

# Wanted: Teleportation

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It was one of the more tempting offers that came in to my inbox this Friday to experience teleportation through time and space. Something about the letter seemed familiar, and perhaps I had already been on it, had been sent back to the moment the e-mail arrived and was experiencing some kind of time-travel indigestion.

The time travel is done according to the theories of Nicola Tesla, that genius scientist who created much of the modern world with his inventions in the sphere of electrical engineering.

Friends with Mark Twain, employee and then bitter enemy of Thomas Edison, Tesla was an archetypal eccentric and a brilliant scientist. If anyone was going to invent teleportation, then it was going to be the Serbian-American whose reputation has reached new heights in recent years.

How his invention ended up on Novy Arbat was a question that not even Tesla could answer.

Alyona was my contact for the experience and Oktyabr cinema the venue. A friend who was living on Trubnikovsky Pereulok just around the corner said goodbye before I went in, and we

agreed to meet in her flat in 2005 — a vintage year — if all worked, but instead we went to Saturn.

To be honest, finding a hired actor in 19th-century garb in front of a small room in the lobby of the cinema was a bit of a letdown.

And indeed, there was no teleportation. Time and space remained intact apart from the 20 minutes spent inside, as it is nothing but a clever arcade-style ride.

Tesla himself greets visitors by speaking from a portrait. He was a polyglot in real life, but his Russian was particularly impeccable on that day — and he looked much more handsome than in previous portraits.

From there you go into another room, preceded by a crack of lightning, where a circular spaceship sits. You are ushered inside, strapped in and the journey begins, with screens all round giving the impression that you are going on a journey.

Before we went to Saturn, one of her moons to be more precise, there is a speeded-up trip through Moscow of the future, along a busy Tverskaya. As Moscow generally changes at a faster rate than time, you can probably work out exactly what date the film was made in a few months.

If you are 12, or have a hidden 12-year-old inside you, it is a fun, cleverly done, if hardly cheap ride, a sort of faux scientific ghost train. The best bit is at the end, when the space machine opens slowly in creaky movements, leaving you feeling as if you were about to leave the UFO in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind."

On exiting, the streets were empty as if an alien force had come down and swept the city clean of all life. That, sadly, also turned out not to be true.

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