

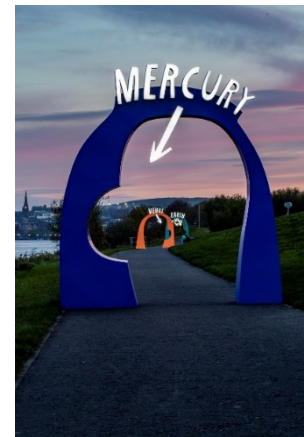
Press release

19 July 2022

8.5km sculpture trail of the solar system lands in Cambridge

Our Place in Space: Midsummer Common to Waterbeach, Cambridge, Free

30 July – 29 August 2022



Our Place in Space, the recreation of our solar system as an 8.5 km sculpture trail designed by artist Oliver Jeffers with astrophysicist Professor Stephen Smartt and a creative team led by the Nerve Centre, launches in Cambridge on 30 July with a weekend of free, family events.

Stretching from Midsummer Common in the heart of Cambridge along the River Cam to Cow Hollow Wood in nearby Waterbeach, the trail features scale models of our solar system's planets and the Sun, recreated as contemporary art sculptures – an arch houses each planet with an arrow and its name as a giant illuminated sign above it.

The trail's scale of 591 million to one makes the Sun 2.35 metres across, Earth 2.2 centimetres, and Pluto just 4 millimetres.

Our Place in Space, part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, invites participants to consider how we might better share and protect our planet in future and what is the difference between 'us' and 'them'? The project aims to bring our solar system down to Earth and send us soaring into the stars to find new perspectives and reconsider what it means to live life on our planet.

The trail is accompanied by the *Our Place in Space* augmented reality app, available on Apple and Android, which allows users across the world to take a walk through the solar system, experiencing the planets in augmented reality and considering 10,000 years of human history on

Funded by

Delivered in partnership with

Earth. Users are invited to collect space souvenirs, including characters from the world of Oliver Jeffers, as well as launching a personalised star into space.

Our Place in Space runs until 29 August with events running from the opening weekend on 30 and 31 July and throughout the summer, with interstellar tours, silent disco stargazing, live music, film screenings, yoga, and building a Minecraft planet.

Oliver Jeffers, internationally renowned artist and author said: *“For centuries, we’ve defined ourselves by who we are and who we’re not. Which side we choose, on what ground we stand, who and what we fight for. A human story, that lives merely in human minds. But with distance comes perspective – and what happens to our perspective on everything when we look back at Earth from space? Our Place in Space is a playful experiment that asks: What is the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’? Which side are we on, and if we look back at ourselves from vastness of outer space – alone on our tiny planet, the only one that can harbour life – should there be any ‘sides’ at all?”*

Our Place in Space has been designed by Oliver Jeffers with leading astrophysicist Professor Stephen Smartt and a creative team led by the Nerve Centre, Northern Ireland’s leading creative media arts centre. Local partners helping to bring *Our Place in Space* to Cambridge include Cambridge University, Cambridge City Council, Cam Conservators and the Woodland Trust.

David Lewis, Executive Producer at the Nerve Centre, said: *“Our Place in Space is a remarkable installation that combines science and art and has been thrilling children and adults alike in Northern Ireland since its launch in April this year. We are delighted to be able to bring the sculpture trail to Cambridge to the spectacular setting of Midsummer Common and the River Cam. We would encourage residents and visitors to come and experience the world of Oliver Jeffers and a creative collaboration involving some of Northern Ireland’s finest talent.”*

Our Place in Space is one of 10 major creative projects commissioned as part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK this year. UNBOXED features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK’s most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration.

Martin Green CBE, Chief Creative Officer of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said: *“Our Place in Space embodies UNBOXED’s aims to bring people together and celebrate creativity through a project that is both fun and incredibly important in its aim for everyone to reflect on life on earth and their relationships with those whose beliefs may be different from their own. It opens our eyes to a better future of understanding and collaboration.”*

There are opportunities for local people to volunteer while the trail is in Cambridge, helping enhance and support visitors’ experience and to assist with events. For more information email volunteering@ourplaceinspace.earth.

Our Place in Space is commissioned by UNBOXED and Belfast City Council. Led by Nerve Centre, the project is a collaboration between Astrophysics Research Centre at Queen’s University Belfast, National Museums NI, NI Science Festival, Big Motive, Taunt, Microsoft, Jeffers & Sons, Dumbworld, Live Music Now, Little Inventors, and Urban Scale Interventions.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Our Place in Space

Midsummer Common, Cambridge

30 July – 29 August 2022

info@ourplaceinspace.earth

<https://www.ourplaceinspace.earth/>

Instagram @ourplaceearth

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Saturday 30 July – Launch weekend

Help us welcome the *Our Place in Space* sculpture trail to Cambridge with our first day extravaganza of talks, art, activities, music and food. Meet real life NASA astronaut Kayla Barron, enjoy live music from Waterbeach Brass, take part in a book signing with Oliver Jeffers, get crafty with SunSpaceArt...and much more!

Sunday 31 July – Launch Weekend

A second day extravaganza of talks, art, activities, music and food. Enjoy an interactive space science show with Mark Langtry, explore the sounds of space, get crafty with SunSpaceArt, join in a special edition of Even You Song...and much more!

6 & 7 August – Morning yoga on Midsummer Common

Jump in your space shuttle and head towards Mercury to join a yoga class that will help restore your body and mind with Karin Eklund.

6 August – Ice from Above at the Polar Museum

Join the team at The Polar Museum and help to map the coldest places on planet Earth with a giant floor map. Satellites circle our planet, remotely mapping important things about the world using different kinds of light. How deep are the lakes? How thick is the ice? Are the forests getting smaller? Drop-in and discover how seeing the Polar Regions from above can unlock their secrets.

8-12 August – Minecraft and Coding Sessions

Free digital workshops will see you create your own space vehicle or design a game inspired by the iconic Space Invaders arcade game.

13 August – Meteors on Midsummer - Silent Disco Skygazing

Taking place on Midsummer Common during the peak of the Perseid meteor shower, this unique event will invite you to lie back and open your eyes and ears to the wonder of the sky. Featuring immersive soundtracks by Sounds of Space and Cambridge-based artist Sarah Wood, this evening of silent disco skygazing will awaken your senses.

14 August & 21 August – Storytelling at the Sun

Join expert storyteller Marion Leeper who will share folktales and legends about the Sun from cultures around the world. Joining her will be illustrator Tonka Uzu who will help you get creative inspired by Marion's stories.

28 August – Picnic at the Planets, Closing Event

Help bid farewell to the *Our Place in Space* sculpture trail with a Picnic at the Planets. Enjoy hands-on creative STEAM activities, guided tours of the trail, games from Living Sport, live music by the Lightwaves, Hunt and Darton's interactive 'Great Planetary Make-Off', make your own rocket with the CHOAS science team or have a go on one of the Outspoken Smoothie Bikes to DIY your own free smoothie.

NOTES TO EDITORS

[IMAGES – HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)

For more information, images and interviews

Our Place in Space media enquiries:

Tracy Jones, Brera PR | tracy@brera-london.com | 01702 216658 | 07887 514984

UNBOXED media enquiries: Jeanette.ward@unboxed2022.uk | 07729 930 812

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK in 2022, designed to reach millions and bring people together. It features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK's most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration. Produced by some of the brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths, UNBOXED features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future. Events and activities take place from 1 March to 2 October 2022 – from the Outer Hebrides to Dover and from Omagh to Swansea, and across traditional and online media. UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

Oliver Jeffers is a visual artist and author working in painting, bookmaking, illustration, collage, performance, and sculpture. Curiosity and humour are underlying themes throughout Jeffers' practice as an artist and storyteller. While investigating the ways the human mind understands its world, his work also functions as comic relief in the face of futility. Jeffers' engagements and practice are truly international in scope. His critically acclaimed picture books have been translated into over fifty languages and sold over 14 million copies worldwide. His original artwork has been exhibited at such institutions as the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the National Portrait Gallery in London, and the Palais Auersperg in Vienna. Jeffers has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books Award, Bologna Rigazzi Award, An Irish Book Award, and a United Kingdom Literary Association Award. Oliver grew up in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he currently lives.

Professor Stephen Smartt FRS is professor of astrophysics at Queen's University Belfast and has previously worked at the University of Cambridge and the UK's Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes. He uses telescopes around the world to survey the sky in search of exploding stars. An exploding star is called a supernova, which can shine with the power of 11 billion suns. Professor Smartt leads several international teams using telescopes in Chile (in the southern hemisphere) and Hawaii (northern hemisphere) to search for these spectacular explosions. He also searches for light emitted by sources of gravitational waves which are thought to be dense neutron stars that smash together. Professor Smartt is a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, and was awarded the George Darwin Lecture and Herschel Medal by the Royal Astronomical Society and the RIA Gold Medal in the physical and mathematical sciences.

[Nerve Centre](#) is Northern Ireland's leading creative media arts centre with a vision of 'changing lives through creative technologies and the arts'.

More than 120,000 people a year benefit from a wide-ranging programme of arts events, innovative projects, creative learning, and production facilities. A successful social enterprise, the Nerve Centre employs 50 staff in Derry~Londonderry and Belfast. At an educational level, the Nerve Centre has developed the Creative Learning Centre model, empowering teachers and community learners to engage with creative technologies to unlock learning in the curriculum.

The Nerve Centre's artistic output has gained an international reputation with Oscar and BAFTA nominations, and an ongoing collaboration with visual artist Willie Doherty, twice nominated for the Turner Prize.