaste—The Museum of Food Waste
Because food waste should be in the past

Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO, António Rodrigues Sampaio School Group,
António Correia de Oliveira School Group, Henrique Medina Secondary School,
Monte da Ola School Group, ATAHCA—Association for the Development of Terras Altas do Homem,
Cávado e Ave, Municipality of Esposende, Municipality of Viana do Castelo

The *Museum of Food Waste* is a citizen science project aiming to monitor food waste in six school canteens in Esposende and Viana do Castelo, Portugal, recognizing that "food waste should be in the past". It is grounded on the relevance of engaging a younger generation as upcoming 'change agents' through local schools, as a privileged medium to empower them, and on the need to act on the 'food consumption' side.

The project partnered with a total of six schools, the Municipality of Esposende (co-manager of five schools), the Municipality of Viana do Castelo (co-manager of one school), and a regional Association as food waste expertise training provider.

536 students (10 to 15 years old) were engaged across several stages of the process, including during 40 continuous (working) days of food waste monitoring in 2024. To facilitate this, we co-developed a food waste monitoring toolkit, which included a detailed protocol and a data collection sheet. This led to identifying 6,24 tons of waste in this period for all canteens, in the form of students' plate leftovers, kitchen food surplus, and kitchen inedible food waste. The project results were incorporated in an itinerant visual exhibition, traveling between the participating schools, and included student-led guided tours.

Students were also engaged in the co-creation of food waste minimization strategies, resulting in six recommendations. Students further developed the topic of food waste in nine disciplines. A total of 26 teachers were engaged, guiding students throughout this process. 24 school canteen staff were also engaged both in food waste separation and in two hands-on training workshops for food waste reduction, and were critical in identifying good practices.

The project is currently advocating for the implementation of food waste reduction strategies in these schools and for regular food waste monitoring and evaluation practices.

With support from: IMPETUS Project – Sustaining Grant

https://u.aec.at/96AE390A

The Museum of Food Waste is led by Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO, a community-based association, founded in 1989, with the mission to defend and enhance the local environment and promote sustainable development. Our primary fields of action are in the Municipalities of Esposende and Viana do Castelo, in northern coastal Portugal. Rio Neiva has Environmental NGO Status, Public Interest Organization Status, is a member of CLA—Esposende's Local Council for Social Action, a member of Viana do Castelo's Council for the Environment and Climate Action, and official New European Bauhaus Partners since 2021. In 2024, 9,000 participants took part in 300 activities.








Rio Neiva—Environmental NGO

Innov
&
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ology

Grand Prize of the European Commission
honoring Innovation in Technology, Industry
and Society stimulated by the Arts

S+T+ARTS PRIZE'25

Funded by the European Union

S+T+ARTS

The project is funded by the European Union under the Grant Agreement No 101135691. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. The European Union cannot be held responsible for them.

"When we ask how invisible forces shape our world—from the air we share to the mysteries of matter—art shows us new ways to sense, model and connect. The S+T+ARTS Prize celebrates this spark of curiosity that fuels transformative innovation."

Peter Friess
Senior Programme Officer S+T+ARTS
Senior Programme Manager at DG Connect, European Commission

S+T+ARTS

Science, Technology, and the ARTS

Europe has historically focused its attention in engineering on R&D and standardization, and historically innovation is viewed to be the core of a competitive economy. Today, however, an increasing number of high-tech companies throughout the world assert that, in addition to scientific and technological skills, the critical skills needed for innovation to happen and to be of value for society are rooted in forms of creativity found in artistic practices. In this context, the expertise of artists can directly drive and influence innovation in technology. They offer new perspectives, inspire new directions, and act as a catalyst for a successful and socially responsible transformation of new technologies into new products and new ecological, social, and business models. In recognition of this development the European Commission has launched the STARTS initiative—Innovation at the nexus of Science, Technology, and the ARTS to promote the inclusion of artists in research and innovation activities in Europe.

Innovation in and for Europe

The STARTS initiative of the European Commission is currently funding different pillars: STARTS Residencies to stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations in situ, STARTS Thematic Pilots to finance research with artists as active parts of projects that work on concrete challenges for industry and society, STARTS Academies uniting engineers and artists to teach digital skills to citizens and young adults in a playful way, STARTS Regional Centers to expand the initiative on a local level in a number of European regions, Digital Innovation Hubs that help emerging companies improve production processes and services, and last but not least the STARTS Prize to give recognition and visibility to outstanding examples of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Since 2016 this remarkable initiative has funded over 380 residencies with more than 19 million Euros and honored 298 STARTS Prize projects.

S+T+ARTS Prize

Grand Prize of the European Commission honoring Innovation in Technology, Industry and Society stimulated by the Arts

The STARTS Prize highlights people and projects that have the potential to make a sustainable positive impact on Europe's economic, technological, social, and ecological future. The competition seeks innovative projects at the nexus of science, technology, and the arts and celebrates visions and achievements at the interface between innovation and creation. On behalf of the European Commission, Ars Electronica in collaboration with French Tech Grande Provence, INOVA+, Media Solution Center Baden Württemberg, High Performance Computing Center Stuttgart, Salzburg Festival, Sónar, T6 Ecosystems, and TUD Dresden University of Technology annually issues an open call for entries to the STARTS Prize competition.

The competition invites project submissions by either artists and creative professionals or the researchers and companies involved from all over the world that present

- ground-breaking collaborations and projects driven by both technology and the arts.
- all forms of artistic works and practices with a strong link to innovation in technology, business, and/or society.
- all types of technological and scientific research and development that have been inspired by art or involve artists as catalysts of novel thinking.

Throughout its 10-year history, from 2016 to 2025, the S+T+ARTS Prize competition has attracted 18,900 submissions from 124 countries.

Nominations by international advisors and Prix Ars Electronica expert juries

To encourage a wider range of participants as well as a geographical and gender balance, twelve international expert advisors were engaged to identify and recommend relevant works, projects, and artists, who were contacted and encouraged to submit their projects to the competition.
Since the main categories of Prix Ars Electronica have a strong overlap with the content criteria of the STARTS Prize, artists submitting for the Prix Ars Electronica can simultaneously enter for the STARTS Prize. Out of these submissions, ten projects per category are nominated for prize consideration by the three Prix Ars Electronica expert juries (New Animation Art, Digital Musics & Sound Art, and Artificial Life & Intelligence).

The STARTS Prize competition annually awards:

Grand Prize—Artistic Exploration
Awarded for artistic exploration and art works where appropriation by the arts has a strong potential to influence or alter the use, deployment, or perception of technology.

Grand Prize–Innovative Collaboration
Awarded for innovative collaboration between industry or technology and the arts (and the cultural and creative sectors in general) that opens new pathways for innovation.

The winners of the two Grand Prizes each receive a STARTS Trophy and €20,000 in prize money. Both winning projects as well as a selection of the Honorary Mentions and Nominations are showcased at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz and featured in exhibitions and events that Ars Electronica and its consortium collaborators implement at partner institutions worldwide.

Five international experts from the fields of industry, technology, governmental policies, and culture came together for the main jury event to determine 30 finalists, including the two Prize winning projects, 10 Honorary Mentions, and 18 Nominations for the STARTS Prize 2025.
Following extensive deliberations, the unanimous decision was taken to award *Sensing Quantum* by Light Art Space Foundation with the STARTS Prize for Innovative Collaboration and *AI War Cloud Database* by Sarah Ciston with the STARTS Prize for Artistic Exploration. *Sensing Quantum* responds to the growing societal impact of quantum technologies by building artistic and educational frameworks that help the public grasp their complexity and implications. While quantum technologies expand our perception of reality, *AI War Cloud Database* examines another realm of technological power: the hidden entanglements of AI in everyday life and global conflict. Thus, *AI War Cloud Database* raises urgent questions about transparency, ethics, and responsibility in the development and deployment of AI technologies.

The selection of the 30 finalist projects represents a comprehensive overview of innovative trends at the intersection of art, science, and technology from all over the world and recognizes the most outstanding projects. Therefore all 30 projects are published in the *Prix Ars Electronica 2025* catalogue.

STARTS Prize 2025, part of a joint project
STARTS Ec(h)o by:
Ars Electronica, French Tech Grand Provence, INOVA+,
Media Solutions Center Baden-Württemberg,
High Performance Computing Center Stuttgart,
Salzburg Festival, Sónar, T6 Ecosystems, and
TUD Dresden University of Technology

Peter Verplancke

The STARTS Trophy was designed by Nick Ervinck. The Belgian artist explores the boundaries between various media, fostering a cross-pollination between the digital and the physical. He applies tools and techniques from new media, in order to explore the aesthetic potential of sculpture, 3D prints, animation, installation, architecture, and design.
Nick Ervinck, TAWSTAR, 2016

A Spark of Light in the Darkness

Francesca Bria, Veronica D'Souza, Thomas Gegenhuber, Irini Papadimitriou, Asako Tomura

While considering this year's STARTS prize entries, being aware of the fact that the spirit of the competition is to support and champion work that brings together much needed exchange between science, technology, and the arts, while also addressing urgent societal challenges, we can't help but remind ourselves that this selection process comes at particularly shaky times.

Today's reality is that not only do we continue to face socioeconomic, geopolitical, ecological, and technological challenges, we are witnessing a wave of global political disruption, ongoing conflict, and a deepening ecological crisis. Progressing to times of growing economic turmoil and inequality, climate catastrophe, and threats of nuclear war, while unregulated tech and blind faith in AI endure, the need for research and work that open up new narratives and help us re-focus, is bigger than ever. Similarly, the importance of the STARTS initiative, encouraging and advocating for such work cannot be underestimated.

In the midst of a political turn that looks to blow up the world order and democracy, while disinformation campaigns undermine civic trust and cause dismay when reasoning is needed the most, in this year's submissions the jury has found critical work and voices that can make a much needed difference, bring clarity and a spark of light in the darkness. In this context, we deem it necessary to highlight extraordinary critical and collaborative approaches that challenge and reframe our relationship to technology, society, culture, and nature; projects that not only address the urgent need to continue to act and build on space for resistance, diverse voices, and critical ideas, but work and initiatives that can actually open paths to environmental and community-driven innovation, social justice narratives, and care-based infrastructures.

In this year's Honorary Mentions and Nominations we see best practice examples that significantly contribute to our understanding of the ethical, social, and political implications of techno-solutionism, the impacts of colonial and industrial extraction on communities and environments, or urgent issues of gender-based violence. But here we also have innovative work and approaches that show how digital infrastructures and AI can connect to ecological regeneration and coexistence; and how alternative digital futures and synergies between technology and ecology are indeed possible. In this selection, the jury also wants to emphasize collaborative practices and work that make abstract scientific concepts tangible, and projects that show how technology and AI can come to the service of truth-telling, care-based data ethics, and therapeutic practices.

While we are still grappling with the impact of technologies such as AI as it continues to shape our society, reality, and imagination, we are witnessing the emergence and spread of quantum technologies that are poised to radically reshape computing, communication, and our philosophical understand-

ing of the world. Without access to education, cultural interpretations, and debates in this emerging field, knowledge and control will remain in the hands of a few specialists creating further gaps in technological literacy, powerful knowledge, and skills essential to understand the opportunities, but also implications of this technology. Recognizing the importance of the work of LAS Art Foundation, engaging with the transformative implications of quantum mechanics and commissioning art that translates abstract quantum concepts into sensory, immersive experiences accessible to all, the jury awards this forward-thinking arts organization with the STARTS Grand Prize for Innovative Collaboration. LAS Art Foundation's initiatives and work play a crucial role in democratizing abstract and complex scientific advancements such as quantum mechanics into experiences that people can see, feel, and reflect on. As quantum technologies shift from theory into practical application, LAS Art Foundation emphasizes the need for early cultural engagement, and in doing so, it not only enhances scientific literacy but also encourages inclusive participation in shaping the ethical and societal frameworks around emerging technologies.

Thinking back to the extremely precarious and challenging times we live in, and the urgent need for critical understanding and reflection on the relationship between technology and conflict, the jury unanimously awards the Grand Prize for Artistic Exploration to the *AI War Cloud Database*. An essential project integrating artistic research, open-source intelligence, and critical analysis of AI systems in military applications that deserves recognition for its critical role in illuminating the hidden entanglements between commercial AI tools and the machinery of modern warfare. The *AI War Cloud Database* plays a great role in shaping public debate when it comes to such a critical topic. When artificial intelligence is increasingly embedded in everyday life, this project dares to confront the ethical and political implications of this integration and in particular the devastating human cost borne disproportionately by vulnerable populations.

If *AI War Cloud Database* shows us where we have been led by a sector dominated by obfuscation, proprietary secrecy, and techno-solutionist hype, it also forces us to think where we want to go next and what choices we make as users, developers, and investors of AI systems.

S+T+ARTS Prize '25

Grand Prize Innovative Collaboration

Awarded for the innovative collaboration between industry or technology and the arts (and the cultural and creative sectors in general) that opens new pathways for innovation.

Sensing Quantum
LAS Art Foundation

As Europe steps up investments in quantum technologies, from the Quantum Flagship and EuroHPC to key industrial initiatives in chips and cloud computing, *Sensing Quantum* reminds us of something essential: technological sovereignty is not just about hardware, speed, or scale. It's also about how we imagine and shape the future together. Curated by the LAS Art Foundation, *Sensing Quantum* opens up the complex world of quantum science to society at large. It is a powerful example of how art and culture can make emerging technologies more transparent, more democratic, and more human. While Europe builds the physical and digital infrastructure of the future—AI factories, quantum labs, supercomputers—this program offers a vital addition. It transforms critical technologies and abstract concepts into stories, complex systems into emotions, and scientific infrastructure into shared experience.

At the heart of this program is *We Felt a Star Dying,* a poetic video installation by Laure Prouvost. Created in dialogue with quantum physicists and AI systems trained on quantum data, the work translates the death of a star into a powerful meditation on fragility, impermanence, and our deep interconnections. It shows that quantum ideas, like uncertainty, entanglement, and superposition, are not just scientific theories, but metaphors that help us understand today's global, digital, and ecological challenges.

In a time of mega-infrastructures—from data centers to quantum sensing networks—Europe must ensure that these systems serve the public good, are ethically grounded, and open to democratic participation. *Sensing Quantum* makes this vision tangible. It invites artists, scientists, and citizens to explore new ways of thinking about our technological future, not as passive users, but as active co-creators.

The jury celebrates *Sensing Quantum* as a bold

model of cultural-scientific collaboration. It reflects a Europe that leads in innovation, while staying rooted in democratic values and planetary care. This program ensures that public understanding and aesthetic experimentation evolve in tandem. It is not enough to sense the quantum, we must also sense the political, emotional, and planetary implications of what we are building. This work allows us to do both.

S+T+ARTS Prize '25

Grand Prize Artistic Exploration

Awarded for artistic exploration and art works where appropriation by the arts has a strong potential to influence or alter the use, deployment, or perception of technology.

AI War Cloud Database

Sarah Ciston

As Artificial Intelligence becomes central to both everyday life and modern warfare, *AI War Cloud Database* by Sarah Ciston offers a vital and timely investigation into how these systems operate, and the consequences they carry. The work reveals how the same machine learning tools that power recommendation engines, chatbots, and predictive algorithms are also used in military decision-making, raising urgent questions about accountability, transparency, and responsibility.

Focusing on real-world systems like Palantir's MetaConstellation and Israel's Lavender, *AI War Cloud Database* shows how vast amounts of data are processed to make life-and-death decisions at speed. It highlights how these technologies are often tested on vulnerable populations in conflict zones, before being deployed domestically on the very citizens whose countries built them. By tracing the links between commercial AI and military infrastructure, Ciston exposes a hidden feedback loop—where tools of convenience become tools of control. At a time of growing geopolitical tensions, AI arms races, and rearmament efforts across Europe and globally, this work underscores the need for democratic oversight, ethical governance, and civic awareness in shaping our technological future.

Still in the early stages of development, *AI War Cloud Database* is a research-driven artistic project with exceptional promise. The jury recognizes its contribution to a rapidly evolving debate on the societal and political stakes of AI. It encourages further collaboration, deeper investigation, and broader public engagement moving forward. In the spirit of the STARTS Prize, this work exemplifies the power of art and research to illuminate complex systems—and to invite us all to take part in shaping them.

S+T+ARTS Prize '25

Honorary Mentions

Brain Processing Unit—The Future Where Biology and Computer Integrate

SoftBank, Daito Manabe, The University of Tokyo—Special Exhibition

Beyond classical computing, which values logical optimization and reproducibility, and even beyond rapidly advancing quantum computing, this project explores a new frontier of creativity using the Brain Processing Unit (BPU)—a biological processor made from lab-grown brain organoids. Led by artist Daito Manabe with the University of Tokyo and SoftBank, this industry–academia–art initiative explores the roots of human creativity by introducing music and rhythm into interactions with the BPU. Particularly interesting is that, as living tissue, organoids can show fatigue or errors—responses that, as well, may challenge conventional notions of correctness and suggest alternative, possibly evolutionary, forms of intelligence. By posing essential, uncompromising

questions, the artist productively disrupts the conventional research process, opening new directions and accelerating discovery. This project is a powerful example of how artist-led contributions to fundamental research can expand emerging technologies and inspire new societal visions.

Breathing Architecture
Filippo Nassetti
We live in an age of hyper-specialization. Take the medical field, for example: making meaningful progress often requires years of rigorous training and deep immersion in a specific area of expertise. Researchers must master what has come before in order to build upon it—to find better ways to understand, treat, or cure disease. And as knowledge continues to expand, specialization deepens further. Yet innovation—the act of creating something both novel and valuable—often demands a shift in perspective. It calls for a willingness to cross disciplinary boundaries and to invite in unfamiliar ways of thinking. *Breathing Architecture* embodies this shift. It shows how collaborations between scientists and artists can create fertile ground for analogical thinking—the kind of thinking that bridges ideas across seemingly unrelated domains. In this case, imagination met inquiry, and new therapeutic possibilities began to emerge.

Coexist
Emergence Delft
When you talk to people who start to dive into quantum technology, you often hear: "The more I learn about it, the less I understand." What is clear: We need to embark on a journey to enhance our understanding, because one thing *is* clear: This technology is highly relevant and can be highly disruptive, for instance, if quantum computing can offer a computing power that can dwarf the power of supercomputers for certain problems. There are many things to appreciate about the *Coexist* project. It fosters a unique cooperation that brings together bright minds from universities, the arts, and ecosystem partners—not only to explore and challenge one another but also to deepen our understanding of this new technology. One outcome of the collaboration is this installation. The jury applauds the collaboration and the efforts to make the abstract concepts of quantum technologies more tangible for a broader audience.

Computational Compost
Marina Otero Verzier
Computational Compost reimagines digital infrastructure as a life-generating system, turning the waste heat from high-performance computing into energy for vermicomposting. It is a bold response to Europe's urgent need for sustainable, sovereign, and ecologically grounded technologies. This real-world prototype, embedded in an active data center, merges advanced physics with regenerative design. It challenges the extractive logic of today's digital systems and offers a new model: computation that is materially aware, ecologically integrated, and democratically governed. The project aligns powerfully with the European Green Deal, the Digital Decade, and the EuroStack vision showing that climate goals, democratic data governance, and technological innovation can—and must—go hand in hand. From its use of indigenous knowledge systems like the quipu, to its architectural vision of post-extractivist infrastructure, *Computational Compost* offers a poetic yet practical roadmap for a digital future rooted in planetary care.

Coral Sonic Resilience
Marco Barotti
Some of our planet's most valuable ecosystems, coral reefs, are vital for providing shelter for thousands of marine species, but also for protecting coastal communities from erosion and storms, while being sources for medicine, food, as well as supporting businesses as spaces for recreational activities. As is the case though with other marine eco-

systems, coral reefs are disappearing at an alarming rate, being threatened by both natural factors and human activity. Can art and science collaborations enable innovative ways to not only address these urgent issues, but also to provide creative solutions to restore these diverse and important ecosystems? The jury thought so when it comes to *Coral Sonic Resilience*, a brilliant example of art and science joining forces to repair and revitalize damaged coral reefs. *Coral Sonic Resilience* uses 3D printing, solar power, and soundscapes from vibrant coral reefs that help attract marine life to declined colonies. But more importantly, the underwater 3D-printed sound sculptures, created as part of this project, are installed as part of a coral reef restoration project in the Maldives, providing a new habitat to marine life, while also reviving threatened coral reefs.

Data Against Feminicide: AI tools, transnational community, and data activism
Isadora Cruxên, Catherine D'Ignazio, Silvana Fumega, Helena Suárez Val

While data shapes our institutions and decisions, gender-based violence remains tragically underreported, misclassified, or ignored. *Data Against Feminicide* responds to this silence with care and urgency. Founded by Isadora Cruxên, Catherine D'Ignazio, Silvana Fumega, and Helena Suárez Val, the project supports activists who transform missing statistics into feminist counterdata—naming lives erased by institutional neglect. Through ethical tools, shared standards, and global collaboration, it creates a network where stories, not just numbers, matter. Bridging civic tech, activism, and memory, the project reclaims data not as extraction, but as connection—a way to mourn, to resist, and to insist that every life counts.

Kataula
Ana Mikadze

The most consumed resource on the planet and the most widely used human-made material, cement is found everywhere we turn; roads, ports, buildings, floors, the list goes on. But while being a resource we relentlessly consume, cement also has a huge impact as one of the biggest CO_2 emitters, as well as causing significant environmental destruction in its production process, devastating landscapes, but also communities. It is one such story of environmental and human destruction that *Kataula* is very eloquently trying to tell. Kavtiskhevi village and a site of limestone quarries in Georgia has been transformed by decades of mining and extraction. Heidelberg Cement, a large multinational German company, and the world's second largest cement producer, has been central to Kavtiskhevi's destruction, while attempting to manipulate the narrative by positioning itself as a sustainable company. *Kataula* repurposes cement and quarry waste, creating artefacts that present the life and environment erased by extractivism, while telling stories Heidelberg Cement tries to suppress.

Seeing Echoes in the Mind of a Whale
Marshmallow Laser Feast

While oceans and marine ecosystems are crucial for our survival, human activities including overfishing, shipping, extractivism, and pollution, are heavily affecting the health and biodiversity of these important environments that we mostly perceive as endless resources to be exploited. And despite our significant dependence and connection with the ocean, we often ignore or feel disconnected from the life and creatures that inhabit this world that is so intertwined with ours. Some of these creatures, cetaceans, apart from their important role in reducing CO_2 amounts in our atmosphere and acting as indicators of the health of our oceans, are complex, highly intelligent creatures with great cognitive skills.

Seeing Echoes in the Mind of the Whale is a beautiful, immersive experience taking us on a journey alongside three cetacean species: a humpback whale, a bottlenose dolphin, and a sperm whale. In an attempt to bring us closer to these extraordinary animals, while also urging us to reflect on how our activities impact their lives and environment, the project bridges scientific research, marine biology, and storytelling, and with the use of real-time computing, marine data, and recordings that result in stunning visualizations responding to acoustic data in real-time, allows humans, in accessible, engaging ways, to experience underwater worlds through the eyes and perspective of these amazing creatures, whose very existence is threatened by our actions.

Synthetic Memories
Domestic Data Streamers
In the 1995 film *Ghost in the Shell*, the fully cyborg protagonist reflects: "There are countless ingredients that make up the human body and mind, like all the components that make up me as an individual with my own personality." Memory, the physical body, a sense of the future, and connections to vast networks of information—all shape our identity. *Synthetic Memories* is a sincere and compassionate initiative that seeks to preserve personal identity and dignity when memory is at risk—due to dementia or other unfortunate life events. Using interviews and contextual data, AI helps reconstruct individualized narratives, enabling people to reconnect with their past. This fosters emotional well-being and restores a sense of self. By addressing the often-overlooked realm of mental and emotional health, the team at Domestic Data Streamers highlights a vital dimension of what it means to be human. Already implemented in public services, their work shows how design and technology can collectively serve the common good—offering scalable models for collaboration and the nurturing of meaningful global communities.

The Nebelivka Hypothesis
Forensic Architecture, David Wengrow
Although cities are often seen as monuments to power, hierarchy, and extraction, ancient sites like Nebelivka suggest another beginning. Hidden beneath the fertile black soils of Ukraine, this 6,000-year-old settlement reveals a vast, organized society—yet with no palaces, temples, or ruling elites. In collaboration with archaeologist David Wengrow, Forensic Architecture explores this forgotten urbanism through soil analysis, agent-based models, and spatial reconstruction. *The Nebelivka Hypothesis* invites us to rethink what a city is and could be: not a center of domination, but a site of cooperation, shared life, and ecological balance. Bridging archaeology, technology, and storytelling, the project opens a space where ancient futures re-emerge.

S+T+ARTS Prize '25
Nominations

AI in the Sky
Laura Cinti

ASTRES: Mapping the Firmament
Playmodes Studio

Echorroes: Reflections on Tchaikovsky
Echorroes

Emerald Black Latency
Mario Santamaría

HYBRIS
Yana Zschiedrich

Lucid Life | Marama Ora
Christopher Bellamy

Large Language Writer
Lucy Li, Leo Mühlfeld, Alan Schiegl

Light, Touch, Root (Hybrid)
Vanessa Amoah Opoku

Museo Ocasional de un Paisaje Increíble
Ana Vogelfang, Julieta García Vázquez

Neutone Morpho — Real-time AI Audio Plugin and Platform
Neutone

Performative Ethnographies
Špela Petrič

SUN[Flower] Plasma
Victoria Vesna, Haley Marks, Walter Gekelman, Kevin Ramsey

Surpassing Limits of Virtuosity of Pianists by Exoskeleton
Shinichi Furuya

The Call
Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst

The Permanent and Insatiable
Xin Liu

The Solar Share
An Edible Solar Currency
DISNOVATION.ORG art collective

The Year of Weather
Open-weather

Zifzafa
Lawrence Abu Hamdan

AI War Cloud Database

Sarah Ciston

What responsibilities do users and makers have in choosing AI tools, when their development can also lead to deadly outcomes at massive scales? *AI War Cloud Database* catalogues the systems used to make automated decisions in warfare, and it maps where the same types of tools appear in smartphones and popular social platforms. The iris scanner tested on refugees becomes technology for a crypto wallet. The robot vacuum mapping homes becomes a bomb robot abroad. The chatbot trained by low-wage workers determines the results of your next internet search and also the next drone target or the force of the next bomb.

AI War Cloud Database makes these latent connections plain. It builds a taxonomy of AI decision-making systems, shows how they are used in both military and commercial contexts, and tracks which nations and corporations are collaborating to deploy them. It offers an interactive interface for interrogating both automated warfare and the seemingly innocuous devices we use every day.

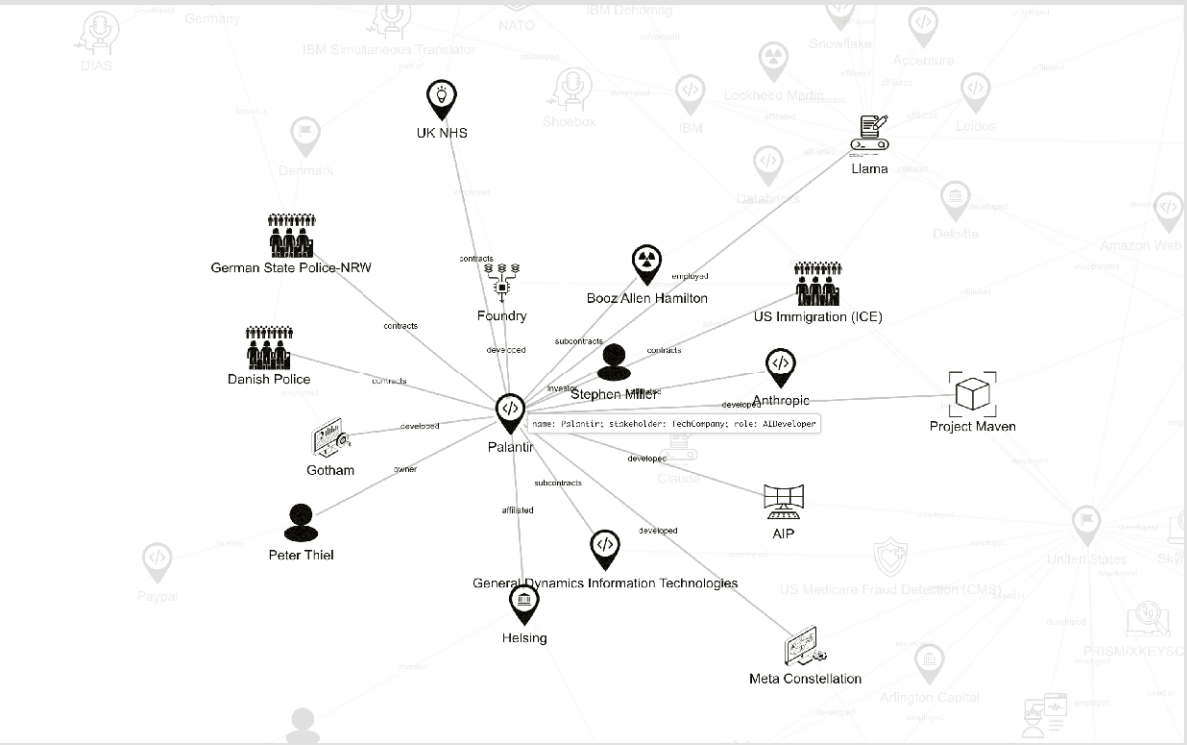
"Software-defined warfare" is upscaling violence and normalizing its logics—the US army claims it has shortened the time it takes to select and execute a target from 20 minutes to 20 seconds. By understanding how warfare uses machine learning, *AI War Cloud* deconstructs the idea of "AI decision support" as a misdirect from the larger problems common to all AI systems, which amplify, accelerate, and neutral-wash biased human processes. It questions the faulty reliance on "humans in the loop" when decisions have been algorithmically constructed.

AI War Cloud also provides a framework to question the extrajudicial shifts in power that are occurring as tech giants and tiny startups become defense contractors, as their products become arbiters of acceptable casualties. Its database includes more than 50 examples spanning the last 25 years. Continually updated, these remain a small sample of the rapidly growing field. They are contextualized by a selection of commercial and historical examples to help show how connections have developed over time, across borders, and across domains—complicating attempts at regulation and critical appraisal.

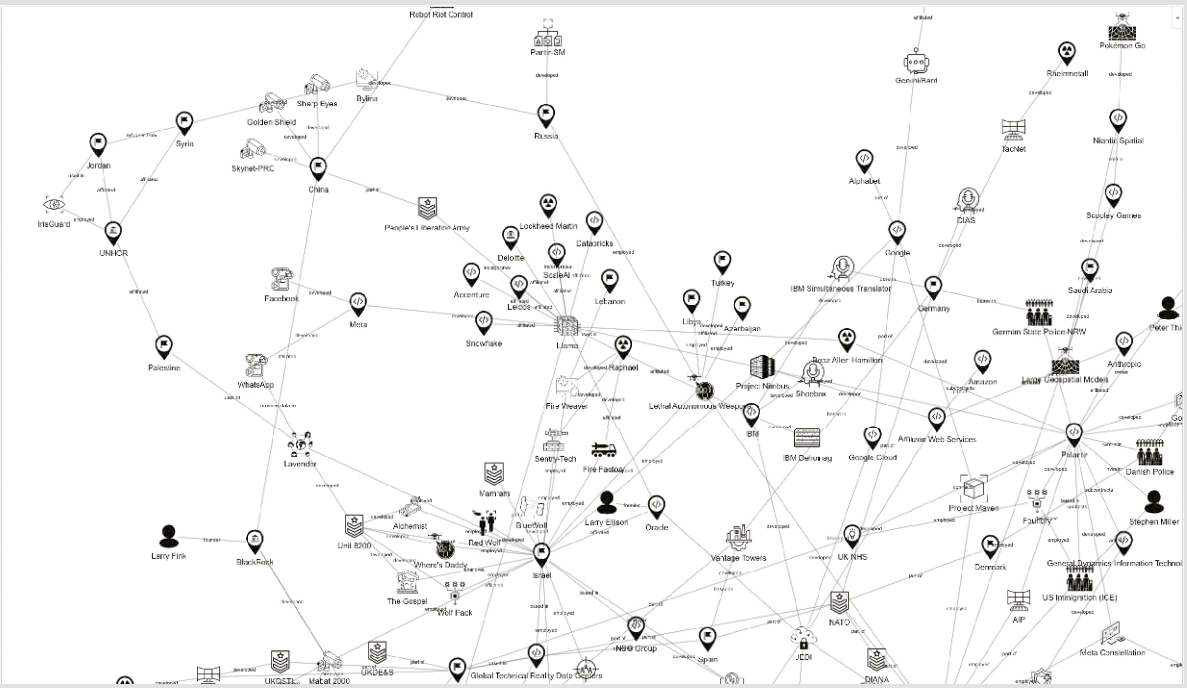
These systems are "neither new, nor newly urgent," as Sarah T. Hamid says. "[...T]hey exemplify more of what Ruth Wilson Gilmore articulates as the 'changing same.'" Inspired in part by the histories of tech and power mapped by Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler's *Calculating Empires*, and building on important research by groups like AirWars, Tech Inquiry, No Tech for Apartheid, and the Forum of Computer Professionals for Peace and Societal Responsibility, the database gathers many kinds of publicly available materials: journalism, scholarly articles, product descriptions from military and corporate websites, patents, technical papers, government tenders, and (where possible) source code and software documentation. The project is open-source and in process, in order to adapt as technologies and contexts change, and to welcome interdisciplinary contribution. As such, it provides a scaffold for further research, conversation, and provocation.

AI War Cloud is not a comprehensive index nor a solution. Unfathomable loss is impossible to reconcile, as it scales alongside the technological accelerations which enable that loss. The piece began as a personal strategy to witness and cope with the dailiness of AI-enabled tragedies worldwide. It is meant as a plea, encouraging intervention into the automated tools and infrastructures that support warfare. Early computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum asked that we fight the psychological distance created by the electronic battlefield, saying, "All of us must therefore consider whether our daily work contributes to the insanity of further armament or to genuine possibilities for peace." *AI War Cloud Database* hopes to support the collective work needed to reckon with automated systems both on the battlefield and on our own devices.

Design, programming, research, writing: Sarah Ciston
Research sources and image credits on project website.
With thanks to Claire Carroll, Kate Crawford, Ariana Dongus, Samir Ghosh, Vladan Joler, Pedro Oliveira, Miller Puckette, Corbinian Ruckerbauer, Nataša Vukajlovic, Ben Wagner and the AI Futures Lab, Thorsten Wetzling, Cambridge Digital Humanities, and the Center for Advanced Internet Studies for discussions and support contributing to the work.



Graph detail, Palentir in focus. Photo: Sarah Ciston



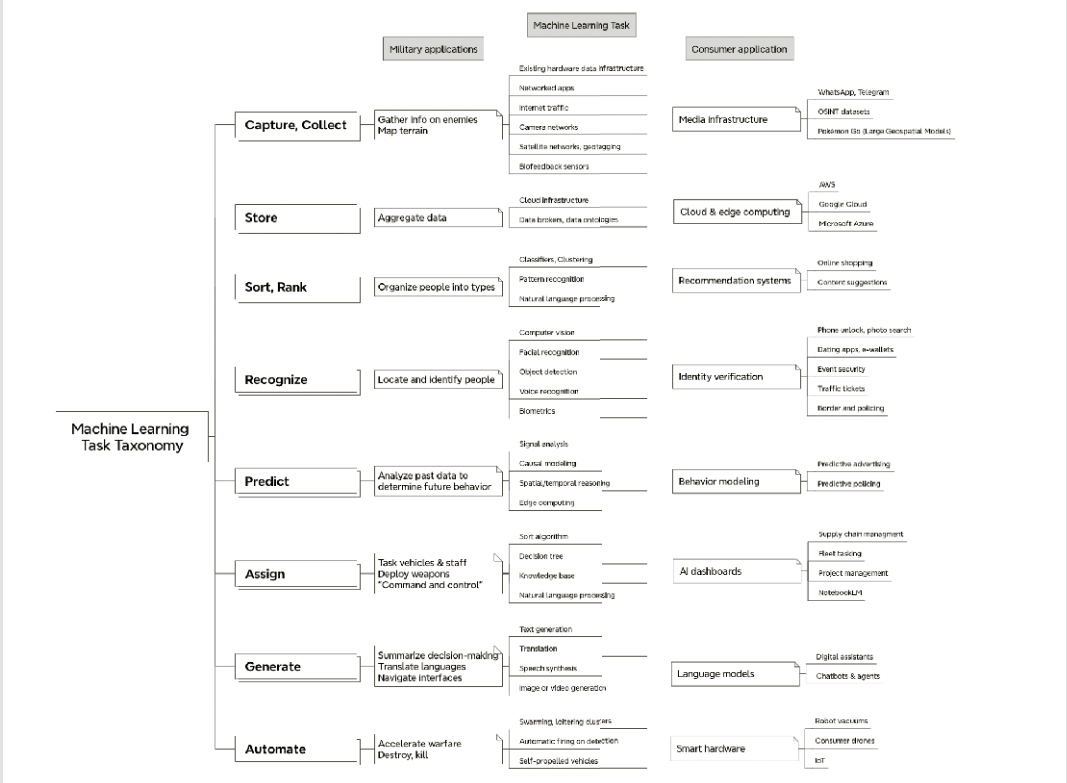
Graph detail, IrisGuard, Lavender, WhatsApp, Llama, Nimbus, Pokemon Go, etc. Photo: Sarah Ciston

Table 1: AI War Cloud Database: A collection of techno-military-industrial projects that use machine learning tasks.

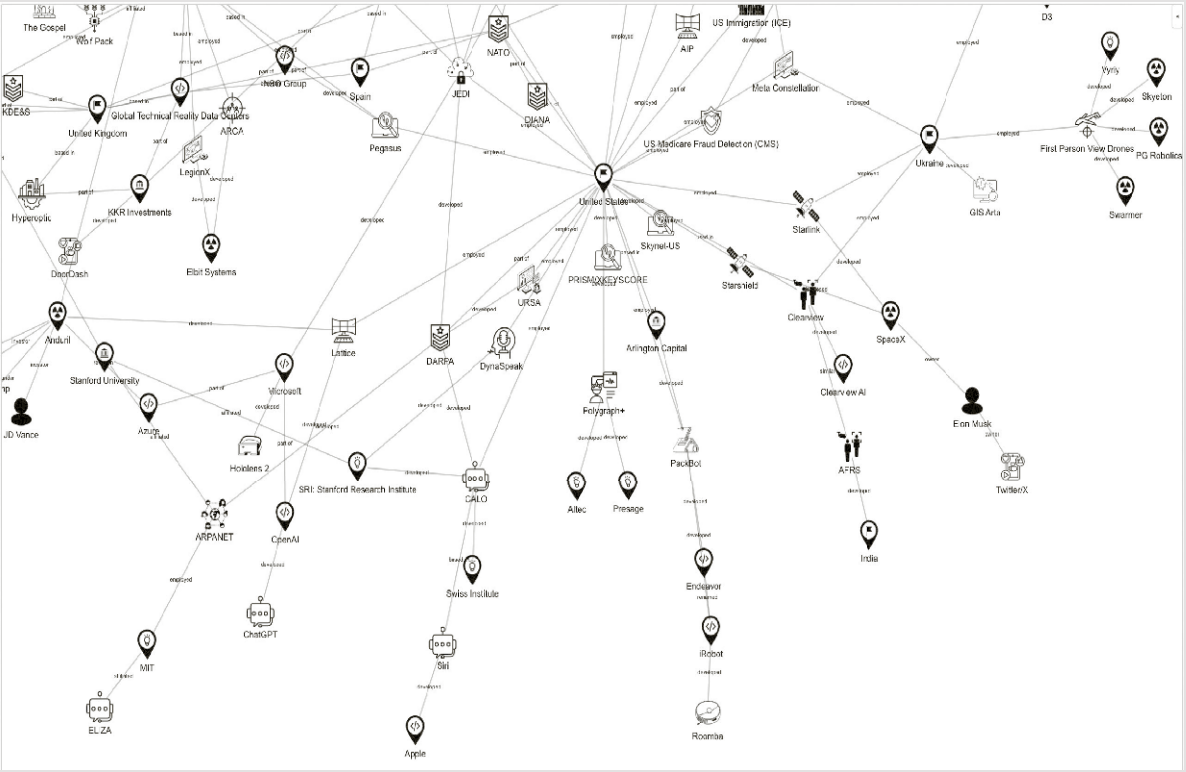
Search:

Weapon	Developed	Used By	Military Purpose	Type of Tech	Repurpose (Potential/Actual)	SourceType
Clearview	2022	Ukraine, ClearviewAI	Facial recognition to "identify dead soldiers and to uncover Russian assailants and combat misinformation."	Facial recognition	Commercial/policing tool then used for warfare	Corporate, Video
Wolly	2022	Ukraine, Roboneers, D3 (former Google employees, investors), Helsing (investors)	Automated machine guns "We could sit in the trench drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes and shoot at the Russians"	Object identification, computer vision, repurposed video game controllers	Security systems, prisons, protests	Press
First-Person-View Drones	2022	Ukraine, Vyriy, PG Robotics, Skyeton, Swarmer, others	Fully automated, weaponized drones, with automated targeting. Some can easily be built with hobby kit like materials.	Quads, computer vision, deep learning, classification and sorting algorithms	Personal drones, sports, already in use. Drones as local police first responders	Press
MAPLE	2022	United Kingdom	Command and control platform for the UK Navy to control an automated fleet of unmanned air, ground, and water vehicles	Assign, task	Driver and delivery apps, logistics apps	Corporate, Press
The Gospel (Habsora)	2021	Israel	Marks homes and public buildings as targets for destruction, for alleged military use, based on "enormous amounts of data that "tens of thousands of intelligence officers could not process," and recommends bombing sites in real time. Possible data includes: "cell phone messages, satellite images, drone footage, and even seismic sensors."	Classification, data analysis, object recognition	Redlining, unequal or biased distribution of resources	Press
The Alchemist	2021	Israel	Sends real-time data to commanders in field about possible threats, using machine learning	Transmit	As-yet unknown	Press
			Provides cloud services (storage, compute) "Nimbus is a flagship project and a key anchor in the implementation of the Israeli			

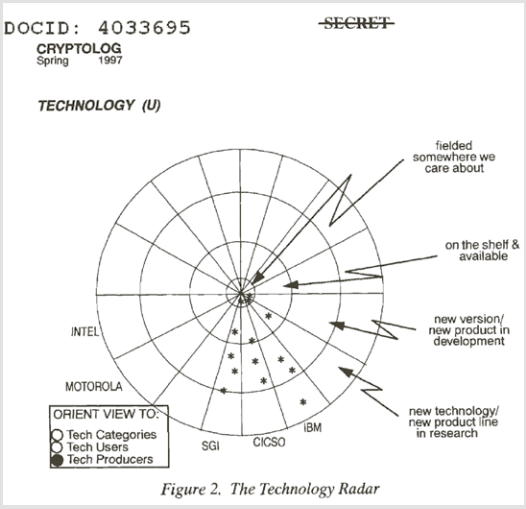
Table detail. Photo: Sarah Ciston



ML Task Taxonomy. Photo: Sarah Ciston



Graph detail, Ukraine, United States, Clearview, SpaceX, Roomba, Siri, Lattice, WolfPack, etc. **Photo: Sarah Ciston**



"Technology Radar", Cryptolog, Spring 1997
Photo: Public domain, Internet Archive

https://aiwar.cloud

Sarah Ciston (US) builds critical-creative tools to bring intersectional approaches to machine learning. They are author of "A Critical Field Guide for Working with Machine Learning Datasets" and co-author of *Inventing ELIZA: How the First Chatbot Shaped the Future of AI* (MIT Press 2026). Ciston has been named an AI Newcomer by the German Society for Computing, a Google Season of Docs Fellow for p5.js/Processing Foundation, and an AI Fellow at Akademie der Künste Berlin. Currently a Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Internet Studies, they hold a PhD in Media Arts + Practice from University of Southern California and are the founder of Code Collective: an approachable, interdisciplinary community for co-learning programming.

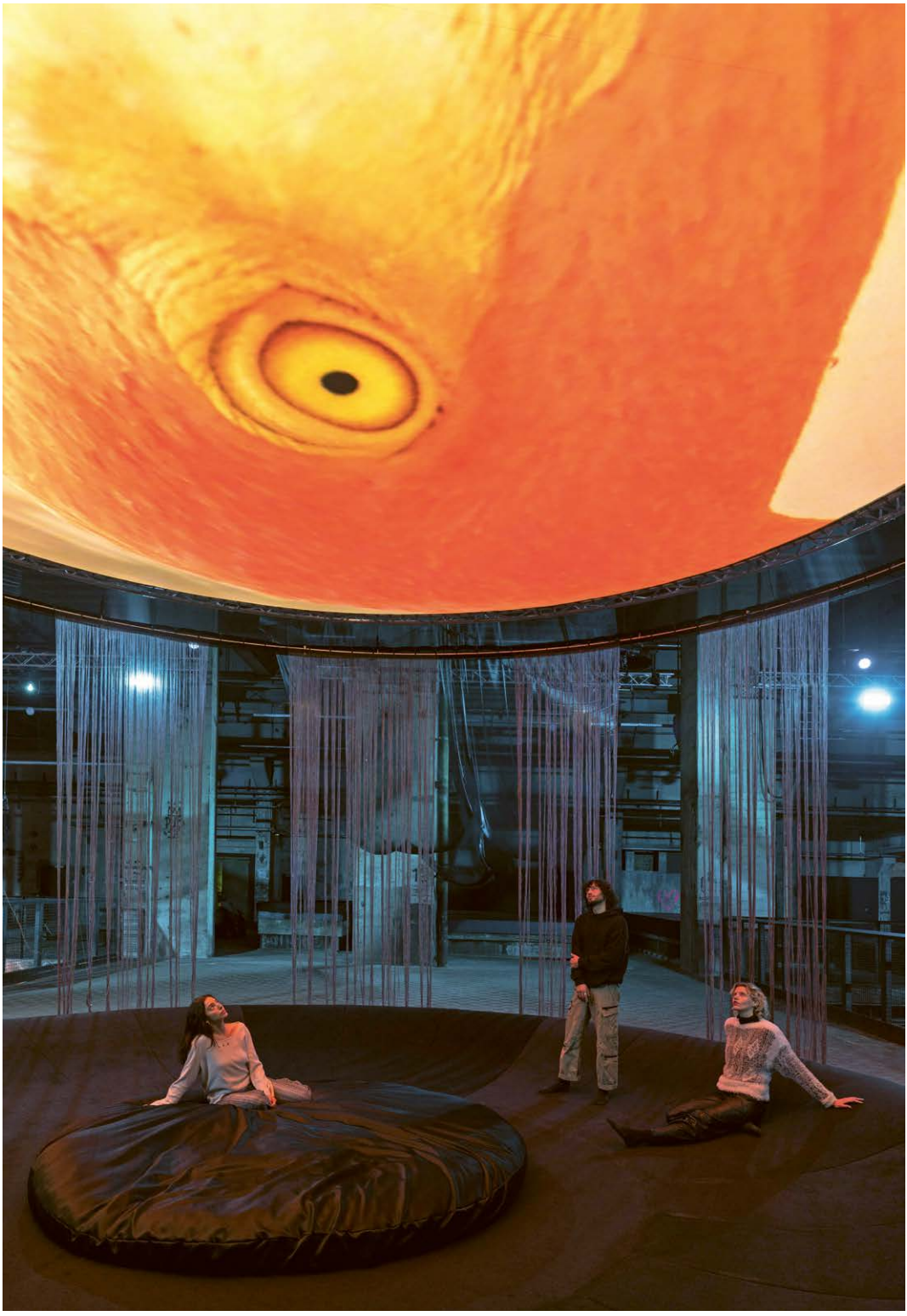
Sensing Quantum

LAS Art Foundation

LAS Art Foundation's *Sensing Quantum* is a long-term artistic research initiative that explores the intersections of quantum science, technology, philosophy, and contemporary art. One century after the emergence of quantum physics—and in a moment when its applications are predicted to have profound effects on many sectors—the program fosters interdisciplinary collaborations, aiming to translate complex quantum principles into immersive and thought-provoking experiences.
Sensing Quantum brings together artists, scientists, and thinkers to create critical and artistic languages around the evolving field of quantum computing, highlighting the importance of creative experimentation with emerging technologies. Through new commissions with artists and musicians, a symposium, a publication, and an ongoing educational program, *Sensing Quantum* explores how art can bridge the gaps between the invisible, the speculative, and the evolving role of quantum technologies in our lives.

The initiative's first iteration takes shape in Laure Prouvost's multi-sensory installation *WE FELT A STAR DYING*, which was presented by LAS Art Foundation at Kraftwerk Berlin in Spring 2025 and is on view at OGR Torino from 31 October 2025 to 10 May 2026. For this commission, the artist plunged into the counterintuitive logic of quantum physics, and the technologies emerging from it. She asked: "what might it feel like to sense reality from a quantum perspective?" Prouvost worked with philosopher Tobias Rees and scientist Hartmut Neven to explore quantum computing and its links to the universe. The project's title, *WE FELT A STAR DYING*, highlights quantum computers' sensitivity to factors like heat, vibration, and cosmic radiation. Drawing together video, sound, sculpture, scent, and light, the installation unfolds as a fluid entity tuned to the sensitive and unpredictable characteristics of quantum systems. Lyrical and surreal, it weaves direct experimentation with a quantum computer into a wider reflection on what it means to open oneself to the quantum realm.

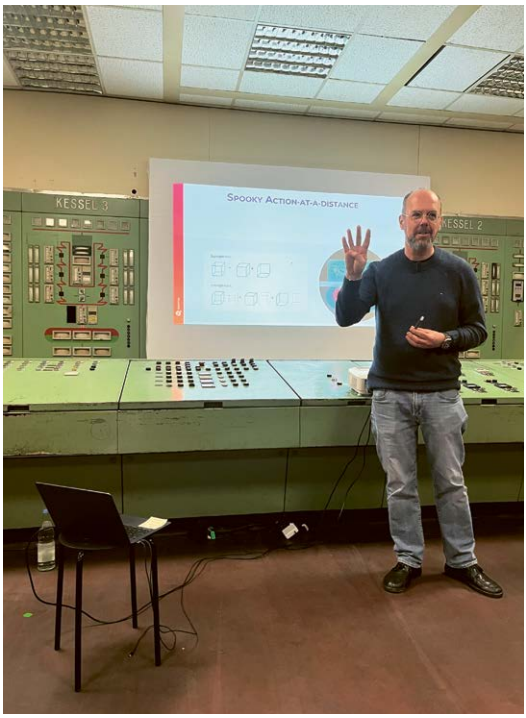
Laure Prouvost, *WE FELT A STAR DYING,* 2025. Installation view at Kraftwerk Berlin. Commissioned by LAS Art Foundation and co-commissioned by OGR Torino,



Laure Prouvost, *WE FELT A STAR DYING,* 2025. Installation view at Kraftwerk Berlin. Commissioned by LAS Art Foundation and co-commissioned by OGR Torino,

Entangled Currents: A Learning Space. Programme as part of Laure Prouvost, *WE FELT A STAR DYING,* 2025. Commissioned by LAS Art Foundation and co-commissioned by OGR Torino

At Kraftwerk Berlin, *WE FELT A STAR DYING* was accompanied by two key platforms for exploration and engagement. The learning space titled "Entangled Currents" invited discovery through a broad range of materials, including interviews with *Sensing Quantum* collaborators, readings, and games. It hosted a six-part discursive program featuring voices from across quantum disciplines, such as quantum scientist and policy advisor to the EU Prof. Dr. Tommaso Calarco, quantum researcher Dr. James Wootton and writer and internet folklorist Günseli Yalcinkaya. Alongside the talks, "Entangled Currents" offered workshops for all ages, including a specially-designed program for high schools.
Hosted at Kraftwerk alongside Laure Prouvost's installation was the Sound Lab, an ongoing initiative dedicated to deep listening and sonic exploration, inviting sound artists and composers to engage with tools and concepts emerging from the field of quantum technologies. From 21 February through 4 May 2025, it featured original compositions by Kara-Lis Coverdale, Marco Donnarumma, and Aïsha Devi.
On 25 October 2025, the *Sensing Quantum* symposium in Berlin will explore creative thinking around the possibilities of quantum technologies, featuring artists Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian, Libby Heaney and Laure Prouvost, philosopher Tobias Rees and scientists Tommaso Calarco, Hartmut Neven, and Roger Penrose.
A subsequent publication will distil and expand upon the gathered insights, providing a vital resource for understanding the artistic and societal implications of quantum technologies.
In 2026, LAS will present a second large-scale art commission in Berlin as part of the *Sensing Quantum* initiative.



Entangled Currents: A Learning Space. Programme as part of Laure Prouvost, *WE FELT A STAR DYING,* 2025. Commissioned by LAS Art Foundation and co-commissioned by OGR Torino

Organizer and Conceptual Lead: LAS Art Foundation
Research Partner: QuantumLeaks Foundation / Max Planck Foundation
Scientific Consultant: Jülich Forschungszentrum
Lead Partner Education, *Sensing Quantum:* Volkswagen Group
Co-Commissioner of Laure Prouvost's *WE FELT A STAR DYING* and the *Sensing Quantum* publication: OGR Torino

https://u.aec.at/300C1095

LAS Art Foundation (DE) looks deep into the present and gives form to future imaginaries. Working with artists, thinkers, and institutions worldwide, the Berlin-based foundation catalyzes ideas and brings forward innovative projects and experiences. Key research areas include artificial intelligence, quantum computing, ecology, and biotechnology—highlighting the intersections between art, science, and emerging technologies. The foundation's program spans installations, and performances, as well as educational activities, publications, and research initiatives. Since its founding in 2019, LAS has realized over 30 installations and projects with artists such as Refik Anadol, Libby Heaney, Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Robert Irwin, Josèfa Ntjam, Ian Cheng, Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, and Lawrence Lek. Guided by curiosity, LAS continually reimagines the role of an arts institution as one that shapes and evolves with collective futures.

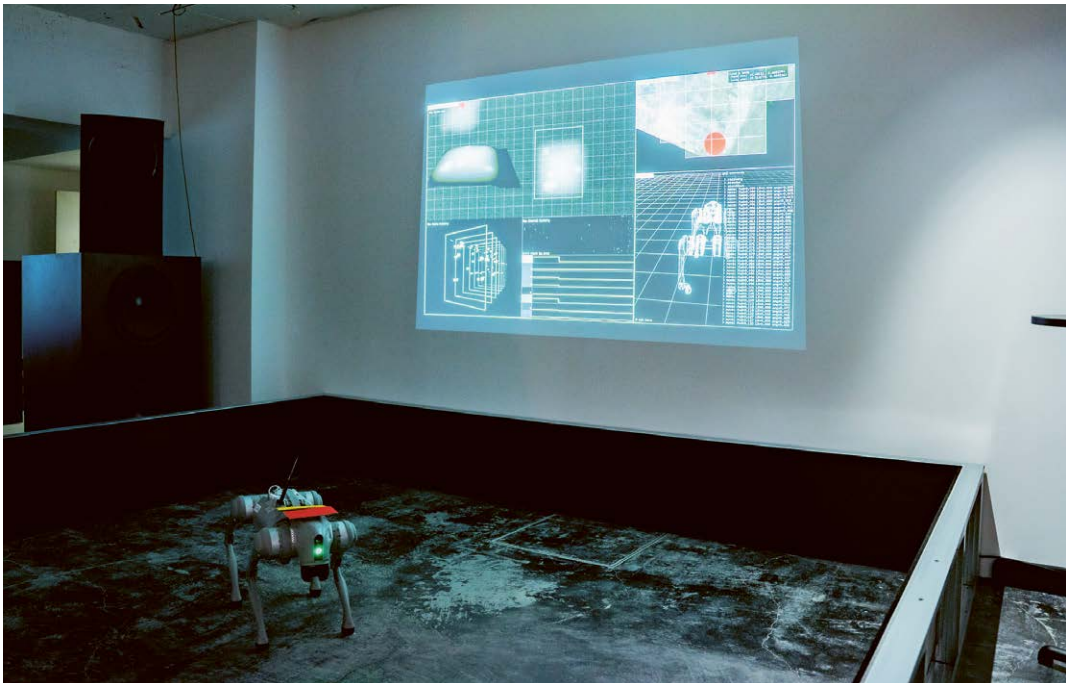
Brain Processing Unit—The Future Where Biology and Computer Integrate

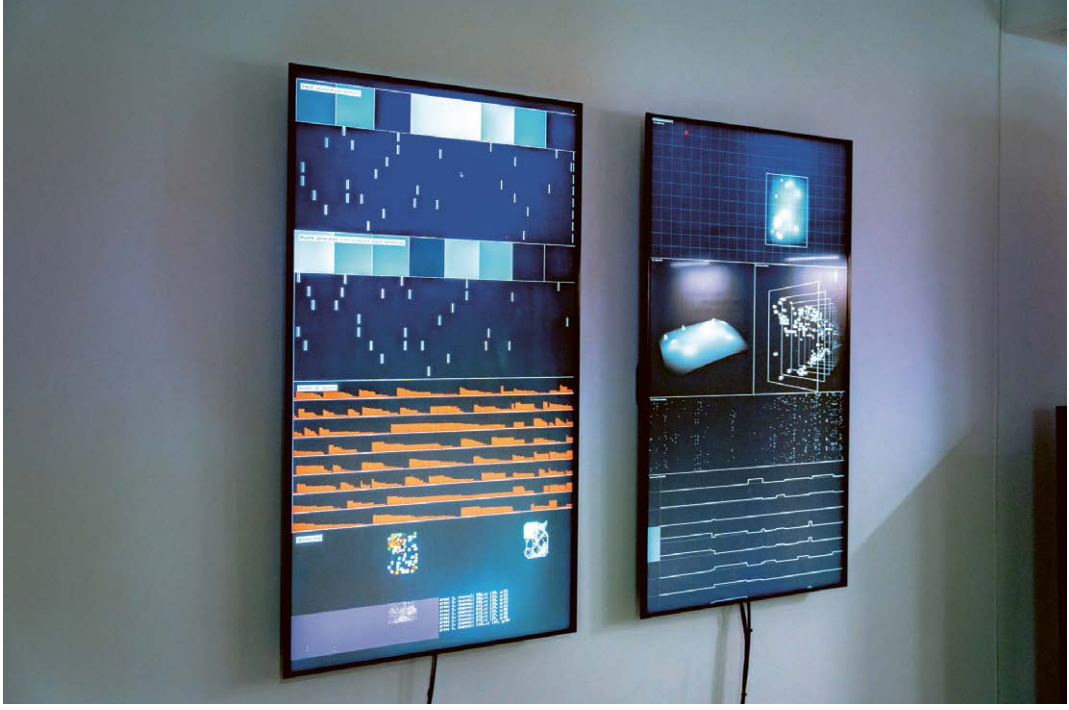
SoftBank, Daito Manabe, The University of Tokyo—Special Exhibition

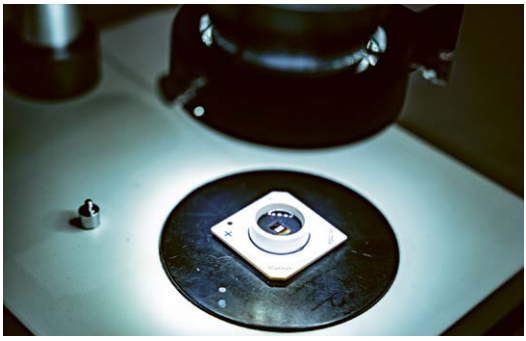
Focusing on the distinctive abilities of the human brain, such as adaptability to unfamiliar environments and remarkable learning efficiency, the SoftBank Research Institute of Advanced Technology has been collaborating with artist Daito Manabe and the Ikeuchi Laboratory at the University of Tokyo on a project since 2022. Together, they have been working on methods to stimulate cerebral organoids, analyze their activity data, and develop the necessary APIs, networks, and other interface technologies. In February 2025, they held an exhibition showcasing the current state of cerebral organoid research and the vision they are pursuing through cutting-edge technologies.

In the *Cellular Ears* experiment, brain organoids were presented with music through noise-minimized optical stimulation. This optical stimulation was designed to emulate the frequency analysis performed by the human inner ear. Brain organoids were exposed to various genres of music, including techno, classical, ambient, and noise, and changes in neuronal activity patterns, such as timing and response patterns, were analyzed. The results showed that the brain organoids exhibited distinct neural activity patterns for six different music genres, enabling classification with an accuracy exceeding 70%. This indicates that brain organoids have the potential to discriminate between music genres. Moreover, neural activity after music exposure ceased could also be classified with a certain level of accuracy, suggesting that brain organoids may experience changes in mood or internal state after listening to music, analogous to humans.

In the *Life and Rhythm* experiment, rhythm patterns were input to brain organoids as electrical stimulation, and subsequent neural responses and spontaneous activities were observed. Specifically, during the first half of a one-minute cycle,







a specific rhythm pattern was presented through regular electrical stimulation, after which the stimulation was halted, and autonomous neuronal activities were recorded in the second half. The results demonstrated that once the brain organoids had been stimulated with a rhythmic pattern for a certain duration, they spontaneously generated neuronal activities that mimicked the provided rhythm pattern even after cessation of stimulation. This phenomenon resembles humans' natural inclination to move their bodies upon hearing rhythmic patterns, supporting the intriguing hypothesis that "life inherently seeks rhythm."

Artist: Daito Manabe (Rhizomatiks, Studio Daito Manabe)
Organizer: SoftBank Research Institute of Advanced Technology
Collaborators: Daito Manabe, Studio Daito Manabe, Ikeuchi Lab (Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo), INERTIA
Production team: Daito Manabe, 2bit, Ayumu Nagamatsu, Keke, Yuta Okuyama, Takao Inoue, Masaki Teruoka, Takahito Hosono, ARTE, Tatsuya Motoki, Tomoyuki Ichikawa, Aya Shinohara, strings VY

https://u.aec.at/9EAD71A6

Daito Manabe (JP), born in Tokyo in 1976, grew up surrounded by music and programming, influenced by his musician parents. After working as a DJ and jazz band member, he studied at Tokyo University of Science, where he was inspired by Xenakis and began researching mathematical music generation. In 2006, he founded Rhizomatiks, merging technology and physical expression through collaborations including AR direction for the Rio Olympics closing ceremony. He has worked with artists like Ryuichi Sakamoto and Björk, and recently, he has created works using biofeedback systems with cultured neural cells, currently leading Studio Daito Manabe.

Masashi Kikuchi (Nippachi Factory)

Breathing Architecture

Filippo Nassetti

Breathing Architecture explores the anatomy of air, modelling its flows within the intricate and beautiful structures of human respiration. The project merges art and science to advance the study of human anatomy, connecting artist Filippo Nassetti with researchers at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center through the S+T+ARTS AIR Residencies program.

Breathing Architecture began with the idea that an artist's perspective can help solve challenges in simulating complex biological systems. While scientists use equations and mechanical physics, an artist may see the body as a spatial architecture—structures to navigate through high resolution simulations, revealing their beauty and complexity. This fusion of analytical thinking and visual imagination offers a new approach to simulate anatomical systems.

The team used High Performance Computing to explore many ideas. A breakthrough came unexpectedly when a similarity was noticed between the artist's work and a microscope image of lung tissue. Since these structures can't be scanned with existing technologies, it was attempted to create a digital model. Ultimately, this led to a new, procedural method to accurately simulate airflow and particle deposition in alveolar tissue. These models of lung microstructures could help simulate how diseases progress, enabling more effective, personalized treatments. The innovation is key to ongoing research on the modelling of tuberculosis. In this work, beauty and aesthetics are not incidental; they serve as measures of order, enhancing perception, recognition, and memory. The project explores the role of artists in scientific inquiry, while treating scientific data as artistic material.

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Honorary Mention

Beyond its scientific impact, *Breathing Architecture* produced video and physical, 3D printed artworks that describe the microstructures within a breath, creating an experience that invite viewers to explore the anatomy of air and marvel at the hidden beauty of human biology.

Filippo Nassetti within S+T+ARTS AIR Residencies program (Barcelona Supercomputing Center, In4Art, Fundación Épica La Fura Dels Baus, Media Solution Center Baden-Württemberg / High Performance Computing Center Stuttgart, Pina/Heka, RCR Lab·A, Sony CSL).

https://u.aec.at/DCF608E2

Filippo Nassetti (IT/GB) is a multimedia artist and computational designer, whose work explores the visual languages and design opportunities that emerge from challenging conventional dichotomies such as natural and artificial, digital and material, human and non-human. Operating across disciplines and scales—including architecture, product design, and art and technology—his practice integrates research on organic forms, computational methods, new media, and advanced manufacturing. Filippo's work has been exhibited and published internationally.

Coexist

Emergence Delft

Coexist is the outcome of artistic research on quantum technology by Emergence Delft. By translating key principles like superposition and the measurement problem into a life-size, multidimensional installation, *Coexist* offers visitors an experience of quantum phenomena. The project, initiated and led by students, brought together people from various fields to discuss the role of quantum technologies in society.

Quantum technology is evolving rapidly, with significant investments from both governments and the private sector. While innovations such as quantum computing hold potential, their societal implications call for careful reflection. How do we, as a society, wish to integrate quantum technologies in our world, and how can we ensure they serve humanity's best interests?

Emergence Delft noticed a gap in public awareness of quantum technology. If we lack familiarity with a technology, how can we meaningfully discuss and shape its future? *Coexist* bridges the gap by exploring the intersection of art, science, and technology. The installation parallels quantum mechanics with societal structures, making abstract concepts more tangible and insightful.

In quantum mechanics, particles can exist in multiple states simultaneously, a phenomenon known as superposition, but measuring them collapses this state into a single observable outcome. The full nature of the system can only be revealed through repeated measurements. This idea echoes in society: differing viewpoints may seem incompatible, yet each can reveal different facets of a more complex truth.

In *Coexist*, light passes through a set of polarizing filters, splitting into separate colors. This represents the collapse of quantum superposition into a single observable state and metaphorically illustrates how isolated perspectives lead to incomplete understanding. Through this immersive experience, *Coexist* invites visitors to reflect on reality's nature and how knowledge is formed in both science and society.

Thanks to: Ezra Sanders, Frederique Spruijt, Gijs van der Kerk, Haryn Jeon, Hugo de Jong, Ismail Music, Jor Frencken, Khruthika Kowkuntla, Loïs de Reus, Marcos Merino Francos, Nemo Anderson, Tom Hoevers, Valerie Schulpen, Wouter Schuit, Yasamin Zeinalizadeh, Emma Sanders
With support from: Quantum Delta NL, QuTech, TNO, Delft University of Technology

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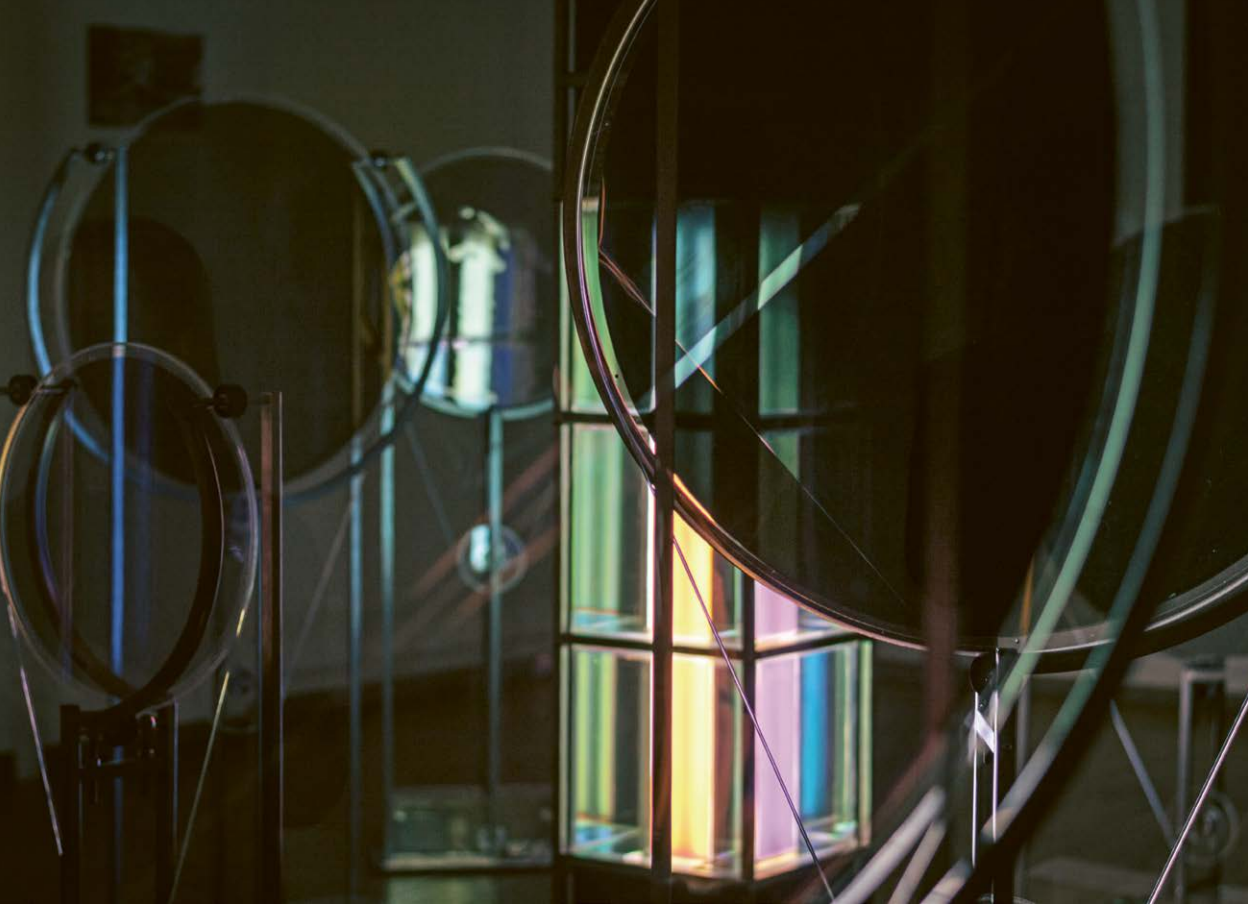
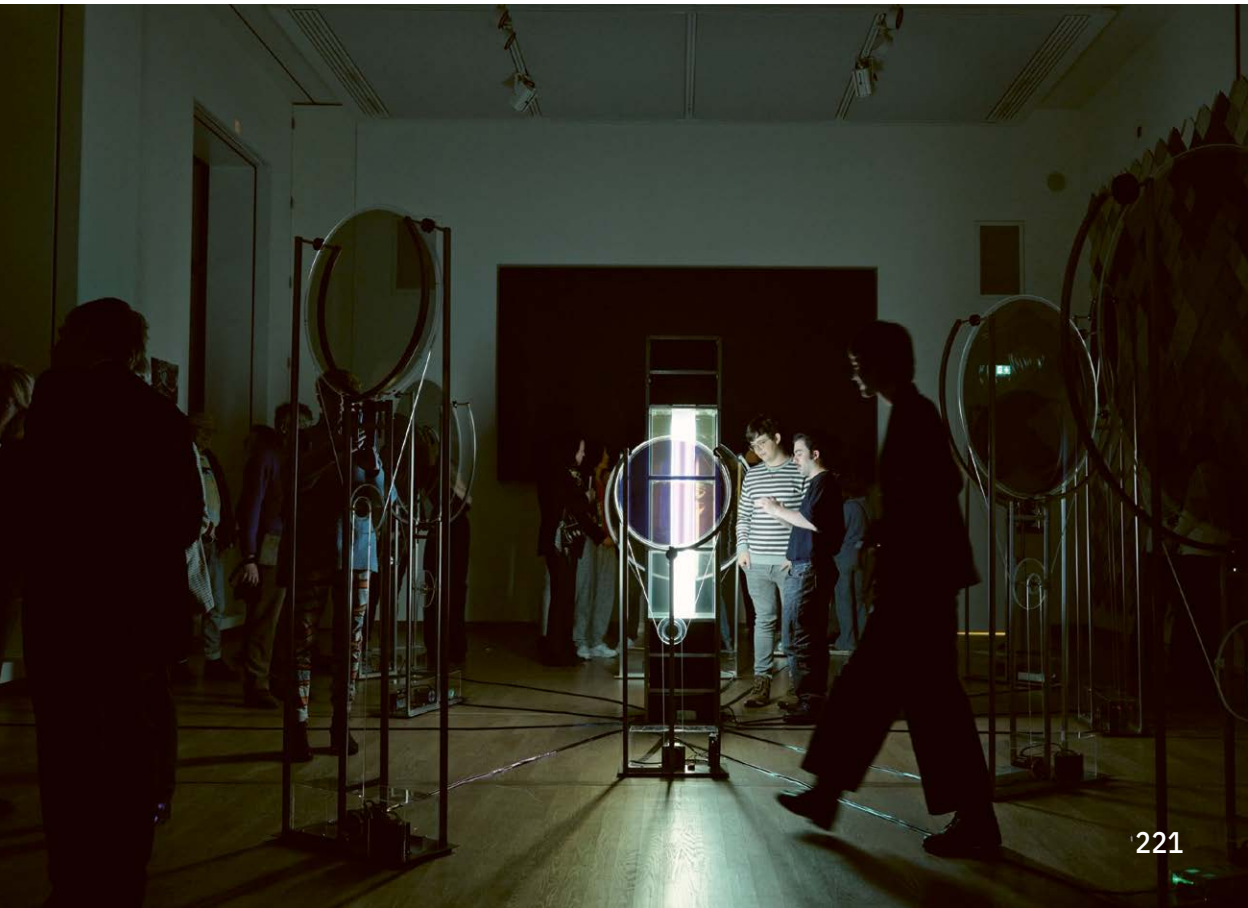
Emergence Delft (NL) was founded in 2023 by students who believed in the power of exploring the intersection of art and technology to reflect on emerging technologies. *Coexist* was created by the third generation of the student team. By bringing together art and tech students from Delft University of Technology and various art schools, Emergence Delft develops art that benefits from both artistic and technical mindsets and expertise. Our artworks inspire dialogue and invite deeper reflection on the potential opportunities and issues posed by rapid technological progress.

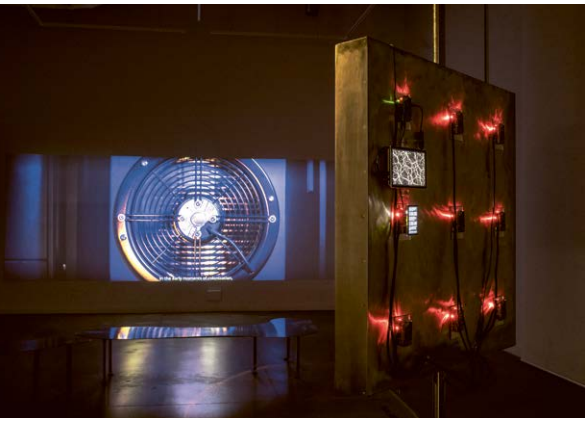




Computational Compost

Marina Otero Verzier

Although the familiar metaphor of the cloud makes us believe that digital information is ethereal, it is supported by gigantic architectures that demand increasingly more energy, water, and raw materials, and inevitably emit heat and carbon dioxide.
Computational Compost addresses the environmental impact of data storage and proposes a synergy between technology and ecology. It consists of a prototype using the heat emitted by computers running simulations of the universe's origin to power a vermicomposting machine with live worms and microorganisms that thrive on this energy to create fertile soil that sustains life in its most primal form. Celestial and biological bodies are linked by processes of metabolism and fermentation, decomposition and regeneration, the metamorphosis that runs through all cycles of matter.
The *Computational Compost* prototype is presented as a possible application for the DIPC, which currently redirects the heat generated by its supercomputers into its immediate environment. This process has caused, for example, a nearby loquat tree to bloom prematurely. Understood on a planetary scale, this particular case reveals deeper dimensions, highlighting the significant impact that digital infrastructures can have on processes related to climate change.
The work also includes a film directed by Locument and Otero Verzier, starring the quipu MCHAP 0780, currently exhibited at the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art in Santiago. Quipus are pre-Columbian recording devices used by the Inka that we can no longer decipher, yet offer some clues for imagining another digital future. Today, humans and artificial intelligence produce so much data that soon there will be no capacity to store it; we are accumulating infinite information with finite resources.

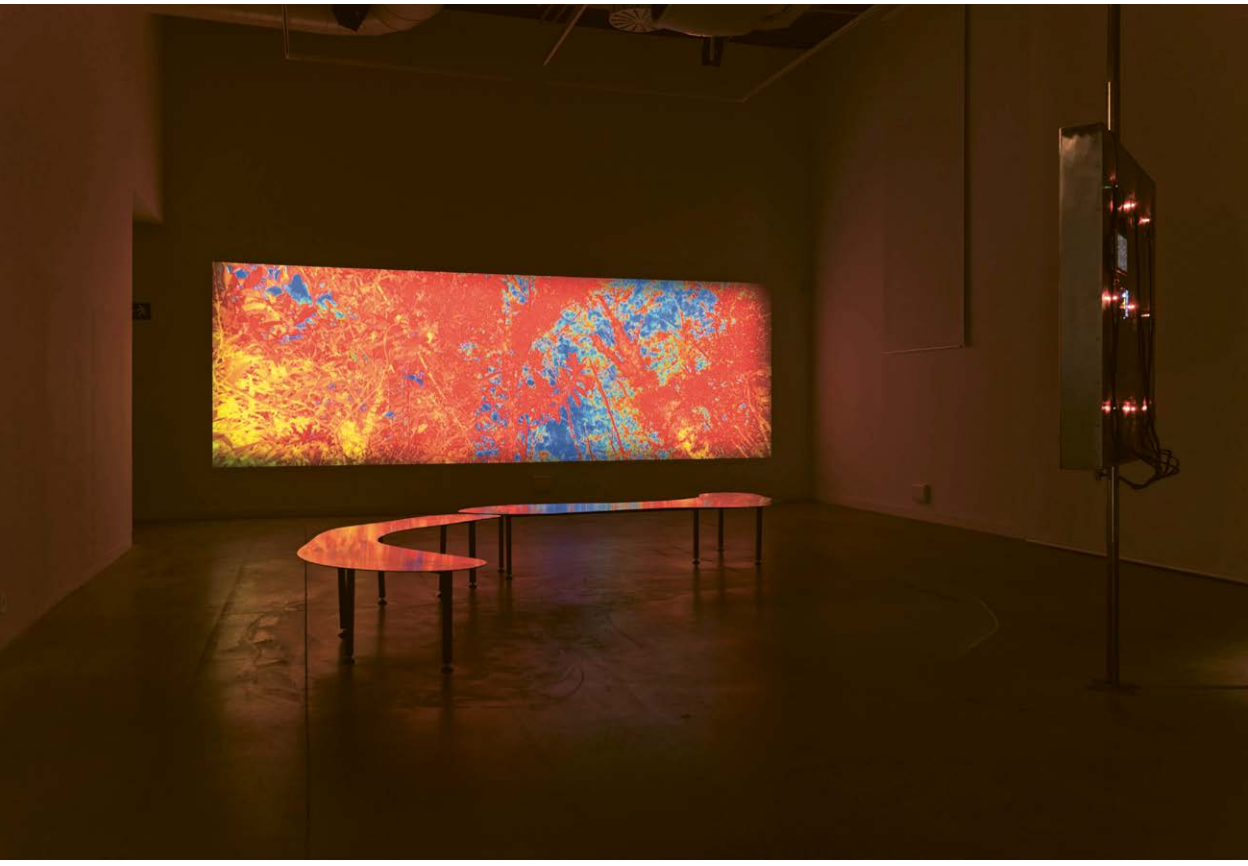


Artistic direction, research and prototype design: Marina Otero Verzier
Project coordination, research, 3D direction: Claudia Paredes Intriago
Film direction: Locument (Francisco Lobo, Romea Muryń);
Marina Otero Verzier
Prototype development: Claudia Paredes Intriago,
Fernando Fernandez Sanchez, Pablo Saiz del Rio
Production: Rocco Roncuzzi
In collaboration with the
Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC)
Commissioned by Tabakalera

https://u.aec.at/F3C3C28D

Mikel Blasco

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Honorary Mention



Marina Otero Verzier (ES) is an architect and researcher. At Columbia GSAPP, she leads Data Mourning, an initiative focused on digital infrastructures and climate catastrophe. She received Harvard's 2022 Wheelwright Prize for her project on the future of data storage. She collaborates with the DIPC Supercomputing Center on the development of experimental prototypes and has contributed to Chile's first National Data Centers Plan. She is the author of *En las Profundidades de la Nube* (2024), and co-editor of *Automated Landscapes* (2023), *Lithium: States of Exhaustion* (2021), and *A Matter of Data* (2021), among others. She was Head of the Social Design MA at Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE) and Director of Research at Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Coral Sonic Resilience

Marco Barotti

Coral reefs are vibrant underwater ecosystems essential for maintaining marine biodiversity and protecting coastlines. Thriving with life, they create a unique underwater symphony that resonates with the crackle of shrimp, the chatter of fish, and other marine sounds. However, rising ocean temperatures, pollution, and unsustainable fishing practices have led to widespread coral bleaching, leaving the reefs silent.

Harnessing sound to restore marine ecosystems, Marco Barotti merges acoustic ecology, 3D-printed sculptures, and solar energy to breathe new life into coral reefs. His interdisciplinary project, *Coral Sonic Resilience*, builds on the research of Dr. Timothy Lamont from Lancaster University, who demonstrated that playing soundscapes of healthy coral reefs in degraded colonies attracts new marine life. Inspired by these findings, Barotti created a series of underwater 3D-printed sound sculptures made with ceramic and calcium carbonate, reef-compatible materials similar to the natural composition of corals. Their shapes and texture are based on 3D scans of bleached corals and they are designed to invite marine life to settle, shelter, and grow. Powered by floating solar stations, underwater loudspeakers continuously emit the ambient sounds of vibrant coral reefs, reproducing their tonal diversity to support marine regeneration.

Developed under the supervision of Dr. Lamont, the project is carried out in close collaboration with marine scientists from the University of Padova, who analyze the collected data and evaluate the project's effectiveness. While exploring the potential of sound as a tool for ecological healing, the sculptures are also designed for exhibition in art spaces to engage audiences with the challenges facing coral ecosystems and to spark deeper involvement in ocean conservation. By combining art and science, *Coral Sonic Resilience* amplifies the silent crisis facing our oceans and calls for immediate, collective action to restore marine life.

A project by Marco Barotti, in cooperation with the University of Padova, Relaxound, the Coral Restoration Project Feridhoo, and the Feridhoo Island Council.
Advice on acoustic ecology and research:
Timothy Lamont
Research, and project coordination: Antonio Beggiato
Research and data analysis: Federica Moscheo, Carola Chicco, Kilian Fix, Marco Patruno
Design: Studio Marco Barotti
Solar station buoy and electronics design: Alles Blinkt

https://u.aec.at/2D63C66F

Marco Barotti (IT) is a an internationally awarded media artist exploring the interplay of sound, technology, and the environment. His kinetic sound sculptures create a fictional "tech ecosystem" resembling animals and plants. These works highlight the Anthropocene's cultural and ecological realities, raising awareness of humanity's impact on the planet. Barotti has been awarded the NTU Global Digital Art Prize, the Tesla Award, and the Delux Colour Award, and has received grants from S+T+ARTS, Stiftung Kunstfonds, Emap/Emare, BBK, Music Board, Zer01ne Creators project, Seoul, and many more.

Marco Barotti

Data Against Feminicide

AI tools, transnational community, and data activism

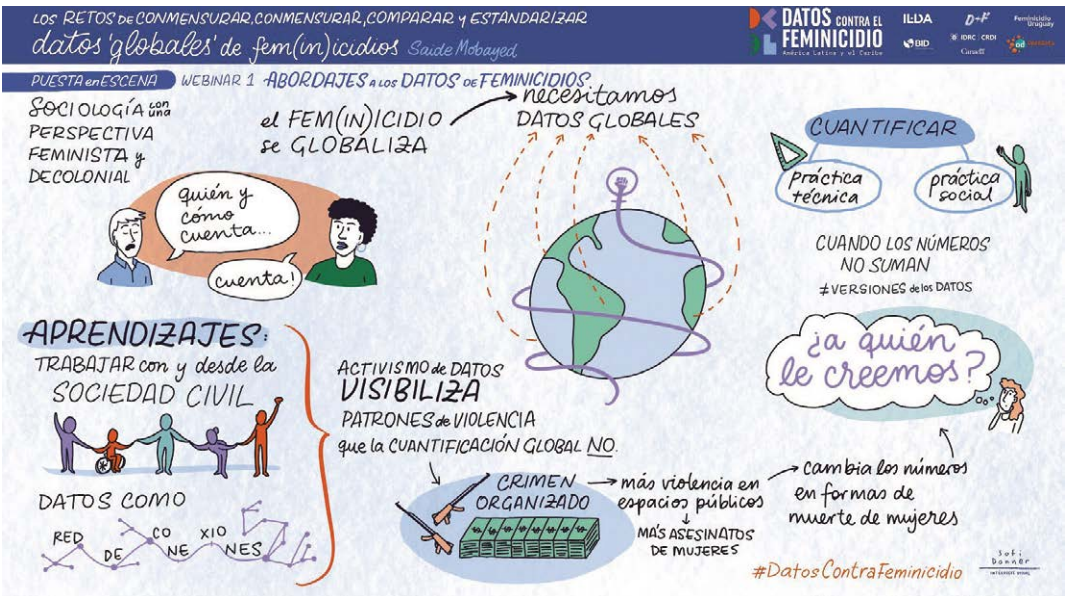
Isadora Cruxên, Catherine D'Ignazio, Silvana Fumega, Helena Suárez Val

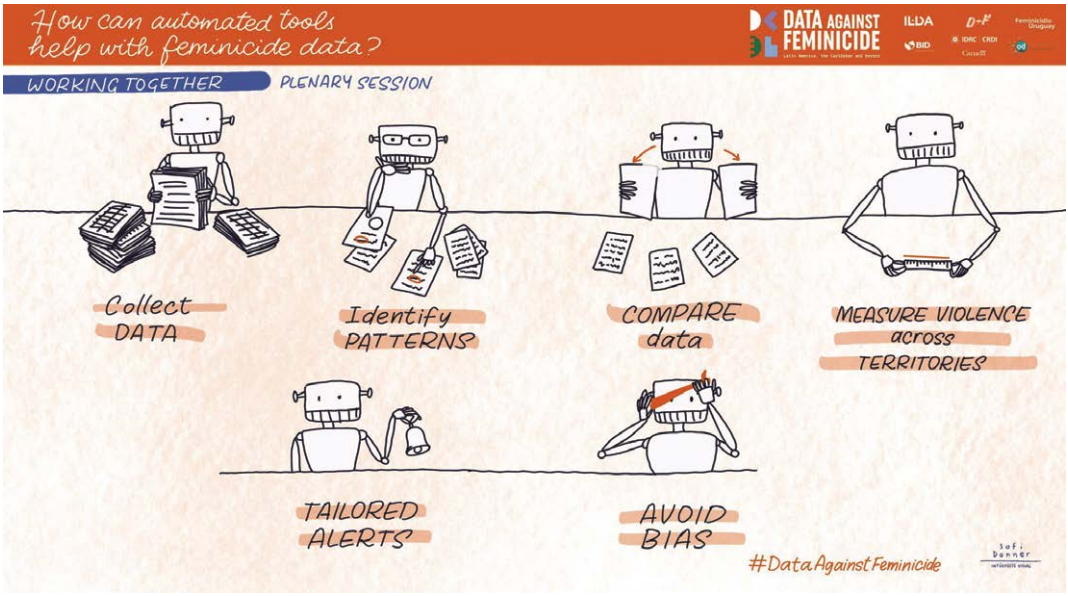
Data Against Feminicide is a feminist participatory action research and technology design project. We collaborate with data activists, artists, nonprofits, communities, governments, and journalists who monitor feminicide (or femicide in some contexts). The project has three main objectives: (1) understanding how activists produce and use data to confront feminicide and other forms of gender-related violence in different contexts; (2) fostering a transnational community of practice and dialogue around the production of feminicide data, and using creative forms of graphic illustration to record and disseminate collectively produced knowledge; and (3) co-designing digital tools using AI and machine learning (ML) to support data production and communication about feminicide.

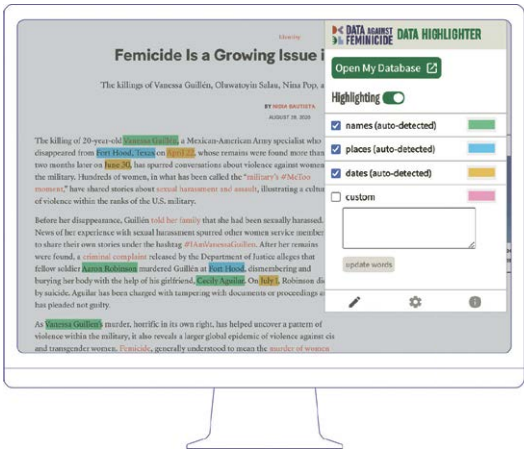
Data Against Feminicide does not collect or aggregate data. Rather, we support and sustain the already existing practices of activists, journalists, and citizen data scientists who care for feminicide data in their own contexts. In so doing, we are developing feminist frameworks for AI development that center collectivity, pluralism, care, and contextual specificity.

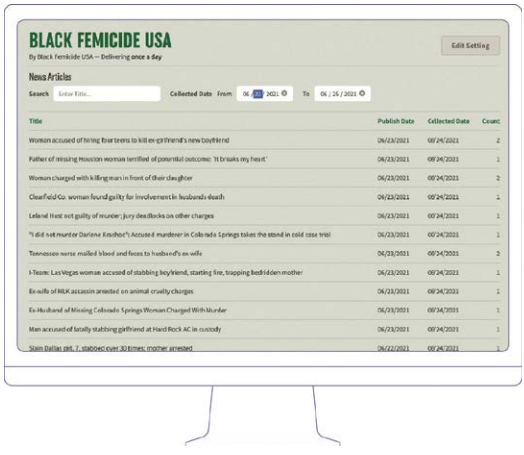
While we started work in 2019/2020, we achieved major accomplishments starting in 2023:

- AI co-design process with five Brazilian human rights organizations: We undertook participatory data annotation workshops, design & reflection sessions, and piloted our machine learning models for their feedback and iteration.
- Launch of new co-design process with a human rights group in Kenya (Femicide Count Kenya). This will train a Swahili ML model that will enable human rights groups who work in Swahili to detect and monitor femicide/feminicide.
- Three transnational community meet-up events, each attracting hundreds of registrations and people from more than 35 countries.
- Publication of an award-winning book about the work—*Counting Feminicide* from MIT Press. Open access, community review process.









Led by Isadora Cruxên, Catherine D'Ignazio, Silvana Fumega, and Helena Suárez Val in partnership with Rahul Bhargava/MediaCloud, ILDA, Red Interamericana Anti-femicidio, and Harini Suresh/ DISCO Lab.
Built in collaboration with a large community of civil society organizations. Students, translators, and illustrator Sofía Donner also provided key contributions.

With support from: ILDA (IDRC), MIT DUSP, NSF, and Queen Mary University of London.

https://u.aec.at/44FF0EAD

Isadora Cruxên (GB) is a lecturer in Business and Society at Queen Mary University of London whose work focuses on processes of political mobilization and explores participatory methods of research and planning. **Catherine D'Ignazio** (US) is an Associate Professor of Urban Science and Planning in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT where she is the Director of the Data + Feminism Lab. **Silvana Fumega** (AR) is a professional with 20 years of experience, having worked in areas ranging from access to public information, data and global measurements, always with a strong focus on gender and inclusion. **Helena Suárez Val** (UY) is an activist, researcher, and producer, focused on digital communication strategies and cultural events in the areas of human rights and feminism. She is the creator of the ongoing activist project *Feminicidio Uruguay*. feminicidiouruguay.net.

Kataula

Ana Mikadze

Heidelberg Materials (previously Heidelberg Cement) is a German multinational building materials company. Operating across 50 countries, Heidelberg is a world's second largest cement producer, and third largest for ready mixed concrete. While being numerously accused of causing uncontrollable environmental destruction around the world, Heidelberg positions itself as a symbol of sustainability.

Offering a counter-narrative rooted in the locality of Kavtiskhevi, Georgia, told by the artist's grandmother: the work seeks to dismantle Heidelberg Cement's carefully curated image of responsibility. Using Heidelberg cement (sourced from the limestone quarries of their native village Kavtiskhevi), the artist confronts the enduring legacies of German extractivism in the region.

Georgian legislation, which permits mining until total resource depletion, underscores the eschatological violence of this process. Cement tiles, made from the same Heidelberg cement bear photographic imprints of Kavtiskhevi's residents and non-human life, rendering the erasure visible. Meanwhile, quarry waste foraged on site is repurposed into ceramics and glazes, transforming them into artifacts resisting commodification. The resulting artwork seeks to reclaim the complicit material into a surface for truth-telling and accountability.

"My grandmother used to tell me that in the previous century, about 50 years ago, German (through her words) 'technologists' came to the village. They asked for consent to mine kaolin from a hill, which the Kavtiskhevi locals call Kataula. According to the

Ana Mikadze

German technologists, the material extracted from the mountain would make valuable porcelain. My grandmother resisted and sent them away. Years have passed by, and a thin layer of white dust swathes the village; a cement grime from the nearby cement factory. The residents claim that the cancer rates have significantly risen since.''

On 27 November 2024, German Ambassador Peter Fischer, responding to a question about the trend of German investments, stated that a major investor, Heidelberg Cement, had left Georgia. However the mining still continues, now under Georgian shareholders.

Artist: Ana Mikadze
Kataula inaugurated at Design Investigations, University of Applied Arts Vienna
Special thanks to: my neighbors, co-organizers and group members in Kavtiskhevi
Thanks to: Nina Khutsishvili, Mirian Jugheli, and David Gurgenidze for their support for the cause and drone footage.

https://u.aec.at/EC960631

Ana Mikadze (GE) is a Georgian researcher, designer/artist of Armenian descent (Kars). Their work mainly addresses the legacies of imperialism and colonialism in the Caucasus, tracing them to the contemporary conditions of extractivism, labor, and the processes of borderization. With a background in industrial design, their practice emerges from their profound interest in the entanglements of design, history, and geopolitics. Ana's work moves across installations, investigations, text and material inquiry.

Seeing Echoes in the Mind of a Whale

Marshmallow Laser Feast

Seeing Echoes in the Mind of a Whale is a large-scale audiovisual installation immersing viewers in the sensory world of cetaceans, celebrating the rich biodiversity of our oceans. Focusing on bottlenose dolphins, humpback whales, and sperm whales observed along the Spanish coast, with recordings from the Mediterranean and beyond, the project explores the crucial role of sound for these marine mammals.

At the heart of this work is sound, a crucial element for cetaceans. In water, sound travels five times faster than in air, allowing whales to map their surroundings through echolocation and communicate across vast distances. However, this evolutionary adaptation is threatened by increasing anthropogenic noise pollution.

The installation combines hydrophone recordings, underwater videography, scientific insights, and real-time computing to offer a multisensory experience that bridges the gap between our world and the whales' umwelt. Through machine learning algorithms, underwater video data is processed to extract information, creating visualizations that respond in real-time to acoustic data.

The project is grounded in pioneering research from the Laboratory of Bioacoustic Applications (LAB) at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya on the impact of anthropogenic noise on marine ecosystems. LAB has extensively documented how acoustic pollution alters the behavior, physiology, and reproduction of marine animals, from microscopic invertebrates to large cetaceans.

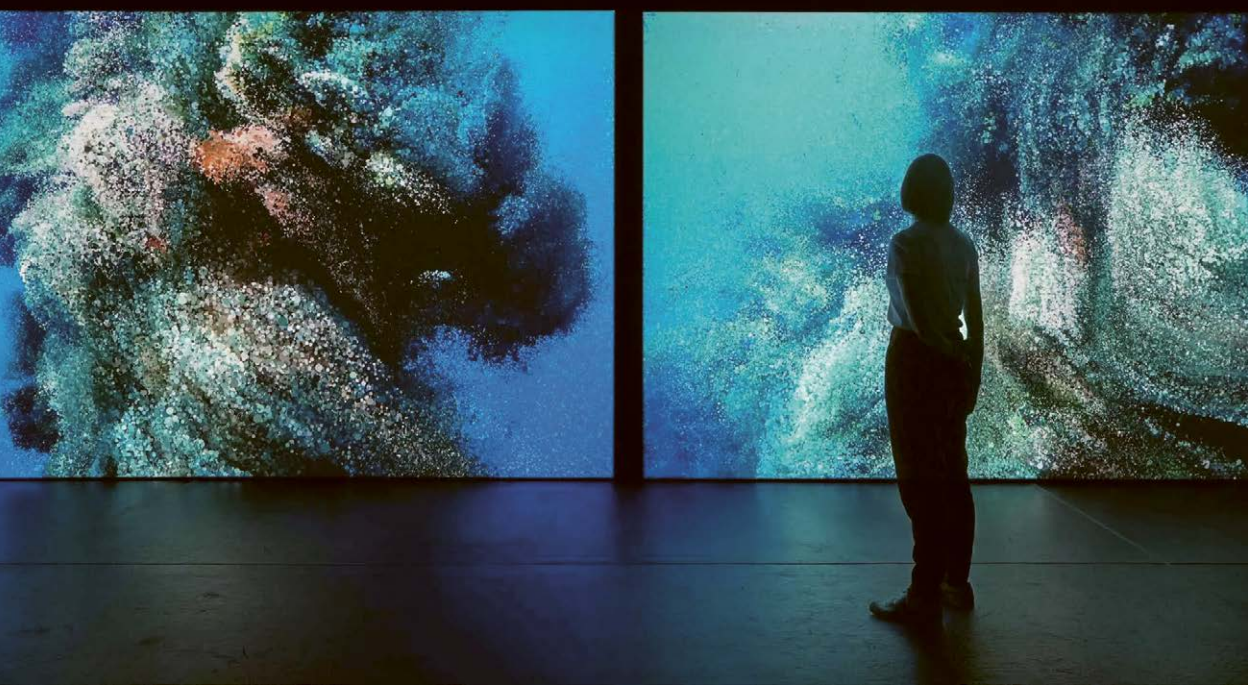
Seeing Echoes in the Mind of a Whale not only translates this scientific data into an immersive audiovisual experience but also aims to raise awareness about the urgency of protecting the oceans. Through this symbiosis of bioacoustics and creativity, the installation invites reflection on human impact on marine ecosystems and the need to preserve their balance to ensure a sustainable future.

Marshmallow Laser Feast: Ersin Han Ersin, Barnaby Steel, Robin McNicholas in collaboration with Tom Mustill and with the scientific support of the UPC Laboratory of Applied Bioacoustics (LAB)
Scientific advisors & contributors, video and audio sources: Professor Michel André (LAB), Steffen De Vreese, MVM, PhD (LAB), Tom Mustill, John Ryan (MBARI), Howard Hall, Steve McNicholas & Luke Cresswell (Yes/No Productions), Daan Verhoeven, Misael Morales Vargas (Biosean), Open Planet (openplanet.org), Aguasonic (Freesound)

Commissioned by: Espacio Fundación Telefónica and DHub (Disseny Hub Barcelona)

https://u.aec.at/9C739D77

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Honorary Mention



Marshmallow Laser Feast (MLF) is an experiential artist collective. They believe in the power of stories to tickle senses and shift perceptions. Their work takes people on a multisensory journey to where imagination and information collide. From coders to poets, chemists to ventriloquists, brands to institutions, they collaborate with specialists in all disciplines. They explore new forms of culture, interrogate their relationship with the world around them, and leave a glittery slug trail as they journey through the cosmos.

Synthetic Memories

Domestic Data Streamers

Synthetic Memories is a heritage preservation initiative using generative AI to reconstruct and safeguard personal memories at risk of being lost or never visually documented. Through guided sessions, participants describe their special memories, which trained interviewers transform into AI-generated visual representations—tangible images refined collaboratively to strengthen emotional connections. This process supports individuals affected by displacement, conflict, or neurodegenerative diseases, helping them reconnect with their past, dignify it, and retain a sense of identity.

The project sits at the intersection of art, technology, and social innovation. It fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue while addressing new 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.

Launched as a research project in 2023 by Domestic Data Streamers, it expanded with the Citizens' Office of Synthetic Memories at the Design Hub Barcelona in 2024. The museum functioned as a prototype for new municipal services, enabling visitors to generate and contribute personal stories to the city's intangible cultural archive. The exhibition merged art and scientific dissemination, showcasing AI's role in memory reconstruction. Over three months, it welcomed 10,900+ visitors, with 300+ participating in memory reconstruction sessions.

The initiative continues expanding through scientific research, artistic collaborations, and human rights advocacy, working with institutions like the University of Toronto, British Columbia, Amsterdam, and Southern California. It explores new forms of memory storytelling, supports migrant communities, and develops reminiscence therapy for early-stage dementia in partnership with elderly care facilities.

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

https://u.aec.at/FFFCB180

Domestic Data Streamers (ES) is a Barcelona-based collective of journalists, researchers, coders, artists, data scientists, and designers exploring new data languages and their social impact since 2013. Their work manifests as films, installations, digital experiences, performances, and exhibitions across diverse settings—from schools and prisons to museums and the UN Headquarters. Operating globally in over 45 countries, they've collaborated with prestigious institutions like Tate Modern, Hong Kong Design Institute, and California Academy of Sciences.

Domestic Data Streamers

The Nebelivka Hypothesis

Forensic Architecture, David Wengrow

Below Ukraine's rich, black soils lie ancient settlements, rivals in scale to the first Mesopotamian cities, yet conceived on radically different principles. Their archaeological remains trouble our understandings of urban space, power, and ecology.

Archaeological research reveals that the 6,000-year-old settlement of Nebelivka is organized in concentric rings of domestic buildings around an open space, without signs of centralized hierarchy or social stratification. Our project, arising from a partnership between Forensic Architecture and archaeologist David Wengrow, integrates digital technologies and computational science with archaeological practice and material analysis, extending the vision of both fields. Our agent-based model simulates the distribution of buildings in Nebelivka, exploring inherent indeterminacies and possible urban configurations. The model reveals the outlines of a social process: a collective imagining and reshaping of human relationships; a multiplicity of urban worlds and ways of inhabiting them.

Some argue that the foundation of such sites in Ukraine accelerated the formation of Chernozem, one of the richest soils in the world. The famous black earth soils of the Ukrainian forest steppe may be Anthrosols, confronting us with the possibility of urban life which enhances the vitality of its environment. Using data from the ground at Nebelivka, we simulated digital soil strata, modelling the interactions between human and non-human forces, redefining soil as an active, evolving archive of urban life and archaeological artefact in its own right, rather than a static layer of history. Our project offers a new paradigm for architecture and archaeology by innovating at their intersection to transform our understanding of urbanism: if these ancient Ukrainian sites are indeed considered cities, then our concept of the city and its territory, as rooted in histories of extraction and hierarchy, must change. This is the 'Nebelivka Hypothesis.'

The Nebelivka Hypothesis was created in collaboration with The Center for Spatial Technologies (CST) and The Nebelivka Project.

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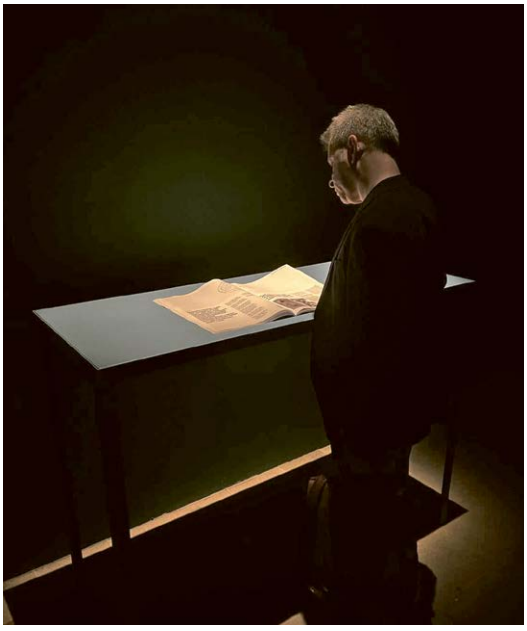
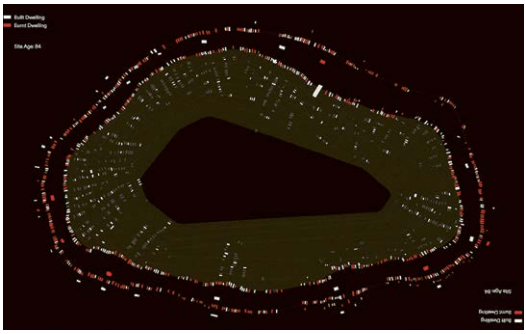
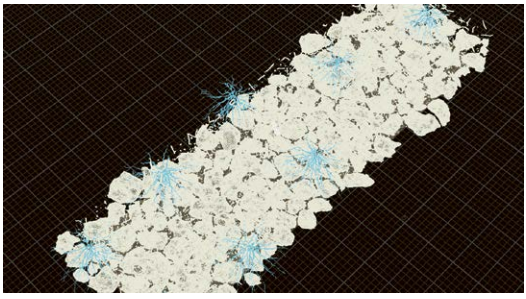




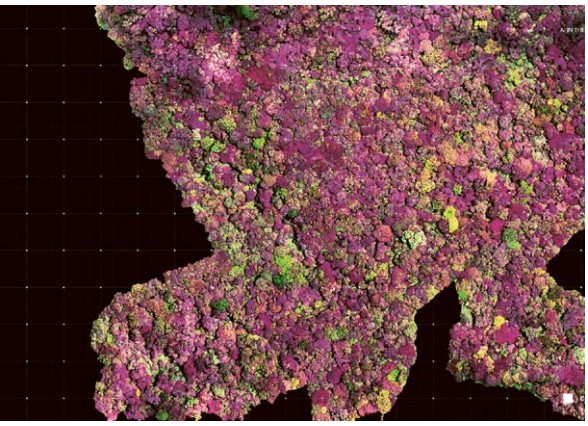


Forensic Architecture, 2023

Forensic Architecture is an interdisciplinary research agency born during the 'open source revolution'. 'Forensic architecture' is also the name of an interdisciplinary academic field developed and developing from within our research agency at Goldsmiths' Centre for Research Architecture (CRA) since 2010. The term refers to the production and presentation of spatial evidence within legal, political, and cultural contexts, and takes architecture to include not only buildings, but shaped environments at the scale of cities and territories.

AI in the Sky

Laura Cinti



At the heart of this project is a plant so rare that it stands on the brink of extinction. This plant, the *Encephalartos woodii* (*E. woodii*), a cycad classified as 'extinct in the wild,' is known from a single pollen-producing specimen found in South Africa's oNgoye Forest in the late 19th century. Removed and propagated through cloned fragments of the original, all existing specimens are genetic replicas. As a dioecious species, it requires a seed-bearing (female) counterpart to reproduce—but none has ever been found. It remains trapped in a paradox—living, yet unable to reproduce.

The oNgoye Forest has not been fully surveyed, leaving open the possibility of undiscovered specimens. While past searches relied on foot surveys, our project uses drones, multispectral imaging, and AI-assisted detection. Data from flights, mosaic maps, AI outputs, and synthetic imagery form a visual narrative where the forest dissolves into data, segmented and reassembled by algorithms. *AI in the Sky* lays bare its methods, exploring how technology shapes our engagement with nature and the meaning of searching for something that may no longer be there—at a time when so much is disappearing.

Laura Cinti in collaboration with
Howard Boland and Debbie Jewitt

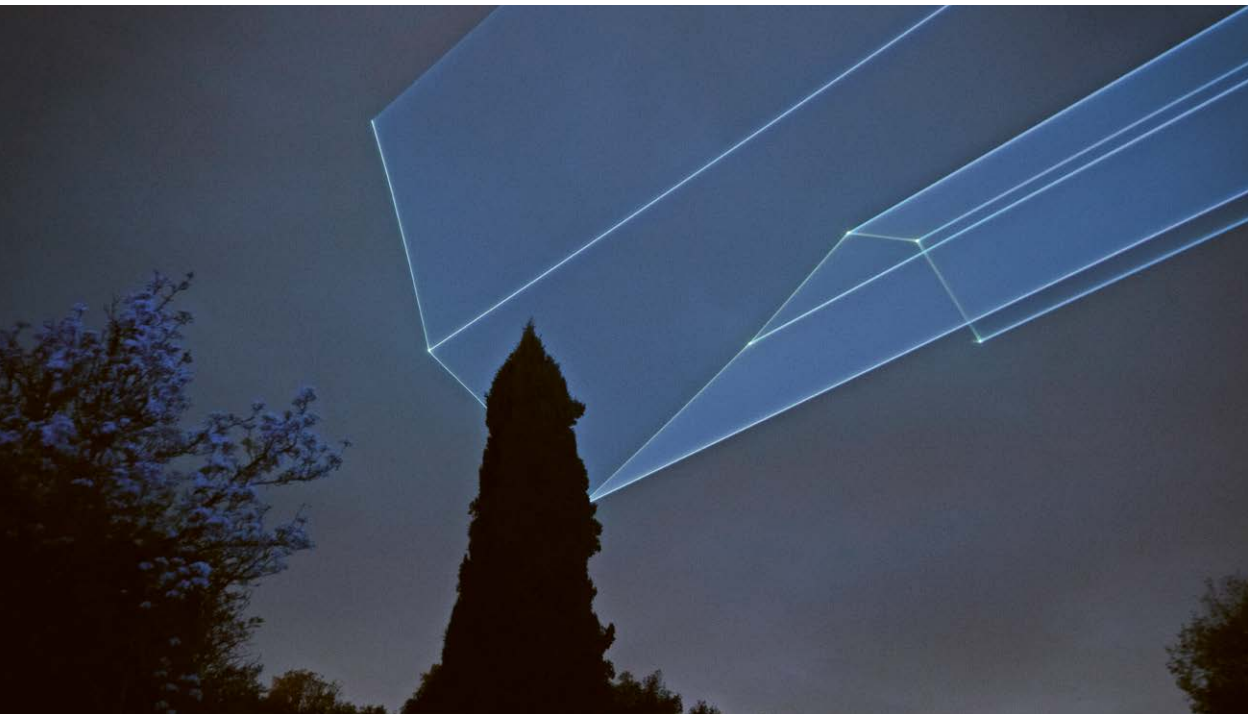
https://u.aec.at/E0998CAC

Laura Cinti (IT) is a research-based artist whose practice intersects science, technology and visual storytelling through experimentation and field research. More recently, her focus has shifted to biodiversity loss, using creative and technological approaches to rethink our relationship with endangered species. Her works have been exhibited and presented internationally.

C-LAB

ASTRES: Mapping the Firmament

Playmodes Studio



Ancient cultures used stars to measure time and understand seasons, with the sky as both divine realm and scientific tool. Today, light pollution has severed this celestial connection, affecting ecosystems and human experience.

ASTRES is an audiovisual installation using laser light and sound to celebrate the night sky. The project employs algorithmic systems to address constantly changing star positions, with precise laser calibration techniques developed through university collaboration.

The installation creates generative constellations using mathematical clustering and graph theory for organic-looking patterns. Sonically, each star produces unique sounds based on its properties, using historical scales from diverse cultures to reinforce the sky as humanity's shared heritage.

ASTRES can be experienced in nature (reconnecting with dark skies), urban settings (reviving stargazing despite light pollution), or indoors (as a data visualization). Each context invites contemplation of our cosmic relationship and what modern life has lost—the wonder of a universe filled with mystery.

Playmodes Studio: Eloi Maduell Garcia, Santi Vilanova Angeles, Eduard Frigola
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (ETSETB): Francesc Rey
With support from: Generalitat de Catalunya, Direcció General de Cultura Digital, Catalonia

https://u.aec.at/165AE94C

Founded in 2006 by **Eloi Maduell** (ES) and **Santi Vilanova** (ES), **Playmodes Studio** (INT) blends art, science, philosophy, music, and technology. Their passion manifests in light sculptures, audiovisual instruments, star projections, or data sonification. Their core mission: creating an impure, minimalist, abstract Visual Music language using homemade tools—software and hardware alike—transforming thought into solder and open source code. Over nearly two decades, their works have been exhibited in festivals and museums worldwide. They've received international recognition for contributions to music, art and design, with pieces treasured by institutions and collectors globally.

playmodesstudio

Echorroes: Reflections on Tchaikovsky

Echorroes

Echorroes: Reflections on Tchaikovsky is a human-centered approach to Artificial Intelligence through interactive play with classical music, for children ages 1–3. Created by the interdisciplinary team Echorroes and commissioned by the Greek National Opera, the project establishes a playful dialogue between AI and Tchaikovsky, enabling children to co-create and transform his compositions.

At its core, a real-time algorithm processes each movement and sound, generating instant musical responses. Children play with custom cylindrical instruments fitted with wireless microphones and motion sensors, while a costume and set woven with tactile materials—and complemented by dynamic lighting—expand the stage into an immersive soundscape. Structured around selected Tchaikovsky themes, children reconstruct music through playful exploration without verbal instruction. The facilitator minimally intervenes, providing a safe environment for free expression through interactive sound play.

Reflections on Tchaikovsky is part of Echorroes' greater vision to eradicate music illiteracy by giving everyone tools to appreciate and create music through playful, experiential learning.

Composer, music technologist, creative director: Phivos-Angelos Kollias
Applied theater facilitator & educator: Christina Stouraiti
Set & costume designer: Niki Psyhogiou
Lighting designer: Anna Sbokou
Strategic advisor: Anastasia Patsouri
With support from: Greek National Opera; Neukölln Cultural District, Berlin; Nobiwerk Schools, Berlin; Orange Grove Incubator; NBG Seeds Innovation Competition; Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

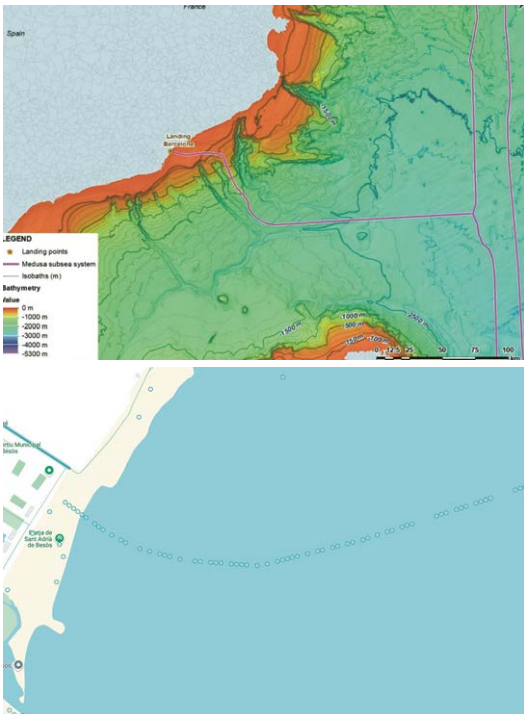
https://u.aec.at/83D777AC

Echorroes (GR) is an artistic-research collective and startup operating between Athens and Berlin. Founded by composer-technologist **Dr Phivos-Angelos Kollias** and applied theater facilitator **Christina Stouraiti,** with the team of costume designer **Niki Psychogiou**, lighting artist **Anna Sbokou**, and strategist **Anastasia Patsouri**. Echorroes combines interactive music and AI to create non-verbal, participatory music experiences, empowering audiences to learn music in a playful, fun, effortless way, offering the excitement of creation and co-participation from the first moments.

Giannis Antonoglou

Emerald Black Latency

Mario Santamaría



Emerald Black Latency takes the Medusa Submarine Cable System as a starting point to explore the representation and material dimension of data circulation on the internet. Planned for 2026, Medusa is an 8,700 km fiber optic cable designed to enhance connectivity in the Mediterranean and link Europe with North Africa. Submarine cables currently carry 98% of international internet traffic. The project focuses on a 7 km segment between the coast of Sant Adrià del Besòs (Barcelona), where one of the landing points is located, and the Balearic Sea. This stretch, documented in official reports, is recreated on Google's global map using studio-generated images visible in Street View mode.

The result is a hybrid of reality and fiction, simulating the impossible experience of walking along a fiber optic cable, which can be thinner than 1 mm. Like the mythological Medusa, whose face could only be seen through a reflection, the interior of the cable can only be perceived through its representation. The project thus operates at the intersection of the material and virtual, the real and the fictional.

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Mario Santamaría (ES) is a Barcelona-based artist whose work moves across diverse media, often employing photography, video, performance, websites, and online interventions. In 2018, he founded *Internet Tour*, a tour operator offering tourist experiences of infrastructures linked to the digital. He has exhibited at ZKM Karlsruhe, C/O Berlin, WKV Stuttgart, Aksioma Ljubljana, MACBA Barcelona, CENART Mexico, and Arebyte London. He teaches at Elisava School of Design and Engineering Barcelona and has taught at UC Berkeley, HSLU Luzern, and Trinity College Dublin. He has held residencies at Hangar, HISK, and Sarai New Delhi.

HYBRIS

Yana Zschiedrich

HYBRIS is an art-based research initiative presenting an innovative method for transforming waste into both art and building materials. Since 2019, Yana Zschiedrich has explored this concept through a collaboration with mealworms, which decompose polystyrene into biodegradable substances. These can replace sand in new, sustainable construction applications.

Mealworms carry bacteria in their digestive systems capable of breaking down insulation boards treated with toxic flame retardants, excreting the material as eco-friendly matter. While the mealworms create sculptural reliefs for Zschiedrich, a significant amount of excrement is produced. In collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics IBP, this material was analyzed for its composition. A geopolymer-based binder was selected—as durable as concrete, yet more sustainable, recyclable, and fully compatible with the chemical properties of mealworm excrement.

Zschiedrich developed a custom recipe for large-scale 3D printing, enabling the production of architectural components from this hybrid material. This process powerfully symbolizes nature's ability to renew life cycles and embodies the resilience and regenerative potential of biological systems.

Artistic director, concept, research, material development, production, and installation: Yana Zschiedrich
Technical support by industrial designer Alexander Skowronski
Scientific analysis and material recommendations: in collaboration with Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics (2022–2023)
Special thanks to: Prof. Joachim Blank for mentorship and critical input

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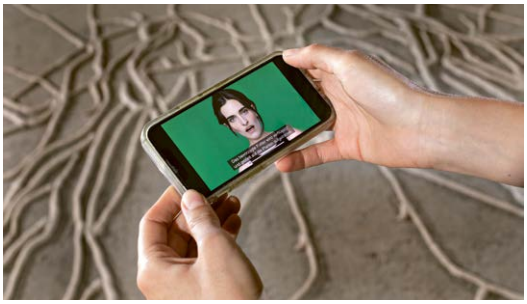
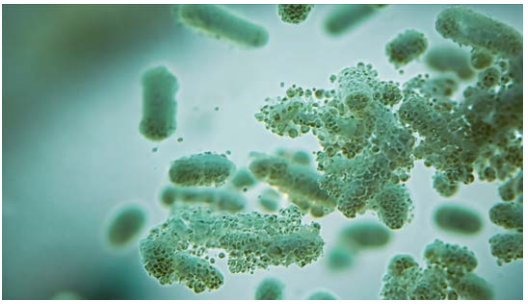


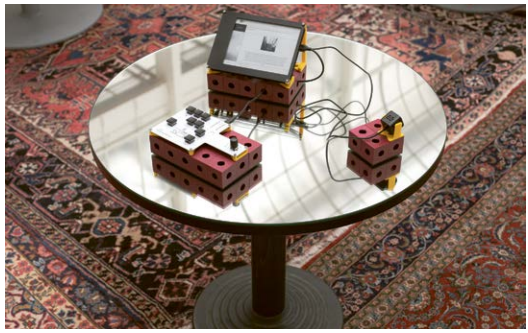


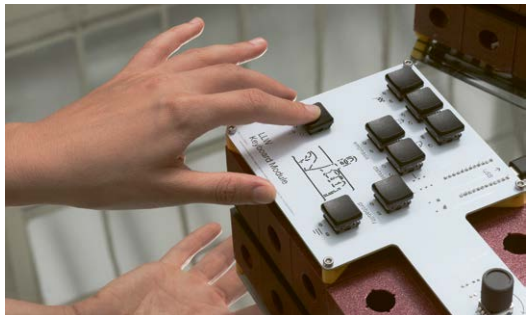
Yana Zschiedrich (DE), born 1987, Ludwigshafen am Rhein, is an artist and researcher based in Leipzig. Her practice explores the intersection of art, architecture, and ecology, focusing on sustainable material development. Since 2019, she has led the research initiative HYBRIS, which collaborates with mealworms to transform waste—particularly polystyrene—into biodegradable building substances. Central to her work is GEOBRIS, a speculative material composed of geopolymer and mealworm excrement, proposing alternatives to sand in construction.

Julius C. Schreiner

Large Language Writer

Lucy Li, Leo Mühlfeld, Alan Schiegl





How will we write in the future, and why should we design "seamful" interactions? The *Large Language Writer* (LLW) is an experimental design project that explores honest interactions with Large Language Models (LLMs). While most digital tools obscure their mechanisms behind seamless "works like magic" experiences, the *Large Language Writer* suggests a different approach. It introduces an alternative workflow—one that places users within the generative process.

Operators can steer the text during its creation, offering a direct and intuitive means of control. Beyond software, the project asks how hardware design for AI-powered technology might evolve. Its modular construction allows it to adapt gracefully to obsolescence, proposing a future where devices evolve alongside their users. The project is deeply rooted in critical design discourse, questioning the current trajectory of generative AI integration and proposing an alternative that is transparent, empowering, and user-centric.

Through *Large Language Writer*, we ask: How will we write in the future? And most importantly, how can we create tools that foster trust and agency in an AI-driven world where everything currently "works like magic?"

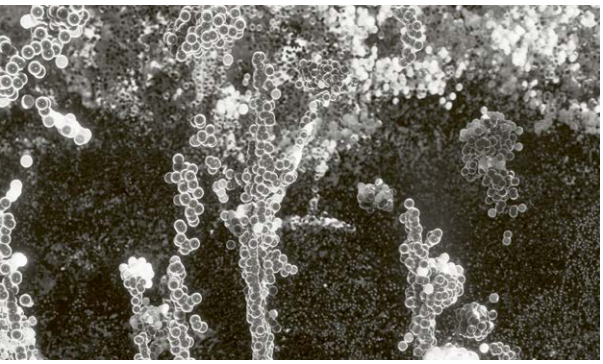
Supervision: University Professor Anab Jain, Design Investigations Studio Team, University of Applied Arts Vienna
Project Team: Lucy Li, Leo Mühlfeld, Alan Schiegl
PCB design: Elias Mack
Special thanks to: Ursula Gschlacht & the Angewandte library team, Max Kure, Florian Sapp, Stefan Schönauer, Viktor Windisch

https://u.aec.at/28B6DA89

Lucy Li (AT) is a designer and researcher working on playful and imaginative interactions with machines. Her works are sociopolitical, multispecies, and intrinsically optimistic. Lucy is a current PhD candidate at MIT Media Lab Tangible Media Group. **Leo Mühlfeld** (AT) is an industrial designer working in experimental settings, using design to translate research and ideas into engaging, tangible experiences. He sees design as a tool to connect disciplines. **Alan Schiegl** (AT) is a designer focused on free and open-source tools. He explores the societal impact of emerging technologies and develops thoughtful, experimental projects that engage with the ethics and futures of digital systems.

Light, Touch, Root (Hybrid)

Vanessa Amoah Opoku



Vanessa Amoah Opoku

Fangsheng Chou

During a research residency with Künstlerische Tatsachen at the University of Ulm's TRR234 CataLight, I explored molecular light-driven catalysis in soft matter systems. Using near-infrared LiDAR, I scanned so-called "invasive" plants, creating point clouds that reimagine their presence in a sci-fi-inspired world with two suns. The scanner's 800 nm light interacts with plant surfaces and possibly their biology, prompting questions about light's impact on growth. Recontextualized in virtual space, these resilient species defy human-imposed categories. The point clouds absorb or reflect simulated IR light, revealing internal water and subsurface structures. 3D-printed wax-encaustic reliefs and UV photograms extend the work physically, inviting touch and tracing seasonal change. The project blurs boundaries between natural and artificial, challenging concepts of belonging, borders, and ecological perception in the age of mixed realities.

Artist: Vanessa Amoah Opoku
Scientific collaborators & organizational support: Researchers from the University of Ulm and the CataLight Consortium; Künstlerische Tatsachen

https://u.aec.at/C4F52B28

Vanessa Amoah Opoku

Vanessa Amoah Opoku (DE) is a German-Ghanaian artist exploring history, digitality, and marginalized narratives through mixed realities. She uses 3D scans, video, sculpture, and sound to challenge dominant futures. A member of the PARA collective and curator at Balance Club Culture Festival, she studied in Leipzig, Vienna, and Jerusalem. Her work has shown at EIGEN+ART Lab, Deichtorhallen, and Belvedere 21. She teaches and lectures widely and lives in Berlin.

Lucid Life | Marama Ora

Christopher Bellamy


Ben Turner


Christopher Bellamy


Sundran Daniel Krebs

Inspired by the symbiotic relationship between corals and microorganisms, Christopher Bellamy has developed a contemporary living material that encapsulates bioluminescent microalgae. This living material glows in response to touch and requires only sunlight to survive, with a lifespan of at least six months. In collaboration with Polynesian artisans, the project brought together traditional knowledge and science to co-create a series of artefacts that demonstrate how living materials can reconnect us with nature through intercultural and interspecies collaboration—and how biotechnology can move beyond the laboratory.

A drum, a swimsuit, and a necklace were created using local materials and practices, infused with the living bioluminescent material. Each object evokes awe and a sense of transcendence, with the artist hoping these experiences inspire people to live more symbiotically with other species and cultures.

Like Polynesian traditional knowledge, which exists only in living memory, the bioluminescent material is ephemeral. Its fragility allows it to adapt, respond, and interact qualities that make its temporary, living nature so beautiful.

Collaborators: Tekoui 'Jérémie' Tamari, Tokainiua Jean-Daniel Devatine, Hinatea & Moé Colombani, Naumi 'Mamie' Tapi

https://u.aec.at/2F63747D

Christopher Bellamy (GB) is a biodesigner and engineer fascinated by how we might live more symbiotically with nature. With a background in designing electric vehicles, footwear, and outdoor gear, he has now turned his focus to working with living systems. His research explores the potential of "livingness"—as both material and philosophy—through interspecies and intercultural collaborations. His award-winning biodesign studio, **Bio Crafted**, investigates how contemporary living materials can be integrated into everyday life.

Museo Ocasional de un Paisaje Increíble

Ana Vogelfang, Julieta García Vázquez

The Occasional Museum of an Incredible Landscape (MOPI) is a nomadic, ephemeral museum rethinking our relationship with landscapes, ecosystems, and collective memory.
Created by Argentine artists Julieta García Vázquez and Ana Vogelfang, MOPI merges participatory art, environmental research, and territorial practices, using storytelling and collaborative knowledge to tackle ecological and cultural challenges.

Each edition unfolds as a one-day, site-specific intervention in Latin American wetlands—fragile ecosystems under global threat—creating a space where real and imagined territories meet. Scientists, artists, and local communities come together to reimagine their environment through shared narratives, borrowed artifacts, and interdisciplinary collaborations.
MOPI proposes museum-making as a dynamic, collective practice, decentralizing cultural production and fostering community-led conservation. Through evolving artistic protocols, it advances a pluriversal, decolonial approach to regenerative futures, challenging extractivist narratives and activating new ecological imaginaries.

https://u.aec.at/820A301F

Ana Vogelfang (AR) and **Julieta García Vázquez** (AR) began their collaboration in 2018, exploring the ways in which certain absences within a community's pictorial heritage persist and operate in contemporary contexts. Situated at the intersection of painting, architecture and social practice, their research led to the founding of *Museo Ocasional de un Paisaje Increíble* (MOPI) in 2021. From its first edition, *MOPI* has established itself as a poetic tool for investigating the relationships between community, landscape, and representation across various Latin American wetlands.

Gustavo Arrellaga

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Nomination

Neutone Morpho
Real-time AI Audio Plugin and Platform
Neutone

Neutone Morpho is a real-time tone morphing plugin for Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) powered by advanced machine learning technology. It resynthesizes input sounds into entirely different styles while preserving the original sound's shape. We also offer a custom model training service—the first of its kind—where artists can upload their own sound materials and train custom models to create unique sonic textures.

With *Neutone Morpho*, we challenge the dominant narrative surrounding AI music tools and their tendency to rely on large, impersonal, and unlicensed datasets scraped by big tech corporations. The plugin has been used in university lectures worldwide and in artist workshops at international music festivals, such as CTM and MUTEK. We have also been working closely with a facility for young people with mental and physical disabilities, organizing workshops that share the joy of making music.

Neutone Morpho represents our first step toward a future where AI empowers artists to explore new sonic possibilities while making music creation more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Project lead: Nao Tokui and Andrew Fyfe
Plugin engineers: Andrew Fyfe, Alfie Bradic, Nico Pellerin, and Matthias Schäfer
AI researchers: Naotake Masuda and Christopher Mitcheltree
Backend engineer: Bogdan Teleaga
Artist relations: Justin Ruiz
Advisor: Hitoshi Miyata and Kaoru Sugano
Collaborators: Tanpopo-no-ye, Wilding AI, MUTEK Japan

https://u.aec.at/6CA6C082

Neutone / Natsumi Kinugasa

Neutone / Natsumi Kinugasa

Neutone

Neutone (INT) is an international team of musicians, artists, AI researchers, and engineers based in Japan. *Neutone* began as an internal project of Qosmo, a Tokyo-based AI creativity lab, in 2022, before evolving into an independent company. Their first open-source project, *Neutone FX*, has become a go-to platform for sharing real-time AI audio processing models with users in the audio production community. *Neutone FX* and the company's first commercial product, *Neutone Morpho*, have been widely used by inventive musicians and sound designers for music production and sound installations.

Performative Ethnographies

Špela Petrič

Performative Ethnographies (PE) are an artistic methodology and ongoing non-disciplinary research created as a response to the multiple layers of exclusion of laypeople from spaces where advanced technology is developed, even though their bodies are affected by it.

As a hybrid between a participatory performance, workshop, and tactical intervention, *PE* is a guided visit to a site of concern, during which the participants are asked to embody amateur ethnographers, observing the site and the local experts who present their work and challenges. The participants try to make sense of the technological undertaking from the particular perspective of observation they choose at the beginning of the action. After the tour, the participants' field notes are recorded as testimonies that become part of an ever-growing archive of insights into opaque technological infrastructures, as understood through the countless perspectives of concerned amateurs. Repurposing elements of ethnography, a scientific method that champions knowledge production through first-person experience, and role play that invites participants to explore unusual vantage points, *PE* positions laypeople as those whose pluriversal values form the basis of making sense of new technologies.

Concept and execution: Špela Petrič
Camera and editing: Rob van Pelt, Carla Zamora, Parisa Yousef Doust, Reon Cordova
Dramaturgical advice: Ira Melkonyan
Conceptual advice: Agnieszka Wołodźko
Assistance: Reon Cordova
For list of hosting organizations please visit: https://www.spelapetric.org/pearchive
Support received from: Creative Industries Fund NL and Deutsche Telekom.
For an extensive list, please visit: https://www.spelapetric.org/pearchive

https://u.aec.at/148AFF5D

Špela Petrič

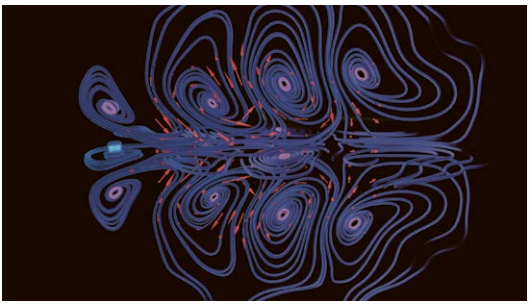
Tom Mesic

Špela Petrič (SI) is a hybrid media artist with a background in the natural sciences. Her artistic research and practice combines biomedia and performativity to enact strange relations between bodies that question the underpinnings of our (bio)technological societies. Recently she has been busy with looking closely at automation of care in agriculture and medicine. Petrič has received several awards, such as the White Aphroid for outstanding artistic achievement (SI), the Bioart and Design Award (NL), and an Award of Distinction at Prix Ars Electronica (AT).

SUN[Flower] Plasma

Victoria Vesna, Haley Marks, Walter Gekelman, Kevin Ramsey

Still of an animation that moves from the machine to the sun-flower. Photo: Victoria Vesna

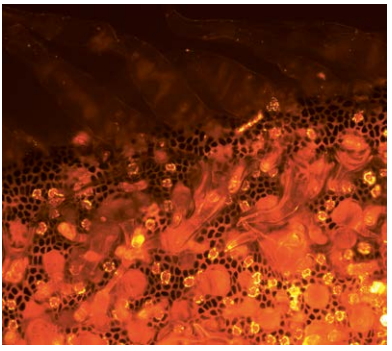


Sunflower bract with microscopic patterns resembling a plasma storm on the sun - revealing the colorful structures bees use for navigation. (Layered auto-fluorescence and polarization images, EDoF processing, 10x 0.4NA objective lens, Leica Microsys-tems). Photo: Dr. Haley Marks, UCLA ALMS, CNSI

This project emerged from years of dialogue between Victoria Vesna and plasma physicist Dr. Walter Gekelman, an expert on Alfvén waves and builder of one of the world's largest plasma devices. Inspired by the December 2022 fusion breakthrough, they co-taught "Art + Physics = Energy" and brought students to the National Ignition Facility to explore energy in relation to food.

The connection between plasma physics and the sunflower lies in how both ignition and growth unleash energy and complexity from simple beginnings. This parallel is amplified by the Solar Maximum that began as the project premiered in 2024 and continues through 2025.

[SUN] Flower Plasma explores the ecological and geopolitical meanings of sunflowers alongside the science of Alfvén waves moving through the sun's corona and interstellar space. The installation features a two-channel video of the Large Plasma Device, sunflower fields, bees, and microscopic sunflower cells that resemble the sun's surface. Audiences are immersed in 8-channel sound: plasma data, NASA Parker Solar Probe recordings, and beehive sounds. The soundscape was mixed at Harvestworks NY with composer Kevin Ramsay.



Current of an Alfven wave produced by a filamentary oscillating field aligned current. Scale 40 cm across and 10 meters in the X direction. Photo: Dr. Walter Gekelman, UCLA BaPSF (Basic Plasma Science Facility)

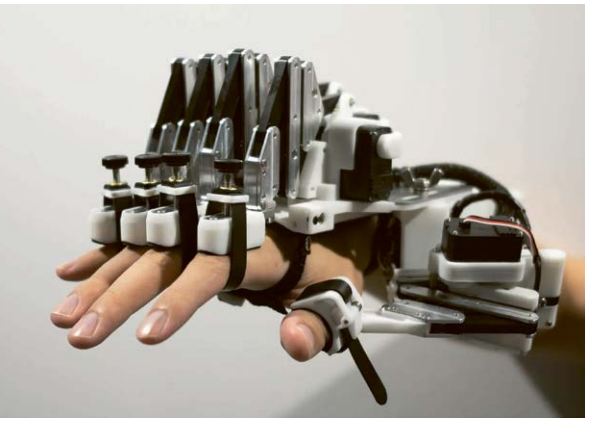
Collaborators:
Artist: Victoria Vesna
Plasma physicist: Walter Gekelman
Biomedical engineer: Haley Marks
Composer: Kevin Ramsay
Production assistants: Ivana Dama, Samuel Yang, Mae Chen
With support from: NYC cultural affairs, NY Council of the Arts, Harvestworks NY, UCLA LaPD, UCLA Art Sci collective

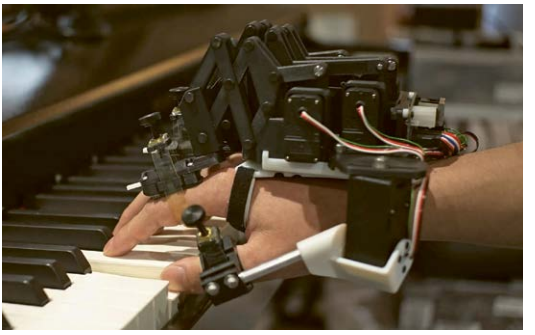
https://u.aec.at/F8FF8036

Victoria Vesna (US) is an artist and professor at UCLA. She explores how art, science, and technology shape identity, perception, and collective experience. **Walter Gekelman** (US) is a plasma physicist at UCLA and director of the Large Plasma Device. His work focuses on space plasma, Alfvén waves, and magnetic reconnection. **Haley Marks** (US) is a biomedical engineer at UCLA CNSI. She develops imaging tools and nano-biosensors, focusing on microscopy, optics, and translational medicine. **Kevin Ramsay** (US) is a composer and sound engineer at Harvestworks NY. He creates immersive, experimental audio works using acoustic and electronic sources.

Surpassing Limits of Virtuosity of Pianists by Exoskeleton

Shinichi Furuya





A challenge commonly encountered by trained individuals—such as athletes and musicians—pertains to the refinement of over-learnt motor skills that have been cultivated through extensive training since childhood. However, the deliberate practice alone may no longer improve experts' expertise, primarily due to the presence of a performance ceiling—the ceiling effect. Despite this limitation, many continue to rely on deliberate practice as the conventional way to enhance a skill.

By contrast, recent advances in robotics and AI technologies have enabled humans to develop superb abilities that would be impossible without the use of such technologies. However, it remains unknown how augmentation technologies can be used to enable humans to overcome the limitations of their own abilities without using the assistance.

We tested whether passively experiencing motions that have been not experienced could surmount the ceiling effect and enhance the already well-honed skills of experts. We utilized a novel exoskeleton robot attachable to fingers. Pianists were exposed to complex finger movements performed at a speed surpassing their regular pace. This training enhanced the maximum speed of finger movements when performing the already-trained motor skill without the exoskeleton. The untrained hand also exhibited improved motor skills.

This project was described in a research paper published in *Science Robotics*.
https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/scirobotics.adn3802
All credits are given to Sony Computer Science Laboratories Inc.
This study was supported by JST CREST (JPMJCR17A3), JST Moonshot (JPMJMS2012), and JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Transformative Research Areas B (20H05713).

https://u.aec.at/0C15EBD4

Shinichi Furuya (JP) is a research director at Sony CSL. After studying at Osaka University, he worked at the University of Minnesota and HMTM Hannover. He received a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, a Heisenberg fellowship at the German Research Foundation (DFG), and the Susanne Klein-Vogelbach Prize for Research on Human Movement. His research goal is to support musicians to overcome their musical expertise limitations and to prevent injuries through musical practice. He provides evidence-based physical training and technological support for musicians in various countries.

Sony CSL / NeuroPiano

The Call

Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst

Artists Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst approach AI as a coordination and communication technology, much like singing has been for millennia. Historically, singing techniques have been rituals for communication, leading us to build spaces and structures for gathering, transmitting information, and creating meaning. Like a choir, where many individual voices become a collective, the artists propose that AI can further augment the transformation from the individual to the collective.

The Call develops new protocols and materials for the creation of AI models. To train the AI, Herndon and Dryhurst have composed a songbook of hymns, singing exercises and a recording protocol, and recorded fifteen community choirs across the UK. The choristers are now part of a Data Trust experiment that allows for the distribution of power between the contributors to the training data and those who use the models.

The interactive spatial audio installation uses the models to activate the exhibition space. These new artifacts for gathering and ritual, co-designed by SUB, offer us renewed insight into the networked and collective nature of human creation in the 21st century.

The research carried out in the Data Trust Experiment, led by Serpentine's Arts Technologies team, was published in a recent white paper: *Prototyping a GLAM Trusted Data Intermediary for Public Interest AI.*

Artists: Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst
Architectural design: SUB
Curatorial lead: Eva Jaeger
Audio assistant: Ian Berman
With support from: Serpentine extended funding network, Berlin Artistic Research Grant, Fellowship, 1of1

https://u.aec.at/5F5AEEFC

Holly Herndon (US) and **Mat Dryhurst** (US) are artists renowned for their pioneering work in machine learning, software, and music. They develop their own technology and systems for living with the technology of others, often with a focus on the ownership and augmentation of digital identity and voice. These technical protocols not only facilitate expansive artworks across media, but are proposed as artworks unto themselves. In 2024 they were awarded Austria's first Digital Human Rights Award, presented the solo exhibition *The Call* at Serpentine Gallery, and took part in the Whitney Biennial.

Serpentine Gallery / Holly Herndon, Mat Dryhurst

The Permanent and Insatiable

Xin Liu

The Permanent and Insatiable is a series of installations exploring the mythic tension in material science: humans create indestructible materials like plastic while engineering organisms to consume them. Each installation features miniature cityscapes made from post-consumer PET plastic, submerged in transparent bioreactors where lab-grown enzymes gradually dissolve them. The first work, commissioned by Moody Center for the Arts, recreates downtown Houston and Rice University's campus; the second, Lower Manhattan's financial district. Within these decaying cities that compress centuries of degradation into weeks, the artist imagines a world of urban excess confronted by microbial appetites, questioning our uncanny desire for immortality and fear of permanence: aren't we the most insatiable ones? The project builds on *MicroPET*, a 2018 research initiative to develop a bioreactor for plastic degradation on the International Space Station. Launched in 2022, it enabled autonomous enzymatic reactions in microgravity and was named one of *TIME*'s Best Inventions of 2023. Published in *Nature Partner Journal Microgravity*, it laid the technical and conceptual foundation for the series.

Biologist collaborator: Erika Erickson
Model fabricator: Shijia Huang, Thanya Tham
Artist assistant: Jeremy Siyang Chen
Produced by: Xin Liu Studio LTD
With support from: Moody Center for the Arts; Management Gallery;
Backslash Fellowship, Cornell Tech

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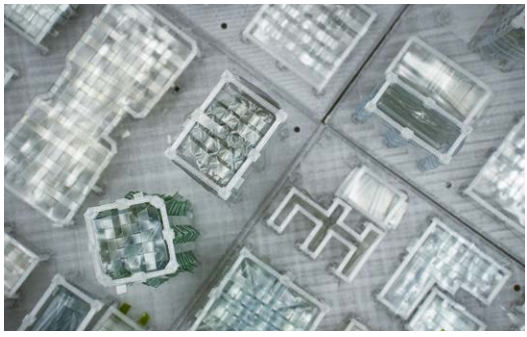


Xin Liu Studio LTD

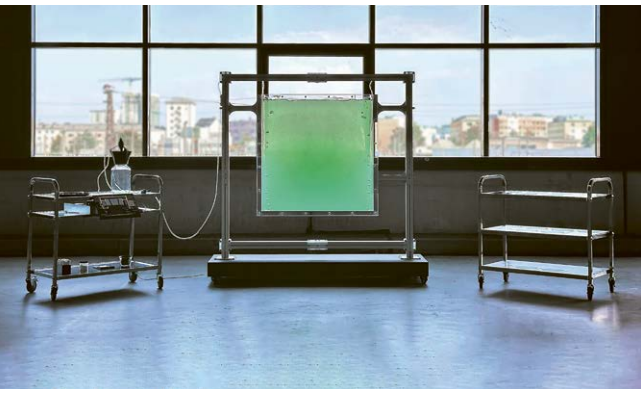
Management Gallery New York

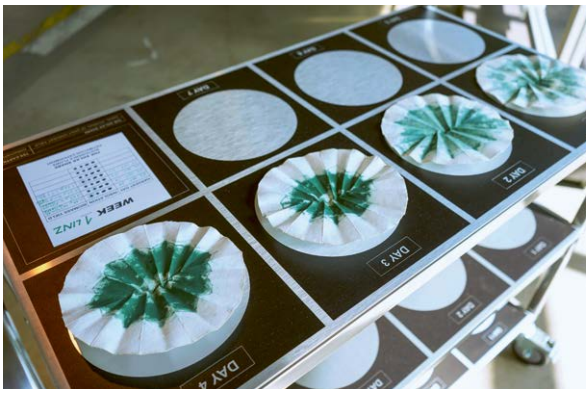
Xin Liu Studio LTD

Xin Liu (CN) (born in Xinjiang, China) is a multidisciplinary artist and engineer, whose work spans sculptures, digital experiences, and films to explore the verticality of space, extraterrestrial explorations, and cosmic metabolism. Xin is an artist-in-residence at SETI Institute and the founding Arts Curator in the Space Exploration Initiative at MIT Media Lab. Currently, she is a resident artist at Somerset House and Delfina Foundation. Her work has been shown at Shanghai Biennale, Thailand Biennale, M+ Museum, Yuz Museum, MoMA PS1, MAXXI Rome, Sundance Film Festival, and Ars Electronica.

The Solar Share An Edible Solar Currency

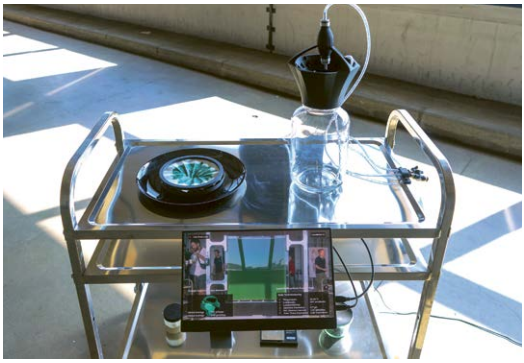
DISNOVATION.ORG art collective





The Solar Share stages a form of planetary economics based on photosynthesis. This artistic provocation seeks to estimate the orders of magnitude of new solar energy income metabolized by photosynthetic organisms at a planetary scale, a process fundamental to all planetary life.

The Solar Share project challenges prevailing economic models with insights from sunlight-processing organisms, crucial to life's metabolism. Featuring a one-square-meter microalgae bioreactor, it highlights human dependence on photosynthesis and proposes phytobiomass (here as edible microalgae) as a new economic unit. This new unit, a "Solar Share", represents the average daily biomass yield on one square meter of Earth's surface. This edible algae unit is a photosynthetic proof of work that can be consumed, exchanged, or stored as a currency. By recognizing the critical role of photosynthesis, *The Solar Share* introduces a new kind of economic tool that balances human needs with the planet's ecological limits.



Project by DISNOVATION.ORG
Co-design: Katharina Ammann
Production: IFT, Xcenter, ART2M, More-Than-Planet,
Commissioned by HacTe with the support of the
S+T+ARTS program

https://u.aec.at/EE275C8E

DISNOVATION.ORG (INT) merges contemporary art, research & hacking to critically translate complex eco-social debates into operative and provocative exhibits. They create radical artworks staged as large laboratory experiments focused on energy, ecology, and economics that work as catalysts for crafting futures that diverge from prevailing narratives. Their exhibits, books, and videos permeated global cultural landscapes fostering a critical dialogue at the nexus of artistic, political, and scientific inquiry. They co-edited *A Bestiary of the Anthropocene* with Nicolas Nova.

DISNOVATION.ORG

The Year of Weather

Open-weather

Open-weather's *Year of Weather* (YoW) explores changing relations to weather and climate as the planet warms above 1.5 degrees Celsius. It unfolds as public access to environmental knowledge is threatened by attempts to dismantle US agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an institution that has provided satellite images to ground stations around the world since the 1970s. In 2025, this political climate coincides with the end of a private contract to maintain the last NOAA satellites to transmit analogue weather images.
Together we ask: What is the political potential of archiving satellite imagery and weather observations at a time when publicly-funded environmental datasets are under threat? Which forms of knowledge on weather do we need to amplify in our communities?

The *YoW* activates the open-weather network, including more than one hundred DIY Satellite Ground Station operators, to generate a living, collective record of planetary weather and assert our access to environmental knowledge. During the *YoW*, this material will be transposed into three online transmissions, each elevating a different dimension of the data and its contributors.

Project: Open-weather (Soph Dyer, Sasha Engelmann)
Design and code with Rectangle (Lizzie Malcom, Daniel Powers)
Open-weather apt decoder with Rectangle, Bill Liles (NQ6Z), Grayson Earle
Automatic Ground Station with Grayson Earle
Drawings: Golrokh Nafisi
Open-weather extends authorship and gratitude to Automatic Ground Station hosts, members of the Open-weather network and all contributors to the Open-weather Public Archive.

https://u.aec.at/C35E651B

Teresa Cos

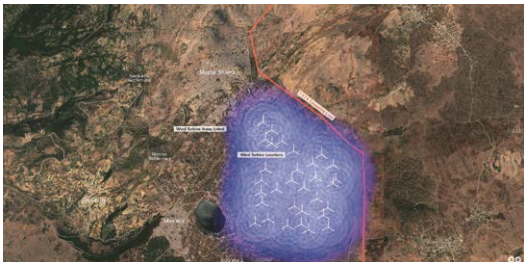
Teresa Cos

Ruth Klückers

Open-weather (INT) is a feminist experiment in imaging and imagining the earth and its weather systems using DIY tools. Co-led by researcher-designer Soph Dyer and geographer Sasha Engelmann since 2020, open-weather makes artworks, leads inclusive workshops, and develops resources on satellite imagery reception. A network has formed around the project, currently numbering more than one hundred DIY Satellite Ground Station operators around the world, from Buenos Aires to Berlin. Open-weather has been supported by UK research councils, artistic commissions, and international residency programs.

Zifzafa

Lawrence Abu Hamdan



A digital tool, a performance, and a multichannel video installation, *Zifzafa* advocates for the sonic self-determination of the people of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights (Jawlan). Developed in collaboration with Al Marsad, it is a video game simulation of the noise pollution caused by wind turbines that seeks to safeguard the auditory life of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights against further acts of occupation and dispossession, and to highlight the fundamental role of sound in the formation of a community. In 1967, Israel seized and occupied 95% of the Jawlan, displacing 131,000 people across 344 villages. Those who remained have since endured military occupation. In summer 2023, in response to an Israeli government project to build 31 wind turbines—the world's largest (256 m)—on the last piece of land allocated to them, Jawlanis protested on a scale not seen in 40 years. Depending on wind speed, each turbine generates between 70dB-90dB of noise—equivalent to a busy highway. The project's acoustic footprint will be 16 km², a quarter of the Jawlanis' allocated area.

Zifzafa demonstrates the force of this sonic annexation, and features over 40 field recordings by Jawlani artists, to serve as an archive of a sonic life under threat.

A project by Earshot (Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Fabio Cervi, Caline Matar, Adnan Naqvi)
Sound recording: Adam Laschinger; Busher Kanj Abu Saleh
Special thanks to: Shada Safadi and Wael Tarabieh
With support from: Barakat Contemporary, Munch Museum Oslo, Alserkal Arts Foundation, Festival d'Automne à Paris, CENTQUATRE-PARIS, and L'Art Rue as part of Dream City 2025

https://u.aec.at/0E278238

Lawrence Abu Hamdan (LB) has over a decade of experience investigating audio and a doctorate from the University of London on the role of sound in legal investigations. In 2023 he founded Earshot the world's first not-for-profit organization dedicated to the study of audio for human rights and environmental advocacy. His work has been presented in the form of forensic reports, lectures, and live performances, films, publications, and exhibitions all over the world. Abu Hamdan projects are part of collections at Reina Sofia, MoMA, Guggenheim, Hamburger Bahnhof, Van Abbe Museum, Centre Pompidou, and Tate Modern.

Grand Prize of the European Union
promoting a S+T+ARTS approach
to digital innovation in Africa

S+T+ARTS PRIZE AFRICA

Funded by the European Union

S+T+ARTS

S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence is funded by the European Union under the STARTS—Science, Technology and Arts initiative of DG CNECT under grant agreement LC-03568051. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or DG CNECT. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

"Addressing the world's complex challenges demands integrated, holistic thinking. Fragmented approaches are no longer viable. Instead, we need a unified vision that considers the ripple effects across all systems and communities. This necessitates not only blending diverse perspectives from science, technology, and the arts, but also fostering robust international cooperation across every continent. Only by collaborating, and truly valuing ideas from all corners of the globe, can we achieve meaningful progress."

Peter Burian
Programme Officer S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence and S+T+ARTS Aqua Motion
Programme Manager at DG Connect, European Commission

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa

Ars Electronica is delighted to award the STARTS Prize Africa for the second time in 2025, together with new consortium partners CHRONIQUES, GLUON, and the Royal Museum for Central Africa, as part of the European Union's project *STARTS Afropean Intelligence.*

Launched in 2024, the African edition of the well-established STARTS Prize highlights creative practices at the intersection of science, technology, and the arts across the continent. With a Grand Prize of €15,000 and five Awards of Distinction of €3,000 each, STARTS Prize Africa recognizes projects and initiatives that creatively tackle complex issues, promote a diverse and sustainable society and offer visionary pathways towards positive social, humanitarian, economic, or political change. Submissions span a broad spectrum of disciplines from mixed reality and performance to AI, biotech, design, gaming, and more.

Open to citizens, residents, and legal entities from all African countries, the prize attracted an overwhelming response with 537 entries from 33 countries in its second year, following 405 submissions in its inaugural edition. Using the STARTS Prize methodology STARTS Prize Africa combined an open call and nominations by expert advisors to ensure diversity and excellence. The six winners were selected by a jury of five high-profile distinguished members from a variety of fields of expertise, based both in Europe and Africa. The Grand Prize winner and the selected Awards of Distinction will be showcased at the Ars Electronica Festival 2025 in Linz.

As a key initiative of the European Commission, the STARTS Prize Africa reflects a broader commitment to deepening EU-African cooperation by spotlighting Africa's dynamic creative ecosystems and supporting visionary innovators that shape a more inclusive, sustainable future. Since 2024, the EU has placed increased emphasis on arts-driven innovation across specific world regions, recognizing the transformative potential of local creativity and technology in addressing global challenges. This strategic focus is exemplified not only by the second edition of the STARTS Prize Africa, but also by the launch of the first edition of the STARTS Prize South America in 2025—marking a significant step in expanding STARTS' global engagement and fostering cross-continental collaboration.

Between Promise and Practice: Emerging Technologies in African Art

Andrea Barschdorf-Hager, Mónica Bello, Joy Mawela, Kathleen Siminyu, Tau Tavengwa

The STARTS Prize Africa is in its second edition. In 2025 the prize received a record 537 submissions that presented a 33% increase from the 2024 edition. After the pre-screening round to ensure that submissions met the eligibility criteria of the award, the judges were left with 80 submissions to review. This year's projects showcased remarkable diversity and depth, with a strong emphasis on social impact through the lens of culture and technology. Immersive reality projects dominated the submissions, accompanied by a range of works in AI generated content, gaming, 3D designs, and 360-degree installations. A significant number of projects incorporated AI-generated content—some with impressive execution, while others highlighted the growing need for better conceptual understanding and technical refinement in the use of emerging tools.

We found a trend of repositories. Repositories in the sense of datasets; of African motion—with discrete data points being the action of carrying a baby on one's back, washing clothes by hand, and professional mourners at a funeral; African soundscapes—with one project creating an instrument that replicates the city sounds of Nairobi with the infamous matatu (mini-buses used for transportation) horns in the background, and a second collecting snippets of stories of hope and nature-like sounds.

Poor waste management and the global norms of industries such as the textile and electronics industries shipping their waste off to Africa where it finds a home in landfills was a recurring theme. Submissions highlighted Agbogbloshie in Ghana, the world's largest e-waste dump, the lives of the communities that make a living off of and around the dumpsite, and their hopes for a better life, another takes us through the e-waste lifecycle through the perspective of key stakeholders in the lifecycle of these gadgets: miners, manufacturers, distributors, consumers, repairers, second-hand dealers, scrap dealers, and recyclers.

Access to clean water remains a challenge on the African continent and several projects tackle this issue through the proposition of and material design of water filters that make use of indigenous technologies and advanced IoT sensors and devices to decentralize access to clean water.

Fashion was approached with ingenuity, notably in a Kenyan project that collaborated with a banana plantation to experiment with sustainable fabric production, combining agricultural waste with advanced digital tools such as 3D printers and CNC machines.

Submissions highlighted the environmental impacts of mining activities, sand and crude oil mining, in contexts where no safe guards, care or reclamation activities are organized to mitigate these effects. Illegal oil bunkering in Bayelsia, Nigeria and sand mining in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where urban expansion is at odds with the natural environment as sand is harvested for construction. This second work, *Sands Of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through*, is an award winner.

A couple of pieces bring us to reflect on African labor that has contributed greatly to industrialization efforts in Europe and in North America, yet is not acknowledged but instead made invisible. One of these is an award-winning submission, *The Founder's Pillars*. The second highlights the case of Moroccan laborers recruited to work in coal mines in France, an archival record with audio testimonials, 3D scanned letters, and documentation of the labor recruitment system used in France at the time.

There is an inherent desire in popular culture that the Internet, and the underlying technologies, were designed with motivations such as care, transparency, and reciprocity rather than the capitalistic driven ecosystem we currently have. A couple of

submissions reflect on the digital infrastructures that enable connectivity on the African continent and their mapping onto transatlantic trade routes, uncovering the entanglement of colonial histories and innovation. While another imagines what the internet would look like if it was designed to mirror ancestral systems of knowledge production which prioritized the dissemination of wisdom over mere information, thus designing a 'proverbial protocol,' based on the premise of proverbs as linguistic technology.

Recurring themes of slavery, ancestral belief systems, archives, tradition, and spiritual identity echoed strongly throughout many of the projects. However, one of the more pressing concerns across all categories was the evident underdevelopment of several submissions and the misapplication of new media technologies like AI and VR. In many instances, these tools were used superficially or repurposed into concepts that lacked originality, depth, or cultural coherence.

Overall, while the creative landscape is rich with ideas and cultural resonance, the need for more thoughtful integration of technology and deeper project development remains critical to unlocking the full potential of these innovative works.

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa

Grand Prize

The Wild Future Lab

Kairos Futura

"What does it mean to make a future entirely built here, and what could we make if we work with what's already available here?" These two questions framed Kairos Futura's winning entry for the STARTS Prize Africa 2025.

A trans-disciplinary collective of artists, designers, engineers, and scientists, the organization's *Wild Future Lab*, which commenced in 2023, imagines a future in which re-wilding has successfully turned Nairobi into a city that's more harmonious with nature and that has built a self-reliance based on the resources available to it without the need to import goods from elsewhere. Rather than embarking on a merely conceptual world-building exercise, the lab has focused on the resources, skills, crafts and other maker traditions and energies that anyone can find in daily Kenyan life.

The results of their experiments are as varied as the eclectic ideas at the heart of the project. Recognizing the expense and difficulty of getting textile equipment in Kenya, they used open-source blueprints to build their own fully operational prototypes to allow them to turn raw fiber into threads, followed by a series of experiments in growing flux, designing and building other processing tools, resulting in the successful spinning of the first thread in Kenya in over 70 years, a result of the thinning out of manufacturing capacity across the country that has happened since gaining independence. Further experimentation has resulted in the production of non-synthetic, local fabric from banana fibers and other materials and processes that have been used as the basis for the design and development of a range of "wearable artefacts of the future"—climate resilient garments made from the new materials together with recycled solar panels, discarded billboards, and other materials. The garments look as good and are as imaginative and appealing as the ideas behind them.

Africa, as a continent, needs to imagine itself differently and on its own terms. Kairos Futura (KF), through *The Wild Future Lab*, and in the rest of their work, boldly proposes what a re-imagining process might look like in ways that challenge the familiar, are fun, and transcend genre, form, discipline, and

appeal. By directly challenging how we imagine the future from a Kenyan/Nairobi perspective, KF is daring Africans to wildly engage one aspect of life on the continent—developing a new, homegrown imaginary of both the present and the future—that is in desperate need of attention, and new approaches. Many such attempts exist, but most are exercises in mere, often shallow, image-making without substance. They turn into the creation of fantasies that replicate, express and respawn ideas from Europe and elsewhere without convincingly managing to demonstrate how they are truly responding to their context and solving present and future challenges. They fail to demonstrate how those ideas can move us from where we are now to a different future.

Kairo's Futura's *Wild Future Lab* attempts to build the beginnings of that roadmap in modest but inspiring ways through continuing experiments that involve dreaming, developing, and testing, and prototyping new ideas and objects. This is why, as a jury, we found them deserving of the 2025 STARTS Africa Grand Prize.

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa

Awards of Distinction

Fisherchild

Traci Kwaai, Lo-Def Film Factory (Francois Knoetze & Amy Louise Wilson), Kyle Marais

This is a powerful story about the history of forced removals in the Colored community, tracing back over six generations. Kalk Bay is one of Cape Town's most economically significant areas. The fishing industry serves as the backdrop for this narrative. Through immersive reality, the project seeks to preserve and share the rich heritage of the Kalk Bay community, as narrated by Traci Kwaai—an activist, teacher, and artist. In this work, new media collective Lo-Def Film Factory, together with developer Kyle Marais, joins forces with Kwaai, using Virtual Reality, 3D scanning, and Augmented Reality to map how community's experiences of dispossession and marginalization intersect with larger global patterns of inequality and exclusion. The material for the 3D worlds will be created through workshops with the *Fisherchild* community, a network assembled by Kwaai of young community members. The aim of these lo-fi, DIY workshops is to assemble images, audio recordings, drawings, songs, and performances, remixing and collaging historical material into digital media that can form part of the knowledge corpus that houses this project.

Sands Of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through

Ala Praxis

Sand mining is an urgent, devastating act of environmental sabotage that is devastating rivers and other ecosystems across the global South. Driven by the ravenous demands for the raw material with which our ever-expanding built fabric—cities, roads, infrastructure—is constructed, insufficient attention is paid to this persistent challenge, threatening the stability of entire ecosystems and the livelihoods they support.

Engaging people in this important topic is not easy. After all, sand or soil seems like an infinite resource to the average eye. It's everywhere. If only it were that easy. Enter Ala Praxis with their project *Sands Of Time*, in which they demonstrate a sharp understanding of the urgency of this topic.

A mixed-media installation consisting of multiple elements, including VR, various videos and audio, a prayer room, and an interactive giant sundial, Ala Praxis weaves a time travel tale. Still, it ultimately brings the viewer down to earth—witnessing the devastating effects of this ruinous activity from the perspective of a time traveler who has stepped back in time from x years in the future to understand how sand mining activities devastated the earth, leading to catastrophe. Ala Praxis proves that speculative fiction can be a powerful tool for helping us anticipate what might come and connecting the present to a yet-to-be-written future, stirring us away from taking paths that might imperil not only ourselves but the planet.

The Founders Pillars

Meghna Singh, Simon Wood, Lesiba Mabitsela

The Founders Pillars by Meghna Singh, Simon Wood, and Lesiba Mabitsela is a powerful and poetic augmented reality installation that reimagines collective memory through site-specific digital storytelling. By weaving the personal histories of six enslaved individuals once owned by the founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

William Barton Rogers, the work transforms the architectural columns of the university's façade into living monuments of resistance and resilience. Through artificial intelligence-generated imagery, African textile traditions, and evocative soundscapes, it opens portals into fantastical visual worlds that honor lost lives and untold histories. Technically refined yet easily accessible via smartphone or tablet, the project challenges viewers to confront how institutions of prestige and innovation are rooted in the histories of enslavement. A collaboration between artists from South Africa, India, and Ireland, *The Founders Pillars* connects continents, memories, and myths. It stands as a courageous example of how immersive technologies can foster remembrance, cultural healing, and a reimagining of institutional legacies.

Black Planetarium—Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic
Kidus Hailesilassie

Black Planetarium—Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic features an immersive dance performance, one that is layered with several forms. The premise of the performance centers the body as an archive, and in fact the project was conceptualized as a reimagination of the architecture of existing archives, such as museums. In the case of this performance, the body is an archive featuring Adowa, a type of dance performed by the Ashanti people of Ghana where the body movements narrate a story. The dance choreography is set in the midst of a cluster of over 6,500 characters from African and diasporic writing systems, in motion, suspended in the space. These characters are a nod to the fact that African languages make up one third of the world's languages, are systems of knowledge generation, represent ancestral stories relating to the continent, and are spiritually connected to the African diaspora. The work in documenting these characters has been ongoing since 2020, it has involved collecting fragments of pictographs, ideographs, and syllabaries from historical records such as books, calendars, and paintings as well as building upon the works of Saki Mafundikwa in his book *African Alphabets*. *Uncharted* reimagines archives as an experience of embodied collective memories in a virtual space.

Written To Not Remain
Tewa Barnosa

In postwar Libya, normalized violence pervades daily life, eroding hope and stability. Ongoing wars and foreign interventions have deepened misery, replacing peace with chaos. This persistent insecurity stifles recovery, leaving a fractured society struggling to rebuild amid unending conflict and forgotten international promises. Yet, even in this harsh reality, the desire for dignity and self-expression persists. Graffiti in Tripoli is a form of speaking up for many. It appears on walls across the city; some pieces are political, criticizing militias, foreign powers, or past regimes. Others call for peace, justice, or freedom. In a place where open speech is risky, writings on walls provide people with a voice. In this landscape, artists like Tewa Barnosa play a vital role. Her work, especially *Written To Not Remain*, captures the struggle for voice and memory in a society marked by silence and fragmentation. Through bold artistic expression, she resists erasure, documents lived experience, and reclaims space for truth.

Written To Not Remain is based on a visual investigation looking into the acts of writing on the walls across post-revolution Libya. Built on a foundation of research, writing, photography, and 3D spatial scanning, the work unfolds as an immersive visual experience shaped by digital production tools. It explores the act of inscribing words on walls throughout Libya; each inscription marks a fleeting yet powerful trace of lived experience, public reflection, or protest. Some inscriptions confront the normalization of violence and the suffering caused by ongoing conflict and interventions. Others evoke unsettling images of war zones or reveal dark humor as a coping mechanism in the face of fear. Together, they form a quiet yet persistent language of resistance or an unspoken narrative etched into public spaces and embedded in the shared consciousness of a silenced society. In regimes where art is often seen as a threat, her practice is both defiant and hopeful, a reminder that even in the darkest times, creativity endures as a force of resistance and freedom.

The Wild Future Lab

Kairos Futura

Iddah Akinyi

Adams Rop

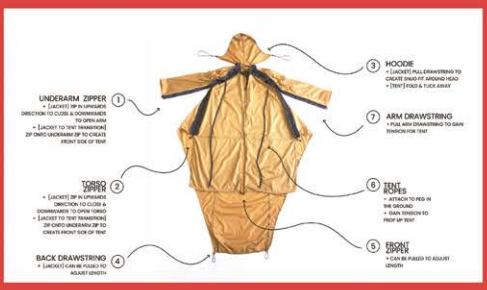
The Wild Future Lab imagined Nairobi in 2045 as a metropolis where ecological systems and urban life have been transformed through regeneration and biomimetic design. This speculative worldbuilding project explores how fashion can respond to—and help facilitate—a transition toward rewilded urban spaces. Set in a future where abandoned greenhouses and forgotten infrastructure have been reclaimed by native flora and fauna, the project included an exploration of textiles, machines, and garments that exist at the intersection of locally made materials, adaptation, and ecological integration.

The conceptual foundation of *The Wild Future Lab* emerged from urgent questions facing many African cities: How might we design for resilience in the face of climate uncertainty? What relationships between humans and non-human species could flourish in post-extractive urban environments? How can fashion serve as both a practical technology and cultural narrative in rewilded spaces?

At the core of the project's research was the synthesis of traditional Kenyan craft techniques with innovative approaches to textile production. Storytelling led our inquiries, but we also wanted to produce tangible results and not just fantasies about what might be possible in the future here. We built fabric electronic spinning machines using 3D-printed components and open-source CNC files. With these tools, we now hope to create a distributed manufacturing system that will enable community-level textile production. Our team scientist,

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa
Grand Prize

JACKET SPECIFICATIONS



TENT SPECIFICATIONS

KAIROS FUTURA

THE TENT JACKET

Lea Oneko

Willy Ng'ang'a, worked with Zaida Crafts, to experiment with banana fiber extraction and processing—conducting systematic tests on enzyme treatments, mechanical separation techniques, and softening protocols that can transform this agricultural waste into a viable textile. These experiments, along with tests on nettle, pineapple, and vegan silk fibers, led us to look into flax and the development of linen because it grows well in Kenya, can be produced sustainably, and is already a viable material and not an experimental one. Abdul Rop grew an ⅛ of an acre of flax successfully and we then created the tools for breaking the flax to extract the fibers and spin them on the e-spinners. From our research, we believe we may be the first people to have created linen thread in Kenya since before World War II.

The Wild Future Lab extended beyond our research and experiments to encompass a participatory design methodology. Through a series of workshops with Nairobi-based designers, the project developed speculative worldbuilding techniques that help participants envision and articulate their own perspectives on rewilded urban futures. These collaborative imagination exercises serve as the foundation for material experimentation and design development, creating a feedback loop between conceptual exploration and making.

The collection was photographed in partially abandoned greenhouse structures, creating a visual dialogue between the speculative future garments and environments that hint at possible transitions already underway. These images document the potential relationships between people, material futures, and evolving ecosystems.

The Wild Future Lab explored fashion design as a form of critical future-making—a practice that doesn't just respond to changing environmental conditions but actively participates in imagining and materializing regenerative possibilities. By presenting concrete artifacts from a speculative future, the project invites viewers to consider how current design decisions might contribute to the emergence of more rewilded and resilient urban environments.

Ajax Axe

Ajax Axe

Ajax Axe

Adams Rop

Ajax Axe

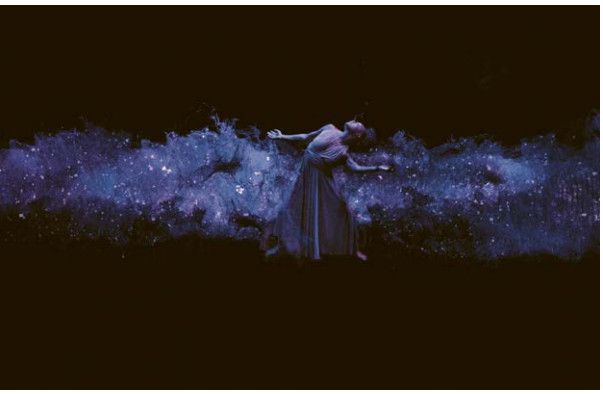
Lead creative team: Kairos Futura
Workshop facilitation: Kairos Futura Team and New Order of Fashion
Photography: Ajax Axe and Adams Rop
With support from Stimuleringsfonds and Netherlands programs by New Order of Fashion

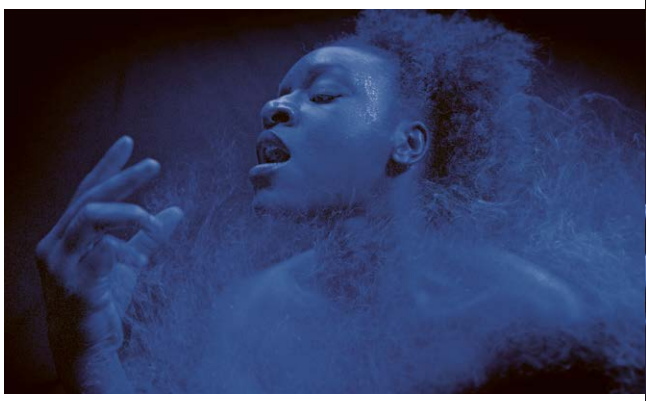
https://u.aec.at/04ED85D0

Kairos Futura (KE) is an arts futurist collective whose work explores the intersection of art, ecological resilience, worldbuilding, and speculative futures. Founded by Abdul Rop, Ajax Axe, and Lincoln Mwangi, the collective's practice combines imaginative futuring with critical design methodologies to address environmental and social challenges in East Africa. Their previous projects have been exhibited at Milan Design Week, Nairobi Design Week, The UN Headquarters, and Triennale Milano. Through *The Wild Future Lab*, Kairos Futura investigated how fashion can function as both a practical technology and cultural narrative in imagining post-extractive relationships between humans and ecosystems. The collective has been recognized for its innovative approach to futuring and its engagement with traditional Kenyan craftsmanship in dialogue with emerging technologies.

Black Planetarium—Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic

Kidus Hailesilassie





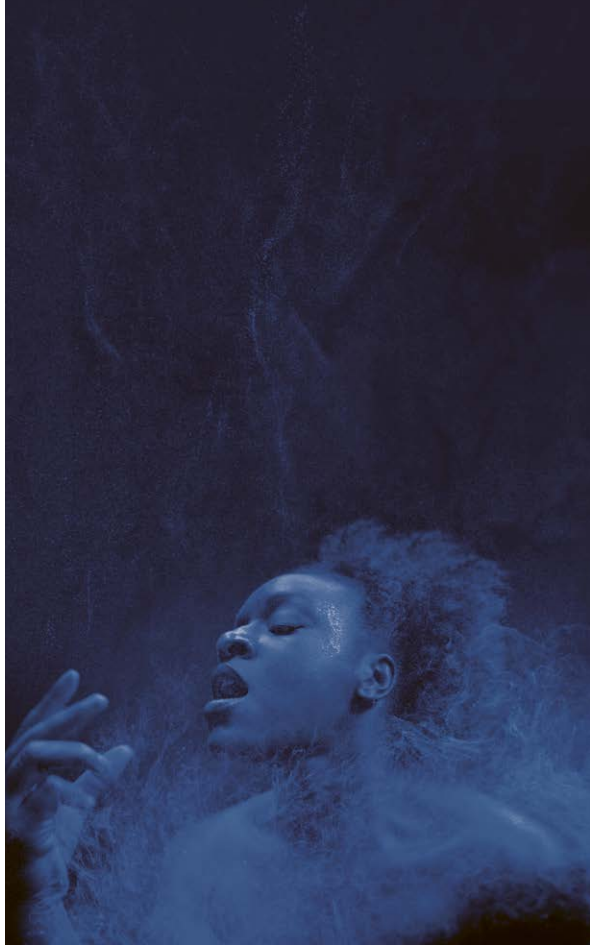
Black Planetarium—Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic is a cosmic performance installation inspired by 5,000 years of knowledge generation from the continent of Africa.

Meticulously developed since 2020 as part of the project *Black Planetarium*, *Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic* is conceived as a nonlinear, multimodal, collaborative experience—where ancestral knowledge, speculative storytelling, cartography, and performance converge.

It is shaped by Kidus Hailesilassie's earlier cartographic large-scale installation, *Ancestral Algorithm* (2019–2023), which collected, digitized, and mapped over 6,500 pictographs, ideographs, syllabaries, alphabets, and iconographs from twenty African languages. Using a combination of custom workflows, pirated AI tools, machine vision, and crowd-sourced spatial-sonic computation, it weaves these knowledge systems into a cosmic performance inspired by Adowa—a dance practiced by the Ashanti community in Ghana, where the body's movements narrate a story.

It is a collaboration between Kidus Hailesilassie, an Ethiopian artist, architect, and futurist, and Ghanaian choreographer and cultural producer Elisabeth Efua Sutherland. At its core, *Uncharted: Anthologies Across the Atlantic* moves through the method of critical fabulation—mapping different forms of collective consciousness across the continent and its diaspora. Through this process, the body becomes an archive, centering oral expression that moves beyond writing systems and creating a vessel for ancestral storytelling.

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa
Award of Distinction



It is both a physical and virtual platform that bridges the continent and its diaspora, the past and the future, and the material with the ephemeral. *Uncharted* revisits the legacy of African resistance, amplifying alternative decolonial knowledge generation and embodying the ethos of Afro-Surrealism—as a lens for reimagining collective futures.

Created by: Kidus Hailesilassie
Choreography: Elisabeth Efua Sutherland
Performance: Harmony Adams
Filming and production collaborator:
Ainslee Alem Robson
Producer: Liam Young, Kidus Hailesilassie,
Ainslee Alem Robson
Executive producer for Black Public Media: Lisa Osborne
Immersive producer: Aja Quinn Evans
Creative direction and production design:
Kidus Hailesilassie
Visual effects simulation: Jann Frederik Reuter

https://u.aec.at/31E7E635

Kidus Hailesilassie (ET) is an Ethiopian spatial artist and futurist whose work bridges cartography, physical installation, and film. Drawing on his background in architecture, he explores spatial improvisation rooted in Afro-diasporic and Black expressive modalities. His practice engages themes of collective memory and speculative futures. Kidus is a 2025 Royal Shakespeare Company and Brooklyn Academy of Music Fellow, 2025 International Documentary Association (IDA) Fellow, a 2022–2024 Artist-in-Residence at Black Public Media and the MIT Open Documentary Lab, and ONASSIS, ONX artist member since 2022. His work has been featured internationally at institutions and festivals including MIT, Cornell University, the Venice Architecture Biennale, African Future Institute, Venice Film Festival, Contemporary And (C&), the Geneva International Film Festival, IDFA, Sundance, among others.

Kidus Hailesilassie

Fisherchild

Traci Kwaai, Lo-Def Film Factory (Francois Knoetze & Amy Louise Wilson), Kyle Marais

Ashraf Hendricks

Fisherchild is a community-based new media project which translates the oral storytelling archive of a small South African fishing community into an interactive digital repository of indigenous marine knowledge. *Fisherchild* builds on the ancestral and archival work of sixth-generation fisher child Traci Kwaai, who archives and retells the stories of the centuries-old Kalk Bay indigenous fishing community whose livelihoods are threatened by lack of access to marine resources. As a child growing up under apartheid, Kwaai was denied access to the ocean spaces she lived across from. Today, she works to create access to the ocean for the youth in her community.

The project was co-created by the artist duo Lo-Def Film Factory (Francois Knoetze & Amy Louise Wilson) and creative technologist Kyle Marais. Combining new media storytelling technologies like 360 video, photogrammetry, and VR with traditional knowledge and practices, this project creates a repository for holding the stories of the Black and Brown communities of Kalk Bay, as well as a prototype for an archive of indigenous cultural knowledge. It aims to digitally preserve the cultural heritage and identity of this community through the creation of a game-engine built experience which houses the 3D documentation of important artefacts, sites, and oral histories, as well as a site-specific audio walking tour. In a workshop series, youth from Kalk Bay created hand-made media that contributed to the VR experience, working directly with the artists and technologists in a shared creative process. This project is an important contribution to the growing field of African 3D digital cultural heritage.

Beyond the digital work, the project also addressed local socio-economic challenges. It included the establishment of a community kitchen experiment, where locals produced jarred products linked via QR code to a newly-created app as a means to generate income. This initiative was a prototype for what community-led income generation could look like.

Ashraf Hendricks

Traci Kwaai, Lo-Def Film Factory, Kyle Marais

Created by Traci Kwaai, Lo-Def Film Factory
(Francois Knoetze & Amy Louise Wilson) and Kyle Marais
in collaboration with Fisher Child youth
With support from: the Heritage Management
Organization and the Mellon Foundation

https://u.aec.at/9521FC25

Traci Kwaai (ZA), a sixth-generation fisher child from Kalk Bay, is a storyteller, activist, teacher, and entrepreneur. She leads the "Walk of Remembrance," which highlights the history and marginalization of her community, who have lived in Kalk Bay for over 300 years. The **Lo-Def Film Factory** (ZA), artist duo **Francois Knoetze** and **Amy Louise Wilson**, blend archival research, video art, collage, sculptural installation, and new media. They focus on engaging young people in participatory research-creation projects. **Kyle Marais** (ZA), an XR developer and new media artist from South Africa, explores the intersection of technology and art. He specializes in creating immersive 6DoF VR experiences, focusing on non-linear storytelling and interactive environments.

Sands Of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through

Ala Praxis

Sands of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through is an architectural, multi-sensory installation that explores the delicate relationship between urban expansion and environmental degradation in Dar es Salaam. This immersive installation invites participants into a space where the boundaries between present and future blur, drawing them into the narrative of sand—a vanishing resource that supports the city's rapid development while simultaneously eroding coastlines, destroying habitats, and displacing communities.

Utilizing interactive projections, sound, photography, text, found object art, animation, and experimental construction techniques, the experience looks into the dual nature of sand: a vital building block of modern cities and a force of destruction when extracted irresponsibly. The work looks into the tension between Dar es Salaam's vibrant coastal life and the growing threat of environmental collapse, emphasizing the delicate balance endangered by unchecked sand extraction.

More than just presenting sand mining as an environmental issue, *Sands of Time: Walls We Can Walk Through* frames it as a deeply human crisis. The installation offers space for contemplation, asking whether the future will be defined by a landscape of ruin or by alternatives where development, participation, and sustainability coexist.

Ultimately, the project serves as both a cautionary tale and a vision of possibility. It urges us to look beneath the surface of rapid urbanization to confront its far-reaching consequences—for the coastlines we shape and the communities whose livelihoods depend on it.

This project was realized through the *STARTS4AFRICA* project co-funded by the European Union under the STARTS – Science, Technology and Arts initiative of DG CNECT (GA no. LC-01960720).

Residency hosts: INOVA+, Nafasi Art Space
Ala Praxis: Philip Fagbeyiro, Peace Olatunji, Timilehin Osanyintolu, Jadesola Olaniyan, Noah Okwudini, Josh Egesi
Installation and construction: Mufaddal Nagree, Abubakari Ibondo, Salamu Abdala, Haji China, Siyani Mponda, Imanueli Sanga, Omari Hamis, Acley Mwalusamba
Technical support: Bukunmi Oyedapo
Sound, audio & translation: John Kitime, Salma Munde, Rhoda Kambenga
Curatorial research and support: Jesse Mpango, Mariam Gichan Athman, George Freemason Msuya
Animation: Gwamaka Mwabuka, Dianne-Maryline Charles, Shalom Micky, Ally Mtandilla, Efraim Lyimo, Tai Animations Studio

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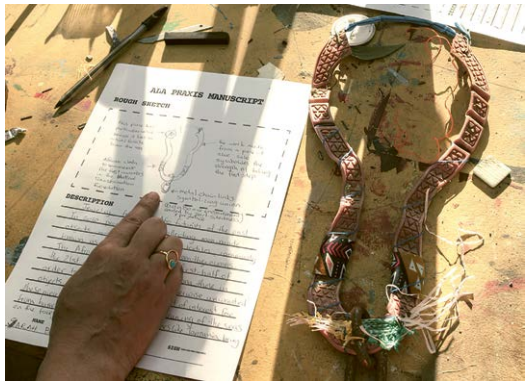
S+T+ARTS Prize Africa Award of Distinction

Philip Fagbeyiro



Ala Praxis (NG) (founded 2024) is a research-driven art collective committed to addressing urgent environmental and human challenges through pioneering experiments at the intersection of art, science, technology, and society. As an interdisciplinary group, we draw on the diverse expertise of anthropologists, architects, animators, design and visual artists, curators, writers, worldbuilders, sound artists, and experimental thinkers. Together, we investigate, ideate, and create imaginative responses to the pressing societal issues of our time, particularly those linked to the environment and cultural preservation.

Noah Okwudini

The Founders Pillars

Meghna Singh, Simon Wood, Lesiba Mabitsela

The Founder's Pillars is a site responsive Augmented Reality (AR) memorial and multimedia installation that transforms the neoclassical pillars of the New York Stock Exchange and MIT's Rogers Building into dynamic monuments honoring the African diaspora. It weaves decolonial practices of freedom-making by fusing colonial architecture with African futurist storytelling rooted in textile traditions.

A continuing and travelling project, its current iterations digitally wrap the columns of both buildings in six animated textiles, each representing a region of the African continent. At MIT, these smart fabrics augment the columns that uphold the name of its founder William Barton Rogers, who once enslaved six individuals. At the New York Stock Exchange, a symbol of capitalism built on the commodification of human lives, the same fabrics activate its columns, transforming these pillars of institutional power into dynamic sites of remembrance and resistance. An accompanying installation at Water Street Projects features a power loom that digitally weaves African fabrics, revealing the ancestral knowledge embedded in their designs.

Developed by South Africa-based artists through the MIT Open Documentary Lab, *The Founders Pillars* draws from six regions of the African continent, each represented by a distinct textile, an associated myth or story, brought to life by AI-generated films and AR. As a travelling memorial, the project uses sound, animation, and smart textile visualization to embed ancestral memory and cosmology into digital cloth, activating public space. The experience not only reveals suppressed histories but celebrates African interconnectedness. As a communal audio-visual technological experience, it transforms pillars of colonial power into spaces of decolonial expression.

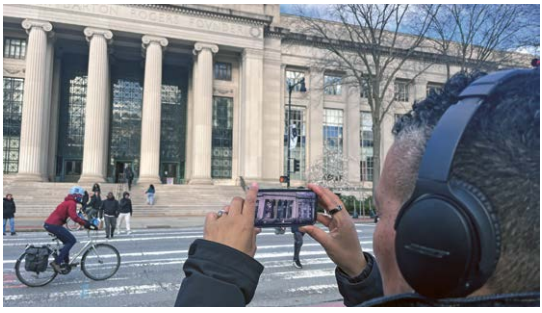
Simon Wood

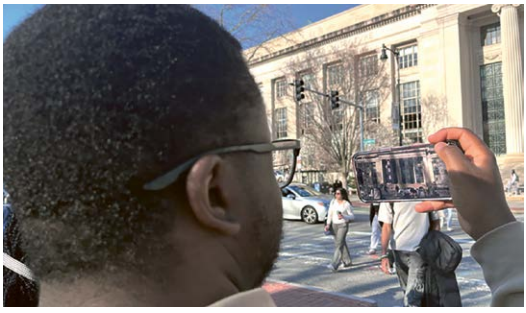

Simon Wood


Simon Wood


Simon Wood

Simon Wood


Meghna Singh


Meghna Singh


Simon Wood


Simon Wood

Co-creators: Dr Meghna Singh, Simon Wood, Lesiba Mabitsela
Editor and After Effects: Michael Carter
Augmented Reality: Nicolas Robbe @ Hoverlay
Incubated at the MIT Open Documentary Lab

https://u.aec.at/77F1D2BC

Meghna Singh (IN) is a visual artist and researcher with a PhD in visual anthropology. Working across video, XR, and public installations, she explores themes of migration, digital decoloniality, and immersive storytelling. **Lesiba Mabitsela** (ZA) is a Johannesburg-based fashion practitioner and co-founder of the Africa Fashion Research Institute. Lesiba is a former recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation scholarship and was named one of Vogue Business' Top 100 Next-Gen Entrepreneurs and Agitators for 2023. **Simon Wood** (IE) is an Emmy-nominated filmmaker based in Cape Town. His work explores capitalism and historical memory, and has screened at notable international festivals including Venice, Tribeca, and IDFA. All three are based in South Africa.

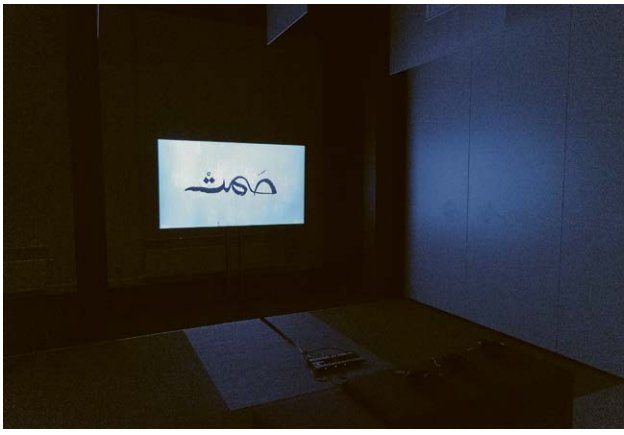
Written To Not Remain

Tewa Barnosa

Written To Not Remain is an ongoing visual investigation looking into the act of writing on the walls across post-revolution Libya. Positioning collective statements as ephemeral evidence of contemporary and historical events, social commentary, correspondences, or often silent protests, serving as testimonies of the times from 2011 onwards, reflecting the state of the world through the Western-led manufactured wars in Libya.

The (12'30) video work combines archival imagery and acts made inside a VR simulation. Tewa Barnosa recontextualizes a photo archive she began collecting from 2019 onwards, elaborating on a few happenings from over 200 images of writings, as source materials alongside a text recitation. Many of those statements refuse the normalization of everyday violence and death; some are prevailing dark dystopian or alarming realities, in

Tewa Barnosa



direct reference to previous frontlines and battlefields. Some carry the surreal irony of the times. Barnosa's work questions the notion of world building in those social gestures and speculates their futures in a digitalized reality and a world led by a technologically militarized economy.

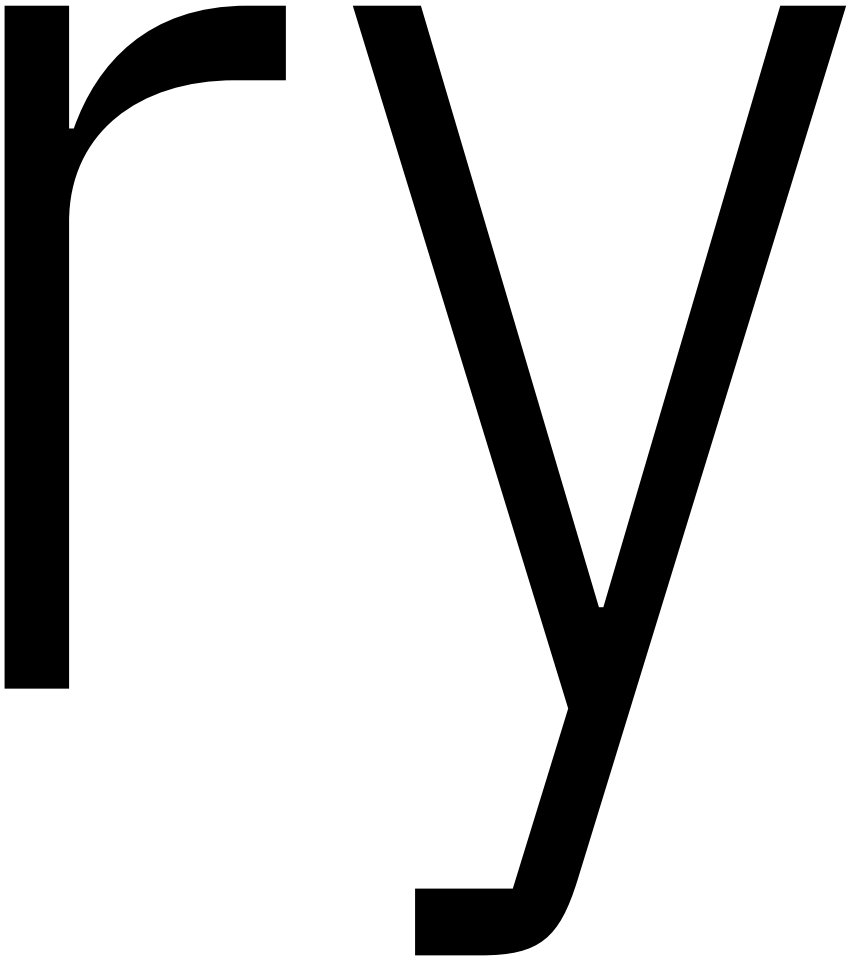
Edited by Moon studio
With support from:
Amsterdam Kunst Fonds

https://u.aec.at/670AA254

Tewa Barnosa (LY) is an interdisciplinary artist and cultural producer based between Tripoli and Amsterdam, whose practice spans visual arts, time-based media, performance, and curatorial collaborations. Grounded in critical curiosity- and research-based knowledge reinterpretation and production, her work examines historical events and political contradictions with an interest in language and anti-colonial modes of communication. Barnosa recontextualizes images, sounds, objects, investigates war archives, Bedouin and Amazigh oral literature, fiction, and mythologies. She attempts to interweave fragments of evidence concerning human alienation and socio-ecological turbulence, intersecting with notions of contemporary warfare and the violations of cognitive and cultural means of resistance.

Koosje Koolbergen

Ju



Prix Ars Electronica 2025
Jury members

New Animation Art
Boris Eldagsen, Ayoung Kim, Ari Melenciano, Everardo Reyes, Liz Rosenthal, and Ars Electronica Team

Artificial Life & Intelligence
Clemens Apprich, Tamar Clarke-Brown, Charlotte Jarvis, Špela Petrič, Simon Weckert, and Ars Electronica Team

Digital Musics & Sound Art
Miriam Akkermann, Dietmar Lupfer, Kamila Metwaly, Ali Nikrang, Nao Tokui, and Ars Electronica Team

u19–create your world
Vivian Bausch, Clara Donat, Jan G. Grünwald, Katharina Hof, Conny Lee, and Ars Electronica Team

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity
Regina Rusz, Katalin Tünde Huber,
Thomas Kloiber, Veronika Liebl, Gerfried Stocker

European Union Prize for Citizen Science
Katja Mayer, Dusan Misevic, Josep Perelló,
Marleen Stikker, Sarah West, and
Ars Electronica Team

S+T+ARTS Prize'25
Francesca Bria, Veronica D'Souza,
Thomas Gegenhuber, Irini Papadimitriou,
Asako Tomura, and Ars Electronica Team

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa
Andrea Barschdorf-Hager, Mónica Bello,
Joy Mawela, Kathleen Siminyu, Tau Tavengwa,
and Ars Electronica Team

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Prix Ars Electronica 2025 Jury members

New Animation Art

Boris Eldagsen (DE) is a Berlin-based photo-media artist, he studied intermedia arts and philosophy. Being one of the internationally acclaimed experts on AI-generated images, his refusal of the Sony World Photo Awards in 2023 kicked-off a global debate about AI-generated images. His AI image "The Electrician" became "the picture that stopped the world" *(The Guardian).* He exhibited at ELEKTRA Montréal, EMAF Osnabrück, New Media Scotland, BEAP Perth, Expanded.Art Berlin, MAK Wien and others. He was a lecturer at VCA Melbourne and Filmakademie Ludwigsburg, and has been invited for talks by over 30 universities and 20 festivals.

Ayoung Kim (KR) weaves reality anew through a tapestry of hybrid narratives, integrating geopolitics, mythology, technology, and futuristic iconography in her moving image, video, VR, game simulation and performance projects. Kim has received the ACC Future Prize, National Asian Culture Center, Korea (2024), Golden Nica, Prix Ars Electronica (New Animation Art), Austria (2023), and Terayama Shuji Prize, Image Forum Festival, Japan (2023) and was a supported artist for the Korea Artist Prize, Korea (2019).

Ari Melenciano (US) is an artist, technologist, researcher, and theorist whose work reveals the synergy between computation, cultural metacognition, and transcendental expression. She is a frequent public speaker and guest lecturer at universities around the world, sharing her research on creative and societally inquisitive uses of emerging technologies. She occasionally designs and teaches courses at universities around NYC, including New York University and The Pratt Institute's Design School. Her work has been supported and published by Sundance, *The New York Times,* The Studio Museum of Harlem, MIT Media Lab's Space Exploration Initiative, The Ford Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and more.

Everardo Reyes (FR/MX) is a Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis. He directs the Master's program in Digital Humanities, an interdisciplinary course offering specializations in creative computing, data analysis, digital archives, and hybrid environments. His research interests include digital culture, visual information, media art, and the interrelations between art, science, technology, and the humanities. He is a board member of ISEA International and has served as a program chair for the ACM SIGGRAPH conference (Art Papers 2019, Special Projects 2024, Art Gallery 2026). He is the author of *The Image-Interface: Graphical Supports for Visual Information* (Wiley, 2017) and has edited and translated several books on digital topics.

Liz Rosenthal (UK) is Curator of the Venice Biennale's International Film Festival's Immersive Content Official Selection and Competition. She is an executive producer of award-winning immersive content and helped found and lead the CreativeXR program. Her credits include *Soul Paint*

(2024), *Maya: The Birth of a Superhero* (2024) *Goliath: Playing With Reality* (2021), *Child of Empire* (2022), *(Hi)story of a Painting* (2022). Liz is CEO & founder of the trail-blazing innovation company Power to the Pixel, which was the first organization to create international development, finance, and exhibition programs for immersive and interactive works. She is based out of London and is a regular keynote speaker and juror for international events and organizations.

Artificial Life & Intelligence

Clemens Apprich (AT) is head of the Department of Media Theory as well as the Peter Weibel Research Institute for Digital Cultures at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, where he has held the Professorship for Media Theory and History since 2021. Since fall 2023 he has been Vice-Rector for Research & Digitality. Apprich is, among other things, a member of the Assembly of Delegates of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) as well as the Digital Democracies Institute at Simon Fraser University.

Tamar Clarke-Brown (GB) is a writer and curator (Arts Technologies, Serpentine) who commissions artworks and R&D projects engaged with experimental worldbuilding and the civic potential of technologies. Her work centers storytelling, diasporic practices, underrepresented and overlooked imaginaries. In 2023 Tamar commissioned and curated the celebrated video game project *Third World: The Bottom Dimension,* led by Brazilian artist Gabriel Massan. Currently she is working with artist, game designer and archivist of Black trans stories, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley for a project opening at Serpentine North in Autumn 2025 about the culture wars. Tamar is a 2024-5 NEW INC mentor, and has worked with institutions including NTS Radio, ICA, Tate, Yale, Somerset House, and more.

Charlotte Jarvis' (GB) practice explores the future of reproduction and the body as a liminal space—a site for transformation, hybridization, and magic. She is currently making "female" sperm with scientists in Leiden, a "collaborative uterus" with a team in Argentina, and an artificial embryo model "parented" by an artificial intelligence in Denmark. Charlotte has exhibited her work in twelve international solo shows and over two hundred group exhibitions. Her work is on permanent display at the MIT museum in Boston and the Ars Electronica Center in Linz. Charlotte has won the BioArt and Design Award, The Alternate Realities Commission, The EMAP EMARE residency, and the European Digital Deal residency. Charlotte has published in *Leonardo* journal and is a research tutor at The Royal College of Art in London.

Špela Petrič (SI) is a Slovenian hybrid media artist with a background in the natural sciences. Her artistic research and practice combines biomedia and performativity to enact strange relations between bodies that question the underpinnings of our (bio)technological societies. Recently she has been busy with looking closely at automation of care in agriculture and medicine.

Simon Weckert (DE), a modern-day digital wizard and mischievous tinkerer, revels in sharing his insights on everything from generative design to physical computing—think of it as tech wizardry with a dash of social commentary. His playground? The digital world, where code and circuits aren't just tools but ironic statements. Forget tech's practical value; Simon's focus is on what future generations will make of our button-pressing, app-refreshing selves. His creations are part tech, part art, and part cheeky social critique, aiming to unravel complex issues in a way that makes people laugh, think, or maybe just scratch their heads.

Digital Musics & Sound Art

Miriam Akkermann (DE) is a musicologist and a sound artist. Her research areas include music of the 20th and 21st century, computer music and music technology, digital musicology, musical performance practices and archiving music, as well as the effect of music on sleep. As a musician and sound artist, she shows her compositions, sound installations, and performances internationally at festivals and concerts, most recently at the ICMC in Seoul and at PHONOS in Barcelona. Since April 2024, she has held the Ernst-von-Siemens endowed professorship for New Music at FU Berlin.

Dietmar Lupfer (DE) conceptualizes and curates art projects in public spaces and designs media art spaces, as well as exhibitions in the fields of robotics, bioart, and new media. His works include the EU project *Crash Test Dummy and Urban Mutations,* blending architecture, new technolo-

gies, and media art. He co-created the mobile studio Cocobello, showcased at Venice's 9th Architecture Biennale, and a hemisphere for Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau. He developed *Sensefactory,* an immersive installation, and directed performances like *Skate14_14* in Berlin. As co-founder and Artistic Director of Muffatwerk and the Muffathalle Betriebs GmbH, Lupfer oversees interdisciplinary programs merging art, technology, and science, collaborating with leading artists in music, media, performance, and hybrid arts.

Kamila Metwaly (EG/PL) is a Berlin-based music curator, writer, and cultural organizer whose work moves across sound, experimental music, and transdisciplinary artistic practices. She is currently the artistic director of MaerzMusik, a leading Berlin festival dedicated to experimental, interdisciplinary, and contemporary music and sound practices. Through her curatorial vision, she has positioned the festival as a site for sonic inquiry, collective listening, and critical reflection on time, memory, and histories. In 2004 she launched an independent arts publication that served as a vital platform for artistic discourse, critique, and collaboration across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region. The magazine became a connective tissue for artists working across music, visual arts, performance, and film, fostering a shared space for experimentation and exchange across disciplines and geographies.

Ali Nikrang (AT/IR) is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher at the intersection of music and AI. He is a professor of AI and Musical Creation at the University of Music and Theatre Arts in Munich, while simultaneously working as an AI researcher at the Ars Electronica Futurelab. He studied Computer Science at Johannes Kepler University as well as Composition and Piano at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. As a musician and AI researcher, he has carried out numerous projects that connect AI and music. His work explores the artistic possibilities of AI in music, particularly through the development of the compositional software "Ricercar", an AI system that addresses the specific artistic demands at this intersection. His works have been showcased at a wide range of conferences and exhibitions such as the Biennale Musica in Venice (2024), the Misalignment Museum in San Francisco (2023), and the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg (2023).

Nao Tokui (JP) is an artist/DJ and researcher based in Tokyo. He holds a PhD in Engineering and is the CEO of Qosmo and Neutone. Nao and his team's works have been exhibited at renowned venues such as the New York MoMA and the Barbican Centre in London. Their performances have also been showcased at various music festivals, including MUTEK and Sonar. Additionally, he leads the development of AI-based music instruments at his newly founded company, Neutone. In 2021, Nao received the Okawa Publishing Award for his book on art, creativity, and AI. The book was translated and published in English as *Surfing human creativity with AI—A user's guide* in 2023.

u19–create your world

Vivian Bausch (AT) is studying Editing at HFF Munich and simultaneously pursuing a Master's degree in Directing at the Film Academy Vienna. Her films explore identity, memory, and interpersonal dynamics. *At home with my moms* examines family and motherhood, *Dreaming bodies* takes an experimental approach, and *Ivana wants to become an actress* closely examines the struggle for recognition. *A part of me* follows a young woman (Julia Windischbauer) confronting repressed memories of her abusive ex-stepfather, while *Falling into each other* explores the fleeting yet intense connection between two grieving individuals. In 2024, Vivian Bausch and Fabian Rausch received the Carl Mayer Screenplay Award for their feature film project *Soldier,* which is currently in development with the production company Freibeuter as part of the ÖFI Talents Lab. In addition to her film work, she creates video installations and live performances, which have been exhibited internationally.

Clara Donat (AT) is studying saxophone at Anton Bruckner Private University. She is, alongside other musicians from the independent scene, part of the working group of Minciospace, where she advocates for networking and change in the art world. As the leader of the young ensemble 'Synergia' and together with her duo partner Leo Gaigg, she composes and organizes interdisciplinary concerts that always address socially relevant topics. In her texts, she tries to present rarely discussed subjects in a simple way and, above all, to evoke emotions in the audience.

Prof. Dr. Jan G. Grünwald (DE) is Professor of Didactics for Visual Arts Education at the University Mozarteum Salzburg (Innsbruck site) and Head of the Institute for Equality and Gender Studies. He is also a member of the working groups for sustainability, digitality, inclusion and diversity. His main areas of work are visual education, visual and everyday cultures, critical art education, gender studies, and post-digitality. He is the author of *Der Zweifel als produktive Möglichkeit in der kunstpädagogischen Praxis* and *Male Spaces: Bildinszenierungen archaischer Männlichkeiten im Black Metal;* co-author of *Flickernde Jugend—Rauschende Bilder. Netzkulturen im Web 2.0, and* co-editor of the forthcoming volumes *Dank Images, Tiktok and Apokalypse. Bildhandeln im Internet* and *Cringe or worthy? Art and music pedagogical reflections on popular youth cultures.*

Katharina Hof (AT) studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. As an art and cultural mediator, she deals with art as a tool for experiencing the world, as a method of experiencing, reflecting and relating. She sees artistic exploration as a powerful foundation for forming an independent point of view and making responsible decisions. She has worked for Ars Electronica and Kunst Haus Wien, among others. She currently works for the OeAD, the Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization, in the field of cultural mediation with schools, where she advises on digital media, film, visual arts, photography, design and architecture.

Conny Lee (AT) works with words and feelings at the FM4 radio station, where the one is closely linked to the other. She hosts the midday show there, co-hosts the FM4 morning show, is on the road at various music festivals with special broadcasts, and deals editorially with analog and digital gaming culture. In addition to her radio work, she also hosts live events, award ceremonies, and congresses. Conny Lee is part of the core team on the u19–create your world jury.

Ars Electronica Award for Digital Humanity

Regina Rusz (AT) is an Austrian diplomat and currently heads the General Directorate for international cultural relations at the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs. She has worked at embassies and cultural forums in Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, and Slovakia, among others. The advancement of women is, and always has been, an important concern in her professional activities as Director of the Cultural Forums in Budapest (2017-2020) and Belgrade (2001-2005), and she is one of the founders of the program "Calliope.jointhedots" (www.calliope.at), which aims to support female Austrian artists and scientists abroad. From 2008-2012, she was a member of the Austrian Task Force for Combating Human Trafficking at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Katalin Tünde Huber (AT) is the Director of the Department for cultural and scientific programs abroad at the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, where she is responsible for coordinating the cultural activities of the Austrian Cultural Forums and Embassies. From 2017-2020 she served as Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum London. Before engaging in arts and culture, she focused on EU affairs and the Western Balkans region. She worked at the Austrian Permanent Representation to the EU (Brussels) and to the United Nations (New York). She studied Political Science, Hungarian, and French and worked for the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Thomas Kloiber (AT), born in 1972 in Graz, Austria, studied Catholic theology at the University of Vienna and at the Facultad de Teología del Norte de España Burgos. Before he joined the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in 2008, he worked as a high school teacher for Religion and taught Catholic theology to students. He worked from 2003 to 2006 as General Secretary of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. As an employee of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs he served at the Austrian Embassies in Washington D.C. and in Moscow as well as at the Cultural Forums in Tehran and Bucharest.

Veronika Liebl is currently Managing Director at the department Festival/Prix/Exhibitions of Ars Electronica. She studied Economics and Business Science at Johannes Kepler University in Linz (graduated in 2010) with study visits at Harvard University (US) and Université de Fribourg (CH), and has an interdisciplinary background in non-profit and innovation management. Since 2011 she has been

in charge of cultural management and European project development at Ars Electronica Linz and serves as a member of Linz' city culture council and Linz' UNESCO City of Media Arts Executive Board. She leads Ars Electronica's European collaboration projects in the field of culture, research & education and with her team she developed, launched as well as executed in this position numerous EU projects such as the STARTS Prize, DOORS (Digital Incubator for Museums), or the European ARTificial Intelligence Lab.

Gerfried Stocker (AT) is a media artist and an engineer for communication technology and has been artistic director and co-CEO of Ars Electronica since 1995. In 1995/96 he developed the exhibition strategies of the Ars Electronica Center with a small team of artists and technicians and was responsible for the setup and establishment of Ars Electronica's own R & D facility, the Ars Electronica Futurelab. He has overseen the development of the program for international Ars Electronica exhibitions since 2004, the planning and the revamping of the contents for the Ars Electronica Center, which was enlarged in 2009, since 2005; the expansion of the Ars Electronica Festival since 2015; and the extensive overhaul of Ars Electronica Center's contents and interior design in 2019. Stocker is a consultant for numerous companies and institutions in the field of creativity and innovation management and is active as a guest lecturer at international conferences and universities. In 2019 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Aalto University, Finland.

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

Dr. Katja Mayer (AT) is a senior scientist at the Centre of Social Innovation ZSI and a sociologist at the University of Vienna. She works at the intersection of science, technology, and society. Since 2019, she has focused on the politics of open science and open data in the context of AI. Dr. Mayer has served as the PI for international research projects and as rapporteur for the European Commission's open science MLE in 2018. She has contributed extensively to policy advice and promoting open science in science diplomacy. Her practical experience from prior work in IT industry and her former role as a research advisor to the President of the European Research Council have enriched her transdisciplinary approach. Additionally, she has mentored and trained individuals in open research practices and taught citizen science and critical data studies at TU Munich and the University of Lucerne, among others.

Dusan Misevic (FR/SB) is a data scientist at the University of Southern Denmark and uses open data and AI to facilitate collaboration and search for funding. He supported and participated in multiple citizen science projects and published in the domain. At the Center for Research and Interdisciplinarity in Paris he was a Director of Research Affairs and taught courses on open and citizen science. As a researcher in computational biology, he focused on the evolution of sex/recombination and cooperation.

Josep Perelló (ES), is Full Professor at Universitat de Barcelona Physics Department and UBICS member and founded OpenSystems to promote citizen science and art-science projects. He studies complex systems and human behavior, leading large-scale public experiments. He curated the Science Area at Arts Santa Mònica (2009–2012) and coordinated Barcelona's Citizen Science Office (until 2019). He co-curated the City and Science Biennale (2019, 2023) and is part of CoAct for Mental Health, winner of the EU Citizen Science Prize 2024—Digital Communities.

Marleen Stikker (NL) is founder and executive director of Waag Futurelab in Amsterdam. Waag Futurelab reinforces critical reflection on technology, develops technological and social design skills, and encourages social innovation. Marleen leads the trans-disciplinary team of designers, artists, and scientists, utilizing Public Research and Key Enabling Methodologies to empower people to participate in the collective design of open, fair, and inclusive futures. Marleen founded 'De Digitale Stad' (The Digital City) in 1993, the first virtual community introducing free public access to the Internet in Amsterdam.

Sarah West (UK) has been bringing diverse voices into science and decision-making for over 15 years, mainly using citizen science approaches. She has used citizen science to explore topics as diverse as air pollution, biodiversity, parenting, and mental health. She is passionate about participant-centered citizen science and about inclusivity. Sarah is also SEI York Centre Director, a science to policy research institute, based at the University of York.

S+T+ARTS Prize'25 Jury

All submissions are judged by a jury to decide on the two prize-winning projects and up to ten Honorary Mentions.

Francesca Bria (IT) is an innovation economist working at the intersection of technology, geopolitics, and society. She is Honorary Professor at UCL's Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose and a Senior Fellow at Stiftung Mercator in Berlin, where she leads the EuroStack Initiative on Europe's digital sovereignty (euro-stack.info). She advises the European Commission and chairs the New European Bauhaus Expert Group to help advance Europe's Green Deal. She is also a member of Spain's International Council on Artificial Intelligence. Previously, she served as President of Italy's National Innovation Fund (CDP Venture Capital), was a board member of RAI, and held the role of Chief Digital Technology and Innovation Officer for the City of Barcelona (2015–2019), where she led the city's digital transformation and participatory democracy initiatives. Francesca founded the EU's flagship *DECODE* project on data sovereignty and co-founded the United Nations Cities Coalition for Digital Rights. She has advised governments, the UN, and international organizations on innovation policy and its socio-economic and environmental impacts. She has been recognized by *Forbes, Apolitical, Politico,* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* and was awarded the title of Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.

Veronica D'Souza (DK) is an award-winning social entrepreneur, multidisciplinary artist, speaker, and independent advisor working towards a regenerative, inclusive, and aspirational future. She is the founder of CARCEL, a pioneering fashion label that operated on principles of social impact and sustainability. CARCEL's garments, crafted by women in prison in Thailand and Peru using 100% natural materials, provided valuable skills, paid employment, and opportunities for a better future. The brand's commitment to ethical production and design earned it global recognition, including opening Copenhagen Fashion Week in 2020 and coverage in *The New York Times, Vogue, Forbes,* and *i-D.* Veronica is also the co-founder of Ruby Cup, a social enterprise offering sustainable menstrual products to women and girls in East Africa and GEIST Agency, an independent consultancy, where Veronica collaborates with organizations to drive impactful strategies, communications, and business development for positive societal change. She is a Board Member of The Danish Design Council, Global Shaper alumni (World Economic Forum), a Board Member of The Soulfuls, and a jury member for the INDEX Award. Veronica is also a Humanity In Action Senior Fellow, and a UWC Adriatic alumnus and recipient of several awards such as EY Social Entrepreneur, Creative Business Cup, Elle Style Awards CSR Prize, Wessel and Wett Design Award.

Thomas Gegenhuber (AT) is currently responsible for innovation & economic affairs in Linz City Council. He is also a professor on leave at the Linz Institute for Transformative Change at JKU Linz and Visiting Professor at Leuphana University Lüneburg. His professional and academic interests include topics such as (open) social innovation, digital and sustainable transformation, and new forms of organizing.

Irini Papadimitriou (UK) is a curator and cultural manager, whose practice draws on interdisciplinary and critical discourse to explore the impact of technology in society and culture, and the role of art in these conversations. Currently Director of Exhibitions at Diriyah Art Futures, she was previously Creative Director at FutureEverything, Digital Programmes Manager at the V&A, and Head of New Media Arts Development at Watermans. In 2023 she was the Artistic Director for Busan Biennale's Sea Art Festival. Recently curated exhibitions include: AI: Who's Looking After Me? Science Gallery London; Flickering Shores, Sea Imaginaries, Sea Art Festival 2023, Busan; FutureFantastic, Bangalore; Plásmata: Bodies, Dreams, and Data and You and AI: Through the Algorithmic Lens, Onassis, Athens; [Digital] Transmissions, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; Artificially Intelligent, V&A. Irini has served as a jury member for Prix Ars Electronica, Lumen Prize, EU STARTS, and ACM Siggraph.

Asako Tomura (JP) is General Manager of the Content Technology & Alliance Group within HQ Technology Strategy Division, Sony Group Corporation. With MAs in Chemistry and Media Arts, she began her career in advertising at Shiseido before joining Sony Corporation in 2001. At Sony Pictures Entertainment (Japan) and Aniplex, Inc., she led the launch of digital content distribution businesses for film and animation. She later served as Head of

CSR Innovation at Sony headquarters, where she collaborated with the UNs and international NGOs on technology-driven social initiatives. Since 2016, her current role has focused on advanced content development, entertainment technology, and sustainability strategies. In addition to her corporate role, she has actively contributed to the media arts community, serving as the planning director for Ars Electronica 2021 Garden TOKYO and as a jury member for the EU's STARTS Prize 2022 and SIGGRAPH Asia 2024 Art Gallery. She is also an advisor for the Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs' Project to Support Emerging Media Arts Creators (2017–2025) and a visiting researcher at the University of Tokyo Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies since 2021.

S+T+ARTS Prize'25 Advisors

The advisors are renowned international consultants with expertise in this field. They recommend projects and encourage a wide range of potential participants to submit proposals. In addition, they ensure a balance in terms of gender and geographical origin of the participants.

Rosario Talevi (IT/AR), born in Buenos Aires in 1983, is a Berlin-based architect, curator, editor, and educator interested in critical spatial practice (Rendell) and transformative pedagogies. Her work advances architecture as a form of agency—in its transformative sense and in its capacity for acting otherwise (Schneider) and as a form of care—one that provides the political stakes to repair our broken world (Tronto). Rosario is a graduate of the School of Architecture, Design & Urbanism at the University of Buenos Aires and has held teaching and research positions at various universities (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Technische Universität Berlin, Universität der Künste Berlin, Freie Universität Bolzano). She was a visiting professor for Social Design (2021–22) at the University of Fine Arts (HFBK) in Hamburg. She is a founding member of Floating University and Soft Agency. In 2022 she was a fellow at the Thomas Mann House in Los Angeles, California. She speaks about her practice internationally, in both institutional and non-institutional contexts, and her work and writing has been widely published. Single mother of Florentina Talevi (born 2003).

Jussi Parikka (FI) is Professor in Digital Aesthetics and Culture at Aarhus University, Denmark as well as a (visiting) research professor at University of Southampton. Founding co-director of the Environmental Media and Aesthetics research program at Aarhus University, he has worked extensively on environmental media, history of technology and science, as well as on various interdisciplinary topics , not least on media archaeology. Some of his books include *Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology* (2010), *A Geology of Media* (2015), and *Operational Images* (2023). He has co-authored such books as *The Lab Book* (2022) and *Living Surfaces* (2023) as well as worked in various editorial roles. Over the past years Parikka has been active as a curator too, including collaborations such as the Weather Engines and Climate Engines exhibitions (with Daphne Dragona), as well as serving on the curatorial team of Helsinki Biennial 2023 and transmediale 2023. He is currently a board member of the transmediale festival in digital art and culture as well as serving on the advisory board of the LG & Guggenheim initiative on art and technology. Parikka's books have been translated into 12 languages.

Deborah Rey-Burns (UK) started her career in Sydney as a banker and later pivoted in London to become a cultural entrepreneur and the founder of Propela, an innovative speaking agency globally known for its commitment to frontier thinking. With a mission to bridge the gap between the creative sector and the business world, Deborah established the British agency over a decade ago. Propela's roster features a selection of international innovators who have been keynote speakers at major conferences, Fortune 500 companies, and leading brands. Among Propela's clients are Neil Harbisson, the world's first Cyborg, along with Oscar-nominated set designers Katie Spencers and Sarah Greenwood (Barbie), artist and technologist James Bridle, Designer Dr. Nelly Ben Hayoun, Speculative Architect Liam Young, Bas Van Abel, the founder of Fairphone, a world leader in sustainability and ethics, and Dr. Sian Proctor, the world's first black female spaceship pilot. Beyond Propela, Deborah has curated programs for institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Design Council's COP26 conference, along with organizations such as Google, Airbnb, and Spotify. Furthermore, she has founded ReDesign Business and The Future Of_, two conference brands dedicated to showcasing art, creativity, innovation, and business.

Micaela Mantegna (AR), known as the 'Abogamer', is a video game lawyer and activist who is internationally renowned for her expertise in digital ethics, extended reality (XR) policy, and the complex relationship between artificial intelligence, creativity, and copyright law. In 2022, Micaela was chosen for the prestigious TED Fellowship, and her TED talk on the metaverse earned 1.5M+ views globally. Currently she is an affiliate at the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard University, while also serving on Chatham House's Responsible AI Taskforce, the World Economic Forum's Metaverse Council, and the Scientific Committee of UAMetaverse Chair, positions that highlight Micaela as a global thought leader in Generative AI, ethics, videogames, and metaverse policy. As a keynote speaker, she has presented across the globe in conferences like GDC, TED, GamesBeat Summit, Ada Lovelace Festival, Vancouver Biennale, More Than Just a Game, RightsCon, DLD, Internet Freedom Festival, and many more, in over 28 countries. Author of *ARTficial: creativity, AI and copyright* (2022) and the upcoming *Braindancing in the Metaverse: a capitalism of cognitive surveillance* (2024), her work explores in depth the implications of digital capitalism, at the intersections of intellectual property, AI, art, and ethics. She earned the 2017 Google Policy Fellowship for her work creating an algorithmic governance framework. Her work and insights have been featured in outlets like *The Verge, WIRED*, and *Le Monde.* Micaela curates the popular Substack newsletter "This week in the #Metaverse", offering weekly insights into the latest trends and policy developments on the metaverse, AI, neurotech, crypto, and gaming.

Alex Quicho (CA/PH) is a theorist and research director in London. Her practice incorporates critical writing, performative lectures, and moving image, with a focus on how emerging technologies warp social reality and vice-versa. Her work has been featured in *Wired, Frieze, Dazed, Vogue, Spike, The Face, MIT Technology Review,* and more. Alex collaborates with arts institutions including Singapore Art Museum, Power Station of Art Shanghai, Julia Stoschek Collection, Fondation Pernod-Ricard, Rennie Museum, and Nationalgalerie Berlin. She teaches narrative theory for MA Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martins, and studied Critical Writing at the Royal College of Art.

Yun-Cheng Chen (TW) (Lucky) is an artivist and strategist specializing in creative institutionalization and digital innovation, reshaping cultural and nonprofit organizations with strategic foresight. He led the transformation of a struggling nonprofit dance company into a resilient, 17-member performing arts cooperative within six months. Additionally, he is deeply engaged in Guishan Island's relocation controversy, collaborating with local communities and the whale-watching industry to integrate participatory democracy, SDGs governance, and blockchain technology in building a marine cultural database and the digital twin of Guishan Island. Through this initiative, he aims to foster non-anthropocentric, regenerative economies, facilitating sustainable transitions in remote communities through commoning. As a connector across industry, government, academia, and communities/DAOs, he currently serves as the Strategy Director of Les Petites Choses Production and Seabelongings, while actively contributing to the decentralized civic tech community g0v. His expertise in performing arts, deliberative democracy, regional revitalization, and digital transformation has earned him key roles in leading impactful projects since 2016. Many of these projects have received international awards and have been showcased in Singapore, France, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Germany, the UK, and Japan.

Behnaz Farahi (IR/US) is an award-winning designer and critical maker working at the intersection of fashion, architecture and interactive design. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor at the MIT Media Lab where she leads the Critical Matter research group. Trained as an architect, Farahi's work focuses on fostering empathetic relationships between the human body and its surrounding environment. For this she draws upon emerging technologies and morphological and behavioral principles inspired by natural systems. Her projects address critical issues such as feminism, emotion, bodily perception, and social interaction. She specializes in computational design, interactive technologies, additive manufacturing, and digital fabrication technologies. Farahi is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum Digital Design Award, Innovation by Design Fast Company Award, and the World Technology Award. She co-edited *Interactive Design: Towards a Responsive Environment* (Birkhäuser Verlag, 2023) and *3D Printed Body Architecture* (Wiley, 2017). Her work has been included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Science and Industry

in Chicago. It has also been exhibited internationally at Ars Electronica, Linz and Context Art Miami, SIGGRAPH, La Piscine Museum in France and A+D Architecture and Design Museum in LA. It has also been featured in several magazines and online websites including *WIRED, BBC, CNN, The Guardian, Frame Magazine,* and many more.

Kamya Ramachandran (US), Founder-Director of BeFantastic, spearheads pioneering initiatives at the intersection of technology, art, and societal impact. With a dynamic career spanning the UK, USA, India and currently Singapore, she orchestrates experiments in transdisciplinary pedagogy focusing on pressing issues like emerging technology on the one hand and climate change on the other. She helms this nascent field for South and South East Asia with deep experience in strategic curation and thoughtful execution of programs including Fellowships and a marquee Festival series in Bangalore India.

Dreaming Beyond AI (INT) (DBAI) is a collective and platform that critically explores the intersections of technology, marginalization, and imagination. Using AI as a portal, DBAI curates visionary fiction, speculative art, and community-driven discourse to challenge dominant narratives and center feminist, decolonial, and care-driven perspectives. The core team consists of Sarah Diedro Jordão, Iyo Bisseck, and Nushin Yazdani. DBAI was created in collaboration with ifa—Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen. Shaped by artists, researchers, writers, activists, designers, scientists, and community organizers, DBAI examines the social impact of technologies. Through two residencies, it investigates AI's influence on temporality and our experience of time while fostering artist-activist coalition-building. Influenced by feminist thinkers and movements, DBAI seeks to de-center technology, reimagine futures, and cultivate experimental spaces for resistance, solidarity, and radical possibility.

Christian Rauch (DE) is the director of Berlin Science Week, one of Europe's largest science festivals, and the founder of the art-science initiative STATE. As a Ph.D. physicist and an expert in innovative collaborations between science, art, and society, he advises companies, research institutions, foundations, and the public sector on transformation processes. He is a lecturer at the European Center for Executive Education and a Responsible Leader at the BMW Foundation.

Tere Badia (ES) is an art historian and cultural strategist with an MA in Information and Knowledge Society from the IN3 (Internet Interdisciplinary Institute) at the Open University of Catalonia —Barcelona UOC. With a career spanning analytical research, policy development, cultural management and curation and cross-sectoral collaboration, she specializes in the intersection of art, science, technology, networks and cultural rights. She directed Hangar (Barcelona's center for artistic production and research) and served as Secretary-General of Culture Action Europe in Brussels, contributing to cultural policies at a European level. She is now leading HacTe—Barcelona's Hub of Art, Science, and Technology— to promote experimentation and knowledge creation at the intersection of these fields.

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa 2025 Jury

Andrea Barschdorf-Hager (AT) has been serving as CEO of CARE Austria in Vienna since 2009. In this role, she leads the marketing team and oversees program and finance areas, as well as the relief and development work. Andrea also represents CARE Austria in media and politics. CARE is one of the world's leading development and humanitarian aid agencies, dedicated to fighting poverty and injustice, with a specific focus on the empowerment of women and girls. Born in Vienna, Andrea began her involvement in development cooperation while studying Ethnology and African Studies at the University of Vienna. Andrea has received several awards and recognitions for her service. Additionally, she is an International Gender Champion and serves as a board member of the institute OIIP (Austrian Institute for International Affairs). Andrea has a special interest in and focus on digitalization and artificial intelligence.

Mónica Bello (ES) is an art historian and curator based in Geneva and Barcelona. Until March 2025, she served as Head of Arts at CERN, where she led initiatives such as artist residencies, art commissions, and exhibitions, supporting over 150 artists and fostering collaborations between creators and scientists. Under her tenure, the Arts at CERN team received the 2024 STARTS Grand Prize for Collaborative Innovation. Some notable curatorial projects include *Quantum Visions*

(2025), the Icelandic Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2022), *Dark Matters* (2023), and *Broken Symmetries* (2018–2021). She has developed unique global expertise at the intersection of art, science, and technology, fostering innovative collaborations across disciplines, through leadership and policy initiatives.

Joy Mawela (ZA) is a distinguished leader in Africa's digital creative industries, currently serving as the Head of the Digital Content Hub at Tshimologong, Wits University. With a postgraduate diploma in management, she drives strategic business development across film, television, animation, gaming, XR (AR and VR), digital music, and visual arts. A key figure in shaping South Africa's digital creative landscape, Joy has played a pivotal role in establishing Tshimologong's gaming incubation hub and spearheading the Fak'ugesi African Innovation Festival, a premier platform for African innovation and creativity. She is deeply committed to skills development, incubation, and market access for emerging talent across the Pan-African region. With extensive experience as a broadcaster, funder, and festival programmer, Joy brings a wealth of expertise in content curation, acquisition, and production. Her engagement with international film festivals and industry markets has provided her with a global perspective on creative storytelling and emerging digital trends. She has served as a jury member for IDFA 2023 and also sat on boards such as Literacy for Life—an NPO for promoting literacy in underprivileged communities and Lawyers for Arts South Africa—where she advocated for legal rights for South African Artists.

Kathleen Siminyu (KE) is a Natural Language Processing researcher at the DAIR Institute. She focuses her research on African languages as a form of activism and from a desire to see these languages better represented on digital platforms. Kathleen has been involved in various efforts to build language datasets. Her experiences in building open datasets has inspired a desire to explore data governance and licensing models that can ensure maximum benefit is returned to the communities of dataset builders and subjects. Kathleen also works with African AI communities to enable ecosystem capacity building and research relevant to Africa. She continues to organize with communities as part of the Deep Learning Indaba, where she is a trustee, and the Masakhane Research Foundation, where she is a director.

Tau Tavengwa (ZW/GB) founded *Cityscapes,* a periodical publication and long-running collaboration with the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town about knowledge, ideas and narratives on the future of cities, society, and the built environment from a Global South perspective. He is also a co-founder of CS Studio, a discipline-agnostic urbanism studio focused on developing tools to enable a better understanding of cities from a broad range of perspectives and experiences through experiments. Tau is a 2018 Harvard University Loeb Fellow, a 2020–22 Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics' LSE Cities, and in 2022 was a curator on the Lisbon Architecture Triennial and a member of the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 jury.

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa 2025 Advisors

The advisors are renowned international professionals with expertise in this field. Their recommendations ensure a wider and balanced range of potential participants to submit proposals.

Agnes Aistleitner-Kisuule is a partner and co-founder of First Circle Capital, an early-stage fund established in 2021 focusing on fintech in Africa, with a portfolio of twelve companies. She has been an experienced operator for 10+ years with a background in building businesses in emerging markets, including textile manufacturing ventures in Jordan and Ukraine, and a tech business in Uganda. Agnes is also an active VC ecosystem contributor and writes a Macro Economic focused newsletter called the Data Dive.

The artist **Sammy Baloji** (b. 1978, Lubumbashi, DR Congo) lives and works between Lubumbashi and Brussels. Since 2005 he has been exploring the memory and history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. His work is an ongoing investigation into the cultural, architectural, and industrial heritage of the Katanga region, as well as questioning the impact of Belgian colonization. His critical view of contemporary societies serves as a warning of the ways in which cultural clichés continue to shape collective memory, allowing social and political power games to continue to dictate human behavior.

Jepchumba is a digital artist, farmer, and cultural technologist. Exploring the intersection of art, tech, and culture in Africa, she is on a mission to access the rich legacy and inheritance of African technological innovation and elevate African creativity and innovation on a global stage. She is the Founder of African Digital Art and Future Lab Africa. A passionate advocate for the growth of creative technology in Africa, she is a speaker, strategist, and cultural ambassador, bridging the gap between African art and tech innovation. Jepchumba is a visionary shaping African futures through her focus on African digital art and African Speculative Design. She has been listed by *Forbes* as one of the 20 Youngest Power Women in Africa (2012) and in *The Guardian* Africa's Top 25 Women Achievers (2012) and Africa's Top 10 Tech Pioneers (2016). Jepchumba crafts user experiences and interfaces that shape future digital artifacts and technologies. Her groundbreaking work in speculative design, user experience and user interface design is shaping African futures and imagination.

Femi Johnson is a Digital Heritage Specialist at the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA), where he uses science and technology to preserve and understand African heritage. Through work at the MOWAA Digital Lab, Femi has joined efforts to digitally reconstruct the Benin Bronze Plaques and recreate the 16th Century Audience Hall in which they were housed, from a fragmented corpus, dispersed round the world. Femi's expertise has been recognized through his role as a guest professor at the University of Arts Hamburg, where he explored the concept of impermanence through the lens of art and science. He has also guest lectured in University of Zurich, University of Arts Zurich. His work has also earned him collaborations with various institutions such as the Swiss Benin Initiative, EUNIC, Museum der Gegenwart Berlin, Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, the GAS Foundation, The Goethe Institute, German Archeological Institute, Filmhaus Basel, the Institute of Benin Studies and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments Nigeria.

Brenda Katwesigye is the co-founder of Wazi Vision, East Africa's pioneering eyewear company specializing in affordable, inclusive eyewear designed specifically for African facial features. Under her guidance, Wazi Vision has reached thousands, offering accessible eye care solutions while championing sustainability through eco-conscious materials. Brenda's impact in social enterprise and innovation has earned her international recognition, including the Commonwealth Youth Award for Development, the prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, Female Entrepreneur of the Year award at the African Rethink Awards and the ITU Young Innovators Award, as well as a spot on *Forbes'* New Wealth Creator list. Beyond her entrepreneurial achievements, Brenda plays a key role at Mastercard, where she guides organizations in shaping impactful payments strategies. Her work spans areas such as market expansion, digital transformation, and innovative value proposition design, helping clients navigate complex financial landscapes with a focus on growth. Within Mastercard, Brenda also champions various leadership initiatives, actively supporting recruitment and mentorship programs for employees of African descent. She also holds an MBA from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University in Canada, where she earned the prestigious Stephen J.R. Smith Entrance Scholarship and Forte Scholarship. Her connection with Smith extends beyond her studies; she actively serves on the MBA Advisory Board, contributing strategic insights to support the school's impact on the Canadian business community.

Ingrid Kopp is Co-founder and Director of Labs and Partnerships at Electric South, a non-profit organization based in Cape Town. Electric South works with interdisciplinary artists across the continent to incubate and fund immersive work and has recently started working on research and policy work to build and strengthen the creative ecosystem. Ingrid produces and facilitates the New Dimensions Lab and is an executive producer on award winning VR projects. She was co-chair of the Global Future Council on the Metaverse at the World Economic Forum until the end of 2024. Along with MIT's Open DocLab and Dot Connector Studio, she produced *Immerse,* a monthly publication on emerging nonfiction storytelling. Ingrid also curated the 'Tribeca Storyscapes' program for interactive and immersive work at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. Ingrid was director of the Interactive Department at the Tribeca Film Institute until 2015 when she moved back to South Africa.

George Mahashe works in the field of photography, particularly at the intersection of artistic practice, archives, museums, and the afterlives of anthropology. Since 2018, he convenes the

research platform '––defunct context' exploring the nexus between art, scientific observations, technology, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. His monograph *—defunct context: Ambivalence to Important Work* (2023) consolidates work on photography and the camera obscura; the refiguring of an anthropology museum; as well as the turn to Indigenous Knowledges Systems to support contemporary scientific observations. Current projects include *Pavilion Prototype II: U406* which engages photographies beyond representation, as well as installation as sites of participation and collaborative practice. Dr. Mahashe is based at the University of Cape Town where he convenes the Honour in Curatorship Programme, co-hosted with Iziko Museums of South Africa and The Centre for Curating the Archive.

Esther Mwema is an award-winning artist and digital inequalities expert in Internet governance, tech-innovation and digital rights. Esther's practice intersects art and technology, interrogating hidden systems of power in digital society ranging from fiber optic cables, digital colonialism, to gender inequality. She has over ten years commitment to social impact at the grassroots via her non-profits Digital Grassroots and Safety First for Girls (SAFIGI) Foundation; and has done extensive work within the UN system. Esther is an Open Internet for Democracy leader who centers African feminist and decolonial methodologies in practice. Her paper "Undersea Cables in Africa—New Frontiers of Digital Colonialism" draws historical parallels between colonial telegraph cables and the increased ownership of African undersea cables by big tech. She holds an MSc in Inequalities and Social Sciences from the London School of Economics.

Azza Satti is a creative producer, curator, and social change advocate passionate about creating experiences that inspire and foster connection. She is the co-founder of The Station, a concept space for artists, filmmakers, and educators that aims to redefine the boundaries of engagement in Nairobi and beyond. In 2024, Azza served as the Program Developer for the Rest Residency, a safe haven for Sudanese artists displaced by war and now based in Nairobi, Kenya. Previously, Azza was the Head of Community Engagement at African Crossroads, a program under Hivos in the Netherlands. She also produced the Hivos-funded documentary *Water, Urban Transformation and African Heritage,* which explored the impact of the LAPSSET Corridor Project on the environment and identity of Lamu Island, Kenya. Azza's contributions to the arts extend beyond documentaries. She is a founding member of the African Art in Venice Forum, a two-day platform in Venice that brings together artists, critics, researchers, and academics to discuss critical topics in African art.

Francis Wairura is a media innovator advancing creative solutions at the intersection of art, science, and technology. His work blends storytelling with emerging technologies such as AR, VR, and AI to inspire civic engagement, cultural preservation, and inclusive innovation. Francis has led impactful projects promoting gender equality, governance, and sustainability. He managed a project exploring and preserving Tanzania's mobility story through innovative mediums like VR simulations, film, and augmented reality. He also directed the AncestARs initiative, empowering 12 creatives with AR skills to preserve the Makonde face tattoos, masks, and wood carving heritage in collaboration with the National Museum of Tanzania, engaging over 1,000 students. Committed to showcasing best practices, Francis, as part of Ona Stories, drives digital storytelling innovations, fostering sustainable and inclusive societies while contributing to platforms like the STARTS Prize Africa.

ARS ELECTRONICA 2025

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Critical ChangeLab

Digital Humanism Association

EIT Culture & Creativity

EIT Health

esa

esero Austria

European Digital Deal

EXCENTRIC

fAIr media

IMPETUS

European Union Prize for Citizen Science

Klima- und Energiefonds

Label4Future

Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft - Open Innovation in Science Center

Media Literacy Award

NEB Junction

RIECS-Concept - Towards a Pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science

S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence

S+T+ARTS Aqua Motion

S+T+ARTS Ec(h)o

SHARESPACE

Studiotopia 2

Tilling Roots & Seeds

Zirkus des Wissens

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MEET | Digital Culture Center
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MUSE – Museo delle Scienze
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Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU
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Onassis Stegi
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Oulun Kulttuurisaatio SR – Oulu 2026
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Pro Progressione
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European Union Prize for Citizen Science

S+T+ARTS Prize'25

S+T+ARTS Prize Africa

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