



Capture the Colorful Cosmos 2011

astrophotography using online telescopes

Capture the Colorful Cosmos Astrophotography Project

Special Opportunity for Educators from Smithsonian Affiliate Organizations!

Are you a museum or informal educator interested in sharing the art and science of astrophotography with your audiences? **From November 14 through 21**, take part in an exciting online workshop just for members of the Smithsonian Affiliations network (no astronomy expertise required!)

The Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA), NASA, and Smithsonian Affiliations are collaborating on the "Capture the Colorful Cosmos" astrophotography project. This program will give your public audiences access to the CfA's MicroObservatory robotic telescopes, a network of 5 automated telescopes that you can control over the internet. You and your visitors will be able to take and colorize your own images of stars and galaxies the same way that professional astronomers do. Participating museums, nature centers, libraries, and other informal education organizations will learn how to run public workshops that result in exhibitions of original visitor-created astrophotography displays. These images and displays can be featured not only at the participating institutions, but also on Smithsonian and NASA websites.

What?

By joining an online discussion group and attending two live webinars, you will learn how to control the MicroObservatory telescopes to request images of planets, galaxies, and nebulae, all from your own computer. Open a web browser, select the telescope targets and exposure time, and the images will be taken that evening and emailed the next day.

Once you have some image files, you can use the tools in MicroObservatory to enhance these photos, sharpen and refine the view of your object, and use filters to create stunning colorful interpretations or real-color images. Compare your own images to those from NASA and Smithsonian telescopes.

Now that you have learned how to make these images, help your visitors to take their own photos of astronomical objects and to create displays or exhibits to show in public. During the online workshop, we'll show you some examples of past visitor-created exhibits and projects and provide a place for you to brainstorm ideas.

Why?

This project is brought to you by scientists and educators at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. The goal is to provide nationwide access to Smithsonian resources, and to engage newcomers to astronomy in the wonders of the universe by making images of the cosmos accessible and by encouraging individual interpretations of these images. Supported by NASA's Science Mission Directorate and the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, this project builds on MicroObservatory's past successes in museum exhibits and after-school programs across the country. Smithsonian Affiliations is proud to present this wonderful opportunity to Affiliate organizations and astronomy fans.



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What Does it Cost?

Nothing! This is a free opportunity for informal educators who may wish to use the MicroObservatory telescopes in public programs or out-of-school settings.

When?

The online workshop will take place from November 14 – November 21, 2011. Workshop participants will have access to a password-protected website containing downloadable resources, video tutorials, and a discussion forum hosted by Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory experts. You can participate on your own time as much or as little as you'd like during the week, and there will also be two live 90-minute webinars on Tuesday November 15 and Thursday November 17. Smithsonian experts will demonstrate how to use the telescopes, how to create stunning colorful astrophotographs, and will be available to answer questions. Technical tips for participants will be emailed to registrants in advance of these events.

To participate in the workshop, register at the following URL:
<http://www.universeforum.org/SIcosmos/>

More Questions?

Email any questions to Erin Braswell at MicroObservatory@cfa.harvard.edu. We'll get back to you with additional information.