Ancient Light: a portrait of the Universe

by David Malin

Phaidon Press, 2009. ISBN 978-07148-4932-4. pp127, £29.95 (hbk)

David Malin was employed as a photographic scientist at the Anglo-Australian Observatory and rapidly gained a reputation as the world's leading astrophotographer. He pioneered many techniques to improve the art and science of astrophotography. In one sense it is a great pity that photographic emulsions were superseded by CCDs. Kodak's 'T' grain emulsions, hypersensitisation, autoguiders and Malin's techniques were about to revolutionise astronomical photography.

This is essentially a book of 52 black and white photographs, taken with the 3.9m Anglo-Australian Telescope, the 4m at Kitt Peak, the UK and Palomar Schmidts and a 4×5 camera. There are also eight photographic finder charts by the well-known amateur Akira Fujii, indicating the locations of the included deep-sky objects, which predominate. A handful of other objects are included which as Malin states, '...quite intentionally reflect the earliest days of photographing the night sky'.

The opening chapter describes some of the processes involved in making the images, and a potted history of astronomical photography. Alongside each photographic image is a concise description of the object. Although Malin is renowned for his tri-colour work, he has an artistic preference for black and white, with which I have to agree.

This book demonstrates Malin's technical skill, notably with some prints processed using unsharp masking, a very difficult process, not just the few 'mouse clicks' of today. Fine examples include M8, NGC2264 and M31. Personally, I find the common names given to objects such as 'The Witches Head nebula' and 'Fox Fur nebula', silly and infantile. Only the classical names from antiquity such as 'The Owl Nebula' should be preserved. How long will it be before we have the 'Pizza nebula' or the 'mobile phone galaxy'?

It is not an exaggeration to say that the quality of some of the images in this book can today be reproduced by skilled amateurs using CCD techniques, so it is difficult to know for whom the book is intended. For the reader interested in state of the art 1980s photographic techniques or to fill the obvious literary gap in the history of astronomical imaging, and not too interested in colour work, I can recommend it.

Ron Arbour

Ron Arbour is a retired microphotographer from the Microelectronics Research Group at the University of Southampton. He is also a past Vice-President of the Association, former Director of the Deep-Sky and Astrophotography sections, and founder of the Campaign for Dark Skies. He has discovered 21 supernovae. His other interests include telescope-making.

This book brings together the finest collection available of star clusters, galaxies, nebulae and other such spectacular phenomena caught on film. Each beautiful image, made from a series of delicate yet rich platinum prints, is accompanied by a clear and engaging caption. Malin's short texts (approximately 100 words) describe the depicted phenomena and some of the mythology surrounding them. The book is divided into nine sections, using the constellations as a framework to identify the positions of the images in the sky. Each section is introduced by a short text describing the featured In addition, the new portrait precisely pegs the age of the universe at 13.7 billion years, with a remarkably small one percent margin of error. The WMAP team found that the big bang and Inflation theories continue to ring true. The contents of the universe include 4 percent atoms (ordinary matter), 23 percent of an unknown type of dark matter, and 73 percent of a mysterious dark energy.Â Like a detective, the WMAP team compared the unique "fingerprint" of patterns imprinted on this ancient light with fingerprints predicted by various cosmic theories and found a match. WMAP will continue to observe the cosmic microwave background for an additional three years, and its data will reveal new insights into the theory of Inflation and the nature of the dark energy. Start your review of Ancient Light: A Portrait of the Universe. Write a review. Jun 26, 2014 Ruth rated it it was amazing. Shelves: nonfic. Maybe it's not a 5-star book, but actually I think it is. I think a lot of us took one look at that amazing cover with the bright, shiny silver sparkling through the cut outs in the mat-black cover and thought to ourselves "beautiful!" It is beautiful; we were not wrong. But at least I expected that cover to encase something poetic in its beauty.Â Love: the juxtaposition of images and negatives -- Vala supernova remnant; and also the image of The Antennae (interacting galaxies in Corvus) which to me looks less like antennae than two ribbons floating together and making a heart. ...more. flag 1 like Â· Like Â· see review. Jan 06, 2018 Holly rated it really liked it. A lavishly illustrated photographic exploration of the universe from astronomer David Malin. Order online from the Phaidon Store.Â Malin has written short captions (approximately 100 words) for every picture, describing the depicted phenomena and some of the mythology surrounding them. Specifications: Format: Hardback. Size: 290 x 250 mm (11 3/8 x 9 7/8 in). Pages: 128 pp. ISBN: 9780714849324. About the author. Ancient light. a portrait of the universe. by David Malin. 0 Ratings. 0 Want to read.Â By studying galaxies, we learn about our origins and perhaps our destiny and, the origins of the ingredients of life and the destinies of stars like the Sun and the planets associated with them. Much of our current knowledge on these subjects was gleaned from black and white photographs like those in this book, which were originally taken for scientific purposes. Using the world's most sophisticated telescopes and his own revolutionary techniques, Malin brings us awe-inspiring images of distant worlds and amazing phenomena. He is a pioneer of space photography and has invented new ways of

Ancient light: a portrait of the universe. 2009, Phaidon Press. in English. 0714849324 9780714849324. aaaa. Not in Library. Add another edition?Â By studying galaxies, we learn about our origins and perhaps our destiny and, the origins of the ingredients of life and the destinies of stars like the Sun and the planets associated with them. Much of our current knowledge on these subjects was gleaned from black and white photographs like those in this book, which were originally taken for scientific purposes. Using the world's most sophisticated telescopes and his own revolutionary techniques, Malin brings us awe-inspiring images of distant worlds and amazing phenomena. Simultaneously humbling and awe-inspiring, Ancient Light both entertains and educates. Malin reveals his techniques for capturing the images and provides information a wide range of pertinent information about the stars and galaxies, from the dust clouds that birth stars to the myths behind the constellations. This is a must-read by any definition of the phrase. Read more. 8 people found this helpful. This book brings together the finest collection available of star clusters, galaxies, nebulae and other such spectacular phenomena caught on film. Each beautiful image, made from a series of delicate yet rich platinum prints, is accompanied by a clear and engaging caption. Malin's short texts (approximately 100 words) describe the depicted phenomena and some of the mythology surrounding them. The book is divided into nine sections, using the constellations as a framework to identify the positions of the images in the sky. Each section is introduced by a short text describing the featured const A lavishly illustrated photographic exploration of the universe from astronomer David Malin. Order online from the Phaidon Store.Â His photographs capture light that has travelled immense distances, sometimes thousands of light years, to reach us. This is the finest collection available of star clusters, galaxies, nebulae and other such spectacular phenomena caught on film. The pictures are made from a series of delicate yet rich platinum prints and will delight anyone intrigued by the night sky. The book will be released in 2009, marking UNESCO's International Year of Astronomy. The book will feature the entire collection of photos from Malinâ€™s platinum series â€“ approxmately 60 black and white images â€“ in a simple yet el Start your review of Ancient Light: A Portrait of the Universe. Write a review. Jun 26, 2014 Ruth rated it it was amazing. Shelves: nonfic. Maybe it's not a 5-star book, but actually I think it is. I think a lot of us took one look at that amazing cover with the bright, shiny silver sparkling through the cut outs in the mat-black cover and thought to ourselves "beautiful!" It is beautiful; we were not wrong. But at least I expected that cover to encase something poetic in its beauty.Â Love: the juxtaposition of images and negatives -- Vala supernova remnant; and also the image of The Antennae (interacting galaxies in Corvus) which to me looks less like antennae than two ribbons floating together and making a heart. ...more. flag 1 like Â· Like Â· see review. Jan 06, 2018 Holly rated it really liked it.