

19-25 June 2016 (note the correct date here!)*



Warsaw, Poland

Revolve with the Heavens of Copernicus

“The Milky Way will now shift a bit to the right!” boomed a megaphone, and the Milky Way indeed murmured and shuffled its way to the edge of the sky. Cygnus the Swan stood her ground, while Ursus the Great Bear likewise defended his territory. “I made sure I got here an hour early, so that no one would steal my Vega spot,” explained a girl with stars painted on her face. And there were quite a few others like her.

This was the scene as the square outside St. Anne’s Church in Warsaw was filled to the brim with live versions of the constellations in the summer sky, while the crowd members not lucky enough to have secured a constellation spot for themselves spontaneously formed a somewhat unruly throng: the Milky Way.

Help celebrate 5th anniversary

This was how our planetarium, the Heavens of Copernicus, kicked off its grand opening. And that was just a first taste of the many extraordinary events that we have organized to date. The planetarium has built up a committed community of aficionados. We do our very best to share our passion with them, both under the dome and outside the building.

June 2016 will coincide with the 5th anniversary of our planetarium’s opening. You can rest assured that we will be preparing something truly extraordinary to mark that occasion: a celebration with tons of fun and lots of live interaction! We want you to come visit us in 2016, and we are proposing for the IPS 2016 conference to be held under the theme “Revolve!”

Revolve means to turn around and look in a new direction. Revolve means being open on all sides, being able to look from different perspectives. It entails continual motion, constant action. And that is precisely how we would like to see the IPS conference in 2016:

refreshed, interactive, full of new possibilities, open to new challenges. We propose for the IPS 2016 conference to feature more sessions held live, both under and outside the dome, more discussions and panels about how to create interesting shows and how to better awe and inspire audience members, and more opportunities to share knowledge. The Heavens of Copernicus is the right place for all that to happen.

The Heavens of Copernicus

The Heavens of Copernicus is situated in the centre of the vibrant city of Warsaw, in a university quarter full of quaint student cafes, just a stone’s throw from Warsaw’s historic Old Town, with a view over the Vistula River. The planetarium facility, plopped down right next to our bigger brother (the Copernicus Science Centre), has attracted much interest since its very beginning. And it is no wonder, since we really have reached out to people. We have convinced Warsaw residents to stop for a moment on their way to work to glance at the sky, to come experience a lunar eclipse with us, and to set up camp in the nearby park and in the corridors of the planetarium for one night, just to see an event that would never repeat itself again in our lifetimes: the Transit of Venus.

Live Shows

The Heavens of Copernicus build-

ing is inhabited on a regular basis by the “Planetarians,” who spend most of their time under the 16-m dome, hosting shows while soaring amidst the stars. They come in pairs: as one of them tells the audience about the sky above Warsaw, the other, from behind the console, sets sunrises and sunsets in motion, keeps Jupiter spinning, and can switch on the polar aurora. These are our astronavigators, who sometimes forget themselves as they go racing through the galaxy.

Our live presenters impart to our shows something we really want to feature for IPS 2016: interactivity. While hosting each show, the presenters tweak and alter it depending on the audience’s reactions and questions. As we have gained more and more experience, we have been engaging in more and more interaction with audience members. During the show *Frank the Hare and the Stellar Adventure*, for preschoolers, the kids themselves can choose how they want to color the forest displayed on the dome, and then they help spot



The Heavens of Copernicus, on the banks of the Vistula River. All photos courtesy of Heavens of Copernicus.

*The incorrect date appears in the March 2013 issue of *Planetarian*.

animals among the trees and in the sky. During the *Life 3D Live* show, viewers decide where in the cosmos to head in search of life.

All in all, our planetarium is an awe-inspiring place hosting a Sky-Skan Definiti 3D stereo projection system, which we are quite proud of. And because we also have a hybrid system centered around a Megastar starball, we will give you a chance to gaze at an incredibly star-filled sky and then together decide how to explore it. The overall impression is augmented by laser projectors and truly amazing sound. "That is why we try not to talk about it as merely a 'planetarium,'" explains Maciej Ligowski, PhD, deputy head of the facility. "Instead, it is called the 'Heavens of Copernicus' and what we have to offer extends far beyond just astronomy shows."

The IPS conference will present an extraordinary opportunity, gathering together people from around the world, each with a different set of experiences. We would like for the IPS 2016 event to feature sessions illustrating the many varied and interesting ways astronomy can be talked about and showcased. We will invite some participants to bring their own live shows with them, and to present them here.

We also hope to organize a panel discussion about how to develop more interactive shows and how to engage the audience, how to best take advantage of the technological capabilities offered by the planetarium's spherical space, so as to create an attractive, nonstandard, vivid message. We will invite you to talk about evaluating and surveying what audience members really want, and about the planetarium as an exhibition space. We will gladly display examples of our own exhibits that enrich the planetarium, and we will be eager to see the examples of others.

Production studio

We also create our own planetarium shows. Live shows are rehearsed mainly in a small room that houses a miniature of our big dome, a perfect spot for workshops on how to create live-interactive shows. Fuldome shows are developed in the production studio, situated on the floor above. It is here that we are now working on our first show called *Dream to Fly*, a poetic story about the history of aviation.

During IPS 2016, we will propose to hold production workshops, at which we will present our workflow. Perhaps we can jointly develop a simple show, step-by-step? This will definitely be a good opportunity to take a look "under the hood" of our production studio, so to speak: to find out more about the software we use, how animations, panoramas, and time-lapses all get created. We will show how to put together the soundtrack for a show, and perhaps we will be able to organize a script-writing workshop.

Conference venue

The combination of the Heavens of Copernicus Planetarium, the Copernicus Science Centre, and the integrated Conference Centre makes our site a truly unique place to organize a successful conference, and all of these facilities will be fully at your disposal for the duration of the event.

As a result, conference participants will have the opportunity to enjoy and experience the entire Copernicus Science Centre, one of the largest institutions of its type in Central and Eastern Europe. With its overarching concept of seeking to integrate the "hard" sciences with the humanities in innovative ways, the centre is even unique on the worldwide scale.

We consider the possibility of direct, unlimited, hands-on contact with the science centre exhibitions to be an additional great advantage for conference attendees; we have found that being able to experiment and play during breaks is particularly attractive and stimulating.

The conference centre's excellently-equipped auditorium hall can seat up to 250. The large conference room, in turn, can host up to 400, but also can be subdivided into as many as 6 separate rooms, perfect for smaller workshops. We can also offer a truly one-of-a-kind large



Top: The Milky Way "mob" that helped open the Heavens of Copernicus; Center: learning at one of the many hands-on exhibits at the Copernicus Science Center; Bottom: shadows on the moon in the planetarium.

underground space that can accommodate nearly 700, and which has been used as an original exhibition and concert space.

The architecture of our building lends itself well to interesting conference configurations. For instance, our spacious central entrance hall with nearly 1,000 m² of floor space provides a fantastic place for vendors/exhibitors anxious to attractively present their stands.

One major source of our site's great potential lies in our people: the tremendously enthusiastic staff of the Copernicus Science Centre, a close-knit team of people with a broad range of interests. They have already demonstrated what a great job they can do, for instance, during the ECSITE 2011 attended by almost 900 participants.

With our innovative approach to organizing events (which is nevertheless firmly grounded in experience), we are certain that time spent at IPS 2016 in Warsaw will be exciting and chock full of new experiences. Our building's location in the heart of a capital city makes transport issues easy to resolve and opens up a broad range of hotel options.

At the same time, being conveniently situated along a riverbank amidst a pleasant university neighborhood, will allow participants to enjoyably spend the warm June evenings absorbing the atmosphere of a lively and vibrant city, taking pleasant walks and possibly eating dinner in the nearby restaurants.

Poland is also an attractive location in terms of price. We anticipate participation costs to be approximately as follows: \$380 conference fee, \$70 banquet fee; \$50-\$170 hotel costs, and \$200 (Europe) - \$1700 (Australia) flight costs.

Slavic temperament

What kind of associations does Poland conjure up for you? Perhaps a boldness to overcome stereotypes and stand up for one's views, as shown by Nicolaus Copernicus and Lech Wałęsa? Or a passion for discovery in spite of numerous obstacles, as exemplified by the scientific career and achievements of Marie Skłodowska-Curie? Or perhaps the romantic spirit that rings out in Chopin's music?

You will find all of that here: passionate, creative people who will never accept that there are certain walls that cannot be knocked down (both politically and mentally). We are inventive, nonconformist, and taught by difficult years of history to think outside the box.

At the same time, we live in a truly interesting and beautiful country. That is something worth seeing for oneself: for instance by taking an excursion trip to the world-renowned Kraków or especially Toruń. In Toruń, one can walk the very same cobblestone streets that were once tread by the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. The wealth of Polish cuisine and Polish culture, an intriguing mix of East and West, is just waiting for conference participants to explore.

Opening up to Central and Eastern Europe could present an interesting challenge and opportunity for the IPS conference. Because the event has not yet been held in this part of Europe, its being organized in Warsaw will make it easier for representatives from institutions in our region to attend, while at the same time giving regular attendees a chance to become better acquainted with a different region. The Heavens of Copernicus' excellent location, halfway between East and West, will also facilitate the forging of business contacts in this dynamically developing region.

So have we convinced you to come revolve with us? We hope so.

Our namesake, Copernicus, managed to halt the sun and move the Earth, putting revolve to rights, so perhaps we, too, will manage to persuade you to come visit us.

For more information, contact Maciej Ligowski at maciej.ligowski@kopernik.org.pl



Top: The charm of Warsaw; Center: more hands-on family fun at the Copernicus Science Centre; Bottom: an "exciting" event during Ecsite 2011.