

Celebrations of the international quantum year

Toni Feder

Events held around the world have recognized the past, present, and future of quantum science and technology.

Between the kickoff for the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology (IYQ) in February 2025 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and the closing event this month in Ghana, more than 1000 quantum-related activities large and small have taken place around the globe. They have included conferences, public lectures, hackathons, theatrical performances, art exhibitions, and poetry and photo contests.

The goal of the IYQ was to create awareness and get the gears turning for building a more inclusive and responsible quantum ecosystem, says Claudia Fracchiolla, head of public engagement at the American Physical Society. “I think it’s achieved that.”

The following photos provide a taste of the activities that scientists, institutions, governments, and others organized over the past year.

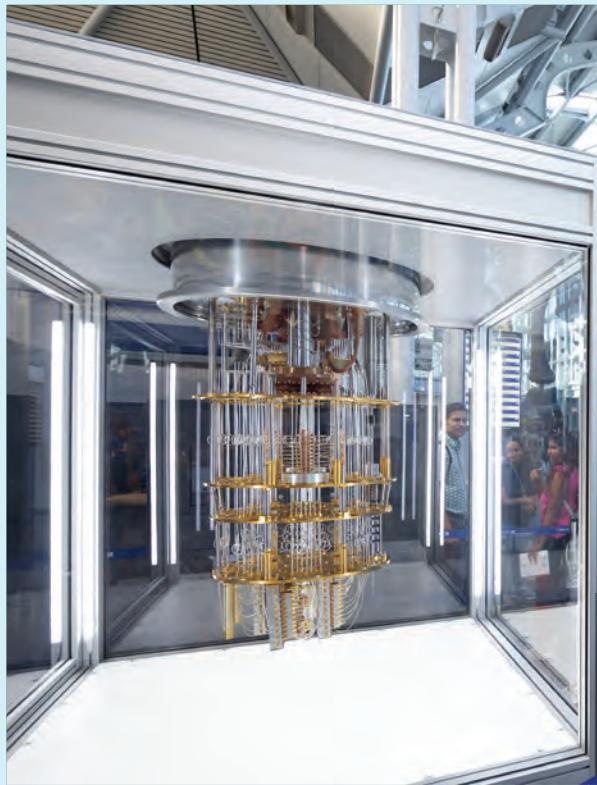
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The public Quantum Jubilee kicked off a weeklong festival that took place during the American Physical Society's Global Physics Summit in Anaheim, California, in March 2025. The performances included *Quantum Voyages*, an original piece by Smitha Vishveshwara and Latrelle Bright that follows the adventures of two explorers in the quantum realm: In one scene (top left), they find themselves inside a minuscule metallic crystal and battling a Fermi sea of electrons. (Photo by James Gross.) In another (top right), the spirit of Erwin Schrödinger shares the conundrum of his dead-and-alive cat. (Photo by Trity Pourbahrami.) In a performance by Le Petit Cirque (bottom right), acrobats engage in a dance of merging black holes while below them physicists on stage discuss astrophysical discoveries. (Photo by Katie Clark.) At bottom left, Le Petit Cirque artists perform at the theater entrance. (Photo by James Gross.)

(Design by Masie Chong with artwork adapted from iStock.com artists desifoto, Mironov Konstantin and Ardkyuu.)



A model of the IBM Quantum System One computer is on display at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. Installed in September, it will remain for at least a year. The Scientists, Technologists, and Artists Generating Exploration Center at the University of Chicago created the exhibit in collaboration with IBM and United Airlines. (Photo by Anne Ryan.)



Wave and light experiments were on show at a festival in October at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. (Photo by Evelyn Ayala.)

A debate on quantum mechanics and society held in May was popular with the public in Trieste, Italy. (Photo courtesy of Elisabetta Gregoric, Trieste International Foundation.)





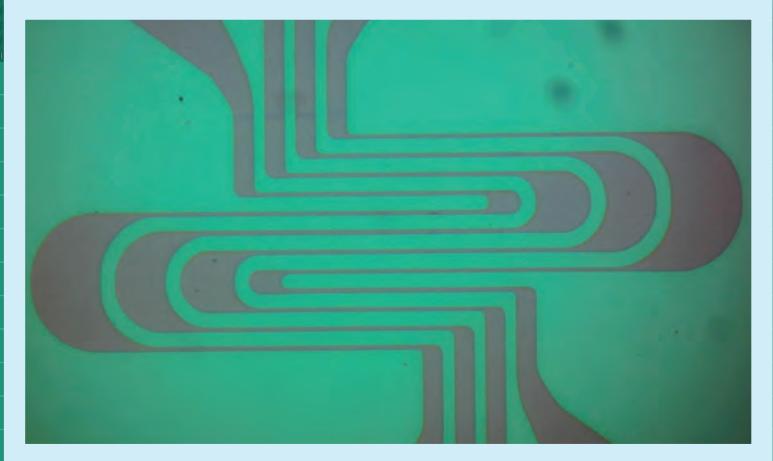
Researchers from Koforidua Technical University in Ghana receive the first-place prize in a contest for quantum innovation. The award was presented in August at the 2025 Africa Regional Conference on Education and Skills Development. (Photo courtesy of ESDEV Foundation Africa.)



Peter Knight, quantum optics and information scientist, looks back on 100 years of quantum science in a keynote talk at the UK Royal Society IYQ opening event in February 2025. (Photo by Louis Barson/Institute of Physics.)

A suitcase carrying a single-photon-emitting artificial atom, during a stop at the Eiffel Tower in Paris (photo by Hélio Huet) and changing hands in Rome (photo by Fabrizio Mercoli). On its journey, known as QuanTour, the suitcase visited laboratories and tourist sights across Europe.





Star Trails (left) juxtaposes a fixed bicycle with streaks of starlight to represent movement in space and time. It took first place in the At a Glance category of a quantum-themed photo contest organized by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics. (Photo by Vishwesh Tiwari.) To represent progress for photon-based quantum technologies, *A Microscopic Detector Toward Quantum Innovation* (above) depicts a superconducting microstrip detector. It took third place in the category Beyond Our Eyes. (Photo by Pasquale Ercolano.)



Rajamani Vijayaraghavan (seated) receives the Pancharatnam Prize for Excellence in Quantum Science and Technology at an IYQ event in Bengaluru, India, last summer. (Photo courtesy of Quantum India Bengaluru Secretariat, Department of S&T, GoK.)



Panelists at a discussion for the public on quantum science and technology in April. The event was organized by the Nepal Physical Society and Rajarshi Janak University and hosted by the Monastic College of Management and Technology in Janakpur, Nepal. (Photo by Hari Shankar Mallik.)

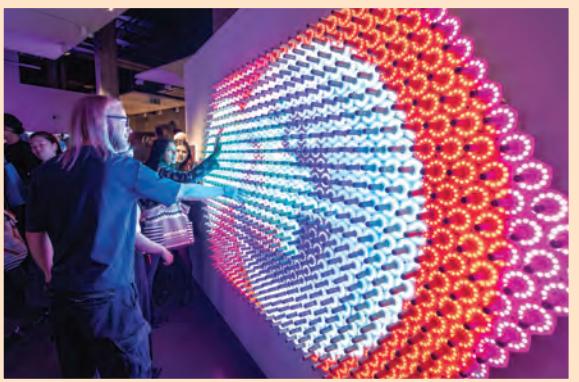


Quantum Unplugged hosted members of Geneva's diplomatic community at CERN in May. The initiative explored quantum mechanics and quantum computing. (Photo courtesy of the Open Quantum Institute.)

A consortium that includes the University of Geneva, CERN, and Rolex launches the Geneva Quantum Network on Quantum Industry Day in October. (Photo by Louis Nausch.)



Undergraduate physics student Aya Abdel-Hayy presents her painting, *Savoring the Universe—Can the Infinite Be Contained Within the Finite?*, at Mind-Blowing Physics, a day of hands-on activities celebrating IYQ and the International Day of Light at the University of Jordan in July. (Photo courtesy of the LAMBDA Physics Group/University of Jordan.)



The art exhibition *Quantum Untangled* at Science Gallery London runs through late March 2026. It includes (from top) *Quantum Jungle*, by Robin Baumgarten (photo by George Torode) and *The Blind Proliferation* and *Ringdown*, both by Conrad Shawcross (photos, courtesy of the University of Nottingham, by Nick Dunmur and Richard Ivey, respectively).



In honor of IYQ, MIT undergraduate Marc Vidal aims to levitate a person with a device he is building using superconductors and magnets on a track. As of press time, he had levitated a 4.6 kg block of copper with a prototype device. (Photo by David Fischer, MIT.)





Physics Nobel laureates Frank Wilczek (left) and Duncan Haldane (right) and IYQ steering committee member Smitha Vishveshwara (center) cut quantum-themed cakes at the Quantum Connections summer school in Högberga Gård near Stockholm. (Photo by Antti Niemi.) School activities also included summer solstice festivities. (Photo by Smitha Vishveshwara.)



At a quantum science slam in Berlin on World Quantum Day in April, participants gave short, entertaining synopses of their work. (Photo by Mauro Franceschetti, courtesy of the Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft and Humboldt Innovation.)



Artists, engineers, policymakers, and cultural leaders gathered in Dunedin, New Zealand, for a global IYQ event in July that focused on the intersection of art and quantum science and technology. The event kicked off with a Maori ceremony welcoming participants to the ancestral land of the Kāi Tahu tribe. Participants went through a traditional gateway (left, photo by Omar Costa Hamido) and convened in the tribal meeting house (right, photo by Jessa Barder). The hybrid event included talks, a roundtable discussion, and a presentation on the synergies between local indigenous knowledge and quantum theory.

