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Durham Lumiere attracts 160,000 lightshow fans

20 November 2023

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Matthew Andrews

Liquid Geometry by Javier Riera at Lumiere 2023

About 160,000 people attended County Durham's Lumiere festival this year.

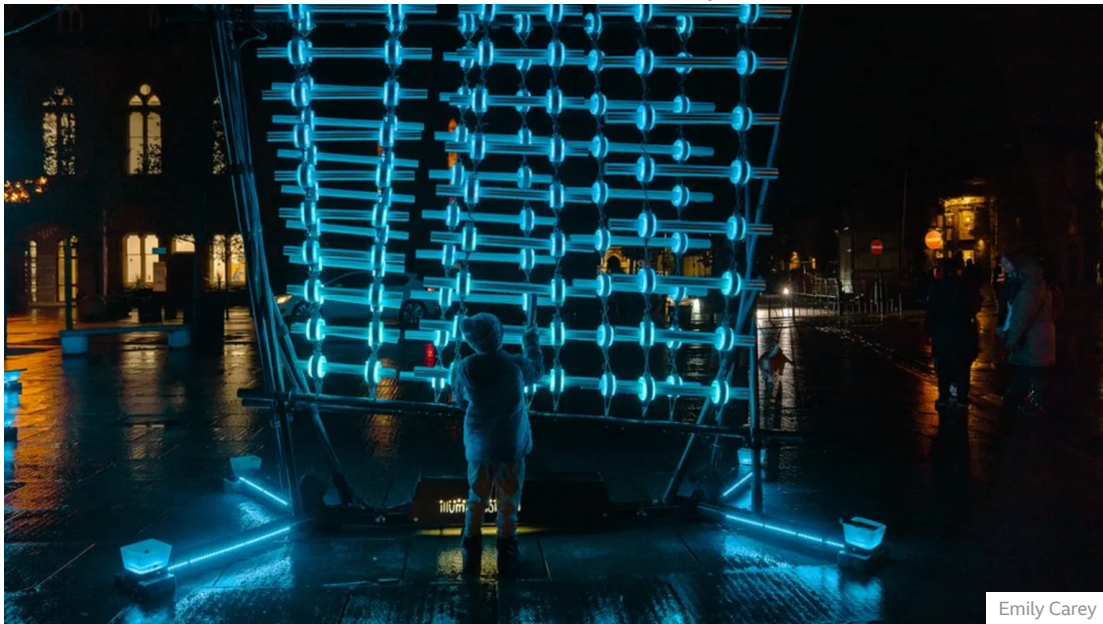
The light festival took place over four nights and saw 120,000 people receive free tickets to the art exhibition.

Councillor Amanda Hopgood said: "You only need to see the expressions on people's faces to know how much they've enjoyed this year's Lumiere."

The event sparked controversy by including work by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei after he **posted comments** about the Israel-Gaza conflict online.

An exhibition of his work in London was cancelled following his social media post which suggested that the "sense of guilt around the persecution of the Jewish people" had been transferred and held against the Arab world.

Despite the row, his Illuminated Bottle Rack was displayed at Durham Cathedral.



Illumaphonium by Michael Davis

Lumiere displayed 40 works by artists from 15 countries, including Chila Burman and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Ms Hopgood, who is leader of Durham County Council, said: "It's an event that always brings so much fun, wonder and joy into people's lives and somehow it manages to get better and better each time."

The number of people taking part in the festival, which takes place every two years, had "increased significantly", the council said.

About 1,800 local residents and schoolchildren took part in 65 workshops and online art submissions.

One of the pieces that used public creations was On Blank Pages by Luzinterruptus, which included thousands of illuminated notebooks for visitors to share their thoughts about justice.

The exhibition was held across Durham and Bishop Auckland and was organised by arts producers Artichoke.

Artistic director Helen Marriage said: "Each edition of Lumiere is an opportunity to create an outdoor art gallery on a grand scale and, for me, this year's was the most exciting and impactful yet."

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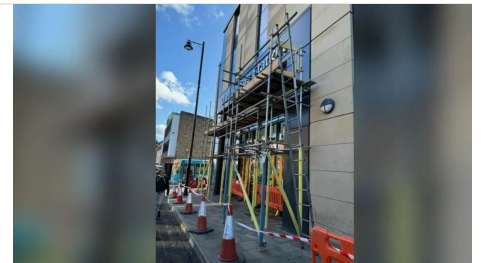


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