

PUBLIC LECTURE

Truth and Beauty in Astronomy Visualization

Dr. Frank Summers

Space Telescope Science Institute

Thursday, March 6, 2014: 7-8 PM

ECJ 1.202, The University of Texas at Austin



PUBLIC INVITED

***Sponsored by the UT Dept. of Astronomy
and the Texas Advanced Computing Center***

The Speaker

Dr. Frank Summers is an astrophysicist who creates dynamic, informative, and artistic presentations of astronomy for the public. His work at the Space Telescope Science Institute brings the wonders of the Hubble Space Telescope to life in the news media, the internet, classrooms, planetariums, television, and film.

Dr. Summers specializes in cinematic scientific visualizations which combine research data with Hollywood computer graphics to make astronomical sequences that are both accurate and aesthetic. Of note, Dr. Summers was a writer, science advisor, and scientific visualization supervisor on the IMAX film "Hubble 3D". Before he was a professional astronomer, Dr. Summers was nationally-ranked in competitive ice dancing.

Abstract

The presentation of complex scientific ideas demands both precision and detail. The interpretation of even graphical representations generally requires specialized knowledge. Public-level visuals are difficult, and risk becoming over-simplified cartoon versions. Astronomy, however, has gained favor with the public for its awe-inspiring images from the Hubble Space Telescope and other observatories. That visual splendor attracts a wide audience, creating a much smoother and natural entry into scientific topics.

Dr. Summers follows this path in creating astronomy visualizations that both engage and inform the public. In this talk, he will showcase compelling visuals and describe techniques used in creating sequences for educational materials, press releases, planetarium shows, and IMAX films.

If beauty is truth, and truth beauty, you won't want to miss this event.

