

# Asteroid named after sci-fi's Alejandro Jodorowsky

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Alejandro Jodorowsky, pictured in Guadalajara, Mexico, on November 28, 2011. A large asteroid has been named after the cult Franco-Chilean film-maker and science-fiction comics writer who later became a spiritual guru.

A large asteroid has been named after Alejandro Jodorowsky, the cult Franco-Chilean film-maker and science-fiction comics writer who later became a spiritual guru.

The Minor Planets Center, a branch of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), has listed asteroid 261690 Jodorowsky at the request of a French astronomer who spotted the five-kilometre (three-mile) -wide object more than seven years ago.

The discoverer is Jean-Claude Merlin, who has several other "minor planets," as large asteroids are called, on his list of sightings.

"I detected it on the evening of Christmas Eve in 2005, using an 80-centimetre (32-inch) telescope in Arizona that I direct over the Internet from my home," Merlin was quoted on Tuesday as saying in a press release by Les Humanoïdes Associés, Jodorowsky's French publishing house.

Several years of observation are needed to confirm a discovery and calculate its orbit, enabling it to be enshrined in the IAU's list.

A special panel, the Committee on Small Body Nomenclature, is in charge of approving names. Approval came on July 24.

Jodorowsky, 84, leapt to prominence in 1970 with an offbeat "acid western" movie called "El Topo", which was followed in 1973 by a surrealist film, "The Holy Mountain".

Both became popular on the underground film circuit in the United States.

In France, he found success in the 1980s with science-fiction comic books, including a series called "The Incal", illustrated by French artist Moebius.

Jodorowsky, based in Paris, also writes and talks about his own spiritual beliefs, which he calls psycho-shamanism, whose influences include

tarot cards, alchemy and Zen Buddhism.

Hundreds of asteroids have been named after human beings, rather than characters in fiction or Greek and Roman mythology.

Astronomers, physicists, mathematicians, politicians, philosophers and teachers are among those who have been given this honour.

"Artistic" asteroids include 2362 Mark Twain, 2675 Tolkien, 8749 Beatles, 7934 Sinatra and 13070 Seanconnery.

261690 Jodorowsky orbits in the main [asteroid](#) belt between Mars and Jupiter, at an average distance of 470 million kilometres (293 million miles) from the Sun, the press release said.

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