Jumpstarting Research at EMPAC

The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) opened its doors in the fall of 2008 and was hailed by the New York Times as a “technological pleasure dome for the mind and senses… dedicated to the marriage of art and science as it has never been done before.”

Our goal is to continuously evolve the bridges between the worlds of experience and modeling, physical and virtual, individual and social, perception and interpretation, multi-modal and immersive, analysis and synthesis.

Founded by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, EMPAC offers artists, scholars, researchers, engineers, designers, and audiences opportunities for creative exploration that are available nowhere else under a single roof.
EMPAC’s 220,000 square-foot center is a signature work of architecture that brings together four main venues (or big laboratories – whichever way you look at it…) as well as many smaller studios and lab spaces under one roof. All can be used independently or interconnected, allowing EMPAC to present events, host student gatherings, and dedicate space to research and residencies in very flexible configurations. EMPAC includes many firsts and exceptional attributes in the fields of acoustics, structural integrity, theatrical presentation, and digital media. High-bandwidth computer, audio and video networks create a technical infrastructure unlike any other performing arts centers. And, when linked to Rensselaer’s CCNI supercomputer, EMPAC’s superb venues provide opportunities for research that surpass those of most other media research centers.

EMPAC is creating an environment of fertile creation, cross-pollination, and intellectual stimulation. Faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, visiting scholars and researchers will participate in the formation of an intellectual community in scientific and engineering disciplines that may also engage perceptual and artistic knowledge and practice. EMPAC will be a platform for areas such as augmented and virtual reality, scientific visualization, audification, haptics, human/machine interaction, auralization, and large-scale multi-modal environments.

And we are looking for a director for research… (Entrances to EMPAC concert hall and new CERN’s newcollider, both during construction)

Johannes Goebel is the founding director of EMPAC and has been involved with the specification and design of all aspects since 2001. He joined Rensselaer specifically to develop EMPAC as a project that integrates arts, science and research in all details of its architectural and technological parameters. On a similar mission, he previously was the founding director of the Institute for Music and Acoustics at ZKM, the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany. He started his path down “computer and music and arts” in 1977 at CCRMA.

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