

Back to the Future 5 – The drone invasion

21. March 2015



No drone invasion, but art: The highlight of the voestalpine Klangwolke in Linz 2012 was a choreographed air show with 50 small AscTec Hummingbirds equipped with LEDs. Ars Electronica Futurelab and Ascending Technologies GmbH set a world record with this, because this was the largest swarm of these “quadcopters” (so called because of their four large rotors) outdoors at the same time.

With spectacular lighting effects and visuals, this year voestalpine Klangwolke told the story of how our world has become interconnected, from the discovery of electricity, to telecommunications, to the globally connected Internet. The highlight of the show was a magically lit swarm of computer-controlled helicopters that symbolized the virtual network and digital communities of our time, and that paraded the opportunities and possibilities associated with these impressively before our eyes.

“After discussing our idea with several experts, we realized that we had undertaken nothing less than a world record with our flying swarm”, says Horst Hoertner, Senior Director of Ars Electronica Futurelab. “Fortunately with Ascending Technologies, we found a company that is able to achieve such a task.”

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Press Release /// Pressemitteilung



50 [AscTec Hummingbird](#) quadcopters were used for the world premiere. This aircraft has already proven itself in many task areas. “The [AscTec Hummingbirds](#) have outstanding flight attitude and position control, which was an important prerequisite simply because of safety concerns with a performance with thousands of spectators in the middle of the city,” said Daniel Gurdan, one of the four founders of Ascending Technologies. “In addition, we were excited about the creativity and the artistic aspect of this project.” In order to allow the [Ars Electronica](#) team to create computerized choreography, the company equipped the miniature helicopters with special radio receivers and slightly modified firmware. Otherwise, the quadcopter, with a take-off weight of only 500 grams, was simply a standard model.

Credits: [Ars Electronica – LIVA](#), [Andreas Röbl](#); [Ars Electronica – rubra](#)

Press:

- <http://www.suasnews.com/2012/09/18570/fifty-swarming-quadcopters-set-world-record-at-the-voestalpine-klangwolke/>
- <http://www.rotor-magazin.com/?p=5266>
- <http://www.aec.at>

Images:

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- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/arselectronica/7899518816/in/set-72157631236671444>
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/arselectronica/sets/72157630204861130/with/7846069206/>
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/arselectronica/collections/72157629891209089/>
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Youtube-videos of the preparations:

- <http://youtu.be/MTtajs9RONE>
- <http://youtu.be/ShGI5rQK3ew>

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[Hummingbird](#), [AscTec Research Line](#)

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