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Space Culture: New Processes of Public Engagement in Space through Culture and Art (9)

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CELESTIAL ADORNMENTS: INTEGRATING SPACE AND LOCAL CONSTELLATIONS INTO MALDIVIAN TRADITIONAL JEWELRY

Abstract

This abstract presents the Maldives Space Research Organisation's (MSRO) innovative initiative to integrate space and local constellations into Maldivian traditional jewelry. By collaborating with local jewelers from R. Rinbudhoo, the renowned jewellers' island in the Maldives, we aim to keep creating unique pieces that spark conversations and generate interest in space, and the Maldivian Night Sky, both nationally and internationally.

The presentation will highlight the design, implementation, and evaluation of our jewelry initiative and partnership.

Through extensive research and oral interviews, we have uncovered traditional Maldivian constellations and their cultural significance. These findings have been mapped and visualized, creating a unique resource for educational and artistic purposes, which were used in this initiative.

MSRO has partnered with skilled jewellers from R. Rinbudhoo to create pieces that integrate space and local constellations. The second prototype of this jewelry collection will be completed in February 2025, with a third design currently in development.

While the intent was to create a star map on the wrist, traditional jewelry bridges the gap between national and international interests, allowing for conversations and sparking curiosity about space exploration among both local and global audiences.

With tremendous interest from the tourism industry, we were able to support the partners to be able to commission custom pieces that were never-been done before. Throughout the smithing process, we had to work with the jewellers to bring new methods and work through challenges, as the deviation from traditional design led to issues. From 3-D Printed models, to CAD design, modern and innovative tools gave us ways to communicate to those that have only ever worked with their hands, and metals.

The exploration, led to a replicable set of partnerships in order to create unique pieces tied into traditional jewelry and national identity, to inspire and create engagement with the night sky, and space.

For future applications of these explorations, we are curious to explore more space-focused cutting edge materials alongside natural ones in order to keep evolving, exploring, and creating unique beauty that engages people. The pieces will be shown and displayed at IAC 2025 during our presentation, alongside future developments.