

MEDIA INFORMATION

AUREA Award 2022 goes to the USA, Canada and Germany

On 21st and 22nd January 2022, it was once again time for visionaries, developers and experts from all over the world to come together in the digital space for the fourth AUREA Award. True to style, it was possible to follow the event not only as a video conference, but also in virtual reality, as the participants were able to immerse themselves in the events with the help of state-of-the-art technology. The highlight of the event, initiated by Michael Mack and MackNeXT, was the awarding of the best ideas in the fields of virtual, augmented and extended reality (VR, AR and XR) by a top-class expert jury. The AUREA Young Talent Award was awarded for a thesis from the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy.

Ten finalists presented themselves to the jury

For the fourth time, this year's AUREA Awards honoured the best mixed reality ideas, developments and products in entertainment. Participants from 25 countries came together virtually to exchange ideas and make connections. At the beginning of the conference, Michael Mack, initiator of the AUREA Award and founder of MackNeXT, welcomed the over 200 international participants and praised the numerous innovative project proposals. "In 2018, the AUREA Award arose from the question of where the future of entertainment lies. Today, we see the clear answer, because in recent years the virtual worlds have developed into one of the most forward-looking branches in the entertainment sector. As early as 2015, we were able to break new ground and do pioneering work with the founding of VR Coaster. Five years later, MackNeXT has achieved another milestone in VR development with the opening of YULLBE. Now, just four years after its premiere, the AUREA Award is one of the most prestigious awards in Europe in this field."

In a video greeting at the start of the conference, Daniel Caspary, chairman of the CDU/CSU group in the European Parliament, was also impressed by the outstanding projects of the finalists and at the same time thanked the hosts: "We are proud to have entrepreneurs like the Mack family in Germany who are willing to invest in this industry and who also

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offer platforms for innovation, cooperation, exchange and, last but not least, entertainment and joy in these times.”

Both the conference with specialist lectures by international experts and entrepreneurs, and the award ceremony, were broadcast live from the blue fire Dome in the centre of Europa-Park using complex video technology. Ten finalists had the unique opportunity to present their projects and developments to the five-person jury. Tech star Kathleen Cohen (The Collaboratorium) once again chaired the jury. As in previous years, she was supported by Thomas Wagner (co-founder & managing director VR Coaster), Cathy Hackl (Enterprise Partner Marketing, Magic Leap) and Frank Govaere (Animation Director, Producer & VFX Supervisor, UFA). In 2022, last year's winner Athena Demos (co-founder of Big Rock Creative) also joined the jury.

Trophies go to the USA, Canada and Germany

In 2022 the AUREA Award was presented for the categories of Innovation, Experience, Impact and Interaction. Of all the projects, the jury found itself most impressed by the ‘Tilt Five’ team with their forward-looking design, which was rewarded with the AUREA Award for Innovation. The US company brings games to life using virtual reality glasses and 3D holograms, revolutionising the classic board game evening with friends.

The award for the development with the best Experience went to ‘Felix & Paul Studios’ in Canada and their unique space experience. In this project, previously unreleased video recordings from the International Space Station have been combined with the latest VR technology to create a breathtaking experience. The ‘OVR Scent’ team was honoured for their idea by the expert jury who gave the team the award for the greatest Impact. The US company combines smells and scents with virtual reality to create an even more immersive and individual experience. The Berlin start-up ‘Ghost – feel it’ was delighted to receive the award in the Interaction category. The entrepreneurs are developing haptic extensions in various areas that work via vibration signals and are intended to improve communication between humans and machines. For example, the backrest of a car seat, which can support the driver in traffic in the future.

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Sponsorship award for young talents from the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy

For the second time, as part of the AUREA Award, a sponsorship prize was also presented to students and alumni of the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy. The jury awarded the 'AUREA Young Talent Award' to the diploma project 'NEOSHIN', which was created at the Animation Institute of the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy. In addition to prize money of 3,000 Euros, the winning team will have the unique opportunity to cooperate with the innovation laboratory MackNeXT to implement the cross-media project.

In addition to Michael Mack, the managing partner of Europa-Park and founder of MackNeXT, the committee consists of Holger Tappe (Managing Director Mack Animation), Gerd Nefzer (Oscar prize winner and CEO Nefzer SFX), Anna Katharina Brinkschulte (Senior Lecturer Interactive Media Baden-Württemberg Film Academy) and Thomas Lechner (production manager Baden-Württemberg Film Academy), as well as Carly Schrader (last year's winner of the 'AUREA Young Talent Award').

NEOSHIN also impressed at the highest international level. At the 20th VES Awards of the 'Visual Effects Society', the first episode of the project by the students from Baden-Württemberg was nominated in the category 'Outstanding Visual Effects in a Student Project' and thus has the chance to win one of the most prestigious prizes in the industry. Movie greats from Hollywood and around the world gather in Los Angeles every year for the VES Awards, which is considered the highest accolade in visual effects after the Oscar.

More information at aurea-award.com

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