

## DIGITAL ART WEEKS 2011: When technology meets art and spirituality



Marie-France Bojanowski (ETH) presented the project "Hidden Rooms"



International artwork was shown in two exhibitions.



The participants used the chance to discuss about the connection of technology, culture and spirituality.

The "Digital Art Weeks" (DAW) is an annual event that brings digital technology in the arts and new cultural contexts, and offers insights into current research and innovations in these areas. The conference provides a variety of symposia, workshops, exhibitions and performances. The organizing group behind DAW is an international autonomous group which functions as a trans-disciplinary arts and science coordination network. The festivals that are organized by the DAW involve mutual collaboration between different participant entities, such as ETH's Computer Science Department, and these entities bring about new solutions.

The DAW has a tradition of moving the conference between Europe, North America and Asia. In 2011, the event ("OFF Label") took place in Canada and moved into more diverse waters and targeted a more general audience by focusing on analogue arts, mixed-media art forms, and by introducing the element of spirituality. Internationally renowned artists and researchers got together to discuss issues, connect (or disconnect), and

to celebrate being off beat, or as the festival defines it, to celebrate 'acting out off label?'. The event was an invitation and a challenge for presenters and practitioners to pose answers to such questions as: What happens to inquiries concerning experiences involving art, technology and spirituality when we begin to peel off taxological labels or interpretations? What results when we begin to remix the variegated themes and codes of the remix itself? Who are we when living or attempting to live in parallel or synchronically the imaginary versions of the story as things might otherwise proceed?

In order to find answers, the festival embraced not only innovative new media art forms but the re-emergence of non-digital arts. During two so-called 'Un-Conferences' the keynote speakers, all established experts and innovators in the fields of technology, culture and spirituality, were invited to share their insights regarding 'off label?' in theory and practice in the context of the festival. These talks, selected for the creative ways the speakers re-imagine the past, the present and the future, challenged the boundaries of critical thinking and provided insights determining alternative methods for engaging the technological present and more.

Next to that, two exhibitions were offered during the festival. The 'Art of a Placebo' exhibition showed a wide range of mostly technology based artworks from Canada, the USA, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Austria. The second exhibition, entitled 'Emotional Landscaping' included works from the USA, Switzerland, Canada, Italy and Germany.

The 'Hidden Rooms' project by Marie-France Bojanowski of ETH Zurich was presented as well. It explores the concept of 'cerebral scenography' in the context of an immersive panoramic visual experience involving neuro-feedback interaction. This involved the use of a wearable immersive system, EEG sensors and an electronic compass to observe and navigate within panorama images.

In 2011, the festival has included the topic of spirituality as an integral part for the first time. However, the task of creating actual events involving spirituality and applicable to a festival audience remained difficult. Although a strong sense of community was created at the Un-Conference events, the question still remained as to whether the desired spiritual condition for a deeper comprehension of self was actually achieved. But it was certain that a deeper feeling of spiritual and inter-personal connectedness was manifested simply through the amalgamation of eclectic venues.

For additional information, please go to: [www.digitalartweeks.ethz.ch/web/DAW11/](http://www.digitalartweeks.ethz.ch/web/DAW11/)

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