

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ST. PETE

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG (MFA) WELCOMES BIOSPHERE 2 CREW MEMBER AND FOUNDER OF SPACE PERSPECTIVE, JANE POYNTER, FOR AN ENTHRALLING DISCUSSION IN TANDEM WITH THE UPCOMING “*THE NATURE OF ART*” EXHIBITION.

What insights can viewing Earth from space offer about our place in this immense, intricate, and beautiful planet we collectively call home? Jane Poynter will discuss “The Overview Effect” at the MFA on October 19, 2023.



ST. PETERSBURG, FL (October 5, 2023) — [The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg](#) (MFA), is pleased to host Founder, Co-CEO, and Chief Experience Officer of Space Perspective Jane

Poynter for a fascinating talk, [The Overview Effect](#), on October 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. *The Overview Effect* is part of a series of public programming events designed to illuminate the MFA's forthcoming exhibition, [The Nature of Art](#), which looks at the disparate ways humans have engaged in artistic expression to understand our environment, mediate our relationship with nature, and attain a more profound comprehension of our role within the world. This exhibition is a celebration of the highest aspirations of humankind—the intellectual and creative activities that reflect and shape the world in which we live.



A pivotal moment in human history occurred with the first sighting of the “Earthrise,” an image capturing our planet from space. This remarkable image, captured by astronaut Bill Anders during the Apollo 8 mission, evoked a profound state of awe with self-transcendent qualities precipitated by a particularly striking visual stimulus. The Overview Effect—a term coined by Frank White in 1987—is a “cognitive shift in awareness” experienced by astronauts during spaceflight that, among others, leads to “a renewed sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment” (White, 2014, 2).

“The Overview Effect bears a resemblance to the 18th century philosopher Edmund Burke's notion of the sublime, which profoundly shaped centuries of artists' representations of nature in landscape painting,” said Senior Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Dr. Stanton Thomas. “The “Earthrise” images can be viewed as an extension of this enduring tradition of landscape art, one that continues to evoke both inspiration and humility within us, serving as a poignant reminder of both the magnitude and fragility of life.”

This powerful effect also prompted Jane Poynter and Taber McCallum to establish [Space Perspective](#). Emerging from their collaboration within Biosphere 2 and their endeavors designing equipment for human survival in extreme environments, they have pioneered innovative approaches for humans to act as both stewards and survivors of our planet.

Biosphere 2, a hermetically sealed, self-sustaining environment, was developed as a laboratory for learning about our planet and a viable prototype for a living environment that could be installed on other planets. Poynter and McCallum resided within Biosphere 2 for two years, completely immersed in a state of profound environmental symbiosis with their natural surroundings. This experience left them with the similarly expanded perspective that astronauts report after returning from space— “a visceral understanding of what it means to be part of the vast, complex, beautiful planet we call home and share with each other.”



One of the goals of Space Perspective is cultural engagement. Most individuals who have witnessed Planet Earth from above belong to a specialized cohort of scientists and engineers. They universally attest to the transformative influence this experience has had on them. Through Space Perspective, Poynter hopes to create the same opportunities for a greater diversity of Explorers, including artists, writers, community leaders, and elected officials—pondering the impact a trip to space may have on their important work.

Jane Poynter is the Co-Founder, Co-CEO, and Chief Experience Officer of Space Perspective, where she is charged with ensuring all Space Explorers have the most meaningful and memorable journey possible. Jane was a member of the Biosphere 2 design team and original crew who lived for two years inside the sealed, self-sustaining habitat, the first prototype space base built and operated. She then co-founded and was President of Paragon Space Development, which today has technologies on almost every human spacecraft in operation in the U.S. In partnership with the World Bank and United Nations, Poynter developed the first carbon credit program using mangroves. She holds a patent for the world's first self-sustaining habitat used in multiple space programs and bred the first animals to complete multiple life cycles in space. Jane's book, *The Human Experiment: Two Years and Twenty Minutes Inside Biosphere 2*, chronicles her time as one of the original eight crew members on that project. She is a fellow of the Explorers Club, and her [TED talk on global sustainability](#) has over one million views.



“We’re passionate about fundamentally changing the way people access space—both to perform much-needed research to benefit life on Earth and to affect how we view and connect with our planet,” said Poynter. “Today, it is more crucial than ever to see Earth as an interconnected planet, a spaceship for all humanity and our global biosphere.”

During a recent test flight, Space Perspective incorporated scientific experiments and artistic endeavors, including student projects selected through a partnership with Higher Orbits, a non-profit dedicated to promoting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). They are continuing to foster cross-disciplinary connections, working with artists to produce pieces that will journey into space on upcoming flights.



PROGRAM:

[The Nature of Art: The Overview Effect](#)

Jane Poynter, CEO of Space Perspective

Thursday, October 19, 2023

6:00–7:00 p.m.

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg

255 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

The MFA 2023 Fall Programming Series is presented by Raymond James

Images

1. The Earth from Apollo 8 as it rounded the dark side of the moon. Photograph: NASA
2. Georgia O'Keeffe, American, 1887-1986, *Grey Hills Painted Red, New Mexico*, 1930, Oil on canvas, Anonymous gift, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg
3. The Biosphere 2 complex in 1991, John Miller/Associated Press
4. Founder, Co-CEO and Chief Experience Officer of Space Perspective, Jane Poynter inside Biosphere 2, Brendan Moore Photography, courtesy of Jane Poynter
5. SpaceBalloon™ courtesy of Space Perspective

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (MFA) has an encyclopedic collection of art from around the globe and across the centuries, with almost 5,000 years of civilization represented in thousands of objects extending from antiquity to the present. The collection includes works by Georgia O'Keefe, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Auguste Rodin, Kehinde Wiley, Jacob Lawrence, and many others, as well as ancient Greek and Roman, Asian, African, Art of the Americas and Native American art. The Museum's photographic collection is one of the largest and well-respected in the Southeast. The museum's rotating exhibition galleries feature a diverse selection of temporary exhibitions from all over the world, as well as exhibitions curated from the museum's extensive collection. In addition to its robust exhibition program, the MFA engages the community through exciting public programs and events and serves students through youth programs and a partnership with the Pinellas County School System.

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