

EMBARGO UNTIL 6/25/19 9:01AM ET

**ART
IN
SPACE**

**OK
GO SANDBOX**

Rock band OK Go announces winners of contest to send student art into space

Two student teams' art experiments will be launched on the Blue Origin New Shepard launch vehicle.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2019 - Rock band [OK Go](#) is pleased to announce the two teams who have been selected as winners of the Art in Space Contest. This spring, the band invited students ages 11-18 to submit ideas for art experiments that will take place in space aboard the [Blue Origin New Shepard](#) launch vehicle. OK Go is hosting the [Art in Space Contest](#) in partnership with the [Playful Learning Lab](#) at the University of St. Thomas, and it is sponsored by [Cognizant Technology Solutions](#).

One of the two winning teams is based in New York and includes students Alexandra Slabakis (16), Grace Clark (16), and Annabelle Clark (12). The team's project is called "Dark Origin" and will use gravity and magnetism to simulate the origin of planet Earth.

The second winning team is based in Utah and includes students Cameron Trueblood (11), Blake Hullinger (12), and Kellen Hullinger(15). Their design proposes using environmental data taken during the space craft's flight to create sounds and visual art.

OK Go is known for their audaciously experimental music videos, including *Upside Down & Inside Out*, in which they danced in microgravity on an airplane! They created the Art in Space Contest to provide an opportunity for student art projects to take place in an *actual* spacecraft in *actual* space.

“We were thrilled with the entries to the Art In Space contest - picking winners was so hard!” said OK Go lead singer Damian Kulash. “The submissions were all so imaginative, and really exemplified the type of thinking and creativity that OK Go is always striving for in our own work. The kids, especially our winners, clearly understand the truth that so many adults have lost along the way: there are no borders separating art and science — they’re the same thing. It all comes from curiosity and experimentation, and creativity is really just about exercising those skills.”

The two ideas were chosen by a team of judges that includes OK Go band members, faculty and staff from the University of St. Thomas, and aerospace experts. The winning teams will work in collaboration with Playful Learning Lab engineers to create the winning art project to send as a payload on a Blue Origin launch vehicle. Founded by Jeff Bezos in 2000, Blue Origin has designed the New Shepard as a reusable spacecraft to take payloads -- and soon people -- into suborbital space.

The expectation for these submissions was not that they would be fully engineered projects -- but ideas that can be turned into space-worthy experiments with the help of OK Go’s expert partners. The selected teams will work with the Playful Learning Lab, in consultation with Blue Origin and OK Go, on flight-ready versions of their ideas. Working with experts from a variety of fields has been key to OK Go’s prior work, and they look forward to having the students be part of a similar process. Previously, such experts have helped them do everything from create a [4 minute-long Rube Goldberg machine](#) to [stretch a 4.2-second chain reaction into a 4-minute song](#) to record [an entire music video](#) in zero gravity.

The contest is a project of [OK Go Sandbox](#), a nonprofit venture that helps educators use OK Go videos in the classroom. Founded in 2018, OK Go Sandbox showcases new videos, challenges, and activities, based on the band’s music videos. Led by OK Go lead singer Damian Kulash and Dr. AnnMarie Thomas, director of the University of St. Thomas Playful Learning Lab, OK Go Sandbox has worked closely with educators from around the world to develop new ways to help kids experience the joy and wonder of learning.

For details, visit <https://okgosandbox.org/art-in-space>

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OK Go

OK Go has built a unique career at the intersection of music, visual art, technology, and science, emerging at the forefront of a class of artists whose 21st-century brand of experimental creativity dissolves the traditional boundaries between disciplines. OK Go have collaborated with dance companies and tech giants, cosmonauts and Muppets, scientists and entrepreneurs. Their videos have been encoded on strands of actual DNA. They've penned New York Times op-eds and testified before the US Congress, and they were President Obama's selection to perform at his 50th birthday party. OK Go have received the Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award for Visual Art, a Grammy, three MTV VMAs, twenty-one Cannes Lions, six CLIOs, three UK MVAs, two Webbys, and their work has been presented at The Guggenheim, MoCA, LACMA, The Hirschhorn, The Hammer Museum, and Seattle's Museum of Pop Culture.

Cognizant

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Blue Origin

For more information about Blue Origin, you can visit their website at www.blueorigin.com or email them at media@blueorigin.com.

University of St. Thomas

Located in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, the University of St. Thomas is a private, liberal arts university that emphasizes values-based education and career preparation. With approximately 10,000 students, it is Minnesota's largest private, nonprofit college or university. Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully to advance the common good. The university has three campuses: St. Paul, Minneapolis and Rome, Italy.