

**Core Team:**

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**Abstract**

The exhibit "A Message from Afar" at the 2019 Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition on the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) encouraged to explore what it means to be human, cutting across the sciences, humanities, and arts.



2019 Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition (1-7 Jul)

**Project Description**

As a diverse team with specific expertise in physics, astronomy, philosophy, anthropology, zoology, arts, literature, computational linguistics, electrical engineering, and mathematics, we delivered an exhibit and an accompanying website that permitted visitors to explore the place of humanity in the vastness of the Universe, the structure of language and encoding information by means of a model of coloured cubes and visualising radiocommunications, and to compose messages to putative other intelligent civilisations, and then receive such a message. Reflecting on their experience, they could complete an opinion survey that aims at investigating whether we would we want to establish contact with ourselves, what regulations should be in place for radio waves sent or leaking into outer space, and how to proceed on the detection of a radio signal that could be due to extra-terrestrial intelligence.

**Key Results, Conclusions, Comments, Impact**

- Press coverage in major national newspapers (The Times, The Guardian, The Mirror, The Daily Mail) and further afar (Newsweek, Fox News)
- Analysis of > 13,000 survey responses (from > 120 countries) underway, to inform revision of the SETI post-detection protocols of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA)
- Key question "What does it mean to be human?" to guide further development of St Andrews Centre of Exoplanet Science
- Activities to form part of a project to promote women in STEM supported by the 2019 Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award
- Royal Society YouTube video ([youtu.be/CIG-xGFshms](https://youtu.be/CIG-xGFshms))

**Refs & links** <http://fromafar.world>