

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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Museum of the Moving Image presents Open Worlds: Science, free hands-on programs exploring the intersection of science and cinema

Events kick off Mother's Day weekend, May 10, with a celebration of Mother Earth and the third kingdom of life: fungi, and continues through October 2025



Illustration by Matteo Farinella & Pamela Parker

Astoria, New York, May 8, 2025 — The science of monster movies; an urban nature stroll; filmmaking and soil testing—these are some of the hands-on, fun activities that combine big ideas in science and the moving image, presented as part of **Open Worlds: Science**. This series of seven free events, presented by Museum of the Moving Image from May through October 2025, invites the public to explore the world in unexpected ways through unique experiences, screenings, and live talks.

Open Worlds: Science is supported by the Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division.

The program kicks off Saturday, May 10, with **Love Your Mother (Earth) Mushroom Party**, a family-friendly afternoon that includes a neighborhood walk exploring local fungi; an artist-led mushroom drawing workshop; a presentation on fungal microscopy;

and the New York City premiere of ***Fungi: Web of Life***, the 2023 short film by Australian filmmaker Joseph Nizeti, featuring noted mycologist Merlin Sheldrake and narrated by Björk.

This series is part of the second edition of the Museum's Open Worlds initiative, which invites the public to use MoMI's first-floor space and courtyard for free during regular hours. This accessible, 15,500-square-foot, climate-controlled, WiFi-enabled area serves as a community resource for visitors of all ages looking to convene, find creative inspiration, learn about and experience new media technologies, or participate in many diverse programming selections.

See below for the confirmed schedule of programs and check back for updates at movingimage.org/series/open-worlds-science.

SCHEDULE FOR OPEN WORLDS: SCIENCE, MAY 10–OCTOBER, 2025

All programs are free to attend and take place at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Ave, Astoria, NY. Reservations are not required but encouraged. Learn more at <https://movingimage.org/series/open-worlds-science/>

Love Your Mother (Earth) Mushroom Party

Saturday, May 10, 12:30-4:30 p.m.

Join MoMI, the New York Mycological Society, and more special guests on Mother's Day weekend to celebrate Mother Earth and observe the third category of life: fungi. The afternoon includes a neighborhood mushroom walk followed by an ID session; a drop-in mushroom drawing workshop—make a card for your mother!—with botanical illustrator Caro Arévalo; a presentation on fungal microscopy by software engineer and community biologist Sally Kong; and the New York City premiere of ***Fungi: Web of Life*** (2023. Dir. Joseph Nizeti. Australia), featuring noted mycologist Merlin Sheldrake and narrated by Björk.

Creature Feature: The Science of Monster Movies and Community Filmmaking

Sunday, June 8, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Join us for live storytelling about the weird and wonderful creatures in monster movies and real biology. A paleontologist contrasts the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* to their feathered, paleontologically accurate—and much scarier—real-life counterparts. An entomologist describes how the *Alien* Xenomorph's famous chestbuster scene owes significant debt to the real-world horrors of the emergence of parasitoid wasp larvae from a caterpillar. Presenters include **Dr. Aki Watanabe**, paleontologist, New York Institute of Technology; **RJ Millena**, entomologist, American Museum of Natural History; **Tom McNamara**, science filmmaker; and **Erin Chapman**, Assistant Director of New Media, American Museum of Natural History. This afternoon also features a **community animation project**: visitors are invited to color animation cels for a scientifically correct monster movie. The final collaborative short films will be shared on the Museum's social channels following the event.

MoMI in the Garden

Saturday, July 12, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Summer is a time of abundance in the plant world—gardens burst with fruit, vegetables, and flowers. Celebrate the season with a series of short films that transport you to the farm, including Student Academy Award winner ***Keeper***, directed by Hannah Rafkin, about a Bronx beekeeper and his daughter who care for their hives, and each other, in the wake of a life-threatening cancer diagnosis. The afternoon also includes soil testing with urban soil expert **Dr. Perl Engdorf** of Pace University. Bring a sample from your own yard for analysis for heavy metals, pH and soil quality, and receive actionable tools to improve the land, and to acknowledge NYC’s “legacy of lead.” Plus, conversations about composting and the beautification of cities through gardening continue throughout the day, culminating with a reception in MoMI’s courtyard, where **Boogie Down Bronx Honey** will be passing out samples.

Magic Hours: Engineering Lighting for Cinema

Saturday, August 2, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Presented in partnership with the Lewis Latimer House Museum

Lighting can tell a story, just like the many other visual elements of filmmaking. Join the Museum for an exploration of the science and artistry of light, with a look at the history of electric light and its contemporary use in film and television. The afternoon includes a tour spotlighting MoMI’s collection of lights and the work of lighting designers. Then, in partnership with the Lewis Latimer House Museum, guests of all ages can build paper circuits in homage to Latimer, an African American inventor, Queens resident, and an innovator of the electric lightbulb. Watch a screening of the short film ***Let There Be Light***, a Victorian-era love story based on the life of Latimer directed by Jon K. Jones. Then, join a conversation about the impact of BIPOC lighting innovation and lighting designers for film and television, moderated by **Edward Bartholomew**, of Bartholomew Lighting, and founder of BUILD, an affinity space for Black lighting professionals. Afterwards, experience New York City’s own magic hour—a reception in the courtyard in the moments before sunset when the light is perfect and beautiful.

Field Report: The Filmmaker & the Scientist

Sunday, September 7, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Presented in partnership with Pioneer Works and the Institute for the Conservation of Tropical Environments at Stony Brook University

What is the role of the filmmaker in scientific research and conservation? Expedition films show us the work of scientists in the field and document important behavior. But does adding more humans to the scene disrupt animal activity, or damage the environment? This Open Worlds: Science afternoon features a screening of ***Ivohiboro, The Lost Forest***, about renowned American primatologist **Dr. Patricia Wright**, as she leads a 30-day expedition into a pristine tropical forest in the rugged plains of Southeast Madagascar, one of the last primary forests on the planet. Following the screening, Dr.

Wright and other scientists featured in the film will discuss their work and their collaborations with filmmaking teams, in conversation with other notable filmmakers.

Sonic Sunset

Performance produced by Media Art Xploration (MAXlive)

Saturday, September 27, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Sonic Sunset transports the audience with sound like you have never heard before, with light or its absence as your pathfinder, and a scientist's field notes as your guide. Enter three ecosystems and join the conversation as the inhabitants struggle, provide resistance, and prove resilient. Featuring bioacoustic recordings of whales in Arctic waters, orangutans in the rainforests of Borneo, and birds of India's Western Ghats.

Don't miss this sneak peek of a new work from the award-winning creative team of Nick Ryan Studios, Kay Matschullat, and Kameron Neal. With vocals by Eliza Bagg, of the Grammy-winning experimental vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. The performance will be followed by a talk-back about bioacoustics including scientists whose work is featured in the performance: Dr. Michelle Fournet, Dr. Wendy Erb, and Dr. Vijay Ramesh, in conversation with *Sonic Sunset* composer and sound designer Nick Ryan.

Presented in partnership with Media Art Xploration (MAXlive). *Sonic Sunset* is produced by Media Art Xploration (MAXlive), with presentation at Museum of the Moving Image. Media Art Xploration is supported in part by Simons Foundation International and administered by the Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division. Additional Funding provided by the Ettinger foundation, public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the generous support of our individual donors.

The October event will be announced at a later date.

About the Simons Foundation

This program is supported by the Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division. The Simons Foundation's mission is to advance the frontiers of research in mathematics and the basic sciences. Since its founding in 1994 by Jim and Marilyn Simons, the foundation has been a champion of basic science through grant funding, support for research and public engagement. We believe in asking big questions and providing sustained support to researchers working to unravel the mysteries of the universe. The Simons Foundation's Science, Society and Culture division seeks to provide opportunities for people to forge a connection to science — whether for the first time or a lifetime. Through our initiatives, we work to inspire a feeling of awe and wonder, foster connections between people and science and support environments that provide a sense of belonging.

About Museum of the Moving Image

Founded in 1985, MoMI celebrates the history, art, technology, and future of the moving image in all of its forms. Located in Astoria, New York, the Museum presents exhibitions;

screenings; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, and creative leaders; and education programs. It houses the nation's most comprehensive collection of moving image artifacts and screens over 500 films annually. Its exhibitions—including the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* and *The Jim Henson Exhibition*—are noted for their integration of material objects, interactive experiences, and audiovisual presentations. For more information about MoMI, visit movingimage.org.

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Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation).