

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
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FROM THE EARTH TO THE STARS: AN INTERACTIVE ART EXHIBIT OF THE PAST, PRESENT,
AND FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SPACE

Abstract

Effective and engaging science communication has been instrumental in garnering public and political support for space programs, both for national initiatives and for those that involve international cooperation. In both the United States and Russia, technical objectives in space have been legitimized and popularized in the general public through TV shows, movies, government-commissioned art, and written works that elevate the cultural status and importance of space programs. Today, with the upcoming decommissioning of the International Space Station and the increasing involvement of the commercial space industry, the future of international cooperation in space - particularly between Russia and the United States - is at a crossroads. However, international cooperation and the public and political support required to achieve it remains critically important if national space agencies and commercial companies are to achieve the ambitious science, technology, and exploration objectives they have set for the coming decades.

The interactive exhibit presented here is the result of a year-long collaborative initiative that researched the role that science communication in the United States and Russia has played in shaping public awareness and support for space exploration and international cooperation in outer space. Based on lessons learned from case studies stretching back 50 years and interviews with current Russian and American stakeholders, effective participatory and dialogue-based models of science communication for space cooperation were implemented in the development and display of an interactive visual art installation. Researchers involved in this project worked with a Saint Petersburg-based artist to develop a series of paintings that depict the cultural and scientific impacts of the past and future of international cooperation in space. These paintings are displayed in a digital format based on the James Webb Space Telescope and are paired with interactive information and questionnaires to engage a public audience in dialogue about the history and benefits of international space cooperation. Currently, these paintings have been distributed in a calendar print format to a small audience and ongoing work is being completed to evaluate the efficacy and impact of this art installation on awareness of and support for ongoing collaborative space programs. The researchers intend to use any data collected from the proposed display at IAC to add to this analysis. Samples of the paintings and information used in this exhibit can be found at: <http://www.anproart.com/space-calendar-2020>.