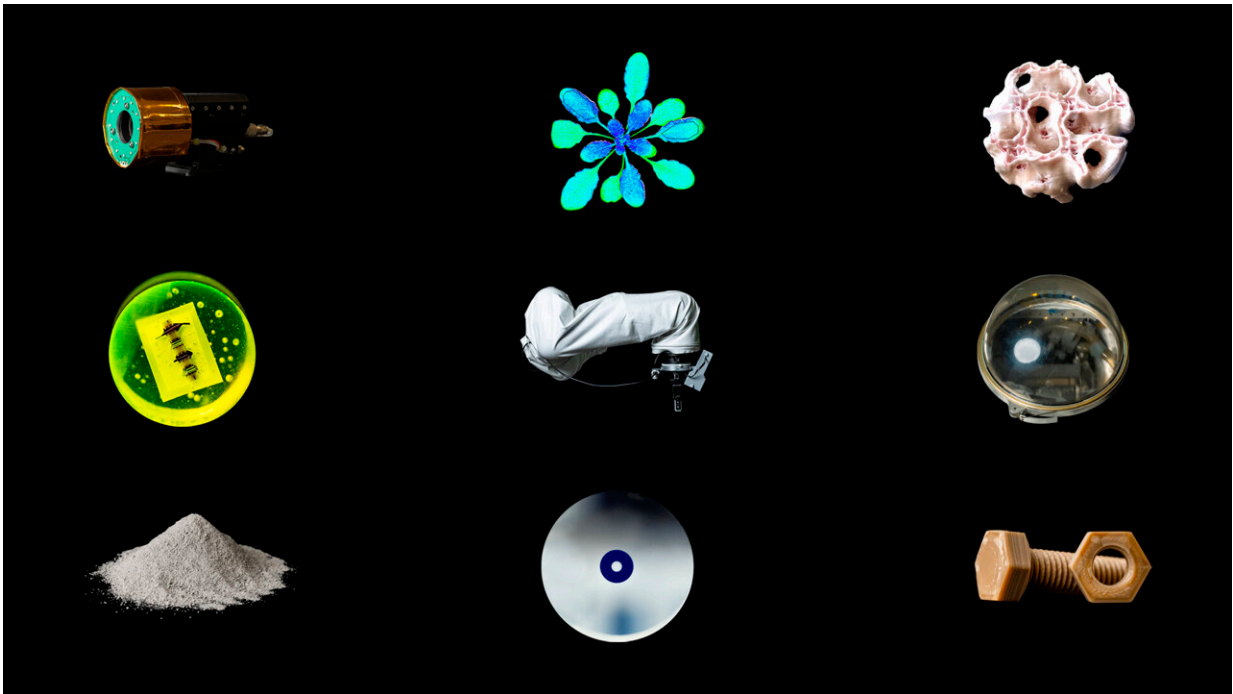


99 objects telling tales from ESA's technical heart

December 28 2021



A selection of items from the ESA ESTEC in 99 Objects website. Credit: ESA-Remedia

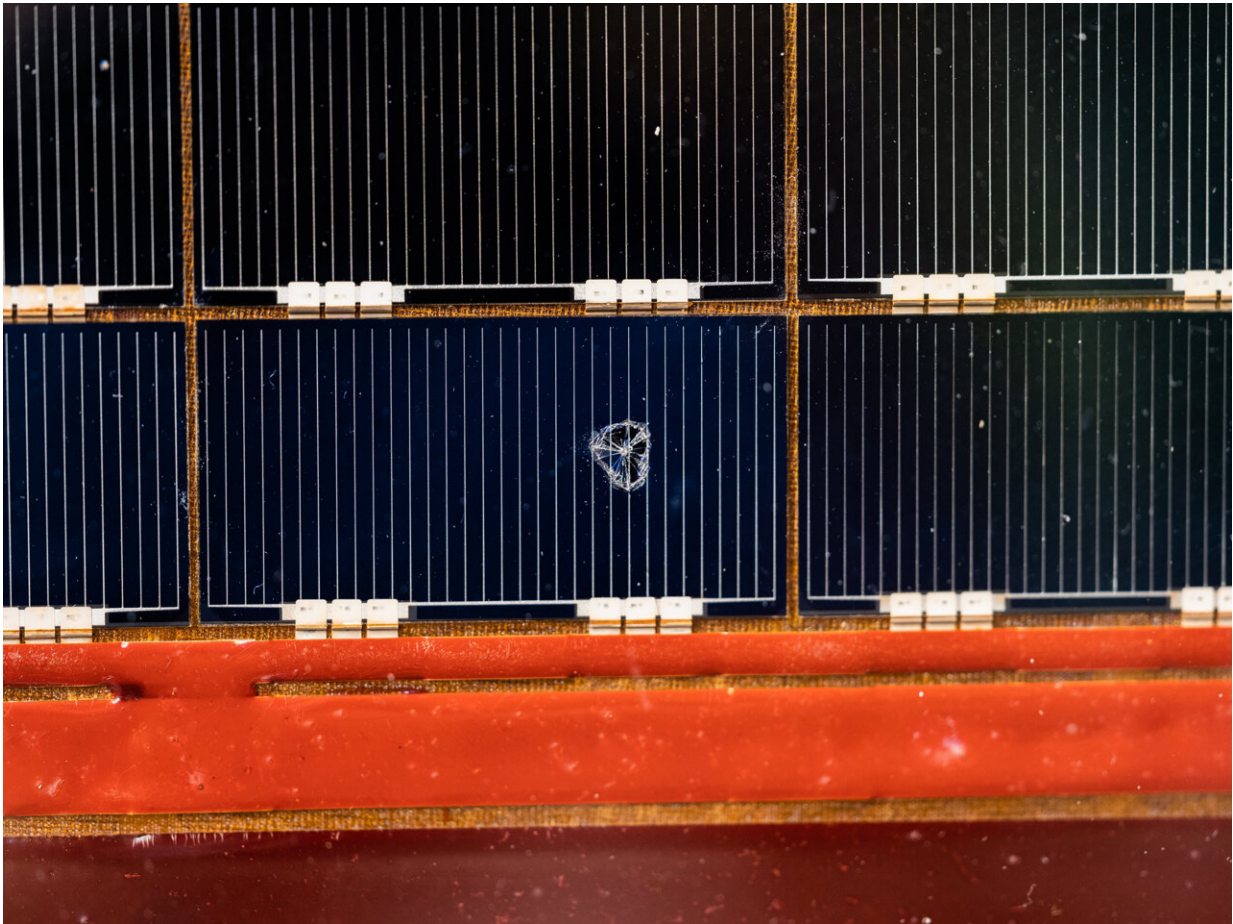
From simulated moondust to an ultraflat floor, a 3D-printed human bone to a wall decoration that once flew on the Hubble Space Telescope, the new 99 Objects of ESA ESTEC website gives visitors a close-up view of intriguing, often surprising artifacts assembled together to tell the story of ESA's technical heart.

"Objects are what matter," famed anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss once wrote. "Only they carry the evidence that throughout the centuries something really happened among human beings." So what manner of objects come out of more than half a century of activity at Europe's biggest [space](#) center?

The European Space Research and Technology Centre, ESTEC, is ESA's single largest establishment, based on the North Sea coast at Noordwijk in the Netherlands.

Often described as the technical heart of ESA, ESTEC is where most ESA projects are born and where they are guided through the various phases of development. It is also the Agency's center for technology development, and includes Europe's largest satellite testing center, equipped to simulate every aspect of the spaceflight environment.

During its long and distinguished history as the incubator of Europe's space efforts—ESTEC's first satellite was launched back in 1968, the same year that the establishment opened—this establishment has accumulated a rich stash of objects. Whether exotic or ordinary, each tells a story—of inspiration and perseverance, of steps forward and backward, of exploration, discovery and surprise.



Part of a solar panel from the Hubble Space Telescope was returned to Earth by Space Shuttle and is now on display at ESA's ESTEC technical centre in the Netherlands. Credit: ESA-Redmedia

The aim of ESA ESTEC IN 99 OBJECTS is to chart Europe's cosmic journey through artifacts left behind by the scientists and engineers who've helped launch more than 180 missions.

Surrounded by these 99 objects and many more, nearly 3,000 international experts currently work in 35 ESTEC laboratories on the missions—and new objects—that will define the coming decades in space.

The first selection of objects has already gone live on the site, with more to follow in the weeks and months to come.

More information: 99estec-objects.esa.int/

Provided by European Space Agency

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