

Press release

Basel, 23.09.2021

The Pax Art Awards 2021 – Fourth Award Ceremony at HEK

On Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 7pm, the Pax Art Awards will be presented for the fourth time at HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel. This digital art award from the Art Foundation Pax in collaboration with HEK, honors and promotes media-specific practices by Swiss artists whose work uses media technologies and their effects.

This year's main Pax Art Awards prize goes to Marc Lee (*1969). This award honours the work of an established artist who has lasting influence on the present and future of the Swiss media art scene with CHF 30'000 in prize money. The Art Foundation Pax is also granting CHF 15'000 to the artist to create a new work and a further CHF 15'000 will be used to acquire a work for the Art Foundation Pax collection. **Two additional prizes of CHF 15'000 each, including prize money and purchase, will be given to young, emerging media artists.** This will be awarded **Chloé Delarue (*1986)** and **Laurent Güdel (*1984)**.

Marc Lee (Eglisau)

With his net-based artistic work, Marc Lee has become an important voice in the field of media art in Switzerland for many years. Lee creates impressive immersive installations that both enchant and overwhelm. In his multi-layered configurations of networked communication and information feeds, Marc Lee makes visible the cultural, economic and political aspects of networks. He uses live feeds as triggers for impressive interactive installations that invite users to reflect on their own embeddedness in these information streams.

Unfiltered, his most recent work, is a net-based installation centered around the different voices of the social media app *TikTok*. Each showcase uses new posts, hashtags, and user profiles from the local *TikTok* community to generate input for the room-sized installation. The work reflectively addresses the impact that digital accessibility has on public consciousness, identity structures, and visual aesthetics within a community, and how these are through targeted questions.

Chloé Delarue (Geneva)

In her artistic work, Chloé Delarue creates installations that combine sculptural elements, videos and sound under the acronym TAFAA, which stands for "Toward a Fully Automated Appearance". Her works, which the artist calls "environments", emerge as abstract yet physical structures. They are composed of various materials such as fluorescent tubes, electronics, hanging metal parts, hooks and wires, organic-looking layers, sounds and video pieces, prisms, crystals and latex. The installations are designed as flesh-like sculptural bodies.

Similar to biosemiotic planes - such as mycelium dormant in the forest floor or a tick waiting for a mammal to cross its path – Delarue's environments aim to capture the signals and fluctuations found in these environments. Through the use of these raw materials and their composition, Delarue comes close to depicting a kind of extraterrestrial nature, the purpose of which is an invitation to allow associations to emerge from the various fragments on display.

Laurent Güdel (Biel)

Laurent Güdel is a sound artist and experimental electronic musician. The complexity of listening is at the center of his work. He is interested in what he calls the "Politics of Sound", namely the social, economic and political context in which sound is produced and disseminated. Sometimes his works are the result of archival research conducted on specific, lesser-known subjects. Other times they are the result of fortuitous circumstances, such as finding accidentally recorded sound tracks on a brand-new digital recorder. Güdel's works tell stories that are often embedded in post-colonial realities and globalised economies.

Güdel allows electricity to flow through his body of work, and does so in multi-track mode. In his ever-shifting tangle of veins and cables, electricity is both a communicative actor with a history steeped in tradition in the transportation of sound and a live wire twitching the spine of the present. In his live electronic sets, Laurent Güdel is on the verge of becoming electricity itself. What is of documentary significance elsewhere in his work becomes raw, instant power. He is distinctly masterful at carving space and time out of the shocks of pure tension, turning communication into a communal and ecstatic experience.

Art Foundation Pax is a foundation for the promotion of digital and visual arts, financially supported by Pax. It was launched in late 2017 and the first Pax Art Awards were presented in June 2018. Pax is dedicated to funding due to its cooperative origins. The Pax Art Foundation continues its long-standing art collecting activities and makes a significant contribution to corporate and social culture. The focus is on digital art, which has generated new impetus since the 1990s. Pax adopted this form of foundation for independent, successful work in the still young and mobile genre of digital art. The Art Foundation Pax is endowed with funding that ensures the foundation's activities for the next ten years.

HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel is Switzerland's national center of excellence for all art forms that express and reflect themselves through new technologies and media. With its interdisciplinary orientation, HEK enables a broad public to gain insights into art productions of different genres in the confrontation of art, media and technology. In a diverse program of exhibitions, concerts, performances and educational activities, HEK addresses current social themes and issues as well as technological-aesthetic developments. In addition to its event and exhibition activities, HEK is engaged in collection methodology and the preservation of digital art.

HEK (House of Electronic Arts)
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