

Schedule and speaker highlights

9:30 am: Keynote presentation by Robert Seidel

Breaking Frames – Do Digital Artists dream of Electric Brushes?

The visual research efforts of the animation industry are mainly focussed on simulating photorealistic imagery or emulating classical animation techniques. Each little detail of the physical world is taken and abstracted into tools, which allow more realistic films and games to be created. Instead of exploring the unlimited possibilities of animation itself, this focus on a precise visual representation frequently results in “Uncanny Valley” moments and labour-intense but lifeless works. Starting with my film „grau“(2004) I aimed to break these conceptual frameworks of animation, expanding them by appropriating digital tools and combining them with approaches of scientific visualisation. These collages of “unseen” but coherent worlds are part of my artistic research, which slowly penetrated the real world with my video installations and large-scale projections.

While trying to branch out into different fields I realized that the highly different paths of research in the natural sciences, digital image processing and contemporary art rarely intersect. Exponentially growing complexities manifest this separation, but interestingly in recent years the power of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning was catered to a wider audience through the “learning” of artistic styles of painting. These pastiche works mostly ignore art history beyond the visual level and use a superficial understanding of “abstract art” as an identifier. So the freedom established in the arts is used as an excuse for instable scientific results, while the algorithms and machines are not powerful enough to simulate the real world yet. To frame this absurd situation heretically: Would we see this explosion of Machine Learning today, if the decades of avant-garde movements had not happened? What power will artists gain with these new tools? How could we establish a fruitful exchange between scientists and artists? And how can an artist make sense of all these contradictions? Expect more questions than answers from this keynote.

10:30 am: Coffee break

11:00 am – 1:00 pm: Presenters from creative practice and academic research will present papers that address topics ranging from VR recreation of cultural heritage, understanding motion, to the role of the animator as scientist:

- **11:00 am – 11:30 am:** Sorin Oancea ,The Animator as the Artist-Scientist Archetype’
- **11:30 am – 12 pm:** Philippe Vaucher ,Understanding Cinematic Motion’
- **12:00 pm – 12:30 pm:** Benjamin Seide, Elke Reinhuber and Ross Williams ,Gone Garden’
- **12:30 pm – 1:00 pm:** Bettina Papenburg ,Affect and Objectivity’

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Lunch break

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm: High quality presentations on animation and science: Exciting experimental animation that engages with scientific topics, the discussion about “objective research” and “subjective expression” and the connection between games and philosophy:

- **2:00 pm – 2:30 pm:** Max Hattler ,Superstructure Playgrounds’
- **2:30 pm – 3:00 pm:** Raphael Zähringer ,Processuality, Metagaming, and Metaprogramming in Doki Doki Literature Club!’
- **3:00 pm – 3:30 pm:** Steve Henderson, Damien Markey ,Resurrecting the Archive Using Digital Technologies to Bring Animation Collections to Life’

3:30 pm: Book Presentation “Global Animation Theory” by editor Dr. Franziska Bruckner

Scanning historical and current trends in animation through different perspectives including art history, film, media and cultural studies is a prominent facet of today’s theoretical and historical approaches in this rapidly evolving field. The anthology Global Animation Theory offers detailed and diverse insights into the methodologies of contemporary animation studies, as well as the topics relevant for today’s study of animation. The contact between practical and theoretical

approaches to animation at the symposium Animafest Scanner, is closely connected to host of this event, the World Festival of Animated Film Animafest Zagreb. It has given way to academic writing that is very open to practical aspects of animation, with several contributors being established not only as animation scholars, but also as artists. The book presentation of *Global Animation Theory* will give an overview about the 15 selected essays that explore various significant aspects of animation studies, some of them still unknown to the English speaking communities.

4:00 pm: Coffee break

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm: Closing panel “Animation and Science” moderated by Erwin Feyersinger and Hannes Rall. Panelists: key note presenter **Robert Seidel**, renowned VFX-expert **Matthias Wittmann** and **TBD**.

Refreshments will be served for the coffee breaks. Coffee/water/tea are available throughout the day.

Robert Seidel

[Robert Seidel](#) (*1977) began his studies in biology before transferring to the Bauhaus University Weimar to complete his degree in media design. His projections, installations and experimental films have been shown in numerous international festivals, as well as at galleries and museums such as the Palais des Beaux-Arts Lille, ZKM Karlsruhe, Art Center Nabi Seoul, Young Projects Los Angeles, Museum of Image and Sound São Paulo and MOCA Taipei. His works have been honoured with various prizes, including the KunstFilmBiennale Honorary Award and the Visual Music Award Frankfurt.

In his work Seidel is interested in pushing the boundaries of abstracted beauty through cinematographic approaches, as well as ones drawn from science. By the organic interplay of various structural, spatial and temporal concepts, he creates a continuously evolving complexity. Out of this multifaceted perspective emerges a narrative skeleton, through which viewers connects to the artwork on an evolutionary-derived and phylogenetic-fixed symbolic level. Seidel lives and works in Berlin and Jena as artist as well as curator.

Franziska Bruckner

Franziska Bruckner, media scholar and Head of the Research Group Media Creation at St. Poelten University of Applied Sciences; curator and organizer of the international symposium series Animafest Scanner. Co-coordinator of the working group Animation of the German Society for Media Studies and a member of the Executive Board of ASIFA Austria. She studied painting and animated film at the University for Applied Arts Vienna and Theater, Film, and Media Studies at the University of Vienna, where she worked as a University Assistant from 2009 to 2013 and earned her doctorate in 2017. She was a lecturer at Vienna University, the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, and the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Hagenberg among others. Her research focuses on the history of animation in German-speaking countries, hybrids of animation and live-action films, animation in virtual and augmented environments, and the connection between art and film.

Matthias Wittmann

A recognized digital human pioneer, Matthias Wittmann worked in the film industry for 15 years as an animator and supervisor on groundbreaking digital humans for features including the VFX Academy-Award-winning *Curious Case of Benjamin Button* as well as *I, Robot*, *Tron: Legacy*, and *Maleficent*, and was part of the team that created the appearance of ‘virtual Tupac’ at Coachella. He now specializes in developing interactive virtual humans for VR and AR working exclusively with real-time engines. Before joining Method EXP Matthias Wittmann was a VR/VFX Supervisor at MPC, working on cutting edge VR experiences such as “Alien: Covenant – In Utero” and “Passengers – Awakening.” He has also held leadership creative and development roles at Digital Domain, IM360 and DAQRI and is a graduate of Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg.