

Images of the month: April 2014

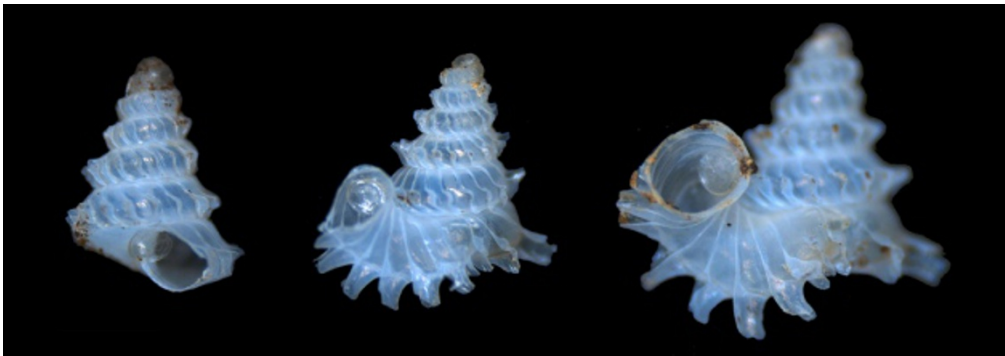
Natural and artificial wonders feature in this selection of photos by *Nature's* art team.

[Daniel Cressey](#)

08 May 2014

This edition of Images of the month showcases strange snails, space debris in the Amazon River and newly digitized photographs from the American Museum of Natural History.

Shell games

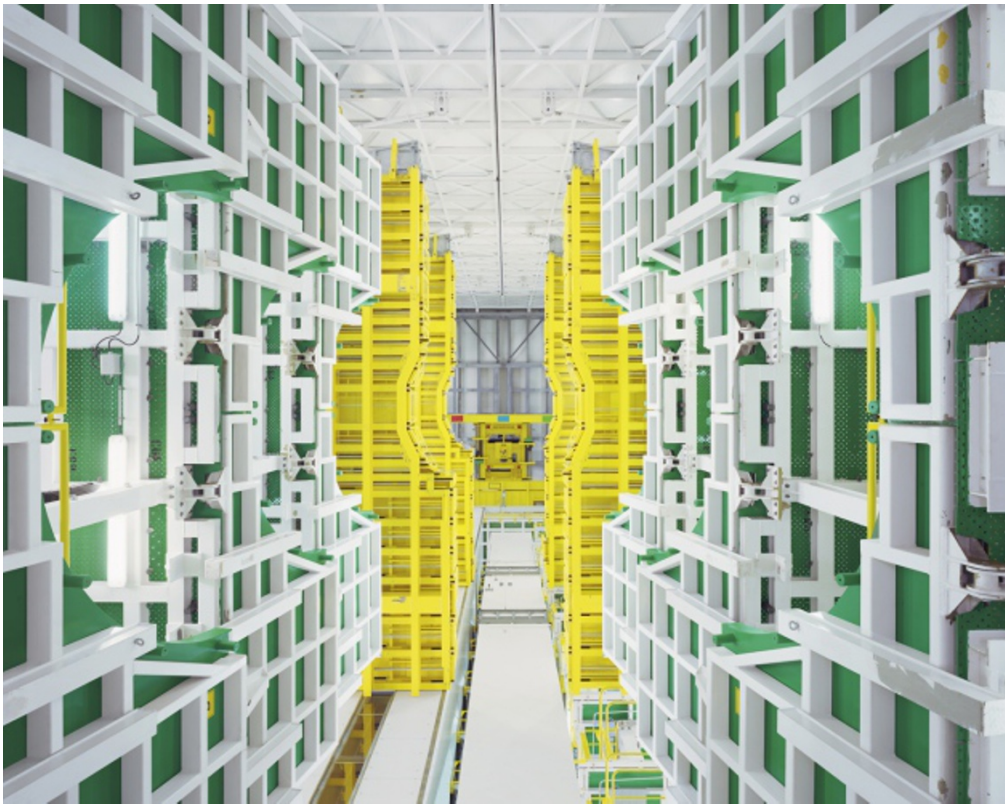


Thor-Seng Liew

Thor-Seng Liew and Menno Schilthuizen, at Leiden University in the Netherlands, have been investigating how the incredible shapes of mollusc shells protect their occupants against predators, and how this forces predators to modify their strategies. Despite these adaptations, the *Plectostoma* snails that once lived in the shells pictured still became another animal's dinner, the researchers report in *PeerJ* (Liew, T.-S. and Schilthuizen, M. *PeerJ* 2, e329; 2014).

Digitizing natural history

Stairways to Heaven



Edgar Martins/ESA

The mobile gantry shown here helps staff at the European Space Agency to prepare rockets for launch from French Guiana. This photo was taken by Edgar Martins and is included in his book *The Rehearsal of Space and The Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite*. But what goes up...

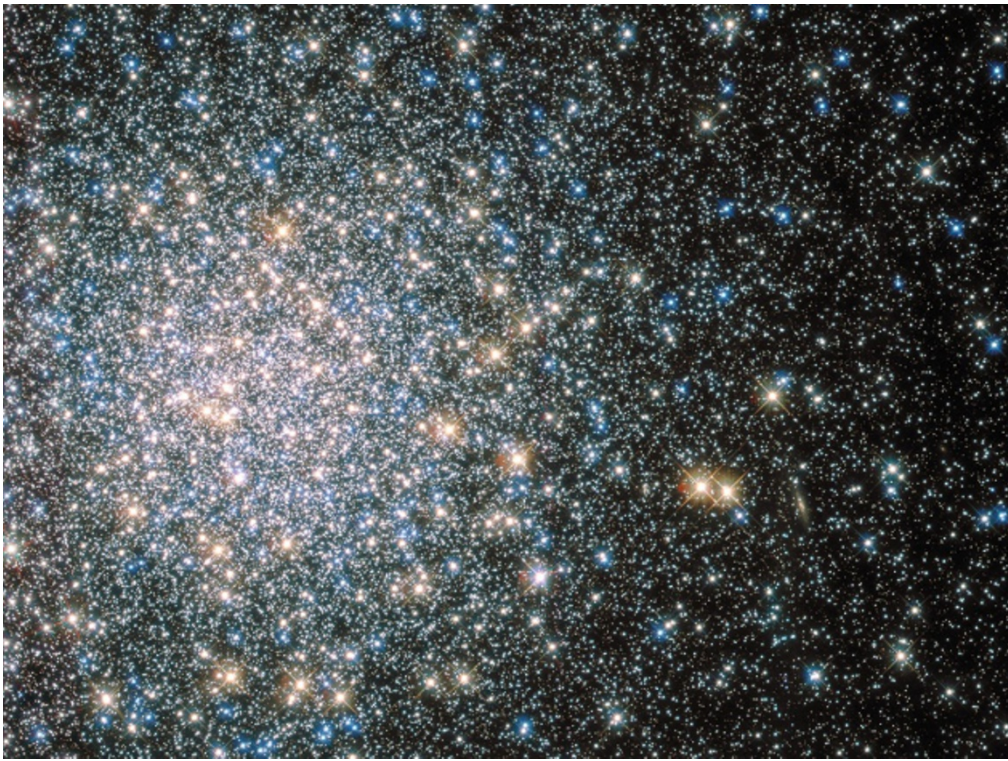
Fisherman's big catch



Tarso Sarraf/Reuters/Corbis

...must come down. A fisherman on the Amazon River in northeast Brazil unearthed a novel, and fortunately very rare, piece of pollution in April — a piece of a space rocket, emblazoned with a UK space agency logo.

Messier complex



ESA/Hubble and NASA

This complexity of light sources is a 13-billion-year-old cluster of stars some 7,665 parsecs (25,000 light years) away called Messier 5. This image from the Hubble Space Telescope was released 21 April.

Canada on the rocks



Michael Studinger/NASA

Every year NASA's Operation IceBridge sets out to fly over and image Earth's polar ice. This image was captured above Canada's Ellesmere Island as ground- and air-based teams measured the snow depth at the end of March.

And finally ...



Quail Assembling

First place in the Nikon Small World in Motion Photomicrography Competition was awarded in April to this reconstruction of a quail embryo, created by Gabriel Martins of the University of Lisbon from more than 1,000 image 'slices' of the 23-millimetre-long specimen.

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