

The Winners of the 2018 Prix Ars Electronica

(Linz, June 11, 2018) The Belgian artistic duo known as the LarbitsSisters, the digital community *Bellingcat* and French artist Mathilde Lavenne are this year's Prix Ars Electronica grand prize winners. In the u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD category honoring excellence by young people in Austria, the Golden Nica goes to Viennese schoolboys Lorenz Gonsa, Martin Hatler, Samuel Stallybrass and Vincent Thierry. The community of *Leonardo* is being singled out for recognition as Visionary Pioneer of Media Arts.

3.046 entries from 85 countries were submitted for Prix Ars Electronica prize consideration this year. The most entries were received by the ... category. The Golden Nica statuettes will be bestowed upon the honorees at the Ars Electronica Gala on September 8, 2018 in Linz's Brucknerhaus. The prizewinning projects will be showcased in the CyberArts exhibition at the OK Center for Contemporary Art.

Digital Communities

Golden Nica

Bellingcat

http://www.bellingcat.com

"Bellingcat brings an in-depth and rigorous analytical process into the picture, contributing to a closer understanding of complex scenarios in an increasingly polarized context." - Statement of the Jury

The machinations of Mexican drug cartels, shooting down MH17, and war crimes such as those being committed in Syria—Bellingcat gathers together open source and social media investigations by citizen journalists and interlinks them. In addition to publishing and disseminating articles and reportage, Bellingcat offers instructions and pointers for all those who would themselves like to actively engage in citizen journalism. The aim is to promote the use of open source and case studies, and to bring them to the attention of, above all, organizations whose mission is to archive and secure facts and evidence that are relevant to legal proceedings stemming from wars, war crimes and organized crime.

Bellingcat was founded in 2014 by Eliot Higgins, who made a name for himself as the author of the Brown Moses Blog with its revelations about the Syria conflict. After having closely followed the activities of a growing number of citizen journalists, he resolved to launch a platform dedicated to open source investigations to serve as a network interlinking these "lone wolves." This was the birth of Bellingcat. Ever since, the blog has offered anyone the chance to publish his/her own work as well as to examine case studies and guides.

Only a few days after Bellingcat went online, passenger flight MH17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine. For the past four years, Bellingcat has published a whole series of articles and reportage about this attack, whereby various communiqués released by the Russian government and its supporters were revealed to be disinformation. To shed light on this



incident, the international community finally formed a Joint Investigation Team, which established contact with Eliot Higgins and incorporated the comprehensive research results of the Bellingcat community into its work.

In less than four years, Eliot Higgins has succeeded in setting up a globally active community of citizen journalists active at the world's current flashpoints, bringing (war) crimes to the attention of the international public. Bellingcat is being honored with the Prix Ars Electronica's Golden Nica.

Award of Distinction

Anti-Racism Movement (ARM)

https://www.armlebanon.org

"(...) is a great example of grassroots countering of racist trends and promoting migrant rights in a very difficult context." - Statement of the Jury

In response to a racist incident in Beirut, the Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) was founded in 2010 in Lebanon as a grassroots movement by young feminist activists in collaboration with community activists and domestic employees who had immigrated to that country. The interest in ARM grew steadily as did the number of members and the dimensions and scope of its projects. ARM subsequently set up several Migrant Community Centers (MCCs) as setting for projects run in cooperation with guest workers and especially domestic servants from abroad. The MCCs are freely accessible, secure spaces tailored to the needs of guest workers—places to exchange views and work together, to learn new skills, and to get access to information, resources and assistance. MCCs have served as settings for free language and computer courses, consultations on health matters and legal issues, celebrations, and projects promoting cultural exchange.

Award of Distinction

g0v.tw

https://g0v.tw

"g0v.tw wants to create a basis through transparency in order to sustainably strengthen democratic structures and create a basis of trust between citizens and the government." – Statement of the Jury

g0v 2012 grew out of dissatisfaction with the yawning gap between Taiwan's bureaucratic government and the country's citizens. g0v is a civic community that utilizes technology to advance the common good by eliminating information asymmetries and, at the same time, fostering independent thinking and collaboration. The guiding principle of g0v is trust in the power of the people. Since its inception, a feeling of openness has brought together men and women from all walks of life, and brought forth ideas that are poetic, progressive, useful and



radical. The citizenry's demand for openness and transparency on the part of the government has grown, and *g0v* grows with it. Projects like Taiwan Environmental Dashboard call attention to air quality, Amis Moe Dict is fighting to revive one of Taiwan's most widely used mother tongues, and Open Political Contribution and Voting Guide inform people before elections.

INTERACTIVE ART+

Golden Nica

LarbitsSisters (BE): BitSoil Popup Tax & Hack Campaign

https://bitsoil.tax/campaign

"(...) has been developed as the sum of a process of interdisciplinary scientific research, philosophical reflection, and artistic practices, setting up a device of VPN connections, AI and tax collector bots at the service of a global system of economic and social welfare." – Statement of the Jury

BitSoil is the black gold of our time—every click, every Tweet, every post generates data that can be sold. More than 2.5 trillion bytes of data are generated daily, with each and every one of contributing 600 to 700 megabytes to the total. In return for free services, we swap this data with Google, Apple, Amazon, Facebook et al, who make money on it. A lot of money. The digital economy earns billions and concentrates these profits in the hands of a few people. LarbitsSisters regarded this as a totally unacceptable situation, and it motivated them to initiate their BitSoil Popup Tax & Hack Campaign.

The internet installation—currently on display at Gluon in Brussels—makes use of a troop of bots that comb through Twitter accounts for particular keywords: affluence, Apple, assets, benefit, common, data, data economy, cash and cost. When they're found, the respective Twitter user is contacted and invited to join the BitSoil Popup Tax & Hack Campaign, which the user can do in a variety of ways: obtain information about the project and its mission; create and launch their own bots; or, if they prefer, send a digital postcard from BitREBUPLIC to a CEO of one of the 10 biggest high-tech companies or the chancellor/prime minister of their country of choice. Each of these activities, in turn, generates new data—which is to say new BitSoil— and the resulting profit is divided up fairly and transparently among all participants. The general public can follow this on Twitter or at Gluon in Brussels. Prix Ars Electronica has awarded the LArbitsSisters a 2018 Golden Nica for BitSoil Popup Tax & Hack Campaign.



Award of Distinction

Kohei Ogawa (JP), Itsuki Doi (JP), Takashi Ikegami (JP) and Hiroshi Ishiguro (JP): Alter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QN7pJQz1XDs

"(...) represents a step forward in android science projects." - Statement of the Jury

Alter is a robot that was developed to find out what it means to come across as lifelike. Judging by its appearance, Alter seems to be a denuded machine; nevertheless, its complex movements appear natural. And even if there's evidently no rhyme or reason to these movements, they're constantly changing in accordance with the algorithm they're based on, which imitates the logic of neuronal circuitry of living creatures. Alter doesn't move about in a predetermined way; rather, the body's movements originate in real time. A neuronal network of 1,000 nerve cells is emulated on a computer, and Alter "learns" lifelike actions from the sensors' signals. Alter is the offspring of a joint venture of two researchers: one working with androids; the other in artificial intelligence.

Award of Distinction

Mary Flanagan (US): [help me know the truth]

http://maryflanagan.com/work/help-me-know-the-truth/

"(...) valued the use of neuroscientific software that allows the users to experience – through the interaction with the system – the weak plot of diffuse values that are barely sustainable to help us know the truth." – Statement of the Jury

[help me know the truth] is a software-controlled participative work of art. First, the visitor takes a digital self-portrait or selfie in the exhibition space. The image is then displayed at various digital stations within the exhibition. Using the tools of the cognitive neurosciences, the face is then manipulated with noise patterns to, in the truest sense of the word, construct the perfect stereotype through time and the visitor's input. Then at a series of digital stations, the visitor is requested to choose between two slightly different portraits that correspond to a text on display. Through the selection of slight variations of the image over time, there emerge various facial features from otherwise random patterns, which reveal unconscious convictions about facial features or tendencies with respect to culture and identity. The list of demands made upon visitors to the exhibition space range from politically explosive to taboo. Examples: "Pick the victim"; "Which one is the ringleader"; "Choose the terrorist." Other verdicts visitors are called upon to reach entail deciding which face is, say, the most angelic, friendliest, or most indicative of a wrongdoer. The artist's intention is to question how computer techniques can uncover the categorizing systems of consciousness and how software itself is thus subject to socially constructed fears and values.



Computer Animation

Golden Nica

Mathilde Lavenne (FR): TROPICS

https://vimeo.com/271655658; www.mathildelavenne.com; https://www.facebook.com/TROPICSMathildeLavenne/

"The clean black-and-white visual environment contrasts with the unseen, spoken expression of memories, revealed with the digital distortion connected with the Mexican culture and history." - Statement of the Jury

French artist Mathilde Lavenne's animated film entitled TROPICS is a visually impressive search for traces of a long-lost civilization. The setting is the town of Jicaltepec on the Filobobos river in the Mexican province of Veracruz. French farmers and their families settled here in the 19th century and began to farm the land. By engaging in agriculture according to a European model, constructing buildings and streets, laying out and plowing fields—in short, configuring the tropical landscape as they saw fit—they eradicated the last traces of the pre-Columbian past. Nevertheless, the newcomers are repeatedly reminded of what used to be. Every year during the rainy season, Rio Filobobos, on its course from the mountains to the valley, overflows its banks and washes up pre-Columbian artifacts—ceramic utensils, painted statues and other objects that the former inhabitants conserved and utilized in everyday life or for religious purposes. Each individual piece attests to the culture and faith of the people who once lived here and worked the land in accordance with the laws of their culture and of nature. In TROPICS, Mathilde Lavenne summons up these spirits of the past and casts an unaccustomed look at modern-day Jicaltepec. To do this, she used a FARO scanner, a technology usually employed by architects to generate three-dimensional images of buildings. From the scanner's point clouds, she created a three-dimensional image of the landscape in which multiple strata always overlay each other. The black-and-white of the images convey the impression that they were shot at night through infrared glasses—the only missing element is the green that normally characterizes such images. Via its distinctive aesthetic, TROPICS imparts the feeling of seeing the structures of things that usually remain unseen. The film invites viewers to discover not only an unfamiliar landscape but also the foreignness of the world-this one that we inhabit today, or that one that used to be long ago. Mathilde Lavenne's animated film TROPICS has been awarded a 2018 Golden Nica by the Prix Ars Electronica.

Award of Distinction

Hayoun Kwon (KR): 489 Years

https://www.hayounkwon.com/

"Hayoun Kwon succeeds in addressing a deeply difficult problem in a profound and poetic way."

- Statement of the Jury



489 Years is a work of computer animation based on the accounts and recollections of a former South Korean soldier. The film offers insights into the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. Since only authorized persons are permitted to set foot in the zone, Hayoun Kwon used animated sequences to reconstruct this place. The soldier talks about his experiences during a reconnaissance mission in an area that had been completely reclaimed by nature—a paradoxical setting in which he felt both alarm in light of the political-military importance of this zone as well as awe at the beauty of nature. With her imagined landscape, Hayoun Kwon tells of the geopolitical reality of the divided peninsula and the danger of war constantly prevailing here.

Award of Distinction

Boris Labbé (FR): La Chute / The Fall

www.borislabbe.com

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byfsw8QTgsg

"(...) seamlessly combines traditional techniques with contemporary software to create a fevered vision of struggle and strife, death and life, construction and destruction, Hell and Heaven." - Statement of the Jury

With heavenly beings having descended to Earth and spoiled its inhabitants, the old world order has begun to waver. And thus a tragic crash leads to the birth of diametrical opposites—Heaven and Hell. Reading Dante's Divine Comedy inspired Boris Labbé to create *La Chute*. The film rather conveys the feeling of a world that is more of an imaginary creation based on art, myths and the history of humankind. The artist employs traditional techniques and combines them with computer-aided processing. The animated sequences consist of pen-and-ink and watercolor drawings on paper, whereby approximately 4,000 original images were needed to produce the whole film.

u19 - CREATE YOUR WORLD

Golden Nica

Lorenz Gonsa, Martin Hatler, Samuel Stallybrass, Vincent Thierry / Five Hours of Sleep (all AT): Levers and Buttons

https://youtu.be/fqGSJMXG4So

You're unique. At least that's what they always tell you. What they don't mention is that you're a clone. One that's especially good at cleaning. You heard correctly: cleaning! That's your fate. You clean the spaceship you've been assigned to. You get assistance from your clone partner in the Control Room ... But then an unexpected event occurs! The spaceship has caught fire, which has to be extinguished immediately! For a smoothly functioning team like you two, that shouldn't be a problem—or is it?



"In addition to the concept's creativity, the humor, and how much fun this is to play, we (...) were delighted by the game's scope and that the program was free of bugs." - Statement of the Jury

Levers and Buttons is a video game—to be precise: an asymmetric cooperative VR puzzle for two players. One player controls a character in two-dimensional space; the other acts in the realm of virtual reality. Both are stationed on a spaceship on which fire has broken out, and they have to prevent a catastrophe. The player in virtual reality has to solve puzzles to extinguish the fire; the other player helps her/him to do so. The whole game hinges on communication between the players. Levers and Buttons is suitable for experienced VR users as well as newbies. This video game has garnered the Prix Ars Electronica's 2018 Golden Nica for Five Hours of Sleep aka Lorenz Gonsa, Martin Hatler, Samuel Stallybrass and Vincent Thierry.

Award of Distinction

Students at HTBLVA Ortweinschule (all AT): //movingshapes;

https://vimeo.com/260381703

"//movingshapes; really wowed the jury with how it imparted sequences of movements to geometric forms and brought the results to the screen in a lovely combination of art and technology." - Statement of the Jury

//movingshapes is a media installation that constitutes a mode of interactive design. Each of these 18 students developed an algorithm to independently transform body movements into digital art. When a person moves about in a zone in which a Kinect can register his/her motions, the average body mass is calculated and abstracted into a single point. In the program, each point is then run as the decisive object, which makes it possible to influence the programmed sequences with movements and to "draw" with them. Each participant developed her/his own algorithm on the basis of various fundamental methods of generative design. Processing was used to create different geometric objects that move in coordination with the user's movements within the Kinect zone and are re-rendered frame by frame. As soon as the user exits the Kinect zone, the finished work of art is stored to memory as an image and the system moves on to the next algorithm. Thus, the next user interacts with a new algorithm configuring a different object by another maker.

Award of Distinction

Christoph Amon, Christian Janßen, Florian Kristof, David Stadlmann (alle AT): Smart CUP

http://www.smart-cup.at

"It's user-friendly, efficient, and conveys a clear message: HYDRATE!" – Statement of the Jury



Failing to drink enough fluids disrupts the metabolism and our body's physical and mental efficiency declines. Smart CUP provides help here by reminding the user to have a drink. This device measures how much the user has imbibed over a preset timeframe and, if the intake is insufficient, issues a warning via LEDs, a buzzer or a smartphone app. Smart Cup consists of a technical unit including a load (weigh) cell, a position sensor, a Bluetooth module, a wireless charging module, warning LEDs and a buzzer. The cup has a non-slip outer surface. Smart CUP can be used in the workplace and all sorts of situations in everyday life, but above all in conjunction with providing care to seniors.

u10 Prize

1st and 2nd Grades at Kindermanngasse Elementary School (all AT): Max in Danger

www.kindermanngasse.at

http://kmg-team-c.blogspot.co.at/2017/04/trickfilm-projekt.html https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il0ALh5UqHA

"An exemplary group effort by a school class, and a worthy prizewinner." - Statement of the Jury

With the children's book entitled "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak as their point of departure, pupils at Kindermanngasse Elementary School grappled with the subjects of "being wild," transcending boundaries, and having the courage to stand up for ones beliefs. They used cameras, lamps and recording software to create a short animated film with a soundtrack featuring background noises produced by the youngsters themselves. In Max in Danger, the protagonist, Max, sails across the sea in a sailboat and displays great courage on this journey—neither sharks, nor huge ships nor screeching birds can force him to change course. On an island, he even encounters wild creatures who subsequently save him from a big fish and ultimately want to crown him as their king.

u14 Prize

Leon Haberleithner (AT): Rise to the Future

"The mix of different media and the way they're used create excitement." - Statement of the Jury

Leon Haberleithner's action film follows two agents on their journey into the future. Along the way, they experience all sorts of adventures including flying cars, battles against security robots, and a Mars landing. Leon Haberleithner conceived and produced this film and also acted in it.



2018 netidee SPECIAL PRIZE

Samuel Daurer, Ämilian Mayrhofer (both AT): out of tune http://out-of-tune.org

"(...) offers a clever solution—an innovative graphic depiction that simplifies the task of finding music across the boundaries separating individual genres." – Statement of the Jury

The confrontation with the subject of Big Data and the quest for newer, cooler music were the driving forces behind out of tune (OOT), a Web project that offers new possibilities to discover music. With the help of OOT, users can enjoy an innovative way to check out a lot of different genres and musicians online. At the moment, the database contains 30-second samples of works by approximately 180,000 artists. This project was implemented by two students at Ybbs IT Technical School as their graduation project.

Visionary Pioneers of Media Art

Art, Science and Technology – Leonardo!

https://www.leonardo.info/

The first issue of Leonardo appeared in 1968 in Paris. The publisher was Frank Malina. The artist and space travel pioneer strove to establish an international platform for artists whose work intensely focused on science and new technologies. After Frank Malina's death in 1981, this vision was carried on by his son, Roger Malina, an astronomer at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1982, together with Frank Oppenheimer and Robert Maxwell, two founding members of Leonardo, he launched the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology (Leonardo/ISAST). The new non-profit organization addressed the growing need on the part of members of the art, science and technology community to engage in networking in the form of conferences, symposia, festivals, lecture programs and competitions, to inspire one another, and to enter into new alliances. All the while, the Leonardo journal has reported on these activities and constantly presented current experiments, pilot projects and new joint ventures. This was the beginning of the Leonardo Network. Over the years, the Leonardo community has continually grown and engendered additional formats: Space and Arts workshops, the Leonardo Educators and Students Program, and the Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous. Ever since its inception, Leonardo has nurtured transnational and interdisciplinary collaborative projects in the USA and abroad, propagating and documenting the most creative and most promising ideas of our time. Leonardo accompanies and supports artists, scientists, researchers, theoreticians and practitioners who, in turn, have made their marks on the Leonardo Network, forming it and constantly modifying it further. As one of the world's most time-honored and leading platforms for art, science and technology, Leonardo is being singled out for recognition by the Prix Ars Electronica with a 2018 Golden Nica.



APPENDIX

Digital Communities / Honorary Mentions

The Mosireen Media Collective: 858 Archive

https://858.ma

Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC)

http://abtec.org

Arab Digital Expression Foundation – ADEF http://www.arabdigitalexpression.org

Digua Community (Sweet Potato Community) 地瓜社区

WeChat ID: DiguaCommunity

EHRI Online Portal

https://portal.ehri-project.eu

The Institute of Network Cultures (INC)

http://networkcultures.org

MuckRock

https://www.muckrock.com

p5.js

http://p5js.org

PetaBencana.id

http://info.petabencana.id

Queering the Map

https://www.queeringthemap.com

Radio Garden

http://radio.garden

TIC-as Centroamérica

https://www.facebook.com/programa.ticas

u19 - CREATE YOUR WORLD / Honorary Mentions

Jakob Ammerer, Patrick Blagojevic, Jakob Gerlitz, Benita Stampfer, Florian Steiner, Aida Suljic (all AT): Das Schallkraftwerk

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC-sS8bAKdA&feature=youtu.be

Boris Cergic, Valentin Rezsnyak (both AT): FotoFlex

Sonja Groiss, Anna Kaufmann (both AT): Generation Y

Susanne Weissenboeck (AT): Good night, Mary



Antonia Beck, Nora Erös, Tobias Gruber, Clemens Makoschitz, Sebastian Schreibmaier (AT): Icarus_thegame

https://icarus-thegame.com

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAJUwCcYVgI

Clemens Grossberger, Isabella Hundstorfer, Markus Petzke, Dominik Schicketanz, Tobias Teichmann, Thomas Übellacker (all AT): Maladidea

Yasmin Litschauer, Chiara Mazanec, Aisling Pircher, Laura Scheidl, Johannes Zottele (all AT): Pounding Heart

Gregor Franz, Lara Rabitsch, Johannes Rass, Julian Schmiederer (all AT): schuldICH?

Cornelia Lobmeier, Andreas Sigl, Verena Wolfsöldner (all AT): Solares Kühlen für Nicaragua https://youtu.be/cs4KqApUiDQ

Interactive Art+ / Honorary Mentions

Nao Tokui, Shoya Dozono: Al DJ Project – A dialog between human and Al through music https://vimeo.com/259129367

http://aidj.qosmo.jp

Kristin McWharter (US): Conspiracy: Conjoining the Virtual

http://kristinmcwharter.com

Etsuko Ichihara (JP): Digital Shaman Project

https://vimeo.com/157890881

http://etsuko-ichihara.com/2017/04/04/digital_shaman_project/

Georgie Pinn (Electric Puppet) (UK/AU), Kendyl Rossi CA/AU): ECHO

https://vimeo.com/257847557

https://www.electric-puppet.com.au/current-work

Ei Wada (JP) + Nicos Orchest-Lab (JP): ELECTRONICOS FANTASTICOS!

http://www.electronicosfantasticos.com

https://eiwada.com

Manuel Beltrán (ES): Institute of Human Obsolescence

http://speculative.capital

Yassine Khaled (MA/FI): Monitor Man https://vimeo.com/259583366

https://yassinekhaled9.wixsite.com/yassine

Sarah Petkus (US): Mother of Machine

http://noodlefeet.zoness.com/

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRPVRMPHJbobF-NhCa4QZEFNblLr-U7gt

https://www.youtube.com/GravityRoad



Antoinette de Jong (NL) & Robert Knoth (NL): Poppy Interactive – War and Organized Crime Gone Global

https://poppy.submarinechannel.com

Quadrature (DE): Positions of the Unknown http://quadrature.co/work/unknown/
https://vimeo.com/236742257

Richi Owaki (JP), Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]: The Other in You

https://youtu.be/OzNU4_W_cEM

http://www.ycam.jp/en/events/2017/the-other-in-you

Ursula Damm (DE): Turnstile

http://ursuladamm.de/u-bahnhof-schadowstrasse/

Computer Animation / Honorary Mentions

Shirley Bruno (US/HT): An Excavation of Us

https://vimeo.com/222092059

www.shirleybruno.com

Peter Burr (US), Mark Fingerhut (US), and Forma (US): Descent

https://vimeo.com/195036249

Andrew Thomas Huang (US): Flesh Nest

https://vimeo.com/242541609

http://www.andrewthomashuang.com

Ash Thorp (US): Ghost in the Shell Reel http://altcinc.com/work/ghost-in-the-shell/

Marta Pajek (PL): Impossible Figures and Other Stories II

https://vimeo.com/166027500

Réka Bucsi (HU): LOVE

https://vimeo.com/ondemand/loverekabucsi

https://vimeo.com/162266553 https://vimeo.com/151452791

James Paterson (CA): Norman

http://normanvr.com

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw8NN38ng9s&list=PLDYOoKgOW0z_HVJhU3zvu9nelY

OaVyEpN

Renata Gąsiorowska (PL): Pussy https://vimeo.com/182994219

Markos Kay (CY/UK): Quantum Fluctuations http://www.mrkism.com/quantum.html

https://vimeo.com/166185297

Akinori Goto (JP): Rediscovery of anima

https://vimeo.com/272616026



Daisy Jacobs (UK): The Full Story https://vimeo.com/203089372

John Gerrard (IE): Western Flag (Spindletop, Texas) 2017

https://vimeo.com/217000876 http://www.westernflag.art

johngerrard.net