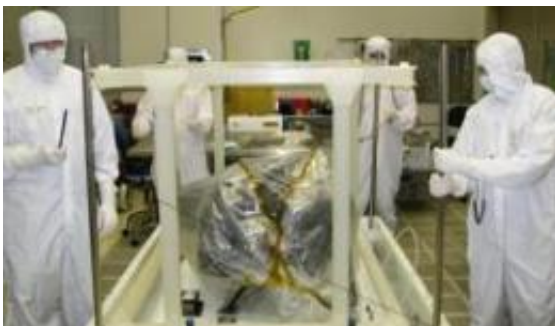


# UA Camera Begins Next Leg on Journey to Space

May 4 2010, By Jeff Harrison

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NIRCam, packaged and on its way to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. (photo courtesy Marcia Rieke)

(PhysOrg.com) -- NIRCam, the UA-designed infrared eye of the upcoming James Web Space Telescope, passed a key test and is on its way to the GoddardSpace Flight Center in Maryland. The telescope, designed to search for the earliest galaxies in the universe, is set for launch in 2014.

A key component of a new orbiting space telescope has cleared an important milestone.

NIRCam, the 0.6 to 5 micron imager for NASA's new [James Webb Space Telescope](#), or JWST, was designed by scientists at the University of Arizona. The NIRCam Engineering Test Unit passed its test phase at Lockheed in Palo Alto, Calif., where it was constructed, and is being

shipped to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland.

It is due to arrive there on May 3.

With its 6.5 meter (21-foot) mirror, JWST will look for the first light-emitting galaxies and star clusters that formed in the universe after the Big Bang. The NIRCcam design is optimized for finding first light sources, peering through clouds of dust in space that obscure these objects.

"The camera also includes features that will make it a wonderful tool for studying star formation in the [Milky Way Galaxy](#) and for discovering and characterizing planets around other stars," said Marcia Rieke, an astronomer and professor at the UA Steward Observatory and a principal investigator for the JWST.

The test unit at Lockheed includes one fully functional optical channel and was used to demonstrate that the hardware that will be used in aligning JWST's mirror segments will work.

The JWST, formerly known as the Next Generation [Space Telescope](#), is due to launch in 2014.

**More information:** [ircamera.as.arizona.edu/nircam/](http://ircamera.as.arizona.edu/nircam/)

Provided by University of Arizona

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