

Edinburgh International Science Festival begins this weekend



The Edinburgh International Science Festival's flagship City Art Centre venue will open on Saturday with five floors transformed into a giant science playground packed full of exciting circuits, scary skeletons, racing robots and manic monsters. With workshops, hands-on activities, exhibitions and demonstrations galore, the City Art Centre offers a full day out for families and the perfect Easter Holiday adventure.

New activities for 2013 include the **Polyfloss Factory**, where kids can see the transformation of everyday plastic items into recyclable fibres in front of their own eyes, get hands-on with some plastic recycling techniques and explore some of the uses of plastic in everyday life. They will have the chance to use the innovative, artisan recycling Polyfloss machine – a converted candyfloss machine which turns plastic into a floss-like fibre which can then be melted and moulded into shape – and design and create their very own multi-coloured, funky recycled plastic ruler to take home. Funding and support from Zero Waste Scotland has enabled the Science Festival to bring Polyfloss Factory to the City Art Centre.

The Polyfloss team (Nicholas Paget, Emile De Visscher, Audrey Gaulard and Christophe Machet) met at the Design Interactions Course at the Royal College of Art. This innovative course brings artists, designers and engineers together to create novel and interesting new products. They assembled as a team because their skills were diverse, but their desires and passions are quite similar, they love cool machines, they love beautiful things and they hate waste. While Christoph and

Emile approached the project from an engineering background, Nicholas explored the design implications and Audrey brought her experience as a fashion designer.

Dr Simon Gage, Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival, said: "For two weeks we transform Edinburgh into one of the world's greatest playgrounds for the restlessly curious. Come and join us on a one way trip to Mars or look into the future of our food where we ask if we should be eating aliens or insects, help us explore the future of our cities and find out why play keeps us young. We invite you to explore literally hundreds of new ideas across the Festival."

Iain Gulland, Director, Zero Waste Scotland said: "Zero Waste Scotland is delighted to be able take part in this creative and engaging programme for this year's Edinburgh International Science Festival. Education is an important part of raising awareness and understanding of how what we previously thought as waste can be an important source of valuable materials and resources for our future. Our Festival event aimed at children will also be fun for adults and will look at plastics and how we can prevent, recycle and reduce the use of plastics."

"The Curriculum for Excellence also offers an opportunity to engage schools, and through this and our associated activities such as supporting recycling infrastructure, schools can put learning into practice by introducing facilities such as collection points and food waste collections to show how it all works together."

Also new to the City Art Centre this year is **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** where young detectives are asked to study the crime scene and decipher the clues left behind by finding fingerprints, identifying soil samples and investigating blood. Can they solve the mystery and help catch the criminal?

Other family-friendly events include **Expedition Botanics** at

the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, **The Secret Life of Coral** workshop at the National Museum of Scotland, **The Maths Olympics** with Simon Pampera and **SciQuest** – a brand new downloadable app which takes families around the city solving clues and deciphering riddles.

The Edinburgh International Science Festival runs from Saturday 23 March to Sunday 7 April. Full details of the programme and all tickets can be found at www.sciencefestival.co.uk. Tickets can also be purchased by phone through the Science Festival Box Office on 0844 557 2686 or in person at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival shop, 180 High Street, Edinburgh (open 10.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 11.00am to 5.30pm Saturday).