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go ARTS



Canterbury Tales: A puppet procession will tell our city's tale.

More than 20,000 Cantabrians squished together in Gloucester St and its surrounds for LUXCITY last year.

It was about 18,000 more people than organisers expected for the mesmerising night of light which creatively transformed deserted inner city streets into life again.

The only festival of its kind in the world, the annual Festival of Transitional Architecture is a free, public event.

LUXCITY, the first Festival of Transitional Architecture in Christchurch (FESTA), caught Cantabrians' imaginations.

It proved such a hit organisers have extended this year's event – FESTA 2013 – to incorporate a variety of events to be held over three days during Labour Weekend.

This year's theme is "a city within a city" and FESTA's temporary cityscape will include an urban farm on the site of Poplar Lane, a recycled house, a mobile cinema for two, markets, music, workshops, talks, and is centred around the headline event, Free Theatre's Canterbury Tales.

A carnival of giant puppets, magnificent sculptures crafted out of recycled bicycles and more, Canterbury Tales, to be presented

The annual Festival of Transitional Architecture, FESTA, is a free public event in the central city to be held over Labour weekend. VICKI ANDERSON highlights events from the programme.

over two nights, is a two-and-a-half-hour procession around the inner city which tells the tale of our city's past and present.

George Parker of Free Theatre said some of the puppets would be familiar to Cantabrians.

"Various city leaders will appear as part of the procession. What we really want to get across is that although it's a performance and procession, we want the audience to be involved, dress up, wear masks and bring lights and really be part of it themselves."

The six puppets are the Friar, the Scholar, the Merchant who may resemble Prime Minister John Key, Wife of Bath – a giant red velvet-encased creature – and the Miller. Some of the puppets are over 5 metres tall.

FESTA director Jessica Halliday said that after the earthquakes, the inner city had become "a single destination experience".

"We don't walk through the city like we used to do, FESTA has a number of urban wanderings which will hopefully reintroduce

people to the city again. It is about engaging with a sense of place."

FESTA events include cinema, an inner city sauna, a project which recycles a house, art, talks, public picnics, urban agriculture, centred around the wider issue of sustainable food production, and architectural installations.

A selection of highlights from the programme includes:

CANTERBURY TALES

The main event of this year's FESTA is led by Free Theatre Christchurch.

Canterbury Tales is a carnivalesque procession of incredible puppets cleverly crafted from recycled objects who, through Chaucer's tale, tell the story of the past, present and future of Christchurch.

Starting at 8.30pm on October 26 and 27, the procession of large puppets and masked performers will assemble near the Bridge of Remembrance and follow a specific path through the central city at night: along the river to Worcester Bridge before ending at the heart of the city in Cathedral

Square.

Spectators can join the procession at any point as it moves through different sites that come alive with diverse performances, soundscapes, lights, hospitality, interactive architecture and installations.

A collaborative exploration of the city, the procession will take over two-and-a-half hours and includes a performance by Pacific Underground and local experimental artists, including Bruce Russell, performing within an interactive environment built and inhabited by Interior and Spatial Design students from the University of Technology Sydney.

From there the procession will move to the Cathedral, where a play between karanga and fanfare performed by Ngai Tahu artists and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra will call the procession into the square.

Along the journey expect to find beverages and tasty fare from some of Christchurch's favourite watering holes – The Darkroom, Cassels and Sons, The Twisted Hop, Black Betty and Smash

Palace.

At the end of the procession there will be The Lost and Found night market in Cathedral Square.

AGROPOLIS

Sited at the former Poplar Lane area at 154 High St, Agropolis is a scalable transitional urban farm in the inner city.

It is an edible landscape and a shared space accessible to all, where citizens support budding students to grow a form of collective enterprise specialising in local food and social goods.

It involves composting organic waste from inner city hospitality businesses as well as the ground preparation, sowing and planting, harvesting, cooking and distribution of the produce. Eventually Agropolis hopes to provide a "garden to plate" experience via a mobile kitchen. It also raises questions about the city's food resilience, land use and food production and distribution in relation to the planning of the city.

Get involved: Learn skills and discover ideas about viable and sustainable food production.

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