



Out of this world



THESE dazzling cosmic images are shortlisted in the Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition, run by the Royal Observatory Greenwich in the UK.

The far-left image depicts Comet C/2021 A1 and was captured by Lionel Majzik using a robotic telescope at the Remote Skygems Observatories in Namibia.

Also known as Comet Leonard, after Gregory Leonard who first spotted it on 3 January 2021, this particularly bright body of ice and dust passed close enough to Earth, at 34 million kilometres, to be seen with binoculars, though it has since disintegrated. The photo has been shortlisted in the Planets, Comets and Asteroids category.

Simon Tang's shot of solar features called prominences looping out from the sun's surface can be seen top right and was shortlisted in the Our Sun category. Prominences are formed when stellar material erupts and is shaped into arcs by the sun's magnetic fields. Here, the most noticeable prominence can be seen on the right as wispy features at the sun's edge.

The south pole of the moon features in Tom Glenn's image, seen bottom centre, which made the Our Moon shortlist. Glenn merged two photos taken on different dates to give this view of the moon's southernmost point, which is of interest to researchers since it contains water ice that could be used by future lunar missions and stations.

Finally, the panoramic image shown bottom right depicts the Northern Lights over the Vestrahorn mountains in Iceland. It was taken by Stefan Liebermann and is shortlisted in the Aurorae category. The winners will be announced on 15 September. ■

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