



University College London Launches ETHNO-ISS: An Ethnography of an Extra-terrestrial Society: the International Space Station

Principal Investigator Victor Buchli and team aim to holistically re-examine one of the most extreme parts of inhabited Earth: Low Earth Orbit and the International Space Station

London/Low Earth Orbit, July 1, 12:00PM GMT/UTC - ETHNO-ISS, a University College London Anthropology based project funded by the European Research Council, today publicly announced its initial launch. Its research and investigation into inhabited low-Earth orbit and the International Space Station (ISS) will commence fully this Autumn.

The ISS is arguably the oldest extra-terrestrial society in low-Earth orbit. To date this radical new form of human habitation and society has not been the object of systematic and comparative ethnographic inquiry. This project aims to correct this and proposes a comparative and multi-sited ethnography of the ISS among some of the key participants contributing to its modular architecture: The United States, Russia, Europe and Japan.

"For twenty years now the inhabitation of the ISS in low-Earth orbit challenges our understandings of Earth and terrestrial habitation in new unprecedented ways," Principal Investigator Victor Buchli explains, *"the ETHNO-ISS project aims to understand these processes holistically on Earth and in low-Earth orbit across the various communities that make up this dynamic expanding nexus of inhabitation."*

[Buchli](#) and [team](#) will re-examine and reflexively consider the assumptions at the heart of this radical form of inhabitation. Related to this are the distinctive political aesthetics in this setting and its innovative dimensions of 'worlding' (Heidegger) and the materialities entailed therein. These relate to wider notions in both anthropological and material terms as well as broader issues concerning governance and the expansion of the human and habitability and general understandings of materiality. ETHNO-ISS will provide the first ever international, integrative, and comparative study of this unprecedented form of human society and the material conditions of its emergent 'worlding'.

About ETHNO-ISS

[ETHNO-ISS](#) affords the opportunity to critically re-examine our terrestrially based theories. Methodologically the project focuses on the quotidian and material dimensions of the ISS and its bodily and material techniques, re-examining traditional empirical assumptions within the innovative conditions of the new polymedia environments in which the ISS is situated. The project situates the respective Mission Controls and their wider communities as coterminous with the ISS site, examining it as a complex nexus of inhabitation encompassing both terrestrial and extra-terrestrial realms in a novel configuration. This project has received funding from the [European Research Council \(ERC\)](#) under the [European Union's Horizon 2020](#) research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 833135).

Contact

ETHNO-ISS
Dariusz R Jakubowski
Media Officer
dariusz@ethnoiss.space