

Lumiere lights up Durham – are you going?

A SPECTACULAR simulation of the sun is suspended in the sky over a city centre.

This breathtaking sight – 100million times smaller than the real sun, but complete with turbulence, solar flares and sunspots – was just one of a host of installations which featured at a special preview of Lumiere festival in Durham City.

Others included an animated elephant conjured up in a huge 3D image and a projection inspired by the Lindisfarne Gospels, beamed on to Durham Cathedral, accompanied by a dramatic soundtrack.

Yesterday, producers Artichoke gave the public a sneak peek of the four-day festival, which will transform the city into a wonderland of light.

The event is officially under way tonight.

Speaking as artists put the finishing touches to their performances, Helen Marriage, Artichoke's director, said: "Lumiere sets out to amaze, delight and stop people in their tracks."

The festival, commissioned by Durham County Council, will be spread further afield this year, beyond the city centre, with some of the 27 installations displayed at the university's science site and in park-and-ride spaces.

Helen added: "This year's Lumiere Durham programme will combine the high-octane excitement of pieces such as Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Solar Equation, a giant maquette of the sun 100million times smaller than the real thing, with moments of quiet contemplation, including the mesmerizing [M]ondes, in the Cathedral and gardens behind, which defies description, but is guaranteed to captivate.

"Among these will be sprinkled moments of pure, joyous fun – a telephone box filled with live fish, Reliant Robins with stained glass windows, and a Consumerist Christmas Tree decorated with glowing baubles made from thousands of recycled plastic bags."

For more information about the display, which will run from today until Sunday, visit www.lumiere-festival.com or follow @artichoketrust, #lumieredurham on twitter or on www.facebook.com/artichoketrust.

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