



# PRESS RELEASE



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## MUSEUM OF SCIENCE CELEBRATES *INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY* WITH ORIGINAL EXHIBIT

***FIRST OBSERVERS***, featuring nationally travelling exhibit *Alien Earths*, explores the history of astronomy and the mysteries of our universe

**BUFFALO, NY (December 23, 2008)** – As *CULTURE QUEST* enters the last days of its run (last day to enjoy the exhibit is January 4), the Buffalo Museum of Science prepares to celebrate the *International Year of Astronomy* with ***FIRST OBSERVERS***. This original, astronomy-based exhibit will be open **January 10 through April 30, 2009** and will feature the nationally travelling exhibit, *Alien Earths* (opening February 1) and **special weekend programming**. Exhibits and weekend programming are included with museum admission.

The *International Year of Astronomy* ignites a celebration of the human spirit's sense of wonder. It is this sense of wonder that has been a driving force behind great explorations of our land, seas and heavens. In *FIRST OBSERVERS*, the Buffalo Museum of Science pays tribute to those whose curious pursuits have laid the path for better understanding our planet, our solar system, our universe and ultimately ourselves. It is from these findings that we will formulate the questions that will determine tomorrow's explorations. Where will your questions take you?

**FIRST OBSERVERS' Special Features:**



**Cynthia Hawkins' Clusters: Paintings and Drawings**  
**January 10 – April 30**

The study of astronomy strongly relies on the exploration and understanding of spatial relationships. View this body of work that challenges proximity and location. Along with questions of proximity of form and formal relationships, this group of works uses color and its relation to spatial placement to invent color relationships that provide a heightened narrative when combined with the historic naming of clusters.

**Voyage of Discovery Gallery**  
**January 10 – April 30**

Set sail with Darwin on his five-year voyage aboard the HMS Beagle. Put your naturalist hat on, grab a notebook and get ready to see the world through Darwin's eyes more than 150 years ago as you retrace his path through South America, Galapagos, New Zealand, Australia and Keeling Island. Watch out for tortoises, iguanas and stinging corals along the way!

**Milestones of Astronomy Gallery**  
**January 10 – April 30**

This gallery features seminal contributors to the field of astronomy who have held the keys to the doors of the sky. Marvel at the tools, methods, models and theories that have led us to be able to travel to the moon, observe other solar systems and discover distant galaxies. See what Copernicus, Kepler, Newton and you have in common!

**FIRST OBSERVERS' Special Weekend Programming:**

The Museum's Center for Science Learning and exhibit staff will provide weekend programming throughout *FIRST OBSERVERS'* run focusing on

different astronomy themes each month. These programs will be available to all Museum visitors and included with Museum admission.

<b>January:</b>	Journey Through the Solar System
<b>February:</b>	Space Travel
<b>March:</b>	Starry Night
<b>April:</b>	100 Hours of Astronomy

Programming will include planetarium shows, outer space story time, satellite and solar system building, children's crafts, auditorium presentations and special guests. A complete schedule will soon be available on the Museum's website at [www.sciencebuff.org](http://www.sciencebuff.org).

## ALIEN EARTHS: ARE WE ALONE?

February 1 – April 30

The 3,100-square-foot *Alien Earths* exhibition addresses some of humankind's most ancient concerns: Where did we come from? Are we alone? Through hands-on components and multi-media presentations, *Alien Earths* invites visitors to join the search for distant, habitable worlds.



The exhibition is geared toward inquisitive young people between the ages of 9 and 13, though visitors of all ages will find it a memorable experience. They will learn about the formation of stars and planets, the search for planets beyond our solar system, and search for life beyond Earth.

*Alien Earths* gives visitors an opportunity to learn how scientists explore areas of the Milky Way Galaxy that we cannot reach with spacecraft.

The National Science Foundation and NASA provided the Space Science Institute of Boulder, Colorado, with grants to develop *Alien Earths*. Research scientists from SSI and several NASA missions worked closely with exhibit designers to create the exhibition.



Visitors to the exhibition will be able to compare the life cycle of our Sun to other stars; set planets in motion around a star and watch what happens; experiment with an infrared camera and ordinary objects; explore the methods used to search for extrasolar planets; listen to sounds from space and find out what signals from intelligent beings might sound like; and have other experiences of the search for alien earths.

For more information on Alien Earths visit [www.alienearts.org](http://www.alienearts.org).

## ABOUT THE SPACE SCIENCE INSTITUTE

The Space Science Institute is a nonprofit organization that carries out world-class research in space and Earth science, together with innovative science education programs that inspire and deepen the public's understanding of planet Earth and its place in the grander Universe. The institute's integrated research and education programs span planetary science, space physics, astrophysics, astrobiology, and Earth science.

*The Buffalo Museum of Science is the non-profit educational institution dedicated to the study and interpretation of the natural and physical sciences. Its extensive collections of over 600,000 specimens and artifacts represent all facets of the natural world with an emphasis on Western New York as well as man-made objects spanning the globe. Based at 1020 Humboldt Parkway and anchoring Buffalo's East Side in Olmsted-designed Martin Luther King, Jr. Park since 1929, the Museum presents a wide variety of programs and services for children, teachers, families, adults, and community organizations throughout each year. General admission to the Museum is \$7 adults; \$6 seniors (age 62+); \$5 students and children over 3; and free for members and children under 3. The Museum also operates Tiff Nature Preserve in South Buffalo, a 264-acre urban wetland preserve on reclaimed former industrial land and also seasonally sponsors archaeological exploration at the Hiscock Site in nearby Genesee County, NY, one of North America's richest Ice Age sites.*

For further information on the Museum and its upcoming activities, call 716-896-5200 or visit [www.buffalomuseumofscience.org](http://www.buffalomuseumofscience.org).

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