

Protectorate 1: An Introduction

Since the Apollo 11 lunar landing in 1969, items and artefacts have been left behind on the moon, among them flags, sophisticated equipment and pieces of landing consoles, bags of waste, and more ephemeral things such as footprints. As Marilyn Adlington explores in her essay, NASA, along with a number of historical preservationists and others, has been calling for the Moon to be considered an international heritage site, effectively a "Moon museum." As the potential for space tourism grows, such questions are ever more pressing. But who would oversee such a site or institution? The 1966 Outer Space Treaty clearly states that no nation can "own" the Moon, and declaring landing sites on the Moon as heritage sites might open other sections to different forms of exploitation (such as mining or resource extraction for profit).

Set in 2085, this exhibition speculatively images a Moon on which a museum, Protectorate 1, has been established. The museum is both a site that protects the ephemeral and material traces of human presence on the Moon, but that also showcases the difficult choices that were made in order to establish the institution. This is not solely a space of protection, but it is very obviously also one dedicated to encouraging tourism and profit, possibly at the expense of the artefacts. Visitors to Protectorate 1 can learn a great deal about human exploration of space, about the artefacts on the Moon, and about the increasing pollution of outer space, but they can also shop at the Galactic Gift Shop or possibly have their picture taken at the Lunar Photo Booth. Set on the opening day of the institution, the hallway outside the gallery includes a wall welcoming visitors in more than thirty languages, and thanking all of the individual and corporate sponsors of the Moon museum (ranging from Meteorite Mining Inc. to Waning and Waxing Spa and Resort, and from Anorthostic Rock Mining to the Moon Protection Authority). But a protest has just taken place, and the ground is strewn with posters demanding an end to mining on the Moon, and the protection of the Moon not just for wealthy tourists but for all. Protectorate 1 is at the same time performing an important preservation function, and also extending human colonial impulses to a new frontier. Though the languages of the welcome poster seem to suggest the whole Earth onside, the solely English names of the sponsoring companies suggests, rather, that the establishment of Protectorate 1 did not enjoy global support.

Students in VAS/VAH 4485 Museum and Curatorial Studies Practicum have worked exceptionally hard to develop a multi-layered and critical exhibition. Though some of the information in the exhibition is fictional, a great deal of it is based on fact, and reflects contemporary debates in terrestrial museums, particularly with regard to accepting and working with controversial sponsors, collecting and showcasing ephemeral materials, dealing with ongoing legacies of the traumas of colonization, and balancing the goals of the museum with the need to attract visitors. At once humorous and thought-provoking, *Protectorate 1: A Darker Side of the Moon* takes a compelling contemporary issue, and plays it out through a science fiction exhibition. Will the future bring a Moon museum? Only time will tell.

Dr. Kirsty Robertson (VAS/VAH4485 professor), February, 2017

The VAS/VAH 4485 class would like to thank the following departments and individuals: The Arts and Humanities Student Council; Artlab Gallery; The Centre for Planetary Science and Exploration; The Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism; The Department of Visual Arts; The Faculty of Arts and Humanities; The Department of Physics and Astronomy; Julia Beltrano; Dickson Bou; Jan Cami; Robert Cockcroft; Susan Edelstein; Meghan Edmiston; John Hatch; Jo Jennings; Troy Ouellette; Jessica Schagerl. We would especially like to thank the McIntosh Gallery for collaborating on this publication.



a darker side of the moon

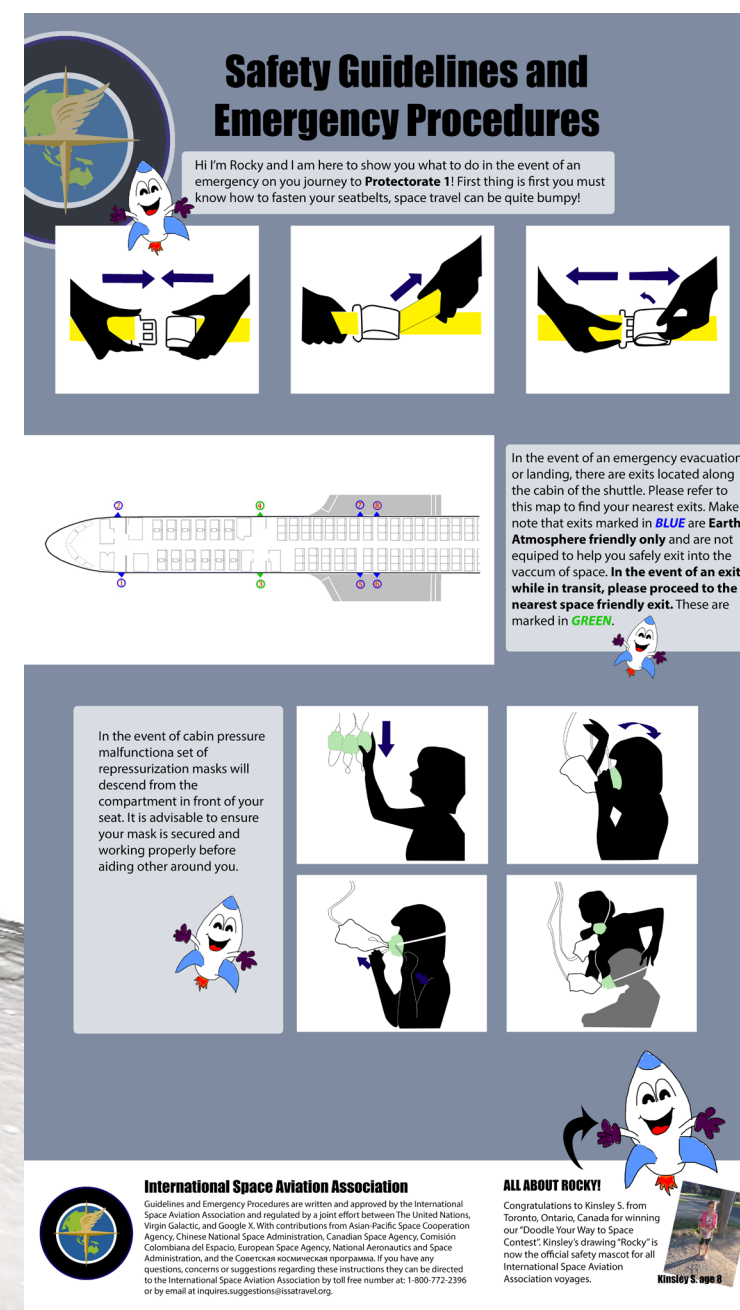
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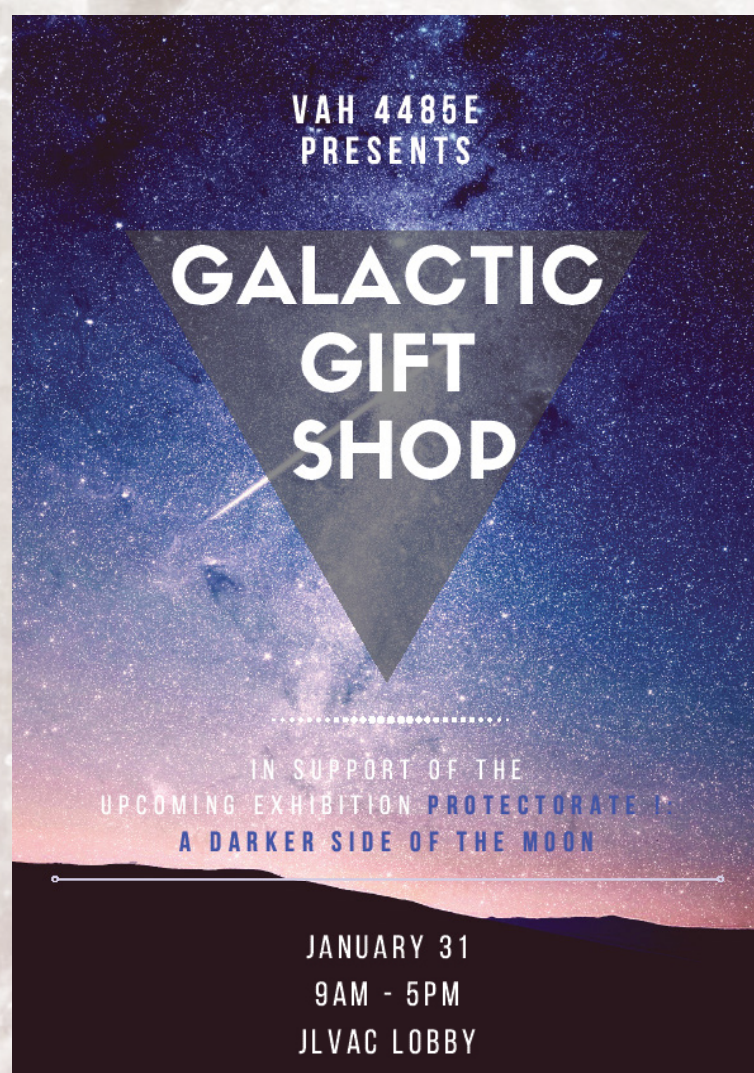
Poster created by Kimberlyn Hawkins for the Protectorate 1 exhibition, 11 x 17, 2017



Class photo! Katie Oates, Alyssa Park, Vicky Jamieson, Kimberlyn Hawkins, Harper Wellman, Regan Benner, MacKenzie Brash, Anna Furfaro, Marilyn Adlington



Harper, MacKenzie and Kim work on the rocks for the moonscape



Poster created by Harper Wellman for the preview Galactic Gift Shop



Alyssa and Regan work on the moon lamps for the Galactic Gift Shop

CURATORS: MARILYN ADLINGTON (WRITER) . REGAN BENNER (PROMOTIONS) . MACKENZIE BRASH (RESEARCHER) . ANNA FURFARO (WEBSITE) . KIMBERLYN HAWKINS (DESIGN/PROMOTIONS) . VICKY JAMIESON (FUNDRAISING) . ALYSSA PARK (WEBSITE) . HARPER WELLMAN (FUNDRAISING) . TA: KATIE OATES

It has long been the fantasy of humankind to visit the moon. *Protectorate 1: A Darker Side of the Moon* gives visitors the opportunity to indulge in those fantasies by imagining the future of celestial colonization and world heritage through a museum established on the moon to preserve items left behind during lunar exploration. Suddenly, one is immersed in the exploration of what it means for the moon to be a commodity. What are the impacts, current and historic, of space travel? What can the objects left on the moon tell us about human nature and contemporary culture?

The moon is – and perhaps always has been – ripe for artistic intervention as an object that holds our most intimate thoughts as we gaze up and ponder that which is beyond ourselves. Space inspires awe and perspective — the currency of the arts. While the studies of astronomers, scientists and engineers are obviously engaged with our vast impersonal universe, it is important to acknowledge that mystics, myth-makers, and shamans who were at it centuries beforehand. Across all cultures, the night sky has been used as a narrative and navigational structure that invites a profound level of enchantment. The significance and mythology of the moon is fundamental when addressing the ways in which it has come to represent a mirror to our own human impulses, flaws, and culture; in turn becoming human in its own way, too.

Nothing shifted our relationship with the cosmos more than the launching of Sputnik 1 by the Soviet Union space program in 1957, and the subsequent Apollo lunar landings by the United States in 1969. Within a decade, using limited technology and raw human brainpower, these events necessitated a hugely significant reconceptualization of the relationship between Earth and the cosmos, which in turn shifted the way that we saw ourselves as a species. No longer confined to the realm of speculative fiction or hopeful science, the moon was now a frontier that was attainable. With an estimated 600 million people tuned in to the event, the lunar landing was the largest audience for any single event in human history to date. Thus, while the Apollo 11 mission was unquestionably highly choreographed and scripted, it was also a completely new experience that no one had ever accomplished before.

It is a popular misconception that space is a vacuum. In reality, outer space is a rich and complex environment that has much to offer for study, with the moon itself currently hosting nearly 400,000 pounds of man-made material (Garber). It follows that acknowledging and taking stock of the material culture left in space is important for gaining a finer-grained understanding of different aspects of human engagement with space. “Space Heritage” is an evolving field where sites and artifacts do not exist on Earth, but rather in Space or on other celestial bodies (O’Leary 1). Under this line of thinking, space exploration technology and activities are considered not only from scientific and technological perspectives, but also from biographical and ideological angles. In particular, objects residual of “Apollo culture” have become a reflection of the relationship between space and time at that particular point in history, revealing a fascinating relationship between humankind’s audacity and the technology that helped to realize it. The spacecraft, for example, represents many elements that speak to the zeitgeist of the times in which they were built, allowing exploration of the many ways that society influences these pieces of material culture. What can we assume about humanity if one of the most fundamental engagements with the moon is one of abjection and discarding?

Protectorate 1 explores the issues mentioned by bringing together objects deemed as “space junk” in conjunction with the objects which have returned back to Earth as prized, otherworldly possessions. Many things left on the moon are actually non-life-sustaining machinery leftovers from earlier space expeditions, yet their charged location gives them a potential new life force within a “moon museum.” This is because of the rocket equation, which states that in order to reach the outer orbit of the earth, large and heavy engines capable of extreme speed are required. However, upon the return to earth, the aforementioned empty fuel tanks and other machinery are discarded, with enormous spaceships returning as tiny capsules; mere fractions of the original machines (NASA). In some ways, it is a humble price to pay for discovery; to never return exactly how you left, and always a little smaller. However, it has also resulted in an exponential increase in the number of objects left behind, creating a belt of debris around the earth (Schwartz). Large chunks of inert metal, inactive satellites, and other discarded bits, which lost their preciousness or function to humans throughout the extraterrestrial trip, are confined to the endlessness of space, effectively altering the very fabric of Near Space by the merest chemical fraction.

Unsurprisingly (and understandably), the philosophy of throwaway rockets goes back to the earliest days of space flight. “Because the moon lacks a mechanism for environmental renewal, such as tides, atmospheric movements, and tectonic activities, any alterations or damage caused by humans will remain indefinitely” (DiPaolo 10). This unique environment means that whatever remains there, and whatever we choose to leave, takes on a special kind of perpetuity that is unavailable to us on earth. It is as though the objects on the moon have ingested an elixir of eternal life in a foreign world; something that we, too, fantasize about. Thus, “it is the location of the objects, structures, and features on the Moon in situ which is the most critical part of their significance: without being on the Moon, without their locational integrity those artifacts lose part of their extraordinary significance and become less than they truly are” (O’Leary 7). Similarly, on the moon, they become larger than life, because they are apart from life.

Archiving is complex, and there are many challenges that arise in independent, non-hierarchical or non-institutional settings. In physics, one of the most fundamental tenants is the theory of entropy, meaning that it is impossible to truly hold places and things still. This is an interesting thought if taken into consideration along with the fact that the moon has not undergone as much volcanic and tectonic processing as the Earth, and still retains information from the early history of the solar system. This information, that has been lost on Earth, can be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the origin and early history of our own planet (Davis). Any archive of the moon must take into consideration the spectacular fragility of such sites when preserving the evidence of these achievements for future generations.

Perhaps Buzz Aldrin’s and Neil Armstrong’s footprints at Tranquility Base are the pinnacle of this, as imprints that are as figurative as they are literal, and have found their final resting place in the most otherworldly mausoleum imaginable (Garber). Yet, the degree of mystique that comes with such recognition also inevitably encourages tourism, and with more people in both the public and private sector interested in their interstellar exploration, the process of moon colonization has become a competitive bid. *Protectorate 1: A Darker Side of the Moon* takes an inquisitive stance, exploring the complexities and ambiguities surrounding what it could mean for the moon to become a tourist destination. We are currently living in an important time in human history, now well versed in escaping the Earth’s atmosphere and the things we can expect to encounter out there. These experiences have already shifted our human perspective, but how could it change further if going to the moon was reduced to an experience (for those who could afford it)?

With the impending and unregulated interest in travelling to the Moon, we must give thought to the implications of space tourism. While an impending return to the Moon seems exciting, it is also likely that individuals and corporations will be looking to turn a profit from space heritage, without concern for the protection of such heritage (DiPaolo 3). The complexities and ambiguities of international legal structures to deal with these sites as cultural resources leave them vulnerable to impacts in the near future (O’Leary 1). Part of the problem concerns out of date legislation: The United Nations’ Outer Space Treaty was drawn up before humans had even landed on the Moon, and the agreements it lays out have since become contested, and risk being taken advantage of. Originally, the treaty stated that no government could lay claim to any celestial body because these objects are considered a common heritage of mankind (Davis).

Since then, private companies have taken an interest in celestial colonization, and it has become unclear whether the exploitation of the Moon’s natural resources would be allowed, and if so, on what terms (Levine). Specifically, space heritage sites could become the economic driver of space tourism, with Tranquility Base as the prime target. With more contemporary nations, other than the US and former Soviet Union, as well as private companies such as Virgin Atlantic, looking to expand their interstellar presence, it is likely that the primary priority will be profit, rather than international space history. Therefore, it is important that the legal rules governing interaction with and preservation of these objects and sites be clearly determined to avoid irreversible damage to a unique and irreplaceable resource.

The issue becomes even more complicated when you consider why the Apollo sites are important: as human-created, and human-influenced sites, they may technically be subject to the same ethical underpinnings and anthropocentric value systems as heritage management on Earth (Spennemann). Importantly, outside of the artifacts left on the Moon, much of the original equipment that belonged to the Apollo missions and other spaceflights have remained in museums when they have returned back to Earth. We should remain sensitive to the aesthetic and cultural value of outer space and the exhaustion of resources misleadingly proclaimed to be limitless. How can we engage with the archive of this archaeological culture when the most ethical thing we can do is prevent any further destruction?

Presently, the process of creating an archive is an act of activism itself, involving decisions that must be self-conscious and accessible to the contemporary public, as well as future to generations. As “society’s memory tool ... the archive is not a passive receptacle of historical information; it actually shapes and controls the way history is read, which in turn shapes our contemporary physical reality” (Evans, Perricci, Roberts 5). The Moon helps us learn about ourselves, and while humanity is constantly morphing and expanding, the Moon remains just as it ever was. When we leave the comforts of Earth behind, it is inevitable that we return irrevocably humbled. Perhaps this speaks to the relationship that we have with space; it strips us down to our core, as explorers and extraterrestrials ourselves. Nothing returns from space the same way that it left – and perhaps that is the fundamental mystique: the capacity to experience the astronomical feeling of smallness and insignificance, and in doing so, eliminate it.

By imagining our own constructed Moon museum, we have given ourselves the opportunity to bring ethical concerns to life by following the science fiction of our contemporary moment to its foreseeable logical conclusions. “Space has its own way of merging loss and eternity” (Garber). To conclude I would like to acknowledge an important point made by Rob La Frenais: “Sooner or later, we are going back to the Moon, whether to mine it, to reverse for a Mars mission or to live there. But how will human activity there reflect what has happened on Earth since the last Moon mission, to respond to the diversity and political and social changes that have happened since?” As much as the fierce nationalism of space history would suggest otherwise, outer space belongs to no one: no nation, no species, and no ideological subcategory of humanity.

Marilyn Adlington, February, 2017

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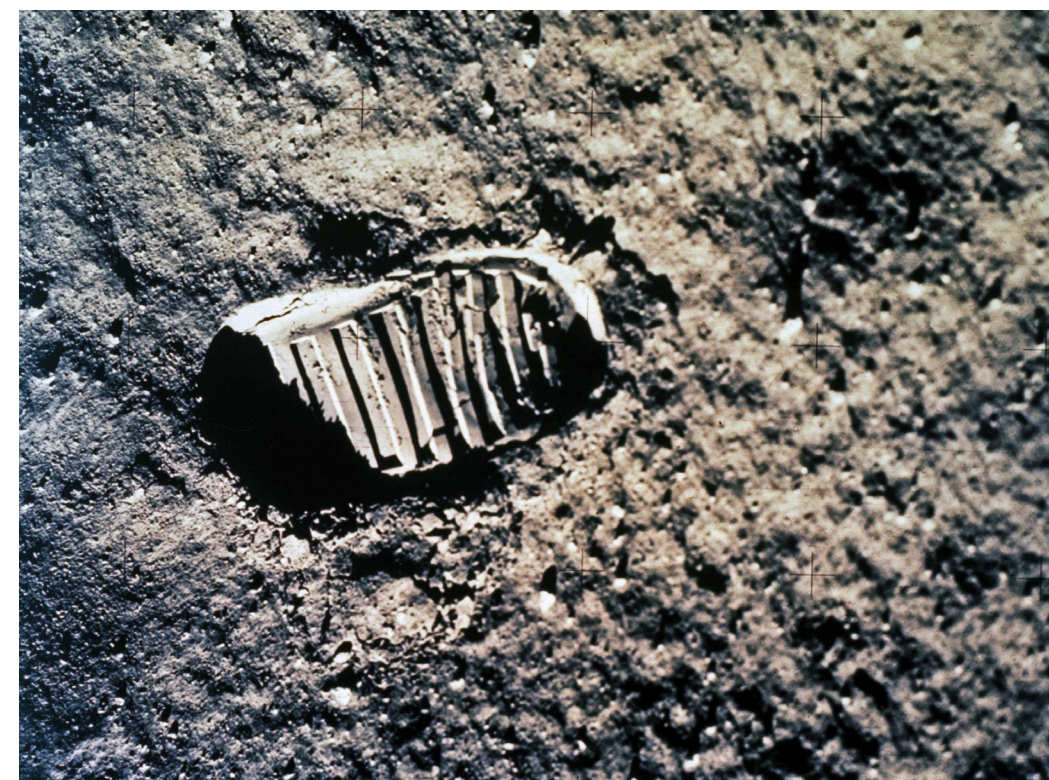
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The Eagle Lunar Module in orbit after separating from Columbia Command Module, 1969, NASA, Public Domain



Buzz Aldrin, Earth Rise Seen from the Moon, 1969, NASA, Public Domain



Buzz Aldrin, Footprint on the Moon, 1969, NASA, Public Domain

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