

● LUMINALE 2020
↳ PRESSEMELDUNG

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When the Digital becomes Romantic - renowned Light Artists on the theme of the Luminale 2020

Philipp Geist, Marija Avramovic & Sam Twidale, Denis Bivour & Florian Giefer, as well as the artist collective Xenorama, provide a strong presence at the Luminale – offering a total of four outstanding, independent interpretations of this year's theme "Digital Romantic". These can be seen at the Alte Oper, the Reichegrabenweiher, the Bethmannweiher and the Eschenheimer Anlage.

A poetic oasis of light and colors in the middle of the city, join in a magical Virtual Reality (VR) fairy tale, a mythological journey through digital structures and artificial swans performing their water ballet on the Reichegrabenweiher: These four works of light art, among many other installations, offer Luminale visitors an excellent opportunity to vividly partake in this year's theme "Digital Romantic". Many already know the internationally renowned light artist Philipp Geist from the last Luminale: in 2018, Geist presented a spectacular video mapping installation on the Römer in Frankfurt. This year, his large-scale installation "Ariadne's Night" will illuminate one of Frankfurt's spectacular former landmarks: the Bethmannweiher and the nearby Le Panther pavillion.

The walk-in video/light installation creates a poetic oasis of light and color in the middle of the pulsating city. Poems and text fragments from the Romantic era are integrated into the abstract, pictorial imagery of Geist's work, together with portraits, sculptures and paintings from the same epoch. None of which would be complete without the famous statue "Ariadne on the Panther", closely related to the history of this place.

Walking through the park, and the romantic pictorial worlds depicted on the trees, the earth and in transparent mist, visitors can actively take part in the installation. The staging is meant to underline the original purpose of the place: as an oasis of beauty, art, nature and urban life amidst the historic ramparts.

"BE\LONGING" on the Facade of the Alte Oper

The problem of poetically shaping the public space with the aid of modern media is explored by Xenorama, the five-man artists' collective, winner of numerous awards for its installations. What nuances are to be found in sober numerical sequences and digital aesthetics? Is there such a thing as digital romanticism? The atmospheric work BE\LONGING is an artistic examination of these questions. The facade of the Alte Oper, peppered with mythological and poetic motifs, depicts a journey from linear, digital structures to sensual plays of light and the dreamlike visions of seemingly impossible scenarios.

"Gliding through atmospheric structures of virtual architecture, beyond figurative representation, information carriers and wild spectacle, we lose ourselves only to rediscover ourselves anew, connect and resonate", the collective explains.

The urban, digital work of art made of light and sound unfolds a new space with its atmospheric, multi-sensory impressions. New dimensions to pause, feel, let oneself go and connect with one's own dreams. Undeterred by functionality, optimization or understanding, "BE\LONGING" allows visitors to explore this space on the facade of Frankfurt's Alte Oper and dive into the romantic possibilities of digitality.

"Cygnus": Hyper-romantic Installation on the Rechneigrabenweiher

Denis Bivour and Florian Giefer make the confrontation with digital romanticism tangibly comprehensible: Their hyper-romantic installation "Cygnus" plays on the surface of the water of the Rechneigrabenweiher. Eight artificial swans begin to glow and then orderly form into a stunning water ballet. A poetic sound field evolves from their delicate voices, while the spectral, shimmering birds circle upon the water. The movement of the swans is completely autonomous and their routes are coordinated via GPS.

"Cygnus" takes the viewer on a journey into the "uncanny valley", the sinister vale where the boundaries between digital imagination and conventional reality become blurred. The installation challenges traditional viewing habits and raises interesting questions in the dawning age of robots: Will we preserve nature or will future generations create their own digital creatures? And what role is to be played by romanticism, which seems so deeply-rooted in human nature? Is it only a fragile, marginal phenomenon of a soon-to-be forgotten epoch? Or will romanticism make the leap into a digital future? And if so, how might romantic images appear in this future?

Virtual Realities in the Eschenheimer Anlage

Using modern graphics, Marija Avramovic and Sam Twisdale transpose an iconic film into the digital age. Sunshowers was inspired by "Dreams", Akira Kurosawa's cult film, where the opening scene portrays a small boy who unexpectedly encounters a forbidden fox wedding in the woods. The film's poetic, magical fairytale language is transformed into techno-animism. Animism describes the belief that, in addition to mankind, nature too is animated - a thoroughly romantic phenomenon.

The virtual reality installation Sunshowers was originally commissioned for an AI exhibition at London's Barbican Centre. The fairytale installation will be brought to life once again in real time at the Biennale for Light Art and Urban Design. In addition, for the Luminale (Sunbeams), an AR app will enhance the animation, allowing the figures to act in the urban space.

The AI system used for the characters is based on the artificial intelligence of video games, as well as techniques of neural networks and genetic algorithms, which allows them to make their own autonomous decisions. With his or her smartphone, the observer is invited to follow or interact with the various AI avatars in the form of animals, spirits, flowers, trees and stones, all of which behave very differently. Before one can fully experience the installation the corresponding AR app "Sunbeams" must be downloaded from <https://sunbeams.land/>.

Visual artist Marija Avramovic and media artist and programmer Sam Twidale have been working together since 2017. Although their artistic backgrounds widely differ, the main themes of their works correlate. They work at the borderline between the artificial and the real, creating (virtual) worlds, conjuring the appearance of AI figures and spirits, as well as paintings and physical installations.

Further informationen: ↳ luminale.de

About the Luminale

Since 2002, the Luminale has been held in Frankfurt every two years. Originally initiated by Messe Frankfurt in close cooperation with the exhibiting Industry of Light + Building, the festival of lights has become one of the biggest cultural events in Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region. Since 2018, as a biennial for light art and urban design, the Luminale has pursued the aim of creating a popular, artistic and high-quality program, as well as making a sustainable contribution to urban design. The city thus becomes not only a stage, but also the object of the festival. Projects that address urban visions at the interface of light, architecture, technology, ecology and social interaction in the city, or with its history and culture, make this tangible - accompanied by interdisciplinary dialogue on related issues. The Luminale 2018 presented 150 light productions in Frankfurt and Offenbach and attracted almost 250,000 visitors. The heart of the Luminale in the urban space is the Light Walk, linking places accessible by foot into a city tour and a public gallery of light art. The Luminale e. V. was founded in June 2017 as a non-profit organization to promote and organize the Luminale as a biennial for light art and urban design.

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