

ARS ELECTRONICA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Many of the works at the Ars Electronica Animation Festival deal with current challenges, pose critical questions and sketch out dystopian and utopian scenarios. In many cases, realities are presented and staged unembellished without concrete solutions; but even if confrontation with the facts gives us little reason for hope, it is usually the emotional staging that provides the impetus for action.

— Juergen Hagler, Ars Electronica Animation Festival Director

ARS ELECTRONICA ANIMATION FESTIVAL 2024

A collaboration between Ars Electronica and the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria Hagenberg Campus, co-curated by Juergen Hagler and Daniela Duca De Tey

The 2024 Ars Electronica Animation Festival is a diverse showcase that invites spectators to discover current artistic productions in the field of digital animation. The selection has been mostly compiled from the submissions to the Prix Ars Electronica 2024, which shifted its focus last year from *Computer Animation* to the landscape of *New Animation Art*. It is therefore now welcoming artists whose work reaches beyond the cutting-edge intersection of animation, art and technology, delving into visual expression through bold experimentation. Several exciting programs such as *Prix Ars Electronica Best-Of*, *AI & Human*, *H-O-P-E* and *Austrian Panorama* will demonstrate clearly the breadth and diversity of the medium, not only in terms of storytelling techniques, conceptual explorations and technological innovation, but also commitment to social change and new political visions. Many creators of animation utilize specific technological tools—applications like Stable Diffusion, Midjourney,

DALL-E, Sora, Runway, or ChatGPT—in a self-reflexive manner to offer critical commentary on the socio-technical nature of these systems themselves. From the 900 submissions, around 40 projects have been selected to be shown at *Ars Electronica Animation Festival*, featuring a broad spectrum of techniques: AI-generated images, cinematic deepfakes, documentary storytelling, scientific and data visualizations, real-time graphics or CGI powered by game engines. The selection is complemented by three outstanding guest programs compiled by SIGGRAPH, ISEA and Runway AI Film Festival respectively. For the first time, *Ars Electronica Animation Festival* will take place in medSPACE, a new venue for teaching anatomy, offering an immersive 4k screening experience with a projection surface of 14 by 7 meters. Located on the medical campus of Johannes Kepler University Linz, the space has been developed and implemented by the Ars Electronica Futurelab.

PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA BEST-OF

Prix Ars Electronica Best-Of is a compilation of outstanding animations chosen by the jury from the works submitted to the *New Animation Art* category of Prix Ars Electronica 2024. The selection begins with the Golden Nica winner, *Smoke and Mirrors* by Beatie Wolfe. This work comprises a blend of music video and science visualization, emphasizing the magnitude of the climate crisis by presenting not only scientific facts about global warming but also the dangerous ideological positions denying it. Rising methane levels are illustrated alongside historical advertising slogans employed by oil companies to downplay awareness of the climate emergency. In addition to the Golden Nica winner, the compilation includes two awards of distinction and five honorary mentions, encompassing a wide array of critical social-political themes and challenges of our times. These themes include data surveillance, the invisible human labor that goes into training AI systems,

the erosion of image credibility and the commodification of transnational education.

Smoke and Mirrors, Beatie Wolfe (GB)
Stained, Jeremy Kamal (US)
I'm Feeling Lucky, Timothy Thomasson (CA)
Unknown Label, Nicolas Gourault (FR)
Thank you for your Souvenir, UK!, Oushi Lin (CN)
*F*ckai?* (Famous), Jordan Clarke (CA)
Random Acts of Flyness: Season 2, Episode 4 / Fourth Dimension: Spacetime/bodyspirit, Kordae Henry (US)
DUCK, Rachel Maclean (GB)



Thank you for your souvenir, UK! © Oushi Lin

This year's Prix Ars Electronica award-winning works visualize the simultaneous creative actions of artists and inspire us to imagine a dynamic, living Earth.

— Emiko Ogawa, Co-Curator & Head of Prix Ars Electronica

H-O-P-E

Hope is a powerful, yet often too ambiguous concept. In a world beset by rampant climate change and societal disruptions, coupled with uncertainty about our ability to influence the future, hope remains crucial. However, relying solely on hope can seem naive and delusional. While hope alone cannot shape a project for future improvement, it can serve us as the underlying emotion that translates into various actions and tendencies shaping the future. Therefore, we

suggest using hope not as a tool in itself, but as a springboard for other useful concepts encapsulated in its letters: *H-O-P-E*.

H for HEALING

in vivo · in vitro · in silico, Kennedy+swan (DE)
 二〇二〇, Max Hattler (DE/HK)

O for OTHERNESS

Bye Bear, Jan Bitzer (DE)
Soft Creatures, BORA (FR)

P for PARADOX

UNKNOWN QUANTUM OBJECTS, Alessandro Bavari (IT)
Tacit Call, Paul Valentin (DE)

E for ENTANGLEMENT

Entangled Atlas, Inferstudio (AU)



Bye Bear © Jan Bitzer

AI & HUMAN

The *AI & Human* program is an annual celebration of the intersection between Artificial Intelligence and animation art, showcasing recent innovations in the field. This year a remarkable one-third of the submissions to *Prix Ars Electronica New Animation Art* were projects created using AI tools or centered around AI as a theme—the highest number to date. These submissions highlight diverse and evolving ways of creative AI, whether in storytelling, visual concept and design or image production. Beyond functioning as a mere tool, AI is increasingly becoming a subject of artistic exploration, serving as a theme and focal point. This year's program therefore includes works exploring the societal, ethical and identity implications of AI. *EMI* merges AI, CGI and real footage to create a frenetic advertisement tutorial

about a virtual female influencer, humorously addressing the growing commodification of the online body. *The Oasis I Deserve* is an animated documentary about dating AI chatbots. *All My Noise* immerses viewers in a bizarre, tech-saturated world of synthetic entertainment, depicting a landscape marked by both poverty and excess, all generated through AI-driven image design. Golden Nica Winner *Washed Out: "The hardest part"* is the first generative video made with OpenAI's SORA text-to-video model, proving AI's potential to become a complementary tool to traditional filmmaking. Last but not least, *AI Day* is an AI-generated digital tapestry paying tribute to women in powerful roles of creativity and Glenn Marshall's *Lady to Fox* tells the story of a mysterious metamorphosis.



All My Noise © Tomás García

EMI, Ethel Lilienfeld (FR)

The Oasis I Deserve, Ines Sieulle (FR)

All my Noise, Tomás García (AR)

Washed Out: "The hardest part", Paul Trillo (US)

AI Day, Ida Kvetny (DK)

Lady to Fox, Glenn Marshall (GB)

DATA AND SCIENCE VISUALIZATIONS

Through animation, scientific concepts become more than just data—they become stories that resonate and inspire. Animation can turn complex scientific concepts into visually comprehensible narratives, making them accessible to a broad audience. From exploring the Milky Way's center and the dynamics of stars orbiting a supermassive black hole to depicting DNA replication or the planet's warming trends throughout time, the selected animations break down intricate scientific phenomena into coherent segments. Such graphical representations of data often unveil 'hidden' insights about our world, in other words, they make us aware of phenomena that develop either too slowly (climate change) or too fast (DNA replication) to be noticeable through direct experience or observation technology. Some of the selected animations have a more factual, informative approach, focusing on making complex scientific concepts such as black holes, "G-object" dusty stars or the AMOC (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation) tangible and engaging for everyone. Other works in the selection integrate scientific data with more emotional narratives. Examples include reflecting on resilience in the aftermath of environmen-

tal disasters such as the Marshall Fire in Colorado, or exploring the complexities of corporate influence in managing climate data.

A Journey to the Center of the Milky Way: Stellar Orbits around Its Central Black Hole, NCSA Advanced Visualization Lab (US)

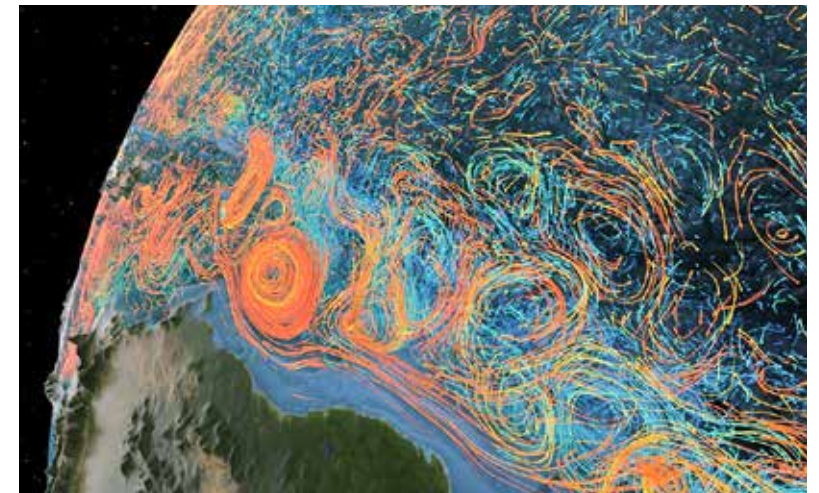
DNA Replication of the lagging strand, Peter Mindek (SK), Tobias Klein (DE), Alfredo De Biasio (IT)

Following the upper and lower limbs of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, Felicia Brisc (DE), Nuno Serra (PT)

NASA Climate Spiral, Mark SubbaRao (US)

Resaerate, Jullian Young (US)

Smoke and Mirrors, Beatie Wolfe (GB)



Following the upper and lower limbs of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation
© Felicia Brisc, Nuno Serra

I hope that *Smoke and Mirrors* helps to illuminate a Truth that has been purposely obscured from view, one that has played and continues to play a major role in the critical climate emergency that we all face.

— Beatie Wolfe, *Prix Ars Electronica* winner 2024, *New Animation Art*

AUSTRIAN PANORAMA

Austrian Panorama showcases a mix of experimental and humorous animations by Austrian artists or artists who live and work in Austria. A fascinating interplay of dance, music and neural style transfer unfolds in *LUCID*. Another AI-generated work, *echoes of grief*, takes one down the rabbit hole of memory in a phantasmagoric journey inside the unconscious, while *Equisite*

Corpus dives literally inside the human body with the help of X-ray imagery. On a comedic note, in *Annoyance*, a pesky fly brings chaos into a hipster's life thwarting his attempts to bite into a veggie wrap. The selection ends on a darker note with two dystopian narratives, *Abyss* and *The Electric Kiss*, one with a futuristic and apocalyptic stance, the other compiled from the remnants of cinema's past.



LUCID, Celine Pham (AT)

echoes of grief, Verena Repar (SI/AT)

Equisite Corpus,
Kevin Blackistone (US/AT)

Annoyance, Sascha Vernik (AT)

The Electric Kiss,
Rainer Kollberger (AT)

Abyss, Sophie Gartner &
Neo Klinger (AT)

LUCID © Celine Pham

YOUNG ANIMATIONS

A collaboration between Ars Electronica and OeAD, curated by Sirikit Amann (AT)

Like every year, the works of talented filmmakers up to the age of 19 are celebrated in the category *Young Animations*. The program is a selection of short films created by young artists across

Austria, who have submitted their projects to the Prix Ars Electronica 2024 in the *u19—create your world* category.



Important Part of my Life

Last
Normal Day in Jurassic World
Herzesschwestern
Na2r_3lumen

War—Escape—Penance

Zemlyanka
Fluten der Freiheit
Everlasting End

Inside—Outside

Constructed Identity
OceaNebula
Nur ein Traum

Last © Anna Bubenicek, Flora Kimbauer

SIGGRAPH GUEST PROGRAM I

SIGGRAPH will be present at Ars Electronica Festival this year with its prestigious annual showcase *Electronic Theatre*, covering 17 outstanding animations from this year's edition.

After Grandpa, Juliette Michel, Swann Valenza,
Florian Gomes Freitas, Axel Sence, Victoria
Leviaux

Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Tagged by Source,
AJ Christensen, Greg Shirah, Helen-Nicole
Kostis, Anansa B. Keaton-Ashanti, Mark
Subbarao, Brenda Lopez-Silva, Lesley Ott

Cuisine Exchange, Yves Geleyn,
Michael Thurmeier

Cycle, Amelie Devauchelle, Eva Degli-Innocenti,
Loreline Clément, Lucie Amherdt, Clemence
Fischbach

Dandelion, Ling Zhao, Zhengwu Gu

Doptelet Mechanism of Action, Jack Nelson,
Nick Klein, Andrew Swift, Pete Matthews,
Emily Drapal

Goodbye my World, Quentin Devred,
Estelle Bonnardel, Maxime Foltzer, Astrid
Novais, Florian Maurice, Baptiste Duchamps

LUKI & the Lights Creator, Toby Cochran



Still From Art of Weightlessness
© Moshe Mahler

Origami, Kei Kanamori

Patterns, Alex Glawion

Remembrance, Isaac Gazmararian

Spark: Milky Way Evolution, Ryan Wyatt,
Mike Schmitt

The Art of Weightlessness, Moshe Mahler

The Sun is Bad, Rachel Mow, Ivan Chui, Laura
Correal, Quinn Marsh, Liren Sun, Chenrui Lan,
Elle Yeung, Hazel Wong, Henry Ni, Rielle Yap
Ong, Samson Flanagan

The War Within Announce Cinematic |
World of Warcraft, Anna Morgan

Wing It, Rik Schutte, Fiona Cohen,
Francesco Siddi, Vivien Lulkowski

Wondermom, Clémence Provost, Lisa Tardieu,
Maud Grainger, Mariam Ulmasova, Manon Benet

RUNWAY AI FILM FESTIVAL GUEST PROGRAM II

Runway AI Film Festival was established in 2022 and welcomes artists embracing new and emerging AI techniques for filmmaking. The selection presented at Ars Electronica shows the last edition's festival finalists and offers a glimpse into a new creative era, showing that

there is no uniform and one-dimensional style in AI-driven filmmaking. The organization behind the festival is Runway, an applied AI research company founded in 2018 that builds Artificial Intelligence systems and tools for human imagination.

Animitas, Emeric Leprince (FR)

The dawn of creation, Carlo De Togni & Elena Sparacino (IT)

Dear Mom, Johans Saldana Guadalupe (PE/US) & Katie Luo (US)

$e^{i*\pi} + 1 = 0$, Junie Lau (CN)

Get Me Out, Daniel Antebi (MX/US)

LAPSE, YZA Voku (ES)

Pounamu, Samuel Schrag (US)

Separation, Rufus Dye-Montefiore, Luke Dye-Montefiore, Alice Boyd (UK)



Runway AI Film Festival © Flora Kimbauer

A Tree Once Grew Here, John Semerad & Dara Semerad (US)

Where Do Grandmas Go When They Get Lost?, Léo Cannone (FR)

ISEA GUEST PROGRAM III

Curated by Rewa Wright

The *Constellations ISEA 2024* animation program reveals a mix of Indigenous and Western animation concepts, styles and methods. New artistic approaches in expanded animation come to the fore through works by Nirma Madhoo, A. Bill Miller and Gregory Bennett, deploying motion and reality capture technology. Illuminating a new aesthetic in contemporary First Nations' thought, works by Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos, UnCalculated Studio, Pasha Clothier, Tiare Ribeaux and Qianqian Ye and Desna Whaanga-Schollum explore traditional knowledge systems with current software tools, part of a growing movement to expand Indigenous Futures in animation.

Patrick Lichty and Clinton Watkins offer experimental explorations, with Lichty investigating the intersection of animation and architecture and Watkins exploring the interplay between animation and sound.

9318, Nirma Madhoo (AU)

Alone 02, A. Bill Miller (US)

Metroplex, Gregory Bennett (Aotearoa/NZ)

Kai-Hai: 塑 Plastia, Tiare Ribeaux & Qianqian Ye (US)

The Coyolxauhqui Imperative, Liliana Conlisk Gallegos (US/MK), Juan Carlos Portillo (US), Cory Scott McCormick (US)

BioRhythms 2, UnCalculated Studio / Rewa Wright & Simon Howden (Aotearoa/NZ)

Te Hihili o te Ahi (the Energy of Fire), Pasha Clothier (Aotearoa/NZ)

SentientPlace, Desna Whaanga-Schollum (Aotearoa/NZ)

Force Fields (edit), Clinton Watkins (Aotearoa/NZ)

untitled movements, A. Bill Miller (US)

Latent 5, Patrick Lichty (US)



9318 © Nirma Madhoo

Expanded Animation Conference
© Animation Festival 2024

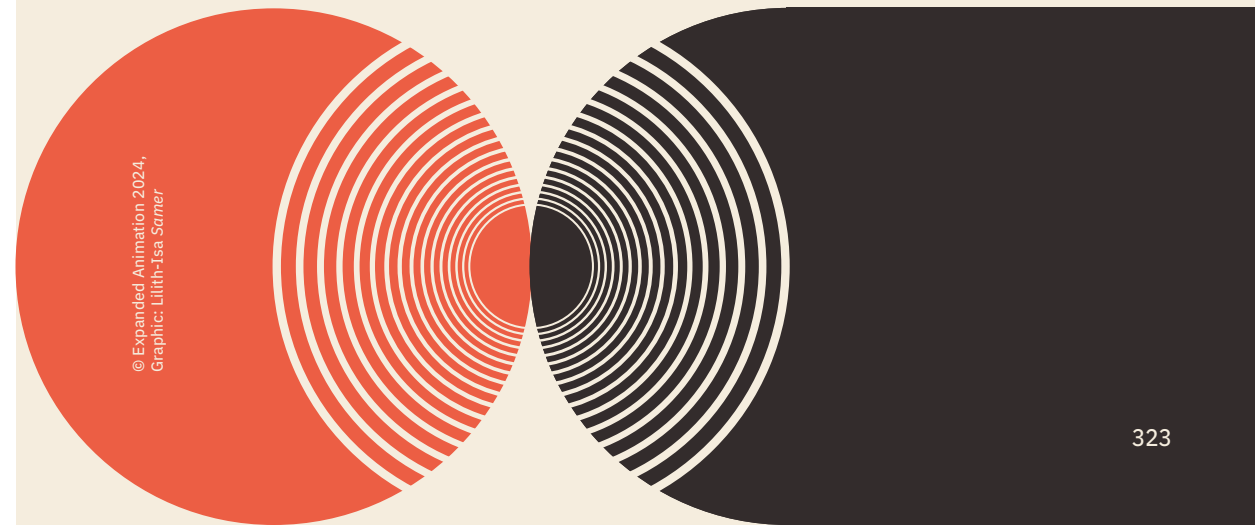


EXPANDED ANIMATION 2024 CONFERENCE ON ANIMATION AND INTERACTIVE ART

Animation, in its simplest form, is media in motion. In a similar capacity, the *Expanded Animation Symposium* is also in motion, continuously evolving since its inception in 2013; each frame effectively represents a current snapshot of the unlimited landscape of animation in the context of media arts. The symposium that began as a one-day side event of Ars Electronica has meanwhile developed into a three-day attraction within the *Ars Electronica Animation Festival*. In the pursuit of a comprehensive metaphor for organizing and critically examining paradigms for the creation, display and perception of animation, a series of four symposia entitled *Synaesthetic Syntax* were included under the *Expanded Animation* umbrella from 2020–2023. In the previous eleven editions, a total of 240 artists, curators, cultural workers and researchers shared their ideas, findings and artworks. Experts from various fields were invited to present their perspectives on specific topics such as *Interfaces in Motion* (2018), *Tectonic Shift* (2021) or *The Art of Performance* (2023), with the aim of bringing the world of art, technology and science together.

With the 12th edition, the event will morph into its next frame as a media arts conference. *Expanded 2024—Conference on Animation and Interactive Art* focuses on academic art papers in the field of expanded animation and interactive art that explore and experiment with audio-visual expression at the intersection of art and technology. The call for papers addressed submissions in two categories: Art Research Paper, a full paper with a focus on theory and context; and Art Paper, a short paper based on an artwork, case study or work in progress. 36 papers were submitted for the Art Research Paper Track, of which 12 were accepted for publication. This represents an acceptance rate of 33%. For the Art Paper track, we received 38 submissions, of which 15 were accepted for publication. This represents an acceptance rate of 39%. All selected papers will be included in a proceedings document published at Ars Electronica Archive and *Expanded Animation*.

Three other panels complement the comprehensive program in addition to the conference presentations.



© Expanded Animation 2024,
Graphic: Lith-Isa Sumner

The *ASIFA AUSTRIA Forum* features animation filmmaker Irina Rubina, the indie game studio *Slow Bros* and Paul Clarke from the collective *uninvited guests*.

Rachel Maclean and Nicolas Gourault, both honored with an Honorary Mention in the Prix Ars Electronica category *New Animation Art*, will offer insights into their current work. Paul Trillo, winner of a Golden Nica in the category *AI in Art*, a category first announced in 2024, will present his current AI-generated films. In the panel *Art & Industry*, Jan Pinkava will talk about the future of interactive storytelling, and Bonnie Mitchell will speak about the *Time Tunnel—50 years SIGGRAPH HISTORY*.

As in the eleven previous editions, all lectures will be live streamed, recorded and made available in the Ars Electronica and *Expanded Animation* archives. The proceedings will complement the already comprehensive documentation of activities from the conference. From the beginning, the

organizers of *Expanded Animation* have followed an open approach, never requiring an entrance fee for either active or passive participation. The extensive materials and documentation (i.e. video and photo documentation, publications) from the event are also freely accessible; the anthology *Expanded Animation—Mapping an Unlimited Landscape* is an open access publication, and the recorded lectures are freely available on the expandedanimation.com website. In contrast to many other conferences, the speakers do not have to pay a conference fee but even receive an Ars Electronica Festivalpass for their participation. In the spirit that research should not be elitist, *Expanded Animation* is a prime example of an inclusive, open and comprehensive research format for all interested parties. The proceedings of the *EXPANDED 2024—Conference on Animation and Interactive Art* are available at the *Expanded Animation* website.

EXPANDED PLAY

EXHIBITION OF PLAYFUL MEDIA

The medium of games has been a frequent object of exploration in our previous *Expanded Animation* Symposia, with artists and developers sharing their perspectives on animation concepts, interaction paradigms and the role of play in their works. However, such works deserve to be experienced first hand in order to be appreciated in their intended context. This year marks the inception of a new format—*Expanded Play*—a cooperative exhibition that explores various perspectives of Mixed Reality and spatial interaction within the realm of playful media, showcasing a range of student works from the Digital Media Department at the University of Applied Sciences Upper

Austria and the Department of Visual Computing at Masaryk University. The exhibition is located at the Salzamt in Linz, a platform for artists and cultural creators from various fields. During *Expanded Play*, a selection of diverse exhibits will be showcased, each opening different realms of experience: from a VR reading corner that allows visitors to engage with books in a novel way, to performative installations where the player's body and other physical objects serve as the controller.

This innovative use of space and technology will offer an immersive journey through the evolving landscape of interactive art and play.



I see you © Lisa Bayr, Gerald Gruber, Florian Horak, Elisa Hackl

General Chair: Juergen Hagler^{1,3}

TPCs Art Research Track: Victoria Szabo², Philipp Wintersberger^{3,4}

TPCs Art Track: Varvara Guljajeva⁵, Bonnie Mitchell⁶

Panel Chairs: Reinhold Bidner⁷, Michael Lankes³, Alexander Wilhelm³

Inclusion Chair: Kathrin Probst³

Publication Chair: Martin Kocur³

Web, Social Media: Nils Gallist³, Wolfgang Hochleitner³, Victoria Wolfersberger³

Exhibition: Jeremiah Diephuis³, Simone Kriglstein³

Event Production Chairs: Patrick Proier³, Christoph Schaufler³

Trailer, Visual Art: Lilith-Isa Samer³

¹ Ars Electronica, AT

² Duke University, US

³ University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, AT

⁴ Interdisciplinary Transformation University, AT

⁵ The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, CN

⁶ Bowling Green State University, US

⁷ gold extra, AT

⁸ Masaryk University, CZ