

LUCERNE FESTIVAL



LUCERNE FESTIVAL ARK NOVA

The inflatable concert hall is coming to Europe from Japan for the first time ever and will be in operation from 4 to 14 September on the grounds of the lakeside Lido meadow at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne.

Lucerne, 11 March 2025. The Ark Nova will be making its first appearance in Switzerland starting on 4 September as part of Lucerne Festival's offerings. This unique mobile concert hall was developed by the British-Indian artist Sir Anish Kapoor, the late Japanese star architect Arata Isozaki, and Lucerne Festival's Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. The Ark Nova was conceived in 2011 with the intention of contributing to the cultural reconstruction of northeast Japan in the wake of the catastrophic tsunami that struck the region. It was constructed and put into operation at four different times in Japan between 2013 and 2017. A fifth edition will now take place in Lucerne. Lucerne Festival is bringing the Ark Nova to Europe in cooperation with the Swiss Museum of Transport. This impressive work of art, which is made of elastic plastic tarpaulin, will be constructed on the Lido meadow on the shore of Lake Lucerne.

For an eleven-day period, the Ark Nova will serve as a venue for a variety of concerts and events for audiences of all age groups, in addition to being open to tours. These are meant to complement Lucerne Festival's high-caliber classical programming, which will take place at the same time, until 14 September, at the KKL Luzern on the opposite side of the lake.

The Ark Nova: From Concept to Execution

In the aftermath of the disaster on 11 March 2011 that took place in the Tōhoku region of Japan, architect Arata Isozaki and artist Sir Anish Kapoor, together with Michael Haefliger and concert agent Masahide Kajimoto, came up with the idea of using music to give people courage, hope, and reassurance as they set about reconstructing the region. To this end, Sir Anish Kapoor and Arata Isozaki designed the world's first mobile and inflatable concert hall, the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova. It was first set up and put into operation in Matsushima in 2013, and subsequently in Sendai in 2014, in Fukushima in 2015, and, finally, in the center of Tokyo in 2017. This summer, the Ark Nova can be experienced outside Japan for the first time.

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The Ark Nova: Concert Hall as an Object of Art and Walk-In Sculpture

Arata Isozaki designed the mobile concert hall as a hall comprising several parts. The inflatable shell, designed by Sir Anish Kapoor, is made of elastic, 0.6-mm-thick PVC material, so that the hall can be easily dismantled, transported, and re-erected at different locations. The concert hall will be able to accommodate up to 300 people in Lucerne using flexible seating. The material was cut and welded together in such a way that the walk-in sculpture does not require any additional conventional supporting structure when it is inflated. For visitors, the effect is impressive: they find themselves immersed in an organic space that conveys a sense of security and warmth due to its round, soft forms and special color. The effect of the color varies both inside and outside, depending on the time of day and degree of sunlight.

The Ark Nova to Dock at the Swiss Museum of Transport on Lake Lucerne

The Ark Nova will be shipped from Tokyo to Lucerne, commencing a two-month-long sea voyage to Lucerne in May 2025. The Swiss Museum of Transport is responsible for the construction and logistics, while Lucerne Festival is organizing the artistic programming. Additional details about all related events and ticket sales will be announced in May 2025.

Photos may be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos

Contacts for Press and Public Relations

Nina Steinhart, Head of Public Relations | n.steinhart@lucernefestival.ch | T +41 (0)41 226 44 43

Sereina Kubli | s.kubli@lucernefestival.ch | T +41 (0)41 226 44 59

www.lucernefestival.ch