

“It is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.”

Carl Sagan (1934-1996)

– American astronomer, writer and popularizer of science

NOT THAT SKY

The sky is nothing more than the blue colour of the atmospheric layer beyond which the interplanetary void extends. Just 100 km above the Earth's surface there lies a conventional boundary between its atmosphere and the outer space, whose magnitude is far beyond the grasp of our imagination. There are fewer and fewer places in the world where the view of the night sky remains unaffected by human activity. However, once we happen to find ourselves away from the city lights, we can feast our eyes on the stellar projection. It is an extraordinary spectacle, one which has fascinated humans since the dawn of time. The darkness of the celestial vault at night, illuminated by the glare of the moon and the billions of stars, is still a mysterious, impenetrable reality that fires the imagination.

The stars in the sky are the image of light travelling from the remote reaches of space at a speed of 300,000 km/s. In fact, the pageant above our heads shows events from the distant past that we get to witness with enormous delay. The light from the closest star (Proxima Centauri) takes more than four years to reach Earth. This means that if the star exploded in real time today, we would see the blast only in 2027. The events visible in the night sky are thus a bridge between the past, the present and the future.

Astronomy and the phenomenon of the starry sky are the starting point for the story presented in the exhibition. An exhibition which does not aspire to be a cosmic encyclopaedia. We would like it to inspire you to discover the universe and its mysteries, to engage in conversations and explore, as well as to kindle your interest in the natural and exact sciences. After all, so many extraordinary things relating to the cosmos are within reach—not by spaceship, but by bicycle or on foot.

“There is nothing in life to be feared, only to be understood.”

Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1867-1934)

– Polish-French experimental physicist and physical chemist,
two-time winner of the Nobel Prize in physics and chemistry