

New exhibition at the Ars Electronica Center

Spaceship Earth

(Linz, August 31, 2015) Impressive satellite imagery of Earth and the information that can be gleaned from it about our home planet occupy the focal point of an exhibition produced jointly by the European Space Agency (ESA) and Ars Electronica. “Spaceship Earth” provides insights into the ESA’s earth observation program, the subjects of this research, as well as its findings having to do with weather trends, the expansion of cities, and the effects of climate change. The exhibition’s interactive design was developed by Ars Electronica Solutions.

Spaceship Earth

Ever since the first satellites were launched in the early 1960s, cameras on board have been monitoring conditions on Earth from outer space and delivering often-spectacular pictures. Now, these photographs are the featured attractions of a new exhibition at the Ars Electronica Center that demonstrates the extraordinary wealth of information that is inherent in these impressive images. Visitors discover how high-tech instruments gather data that enable scientists to draw conclusions about a wide range of parameters such as soil moisture, crop yields, water & air quality, ocean temperature, solar radiation and vegetation, and make appropriate recommendations about what needs to be done about them. The centerpiece of the exhibition is arrayed about a three-dimensional depiction of Earth—seven rotating steles, six representing a continent and one for Austria. They offer a fascinating selection of satellite images—an algal bloom in the Barents Sea, irrigation systems in Castile, a cloud of ash above Iceland’s Eyjafjallajökull volcano—and elaborate on the backstory of each one.

The Design of the Exhibition

The architecture of the exhibition space is an allusion to the elliptical orbit of a satellite. Steles that can be freely turned on their axis are positioned around a rotating globe. Exhibition visitors making their rounds about the steles become international globetrotters who can utilize multi-touch surfaces to access in-depth information about the images. Questions having to do with the location of the pictured areas, technical background details about the sensors and visualizations, as well as the superordinated context of a particular image are treated in an interactive narrative structure. Developed by Ars Electronica Solutions, “Spaceship Earth” also invites installation visitors to act cooperatively. Individual steles are arrayed synchronously, whereby the resulting cumulative nature of the acoustic and visual impressions engenders a shift in visitors’ perspectives from the orbit of the satellites to the atmosphere of our planet.

The European Space Agency

The European Space Agency (ESA) is an international organization dedicated to promoting the use of outer space and space research for peaceful purposes. Its mission is to pool Europe’s space travel capabilities and to carry out projects that are far beyond the possibilities of a single European country. The ESA currently has 22 member states, and works together with the European Union, non-European space agencies, and numerous

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.sonnleitner@aec.at
www.aec.at/press

countries worldwide. Its projects' objectives are correspondingly diverse, ranging from exploration of the Earth and the universe, and developing satellite-supported technologies and services, to nurturing various European high-tech industries.

Ars Electronica Solutions

Ars Electronica's newest division was established in 2012. Its mission is to effectively market inventions made throughout the organization and to develop custom-tailored solutions in the interactive segment. Diverse projects developed and implemented in recent years include many exhibitions and work in the fields of brandlands, urban development and event & show design. The driving conceptual force behind the creativity is Ars Electronica's wide-ranging international competence network. For Ars Electronica as an artistic institution, these market-oriented activities provide a key link in the processual chain that begins in the form of a creative vision, is perfected at the in-house R&D lab and the Festival, and culminates in the ability to deliver interactive installations customized to client specifications.

ESA: <http://www.esa.int/ESA>

Ars Electronica Solutions: <http://www.aec.at/solutions/en/>

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

With queries, please contact

Christopher Sonnleitner
Tel: +43.732.7272-38
christopher.sonnleitner@aec.at
www.aec.at/press