

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**July 5<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**A Cosmonaut, An Ambassador, The International Space Station,  
RIA Novosti and Science Photo Library?**

**It's no joke.**

On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, RIA Novosti, Russia's leading news agency and Science Photo Library, the world's leading supplier of scientific and specialist imagery hosted a gala reception and private view of their recent photography exhibition. Held at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the Hall's Reflect series, it marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's space flight. The collaboration was a successful one, with large numbers of people visiting during the three free open days as well as taking in a talk given by Piers Bizony, the author of 'Starman: The Truth Behind The Legend of Yuri Gagarin'.

On the evening of July 1<sup>st</sup>, over 200 photo researchers, publishers and other individuals including TV Presenter Adam Hart-Davies and Chris Riley, producer of YouTube hit First Orbit, joined RIA Novosti and Science Photo Library to celebrate. Guests watched a pre-recorded message from the International Space Station where Commander of Expedition 28 to the International Space Station Andrei Borisenko started by congratulating the organisers on the exhibition and then turned to the importance of Yuri Gagarin's achievement, saying, "His spaceflight dispelled all existing notions of what a human can do and the future of global science." Flight Engineer Aleksandr Samokutyayev, continued, focusing on something Yuri Gagarin said during his 108 minute flight, "Orbiting earth in the spaceship, I saw how beautiful our planet is. People, let us preserve and increase its beauty, not destroy it."

The 100th Russian in space, cosmonaut Oleg Kotov, also joined guests of RIA Novosti and Science Photo Library. To gasps of amazement and

some laughter, he told guests about his experiences walking in space on three separate occasions as well as some of the tricky and more mundane elements of his role. He was joined on stage by His Excellency Alexander Yakovenko, The Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, who discussed his experiences negotiating the terms under which the International Space Station was founded as well as the importance of Yuri Gagarin to space travel.

Irina Demchenko, Deputy Editor-in-Chief and UK Bureau Chief of RIA Novosti, also spoke about the dramatic change in children's games that occurred after Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight - from re-running the battles of the Second World War, which pre-occupied her elder brother, to her childhood games revolving around space travel, cosmonauts and rocket engineers. Irina also spoke about the news agency's 70th anniversary and its very forward looking approach to multi-platform news formats, fit for the current generation who have grown up with the internet and smartphones."

Master of Ceremonies, Science Photo Library's Gary Evans, summed up the mood after the event perfectly, "Would I do it again? Of course! I was hugely proud of the exhibition, I got to meet the Ambassador and have dinner with a cosmonaut. Not exactly the average working day!"





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For more information or further images to support this story, please contact Pirjo or Julia [marketing@sciencephoto.com](mailto:marketing@sciencephoto.com), 020 7432 1100

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### **Notes for Editors:**

#### [Science Photo Library](#)

Science Photo Library is the world's leading provider of scientifically themed imagery. Independent and privately owned, Science Photo Library is renowned for the quality of its collection of over 350,000 images and 15,000 video clips created by photographers, illustrators,

scientists and medical experts. [www.sciencephoto.com](http://www.sciencephoto.com)  
[The Russian News & Information Agency RIA Novosti](http://www.ria.ru) RIA Novosti is Russia's leading news agency in terms of multimedia technologies, website audience reach and quoting by the Russian media. Main multilingual news website: [www.rian.ru](http://www.rian.ru) / Photo website: [www.visualrian.com](http://www.visualrian.com)

### Royal Albert Hall

The Royal Albert Hall is the world's most famous stage. Its breathtaking auditorium hosts over 380 shows a year by the world's greatest artists. The magical atmosphere combined with inspired artists creates legendary events. Opened in 1871 as part of Prince Albert's vision for a centre for the Arts and Sciences, it is a registered charity operating without public funding.

Extending the brand with over 150 events outside the auditorium, the Hall has broadened its appeal to younger, diverse audiences whilst still engaging its existing customers. It also works extensively with schools and young people through its Learning and Participation programme, reading over 30,000 participants each year. [www.royalalberthall.com](http://www.royalalberthall.com)

### “Poyekhali! Yuri Gagarin & The Dawn of Space Exploration”

The exhibition was available to those attending performances at the Royal Albert Hall between 9<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011. There were also free open days on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2<sup>nd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

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