



The Galileo Project

Head: Professor Avi Loeb, Harvard Astronomy
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Avi Loeb's *Extraterrestrial* to win 2023 Cosmos Award

Annual Italian award recognizes scientists engaged in improving public understanding of science

CAMBRIDGE, USA/REGGIO CALABRIA, Italy — May 20, 2023 — Today the Scientific Committee and Student Assembly for the Cosmos Award (Premio Cosmos) announced Professor Avi Loeb's 2021 bestselling book [Extraterrestrial](#) (HarperCollins) as the recipient of this year's Cosmos Prize for Scientific Dissemination.

The Cosmos Award aims to recognize and celebrate the scientists and science communicators most successful in engaging the public, and improving understanding of fundamental science. Promoting scientific culture in Italy, the Cosmos Award encourages students to read and evaluate exceptional popular science books. Roughly 600 high school students in Italy and abroad participated as jurors in selecting this year's winner from the list of finalists.

Professor Loeb, Co-Founder and Head of the Galileo Project, and Director of the Institute for Theory and Computation, both at Harvard University, [expressed his gratitude for receiving the award in a broadcast acceptance speech](#). "It's a great honor for me to receive the Cosmos prize," said Loeb, "especially because it was awarded by high school students – young fledgling scientists with no prejudice who will carry the torch of science into our future." Loeb noted he was particularly honored to receive the Italian prize because, in his words, "Italy represents the beginning of modern science, as far as I am concerned, with the principles of Galileo Galilei."

This prize is the latest distinction for *Extraterrestrial*, a New York Times bestseller which has now been translated to 25 languages. Previously the book was selected as a 2021 Amazon Book of the Year, and longlisted for the 2022 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award.

This year's Cosmos Award announcement was attended by Carmelo Versace, Mayor of Reggio Calabria, Angela Misiano, Director of the Planetarium Pythagoras, and Gianfranco Bertone, President of the Cosmos Prize Scientific Committee. Also present at the event were Serena Bonito, Delegate of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Anna Brancaccio, Delegate of the Italian Ministry of Education, and Roberto Buonanno, President of the Italian Astronomical Society.

The formal award ceremony will take place in October 2023 as part of the Cosmos Festival in Reggio Calabria.

About Professor Avi Loeb

Avi Loeb is the head of the Galileo Project, founding director of Harvard University's Black Hole Initiative, director of the Institute for Theory and Computation at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, and the former chair of the astronomy department at Harvard University (2011-2020). He chairs the advisory board for the Breakthrough Starshot project, is a former member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and previously served as chair of the Board on Physics and Astronomy of the National Academies. He is the bestselling author of [*Extraterrestrial: The First Sign of Intelligent Life Beyond Earth*](#) and co-author of the textbook [*Life in the Cosmos*](#), both published in 2021. His forthcoming book [*Interstellar*](#) is scheduled for publication in August 2023.

About the Cosmos Prize (Premio Cosmos)

The Cosmos Award for scientific dissemination, now in its 4th edition, aims to recognize and celebrate the scientists and science communicators who are most successful in engaging the public and improving understanding of fundamental science. The awards ceremony takes place as part of the Cosmos Festival, in Reggio Calabria. Learn more at premiocosmos.org.

About the Galileo Project

[The Galileo Project for the Systematic Scientific Search for Evidence of Extraterrestrial Technological Artifacts](#) is a Harvard-hosted, cross-institutional research project launched in June of 2021 by co-founders Avi Loeb and Frank Laukien. Led by Professor Avi Loeb at the *Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian*, the Galileo Project searches for objects near Earth that could have originated from extraterrestrial technological civilizations. The project has three branches: the study of interstellar objects (ISOs) near Earth, the search for unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs) and the study of interstellar meteors (IMs). The project currently pursues software development for identifying ISOs in upcoming data sets, the assembly of the first UAP Observatories and the preliminary analysis of their initial data and the results from an expedition to retrieve fragments from the first interstellar meteor, IM1, in the Pacific Ocean.