

A major Ars Electronica exhibition premieres in Berlin

## “HUMAN FACTOR – endless prototyping” at DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum

(Linz/Berlin, July 1, 2016) HUMAN FACTOR – endless prototyping,” an exhibition produced by Ars Electronica, is now appearing at DRIVE, Volkswagen’s stylish venue in Berlin. This lineup of 25 works is an array of artistic-scientific prototypes offering intriguing takes on the essential social, ecological and economic issues of these times. They’re concepts and projects that remain unfinished, have not yet fully matured, are still untested, or whose outcome and/or further progress are unknowns, but that, nevertheless—or, perhaps, for precisely those reasons—are tremendously exciting and inspirational. The show is being accompanied by a program of talks, workshops, performances and interventions. “HUMAN FACTOR – endless prototyping” is Ars Electronica’s fifth presentation at DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum in Berlin. This facility, which reopened in May 2015 after a two-year renovation, showcases Volkswagen’s diversity and also serves as a setting for discussions of socially relevant issues and emerging future prospects. “HUMAN FACTOR – endless prototyping” runs until August 28, 2016. Admission is free of charge.

### The HUMAN FACTOR in a world increasingly pervaded by technology

Humankind has been fighting for its very survival since time immemorial. For millennia, we have endeavored to arrange our habitats in ways that would henceforth make this existential struggle easier to win. Our intellect and creativity, our readiness to collaborate and our willpower ultimately enabled us to decide this fight in our favor. And what’s more, we have come to be so successful in modifying everything around us—even the essence of life itself—to such an extent and configuring it so complexly that we now find ourselves in the paradoxical situation of no longer being able to comprehend this world we have made. The HUMAN FACTOR, the very thing that has fostered our survival heretofore, is now yielding consequences that threaten to overwhelm us. How can and should we confront the many imponderables and uncertainties of our globalized world? How can we as a society and as individuals sustainably and efficiently go about configuring our future while we’re increasing losing our overview of and insights into the direction in which things are moving and the consequences of all these developments. The “HUMAN FACTOR” exhibition points out how we might go about this, and demonstrates interesting strategies for dealing with the uncertainties inherent in our increasingly technological world.

### Pioneers and Prototypes

There are already pioneers underway at the nexus of art, society and industry, men and women seeking sustainable solutions and creating prototypes on the basis of these ideas. The reference here is to artists who are working together—and at eye level—with engineers, technologists, scientists and business executives, but the outcomes they have in mind are

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not uplifting works of art for display in the lobbies and galleries of this world. They're building prototypes that are often imperfect, and some aren't even finished. For instance, Quayola (IT) is represented in this exhibition by his never-completed, robotically rendered copies of the Ancient Greek Laocoön Group, a work that asks what the outcome would be if the machine's programmed perfectionism would finally bring these sculptures to fruition. Nick Ervinck's (BE) Agrieborz Heads and the Teacup Tools by Agnes Meyer-Brandis (DE) also address the idea of incompleteness and take these considerations to the next level. Teacup Tools seem to be incessantly measuring and the data gathered thereby are interlinked on an ongoing basis. Upon closer examination, the 3-D printed heads by Nick Ervinck likewise impart the feeling of a process that never arrives at the point of closure and convey the impression that they're human heads, only to reassert rational consideration and negate this impression at the same moment. Most prototypes face an uncertain future, one determined by factors that are often external to their immediate surroundings and dependent upon complex interrelationships. In Opimilk by Teresa Dillon, Naomi Griffin-Murtagh, Claire Dempsey and Aisling McCrudden (all IE), what emerges when the artists ask whether genetically engineered cows could produce antibiotics in the future is the uncertainty that resonates between a very real initial situation and a proposed solution in the realm of fiction. That a prototype can also help to see that which presently exists from a new point of view is amply demonstrated by Daniel Boschung's (DE) Face Cartography, in which a specially programmed industrial robot uses a camera to create high-resolution images that we, with our own eyes, would never have perceived this way. A stark contrast to this is provided by the rendering robots in Human Study #1, 3RNP by Patrick Tresset (FR/UK), which take a completely different approach to creating a portrait of a human subject: they come across as street artists in that they observe, measure, and then execute their internalized images in the form of portraits rendered on paper. And then there's Rare Earthenware, an installation and video work by Unknown Fields / Toby Smith (UK/AU), that takes what's unseen and makes it visible as well as tangible, and thereby conveys a feeling for another reality. What would happen if prototypes constantly kept us informed about the current security situation or the level of danger in our midst is impressed on us by Maria Castellanos Vicente (ES) & Alberto Valverde (ES) and Michael Burton (UK) and Michiko Nitta (JP), all of whom have fashioned prototypical measuring devices. How unripe ideas and prototypes could be developed into instruments of a highly critical nature is demonstrated by Afroditi Psarra (GR), Golan Levin (US) & Shawn Sims (US) and Shiho Fukuhara (JP) & Georg Tremmel (AT/JP).

## DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum Hosts Ars Electronica Linz

"HUMAN FACTOR – endless prototyping", an exhibition curated by Ars Electronica Linz, is running until August 28th at DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum. This fifth show presented by Ars Electronica at VW's Berlin venue features works by approximately 30 artists who have collaborated with creative technologists and scientists to create prototypes that propose solutions to the central challenges we face in the Digital Age. DRIVE is also hosting an ancillary program of talks, workshops, performances and interventions. Kicking things off on

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July 5th is a discussion among a diverse group of international panelists representing art, science and industry: Bernd Scherer (HKW-House of World Culture), Horst Hörtner (Ars Electronica Futurelab), Irini Papadimitriou (Victoria & Albert Museum), Peter Wouda (Volkswagen Design Center), Teresa Dillon (artist) and Gerfried Stocker (Ars Electronica Linz).

## Credits

Sculpture Factory / Quayola (IT) // Face Catography, creating new Identities / Daniel Boschung (CH) // Environment Dress 2.0 / uh513: María Castellanos (ES), Alberto Valverde (ES) // The Free Universal Construction Kit / Golan Levin, Shawn Sims (US) // Instruments of the Afterlife / Michael Burton (UK), Michiko Nitta (JP) // Opimilk / Teresa Dillon (IE), Naomi Griffin-Murtagh (IE), Claire Dempsey (IE), Aisling McCrudden (IE) // Common Flowers - Flower Commons / BCL: Georg Tremmel (AT/JP), Shiho Fukuhara (JP) // AGRIEBORZ, IKRAUSIM / Nick Ervinck (BE) // Teacup Tools / Agnes Meyer-Brandis (DE), Human Study #1, 3RNP / Patrick Tresset (FR/UK) // Balance from Within / Jakob Tonski (US) // SWITCH / Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT), // INAPRO Innovative Aquaponics for Professional Application // Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB) (DE) // bioMASON biocement masonry / bioMASON, Inc. (US) // Rare Earthenware Black stoneware and radioactive mine tailings / Unknown Fields Division (UK/AU) // "The Culture" series / Afroditi Psarra (GR), Dafni Papadopoulou (GR) // Datenmarkt / YQP: Maximilian Hoch (DE), Manuel Urbanke (AT), Florian Dohmann (DE) // Jennifer Lyn Morone™ Inc / Jennifer Lyn Morone (US) // Silk Leaf / Julian Melchiorri (IT/UK) // Human Sound Factor / Karl Julian Schmidinger (AT), Joschi Viteka (AT) // 5 Mètres 80 / Nicolas Deveaux (FR), The Wiltshire Chair / Gavin Munro (UK) // Sammy P. / Artist: Istituto Europeo di Design - IED (IT): Cesare Griffa (Master coordinator) with Mohamed Awaty, Victória Calil Barriatto, Anirudh Datta, Giulia Del Din, Samuel Fiolis, Riccardo Rigo (students) // Mine the Scrap / Project Team: Tobias Nolte (DE), Andrew Witt (US), Michael Degen (US), Jason Tucker (US), Sound Design: Simon Epstein (UK)

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HUMAN FACTOR - endless prototyping: <http://export.aec.at/humanfactor/en/>

DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum: <http://www.drive-volkswagen-group.com/>

HUMAN FACTOR-Beitrag am Ars Electronica Blog: <http://www.aec.at/aeblog/en/2016/06/30/humanfactor/>

Ars Electronica Linz: <http://www.aec.at/news/en>

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