

Director's statement about the new A MAZE. Award categories

<< Since 2012 our awards have evolve constantly, illustrating our flexibility and awareness of the fast and constant movement of the scene, the community and the industry. Most of our submission rules we formulated in 2012 are not representative of the current state anymore. There are no standards, no fixed language ... people making games are exploring and experimenting constantly and making thoughtful choices in design and storytelling. From our point of view we are all explorers of new playful realities, creators of possibility spaces, fearless explorers of "what-might-be". Many productions can not be categorized as games exclusively anymore. Not all productions are being created by game developers. If you look closely, you can find many crossovers with other art forms which enrich our beloved medium. They are playful media, exploring new ways of interaction and storytelling, of telling personal histories, of socio-critical thinking and reflection of human life in the digital age.

During the last jury meeting in 2016 we had an interesting discussion on how we can embrace the variety of creation and the obvious need to clarify our award descriptions. So we put a lot of thoughts into the new categories in respect of the past, the present and the future of game productions. The reformation of the A MAZE. Awards was also inspired by a post made by Zach Gage in early 2016- Evolving the IGF (Link: <https://medium.com/@helvetica/evolving-the-igf-8c1c2d5d3617#.qxatpbw4a>).

A lot happened in the last couple of years: new platforms, new technologies and tools, diverse journalism, new publishers, new creators, thought-provoking play, interdisciplinary productions and discourses, realities colliding in VR, AR and MR. Artists are creating games, writers are discovering interactive storytelling, games become toys; no high scores, no goals, no missions... All of this is making us curious about new experiences, pieces of playful art based on pure artistic imaginations, far from the market, far from known game mechanics. We think interdisciplinary and we think out of the box. We love games! We love to play! We love players who are following us on a ride to find the magic of our times.

Our categories are now open for all kinds of playful media (that involve some form of technology). Our categories aim to be as balanced as possible in order to reflect the current state of the game landscape. We won't adhere to separations made by technological platforms (mobile/VR/PC/web... etc). We celebrate your works. We celebrate YOU. We believe in you. >>

In respect,
Thorsten S. Wiedemann and your A MAZE. Team

The six categories for 2017 are:

Most Amazing Game Award

The Grand Prize of the A MAZE. Awards goes to the most relevant, forward-thinking interactive and playful content. We premiere the best work overall - in terms of art, innovation, music, story and interaction. The prize is dedicated to the masterpiece of the award selection that shows us a path we never walked before.

Long Feature Award

This is the award for complex games and developing virtual reality worlds. Those are the ones, who challenge your life by offering immersive storytelling and much more than 2hrs of gameplay.

Digital Moment Award

Poems, statements, experiments, short experiences – expressions of socio-critical messages, personal or comedic life situations and feelings through an interactive medium. Maybe a sensual mechanic, a toy that gives the player a surprising twist in their experience.

Human Human Machine Award

This award goes to the playful system that can be played by two or more people in the same room (local multiplayer), and includes some digital element – fully analog works won't be accepted.

Collider Award

Mash everything! Foster interdisciplinary productions! This is the award for all forms of experiences created in collaboration with science, makers, engineers, researchers, theater and writers. It also includes alternative controllers, interactive installations and creative coding experiments, robotics and tech performances.

Audience Award

The winner will be voted out of the 20 nominees by the public during the course of the festival. Every visitor gets one pink dot to vote for the favorite piece at A MAZE. / Berlin 2017.

More infos about A MAZE. / Berlin: www.amaze-berlin.de

Initiated and organized by A MAZE.: www.a-maze.net

