



**Update: September 16, 2019** (original release date: January 2, 2019)

Lunar Photographs Celebrate 1969 Moon Landing in Exhibit at National Gallery of Art, July 14, 2019 through January 5, 2020



Loewy et Puiseux, *Photographie Lunaire Rayonnement de Tycho - Phase Croissante*, 1899, photogravure, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

Washington, DC—The year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing on July 20, 1969. From the moment photography was introduced in 1839, photographers dreamt about harnessing the potential of photography together with the telescope. While astronomers had earlier mapped many of the moon's visible features through the telescope, the first photographs revealing the lunar landscape were successfully achieved by the 1850s. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th, numerous photographers created uncannily beautiful lunar pictures that captured the public imagination. ***By the Light of the Silvery Moon: A Century of Lunar Photographs*** presents some 50 works, from the 19th century to the "space-age" 1960s, that merged art with science and transformed the way that we envision and comprehend the cosmos. The exhibition includes many works recently acquired from the collection of Mary and Dan Solomon. It is on view at

the National Gallery of Art from July 14, 2019 through January 5, 2020.

This exhibition is part of a season-long exploration of *The Human Journey*—a collaboration between the Kennedy Center, the National Geographic Society, and the National Gallery of Art that invites audiences to investigate the powerful experiences of migration, exploration, identity, and resilience through the lenses of the performing arts, science, and visual art. From October 2018 through July 2019, *The Human Journey* encompasses multidisciplinary performances, exhibits, and immersive opportunities drawing on the unique strengths and complementary capabilities of each of the partner organizations.

### **Exhibition Organization**

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

### **About the Exhibition**

***By the Light of the Silvery Moon*** presents a select survey of lunar photographs, including Warren de la Rue's late 1850s glass stereograph of the full moon; Lewis Rutherford's 1865 albumen prints capturing the moon's different phases taken from his Manhattan observatory; plates from the ambitious *Atlas photographique de la lune*—published beginning in 1896—by Maurice Loewy and Pierre Henri Puisseux, made from the Paris Observatory, of different lunar areas; and a suite of Charles le Morvan's rich, velvety photogravures from *Carte photographique et systématique de la lune* (1914), which attempted to systematically map the entire visible lunar surface.

As NASA planned where to land Apollo 11, the unmanned American Ranger, Surveyor, and Lunar Orbiter spacecraft journeyed to the moon and transmitted images, creating otherworldly photographs not only of the lunar areas visible from the earth, but also of the moon's far side. Each of these spacecrafts used different imaging systems, providing vital information to NASA. With the success of the 1969 mission, more images of the moon from Apollo 11 flooded into the public sphere.

On display in the exhibition are a selection of Ranger photographs, which are single frames taken by a television camera just before the craft crashed on the moon; Surveyor pictures, consisting of grids of small images beamed from a television camera mounted on the outside of the spacecraft; and Lunar Orbiter images, which were assembled into prints from "framelets," or strips, transmitted to Earth from film developed onboard the spacecraft.

From Apollo 11, glass stereographs taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin show close-up views of three-inch-square areas of the lunar surface. Also on view are several NASA photographs of the astronauts on the moon widely disseminated by the press, such as Armstrong planting the American flag and the iconic image of the astronaut's footprint in the lunar soil, and press photographs taken

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both before and after the mission.

## **Exhibition Curator**

This exhibition is curated by Diane Waggoner, curator of 19th-century photographs, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

## **Related Activities**

### **Concert**

Living Art Collective Ensemble (LACE) with Elisa Monte Dance, and DJ Twelve45

*The Lunar Effect*

April 20, 3:00 p.m. (open rehearsal)

April 21, 3:30 p.m. (performance)

West Building, West Garden Court

Since prehistoric times, humans have been fascinated by the moon and its effect on everything from fertility to madness. On Easter Sunday, a holiday determined by the moon, LACE, along with Elisa Monte Dance and DJ Twelve45, weave together a story of how the moon has inspired wonder and fear in various cultures since the human journey began. This program features new music by composer Michael Thurber.

United States Army Band "Pershing's Own"

September 15, 3:30 p.m.

West Building, West Garden Court

The United States Army Band presents "Moonstruck: Reimagining the 'Pierrot Lunaire' Ensemble."

### **Film Series**

#### **Moons and Celestial Bodies**

July 20–21

Since the dawn of cinema, filmmakers have imagined what it might be like to travel to the moon and beyond. Following Georges Méliès's whimsical *A Trip to the Moon* in 1902, the fusion of scientific exploration and humankind's artistic imagination gave rise to evermore ingenious conceptions of space travel. This series includes a screening of Philip Kaufman's *The Right Stuff*, a digital restoration of Nicolas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, and an eclectic international program of vintage and contemporary short films showcasing the moon as inspiration and focus—coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the first human steps on the moon.

*The Right Stuff*

July 20, 11:00 a.m.

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An epic adaptation of Tom Wolfe's 1979 book, *The Right Stuff* follows the saga of the aeronautical test pilots involved in Project Mercury, the United States' first manned space mission. Although focused primarily on the well-known "space cowboys" Chuck Yeager, John Glenn, and Alan Shepard (Sam Shepard, Ed Harris, and Scott Glenn, respectively), the film also delves into the effects of their ambitions and accomplishments on their families. (Philip Kaufman, 1983, 35mm, 192 minutes)

*Cycles, Tides, and Rhythms: The Moon on Film*

July 20, 3:00 p.m.

From avant-garde to animation, narrative, and nonfiction, films about the moon have made the orb an object of mystery and metaphor. This eclectic assemblage of classic and recent shorts includes *A Trip to the Moon* (George Méliès, 1902, silent); *Rabbit's Moon* (Kenneth Anger, 1950); *Polly One* (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2018, silent); *Dancing on the Moon* (Dave Fleischer, 1935, 35mm); *Moonplay* (Marie Menken, 1962, 16mm); *Red Sea* (Judith Noble, 1982, 16mm, silent); *Sea of Vapors* (Sylvia Schedelbauer, 2014); *Lunar Almanac* (Malena Szlam, 2013, 16mm, silent); and several more. (Total running time approximately 120 minutes)

*The Man Who Fell to Earth*

July 21, 4:30 p.m.

A striking contribution to the science-fiction genre as well as a cautionary tale about the protection of natural resources, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* features David Bowie in his acting debut as an alien sent to our planet to source water for his own. British director Nicolas Roeg's surreal mise-en-scène and Tony Richmond's sumptuous cinematography make the most of Bowie's considerable screen presence. The film's narrative ellipses serve to emphasize enduring existential qualities of estrangement and despair. (Nicolas Roeg, 1974, 148 minutes)

**Lectures**

*Photographing the Moon: An Evening with Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Curators*

October 3, 6:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

David DeVorkin, curator of astronomy; Jennifer Levasseur, curator of space history; and Matthew Shindell, curator of planetary science

This program will be streamed [live](#)

*Apparent Retrograde: Reflecting on Lunar Photography*

October 7, 12:10 p.m. and 1:10 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Yuri Long, photographer, and special collections librarian, National Gallery of Art, in conversation with Diane Waggoner, curator of 19th-century photographs, National Gallery of Art

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## *The Moon in the Age of Photography*

October 20, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Mia Fineman, associate curator, department of photographs, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Update: July 8, 2019

*This update includes addition of October 3 lecture.*

Update: September 16, 2019

*This update includes acknowledgement of acquisitions from Mary and Dan Solomon and the addition of October 7 lecture.*

### **Press Contact:**

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### General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt), Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ngadc](http://www.twitter.com/ngadc), and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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#### **Exhibition Press Release**

[Exhibition Checklist](#) (PDF 425 kb)

[Wall Text](#) (PDF 601 kb)

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### AUDIO/VIDEO ▼

[Press Event Remarks and Curatorial Tour: By the Light of the Silvery Moon: A Century of Lunar Photographs](#)

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### ONLINE RESOURCES ▼

[Exhibition Page](#)

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Questions from members of the media may be directed to the Department of Communications at (202) 842-6353 or [pressinfo@nga.gov](mailto:pressinfo@nga.gov)

The public may call (202) 737-4215 or visit [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov) for more information about the [National Gallery of Art](#).

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