

'Here and Now' for Summer at Strelka

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Despite the tendency of Muscovites to engage in a mass exodus from the city this season to their dachas, the Black Sea and various foreign countries, the Strelka Institute is pressing ahead with its summer program of lectures, discussions and video games.

This Thursday sees the unveiling of Strelkraft Level II, described by the organization as a close look at "video games as a cultural phenomenon." While, as with the eternally popular Museum of Soviet Arcade Games, visitors get a chance to revisit popular games from their youths — albeit those appreciated internationally too at Strelka — the "second level" has a slightly more futuristic twist.

Virtual reality headsets, the bizarre and beautiful creations of Minecraft's building blocks in the hands of architects and the usual games consoles will all put in an appearance in the exploration of game mechanics Thursday evening.

The ever-addictive Super Hexagon game, which involves players attempting to direct a small arrow through a maze of ever-decreasing hexagon sizes closing in at alarming speeds on the

higher levels, will also be projected onto the main screen.

The British Council's "Selector Live" evening taking place Friday is a free-entry taste of Britain music, featuring Troumaca and Dean Blunt's swinging, soulful tunes; although that is about all they have in common. Troumaca veer on the more tropical side, as their Caribbean name suggests, while Blunt edges more toward minimalism and psychedelia, backed by intense visual "installations."

The week's fun, all taking place around a week-long English language architectural workshop, culminates in Sunday's "surprise film" as part of the "What the Film?!" season. An oblivious audience aware of "minimal information" shows up to watch whatever is placed on the screen in front of them at the institute. The next "experience" is Aug. 18.

The series is bolstered by two sessions of short-films Aug. 21 and 28 from the Netherlands and England respectively, showing combinations of animation and fictional stories.

While Strelka has always been a "melting pot" of sorts, as Antol Kalgayev and Anna Shirokova, the summer program's curators, stated in June, the key idea of the program this year was to specifically stretch "beyond Moscow."

However, as people who have spent their summers doing exactly that — in the physical sense — trickle back to the city, the program does not quite end. A little further in the future, in September, Russian-Dutch design bureau SVESMI will be launching Technology Fantastic.

Described as an "opportunity to indulge in heated arguments about the future," the English-language project will raise questions about how seemingly innocuous objects, such as the electrical air conditioner, have changed the appearance of modern cities for good.

Strelka Institute is located at 14 Naberezhnaya Bersenevskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 5A Metro Kropotkinskaya. www.strelka.com

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