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Where Art and Technology Meet



Audiovisual dance performance starring artist Yago de Quay, who was selected to be one of the artists-in-residence at Nokia Bell Labs (New Jersey, USA).

Overview

Peter Gwynne, former Newsweek science and technology editor, is the author of an article published on **Research-Technology Management** to draw attention to the increasing number of Artist-in-Residence (AIR) programs that bring artists into companies to work at close quarters with **scientists and engineers**.

Research topics and results

The article describes an increase in the number of Artist-in-Residence (AIR) programs that bring artists into companies to work at close quarters with scientists and engineers. This tendency is in contrast to what novelist and civil servant C. P. Snow described as “the two cultures” and what still some argue – that is, an intellectual chasm between individuals qualified in science and those in humanities, with scientists knowing more about the arts than what arts graduates understand about the laws of thermodynamics. By collecting a variety of experiences from top high-tech organizations around the world – such as XEROX Parc, Siemens, Nokia, Facebook, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the European Center for Nuclear Research in Geneva and SpaceX, the essay demonstrates the benefits that both artists and companies gain.

Motivation for research

The article is included in a 2017 report by Research-Technology Management, titled News and Analysis of the Global Innovation Scene and is presented alongside with multiple cases from the field of business innovation research in the high-tech industry.

Contribution to the field

Where Art and Technology Meet reports quotes and facts taken from the experiences which result from the collaboration of artists and engineers working in the high-tech industry over the last years five years. The contribution of the article to the field of AIR programs is mainly its take on the measurable impact that artists have in fostering innovation within an organizational settings. Accordingly, one of the interviewees, Jeffrey Thompson, director of the Visual Arts and Technology program at Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey and the first Nokia Bell Labs artist-in-residence in the middle of 2016, expresses the hope that more technology corporations will become involved with the artists, to the benefit of both.

Key learnings

AIR programs have demonstrated to bring an array of benefits for both artists and technologists in European and North American companies. On a long-term scale, “they reveal more clearly important problems to be addressed” – says Susanne Arney, AIR program manager at Nokia Bell Labs, and adds – “if you bring in 50 artists over 10 years or so, they can have a tremendous impact as a whole, it’s like the venture capital model of investment.” On a more immediate scale, California-based Autodesk gained dividends by giving life to a sculpture of San Francisco’s underground water system, while stress-testing the company’s advanced 3D printing systems to produce it. Companies also talk about benefits in human terms. At Autodesk, for example, many artists eventually joined the company in roles that never existed, such as developing new uses for 3D printers.

You can read the essay in full [here](#).