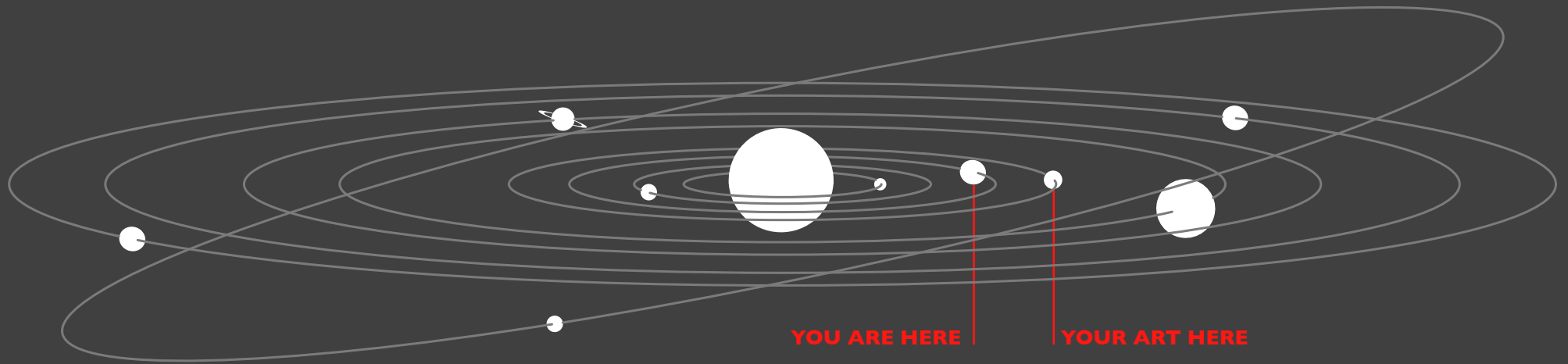




ART ON MARS!

Be a part of what will become
the greatest art event
of this century.



As humankind is set to enter the next millennium the world's artists are ready to boldly go where no artist has gone before.

We are calling for artists to submit sketches of works designed to be displayed on the surface of Mars.

Join us in this exciting attempt to indelibly stamp the mark of human culture on the face of our solar system.

Much excitement has been generated in the popular media by hints of microscopic life forms possibly found in a rock of Martian origin. This combined with the massive stream of information beamed to Earth from Mars by the Pathfinder landing module and the Sojourner survey vehicle over several months last year have revived public interest in our nearest planetary neighbour. Our knowledge of the Red Planet will increase tenfold as the data is processed. We already know about the weather patterns of the planet, the composition of its soil and rocks, and are rapidly learning about its environmental conditions. But what of its cultural environment?

Of the thousands of images beamed back to Earth none has so much as suggest the presence of art on the planet. There are spectacular valleys, olympian mountains and

sweeping deserts. However, not one single public sculpture has been seen; no murals, graffiti, plaques, private showings or third year group shows anywhere. No wonder it has no atmosphere! Earlier hopes – pyramids and a life-like portrait of Elvis – were unfounded. They have since proved to be naturally occurring phenomenon.

It need not remain thus. Humans have displayed an ability to shape the Earth and will soon be capable of shaping another planet to fit our will. Concepts such as terraforming are no longer merely the play-things of science-fiction writers. Break-throughs like Ion-drive will shorten travel times between planets. Reusable space-craft already exist and sub-orbital commercial flight, already on the agenda in many airline companies, will be commonplace by early next century. The future is out there. Our wish, at Art on Mars!, is to place artists at the forefront of the next major change in the human condition. Just as artists heralded Russia's Great Leap Forward and documented Mao's Long March, the brave new generation of artists will take the Next Giant Step Forward For Mankind.

Art on Mars! claims that human cultural ideas, rather than military, economic or political, must drive human expansion through the solar system and beyond.

At the moment space is full of military and communications hardware. The Moon, Venus, Jupiter and Mars already bear the signs of human technological culture. We have literally littered the inner solar system. Why should the signs of human habitation be detritus? Why don't we decorate Space? These questions have not been asked because for too long people have considered Space an inhospitable environment for humans and thus such questions were deemed irrelevant. This is no longer so. We have proven ourselves able to overcome the dangers of the interplanetary vacuum. The problem lies elsewhere. As Luther Blissett claimed "Nature abhors a vacuum, and a cultural one more so."

It is this very problem we at Art on Mars! hope to overcome. We believe the fact that other planets are literally alien environments has made humans less inclined to inhabit them. We intend to indelibly stamp the mark of human culture on the face of the universe. Our first project is to make Mars a more habitable environment for future visitors. The knowledge that aspects of their own culture await them will make the forbidding journey more bearable for any intrepid future inter-planetary settlers.

A Brief History of Art on Mars!

Throughout history humankind has been fascinated by the stars and the planets. Early humans recorded the positions of the planets relative to the seasonal divergences in weather patterns in order to live in harmony with the 'heavens'. Such artefacts as the pyramids, Stonehenge, the stepped temples of South America and the twig maps of the Polynesian seafarers prove the ancients had a firm understanding of the movements of the planets. The stars, moon and the planets have been represented in art by all cultures. However, these are always terrestrial representations of space. No single culture ever tried to actually develop the cultural potential of even our own solar system.

There are many reasons for this. Historians such as Fernand Braudel blame it on the lack of foresight, cultural conservatism and intellectual oppression inherent to the tyrannies that ruled the most advanced societies prior to the Golden Age of Greece and the development of Democracy. Others such as Daniel J. Boorstin place a greater emphasis on the role of technology in the development of a progressive free-thinking society. Admittedly, the Chinese have only entered the 'space race' since the recent Westernisation of their economy, but we must let history be the judge. However, there is no evidence whatsoever of any pre-historical trans-planetary cultural interchange. As late as the Golden Age of Greece, while understanding of the solar system blossomed, any mention of the cultural features of the planets was metaphorised as the qualities of 'gods' and their terrestrial predilections. Sadly, almost all of this knowledge was lost during the Dark Ages. The Romans, a rather boorish and pushy people, developed our understanding of the universe not a whit.

By the Middle Ages the centre of power had shifted from the ancient autocracies of the Far and Near East to Central and Northern Europe. In the trading and seafaring nations of the North precise astronomical prediction became vital for the purposes of navigation. Astrology grew into astronomy to meet this need. Meanwhile, the development of moveable type had coincided with the emergence of the unfettered free market to unleash a flood of free-thinking. Human understanding of the universe reached critical mass with the publication of Galileo's *The Starry Messenger*. Suddenly, every household had a 'hitchhiker's guide' to the solar system. But the interest was purely scientific. The great astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler attempted to correct this in his unfinished and unpublished novel *Somnium* - the first science fiction story. However, even Kepler in his fanciful description of the fictitious Subvolvans and Prevolvans inhabiting the moon, while maintaining scrupulous accuracy as the physics of their existence failed to mention anything of their music, literature or other aspects of their intellectual culture.

The industrial revolution provided the technological basis needed for humans to shuffle-off the constraints of an Earth-bound visual culture yet there was a marked lack of interest in the artistic community. Of course, Space was still a subject for art; witness Elgar's symphony *The Planets* and the science fiction of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells as cases in point. However, these works were still 'about' space or 'set in' space. Humankind still worked in a terra-centric manner. It was not until the middle of this century that the popular imagination was set afire. Television shows such as *Lost in Space* featured scenes of Wil or Judy Robinson painting while marooned on a distant, exotic planet. Although art was merely an incidental part of such shows, the public could see the potential.

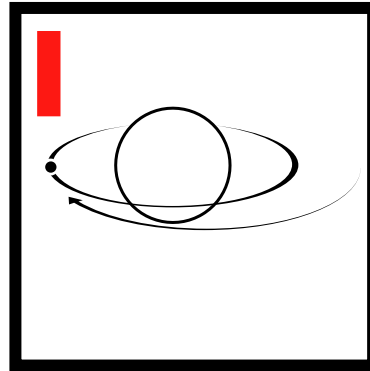
Still the artworld seemed to be blithely unaware until in 1985 the renowned artist Luther Blissett proposed that all the artworks in the world be put into a huge orbiting container and then fired into the sun. This proposal was met with broad public support but the Challenger disaster led to delays in implementation that finally forced the project to be cancelled.

Until now, no similar project of such great benefit to the Earth's visual culture has been proposed. However, recent breakthroughs in space travel have made *Art On Mars!* possible. This is undoubtedly the single-most exciting event in human history.

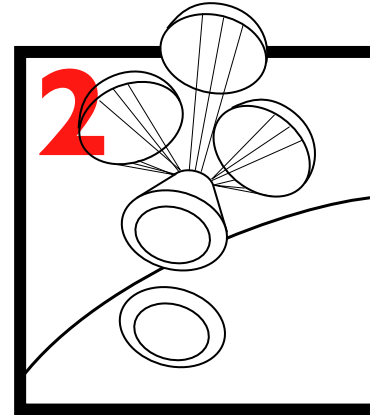


Proposed method for delivery

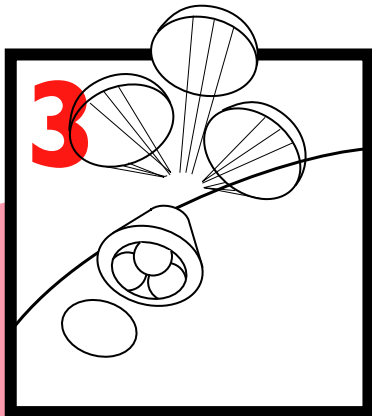
of category I works



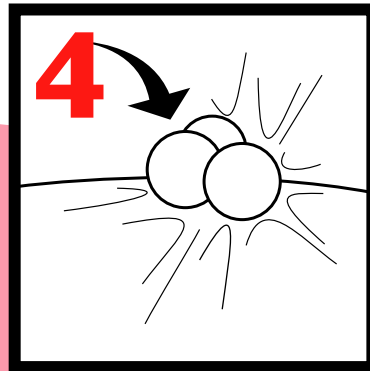
1 The spacecraft enters low orbit using the planet's atmosphere as a brake.



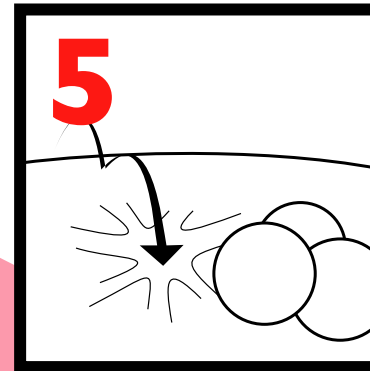
2 When the craft has reached the correct altitude it ejects its heat-shield and deploys parachutes.



3 At a height of 20 meters the craft jettisons the parachutes and its protective casing.



4 Bladders are inflated with compressed gas. They envelope the craft and cushion the shock of impact.



5 The craft rolls and bounces to a halt. The artwork is then deployed.

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Works will be divided into five categories.

Category one

is works capable of self-delivery and self-deployment on arrival.

Category two

is works capable of self-delivery and deployment on catastrophic impact.

Category three

is works requiring transport and establishment.

Category four

is works requiring complete construction on the planet.

Category five

is for children under nine.

Note:

Submissions must be presented on Mac compatible file (JPEG, GIFF,PDF). Each submission (except category five) must include a drawing of the work in situ plus a one page (A4) Microsoft Word document explaining the nature of the work, how it works (where applicable) and any pertinent or unique features of the work.

Submissions

are to be sent to:

jbleaney@westnet.com.au

This is the method used by NASA on their recent Mars expedition. It has proven most cost-effective which is of prime concern in a budget-conscious art world.