

Ars Electronica Festival

The Ars Electronica Festival premiered on September 18, 1979. This pilot project was designed to take the Digital Revolution's emergence as an occasion to scrutinize potential futures and to focus these inquiries on the nexus of art, technology and society. With this philosophy, which remains Ars Electronica's watchwords to this day, the Festival's founders—cyberneticist/physicist Herbert W. Franke, electronic musician Hubert Bognermayr, music producer Ulli A. Rützel and Hannes Leopoldseder, then director of the ORF–Austrian Broadcasting Company's Upper Austria regional studio—laid the foundation for Ars Electronica's ongoing success.

From Trial Balloon to International Success Story

Within a few years, this Linz invention developed into one of the world's most important media art festivals. From year to year, its lineup became more extensive and multifaceted. There were symposia, exhibitions, performances, concerts and interventions spanning a broad arc from speculative futuristic scenarios to analytical considerations, from provocative actionism to philosophical debate. Each year, the Festival has been dedicated to a new theme and the organizers are also constantly on the lookout for interesting new venues—indeed, the consistent effort to break out of the narrow confines of conventional conference rooms and artistic spaces, and to stage cultural and scientific encounters in the public sphere has become something of an Ars Electronica trademark. Linz Harbor, a network of subterranean tunnels, a monastery, a tobacco processing plant and a former Austrian Postal Service logistics facility have been among the settings of this festival that defines itself as work in and with the public.

Extraordinary Spirit

In 1979, the festival lineup was a short list: 20 artists and scientists hosted the program. Now, almost four decades later, the dramatis personae include over 1,000 artists and scientists from more than 40 countries, as well as approximately 450 accredited journalists and bloggers. And the renowned artists, speakers and media outlet representatives from throughout the world are by no means the whole story of what makes this event so great. Key contributors to the festival's incomparable spirit are the thousands of annual visitors—a colorful mix of old friends and new faces.

Management

Artistic Directors: Christine Schöpf (AT), Gerfried Stocker (AT)

Producer: Martin Honzik (AT)

Organizers and Sponsors

The Ars Electronica Festival is organized by Ars Electronica Linz GmbH & Co KG. in collaboration with the Brucknerhaus Linz, the OK Center for Contemporary Art, Central Linz, Mariendom Linz, the LENTOS Art Museum, the Salzamt, Anton Bruckner Private University and Linz Art University. The Ars Electronica Festival receives support from the City of Linz, the State of Upper Austria, the Arts and Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery of Austria, and numerous associates and sponsors.

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