PHOTOPEDAGOGY

THE RPS ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond – Teacher Resource 1/3

These resources have been produced in support of Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond, hosted at RPS House, Bristol from 5 July – 29 September 2019. For further insights, activities and discussion points, visit PhotoPedagogy.com/space-steps

Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing on 20 July 1969. The exhibition traces the story of the earlier Mercury and Gemini space missions and the Apollo programme up to 1969, also paying tribute to the crucial role that women played in the Apollo space programme. A contemporary perspective on space exploration is supplied by Monica Alcazar-Duarte with *Ascension*, an interactive installation in which the artist examines how European space scientists are engaging in a new 'space race'. Visitors will also be able to see up close one of the original Hasselblad cameras used by the Apollo astronauts during their training programme.

'Earth Rise' viewed from the command and service module of Apollo 11, 1969

The 'Blue Marble' taken from the VIIRS instrument aboard Suomi NPP, 2012

One of the most profound impacts of the Apollo space programme (and the resulting photographs) was the sense of a new perspective of the Earth. Sometimes referred to as 'the overview effect', seeing the Earth as a unified whole, a relatively small planet set against a vast universe, prompted a growth in environmental awareness. Set against the competitive political tensions of the Cold War, an alternative set of ideas urged a view of Earth as fragile, a home to be shared rather than a resource to be fought over.

For discussion

- How is our view of the Earth affected by changes in photographic technology? 'Earth Rise (1969)' and 'Blue Marble (2012)', above, were preceded by 'Earth Rise (1968)' and 'Blue Marble (1972). How might you expect these earlier images to differ?
- What changes have taken place in the way we live and our understanding of the Earth since 1969?
- What do you know about the future of space travel? Why is there a renewed interest in space travel today?

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Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond – Teacher Resource 2/3

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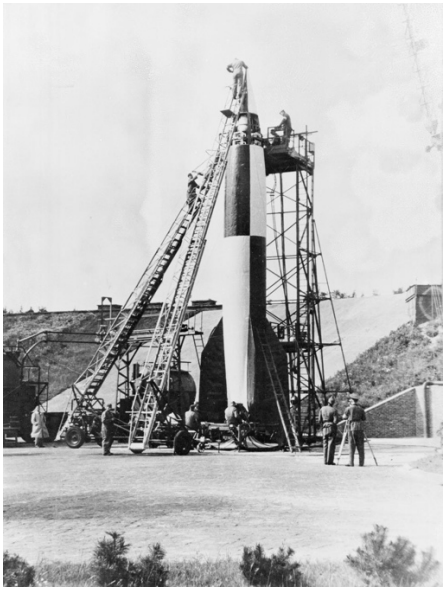
Space travel is unique in its capacity to light up the imaginations of young children and also stimulate the wisest of scientists, mathematicians and philosophers. It provides us with both playful adventures and seemingly impossible problems. Ask a child, artist or scientist to build a rocket and it is quite likely you will be met with equal enthusiasm. But the results, even if visually similar (influenced by established images, expectations, knowledge and so on), would be worlds apart - and literally, if it ever came to test flights.



German technicians stack stages of a V-2 rocket. The engineers and scientists who developed the V-2 went to the USA at the end of World War II.

Astronaut Walter M. "Wally" Schirra, one of the original seven astronauts for Mercury Project selected by NASA on April 27, 1959.

Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond features a selection of photographs from the remarkable archives of NASA Image Library. Photographs of this time can serve as important historical records of technological advances; they can also be regarded with affection and fascination for their influence upon childhood imaginations and popular science fiction.

Activities

Make a photo-montage or experimental artwork that combines science fact with science fiction. For a playful starting point you might consider one of the following statements:

- The cow jumped over the moon
- The wolf howled at the moon
- The man in the moon
- Once in a blue moon

How might you respond to one (or more) of these statements in a creative way? Consider the images, materials and techniques you might use. NASA's online image library (www.nasa.gov) will provide inspirational reference for a photographic collage, short animation or experimental film.

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THE RPS ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Space Steps: The Moon and Beyond – Teacher Resource 3/3

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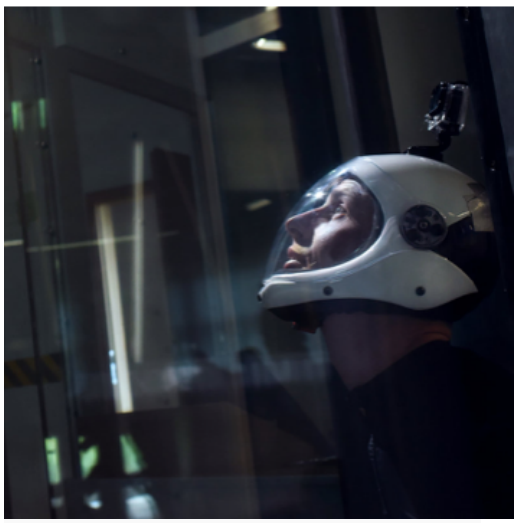
Ascension is an interactive installation by Monica Alcazar-Duarte. The work explores how space scientists in facilities across Europe are engaging in a new space race. The title of the work not only refers to aspirations of rising upwards - be it physically to encounter new worlds, or in a more spiritual sense - but also refers to Ascension Island which has become somewhat of a curiosity due to its history as an artificial environment. By taking these disconnected locations - Ascension Island and Space - Monica Alcazar-Duarte invites the viewer to make new and unexpected connections.

(Domestic Rabbit) Part of Grant Zoology Museum, University College London



(Lunas-Mars workshop) ESTEC-ESA Lunar / Mars Workshop: Analog astronauts, who are specially trained spacesuit testers

Monica Alcazar-Duarte hopes to encourage others to adopt a more complex way of looking at space and its exploration; to look beyond the headlines of discovery and adventure and reflect upon other aspects such as the ethical, philosophical and ecological issues concerning space exploration.

For discussion

- Who decides what (or who) should land on the Moon or Mars (or beyond), and what they might or might not be able to do when they arrive?
- What would be the implications or consequences (for good or bad) of a future energy source (for example, Helium-3) proving viable to be mined from another planet?
- For humankind to live on another planet they would be reliant on technology to survive. Would this level of dependency increase trust within a community, or would residents be more vulnerable to abuse from those in power?
- What are the arguments in favour of, and against space exploration? How might future space explorations benefit humankind – and would everyone benefit equally?