

The sky's the limit at Geneva inventions show

April 15 2016, by Marie-Noelle Blessig



An invention by South Korean inventor Lee Ae Youn, a simple QR code printed on a shoe that carries parents' contact details of a lost child, shown at the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva, on April 14, 2016

Shoes that can reunite lost toddlers with their parents and a morphing sofa designed for spur of the moment conjugal relations are among the centrepieces at this year's Geneva inventions show.

More than 750 exhibitors from 48 countries have come together in Switzerland this week for the world's largest event dedicated to new

creations.

The shoe for infants emblazoned with a "QR" barcode containing parent contact details and readable by smartphones in the event the child gets lost is the brainchild of South Korean inventor Lee An Youn.

"The QR code shoe is one way of preventing our children getting lost. It's cheap, it's quick and it's easy to use," she said.

Gerard Sermier, press officer for the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva, says the annual fair still has something special to offer even though the Internet has made many of the items easily accessible.

"But here, in one place, you meet inventors from across the world and you can speak directly to them," he said.

As many as 59,000 visitors are expected to stream through the doors of the vast Palexpo exhibition centre in the grounds of Geneva airport this year. Almost half are there on business.

"There are professionals, investors interested in buying patents or industrialists researching new products," said Sermier.



Italian inventor Mauro Cavagna shows his invention named 'Desire', a sofa designed to give greater comfort during intimate encounters, at the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva, on April 14, 2016

Patent deals worth tens of millions of dollars are sealed at the show every year.

A Romanian team became millionaires after dazzling judges at the 2013 edition with a scanner capable of detecting contraband merchandise or hidden weapons on aircraft, winning the show's grand prize. They have since started work on a factory in Saint-Imier, western Switzerland.

Dedicated 'love room'

According to organisers, the show has its best years ahead of it.



Member of an inventor team, Sorawat Chivapreecha of Thailand, shows a durian fruit placed onto a microwave sensor for maturity inspection, at the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva, on April 14, 2016

"Half of the items and technologies that we will be using in 10 years have yet to be invented," they said in a press release.

The show has particular cachet in the developing world where many governments subsidise the travel costs of their best and brightest to ensure their countries are well represented. More than half of exhibitors are from the Middle East and Asia.

European inventors are under-represented, put off by Geneva's sky-high prices aggravated by the strength of the Swiss franc and without the advantage of state subsidies to offset their costs.

Undeterred, a French inventor is this year exhibiting an innovative neck brace for use by mobile hair salons while washing clients' hair in their homes.



Adrian Tomoiaga of Romania, a member of a team of inventors, poses with an autonomous robot for the inspection and maintenance of large-sized pipes, seen at the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva, on April 14, 2016

And for those who hate taking out the rubbish, a Thai inventor has brought the answer to Geneva.

The device helps householders to tie a tight knot on even the fullest bin liner, reducing the frequency of rubbish bag changes.

But one of the most intriguing items on display this year is the "Desire"

love-making couch.

The capsule-like red padded platform can be adjusted for maximum comfort during intimate encounters and, according to its Italian creator Mauro Cavagna, could prove to be a breakthrough for people with disabilities and back pain.

The contraption, which resembles a dentist's chair, is even fitted with hand grips and movable supports to limit the physical effort required during sex.

But due to its cumbersome proportions, its creator recommends installing the device in a dedicated "love room".

The International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva finishes on Sunday.

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Citation: The sky's the limit at Geneva inventions show (2016, April 15) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-04-sky-limit-geneva.html>

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