

# Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ArtScience Museum gets ready for lift-off to Mars

*The blockbuster exhibition will be the most comprehensive historical and cultural showcase on the Red Planet to be presented in Singapore*



**SINGAPORE** (26 October 2023) – Visitors can look forward to getting their tickets to Mars as ArtScience Museum counts down to the launch of its final exhibition to round up the year – *Mars: The Red Mirror*. Making its Asian premiere on 25 November, this exhibition synthesizes 12,000 years of cultural history surrounding Mars through art, history, and science, from ancient times to the present day.

The exhibition comes at a significant moment in history where humanity's enduring connection to the Red Planet has culminated in three active rover missions on Mars. At the same time, space agencies around the world, as well as private space companies such as SpaceX, are actively planning missions that may take people to Mars for the first time. *Mars: The Red Mirror* taps into this enduring allure of the planet.

Presented by ArtScience Museum and the Centre of Contemporary Culture Barcelona (CCCB) and curated by Juan Insua, *Mars: The Red Mirror* weaves together enthralling narratives from pioneering scientists, modern day experts, filmmakers, writers, and contemporary artists. With Mars having come to serve as a mirror, metaphor, and source of inspiration for humanity, the exhibition examines depictions of Mars throughout history and across cultures, from ancient

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Greece to Asia. It charts scientific discoveries relating to the planet and its moons, and investigates the portrayal of Mars in science fiction. It features over 300 objects, including rare scientific manuscripts, sculptures, historical artefacts, films, contemporary artworks, and even an authentic Martian meteorite.

First shown in Barcelona in 2021, this new version of *Mars: The Red Mirror* will also turn its lens to Asia – from tracing Mars' ancient imprints in China, India, and Japan, and celebrating the legacy of pioneering Asian astronomers, to providing a glimpse into Mars' portrayal in Southeast Asian pop culture with a rare collection of 50 unique Indonesian comics. Meanwhile, contemporary art by Asian artists will explore the hopes and challenges of humanity's planetary pursuits. Additionally, *Mars: The Red Mirror* also features Singapore's own Space Faculty, which champions space technology's transformative potential in the region as it posits the space sector as holding the key to innovation across climate technology, life sciences, and big data.

Unfolding across three main sections, *Mars: The Red Mirror* takes its design and structure from science fiction – specifically the *Mars trilogy*, a series of science fiction novels by Kim Stanley Robinson that chronicle the settlement and terraforming of Mars. The three novels *Red Mars* (1992), *Green Mars* (1993), and *Blue Mars* (1996) feature in the exhibition and provide the inspiration for the design of the show.

“This November, ArtScience Museum is taking visitors on a trip to Mars. It has fascinated humanity for millennia, having captured our imagination like no other planet. This exhibition invites us on an expedition through history and across cultures to learn how our neighbouring planet has been seen and understood through time. Seamlessly combining art, science, literature, archeology, pop culture and technology, the show encourages a cross-disciplinary contemplation of the Red Planet. *Mars: The Red Mirror* is also the second major exhibition in ArtScience Museum's new season of science fiction which launched recently with *New Eden*. It demonstrates how science fiction has shaped our Martian dreams, seeding many of the fantasies we have about travelling to Mars. But the show poses some crucial questions: with the ecological problems on our own planet, should we really be looking to settle on another? Do we seek Mars as an escape, or as a mirror reflecting the challenges we must address here on Earth?” said Honor Harger, Vice-President of ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands.

Juan Insua, curator of the exhibition, added: “*Mars: The Red Mirror* traces the cultural history of a planet that has been closely intertwined with Earth since the creation of the solar system. Mirroring our evolution as a species in the last 12,000 years, Mars has adopted many forms and representations across time and cultures – it is the red star and God of War, as well as the favourite planet depicted in science fiction. Perhaps our captivation with Mars is because it serves as a reflection of ourselves: as a planet where life may have existed, or one where we could set up a new life in the future. This exhibition presented at ArtScience Museum is an adaptation of the one showcased at CCCB in 2021, and it has been further refined with the exquisite contribution of the Museum's curatorial team. I hope that visitors will enjoy this trip – one that is

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not only strange and fascinating, but also presents us with great learning opportunities during this crucial moment in time where we must prioritize the only home we currently live in: Planet Earth.”

## Highlights at *Mars: The Red Mirror*

Among many highlights, the exhibition features new artworks by renowned contemporary artists such as Luke Jerram, Michael Najjar, and Katie Paterson.



*Mars*, 2021 by Luke Jerram

Measuring four metres in diameter, the large inflatable sculpture, *Mars*, by British multidisciplinary artist Luke Jerram, features detailed NASA imagery of the Martian surface. The artwork offers visitors a close encounter with Mars, as though viewing it from the perspective of a satellite mapping and studying its surface in detail. Alongside light and surround sound composition created by BAFTA and Ivor Novello award winning composer Dan Jones, the sculpture lays bare every valley, crater, volcano, and mountain, inviting visitors to vividly imagine what it is like to step foot on the planet.

"I am delighted that *Mars* is being featured in this fascinating exhibition that highlights the Red Planet. My hope is that it will transport museum visitors to its inhospitable desert wasteland and by comparison, spur them to truly value our life on Earth. Following previous presentations of my artworks *Museum of the Moon* in 2019, and *Glass Microbiology* in 2015 and 2022, it is great to be back at ArtScience Museum," said Jerram.

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*starbase*, 2022 by Michael Najjar

German artist, adventurer and future astronaut Michael Najjar is showcasing a triptych titled *starbase*, that visualises the futuristic new spaceport currently under construction by SpaceX in South Texas. With extensive infrastructure to be added in the coming years to complete this future space city, it is envisioned that Starbase will serve as a port for humankind to journey to Mars in huge spaceships called Starships. 50 metres tall with a diameter of 9 metres, each ship will be able to accommodate up to 100 passengers and will be launched from a 70-metre-high Super Heavy booster.

The artwork directs the viewer's gaze to a vast landscape of construction sites. At first glance, what seems reminiscent of an urban metropolis skyline lit up at night, is actually numerous prototypes of shiny steel Starships, Super Heavy boosters as well as a take-off and landing tower with a launch pad, tank storage and production hangars. This scene of vertical rockets, spaceships and towers rising into the night sky forms a strong contrast against the panoramic landscape of open grass.



*The Moment*, 2022, by Katie Paterson

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Widely regarded as one of the leading artists of her generation, Scottish artist Katie Paterson embodies the intersection of art and science. Her work frequently reflects upon humanity's relationship with Earth, time, and the cosmos.

Measuring 15 minutes of time, Paterson's hand-blown hourglass holds the most ancient material to exist on Earth. Star dust – the fossilised remnants of a time before the Earth was formed – has been crushed into a fine powder and contained within this object. The powder is also made up of Martian dust, materials from exploding stars, remnants from asteroids, and fragments of lunar meteorites.

*Mars: The Red Mirror* extends ArtScience Museum's season of science fiction, which began in October with the opening of *New Eden: Science Fiction Mythologies Transformed*. The season continues with an exciting slate of programmes including talks, educational activities, and films at ArtScience Cinema, promising a captivating and enlightening voyage that will resonate with visitors from all walks of life.

*Mars: The Red Mirror* will run from 25 November 2023 to 7 April 2024.

## **Tickets and Reservations**

Tickets are available for purchase at all Marina Bay Sands box offices and online. It is recommended that guests pre-purchase tickets online in advance due to limited capacity and timed entry of the exhibition.

For more information on *Mars: The Red Mirror* please visit <https://www.marinabaysands.com/museum/exhibitions/mars.html>

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## **About Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd**

Marina Bay Sands is Asia's leading business, leisure and entertainment destination. The integrated resort features Singapore's largest hotel with over 2,200 luxurious rooms and suites, crowned by the spectacular Sands SkyPark and iconic infinity pool. Its stunning architecture and compelling programming, including state-of-the-art convention and exhibition facilities, Asia's best luxury shopping mall, world-class dining and entertainment, as well as cutting-edge exhibitions at ArtScience Museum, have transformed the country's skyline and tourism landscape since it opened in 2010.

Marina Bay Sands is dedicated to being a good corporate citizen to serve its people, communities and environment. As one of the largest players in hospitality, it employs more than 11,000 Team Members across the property. It drives social impact through its community engagement programme, Sands Cares, and leads environmental stewardship through its global sustainability programme, Sands ECO360.

For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com)

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## **About ArtScience Museum**

ArtScience Museum is a major cultural institution in Singapore that explores the intersection between art, science, technology and culture. It is the cultural component of Marina Bay Sands. Since its opening in February 2011, ArtScience Museum has staged large-scale exhibitions by some of the world's major artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, M.C. Escher, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol and Vincent Van Gogh, as well as exhibitions that explore aspects of science and technology – including particle physics, big data, robotics, palaeontology, marine biology and space science. For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com/museum.html](http://www.marinabaysands.com/museum.html)

## **About Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)**

CCCB is a multidisciplinary cultural centre that deals with the key challenges of contemporary society through different languages and formats, with an extensive programme that includes major thematic exhibitions, series of conferences and literary meetups, film screenings and festivals. For more information, please visit <https://www.cccb.org/en>

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