

Press release
16 May 2024

Breathe: an invitation to breathe together

In the hustle and bustle of our hectic cities, an oasis of light appears: Breathe. This 15-metre sphere of light invites us to slow down and breathe together. Breathe will make its world premiere in Geneva from 16 to 26 May on the Plainpalais square, as part of Mr Alfonso Gomez's year as Mayor.

From 16 to 26 May 2024, from dusk onwards, the Plainpalais square will be the beating heart of Breathe, though its soothing rhythm will extend throughout the city: the jet d'eau, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Musée Rath, the Pâquis lighthouse, the World Health Organization (WHO) building and the Palais des Nations will light up in unison with the luminous dome, inviting us to slow down and take time to breathe. “The many stresses to which we are subjected on a daily basis can have harmful effects on our health. Taking our time, rethinking our habits, and living in the moment allows us to improve our well-being and also to look after our planet”, explains Alfonso Gomez.

A sensory experience, in the heart of the city, to reconnect

Breathe, a new installation by Geneva-based activist Dan Acher, is an artistic experience which, beyond its visual beauty, reminds us of the importance of slowing down, of anchoring our lives in the present moment, of reconnecting with ourselves and the world around us.

As night falls, Geneva residents will be able to observe a huge dome, emitting light at regular intervals, encouraging us to follow this rhythm as we breathe in and out. Five breaths a minute: this is the optimal rhythm BREATHE proposes to guide us into a state of deep relaxation and connection that transcends our differences. Dan Acher develops: “I love the idea that an artistic installation can spread throughout the city in such an accessible way. Geneva, with its local and international dimensions, is the ideal city for the premiere of Breathe. In a world that seems increasingly divided, it is an invitation to live a collective and unifying experience around a shared breath”.

Mindfulness accessible to all

Activities proposed by minds Genève - minds-ge.ch will also take place on the Plainpalais square to enable participants to learn more about the importance of mental health and the practice of mindfulness, and to discover several Geneva-based associations committed to the well-being of the population. A round-table discussion in collaboration with the World Health Organization will take place on Friday, May 24, between noon and two o'clock. Entitled “Les autres, c'est fantastique”, it will focus on social ties and the importance of connecting to oneself, to others and to the world. For Dr Andrea Pereira, Director of minds: ‘It is a fundamental human right to enjoy good mental health. Today, it is imperative to strengthen our understanding of

mental health, to break down the taboos and stigmas associated with it, and to promote individual, collective, and political action to support mental well-being”.

Dr Mark Van Ommeren, Head of the Mental Health Unit, World Health Organization, adds: "Collaborative efforts and local initiatives, such as this one led by the City of Geneva, are vitally important in demonstrating the value and commitment given to mental health in our communities. They can also help foster a culture of openness, helping more people feel able to reach out for mental health support."

Programme

On the Plainpalais square

→ From Thursday 16 to Sunday 26 May 2024 at dusk
Light installation

→ Thursday 16 May 2024, from 8pm
Inauguration in the presence of Mr Alfonso Gomez, Mayor of Geneva, and the project partners.

Activities proposed by Minds Genève - minds-ge.ch

→ Wednesday 22 May and Saturday 25 2024, from 10am to 4pm
Breathe – Mediation booth, exchanges and games.

Find out more about the crucial importance of mental health and discover several Geneva-based associations committed to the well-being of the population.

→ Thursday 23 May 2024, from 6pm to 8pm
“Rebel yourself: take a break” - Moments of exchange and meditation in partnership with Dialogai and Convergences.
Learn more about the practice of mindfulness from recognised experts in the field and enjoy a free meditation session.

→ Friday 24 May 2024, from 12pm to 2pm
“Les autres, c'est fantastique” - A round table discussion in collaboration with the World Health Organization.
Social ties are as powerful as they are indispensable for building a world in which each person can feel good and find their place. How can we guarantee and foster this connection to ourselves, to others and to the world?

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