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Contemporary Arts Practice and Outer Space: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach (4)

Author: Ms. Fiona Collins  
International Space University (ISU)/University of SA, Australia

HUMANITY: EXPLORATION, EXTENSION AND EXCESS.

**Abstract**

This paper compares contemporary arts practitioners' transdisciplinary modes of examination of human exploration of outer space. It also contrasts the narratives contained within various historical discourses concerning exploration, how the body changes in spaceflight and hence what it means to be human on worlds other than the Earth.

Recent works have begun to explore the intersections between art and science. Science and exploration are as fundamental to human awareness and consciousness as language and poetry. As disciplines previously seen as distinct are blurred aesthetically, politically and also by recent discoveries in neuroscience, so too does contemporary arts practice extend its boundaries in terms of theme and techniques. This extension of the boundaries of human endeavour – and thus the concept of what it means to be human - is essential to both art and technology. This paper argues that the primary motivation for all these enterprises that are popularly taken to be opposing, are actually the same. The division between modes of exploration are and have always been temporary and flimsy. The desire to explore and extend oneself is the key to understanding the excesses of the species, artistically, politically and technologically.