

# 2018 Edinburgh International Science Festival launches today

*Life, The Universe and anything else you can think of*



With headline sponsors, EDF Energy, on board for the second year, the Edinburgh International Science Festival celebrates 30 years of being. The 2018 edition takes place in and around Edinburgh between the 31st March and 15th April and this year's theme focusses on the wonder of life – and the Universe and everything, etc, etc... – and explores what it means to be alive in the 21st Century. And beyond....

Creative Director, Amanda Tyndall, introduced the Festival, saying :

“This year's Festival is a celebration of life, our existence and of the potential that science offers us as individuals as well as for the planet. As always, we deliver this through an incredible programme of hands-on experiments, thought-provoking discussions, dynamic performances, events and exhibitions; all designed to show how important and central science is to shaping and living our lives and inspiring the problem solvers of tomorrow.

“It's our thirtieth festival this year and we appreciate the privileged role we have in delivering not only the world's longest-running science festival but one of the highlights on the city's annual calendar of events.

“We are delighted that to mark Scotland's Year of Young People 2018 and our newly formed Youth Consultation Group has worked on co-creating content, programming, marketing and designing

some events including Existence: Life and Beyond at the National Museum of Scotland and the Edinburgh Mini Maker Faire. It's been fantastic to work with such a motivated group of young people who have brought new ideas and new approaches to our work and we look forward to seeing the results".

The Science Festival presents almost 270 events for families and adults over the course of two weeks. The vibrant and varied programme includes everything from fun family days out to new exhibitions, shows and performances, discussions with pioneering thinkers and some very special events.

Family festival goers can enjoy five floors of sensational hands-on science at City Art Centre (venue sponsored by Cirrus Logic), world class theatre at Summerhall (venue sponsored by Baillie Gifford) and a host of hands-on activities and more at National Museum of Scotland and other partner venues across Edinburgh.

The exciting adult programme of discussions, workshops, performances, screenings, special events and exhibitions features everything from science themed parties and experimental food events to discussions with leaders in the fields of medicine, space, genetic research, environmental science and data, among others, is set to create unforgettable festival experiences.

Exhibitions aplenty, but maybe not as you know them...

**Eco2ville** : Powered by EDF Energy, Ecoville – a low carbon village – is a large scale outdoor exhibition on Edinburgh's central Mound precinct, inviting audiences to explore how to integrate a low carbon-based future into their lives. Eco2ville will feature the innovations and ideas that will help us move from the Carbon Age into a new future that embraces technological solutions, creative approaches to everyday issues and a mindful use of resources. This will

include eye-catching prototypes or new products that could become everyday objects in a low carbon future such as an electric car, an upcycled shipping container home, with a living roof and smart gadgets, a solar-powered car and a music installation made of recycled metal. (31 March – 15 April)

**Existence:** Life and Beyond, is an interactive exhibition including three creative commissions at National Museum Scotland exploring the origins and future of life – everything from evolutionary biology and conservation, robotics and artificial intelligence.

Beginning with an exploration of life on earth, travelling through the weirdness of life at the extremes and exploring the technological potential of what life could be in the future, Existence: Life and Beyond will take visitors to the outer reaches of life as we know it. The exhibition is developed with support from Creative Scotland through the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund and supported by the Year of Young People 2018 event fund, managed by EventScotland, part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate.



**Future Life :** Science and technology are helping us take control of our bodies and minds like never before, are we changing what it means to be human? In Should we Edit Out 'Disability'? (4 April) discusses who should make this decision and how close the science is to making these choices a reality with breakthroughs like the genome editing tool CRISPR.

**Design for Life :** How do we harness the best of science, technology, engineering, architecture and design to create vibrant, sustainable homes, workplaces, schools and cities? In What the World Can Teach Us (3 April) engineer Dr Rob Malkin explores biomimicry and shows how studying insects with fascinating hearing organs could help us improve mobile phone

and hearing aid design.

**Life on Earth** : We share our planet with about nine million other species and humans make up only a tiny proportion of life on Earth. Explore how our interactions with our fellow earthlings impact on the diversity of life on Earth, and what this means for its human inhabitants.

In the National Museum of Scotland's Exhibition Gallery you can see some of the best wildlife photography in the world. The prestigious event **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** (on loan from Natural History Museum London) attracts tens of thousands of entries from photographers around the world (31 March – 15 April).

Find out why some parasites are so deadly and how the latest research is trying to prevent and control them. Meet arguably the world's most successful parasite – *Toxoplasma gondii* – which lives in the brains of 1 in 5 people in Scotland in Friends or Foe? The Parasites that Live on the Inside (4 April).

Why do we consider some animals more intelligent than others? Dr Jill MacKay (author of upcoming book **Animal Personality**) joins a panel to discuss what intelligence in animals means for scientists in Intelligent Animals (31 March). Around 44% of the UK's population own some kind of animal. Bring along your fluffy friends and join Dr Jill MacKay for Four-Legged Friends With Benefits (8 April).

EDF Energy's Scottish Business Director, Paul Winkle, said: "In the second year of EDF Energy's headline sponsorship of Edinburgh International Science Festival, I am delighted to see another programme packed full of content which is sure to engage and excite festival-goers. With sectors like engineering facing a skills gap in the future it is vital that we take every chance during the Year of Young People 2018 to inspire them to consider a career in science, technology,

engineering and maths.”

These are just a few of the events and exhibitions which will be taking place during the Festival. To browse through the full programme of Edinburgh International Science Festival events [Click Here](#)