

Across the Cosmos March 2026: When Science Meets Art

Some of you may recognize the title of this month's column as a play on the title of the book *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?*, written by the late Ian Barbour, science and religion pioneer and winner of the 1999 Templeton Prize.¹ I'm sure many of you reading this column fall somewhere into the "partners" category. This month, I'd like to briefly highlight another partnership, through the work of a scientist whose career has been devoted to integrating science and art in many creative ways, to the benefit of public as well as academic audiences.

Five decades ago, when I was an undergraduate at Cornell University, my astronomy professor used the first edition of the book *Moons and Planets*, written by William Hartmann² in a course about our Solar System. What I did not know at the time was that Bill Hartmann is a planetary scientist *and* an exceptionally talented artist,³ who has inspired the imagination of many through his paintings of other worlds and space exploration. In 1998, Hartmann was the first winner of the Carl Sagan Medal of the American Astronomical Society's Division of Planetary Sciences for communication of science to the public.⁴

Hartmann is now a Senior Scientist Emeritus at the Planetary Science Institute (PSI) in Tucson, AZ, which houses the largest collection of his space art. The William K. Hartmann Art Collection will open during a FREE public event from 11 am - 3 pm (AZ time) on March 29, 2026 – details about the event and location are on the website.⁵ The collection spans more than 60 years of art that depicts much of the history of space exploration. I encourage any of you who might be in or near Tucson to attend – I wish I could be there! Hartmann's artwork is also featured on a new PSI Calendar and available in signed prints for those who join Planetary Partners⁶ at given membership levels.

Until next month,

Grace

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¹ <https://www.templetonprize.org/laureate/ian-graeme-barbour/>

² <https://www.psi.edu/staff/profile/william-hartmann/>

³ <https://hartmann-legacy.psi.edu/>

⁴ <https://dps.aas.org/prizes/sagan/>

⁵ <https://www.psi.edu/hartmann-collection/>

⁶ <https://www.psi.edu/planetary-partners/>