How the space race influenced art and film was a research interest of Paul Bonaventura, Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies at the University of Oxford’s Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, which he shared with the public by working with the British Film Institute (BFI).

Mr Bonaventura suggested that BFI Southbank run a season of cultural events to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the first manned moon landing in July 1969. By collaborating with the BFI, a rich series of moon-oriented screenings, exhibitions and events grew from his vision. Mr Bonaventura went on to curate One Giant Leap at the BFI, which explored the dream and reality of space travel and the space race in the 1960s through a season of documentaries, feature films and artworks, including the world premiere of the newly restored version of Theo Kamecke’s Moonwalk One, the London premiere of Duncan Jones’s Moon, and the first–ever exhibition of Simon Faithfull’s ‘Escape Vehicles’.

By bringing together creative minds focused on space from different art forms, Mr Bonaventura’s expertise created a rich, cultural and educational experience for visitors. One Giant Leap recorded the second highest ticket sales for a film season in 2009 and the second highest attendance levels for an exhibition in the BFI Gallery.

‘Paul Bonaventura provoked our thinking about curatorial processes and methods of research and consistently brought energy, enthusiasm and insights to the wider planning processes. It was a sometimes challenging, yet always rewarding partnership which stimulated much creative discussion and many new creative processes internally and my colleagues and I have benefited enormously from the process.’

Eddie Berg, Artistic Director, British Film Institute