The Tagtool Story

In the early days of the new millennium, a multidisciplinary group of artists got together in Vienna to create a children's theater piece. The idea was a narrative unfolding live in front of the kids.

While the narrator and the musicians were able to improvise freely, digital artists Markus Dorninger and Matthias Fritz were searching for a solution that gave the same expressive freedom to digital artists.

Tagtool was born as a DIY machine for live painting and animation. It came in many shapes and forms, most commonly a wooden box featuring a tablet, some sliders and a videogame controller. The idea spread around the world after they made the building instructions available online. Soon new Tagtoolers appeared in all corners of the world.

Markus, his brother Josef and Matthias founded the digital arts company OMAi in 2007. In 2012, Tagtool was brought to the iPad, and the experience expanded to new areas. The tool finally became available to creatives without the technical know-how required to build their own Tagtool.

Now Tagtool it is used in over 60 countries around the world, has received numerous awards and was featured by Apple twice in videos presented at the WWDC keynote (2014 and 2016).

The aspiration of the project is to create a unique form of creative communication. It's a visual language that makes it possible to work within the moment and the environment. It's a digital tool that preserves the spontaneity of analogue media: like brushstrokes on canvas, the imagination manifests itself with fluid movements of the hands.

The new Tagtool presented at Ars Electronica Festival 2017 is a completely new development. It builds on a decade's worth of experience with interactive live painting. The worldwide Tagtool community is now starting to explore the new possibilities, and will continue to spread the joy of spontaneous and collaborative creativity.