



Fine Arts Center

COLORADO SPRINGS

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Bemis School of Art
Performing Arts

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NASA | ART: 50 YEARS OF EXPLORATION The FAC takes a look at exploration from multiple angles

COLORADO SPRINGS (Nov. 15, 2009) – The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center will present **NASA | ART: 50 Years of Exploration**, Dec. 19 – March 7, 2010, organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in cooperation with the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum. An Opening Celebration will be held Friday, Dec. 18, 5-8 p.m.

This exhibition has special relevance to the community given the large number of aerospace industries based here. Along with the many great works of art in this exhibition, the FAC has a tremendous line-up of ancillary programming from an innovative, site-specific video installation, to side exhibits by Colorado Springs legend **Eric Bransby** and Denver artists **Monica Petty Aiello** and **Vance Kirkland** as well as a film series, lectures, music, special Bemis classes and workshops and an educational interpretive space in the galleries.

NASA’s historic triumphs and pioneering legacy are well known to millions, but the inspiring rocket launches, moon landings and planetary explorations also have had an impact on the imaginations of America’s leading artists. “NASA | ART” features nearly five decades of creations by artists as diverse as **Norman Rockwell**, **Andy Warhol**, **Annie Leibovitz**, **Nam June Paik**, and **William Wegman**, featuring 73 works of art including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture and other art forms and media. These works—ranging from the illustrative to the abstract—offer unparalleled insight into the private and personal moments, triumphant victories and tragic accidents that form the storied history of NASA.

For example, in **Henry Caselli**’s “When Thoughts Turned Inward,” the artist captures the serene, almost spiritual moment before takeoff, when an astronaut must prepare mentally for a mission. In **Chakaia Booker**’s “Remembering Columbia,” the tragedy and pain of the lost Space Shuttle Columbia and its crew are transformed in the twisting tire remnants preserved from one of the shuttle’s earlier missions. And **Andy Warhol** melds Buzz Aldrin’s historic steps on the lunar surface with the unbridled exuberance and flashiness of the 1960s in his neon-highlighted “Moonwalk” silkscreen.

In 1962, NASA asked a group of artists to illustrate, interpret and elucidate the space agency’s missions and projects beginning the NASA Art Program. Since then, painters, musicians and conceptual artists have been with NASA every step of the way, strolling along launch pads, training in flight simulators, talking with engineers and technicians and visiting with astronauts before and after their flights.

“Scientists, astronauts, and artists have one important quality in common,” said Smithsonian co-curator Bert Ulrich. “All share the inclination to explore, whether by means of scientific investigation, a mission to the moon, or a paint brush. These works of art provide a historical legacy for the public to behold. After all, art is often an important byproduct of any great era of history, including the space age.”

More Information

More information on the artists and art, plus the latest updates about this exhibition and its ancillary programming can be found at the FAC's special *NASA / ART* website, which is filled with images, videos and links to additional resources: csfineartscenter.org/nasa.html.

The Fine Arts Center will host a special **Opening Celebration on Friday, Dec. 18**; from 5-8 p.m. Admission is \$5 to FAC members and \$15 for non-members. The exhibit will run regular museum hours from Dec. 19 – March 7. Admission is free for FAC members; \$10 for non-members.

Group tours can be arranged by contacting the FAC at 719.477.4345 or at tours@csfineartscenter.org.

NASA / ART: 50 Years of Exploration is sponsored by the El Pomar Foundation, Colorado Springs Independent, Pepsi, Barefoot Wine, 5 Star Bank, USAA and Focus on the Family.

NASA

NASA was established by Congress in 1958 “to provide for research into the problems of flight within and outside the Earth's atmosphere, and for other purposes.” The agency is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with 10 field centers and other facilities across the nation. NASA's mission is to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research. nasa.gov

National Air and Space Museum

The National Air and Space Museum, composed of the flagship building on the National Mall in Washington and the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., is home to the world's finest collection of flight artifacts. From aircraft and space vehicles to engines, art and models, the wide array of the museum's holdings tells the story of the history and technology of air and space exploration. The museum is also a key resource for research into the history, science and technology of aviation and space flight. nasm.si.edu

Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibitions

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at sites.si.edu.

Fine Arts Center

The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, established in 1936, is a privately funded, non-profit art museum, performing arts theatre and arts education center. Built on the foundation of the prestigious Broadmoor Art Academy, the FAC carries the legacy of Colorado's arts and cultural heritage. One of 16 charter members of the American Association of Museums, the FAC offers the best in the world of visual arts via its permanent collection and travelling exhibitions, performing arts through the FAC Theatre Company, and arts education with the Bemis School of Art. The FAC building is considered an architectural landmark in the Rocky Mountain region, designed by John Gaw Meem, and is listed on the National Register for Historical Places. In 2007, the FAC unveiled a \$28.6 million renovation and expansion. For information, visit csfineartscenter.org.

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Mike Laur and Rick Mazzola: *Looking Up*

Steiner Gallery

Looking Up is an exhilarating site-specific video work created for the Fine Arts Center's celebration of space exploration. Laur and Mazzola have created a video installation that will transform the museum's Steiner Family Gallery into an environment that helps restore our attention to what Laur describes as "a tiny slice of the story that's been going on for over 14 billion years. Anchored to the Earth by unyielding gravity and the bonds of life, the heavens are where we go to dream, to imagine ourselves far, far away. Looking up, we all understand, yet we know so little."

Monica Petty Aiello: *Frozen / Inferno*

Seagraves Gallery

The geology of Jupiter's moons Europa and Io inform Denver artist Monica Petty Aiello's *Frozen/Inferno* as well as her dialogues with noted space scientists involved with the Voyager, Galileo, Cassini and New Horizons missions. Aiello's paintings are composed of layer upon layer of mixed-media - constructed like strata to emulate the moons' geomorphology. She uses acrylic, paper, ink, gel, fiber, heat, air, gravity and water in attempts to convey and contrast their fascinating terrain.



Vance Kirkland: *The Mysteries of Space*

North Events Gallery

Vance Kirkland (1904-1981) began his Nebula abstractions in 1954. At the time, Kirkland's paintings were closely aligned with the visual language of Abstract Expressionism and his images of cosmic phenomena were derived more from his imagination than from photographic sources. Kirkland's wonder and respect for humanity's capacity and necessity for exploration found form in his paintings, but he recognized their affinity with scientific inspiration.

"To me, the fun is entirely in creating fantastic designs that I'm able to think could happen

with explosions in the sky and the mysteries of space ... I think it is the unknown things that fascinated me all the way along – to visualize what might have happened billions of years ago as things exploded in the universe. The explosions are still there – the light is only getting here now." – Vance Kirkland

Eric Bransby: *The History of Navigation*

Glass Corridor

In 1968, a year prior to the first moon landing, nationally-renowned Colorado Springs artist Eric Bransby created a 30-foot long mural that depicts significant moments in the history of navigation from nautical voyages to space travel. The mural was originally commissioned for the United States Air Force Planetarium and will be on loan to the Fine Arts Center from the Air Force Academy.

Forbidden Planet (1956)

Tuesday, Jan. 5 | 6 p.m.

Based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, this film features great special effects. When the spaceship lands on a forbidden planet, the crew is threatened by a sinister invisible force. *Forbidden Planet* is one of the most influential science fiction movies ever made. Its space explorers are the models for the crew of *Star Trek's Enterprise*, and the film's robot is clearly the prototype for Robby in *Lost in Space*.

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

Tuesday, Jan. 19

This film is considered by many as one of the greatest films ever made. *2001: A Space Odyssey* earned four Academy Award nominations and won the Oscar for "Best Visual Effects." In 1991, the film was deemed 'culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant' by the U.S. Library of Congress to be select for preservation in The National Film Registry.

For All Mankind (1989)

Tuesday, Feb. 2

The 1990 Oscar-nominated documentary uses footage shot by the Apollo astronauts and talks to them about their experiences. The film won the Grand Prize at the 1988 Sundance Film Festival. By splicing together scenes for various mission, the filmmaker creates a single odyssey narrated by the astronauts themselves.

Triple Family Feature

Saturday, Feb. 6 | 1 p.m.

Wallace and Gromit: A Grand Day Out (1990)

Wallace and his furry pal Gromit find themselves desperate for "a nice bit of Gorgonzola", but their refrigerator's empty and the local cheese shop is closed for a holiday! Undeterred, Wallace comes up with an extreme solution to the cheese shortage: since the moon is made of cheese, he decides to build a rocket ship and blast off for a cheesy lunar picnic! Nominated for an Academy Award in 1990, this 24-minute comedy was created by clay animator Nick Park over a six-year period.

Deep Space Homer (1994) | 1 p.m.

In what is considered one of "The Simpsons" greatest episodes, Homer is recruited to be an NASA astronaut, so the organization will be more appealing to the common man. NASA loved the episode, and astronaut Edward Lu asked for a copy of it to be sent on a supply ship to the International Space Station. The DVD remains there for astronauts to view.

Wall-E (2008) | 3 p.m.

As the last robot left on earth, Wall-E is one small robot who holds the future of earth and mankind in the palm of his metal hand. The Academy Award-winning movie, *Wall-E* is a great family film with a depth of emotion conveyed by a simple robot made so touching by the magic of Pixar animation. Underneath the slapstick comedy and love story is a poignant message about the folly of greed and its potential effects on earth and the human race.

Apollo 13 (1995)

Tuesday, Feb. 16 | 6 p.m.

NASA's worst nightmare turned into one of the space agency's most heroic moments in 1970, when the *Apollo 13* crew was forced to hobble home in a disabled capsule after an explosion seriously damaged the moon-bound spacecraft. Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Paxton star in director Ron Howard's intense, painstakingly authentic docudrama. *Apollo 13* was nominated for nine Academy Award Nominations.

Alien (1979)

Tuesday, March 2 | 6 p.m.

A landmark of science fiction and horror, *Alien* arrived in 1979 an instant classic, offering richly detailed sets, ominous atmosphere, relentless suspense, and a flawless ensemble cast as the crew of the space freighter, who fall prey to a vicious creature. Impeccably directed by Ridley Scott, *Alien* is one of the cinema's most unforgettable nightmares.

[Visit the NASA | ART site for film series details.](#)

NASA | ART: Lecture Series

The Honorable Richard H. Truly, Vice Admiral U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Saturday, Jan. 16 | 2 p.m.

Richard H. Truly's astronaut career included work in NASA's Apollo, Skylab, Apollo-Soyuz and Space Shuttle programs. He lifted off in November 1981 as pilot aboard *Columbia*, the first shuttle to be reflown into space, establishing a world circular orbit altitude record. He commanded *Challenger* in August-September 1983, the first night launch/landing mission of the Space Shuttle program. Following the *Challenger* accident, he was called back to NASA as Associate Administrator for Space Flight in 1986, and led the accident investigation. President Reagan awarded the Presidential Citizen's Medal to Admiral Truly in 1989. Truly's numerous NASA awards include two Distinguished Service Medals, the Outstanding Leadership Medal, the Exceptional Service Medal, and two Space Flight Medals. He is a member of the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame.

Dr. David Grinspoon

Saturday, Jan. 30 | 2 p.m.

Dr. David Grinspoon, PhD., is the Curator of Astrobiology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. He studies surface and atmospheric evolution of Earthlike planets elsewhere in the universe, with a focus on possible environments for extraterrestrial life. He is a frequent advisor to NASA on space exploration strategy and is on the science team for NASA's next Mars rover. He was awarded the 2006 Carl Sagan Medal from the American Astronomical Society. Dr. Grinspoon is also author of *In the Dark of Space, Enlightenment Waits*, 2006 and *Lonely Planets: The Natural Philosophy of Alien Life*, 2003.

Monica Petty Aiello

Saturday, Feb. 13 | 2 p.m.

Contemporary mixed-media artist Monica Petty Aiello will give a gallery lecture and tour of her exhibition *Frozen/Inferno*, in which she uses acrylic, paper, ink, gel, fiber, heat, air, gravity and water to emulate the fascinating terrain of Jupiter's moons, Europa and Io. Aiello lives in Denver, where she creates artworks that appear in private and corporate collections and exhibitions nationwide.

NASA | ART: Field Trips

When Tang Met Laika

Saturday, Feb. 20

Join FAC Director of Performing Arts Alan Osburn for a theatre experience at the Denver Center to see the World Premiere of *When Tan Met Laika* at the Space Theatre at the Denver Center for Performing Arts. Heavy issues confront weightlessness when Soviets and Americans join together to establish the International Space Station. Playwright Rogelio Martinez explores the 1990's Cold War thaw as two intensely driven people find love in space, a breakfast drink, a stray dog and a ghost named Yuri. "With my new play, I am exploring the relationship between the Russian and the American space programs and their efforts to build an International Space Station." – Rogelio Martinez

[Visit the NASA | ART site for lecture series and field trip details.](#)

For Adults ...

Art of the Cosmos

Since ancient times, artists have depicted the science and symbolism of the cosmos. Their art has often sought to bridge the expansiveness and mystery of the universe with our earthbound human experience. Taught in the Screening Room and in the galleries by FAC Museum Director Blake Milteer.

Alien Landscapes: *Explore our solar system's mysterious landscapes through art*

Over the last several decades, we have sent robotic explorers to the many planets and moons within our solar system. These spacecraft have returned amazing remote sensing images revealing awe-inspiring new vistas. Taught by contemporary mixed-media artist Monica Petty Aiello, students will be guided on a visual tour of the solar system and learn about the basic geology on distant worlds.

Jewelry From Space Technology:

Introduction to Precious Metal Clay

Blast off with new and innovative products from the space industry that are being used to create art in a whole new way. Precious Metal Clay is a new material, developed for the space industry, and now used in the jewelry industry as well.

Dicroic Glass and Precious Metal Clay

Launch your PMC skills to the next stage by combining PMC and Dicroic Glass. These two materials from the space industry combine to make pieces of jewelry with color and sizzle, all in one firing.

[Visit the NASA | ART site for education details.](#)

For Kids ...

Space Adventures

Explore the colorful world of Space! Create painted galaxies, imaginary space creatures, rockets and more using a variety of materials. Let your imagination take flight.

Moon Walk

Launch yourself through the world of collage, painting and an imaginary solar system! Explore space in a whole new way through paper, paints, pastels and a lot more!

Spaced Out

Explore outer space - galaxies, planets and constellations through hands-on art projects. Reach new heights using pastels, paint, paper and more!

For Families ...

Family Adventure Day

Fun for the whole family, this exploration of your artistic side features artist demonstrations and hands-on art projects that are out of this world on Saturday, Jan. 9 (10a – 2p).

Gallery Treks

Interactive activities and discussions give everyone the chance to participate in the journey into space through the eyes of an artist on Saturday, Feb. 6 at 11 a.m.

Family Discovery Gallery

A dedicated interpretive space, located on the museum's second floor, this gallery will include a visual timeline of space exploration, interactive computer activities, continual screenings of George Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon*, and art activities for all ages. The gallery will also feature art made in Bemis's Precious Metal Clay classes.