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LASM Prepares to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Apollo 11 Mission

On July 16, 1969, the astronauts of the Apollo 11 Mission rocketed into space toward the Moon, where they would land four days later and accomplish one of the greatest feats in human history. In remembrance of this momentous accomplishment, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum has premiered a new planetarium show and will host a special celebration during July 2019.

On July 6, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium premiered ***Apollo 11: First Steps Edition***, a documentary that captures our landing on the Moon in exquisite detail. Crafted from a newly-discovered trove of **never-before-seen** 70mm footage and more than 11,000 hours of uncatalogued audio recordings, ***Apollo 11: First Steps Edition*** puts audiences at the center of NASA's historic lunar landing.

"The Apollo 11 mission was humanity's greatest adventure and we're pleased to be bringing this edition to science centers and museums everywhere," says director Todd Douglas Miller. "This film was designed to take full advantage of the immersive quality of giant screen theaters."

Miller and his team crafted ***Apollo 11: First Steps Edition*** entirely from archival materials. As the team was working closely with NASA and the National Archives to locate all existing Apollo 11 footage, NARA staff members made a startling discovery that changed the course of the project: an unprocessed collection of 70mm large format footage, never-before-seen by the public, containing stunning shots of the launch, the inside of Mission Control, and recovery and post-mission activities. The other unexpected find was a massive cache of audio recordings that captured individual tracks from 60 key mission personnel throughout the mission.

"This show is so unique because it will present to many a new perspective of this iconic historical moment," said Sheree Westerhaus, LASM Director of Operations & Planetarium. "Many who saw it live on TV as small children only saw a few minutes of grainy footage; many others have only read about it. ***Apollo 11: First Steps Edition*** made me feel like I was watching the entire mission live for the first time. It clearly demonstrates that this mission was a massive undertaking with thousands of people from many disciplines working together to accomplish it. Most importantly, it reminds us of the impact this achievement has had on our world, and, hopefully, pushes us to aim even higher."

On **July 20**, the day Neil Armstrong became the first man to touch the surface of the Moon, LASM will host the event **One Giant Leap for Mankind**. This day of celebration will feature special planetarium shows, including ***Apollo 11: First Steps Edition*** from 10 AM – 5 PM, hands-on activities in the Bert S.

Turner Atrium from 10 AM to 2 PM, a special display on the Moon landing in Science Station, and **authentic lunar samples.**

“The Moon landing was an extraordinary event that required unprecedented invention and ingenuity,” said Serena Pandos, LASM President & Executive Director. “As such, it is the perfect occasion to celebrate at the Art & Science Museum. The technology that has enabled never-before-seen audiovisuals from mission personnel inspires much contemplation, inquisitiveness, and wonder. We're so fortunate to have the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium as a resource for providing these kinds of immersive ‘edutainment’ experiences.

“Apollo 11 not only documents a significant historical event, as never before, but also opens an important dialogue about teamwork, trust, exploration, and courage. All of these resonate with our personal passage, or journey, at any age,” continued Pandos. “I am continually astounded by the many new, different, and innovative programs being offered in the planetarium.”

To learn more about *Apollo 11* and other programs at the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, visit **lasm.org/planetarium**.

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Image: Astronaut Buzz Aldrin walks on the surface of the Moon near the leg of the lunar module Eagle during the Apollo 11 mission. Mission commander Neil Armstrong took this photograph with a 70mm lunar surface camera. While astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin explored the Sea of Tranquility region of the Moon, astronaut Michael Collins remained with the command and service modules in lunar orbit. Source: NASA Photographs from the Internet Archive (Public Domain).

About the Louisiana Art & Science Museum

A nonprofit organization housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum enhances the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge. More information about the Art & Science Museum is available at lasm.org.

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