January 2020

*MackNeXT selects the world's best innovations in the field of mixed realities*

**Experts and Visionaries at the AUREA Award**

***Entertainment of the future - on 16th January 2020, the AUREA Award was presented for the second time at an international conference. Pioneers in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) came together to meet colleagues from all over the world and to exchange ideas about the latest trends in the industry. The highlight of the event at Europa-Park was the ceremonial presentation of the AUREA Awards. With their exceptional work, the ten finalists impressed both, the top-class jury and the attendees at the digital event, as well as moderator Alexander Mazza and Oscar winner Gerd Nefzer. In the evening, the jury, chaired by Kathleen Cohen, honoured four companies and their projects for the categories Experience, Influence, Innovation and Interaction.***

**Expert jury honours pioneering projects**

Out of more than 120 submissions, ten finalists were able to prevail against their peers and, on 16th January 2020, were given the opportunity to present their developments to a specialist jury. Together with Kathleen Cohen (The Collaboratorium), who chaired already last year, the following digital pioneers decided on the winners of the AUREA Award: Thomas Wagner (co-founder & managing director VR Coaster), Fred Lecompte (co-founder of BackLight and previous year's winner), Cathy Hackl (Enterprise Partner Marketing, Magic Leap) and Frank Govaere (Animation Director, Producer & VFX-Supervisor, UFA). Among the well-known experts and speakers at the second AUREA Award was Gerd Nefzer, who received an Oscar in 2018 in the category of ‘Best Visual Effects’. Minister of State for Digital, Dorothee Bär, did not miss the opportunity to greet the participants and finalists in a personal video message and at the same time emphasised the importance of the award as a networking opportunity for the still young industry.

Michael Mack, the managing director of MackNeXT, was also impressed by the variety of submissions. In his welcoming speech, he focused on the potential for success of VR and AR applications: “No other medium can bring stories, and even whole worlds, to life in this way and make them tangible for people. There are no limits to this technology."

**The winners of this year's AUREA Award**

The highlight of the two-day event was the gala on 16th January in the stylish Sala Bianca ballroom. The ten finalists had the chance to receive the coveted AUREA Award in four different categories. The prize in the ‘Interaction’ category went to the German company Hologate, whose products already delight users at more than 300 locations worldwide. The Munich company was able to convince the jury with its latest VR innovation, the multiplayer motion simulator Hologate ‘Blitz’. The award in the ‘Innovation’ area was presented by Cathy Hackl to the Volucap team. The start-up was founded in Babelsberg in 2018 and offers viewers the unique experience of moving freely around a walk-in film. The inventors of ‘The 1944 Paris Insurrection’ were delighted to receive the award in the ‘Influence’ category. The French company makes it possible to immerse yourself in the era of liberation of the French capital by walking through the Paris catacombs. A history lesson that gets under your skin and saw plenty of enthusiasm among the jury. The experts chose the idea of ​​Holoride for the best Experience, which makes every car ride a unique gaming experience for passengers using VR headsets. The software reacts to the movements of the vehicle and integrates them into the game without delay.

Worldwide, augmented (AR) and virtual reality (VR) offerings are a booming mass media which experiences new developments almost every day. Europa-Park plays a pioneering role in the leisure park industry. In September 2015, it was the first park in the world to present a virtual reality experience on the roller coaster ‘Alpenexpress Coastiality’ that is in daily public use. In the meantime, ‘Eurosat - Coastiality’ has added another breathtaking VR roller coaster experience, which has already won several awards in the field of digital technologies. While wearing a headset, visitors not only walk through the station in virtual reality, but also get into the carriage and finally enjoy the innovative rollercoaster ride - without taking off the VR glasses even once. In addition, there are other diverse and promising AR & VR products in the entertainment industry that are to be recognised with the AUREA Award.

Further information on the AUREA Award at: aurea-award.com/ and twitter.com/aureaaward