

08.08.2019–15.09.2019, city area of Karlsruhe

Seasons of Media Arts

City of participatory visions

With *Seasons of Media Arts* the ZKM, together with the city of Karlsruhe's cultural-affairs department and a variety of local initiatives, will present a series of media-art installations throughout the city area of Karlsruhe beginning August 8, 2019. The interactive installations, displays, and works of augmented and virtual reality on show will take up the theme of open data and explore the evolution of the smart city.

Today's cities are subjected to constant yet invisible change, as thousands of data streams are created, processed, and distributed each day. The modern city is green and socially inclusive – a space that is equipped with digital technologies and capable of responding intelligently to economic, social, and political challenges. The rise of the smart-city phenomenon raises important questions: How do we imagine the city of the future, and what position will we occupy in it? How can we influence the urban landscape via new digital technologies, data streams, and information? What happens to all the data that is collected by sensors and smart technologies in our smart cities? *Seasons of Media Arts* offers citizens a participatory democratic space in which to confront these questions.

Urban media art for digital self-determination

From the Palace Gardens to displays in the subway, from the ZKM's Kubus to shop windows, *Seasons of Media Arts* will present many different kinds of media-art installations in every possible public venue. Distributed throughout Karlsruhe, the pieces will artistically investigate the world of data, using interactive installations, displays, and works of augmented and virtual reality to render the vision of the smart city tangible. These artworks will create a virtual urban space defined by interaction and knowledge transfer. Their use of digital technology will serve not to collect data on the city's inhabitants, but to create transparency in the political decision-making process and facilitate citizen participation. The goal is to establish a digitally connected city that prioritizes the digital self-determination of its citizens.

Our partners in the planning and execution of this project are major local players in digital culture and education, organizations that think critically about new technologies and seek to direct their future development, with the participation of Karlsruhe's citizens, toward a more open, technologically informed society. The project is slated to become an annual event beginning in 2019.

July 2019

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Co-organizer



In cooperation with



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Strengthening digital participation

Seasons of Media Arts is a continuation of the educational outreach program that began with the ZKM's experimental project Open Codes. Partners from that exhibition will offer workshop series in a public location, such as "Citizens Knowledge Lab," "Code Like an Artist," and "Build Your Own Particulate Monitors," promoting digital participation among Karlsruhe's citizens. One special thing about these workshops is that they will take place in a mobile creativity studio on Friedrichsplatz called Spacecraft_ZKM. This space is the brainchild of the Agboglobshie Makerspace Platform (AMP) a communal youth-run project from Ghana. It combines the practical know-how of the informal maker movement with the technical knowledge of students and young workers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Spacecraft_ZKM offers an alternative architecture for public space on Friedrichsplatz, in which small, inexpensive, incrementally built open-source spaceships function as a set of tools and equipment for shaping space in various ways.

Karlsruhe as a site of participatory visions

Works of augmented and virtual reality, displays, and interactive installations will present a variety of (local) data in poetic and visual forms, allowing the potential social ramifications of the digitally connected city to be experienced at various locations in Karlsruhe. As part of Seasons of Media Arts, internationally active media artists will work with the ZKM, in association with local groups, to transform the city of Karlsruhe into a site of participatory visions. In addition to stationary and mobile artworks, Seasons of Media Arts will offer numerous workshops, tours, lectures, and lecture performances in public locations, addressing the themes of participation, urban planning, and the use of public data.

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Selected Works

Felipe Castelblanco, *The People's Monument(s)*, 2017

The People's Monument(s) calls for participative urban development. It illuminates our perception of public space, and of development's ecosocial conditions, by inviting citizens to share their visions for the city's development and enter into a dialogue about them.

One part of The People's Monument(s) is a publicly installed pedestal. Equipped with augmented-reality markers, it invites passersby in the area around the Palace Gardens to experience unusual city monuments via AR on their mobile devices, without having to download a separate app.

At the same time, the project also includes workshops in which participants take an active role, working with a 3-D artist to develop ideas for new public 3-D monuments reflecting their own visions and fears. These proposals have the potential to produce competing or controversial ideas that express various political views and represent different groups. The public nature of the project invites dialogue, understanding, and productive debate among participants.

In addition to the pedestal in the city center, which will remain installed there, a second one will move to a new location each week.

Adam Harvey, *Think Privacy*, 2016

A mirror with the inscription "Today's selfie is tomorrow's biometric profile" invites passing pedestrians to have their picture taken. At the same time, Adam Harvey's provocative and instructive artwork draws attention to evolving problems in an age of untrammelled data collection. In Harvey's view, the photos we post online could in the future be co-opted for commercial purposes and/or social control.

Currently based in Berlin, the U.S.-born artist has focused on the subject of privacy since 2010. His projects deal with the practice of camouflaging facial recognition systems, among other issues, and seek to heighten viewers' sensitivity to the problem of excessive private data collection – a concern that is more topical than ever in the wake of the Facebook–Cambridge Analytica scandal.

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Daniel Ploeger, *Post-Apocalypse Smart City Desert*, 2019

The smart city has become a new utopia. Visions of urban spaces that are surveilled and almost completely navigated by digital devices are held up as a path to the perfection of everyday life.

The 360-degree browser-based videos that comprise *Post-Apocalypse Smart City Desert* are accessed via QR code. The work presents an alternative version of the smart city: Instead of optimizing processes, it uses digital technologies for the catastrophic end of the world. The artist will place markers on Karlsruhe's garbage cans, everyday artifacts of public space that command little respect. When the markers are scanned, the cans appear in a digital space that hints at postapocalyptic scenes and highlights the unavoidable materiality of consumerism and hypertourism.

Anna Ridler, *Mosaic Virus*, 2018 (ongoing)

Mosaic Virus is a video that draws historic parallels between the tulip mania that swept the Netherlands and Europe in the 1630s and modern-day speculation in cryptocurrencies. The video, generated by artificial intelligence, shows a tulip flower as it develops and undergoes changes in color. The title refers to a type of virus, of the same name, that produces streaks of color in flower petals. In the seventeenth century such streaks enhanced the flowers' appeal and led to a speculative rise in prices during the period. In Ridler's piece, the streaks are determined by the value of Bitcoin, changing over time to reflect fluctuations in the market.

During *Seasons of Media Arts*, Ridler's tulips will bloom on the LED wall at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe.

Peter Weibel, *Music Passenger*, 2019

The interactive installation *Music Passenger* will be presented in the window of Musikhaus Schlaile, at Kaiserstraße 175. An LED screen installed in the window will show a digital sheet of staff paper whose lines function as sensors. An unseen Kinect camera captures passersby and transfers them – transformed into outlines – onto the paper. When a human silhouette brushes against a staff line, soft music plays. To produce music, the outline must touch the line-shaped sensors so that the samples stored in the computer can be retrieved and activated.

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Artists

Zach Blas, Felipe Castelblanco, Ursula Damm, Brendan Dawes, Greg Dunn, Julie Freeman, Sarah Friend, Johan Grimonprez, Adam Harvey, Ria Hinken, Norimichi Hirakawa, Patricia Ines Hoeppe, Albrecht Kim, Olga Kisseleva, Aaron Koblin, Gene Kogan, Ignas Krunglevicius, Sey Min, OK Lab Karlsruhe, Zach Lieberman, David O'Reilly, DK Osseo-Asare & Yasmine Abbas (Aglogboshie Makerspace Platform), Dani Ploeger, Polakvanbekkum (Esther Polak und Ivar van Bekklum), Tabita Rezaire, Anna Ridler, Stanza, Suzanne Treister, Urban Data Patterns, Peter Weibel, Manfred Wolff-Plottegg, Liam Young, Zeitguised

Exhibition curators: Peter Weibel and Livia Nolasco-Rozsás with Blanca Giménez and Olga Timurglieva.

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