The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Strelka Summer Offers 'Responsible Fun'

By Herbert Mosmuller

May 29, 2011



Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design is housed in the former Red October chocolate factory. **Maria Patsyuk**

Design school Strelka's second summer season is now in full flow with a potpourri of film screenings, concerts, theater events, workshops and lectures.

Last year, the Summer at Strelka program shot the institute to the top of Moscow's hipster hangouts but this year promises more "responsible fun" and less pure entertainment, said program director Yekaterina Girshina.

This means, among others, lectures like "Architecture in Action" by Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena on June 15, "Str_lt Culture" by students of the British Higher School of Art on June 22 and "Architecture and New Media" by Milan-based architect, editor and researcher Joseph Grima on June 23.

Pivotal for many of the summer activities is what Strelka calls "creative interdisciplinarity," although luckily you can still have a night out at Strelka without necessarily having to use

your brain.

Under the Strelka Sound festival banner, the institute's courtyard will host a new band every month. London-based ensemble Is Tropical will bring you their exciting pop-rock-dance on June 18; Ariel Pink Haunted Graffiti will bring freak folk from Los Angeles on July 30; Zola Jesus will come over from Arizona to treat her audience to a languid, lo-fi mix of operatic pop on Aug. 13; and Australian electro-pop rockers Midnight Juggernauts will play Sept. 1.

Another pillar of the school and its summer program is interaction between education and society though workshops such as Biennale City on June 7 to 10, which two Hong Kong curators will lead.

The Real Farmers Market workshop on June 3-10 will look at the best ways to build a modern-day farmer's stand, while the Design of Natural Science on July 4-8, in cooperation with the Timiryazev State Biological Museum, will discuss what a contemporary museum of natural science should look like.

Leading architect and design figures, such as Pritzker Prize winner Kazuyo Sejima, will be guests over the summer, too.

The Strelka concept is dominant in every part of the summer program and even the choice of music follows that philosophy. Progressive rock band Appartjik, which opened the summer season earlier this month, matches Strelka's crossover approach.

Apparatjik guitarist Magne Furuholmen, who also plays with A-ha, summarized his band's vision as "combining art history and pop culture with general interest. ... Find something that is not definable, not art, not music, not entertainment, but is all those things."

Vague as this sounds, it looks good in practice. Apparatjik's music is a fusion of electro and indie rock and the band performs almost exclusively in a cube on stage, which has bizarre images, such as piano-playing baby clowns, exploding colors and the shadows of the group, who dress in animal masks and stylized costumes, projected onto it.

"Most bands are too ugly to perform on stage and should be put in a cube," Furuholmen said. "For us it's the opposite. We have to be careful not to outshine our public. That's why we perform in a cube."

This kind of innovation is sadly not up President Dmitry Medvedev's alley, the group said.

"His musical taste forbids him in this part of the universe from enjoying Apparatjik, although in some parts of the multiverse, we are a Deep Purple cover band, and he's our manager," Furuholmen said.

Last weekend, Eliot Paulina Sumner, otherwise known as the daughter of Sting, and her band I Blame Coco performed, without a cube, during the weekend fair, which will take place regularly at Strelka.

Summer at Strelka. Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design. 14 Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 5A. Metro Kropotkinskaya. Tel. 771-7437, www.strelkainstitute.com.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/05/29/strelka-summer-offers-responsible-fun-a7279