



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Earth's messages of hope embark on 400-year journey into space

Messages of hope and reflection from around the world will be beamed towards the North Star, Polaris, as part of an interstellar art project.

More than 3700 messages from 146 countries and territories will be sent into space at the speed of light as a cosmic message in a bottle.

The University project attracted a huge public response to a single question: how will our present environmental interactions shape the future?

Messages have been submitted since February from every continent across the globe, from Bogota, Columbia and Lagos, Nigeria to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and a research base in Antarctica.

At 9pm BST on 10 October, the messages will be broadcast into space from the European Space Agency's (ESA) Cebreros Deep Space Tracking Station, Spain.

They will pass deeper into space than Mars within six minutes. Within 21 hours the signal will have travelled further than mankind's first physical messenger to the stars, Voyager 1, launched in 1977. The messages will reach Polaris in 434 years.

A Simple Response to an Elemental Message is developed in a collaboration involving the University of Edinburgh, ESA, the Royal Observatory of Edinburgh, the UK Astronomical Technology Centre, and the European Southern Observatory.

Organisers said the responses ranged from those optimistic about the future of humanity to a more downbeat vision.

One five-year-old from Denmark said: "I think our future will have trees growing on top of building. We will have cars flying in the sky and be looking to move to other planets when we fix this one."

Another contributor from Indiana, in the US, said: "People have a great fear of asteroids, zombies and nuclear war when the factor that will most likely impede our survival is our own footprints."

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Several strong themes emerged in the submissions, according to researchers. Many contained ideas about how to address climate change, others offered views on the root cause of it.

More than 100 spoke about mankind establishing itself in other worlds.

Edinburgh College of Art postgraduate student and lead organiser Paul Quast said: “It has been a humbling experience attaining the thousands of contributions from different countries. The huge interest reflects a promising worldwide shift in attitudes for securing a future for Earth, its biosphere and humankind. Hopefully this momentum can be sustained as the messages travels through interstellar space for the next several hundred years.”

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