



For Immediate Release

National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath) Celebrates “35th Anniversary of the Prevention of World War III” by Honoring Stanislav Petrov, Soviet Officer Who Prevented Nuclear War and Saved the World by Questioning Algorithms that Falsely Indicated Early Warnings of an Incoming Missile Strike from the United States

Evening features Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of Nobel Peace Prize-winning “International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons,” and mathematician and author Hannah Fry

Tuesday, September 25 at 6 p.m.

New York, NY (September 24, 2018), The [National Museum of Mathematics \(MoMath\)](#) will celebrate tomorrow night, at 6 p.m., the 35th anniversary of the prevention of World War III by honoring Stanislav Petrov, a Soviet officer who prevented a third World War and saved humanity by questioning military algorithms that falsely indicated early warnings of an incoming missile strike from the United States. The event, held at the Museum located on 11 East 26th Street, marks what would have been the 35th anniversary of World War III and will feature Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of Nobel Peace Prize-winning [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN) and mathematician and author Hannah Fry.

Author and mathematician Hannah Fry will host the event at MoMath and discuss her new book [Hello World!: Being Human in the Age of Algorithms](#). Her talk will also honor the heroism of Stanislav Petrov who is prominently featured in her book as a prime example of the risks of automating human decision making. Fry’s book looks at the algorithms behind our increasing reliance on pre-defined, quantitative decision-making rules and how they raise provocative questions about what we want our lives to look like.

In the book, Fry explores the events that took place on September 26, 1983 when Soviet Union duty officer Stanislav Petrov questioned military algorithms that indicated early-warnings of an incoming missile strike from the United States. Computer readouts suggested several missiles had been launched and called for the Soviet military to respond with a nuclear attack of their own. Petrov, whose job it was to register enemy missile launches, decided not to report the warnings and instead dismissed them as a false alarm. After an investigation, Petrov discovered that the Soviet satellites had mistaken the sun’s reflection in the clouds for the start of an American missile salvo, an error that, if left unchecked, could have sparked a destructive global war.

“It is a privilege to honor Stanislav Petrov and his heroic actions at MoMath,” said Cindy Lawrence, Executive Director of MoMath. “Hannah Fry’s new book offers a closer look at how algorithms shape our society and highlights the importance of understanding and challenging algorithms, which, in Petrov’s case, saved the world.”

Hannah Fry is an associate professor of the mathematics of cities at the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at University College London. She works alongside a unique mix of physicists, mathematicians, computer scientists, architects, and geographers to study the patterns in human behavior. In addition to her academic work, Fry is an experienced public speaker, giving conference keynotes and bringing the joy of math into theaters and schools. Fry's mathematical expertise has led to her regular appearance on radio programs in the UK including on her long running BBC Radio 4 show, "The Curious Cases of Rutherford and Fry," and the development of several BBC documentaries.

About the National Museum of Mathematics

The National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath) strives to enhance public understanding and perception of mathematics in daily life. Currently celebrating its fifth anniversary, MoMath has reached more than 1.5 million New Yorkers and visitors from around the world.

The only math museum in North America, MoMath fills a critical demand around the country and worldwide for hands-on math programming, offering a space where the math-challenged, as well as math enthusiasts of all backgrounds and levels of understanding can enjoy the infinite and beautiful world of mathematics through more than 37 unique, state-of-the-art, interactive exhibits.

In addition to MoMath's home in New York City, Museum exhibitions and content are currently featured in Singapore, Brazil, Germany, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

MoMath received the 2016 Communications Award for Public Outreach from the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics. The Museum was awarded the bronze 2013 MUSE Award for Education and Outreach by the American Alliance of Museums. MoMath has been recognized as the Most Fascinating Museum in New York State by the TripAdvisor vacation site, and hailed as "Best Museum for Kids" by *New York Magazine*.

MoMath, located at 11 East 26th Street on the north side of popular Madison Square Park in Manhattan, is open seven days a week, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. For more information, visit momath.org.

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