

“FROM EARTH TO THE UNIVERSE” PROJECT TO COME TO MEMPHIS

March 16, 2009, Memphis, TN

An exhibition of large-scale astronomical images will soon be showing at the Central Branch of the Memphis Public Library. Memphis is the second stop on the American tour of this photo exhibit called “From Earth to the Universe” (FETTU). The exhibit will bring the beauty of astronomy to the general public in a series of free showings across the country. The Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library will host FETTU in its Goodwyn Gallery, just to the left of the main entrance lobby, between April 1-30.

The FETTU exhibit in Memphis is being coordinated through local efforts by the Memphis Astronomical Society and the physics department at Rhodes College. The Spitzer Science Center in Pasadena, California is also assisting with the Memphis project.

Rhodes College will host an opening event for the Memphis exhibit on April 1. The Peyton Rhodes Physics Lecture will feature the unveiling of a newly acquired image of the Triangulum galaxy from the Spitzer Space Telescope. Dr. Gordon Squires, Assistant Director for Public Affairs of the [Spitzer Space Telescope](#) and the Assistant Director for Community Affairs for the [NASA Herschel Science Center](#) at the California Institute of Technology, will discuss the International Year of Astronomy and the role of NASA and the Spitzer Space Telescope in the FETTU exhibit. Dr. Joanna Hinz, senior research associate at the University of Arizona, will discuss her research on the Triangulum galaxy and how the new image affects our understanding of galaxy evolution by letting us see where stars are created, how those stars generate large masses of dust, and how that dust spreads throughout the galaxy. The lecture begins at 7:00 PM in Hardie Auditorium in Palmer Hall and is preceded by a reception at 6:30 PM outside the auditorium. The lecture is free and open to the public.

In conjunction with the FETTU exhibition, the Memphis Astronomical Society (MAS) and the Children’s Department of the library will hold a program for children and families on Thursday, April 2 at 6:30 PM at the library. The event will include a talk about the celestial objects visible in the sky that evening, and the MAS will distribute star maps with instructions on using them. Following the discussion, the MAS invites visitors to observe Saturn, the Moon, and double stars through telescopes, weather permitting. FETTU is a major project of both the US and global efforts for the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009). With images taken from both ground- and space-based telescopes, FETTU showcases the incredible variety of astronomical objects that are known to exist – planets, comets, stars, nebulae, galaxies, clusters, and more.

FETTU will be shown in non-traditional public venues such as parks and gardens, shopping malls, metro stations and airports in major cities across the world. The FETTU images have been selected for their stunning beauty to engage members of the general public who might normally ignore or avoid astronomy. With short but informative captions on each panel, the goal is to introduce some basics of the science once an individual has been drawn to the image.

In the United States, FETTU is being sponsored by NASA and will appear in semi-permanent installations in Atlanta and Chicago later this spring. A traveling version of FETTU will be shown in the Tucson, Arizona airport in March before moving to Memphis in April. Several editions of FETTU will be appearing in the San Francisco area beginning in May, thanks to NASA’s Lunar Science Institute, and the NASA Student Ambassador program is facilitating a FETTU exhibit in Madison, Wisconsin. More FETTU locations are being planned across the US and an enhanced schedule is being developed.

With NASA support, FETTU panels for the visually impaired are being prepared. The caption material for all of the images in the US collection of 50 images is available in both English and Spanish.

"It's great to see FETTU taking shape in the United States thanks, in large part, to NASA," said Kim Kowal Arcand of the Chandra X-ray Center and principal investigator for the NASA FETTU grant. "It's also amazing to see how it has taken off around the world."

With IYA2009 underway, FETTU is already being showcased in a variety of formats—both physically and digitally—in over 40 countries across the globe. For more information about the project and the images visit <http://www.fromearthtotheuniverse.org>.

These worldwide exhibits have been funded through a variety of local resources and are organized by each individual location. For a full list of known FETTU exhibits—both in the US and internationally—visit http://www.fromearthtotheuniverse.org/table_events.php. FETTU is one of 11 global cornerstone projects being supported by the International Astronomical Union's IYA2009 efforts. To learn more about IYA2009 internationally, the cornerstone projects, and other activities please visit <http://www.astronomy2009.org>.

More information is available at these websites:

The Spitzer Science Center at <http://spitzer.caltech.edu>

Rhodes College at <http://www.rhodes.edu/>

The Memphis Public Library at <http://www.memphislibrary.org/>

The Memphis Astronomical Society at <http://www.memphisastro.org/>

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