Barbican Theatre announce the UK and European premiere of The Future Undokai Games coming to Plymouth in November 2023

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Barbican Theatre are excited to announce that Plymouth is hosting the UK and European premiere? of the Future Undokai Project?. The Plymouth Undokai takes place at Plymouth Life Centre between 18-26th November, with two weekends of games, and a conference at the University of Plymouth.

The Future Undokai Project is a groundbreaking Japanese initiative exploring the future of intergenerational community sports and how communities might design new multi-player physical games. And Plymouth is home to its UK & European premiere!

The Plymouth Undokai project is all about bringing people together to have fun and play games. Participants get to play traditional Undokai games - similar to what they might play at a school sports day, fair or carnival but with a twist and a bit of tech mixed in - and also create and play brand new games just for Plymouth!

Creating and playing your own games that fuse traditional sports with future tech is a unique aspect of Undokai and we can't wait for Plymouth to get involved.

Celebrating a 150 year connection between Plymouth and Japan

Plymouth is the perfect home for the European Future Undokai project: The traditional Japanese Undokai's (which are played by 100,000 people a year) were established about 150 years ago, by the British Naval Officer Sir Archibald Lucius Douglas. He served on HMS Cambridge at Devonport for 4 years as Senior Staff Officer, before then being promoted to Commander and posted directly to Japan.

This project is not only connecting Plymouth to Japan 150 years ago, it is renewing it today, and creating a joint future with the new Plymouth Undokai games. And brings together Plymouth- highlighting our acumen across the Navy, sporting excellence, technology and industry. Plymouthians will get to create new community games, and celebrate their Janner identity.

On the link between Undokai and its roots in the UK, Tsubasa Nishi (The Curator of YCAM and Producer and CO-founder for Future Undokai) said

'Undokai sports events have a unique place within the Japanese psyche and mindset. There is nobody in Japan that has not experienced an Undokai. We can trace it back to 150 years ago when Japan was going through a period of modernisation. We invited people from Europe and America to Japan. One of those people who was very influential in the modernisation of Japan was someone from the British Navy called Sir Douglas. He came to Japan to help modernise and create a Navy and set up an academy to train Navy Personnel.

He developed a sports day model, where everyone has fun and works together. It was a concept that was developed by Sir Dougas and his Naval Academy in Japan. He felt that training needed to be combined with play and recreation, since then, it has spread out through schools and community groups in Japan.

We are really excited to be coming to the UK because the routes of the Undokai come from the UK, as Sir Douglas was stationed in Plymouth! We're excited to go into the next stage of developing the concept

Media:

















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that he brought to Japan- and inventing its future.'

Tsubasa Nishi

The Curator of YCAM

Producer and CO-founder for Future Undokai

There will be two main ways for people to take part in the Plymouth Undokai

- As a Player - someone who plays the traditional games and the new games made in Plymouth (for ages 8-88). This is idea for:
    - People who want to have fun and play games
    - People who like mixing with lots of different people
    - People who really enjoy sports day at school
    - People who like beach or park games
    - Groups such as football clubs, scouts, guides, cubs, brownies, boys brigade, girls brigade, young carers, home school groups, duke of edinburgh groups.

- As a Developlayer - someone who helps co-create the new games and events in Plymouth and then joins in with the players to play them! This is ideal for people aged 10+ who are:
    - Community Leaders
    - Dancers / choreographers / movement artists
    - Sports Coaches
    - Teachers
    - Students
    - Tech whizz kids
    - Gamers

Plymouth Undokai is hopefully the first annual event. In Japan, there are 70,000 Undokai events a year - with 10 million people taking part!

Laura Kriefman, Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director, Barbican Theatre, Plymouth said

"Why can't we, as a city, invent our own sports? Imagine people in Plymouth inventing the next 'football' or 'curling'! I am so excited to be able to bring this amazing project to our city and see what games Plymothians want to make, to play together. We have our fingers crossed that this is the first year of many for Plymouth Undokai. I look forward to the laughter and the amazing games we invent."

The first ever Plymouth Undokai takes place over two weeks in November 2023 at the Life Centre

'Plymouth Active's main aim is to encourage people to be more physically active day to day and having fun doing so is incredibly important. We are really looking forward to hosting the Plymouth Undokai event as it fits in perfectly with what we want to promote, and we hope this new activity brings in new users to the Life Centre'

Rhys Jones COO/CEO Plymouth Active Leisure

Tsubasa Nishi, the Curator of YCAM and Producer and CO-founder for Future Undokai said

'Up until now when we've hosted Undokai in Japan- it's been born out of the culture and community. Rolling it out into the Life Centre- a focus for sports in Plymouth, that's a first for us. I'm really intrigued and excited to see how the sporting community will take to it and what their view on it will be'

Hannah Irwin, Strategic Projects Manager, The Bridge at University Of Plymouth said

"The Arts Institute team at University Of Plymouth are really excited to be partnering with Barbican

Theatre and Undokai Association to bring such incredible opportunities to Plymouth. Our students and facilitators in games design, digital media and events are already so invested in this project which is allowing them to develop what they have studied in the real world with communities and the games innovators at Undokai. I can't wait to see the results of everyone's hard work in Nov".

There are four ways to join in:

PLAY IT: JAPANESE STYLE GAMES

Saturday 18th November: @ Plymouth Life Centre

Get ready for attendees to immerse themselves in a day of traditional Undokai games expertly led by The Undokai Association, visiting all the way from Japan. The activities include classics like tug of war, relay races, long rope jumping, centipede racing, and an array of other engaging games which have been enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people in Japan. These time-honored games, orchestrated by the Japanese team, have played a significant role in uniting communities.

Our aspiration is that these traditional style games will serve as a catalyst for a newfound sense of community, enjoyment and fun among all participants- ready for the Develop It and Play It: Plymouth style games!

For: ages 8-88.

Tickets: Pay What You Decide (including £0)

On Sale Now at barbicantheatre.co.uk

Event page https://barbicantheatre.co.uk/whats-on/play-it-days-japanese-style/

DEVELOP IT: CO-CREATE THE PLYMOUTH GAMES

Friday 24th - Sunday 26th November @ Plymouth Life Centre

As a DeveloPlayer people get to rewrite the rule book! This is a seriously cool opportunity for them to design and create a new series of games with the Undokai Association team from Japan while they are in Plymouth. We'll have students and leaders from University Of Plymouth's Arts Institute and i-DAT who are working on Games Design and Games & Experience Design to incorporate their innovations and tech ideas into the games as well.

Then on the final day we'll gather 200 people at the centre to play your games with you!

Fri 24 November - an ideas lab where we'll all meet and run through ideas and maybe do a few testers.

Sat 25 November - our main DeveloPlayer day. Get stuck in and co-create 6-8 games for people of all ages and abilities to play the day after. It's a hackathon with a twist!

Sun 26 November - PLAY IT Plymouth style. Our final day of Plymouth Undokai - we'll have 200 people come together to play the games developed over the two previous days

For ages 10+

Tickets: Pay What You Decide

On Sale Now at barbicantheatre.co.uk

Event Page ??https://barbicantheatre.co.uk/whats-on/develop-it-co-create-the-plymouth-undokai-games/

PLAY IT: PLYMOUTH STYLE

Sunday 26th November @ Plymouth Life Centre

On our final day we'll get into teams and play the new games developed in our DeveloPlayer sessions - these will be the first ever players to try them out! It's going to be so much fun and is as much about taking part than winning (although we will have medals and awards at the end of course!) We can't yet tell people what the games will be like (they don't exist yet) but imagine a mashup of Takeishi's Castle meets TaskMaster meets your school sports day and you might have a bit of an idea!

For: ages 8-88.

Tickets: Pay What You Decide

On Sale Now at barbicantheatre.co.uk

Event page https://barbicantheatre.co.uk/whats-on/play-it-plymouth-style-games/

EVOLVE IT: DEMOCRATIC, PLAYFUL GAMES

Friday 24th November @ University of Plymouth, Roland Levinsky Building

Evolve It offers a one-day conference featuring insights from five prominent Japanese experts during their visit to Plymouth. Participants will have the opportunity to not only learn from these experts but also engage as DeveloPlayers or participants.

Coinciding with the UK and European premiere of the Future Undokai project from November 24th to 26th, we aim to invite individuals with shared interests to join in a day of exploration. This conference delves into the realms of playful and democratic game design, community-owned events, and the necessary support systems.

Throughout the event, attendees will delve into the technical and creative prowess of our Japanese partners in the realm of both digital and physical community gaming. Alongside this we will be getting to grips with how traditions could evolve as technology meets traditional cultural events.

Our Panels will explore the following themes:

Multi-generational Culture - Ownership of cultural identity (over multiple generations)

- What mechanisms do you need in place to enable a project to have a multigenerational life, purpose and validity?
- What are the complexities to be navigated between championing 400 years of tradition versus contemporary audience needs?
- How do you create space and systems for long term thinking?
- How do you balance costs versus commercialising and over advertising?
- How can a national tradition develop and evolve with communities and business'?
- In other words- how do you balance capacity and roots through time?

Democratic Games Design

- What happens if game design is a democratic process?
- What different types of experiences and activities materialise if owned by citizens?
- Can engagement in city-wide/ city led games lead to a new understanding of democracy?
- What are the best tools to achieve this?

Evolve-It

- What's the future of games and play?
- How does technology and physical gaming combine?
- What could the future look like? What new games and playful experience might materialise?
- Will different people want to be involved?

Event page https://barbicantheatre.co.uk/whats-on/evolve-it-democratic-playful-games/

Plymouth Undokai is produced by Barbican Theatre, Plymouth in partnership with The Future Undokai Project and the Undokai Association and funded by

Daiwa Foundation, Sasakawa Foundation, University of Plymouth, Arts Council England, and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Tickets for all Plymouth Undokai events including PLAY IT, the EVOLVE IT conference and DEVELOPLAYER days are all Pay What You Decide, which includes £0. Book tickets now at barbicantheatre.co.uk

About Barbican Theatre, Plymouth

Barbican Theatre is committed to building Plymouth's cultural voice. We have been working for 43 years to inspire the next generation of artists and entrepreneurs to find their creative voices (voices often unheard).

We are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), a registered charity and have been identified as cultural producers for Plymouth. We specialise in creating performances and events for unique spaces, mixing genres and styles to create innovative, accessible work, and taking performances that people want to engage with, direct to their communities. We are committed to inclusivity regardless of cultural, sexual or social background.

Our CEO is award winning choreographer Laura Kriefman, who specialises in the fusion of movement and technology, and has an extensive background across a number of art forms. She is supported by a highly experienced core team of professionals in production, tech, marketing, finance, event management, theatre, and dance.

We want to enable young people to experience and access all lines of work in the creative industry, offering opportunities to explore and create. They can engage with so many areas from technical, choreography, production management, directing and writing to producing, film making, projection mapping, composing and more.

Barbican Theatre is a registered charity, funded by Arts Council England, Plymouth City Council, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation and Youth Music.

www.barbicantheatre.co.uk

About Future Undokai Association

Undokai is a Japanese community sports day. They are an important cultural activity in Japan that has run for over 150 years. Future Undokai adapts the traditional concept to meet today's needs. More than 70,000 Undokais are played each year (with more than 10m people engaged)

In Japan over 70k Undokais are held each year with more than 10m people of all ages taking part. It's one of the most popular annual events in schools, local communities and often in companies and organisations.

The Future Undokai project is all about bringing people together and having fun co-creating new games, activities and events.

Futureundokai.com

WATCH A FILM about FutureUndokai

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