

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture: Innovative Approaches for Public Engagement in Space (8)

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2010 INTERNATIONAL HUMANS IN SPACE YOUTH ART COMPETITION

Abstract

While the current generation is planning the future of space exploration, the next generation will carry it out. In order to encourage young people to think about the future of human space flight and communicate their ideas to adults and other youth, the 2010 Humans in Space Youth Art Competition was held in conjunction with the 18th IAA Humans in Space Symposium in Houston, Texas. The symposium theme was “Integration and Cooperation in the Next Golden Age of Human Space Flight,” and the online competition invited young people 10-17 years old worldwide to submit visual, literary, musical, and video artwork expressing “What is the future of human space exploration, and why is it important?” The response to the call for artwork was enormous: 550 art entries were received, from 22 countries, distributed across 5 continents. An international panel of 71 judges (including artists, scientists, teachers, engineers, astronauts, and others) evaluated the art and provided the scores used to determine the winners. To ensure that adult Humans in Space Symposium attendees would be exposed to the art and messages of the youth, the best artwork was woven into a live performance for the Symposium Opening Ceremony and a weeklong display. Since then, an additional 18 displays and one performance have been held in the Houston area, and 5 other displays and one performance were viewable in other states. The organizers will continue to use the artwork in future venue-specific events, educational tools for classroom curricula, and an Online Gallery (www.humansinspaceart.org). By combining artistic media with scientific and technical subject matter, the competition sought to offer a learning situation which encouraged original and creative thought and to enhance youth awareness, interest, and support for human spaceflight and interest in science, technology, engineering, and math fields. By any measure, this international program was successful, and this success demonstrates the effectiveness of the methods employed to reach youth and adults worldwide. Many young people were encouraged in a fun and absorbing manner to learn about past human spaceflight and to think about the future of human space exploration. Ideas were exchanged between the younger and the older generations and this interaction influenced the thinking of both groups; products from the competition have become lasting educational and outreach tools.