

#### New Exhibition

### The World at Night (TWAN)

Opening Friday, October 7, 2011 / Ars Electronica Center Linz

Vernissage: Thursday, October 6, 2011, 7 PM

(Linz, October 6, 2011) The World at Night (TWAN) is an international initiative to protect and preserve the night sky. Launched by Iranian science journalist Babak A. Tafreshi in 2007, TWAN's team of committed activists now includes astrophotographers from all over the world. They create gorgeous photographs and time-lapse images of heavenly bodies by night in which historically significant places on Earth and some of our planet's most impressive landscapes are depicted in the foreground. These pictures let viewers behold the beauty of the universe that surrounds us, the uniqueness of the planet we live on, and the diversity of the things we humans have produced. They also document an extraordinary array of planets and stellar constellations, astronomical as well as atmospheric phenomena—things that nearly all of us can see with the naked eye (as long as our view isn't hindered by the light pollution that is a growing problem worldwide). "The World at Night" at the Ars Electronica Center is an exhibition in strictly digital form. It showcases a selection of the most outstanding photos and time-lapse images shot by TWAN's photographers. "The World at Night" opens Friday, October 7, 2011.

#### An International Community

"The World at Night" is the creation of an international team of photographers and astronomers. What its members have in common is a shared mission: to capture the beauty of the night sky above a wide variety of terrestrial landscapes and sites that constitute the cultural heritage of humankind. Their spectacular exposures have been made at some of the darkest places on Earth; they show the heavens as they are beyond the reach of big-city lights, the way human beings used to be able to see them everywhere. For the members of the TWAN team, astronomy means bringing folks together and transcending all the boundaries that separate them. "One People, One Sky" is TWAN's motto, a philosophy that is also reflected in the team's makeup. There are currently 30 permanent members from 18 countries; expansion is in sight. Guest photographers from throughout the world contribute to this effort.

#### Best of THE WORLD AT NIGHT at the Ars Electronica Center

Launched in 2007 as the first global project by Astronomers Without Borders (AWB), "The World at Night" really took off in 2009 in conjunction with the International Year of Astronomy, when it was granted special project status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Astronomical Union (IAU). Ever since, TWAN photographers have been creating an impressive collection of images, the very best of which are now on display at the Ars Electronica Center—for instance, a crescent moon above the ancient statue of Ramses the Great in Thebes, a total eclipse of the Sun shot in Zambia's Kafue National Park, and a two-hour time-lapse photo showing the

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at](mailto:christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at)  
[www.aec.at/press](http://www.aec.at/press)

paths of the stars around the south celestial pole taken in the Okavango Delta in Botswana. There's also a three-hour panorama image documenting the stars of the northern and southern hemispheres and their paths across the night sky, a picture taken almost exactly on the Equator in Kenya. A shot made in the Sahara in southern Algeria shows the constellations Draco, Cygnus, Aquila, Sagittarius and Scorpio as well as the planet Jupiter. Another is a portrait of a chain of lights (a team of mountain climbers slowly ascending Kilimanjaro) beneath a ball of fire (a brilliant meteor streaking through the African night). No less breathtaking is a wide-angle shot of a total solar eclipse taken from an Airbus 340-300 cruising at 11,600 meters above the Antarctic on November 23, 2003. "The World at Night" features more than 100 images.

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TWAN: <http://www.twanight.org/newTWAN/index.asp>

Astronomers Without Borders: <http://www.astronomerswithoutborders.org/>

Ars Electronica Center: <http://www.aec.at/center/en/>

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Christopher Ruckerbauer  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at](mailto:christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at)  
[www.aec.at/press](http://www.aec.at/press)