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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

The Lost World: Festival Fun from Moscow's Polytechnic Museum

By Andrei Muchnik

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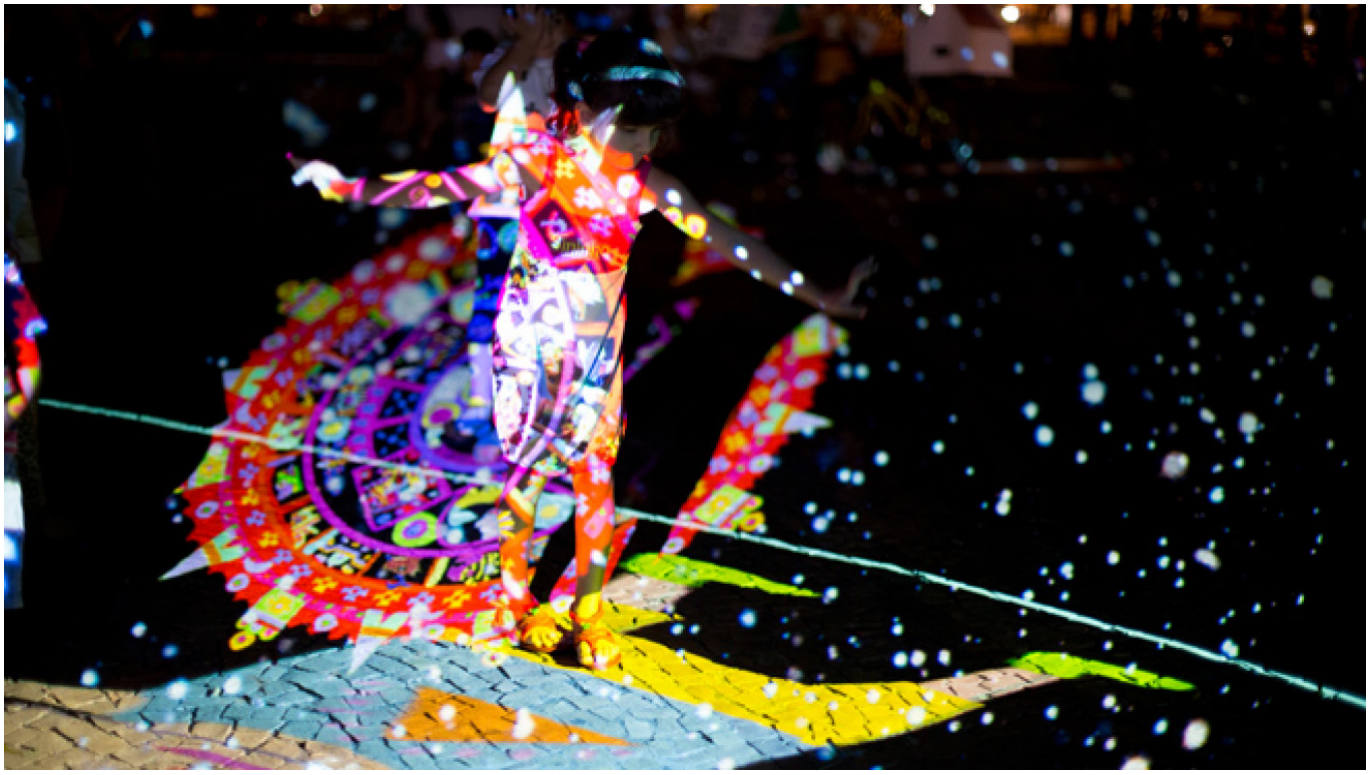

The festival will offer many events for children, including educational sessions on acoustics, mechanics and dynamics.

This weekend Moscow's Polytechnic Museum hosts its third annual Polytech Festival at VDNKh's Ploshchad Promyshlennosti. The enormous Vostok rocket will serve as a suitably impressive backdrop for a weekend of scientific and technological wonders.

"Every year the festival gets better and better, because we learn from our mistakes," said Ivan Bogantsev, director of the Polytech Festival, in an interview with The Moscow Times. "This year the program is more balanced and there's something for every age and audience. We have famous speakers and unusual theater performances. If you want to bring kids come in the morning when there will be plenty of activities like creating a 3-meter high fire tornado! For those who like book markets, we will have one of those as well — so you can come and load yourself up with some of the most popular science bestsellers!"

The theme of this year's festival is "The Lost World," after the eponymous Arthur Conan Doyle novel, which explores mankind's insatiable craving for discovery. And there are discoveries aplenty to be made. The festival's unique combination of scientific experiments, multimedia art, contemporary theater and educational lectures — not to mention an innovative children's program — means that there is something for Muscovites of all ages to unearth over the weekend.

Entrance to the festival is free, but for some of the events you need to pre-register or buy tickets. For a full program and registration, see fest.polymus.ru/en.

The Polytech Museum

Second Body is a cutting edge dance performance that blends the lines between the digital and the physical world.

Performances and Installations

Second Body is a cutting edge performance by the Anarchy Dance Theater from Taiwan. The project combines dance, video mapping and minimalist electronic music. A video projection will be mapped onto the dancers' bodies, creating their "second bodies." The multimedia ballet will be performed inside a large glass cube at pavilion 20 in VDNKh.

May 21 and May 22, 10:30 p.m.

Black Market Yami-Ichi was invented by the Japanese art collective Exonemo and the art group IDPW.org. It's a market of Internet related art objects, created both by IDPW.org and local Moscow artists. You will be able to see things like social media "likes," "canned" Internet spam or the physical performance of a retweet. Quirky for sure, but worth a visit.

May 21, 2:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

"200 prepared dc-motors, cotton balls, cardboard boxes 70x70x70cm" is an installation by Swiss artist Zimoun and the unwieldy title refers to its actual components. It will be a recreation of one of Zimoun's previous installations — a sound tower made of cardboard boxes. The sound will come from cotton balls hitting the boxes.

May 21 through May 29 from 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Pavilion 26

Nikolay Polissky is a regular contributor to the Polytech Festival. He is considered the father of Russian land art and was one of the founders of the famous Archstoyanie festival in Nikola-Lenivets. This year his installation is called "Peace Enforcement" and consists of huge insect-like creatures. Visitors can use some of the leftover parts to build a monster of their very own.

May 21 and May 22, 11:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

The Polytech Museum

Children can help create a 3-meter high fire tornado over the weekend.

Lectures and Discussions

A series of interesting talks and seminars on everything from neurobiology to humankind's interaction with nature will take place over the weekend. Highlights of the educational program include James Gleick and Olivia Judson.

James Gleick is an expert on the information age and everything related to it. At his lecture "Inventing the Information Age" he will talk about "how our relationship to information continues to transform the nature of human consciousness." James Gleick is a former editor and reporter at The New York Times and professor at Princeton University. He is the author of "The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood."

May 21, 8:00 p.m.

Olivia Judson is an evolutionary biologist at the Free University of Berlin and a former staff writer for The Economist. She is also the author of "Dr Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation: The Definitive Guide to the Evolutionary Biology of Sex," a bestseller that was made into a TV show. At her Moscow lecture, Olivia Judson, also known by her moniker "Dr Tatiana" will talk about sex in its various incarnations: human, animal or even insect and how it affects life on our planet.

May 22, 8:00 p.m.

The children's playground will offer various activities for kids, including educational sessions on the laws of acoustics, mechanics and dynamics as well as testing scientific theories in practice. If all that science gets a bit much, they're of course free to play. There will be two zones — one for toddlers and one for children up to 10 years old.

May 21 and May 22, 11:00 a.m. until 6 p.m.

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