

Andreas J. Hirsch

Creating the Future

**A Brief History
of Ars Electronica
1979–2019**

ars.electronica.art

PROLOGUE	
CREATING THE FUTURE	11
1 Ars Electronica Center Provides a Compass for Navigating the Future	13
2 Ars Electronica Futurelab Cultivates the Wisdom of the Swarm	25
3 Ars Electronica Festival Celebrates the Midlife Crisis of the Digital Revolution	31
4 Prix Ars Electronica Takes an Evolutionary Step Towards AI and Life Art	35
5 Immersing in the Future of Learning at the Deep Space and Beyond	39
6 Ars Electronica at 40 – Exploring the Future of the Legacy	41
I THE FOUNDING YEARS OF A NEW FESTIVAL 1979–1986	47
7 Put Your Radio in the Window: A Festival Emerges From a Cloud of Sound	49
8 The Birth of Ars Electronica from the Spirit of Computer Music and Computer Graphics	59
9 Castor and Pollux in the Skies of a 24-Hour World of Telecommunications	69
10 Computer Culture Meets Avantgarde Art and Experimental Television	79
II THE FESTIVAL AND THE PRIX FORM A DOUBLE STAR 1987–1995	87
11 The Birth of the Golden Nica	89
12 Dreaming of Electric Sheep and Exploring Virtual Worlds	99
13 The Rise of the Internet – Wide Awake in a Wired World	119
14 Planning Ars Electronica Center – The Art of Turning a Vision into Reality	129
III A MUSEUM AND A LABORATORY FOR THE FUTURE 1996–2003	137
15 More Than a Prototype – The First Ars Electronica Center	139
16 Memesis – Re-Formatting the Festival	153
17 Finding Out What the Future of the Laboratory and a Laboratory for the Future Could Be	163
18 The Art of Staying Ahead of the Times	181
19 Into a New Millennium – Ars Electronica Amidst the Scenes of Global Conflicts	193
IV ARS ELECTRONICA CASTS ROOTS IN THE REGION AND REACHES OUT GLOBALLY 2004–2008	199
20 Ars Electronica in New York – Reaching an International Stage	201

21	Going to the Country – The Challenge of Simplicity	211
22	Diving Right into the Middle of the City and Flying Over It	217
23	The Long Tail of the Hybrid	223
V	THE NEXT LEVEL – A NEW ARS ELECTRONICA CENTER 2009–2011	229
24	Learning About New Views of Humankind – The Second Center and its Labs	231
25	Robots and Androids Are Among Us	237
26	Sparks of a New Renaissance – Reaching Out Into the Deep Space	241
27	80+1 Turning Jules Verne’s Wager Into a Global Conversation	245
28	Beyond Repair? – Ars Electronica and Saving the World	247
VI	AN ECOSYSTEM OF ART AND SCIENCE IN YEARS OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE 2012–2014	251
29	The Alphabet of Collaborative Creation	253
30	Rough Winds – The Story of the Spaxels	259
31	The Art of Biomechanics and the Evolution of Memory	263
32	What It Takes To Change	268
VII	TURNING INTO A PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE 2015–2019	271
33	Re-Inventing the Festival as Platform – The POSTCITY Phenomenon	273
34	The Practice of Art and Science	285
35	A School for the Future	291
	CONCLUSION	
	THE SEARCH FOR THE SECRETS OF “ARS THINKING”	299
36	1979–2019: A Tale of Generations and a Vision Fulfilled	301
37	Pattern Recognition: A Matrix of Themes and a Fabric of Motifs	303
38	Re-Inventing as Art: The Resilience of a Public Good	305
39	Intangible: Cultural Heritage Ahead of Its Interesting Times	306
40	The Search for the Secrets of “Ars Thinking”	307
	APPENDIX	309
	Footnotes, Photo Credit, Acknowledgments, About the Author	310