

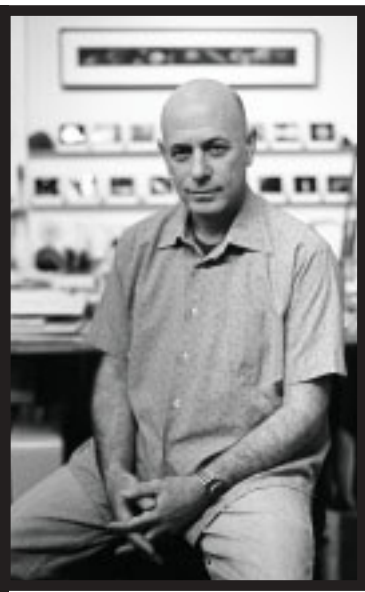
# Victor Raphael

space fields

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# Your Take-Home Activity Guide for Victor Raphael: Space Fields



As a child growing up in the early years of the "space age" (the 1950s), Victor Raphael, like thousands of other children, dreamed of becoming an astronaut. Eventually realizing that the odds of this happening were against him, he focused on exploring and interpreting the cosmos in a different way—through art.

After graduating from UCLA in 1973, Raphael went on to successful and overlapping careers as a printmaker and as an actor, and eventually to a third career as a producer and director of independent documentary films and videos. With that type of background and experience, it is easy to understand how Raphael could also master and create complex multimedia projects.

Victor Raphael's artwork begins with the simple Polaroid photograph. Except that he quickly complicates his process by photographing images—often dazzling views of outer space provided by NASA—from the television. Then he alters this Polaroid

image by painting on it—highlighting or obscuring specific features—with gold and metal leaf. In this way, he transforms, or changes, the Polaroid photograph from something mechanical, into something handmade.

"The Polaroid is something that everybody understands, there is a democratic nature to it. I make something special out of something common," the artist has said.

But he's not finished yet. Raphael then scans the altered Polaroid image into a computer and, using digital technology, creates new prints and paintings—several times larger than the original standard Polaroid size.

Part science, part history, and part poetry, these works of art take us on a fantastic journey through the cosmos. Now it's time for you to become an artist like Victor Raphael – and create your own journey for your friends and family to follow.

## Activity: Space Pictures

**Materials:** 12" x 18" construction paper, black tempera paint, water, water containers, wax crayons, a wide paint brush, and some newspaper to cover your work area

**Ask yourself:** What do I see in the sky at night? If I were riding in a rocket, what would I see? What colors do I see? What shapes are out there?

**Now, draw a picture about space using crayons.**

Make sure the crayon is applied heavily. Go over the crayon markings several times, so that it is very thick. You'll see why in a minute. Next, paint over the entire picture with a thin (watered down) coat of black tempera paint. To make it look like outer space, the paint should be thick enough to turn the paper black, but thin enough to run off the area where you used the crayons.

And remember to give your artwork a title.

## Activity: Star Scopes

**Materials:** Empty toilet paper tube, black construction paper, clear tape, and tooth picks

First cut the construction paper into a 2" circle. Tape one circle over one end of the toilet paper tube. Next, take a toothpick and gently punch small holes through the construction paper.

When this is completed, carefully look through the open end of the tube and point it towards some light. You will see tiny spots of light resembling stars in the night sky. The tube becomes a miniature planetarium.

## Activity: Shadow Self-Portraits

**Materials:** Yourself, the sun, pencil or crayon, and a "life-size" piece of butcher paper

The shadow of your body is a type of self-portrait. You'll need a friend or family member to do this project.

Stand in a bright light so your face or body make a shadow on either the wall or the floor.

Your friend should then place the life-size piece of paper where your shadow is, and then trace the outline of your shadow. Once the outline is finished, you may color it in or draw your favorite things inside the shape.

## Discussion Activity: Legends and Myths about Space

What do we really know about outer space? American popular culture is filled with myths and stories about what exists "out there." Ask yourself what are some legends and myths in our American culture? For example, is the moon really made out of cheese? Are there Martians on Mars? Who is the "man on the moon?" What is fact? What is fiction? Have you ever seen a movie about outer space? Who were the main characters? What did they look like?

How do other cultures address the idea of space? Contrast folklore tales, tales and legends of different cultures.

Write a story or poem about your own ideas about space. What is the origin of space? What might we find there?

## Vocabulary Some useful words and terms for you

**Abstract** Artwork in which the subject matter is stated in a brief, simplified manner. Little or no attempt is made to represent images realistically, and objects are often simplified or distorted.

**Astronomy** The science of understanding the origin, evolution, composition, distance, and motion of all bodies in the universe, including the sun, moon, planets, solar system, comets, stars, galaxies, and interstellar dust.

**Color** The visual sensation dependent on the reflection or absorption of light from a given surface. The three characteristics of color are hue, value, and intensity.

**Comet** A small celestial body composed at least partially of ices. Comets either orbit the Sun or pass through the Solar System on hyperbolic orbital paths.

**Elements of Art** Sensory components used to create works of art: line, color, shape/form, texture, value, space.

**Galaxy** Large groups of stars found throughout the universe.

**NASA** National Aeronautics and Space Agency, a government agency that explores the world beyond our planet.

**Planet** Any body that revolves around the sun or other stars. Our sun has nine major planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

**Polaroid** Brand name for a camera which produces "instant" photographs that appear seconds after taking the picture.

**Shape** A two-dimensional area or plane that may be open or closed, free-form or geometric. It can be found in nature or is made by humans.

**Solar system** The sun, the nine major planets, their satellites, asteroids, and the comets—everything that orbits the sun—make up our solar system. Astronomers

have observed large planets orbiting other stars, and they may also have complex solar systems like we do.

**Star** Stars are huge heavenly bodies made of gas that shine by their own light.

**Sun** The sun is our star. It is the center of our solar system and provides the Earth with heat and light.

**Technology** The practical application of scientific knowledge.

**Two-dimensional** Having height and width but not depth. Also referred to as 2-D.

Special thanks to Victor Raphael for some of the content and activities presented in this poster. To visit his website, visit <http://www.victorraphael.com/>