

Off-World: Above and Beyond

**“The reason I want to explore beyond the world as we know it is simple:
The allure of the unknown is far more powerful
than the comfort of the known.” #ProudlyHuman**



Dr Adriana Marais, theoretical physicist, technologist and aspiring extraterrestrial, believes that we are living at a unique point in the history of life on Earth. Developments in engineering and science are taking place at an unprecedented rate, and the expansion of our society beyond this planet is within reach. In December 2020, she and her team will depart for an overwinter, off-world settlement simulation experiment in Antarctica to demonstrate community living and off-grid capabilities from life-support to communication systems, in the harshest and most isolated environment on Earth. The expedition is an initiative of #ProudlyHuman: pioneering new frontiers in research and technology for a sustainable future on Earth, above and beyond.

Adriana is the Founder of #ProudlyHuman, as well as Director at the Foundation for Space Development, an initiative of which is Africa2Moon, to inspire the youth of developing nations, in particular Africa, to "Reach for the Moon" through education and science. She is also a member of the South African government advisory task team on the 4th Industrial Revolution, Faculty at the Singularity University and Duke Corporate Education, and an astronaut candidate with the Mars One Project.

Previously, Adriana was Head of Innovation at SAP Africa between 2017 and 2019. Her career began in academia, and she has authored numerous articles on her research in theoretical quantum physics, as well as won awards including the L’Oreal-UNESCO International Rising Talent Award in 2015 and the Royal Society of South Africa Meiring Naude Medal in 2016. She is an alumna of the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings in physics and a Global Women’s Forum Rising Talent, both 2016.

Adriana holds an MSc (summa cum laude) in quantum cryptography and a PhD in quantum biology. Her postdoctoral research focused on quantum effects in photosynthesis as well as the origins of prebiotic molecules and life itself. She is currently pursuing a second PhD in economics in resource-constrained environments at the University of Cape Town.

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