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Contemporary Arts Practice and Outer Space: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach (3)

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ALTAMIRA COMET PROOF-OF-CONCEPT

Abstract

Beginning some 30,000 years ago, nine of our Paleolithic ancestors painted their unique hands on the walls of Altamira Cave in Cantabria, Spain—an act of communication by the community, for the community. We present a proof-of-concept for the Altamira Comet, a 21st century work that expresses the evolution of this gesture in our digital age: we all go. The Altamira Comet invites everyone on Earth to participate, individually and uniquely, through our contemporary society's iconic representation of identity: the selfie. Everyone's selfies will be cast as microscopic low relief golden busts, frozen into a ball of ice, and deployed into heliocentric orbit as a sublimating comet, embodying millions of individual humans from around the world. The proof-of-concept is a vial of five million discrete selfie sculptures in solution, using computer vision, electron-beam lithography and high-vacuum deposition to fabricate each selfie the size of a grain of cosmic dust. We also discuss plans to deploy the comet using an off-the-shelf CubeSat deployer and to scale the work to support a goal of at least one billion global participants.