



— Information sheet

Ecology of Techno Mind

ARS ELECTRONICA 2008
Featured Art Scene

4 September – 5 October 2008



ARS ELECTRONICA



Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Title	Ecology of Techno Mind
Exhibition Period	4 September until 5 October 2008
Press Conference	4 September 2008, 12:30 Dialogue Partners: Stella Rollig (Director Lentos Art Museum) Gerfried Stocker (Director Ars Electronica) Jurij Krpan (Curator)
Opening	4 September 2008, 1 pm
Exhibition Locality	Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Basement
Team	Curator: Jurij Krpan; Curator Assistance: Sandra Sajovic, Tomaž Kučer; Speaker: Luka Zagoričnik; Technician: Jure Sajovic, Miha Bratina; Project Management Ars Electronica: Jochen Zeirzer
Kontakt	Ernst-Koref-Promenade 1, 4020 Linz, Tel. +43(0)732/7070-3600; info@lentos.at, www.lentos.at
Opening hours	daily 10 am – 6 pm; Thursday 10 am – 9 pm
Admission	€ 6,50, reduced € 4,50
Press Contact	Mag. Nina Kirsch, Tel. +43(0)732/7070-3603 nina.kirsch@lentos.at

Supported by:

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Division for Culture
Ars Electronica Festival
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University of Ljubljana
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ARS ELECTRONICA 2008_Featured Art Scene

Here, a change has been made to the festival format in 2008. Instead of a Featured Artist Exhibition, we're introducing a Featured Art Scene spotlighting the work of an artists' collective. Kicking it off will be a look at Slovenia's productive young media art scene. Formerly a part of Yugoslavia and thus – despite nominal status as a bloc-free state – within the Soviet sphere of influence, Slovenia's artists were subjected to the dictates of socialist conceptions of art for several decades. Following years of crisis and decline culminating in the late 1980s and early '90s, things began to turn around. Now, Slovenia is an EU member state; its economy is booming, and its media art scene is one of the most active and most innovative in Europe. "Ecology of the techno mind" is the title of the Featured Art Scene 08's inquiry into the high-tech procedures of leading-edge medicine, genetic engineering and space exploration – and thus, its scrutiny of our contemporary social reality.

Featured Art Scene Exhibition

Ecology of the Techno Mind presents a selection of works representing Featured Art Scene from Kapelica Gallery (Ljubljana, Slovenia), artists who are deploying technology and science as a means of delving into social reality today. Among the projects' themes are new media, biotechnology, biopolitic, space exploration and the use of computers in the medical field.

Ars Electronica will be featuring works by the following artists and artistic groups: Iztok Amon, Marko Batista, BridA (Tom Kersevan, Jurij Pavlica, Sendi Mango), Miha Ciglar & Nika Autor, Patricia Ando Cvetkovic, Luka Dekleva & Luka Princic, Stefan Doepner (f18institut), Tomaž Grom, Janez Janša, Andrej Kamnik in collaboration with Marko Pihlar, Saša J. Mächtig, Octex, Marko Peljhan, Borut Savski, Sašo Sedlaček, Irena Tomažin, Polona Tratnik, Tao G. Vrhovec Samolec, Dunja Zupančič & Miha Turšič & Dragan Živadinov, Amelia Biewald, Tadej Fius, Paul Granjon, Vasja Kokelj, Ivan Marušič Klif, Srdan Prodanović, Philip Ross, Jonathan Schipper, Ive Tabar, Zoran Todorović, Jennifer Willet

A Tree is Dreaming of Uirapuru

Artists & Creators: Tao G. Vrhovec Sambolec (Slovenia), Byung Jun Kwon

The legend: An extraordinary Amazonian bird Uirapuru sings only once a year, while building its nest. Uirapuru's song is so beautiful that all the other birds stop singing to listen to it. Both in legend and reality Uirapuru represents a symbol of rarefied beauty and loneliness.

The installation: There are several cassette players hung on a tree, each powered by its own solar cell. Each module contains a different fragment of the Uirapuru song. The playback is dependant on the energy coming from the sun. If all the modules start playing at the same time, then one can hear the song in its originality. That will happen only when the sun will be in a particular position according to all disembodied song parts - then everything will stop. For the rest of the time, A Tree is Dreaming of Uirapuru.

Engineering: Byung Jun Kwon

Produced by Lonely Projects

Supported by Fonds BKVB Amsterdam, STEIM Foundation, Amsterdam, Studio CMMAS – Morelia – Mexico

Sponsored by SOLARC – Berlin

Bowlfuls of Sound

Artist & Creator: Borut Savski (Slovenia)

Bowlfuls of Sound is the name of two moving spherical objects – bowls – made in late 2005. They have simple motorics and a little bit more complex sensorics. They are susceptible to the sound they hear and they also produce the sound. This is why the bowls are full of sound. They can potentially sense each other (infrared sensor) and then change direction. This should allow the bowls to slowly zigzag closer to each other, but this is not an interest to Borut Savski – as for the bowls itself this may be defined as a motive. May one bowl therefore be male and the other female. A simple autoreferential algorithmics produces / gives birth to a kind of autonomy – let's call it life.

Links: <http://www.3via.org/borut>

Brainscore (in collaboration with Darij Kreuh), Brainloop

Artist & Creator: Janez Janša (Slovenia)

Brainscore and Brainloop explore a complete fusion between a user and a digital universe by synchronizing an electromagnetic and electric field.

In the Brainscore project two operators act in a virtual reality environment through their avatars. The task is achieved by triggering a command on a console through a system based on the operator's brainwave signals (neurofeedback technology) and an eye movement tracking system. The Brainloop performance is instead a performance platform that utilises a Brain Computer Interface (BCI), which allows a subject to operate a device merely by imagining specific motor commands; a neural synapse occurs but the actual movement is blocked at the corticospinal level.

Links: <http://www.aksioma.org>

INSULAR Technologies

Artist & Creator: Marko Peljhan (Slovenia)

The "International Networking System for Unified Long-distance Advanced Radio" was conceived in 1999 as a worldwide open and decentralized radio network for the transfer of secure data in the high frequency range (1 MHz - 30 MHz) using digital HF communication. A stable communication flow is ensured through the use of the PACTOR 3 protocol and the existence of an autonomous infrastructure aimed at making users independent from the existing proprietary telecommunication infrastructure.

Marko Peljhan (SLO) born in 1969. In 1995, he co-founded Ljudmila (Ljubljana Digital Media Lab) and has since 1996 worked in Ljudmila as a programme coordinator in many different fields. He is also coordinator of the international Insular Technologies initiative and the Makrolab project, as well as coordinator and producer of flights for zero-gravity artistic projects in conjunction with the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Moscow. See <http://makrolab.ljudmila.org>. He currently holds a joint appointment with the Department of Art and with the Media Arts and Technology program at UC Santa Barbara.

K21

Artist & Creator: Saša J. Mächtig (Slovenia)

The K21 system is a series of multipurpose telecommunications "consoles" for the urban territory, a network of nodes that address the situational logic driven by the flow of people and information.

Unique

Artist & Creator: Polona Tratnik (Slovenia)

Realizations: 2006, In Vivo In Vitro show, Athens, Greece; 2006, U3 – Triennial of Slovenian Contemporary Art, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Production of the project: Kapelica Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Unique as some of Tratnik's previous projects continues to discuss the interweavement of the individual in the common microbiological flesh of the world and to question the boundaries of the individual's intimacy and privacy. It enables an insight into the micro world of the human body, and visualizes the fauna and flora of it. Samples of micro organisms of the observers are collected, cultivated and exhibited in glass vitrines under special conditions. The graveyard of the human remains becomes a fertile storehouse that enables life.

The observer's intimacy is examined with an intrusively piercing eye, which sees more than usually. The observer himself is also invited to meet another aspect of his body in a dissectionary way. But the observer is also confronted with special conditions, he/she is positioned into an artificial environment for cultivating life. He/she enters the inside of an organism, but this organism is above all scientific, is a kind of laboratory organism. It is as much cold as it is warm. It contains life, namely numerous living species. Thus a human being becomes merely one of them.

The confrontation is safe and sterile although the threat of an enormous quantity of the unknown species that might endanger the observer is perceptible. But the atmosphere is also exciting with its motley crowd of species in all colors and forms. The project is shown in progress so that the situation changes and is being enriched. The micro organisms gain much better conditions for growth than they have on the donor's body –

in such a manner these artificial conditions enable their afterlife. The organic elements contributed by the human crowd are gathered as in a DNA bank and artificially kept alive in substitutional living environment.

Special thanks to prof. Dimitris Kekos, Petros Katapodis, PhD, Helen Daflou and National Technical University of Athens – Department of Chemical Engineering – Biotechnology Laboratory; to Metka Krašna, PhD, Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia – Tissue Typing Center; to Jurij Krpan, Sandra Sajovic and Kapelica Gallery; to Jožica Puhar and Slovenian Embassy in Athens; to Helena Drnovšek-Zorko and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Slovenia; to Zoran Gorišek; to Adi Slemenjak, Stainless Steel Equipment; to Alltra, Laboratorial Glass and Equipment; to Anna Hatziyiannaki and Artopos; and to Maja Murnik.

Links: <http://www.ars-tratnik.si>

Modux 3.4

Artists & Creators: BridA, Sendi Mango (Slovenia), Tom Kerševan (Slovenia), Jurij Pavlica (Slovenia)

The project Modux is an indicative example of research being introduced into the medium of visual arts, in which diverse information on various surfaces is brought together to form dense network systems, capable of interacting with the chosen energy, material, or matter, responsible for the transfer and processing of information.

A work of art thus becomes a space in which art occurs and is upgraded and transformed throughout the entire duration of its display. The composition of such systems of expression

changes frequently and in many ways, from ordinary manual interventions in the work to establishing and interconnecting precise physical relations for transferring the artistic message by sound and picture waves in the sense of modern energy channels.

Links: <http://www.brida-kud.si>

O :: O :: O (Orbital Orientation Object)

Artists & Creators: Dunja Zupančič (Slovenia), Miha Turšič (Slovenia), Dragan Živadinov (Slovenia)

The Orbital Orientation Object allows an individual to enter for a moment into the visual field of zero gravity – the individual's horizon is in an unstable dynamic relationship with the apparent horizon.

The technological demonstrator manifests the fifty-years theatre performance "NOORDUNG::1995-2045". It generates and explains the conceptualisation of the performance and is at the same time the cause and central topic of the visual performance O :: O :: O.

Links: <http://www.noordung.net>

Origami Space Race

Artist & Creator: Sašo Sedlaček (Slovenia)

The Origami Space Race project is an initiative for alternative space program which uses contemporary art system as a platform for development and promotion of ecologically based space technologies and its applications on earth.

The idea is to challenge the Japanese Scientist Shinji Suzuki from the University of Tokyo who will be the first to launch an origami prototype airplane from International Space Station. With O.S.A. (Origami Space Airplane) a prototype origami airplane developed in Slovenia the "race" for new generation of ecological space vehicles officially starts. This can be a revolutionary turning point in space ecology and a beginning of new eco utopia.

Robot Partner 02. – Automated Table Modification

Artist & Creator: Stefan Doepner (Slovenia + Germany)

The meta-project robot partner aims towards understanding the basics and relations of partnership, between living beings as well as between humans and machines.

The project deals with the contemporary ideals, ideas and images of improvement ("Fortschritt"). The goal of the project is to re-do the development of automated service systems

by artistic approach. It's not about finding answers but about marking questions. The living table installation on one hand shows possible applications of service-automation in everyday life with a focus on the absurdity of the result, on the other hand with a focus on the poetic moment which emerges out of this absurdity and thereby offers the spectator a possibility for reflexion about his own position.

Th strategies (tactic/haptical strategies)

Artist & Creator: Iztok Amon (Slovenia)

What is and how does interaction really look like? The concept of spatial orientation is based on the spatial planes and axes and on the directions that we see as left, right, etc. The perception of a blind person meanwhile brings up the synthesis of distal and proximal perception. The link becomes especially significant when the blind person navigates with something as distant as a satellite – or something navigates him (?).

Such a gadget is a part of the ontological spiral and of engineering if a person requires an interface for getting a representation of space and a kinesthetic accessory to enter this same space.

The setting is a strategy for transforming, bending and unfastening the algorithm of spatial interaction as posited by Euclidian geometry, defined by Copernican thought, methodologically used by the Enlightenment and dogmatised by religion. Programming and engineering: Ivan and Borut Pirnat

Wind Code Image

Artists & Creators: Andrej Kamnik (Slovenia), Marko Pihlar (Slovenia)

Wind Code Image is a prototype of an responsive facade and interior wall that can interact with the wind or air conditioning systems within a building.

Wind Code Image can be shown as a facade or as a parasitic wall within an already constructed building, into which it can be built in at a later date. The wall deconstructs and constructs an image, the theme of which can be adjusted to the building's surrounding.

Links: <http://andrejkamnik.carbonmade.com>

Robot Rabbit, Lo-Tech songs with servo-drive

Artist & Creator: Paul Granjon (Frankreich/Großbritannien)

Paul Granjon is a visual artist working with electronics, robotics, video and programming. His subject matter is the co-evolution of humans and machines. He applies a playful, hands-on approach to the production of machines for videos, installations and performances, often presenting the work in a humorous fashion, combined with an underlying darker vision. He questions and comments on the effects of exposure to an exponentially growing and more capable technological environment.

Robot Rabbit is an automatic installation that opposes the inflexible rhythm of the machine to the biological growth of the live grass. Modified toy rabbit stands on a mini-patch of real live grass. The rabbit repeats continuously the words 'robot, rabbit' at a rate of 1 word/second. A mechanical counter is incremented at each word. The growing grass is automatically watered by an electric pump when the humidity level gets low.

The work, originally shown in 2001 at the occasion of Granjon's first solo exhibition in the UK, contributed to the artist's ongoing investigation in the relation between humans and machines or, in a wider sense, between nature and artefact.

During the performance *Lo-Tech Songs with Servo-Drive* several machines are presented and activated such as the *Robotic Ears*, the *Robotic Perception Kits*, the *Sexed Robots* (model version) and the *Heartbeat Machine*.

Inside / out

Artist & Creator: Ivan Marusic Klif (Kroatien)

'Drawing on his first-hand knowledge of technology, Klif savours going back, to the history of the medium, manipulating in unexpected ways the screen itself as the main instrument. The reality of physical space and the virtual one exist in parallel; in a space shattered with screens we exist in both at the same time. The result is not schizophrenia, but pleasure. The dimension of uniqueness, in which the main role is played by the principle of coincidence, and the sensation of freedom that it creates with its electronic ambiances, offer the public the royal space that they deserve.'

Juniors' returns

Artist & Creator: Philip Ross (USA)

Plants which grow in hydroponic gardens are synonymous with the industrial production of vegetable, which grow in artificial and precisely controlled conditions, protected from natural asymmetries. The result is predictable and safe. The vegetables are typically good looking and tasteless.

Yet the current climatic conditions presage harsher living conditions for all life forms on Earth. It may soon happen that organisms will be too exposed in the natural environment to develop without control. Ecological barriers are coming down and turning a blind eye to the causes is not even lucrative any more.

At the same time people are living in environments in which plants had never lived naturally. Crops thrive in artificial environments in the desert, in polar environments and in space, providing valuable lessons about them. However, they have long since ceased being the subject of farming or gardening. They are increasingly becoming the subject of science and technology.

Fuck me now or lose me forever

Artists & Creators: Jonathan Schipper (USA) & Amelia Biewald (USA)

Fuck me now or lose me forever draws form disparate sources-biology, technology, and pop culture. The bird-like forms relate to a mating ritual of eagles in North America. These birds fly high, joining in an embrace that causes them to fall dangerously towards the earth only separating seconds before hitting the ground, then effortlessly soaring back into the air repeating this mating ritual tirelessly for hours. This repetitive process lends itself to the basic logic and movement within the sculpture. The biological impetus for his work is now translated into a language of wire and electromechanical pulses. The title of this piece is a bastardization of a quote from the movie *Top Gun*. In the movie, the love interests courting ritual is interweaved with the rising and falling of the jet fueled aircraft flying for the US military. As human dominance of the air, earth and sea becomes more complete how do the systems that have guided organic creation in the past seep into current techno reality?

Assimilation

Artist & Creator: Zoran Todorović (Russland)

Assimilation was an event which, in its own way, puts into the question the idea of beauty. In fact, it was a dinner made of skin and fat that appeared as surgical surplus an aesthetic operation of bodilifting. It was realized in following manner: entire process of the preparation of food was documented with photographs; more precisely, the process was photographed from the beginning of the operation, then through the preparation of the food, to the moment when it was served on the dinner table. This sequence of photographs was a kind of a stage set of a dining-room, where the public was invited to decide whether to accept the invitation to take refreshment.

BIOplay: Bacteria Cultures

Artist & Creator: Jennifer Willet (Kanada)

BIOplay: Bacteria Cultures is a component of a larger body of work called InsideOut: Laboratory Ecologies. This work is based on my experiences as a non-specialist working in a variety of scientific laboratories. Essentially, I am interested in intervening in the ‚laboratory ecology‘, as I perceive it. The carefully balanced relationship between all organisms (and parts of organisms) inhabiting the lab – animal and human research subjects – cells, bacteria, enzymes, plants – the scientists themselves, and even unwanted contaminants. I wish to produce works that purposefully breaks with the convention of a ‚closed‘ laboratory ecology – reconnecting the laboratory with external ecologies – revealing the ‚bodies inbiotechnology‘ to viewers and participants as interconnected orders of life.