What to expect from Sony’s May 24 not-E3 livestream

Enlarge / A screenshot from the first *Spider-Man* PlayStation game.

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E3 might be canceled this year, but the big gaming companies are forging ahead regardless—either as part of Summer Games Fest or with their own presentations and livestreams. Arguably the top dog these days is Sony, which will host what it claims to be a meaty “PlayStation Showcase” on May 24.

The show will last more than an hour, making it quite a bit longer than the usual PlayStation State of Play livestreams, which are usually 30 minutes or so. While Sony has mostly moved beyond the old industry marketing cadence of centering heavily on E3 every June, this looks to be as close to an E3 presser as Sony will offer this year.

Sony promises “a wealth of new games” for PlayStation 5 and PlayStation VR2 from a wide range of development studios. “Expect a glimpse at several new creations from PlayStation Studios, as well as spellbinding games from our third-party partners and indie creators,” a blog post announcing the event says.

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Of course, the announcement didn’t say which games to expect, but we have a few educated guesses based on the expected release windows of previously announced titles. You can almost

surely expect Insomniac Games' *Spider-Man 2*, which is slated to be the platform's big fall or holiday exclusive. Likewise, Insomniac is working on *Wolverine* for a later date, and we've seen almost nothing of the game to date—this could be the perfect time to show it.

It's also just a few weeks before the expected ship date of (likely timed) PS5 exclusive *Final Fantasy XVI*, so another glimpse at that one is possible—though we've seen a lot of it already. *Death Stranding 2* is a possibility, too, and Sucker Punch is known to be working on a *Ghost of Tsushima* sequel—though it might be too early to show gameplay from either of those.

Based on the timing, we wouldn't be surprised to see teasers for *Diablo IV* and the PS5 version of *Honkai: Star Rail*, either. PSVR2 remasters of recent VR classics also seem likely (*Beat Saber*, anyone?).

As noted above, the blog post promises new IPs, too, so we'll be curious to see what some PlayStation studios without announced titles might unveil, like Bend Studio, Bluepoint Games, or Housemarque.

The stream will start broadcasting at 4 pm ET on May 24. Sony has streamed on both YouTube and Twitch in past events of this format.

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French painters inspire new

insights into the physics of soap bubbles

Enlarge / Still life of a boy blowing a bubble (circa 1734) by 18th century French painter Jean Siméon Chardin.
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French painters Jean Siméon Chardin and Édouard Manet both created well-known paintings that depicted children blowing bubbles through straw-like tubes, albeit more than a century apart. Those realistic depictions of bubble dynamics have now inspired two physicists at the Université Grenoble Alpes in France, who conducted their own soap bubble experiments to learn more about the early formation stages of bubble dynamics. They describe their experimental results in a forthcoming paper to be published on May 22 in the journal Physical Review Fluids.

Bubbles may seem frivolous, but there is some complex underlying physics, and their study has long been serious science. In the 1800s, Belgian physicist Joseph Plateau outlined four basic laws of surface tension that determine the structure of soapy films. Surface tension is why bubbles are round; that shape has the least surface area for a given volume, so it requires the least energy to maintain. Over time, that shape will look more like a soccer ball than a perfect sphere as gravity pulls the liquid downward ("coarsening").

More recently, French physicists in 2016 worked out a

theoretical model for the exact mechanism for how soap bubbles form when jets of air hit a soapy film. The researchers found that bubbles only formed above a certain speed, which depends on the width of the jet of air. In 2018, we reported how mathematicians at New York University’s Applied Math Lab had fine-tuned the method for blowing the perfect bubble based on a series of experiments with thin, soapy films. In 2019, physicists at MIT and Princeton University demonstrated how to develop spherical bubbles uniformly by confining them in a narrow tube. Something about the interactions between the walls of the tube and the bubble makes the whole system less sensitive to irregularities in the initial conditions.