

Far Away Land Art Fest Will Bring in Thousands

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July 24, 2014



Visitors relaxing in a land art piece.

When painter Nikolai Polissky and architect Vasily Schetinin moved to the village of Nikola-Lenivets, a four-hour drive from Moscow, in 1989, they did not know that 15 years later, thousands would head to Russia's largest land art festival, Archstoyanie, which runs Friday to Sunday.

"Most of all, I was struck by the primordial, untouched natural beauty around Nikola-Lenivets," Polissky once told *The Moscow Times*, "When you walk out onto the high bank of the [river] Ugra, it takes your breath away, and you understand what it was like 1,000, or 3,000 years ago."

The verdant landscape is now dotted with weird and wonderful wooden sculptures from past festivals and new ones set up for this year's event.

Visitors get to wander round the huge area checking out new objects. One of the most eagerly awaited is "Lazy Ziggurat" built from bark beetle infected timber, apparently a message to dying forests, and art performances such as Jean-Luc Brisson's degustation of clouds in the Cucumber-Compost area. The festival winds down with an eclectic music program, featuring Kira Lao, a Novgorod musician who has been compared to Beth Gibbons, which runs till early Sunday morning. This year there is also a kids camp at the festival.

Detailed instructions on how to get to the festival can be found at arch.stoyanie.ru. Tickets cost 1,000 rubles (\$29).

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Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/07/24/far-away-land-art-fest-will-bring-in-thousands-a37652>