IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

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THE MARTIAN COALITION FOR THEORETICAL LIFE ORIGINS

Abstract

This critical design project attempts to challenge the narratives surrounding our current exploration of Mars. Modern day space pioneers champion exploration with little idea of the destruction of colonization. Whether we are talking historically about the death of races and species or more broadly about the proliferation of pollution, spreading the human way can be ruinous. Mars in particular has become a place where "leave no trace" has no home, and exploration is valued over respect. We must leave our anthropocentricity on Earth.

What would it be like to explore Mars without destructively colonizing the planet? In this speculative future, Mars has been through a period of failed attempts to colonize and is littered with scraps of failed landings, stalled rovers, and exploded habitats. In many ways, this vision is a temporal extension of the present. As a result of the damage, a group of scientists have joined together as The Martian Coalition for Theoretical Life Origins, living in floating habitats for fear of further harming Mars while cataloging and clearing every humans have brought, something perhaps only possible on that planet is a tabula rasa.

Each team has its own ship which is outfitted with trollers and high powered magnets which collect scraps to be upcycled as new sections of the ships. Scrap, energy and water are traded amongst the various ships, along with energy and water. This trade system is largely at the mercy of wind patterns and so a precarious economy based on drift behaves as an emergent political system. This vision of Mars embraces post-capitalist Mars where ownership and proliferation are depritized.

The scientists have divided themselves by various theories of life origin based on real scientific theories. Some believe life originated on Mars, others believe life has gone extinct on Mars from nuclear war, still others believe humans are destined to bring like to Mars. The priority is not expansion of homo erectus but instead discovery of traces of life to prove their theories. For them every rock and stone is sacred every spec of dust could be a key to life. This intensifies their attitude towards non-colonization and in this way the scientists have abandoned their anthropocentricity to treat Mars as more important than the survival of the scientists themselves. This proposal demonstrates that there are alternatives to the aggressive and reckless way humans have historically explored and colonized much to our collective detriment.