ART IN EMBASSIES

Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

INTRODUCTION

I am honored to share with you this exhibition of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Hubble telescope images. These images are beautiful and captivating and very much a gift of American art, and a worthy display at the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. The exhibition seeks to embody the goals of the Art in Embassies program – to intrigue, educate, and connect people through the visual arts, while sharing the rich cultural, innovative, scientific, and exploration history of the United States. The themes of this exhibition speak to the inspiration of people who embrace life and constantly look to a better future, rather than pine for an idyllic past. These photographs also demonstrate the outstanding efforts of the United States Government, and the immense contributions of NASA, as a source of pioneering inspiration for all mankind. I wish to honor and recognize these contributions through this exhibition.

The United States brings these images to the world so we can all relish the beauty and awe that is the universe we live in. The images of the universe around us remind us of how small we are, yet how large our dreams can be, and how far we can go if we focus our intellect, resources, and imaginations to work together. I hope these captivating photographs inspire everyone who sees them to take pause, to think beyond their own lives, and contemplate a better world from which to watch the universe. Each of us may feel insignificant in the vastness of space, but together we can do great things in our own world.

These themes resonate with the people of America as much as those in Estonia, and remind us that in our innovation and inclusiveness there is much that binds us. I hope you enjoy this exhibition and are as inspired as I am by the images. I extend my deepest gratitude to NASA for their generosity in providing these beautiful images to grace the U.S. Ambassador's Residence, to the Department of State's Art in Embassies program for assembling them, and to the staff of Embassy Tallinn for the installation of the exhibition.

James D. Melville, Jr
Ambassador of the United States of America

Tallinn, July, 2016

IMAGES FROM THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE

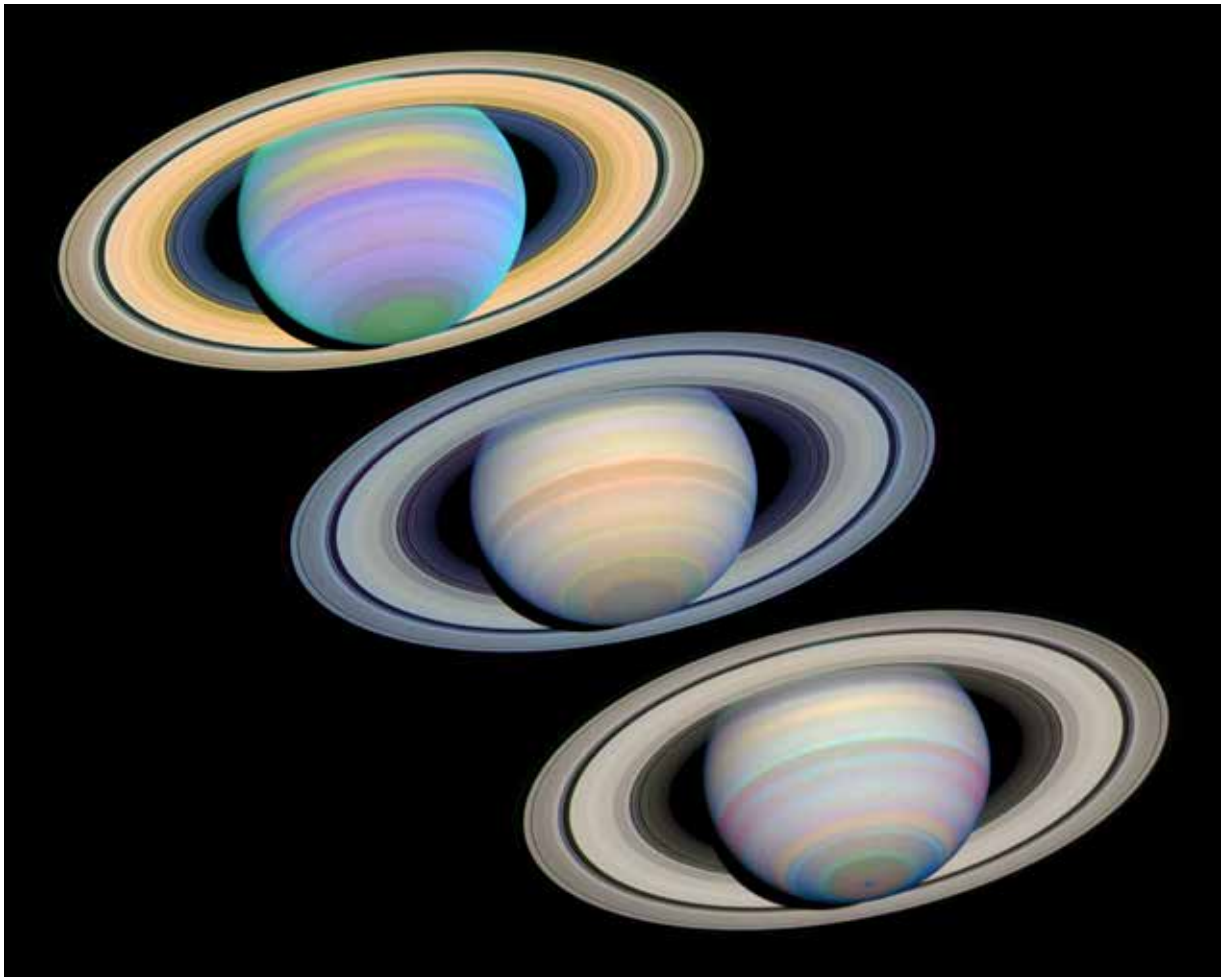
This exhibition brings together six large-scale Hubble images, each selected primarily for their visual impact. By revealing the incredible beauty of the universe, the exhibition explores an underlying relationship between aesthetics and science.

The Carina Nebula: Star Birth in the Extreme. Archival print, 118 x 59 in. (299.7 x 149.9 cm). Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

APRIL 24, 2007: In celebration of the 17th anniversary of the launch and deployment of NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, a team of astronomers [released] one of the largest panoramic images ever taken with Hubble's cameras.

It is a fifty-light-year-wide view of the central region of the Carina Nebula where a maelstrom of star birth — and death — is taking place. This image is a mosaic of the Carina Nebula assembled from forty-eight frames taken with Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys. The Hubble images were taken in the light of neutral hydrogen during March and July 2005. Color information was added with data taken in December 2001 and March 2003 at the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in Chile. Red corresponds to sulfur, green to hydrogen, and blue to oxygen emission.

(All images and texts, courtesy of the Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, Maryland)



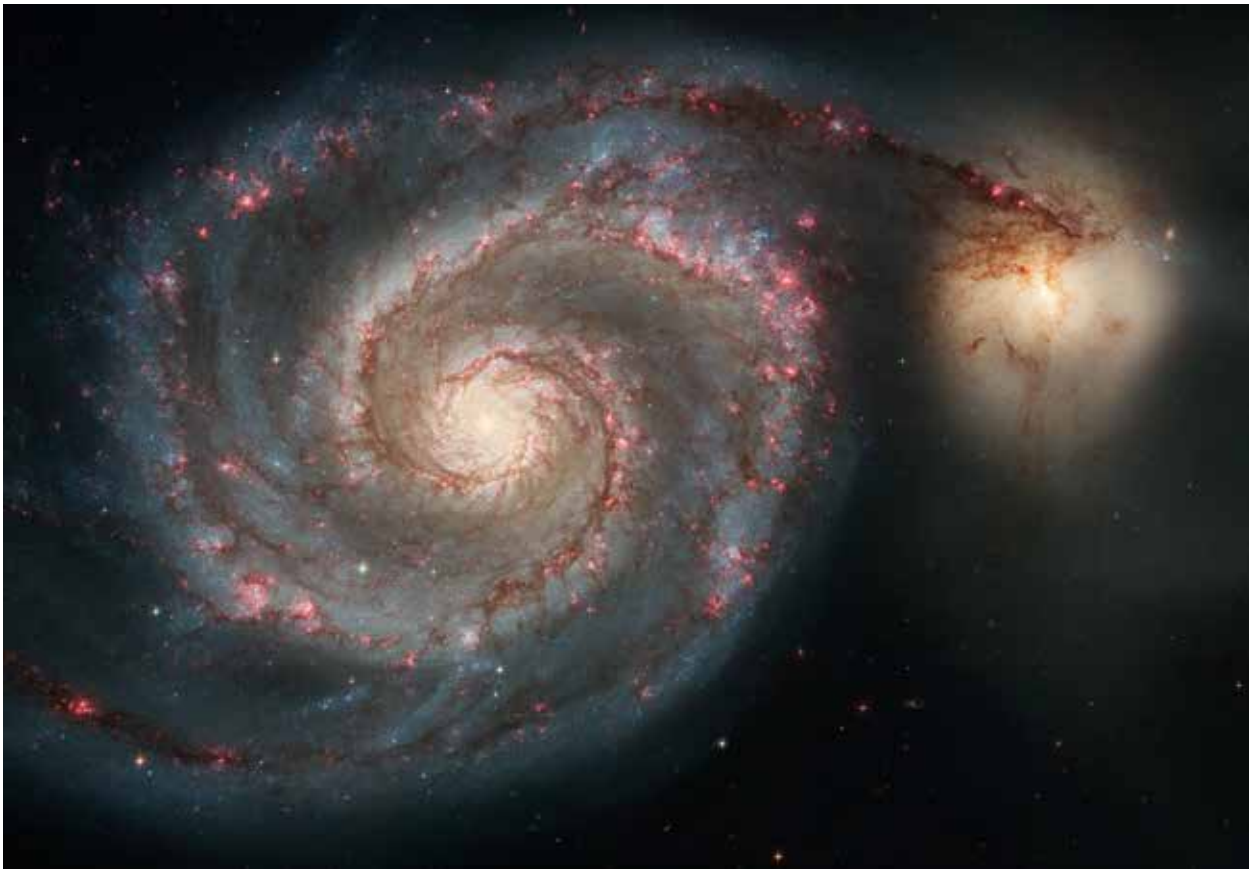
The Slant on Saturn's Rings. Archival print, 59 x 74 ¼ in. (149.9 x 188.6 cm). Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2003: This is a series of images of Saturn, as seen at many different wavelengths, when the planet's rings were at their maximum tilt of twenty-seven degrees toward Earth. Saturn experiences seasonal tilts away from and toward the Sun, much the same way Earth does. This happens over the course of its twenty-nine-and-a-half-year orbit. This means that approximately every thirty years, Earth observers can catch their best glimpse of Saturn's South Pole and the southern side of the planet's rings. Between March and April 2003, researchers took full advantage to study the gas giant at maximum tilt. They used NASA's Hubble Space Telescope to capture detailed images of Saturn's Southern Hemisphere and the southern face of its rings.

APRIL 25, 2005: When NASA's Hubble Space Telescope was launched in 1990, astronomers anticipated great discoveries, ranging from finding black holes to looking back billions of years toward the beginning of time. Now, fifteen years later, the versatile telescope continues to deliver exciting new science, including helping to prove the existence of dark energy, tracing enigmatic gamma-ray bursts to distant galaxies, and sampling the atmospheres of far-flung planets. To celebrate Hubble's fifteenth anniversary, new breathtaking images [were] released of a majestic spiral galaxy teeming with newborn stars and an eerie-looking spire of gas and dust.

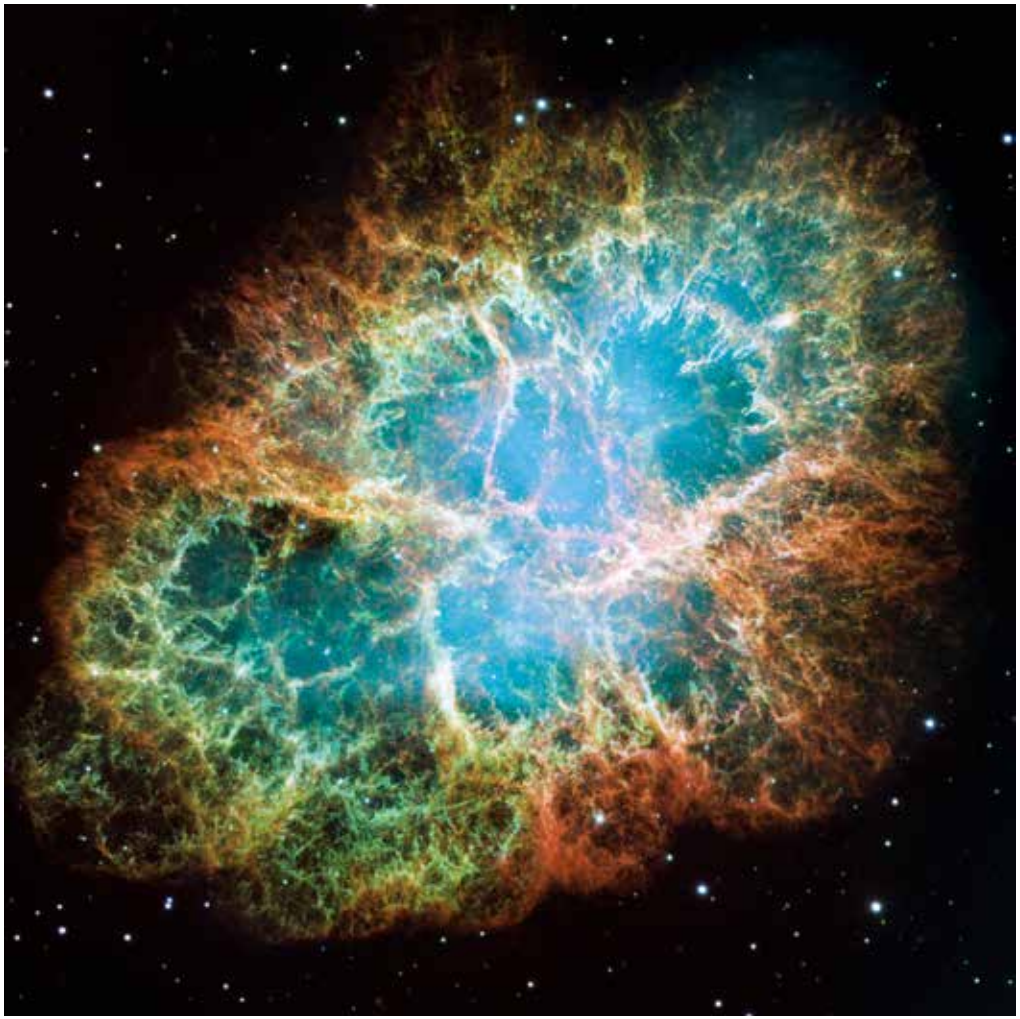
The new image of the well-known spiral galaxy M51 (known as the Whirlpool Galaxy), showcases a spiral galaxy's classic features, from its curving arms, where newborn stars reside, to its yellowish central core, a home for older stars. A feature of considerable added interest is the companion galaxy located at the end of one of the spiral arms.

Out of This Whirl: the Whirlpool Galaxy (M51) and Companion Galaxy.
Archival print, 40 x 60 in. (101.6 x 152.4 cm)
Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.



Abstract Art Found in the Orion Nebula. Archival print, 55 x 78 in. (139.7 x 198.1 cm). Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

JANUARY 11, 2006: In one of the most detailed astronomical images ever produced, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope captured an unprecedented look at the Orion Nebula. This turbulent star formation region is one of astronomy's most dramatic and photogenic celestial objects. More than 3,000 stars of various sizes appear in this image. Some of them have never been seen in visible light. These stars reside in a dramatic dust-and-gas landscape of plateaus, mountains, and valleys that are reminiscent of the Grand Canyon. The Orion Nebula is a picture book of star formation, from the massive, young stars that are shaping the nebula to the pillars of dense gas that may be the homes of budding stars.



A Giant Hubble Mosaic of the Crab Nebula
Archival print, 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm). Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

DECEMBER 1, 2005: The Crab Nebula is a six-light-year-wide expanding remnant of a star's supernova explosion. Japanese and Chinese astronomers recorded this violent event nearly 1,000 years ago in 1054, as did, almost certainly, Native Americans. This composite image was assembled from twenty-four individual exposures taken with the NASA Hubble Space Telescope's Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2 in October 1999, January 2000, and December 2000. It is one of the largest images taken by Hubble and is the highest resolution image ever made of the entire Crab Nebula.

DECEMBER 16, 2004: Looks can be deceiving, especially when it comes to celestial objects like galaxies and nebulas. These objects are so far away that astronomers cannot see their three-dimensional structure. The Helix Nebula, for example, resembles a doughnut in colorful images. Earlier images of this complex object – the gaseous envelope ejected by a dying, sun-like star – did not allow astronomers to precisely interpret its structure. One possible interpretation was that the Helix's form resembled a snake-like coil. Now, a team of astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has established that the Helix's structure is even more perplexing. Their evidence suggests that the Helix consists of two disks nearly perpendicular to each other.

The Helix Nebula:
a Gaseous Envelope Expelled By a Dying Star
Archival print, 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm)
Courtesy of HubbleSite and Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

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