

Camera that saved Hubble leaves nest for good

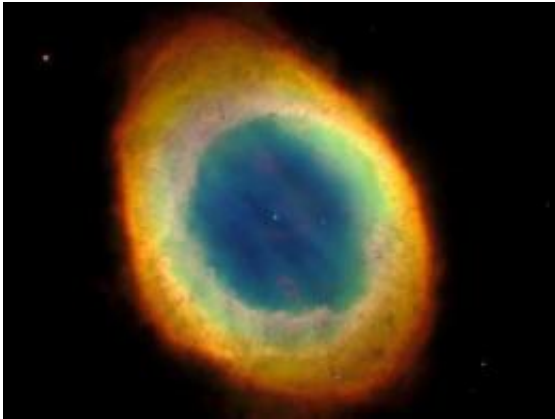
October 14 2010, By DC Agle



NASA's Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2 was loaded for transport from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Oct. 13, 2010.

The historic Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2, developed and built by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, left JPL Wednesday morning, Oct. 13, for points east. Known informally as "The Camera That Saved Hubble," the baby-grand-piano-sized camera was on temporary loan from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington.

During its stay at JPL, the historic camera was a popular attraction for groups of school children and other visitors, including thousands of people who attended JPL's annual Open House in May.



The image from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope shows the most famous of all planetary nebulae: the Ring Nebula (M57). In this October 1998 image taken with the Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2, the telescope looked down a barrel of gas cast off by a dying star thousands of years ago.

Next stop for the camera: It will be on display for a short time at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Colorado, and then it will return to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, where it will go on permanent display. The Wide Field and [Planetary Camera 2](#) was the workhorse camera on Hubble after being added to the observatory in December 1993 to correct an imaging problem created by the telescope's faulty primary mirror.



Using the Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2, Hubble peered into a small portion of the nebula near the star cluster NGC 2074 (upper, left). The region is a firestorm of raw stellar creation, perhaps triggered by a nearby supernova explosion.

During its tenure aboard Hubble, the camera produced many of the mission's most stunning deep space images. Its high-image resolution and quality are some of the reasons the camera became the space telescope's most requested instrument during its operational lifetime. Logging 15 years aboard the observatory, the Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2 was Hubble's longest-serving instrument.

Space-walking astronauts retrieved the camera during the final Hubble servicing mission in May 2009.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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