

HES-SO at Paléo: celebrating 20 years of innovation aboard a mysterious spaceship

To mark 20 years of partnership with Paléo Festival, HES-SO invites the public to step aboard the mysterious, science-fiction-inspired spaceship “Enigmatik”. Created by more than one hundred students from fourteen HES-SO schools, the immersive exhibit combines interactive experiences, concerts by up-and-coming musicians and spectacular aerial performances, all the while challenging senses and held beliefs.

For 20 years, Paléo Festival has been a testing ground for HES-SO students in Switzerland, offering the unique opportunity to design, build and bring to life a monumental piece at the heart of the country's largest music festival. More than 2,000 students have participated in this community project so far. They created a suspended forest, a volcano, a green city, a coral reef and many other installations that have since become landmarks on the Plaine de l'Asse.

An encounter of the third kind

For this anniversary edition, the students decided to take to the skies and maybe to venture out even further. Enigmatik invites the public to step aboard a mysterious spacecraft from another world.

Light effects, intriguing shapes and immersive atmospheres create a space in which familiar reference points blur and curiosity is constantly sparked. The activities invite visitors to challenge their beliefs and ask whether their senses can be trusted. How do we read the emotions and messages around us? And what if the things we think we know still reveal unsuspected dimensions?

The event will also feature aerial performances by Moon Music. Suspended from a helium-filled balloon, the performers will move fluidly above the audience at the heart of the installation. The airy, adaptable scenography transforms the space into a poetic and immersive live performance, with bodies that seem to defy gravity.

A lively space

As every year, the “Face Nord by HES-SO” stage will be at the heart of the space, featuring emerging talent from the HES-SO's schools of music. Throughout the week, six groups will take audiences on a musical journey ranging from pop and cumbia to reimagined Baroque music and electronic soundscapes.

Visitors will also get a chance to rediscover works from the past 20 years in a playful retrospective showcasing how far the project has come since HES-SO first took part in the Paléo Festival.



A project led by the next generation

Students participate in the HES-SO project at Paléo entirely on a volunteer basis. This year, more than one hundred students from fourteen universities combined their skills in engineering, design, social work, health, management and music to bring Enigmatik to life.

This interdisciplinary collaboration is one of the project's greatest strengths and reflects the DNA of HES-SO: learning to work together, testing ideas against reality and finding creative solutions to the challenges ahead.

"For 20 years, this project has offered our students a rare opportunity: the chance to test their ideas under real conditions in front of thousands of festivalgoers. Enigmatik is the result of that confidence and of the remarkable creativity of the next generation," says Luciana Vaccaro, Rector of HES-SO.

Interviews with students or supervisors, as well as media visits or filming arrangements, can be organised on request.

The full list of student projects, the music lineup for the "Face Nord by HES-SO" stage and additional project details are available at <https://www.hes-so.ch/hes-so-a-paleo/edition-2026> (in French only).

Information on the HES-SO at Paléo project

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