

Press release, 14th may 2021

Signal Festival and laser scientists light up the beam over Prague to commemorate the International Day of Light

Signal Festival will celebrate this year's International Day of Light together with ELI Beamlines, a research centre focused on laser technology. The minimalist installation, shining over the centre of the metropolis, consists of a laser beam that will symbolically cross Petřín and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic on Národní třída, which has supported the creation and implementation of the ELI Beamlines centre since its inception. The beam is an imaginary thank you to scientists around the world. It will shine on 15 and 16 May from 8 pm to midnight.

Both institutions want to commemorate the 61 years that have passed since 16 May 1960, when American physicist and engineer Theodore Maiman successfully launched the world's first laser system. Thanks to this invention, not only medicine, but also biology, communication and thermonuclear fusion are moving forward. In 2017, UNESCO designated 16 May as the International Day of Light. As of 2018, this event is celebrated across continents.

ELI Beamlines and Signal Festival want to use the beam of light to symbolically draw attention to the fundamental importance of science and scientific activity for the whole of society. After all, it is science that fundamentally improves life on our planet, and it is scientists who, through their incredible dedication, are also helping us to overcome the global pandemic caused by the Covid-19 disease.

"Science and technology, along with art and public space, are the third most important pillar that defines the essence of Signal Festival. We have worked with a range of technology vendors for years and each year we present artworks that work with the latest technologies. We're fascinated by the fusion of science, technology and art, but alongside that we admire the overall scientific contribution of the company. Science accompanies us every second of our lives. That is why we now want to commemorate the contribution of science to humanity through art in the public space," says Signal Festival Director **Martin Pošta**.

The ELI Beamlines Centre aims to operate the world's most intense laser system in the long term. With ultra-high powers of 10 PW (petawatt) and concentrated intensities of up to 1024 W/cm square, it offers users a unique source of radiation and particle beams. These so-called beamlines enable pioneering research not only in physics and materials science, but also in biomedicine and laboratory astrophysics and many other fields. The laser centre in Dolní Břežany became available for user experiments in 2018 and is operated by the Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

About Signal Festival:

Signal is a festival of digital and creative culture. It connects contemporary visual art, the urban space and modern technologies. It has become the most visited cultural event in Czechia. The programme consists of renowned foreign and Czech artists from the field of light design, visual and digital art, AI and conceptual art. The festival enjoys educating itself as well as its visitors. It combines the historical backdrop of beloved Prague with state-of-the-art technologies and contemporary social issues. Signal festival is one of the greatest producers of contemporary art in our country. It supports the youngest generation of local artists and originated the creation of over seventy installations that were created especially for the festival. It organizes side-events for children, professionals and students. It cooperates with numerous foreign festivals and cultural institutions.

More information on www.signalfestival.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SignalFestival

Instagram: www.instagram.com/signalfestival/

Partners:

With support of: Magistrate of the Capital City of Prague, the Ministry of Culture CR

Main partner: Mercedes-Benz, Kooperativa

Official partner: Playstation

General media partner: Česká televize

Exclusive media partner: Český rozhlas – Radiožurnál

Main media partner: Reflex

Location partner: Výstaviště Praha Holešovice

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