



Vintage chromogenic print, watermarked "This Paper Manufactured by Kodak", NASA caption numbered P-17686 hinged to verso.

THE FIRST COLOUR PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE MARTIAN SURFACE TAKEN BY VIKING 2

[Mars taken by Viking 2, 2 Sept 1976]

Author

NASA

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2 September 1976.

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Publication place

Physical description

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Dimensions

190 by 240mm. (7.5 by 9.5 inches).

Notes

"Besides taking photographs and collecting other science data on the Martian surface, the two [Viking] landers conducted three biology experiments designed to look for possible signs of life. These experiments discovered unexpected and enigmatic chemical activity in the Martian soil, but

provided no clear evidence for the presence of living microorganisms in soil near the landing sites. According to scientists, Mars is self-sterilizing. They believe the combination of solar ultraviolet radiation that saturates the surface, the extreme dryness of the soil and the oxidizing nature of the soil chemistry prevent the formation of living organisms in the Martian soil.

The Viking mission was planned to continue for 90 days after landing. Each orbiter and lander operated far beyond its design lifetime. Viking Orbiter 1 continued for four years and 1,489 orbits of Mars, concluding its mission August 7, 1980, while Viking Orbiter 2 functioned until July 25, 1978. Because of the variations in available sunlight, both landers were powered by radioisotope thermoelectric generators — devices that create electricity from heat given off by the natural decay of plutonium. That power source allowed long-term science investigations that otherwise would not have been possible. Viking Lander 1 made its final transmission to Earth November 11, 1982. The last data from Viking Lander 2 arrived at Earth on April 11, 1980" (description by NASA).

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £15000

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