

Academic gala – versus distress and helplessness

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The interdisciplinary serial of programs called [Hungarian Science Festival](#) (3rd Nov - 30th Nov) was inviting academic and interested lay audiences eager to get first-hand information on certain fields of science and the achievements of contemporary Hungarian scientists in several towns of the country. This year, the main topics of this thought provoking celebration were creativity and innovation, with various conferences, exhibitions, film screenings and concerts helping the absorption of the audience in these themes.

Budapest

Apart from the main organizer, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, several other institutes hosted different programs of the Hungarian Science Festival in Budapest. Events covered various themes ranging from robot warfare through minority issues to new medical healing and preventive methods, so the offering had something in store for everyone interested in the work of contemporary Hungarian scholars of the natural and social sciences.

The psychological conference on Creativity and Talent, which studied the metamorphoses of the concept of creativity during the past fifty years of psychology took place in the lecture hall of the Academy on the 11th of November. Its motto was Ferenc Méri's definition of creativity: „Creative people don't adapt but create, don't learn but find and find out." Lecturers from different institutes presented their specialised perspectives and own results. Concluding the presentation series, Csaba Pléh, member of the Academy, a prominent psychologist in the field of psycholinguistics, reviewed the history of research dealing with creativity from 1960 till nowadays, paying special attention to the factors which highlight aspects of scientific creativity, and to the measurement of creativity.

The open day of the Research Institute of Technical Physics and Material Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was held on the 13th of November. In the morning, visitors were could take a close-up view of the work going on here by watching documentary films on the research projects of the institute, and later by listening to thematic lectures and visiting labs under the guidance of their leaders. The materials of the scientific lectures held in the board-room can be downloaded from the [website of this program](#). However, those who preferred the laboratory visits organised simultaneously had to choose from such alluring issues as ellipsometry, holography or machine sight.

Debrecen

One of the focal locations of the Hungarian Science Festival is Debrecen, where the opening ceremony was held in the hall of the Academic Committee of Debrecen on the 2nd of November, and several other institutes including the local universities organized events which fit into this serial of programs. The festive scientific session called Sciences, Innovation, Talent - Forum of young scholar candidates was held on the 6th of November in the hall of the Academic Committee of Debrecen, offering an opportunity for undergraduates and fresh doctors as well as high school students to present their scientific activities in brief. A presentation was given by István Németh, student of the Fazekas high school of Debrecen, who has already achieved international success, winning an award at the International Science Olympiad in Mexico for his study on the 20th century social geography of Mexico. At the ceremonial session of the Ilona Tóth Foundation, held after the section discussions, a memorial plaque was awarded to Gábor Papp, a PhD student who works for the 3rd Medical Clinic of the University of Debrecen, for his results deserving international publication and - as the justification went - for his character, attitude and readiness to make sacrifices for people.

Pécs

Several local institutes, including the University of Pécs, took their part in organizing programs. The ceremonial opening was held on the 4th of November in the building of the Academic Committee of Pécs, and it was followed by a lecture entitled Stem-Cells in Research and Healing by Balázs Sarkadi, member of the Academy.

Also on the 4th of November, Nikoletta Házas aesthete and art historian presented a new book edited by her, entitled Thought Locked up in a Box - Marcel Duchamp (Budapest, L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2009), in the House of Arts and Literature. The event called Est-West Passage 2009 - The 3rd Meeting at the Balkan Gateway Interdisciplinary Conference - Cultural Diversity and Identification - Religion, Nation, Ideology was held on the 5th of November. On the 6th of November, the Association for Disseminating Scientific Knowledge of Pécs and Baranya organized a scientific lecture on Astronomy in the ancient times, and on the 9th of November, on the 150th anniversary of Madách's Tragedy of Man.

The Hungarian Science Festival has by now become an almost traditional serial of programs, similar to the World Science Festival in New York, the next events of which will be held from the 2nd till the 6th of June in 2010. In 2003, the Hungarian Parliament enacted a law ruling that the festival, aiming to promote the importance of sciences, should be held on the 3rd of November each year, the day on which, in 1825, István Széchenyi offered the annual income of his properties for the foundation of a Hungarian Academic Association, thereby laying the foundations of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The international scientific conference of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences called World Science Forum was also held at this time (5th of Nov - 7th of Nov), and its topic was "Knowledge and Future".

(http://www.felvi.hu/for_foreigners/news/academic_gala)