

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
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THE VITAE PROJECT - AN INTERACTIVE, LIVING LUNAR SCULPTURE

Abstract

Why do we no longer look up at the moon and wonder? Can we encourage ourselves to do so? And in doing so, might it help us to reflect on the precious Earth?

The Vitae Project is the concept of French artist Anilore Banon. It aims to place a deployable sculpture onto the lunar surface by riding along with the next wave of robotic lunar visitors. It embodies STEAM, focuses attention on the Moon, and attempts to unite people from all continents.

Vitae is a participative and living artwork that shows how much we can accomplish when we are together.

As a “seed” it is compressed into a small cylinder just 12cm in diameter. On the moon, it flowers into a 1.2m diameter dish, holding representative human forms. Mankind has happily anthropomorphized lunar rovers such as Yutu, and the rover that delivers Vitae will become our avatar on the moon, to enjoy this exhibition.

Vitae “lives” like a moonflower, using shape memory materials to close into a cocoon structure during the day, and open into a dish shape at night. This serves both an artistic and technical (thermal) purpose.

An app has been developed to easily collect handprints, from exotic exhibitions to coffee shops, from the freezing North Pole to the roasting Namibian desert. One million handprints will be gathered by the artist and printed in miniature on the dish. The handprints of those who miss out can be uploaded and displayed on electronic ink, one at a time, during the 10-year lifetime.

Occasionally, when conditions are right, and perhaps to celebrate important occasions, Vitae’s light beacon, its heartbeat, will pulse, giving the chance to be glimpsed by everyone on Earth at some point.

Earthly exhibitions for outreach and interaction are being created, including a launch event at CERN. An interactive, massive and monumental sculpture on earth will be developed. The more people place their hands on the sculpture, the more it lights up.

An interactive virtual 3D experience has been created – participants can ride along with, and control the lunar lander as it approaches the moon to deliver Vitae.

Vitae is practical and serious. The programme has included edge-of-space flights, an upcoming deployment on the ISS, and multiple engineering developments. We’re working hard to maximize the chances that once again, we will look up at the moon and wonder.