

DOK Neuland 2024 – Change as a force to be reckoned with

Press Release
1 October 2024

DOK Exchange XR Expands to Two Days, XR Prototyping Zone Makes Debut



DOK Leipzig 2024 | Glitchbodies (Creator: Rebecca Meric)

Change is an opportunity and a force—with this optimistic view, the 2024 DOK Neuland programme presents eleven works from the fields of VR, AR, 360° film, gaming, installation and participatory film.

67th International Leipzig
Festival for Documentary and
Animated Film
28 October to 3 November

“Change is not only unavoidable, it is indispensable. Change is our life force, and without it we cease to exist. The key is deciding where we want to go,” says artist and filmmaker Dana Melaver, who began curating DOK Neuland this year. Under the title **“Fluxusopolis”**, she’ll present works that are constantly evolving, that generate “realities” that are not (or no longer) real, and that challenge our idea of art. Some of the works are vehicles for placing ourselves in other bodies and worlds (“Finally Me”, “Glitschbodies”), experiencing the world in a non-human way (“Nut Universe”), or becoming part of a life that otherwise remains distant and intangible due to our everyday habituation to news (“Tales of a Normadic City”, “Murmuration”).

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Other works will also play with our common understanding of art and creation: “Nothing Can Ever Be the Same” invites us to engage with the “imagination” of a machine that endlessly generates new worlds of images and sounds from Brian Eno’s visual archive and music. “AR Character Run” only becomes a work through the cooperation of visitors to the exhibition—a film for everyone, constantly changing. “Minitourism” explores the ideas of creating (artistic) worlds and virtual reality as a medium using a miniature park.

A work such as “Reconstruction Home”, on the other hand, allows realities suffered in the real world to be changed in the virtual world. In it, a house destroyed in the war is reanimated with the memories of its former inhabitants and augmented reality. And in “Oto’s Planet”, we encounter the fragile existence on our world with the distance of cheerfulness and black humor.

„In this time of violence, of xenophobia and dehumanisation, it is necessary to forge a path towards change which is derived from empathy. To become a force for change, rather than have change forced upon us,” says curator Melaver of this year’s DOK Neuland motif. “We must learn to become a force for change ourselves instead of helplessly surrendering to it.”

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DOK Neuland: Interactive Cinema this year will also include a participatory film as part of the exhibition. “Traces of Responsibility” takes viewers to Rwanda, 30 years after the genocide. With the help of an app, the audience will vote at the screening on which narrative threads they wish to follow.

Press Release
1 October 2024

page 2 of 3

DOK Neuland is free of charge. For Interactive Cinema tickets are required. The exhibition takes place with thanks to Dana Melaver (curation), Johanna Gerlach (production), and Ingmar Stange (technical production). The scenography was created in collaboration with Robin Metzger.

DOK Exchange XR Expands to Two Days, XR Prototyping Zone Makes Debut

DOK Industry is extending its **DOK Exchange XR** format in response to the growing relevance of immersive media and the rapid advancements in digital technology shaping the industry. The Industry programme for interactive and immersive storytelling with a focus on XR works, DOK Exchange XR, is now expanding into two full days for the first time, taking place on 31 October and 1 November. Alongside XR Conference and XR Showcase, this year’s programme also marks the debut of XR Prototyping Zone, a space dedicated to testing projects and bridging creators with audiences, XR experts, and distributors.

The 2024 DOK Exchange XR’s roster of events will centre on the unbounded potential of immersive and spatial sound, delving into the art of crafting spatial audio narratives, diverse immersive sonic worlds, 3D soundscapes, and voice storytelling. The programme will further burrow into the creative process of creating spatial audio experiences in documentaries and artistic XR projects, examine various forms of spatial audio storytelling beyond XR, and weigh in on the ethical quandaries of AI in sound and voice creation, among other topics.

The 2-day **XR Conference** (31 October and 1 November) will comprise ten keynote presentations and two panel discussions. The invited speakers will address various aspects of spatial audio in immersive storytelling in their keynote presentations, ranging from sound design psychology and sound as dramaturgy to de-territorialised listening in spatial audio narratives and immersive sound curation, to name a few. The panel discussion ‘Spatial Sound Across Art Forms: The Best Practices for Integrating Immersive Audio in Film, XR, Interactive Media, and Storytelling’ will be moderated by Dr. Markus Zaunschirm and joined by Anan Fries, Malu Peeters, Shervin Saremi, and Oliver Kadel. The second panel ‘From Prototype to Perfection: Lessons from Audience Testing and the Importance of Feedback in the Prototyping Process’ will be led by Dr. Weronika Lewandowska (DOK Exchange XR Coordinator), with the participation of Laurien Michiels (“The Room of Resonance”) and Anne Fehres and Luke Conroy (“Revival Roadshow”).

At **XR Showcase** (31 October), six cutting-edge projects in development will be presented to an audience of professionals. The presentation of the XR works-in-progress, moderated by Dr. Joanne Popińska, will be followed by a feedback session with 30 experts from the fields of research, funding, distribution, as well as arts and technology. The 2024 XR Showcase project selection features “BOUGHT/BROKEN” (USA), “Scratching the Surface” (Germany), “LID-SCAPE” (Colombia), “Snow, Tiger, Reunion” (UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland), “YerbaBruja” (Mexico), and “ENTROPY” (Montenegro).

In **XR Prototyping Zone**, running from 31 October to 1 November, two prototypes—“Revival Roadshow” (the Netherlands) and “The Room of Resonance” (Germany)—will be showcased onsite, allowing for direct audience engagement and testing of XR projects, including the probing of their interactive elements and narrative solutions, as well as onboarding and offboarding experiences in spatial conditions.

**Press Release
1 October 2024**

page 3 of 3

DOK Neuland: Fluxusopolis



Minitourism

XR**Jan Grabowski**
Poland 2023
No Premiere

Die Sphinx, das alte Rom und der Eiffelturm an einem Tag? Der 360°-Film spielt mit unseren Maßstäben und setzt sich mit unseren Ideen der Welterschaffung und der virtuellen Realität auseinander. – *See the Sphinx, Ancient Rome and the Eiffel Tower all in one day. This 360° film plays with scaling and engages with our ideas of world-building and virtual reality as a medium.*

Language Polish
Subtitles English

Murmuration

XR**Patricia Bergeron**
Canada 2023
German premiere

Der animierte Film führt in eine poetische Unterwasserwelt, folgt einem Jungen auf seiner Reise nach Europa. Begleitet wird er dabei von den Geschichten derer, die ihre Reise nicht beenden konnten. – *The animated film dives into a poetic underwater world as it follows a teenager on his journey to Europe. He is accompanied by the stories of those who could not finish their journey.*

Language French, English, Italian
Subtitles None

Nut Universe

XR**Yihan Mei, Jiahong Wu**
China 2024
World premiere

Eine abstrakte Welt, gezeichnet mit digitaler Tinte, inspiriert von der taoistischen Philosophie: Ein Spiel, das Erfahrungen vom Fliegen und Schweben ermöglicht, die Menschen sonst vorenthalten sind. – *An abstract world, drawn in digital ink, inspired by Taoist philosophy. This interactive experience allows the visitor to fly, swim and soar as something other – and maybe more – than human.*

Language Chinese
Subtitles

Reconstruction Home

XR**Antonia Nestler**
Germany 2024
No Premiere

Ein im Krieg zerstörtes Zuhause in Syrien wird durch AR und die Erinnerungen der einstigen Bewohner wieder aufgebaut. Eine Reflexion über das Gefühl von Heimat und dessen Verlust. – *A broken Syrian home, torn down by war, put back together through AR and the recollections of its former inhabitants. A reflection on the sense of home and the loss of it.*

Language without dialogue
Subtitles German, English

DOK Neuland: Fluxusopolis



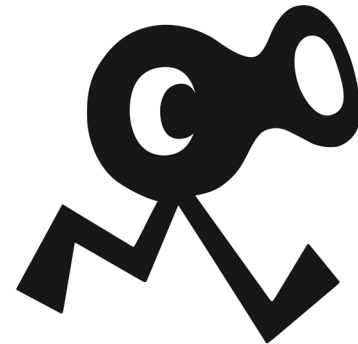
Glitchbodies

XR

Rebecca Merlic
Austria 2023
No Premiere

59 Charaktere, quer aus aller Welt und dem Geschlechterspektrum, in verträumten und surrealen Landschaften. Eine inklusive Darstellung in einer virtuellen Welt, wie sie auch sein könnte. – *What is inclusive representation in the virtual world? This game presents 59 protagonists from across the globe and gender spectrum in dreamy and surreal landscapes.*

Language English, German, Thai
Subtitles None



AR Character Run

XR

BARBAR
Germany 2022
No Premiere

Bei diesem AR-Projekt liegt die Kunst in der Bewegung: Sie bringt die Figuren zusammen, die die Besuchenden der Ausstellung selber zeichnen. Ein Kunstwerk aller, im stetigen Wandel. – *Motion is the art that binds the changing characters of this AR-project, which are drawn by exhibition visitors. An artwork created by all, always fluctuating.*

Language without dialogue
Subtitles



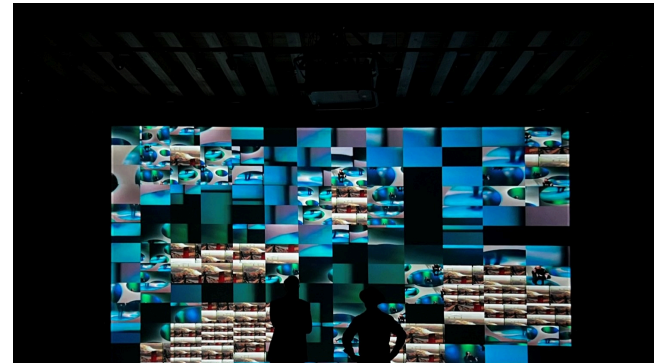
Finally Me

XR

Marcio Sal
Brazil 2023
German premiere

Die animierte VR-Erfahrung dreht sich um Mr. Saul, einem alternden Mann, der in einem Bordell arbeitet und ein großes Geheimnis verbirgt. Eine mit Musik unterlegte Reise zu Selbstakzeptanz. – *Animated in unique style, this VR-experience introduces Mr. Saul, an aging man who works in a brothel and is hiding a big secret. Follow his musically illustrated journey to self acceptance.*

Language English
Subtitles English



Nothing Can Ever Be the Same

XR

Brendan Dawes, Gary Hustwit
USA, UK 2023
German premiere

Basierend auf dem visuellen Archiv und der Musik von Brian Eno sowie neuen Interviews wird diese meditative Erfahrung kontinuierlich durch die "Fantasie" einer Maschine erzeugt. – *A collaboration between artists and machine, this continuously-running generative film is based on the visual archive and music of Brian Eno, as well as new interviews.*

Language English
Subtitles None

DOK Neuland: Fluxusopolis



Tales of a Nomadic City

XR

Med Lemine Rajel, Christian Vium
Denmark, Mauritania 2024
World premiere

Nouakchott, Mauretanien: eine Stadt, die sich bewegt. Das Herzstück der Installation ist ein 360°-Film, der durch Archiv- und Privatmaterial aus der Region erlaubt, die Stadt zu erleben. – *A multimedia dive into Nouakchott, Mauritania: an ever-changing city. This collaborative project is made of a 360° film as well as archival and vernacular media, bringing the city to life.*

Language Arabic
Subtitles English



Oto's Planet

XR

Gwenael François
Luxembourg, Canada, France 2024
German premiere

Oto führt ein ruhiges Leben bis ein Raumschiff landet und dessen Kapitän den halben Planeten beansprucht. – Eine heitere Geschichte mit schwarzem Humor über unseren eigenen Planeten. – *Oto's life in solitary peace is upended by the arrival of a territorial spaceman. A cheerful story about our own planet, laced with black humor.*

Language English, French
Subtitles English, French

DOK Neuland: Interactive Cinema



Traces of Responsibility

XR

Anja Reiß, Jann Anderegg
Switzerland, Germany 2024
German premiere

Ruanda, 30 Jahre nach dem Völkermord. Das Publikum stimmt mittels App darüber ab, welchem Erzählstrang es folgt. Jede Stimme ist wichtig, sowohl im Kino als auch auf der Leinwand. – *Rwanda, 30 years after the genocide. Using an app, viewers vote what happens next, democratically electing the following scene. Every voice matters, both in the cinema and on the screen.*

Language English, French, German, Kinyarwanda
Subtitles English

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