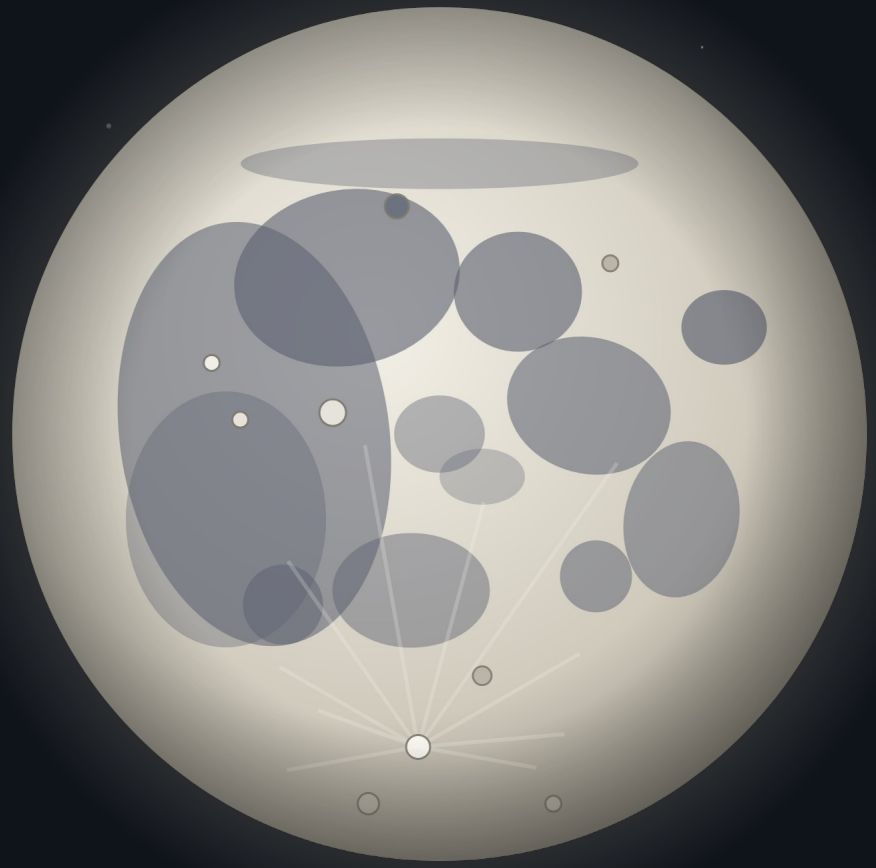
SWITCH TO SPACE 5 · 18 NOVEMBER 2026

WHY THE MOON, AND WHY NOW?



Arnaud Stiepen

Astrophysicist · Nexus science and technology communication

HANDS UP

WHO WAS THE FIRST HUMAN TO WALK ON THE MOON?

1954

A young Belgian reporter.

A quiff. A small white dog.

THE FIRST HUMAN ON THE MOON

1954

A young Belgian reporter.

A quiff. A small white dog.

1969

Neil Armstrong.

Came second.

12

walked on the Moon.

December 1972: we stopped.

More than fifty years without anyone going back.

53

If you’re under fifty-three…

not one day of your life has had a human standing on the Moon.

4

of the twelve are still alive.

All of them in their nineties.

Why go back?
And why now?

REASON 1 OF 5

PRIDE

It’s a race. Again.

APRIL 2026

Artemis II: four astronauts around the Moon, on a module built in Europe

2028

United States: target for the first landing since 1972

2030

China: target for its first crewed landing

REASON 1 OF 5

THE SOUTH POLE.

A handful of spots with almost constant sunlight.

Right next to the ice. And everyone is heading there.

REASON 2 OF 5

PROFIT

At the south pole, there’s ice.

Ice → Water → Air → Rocket fuel

REASON 3 OF 5

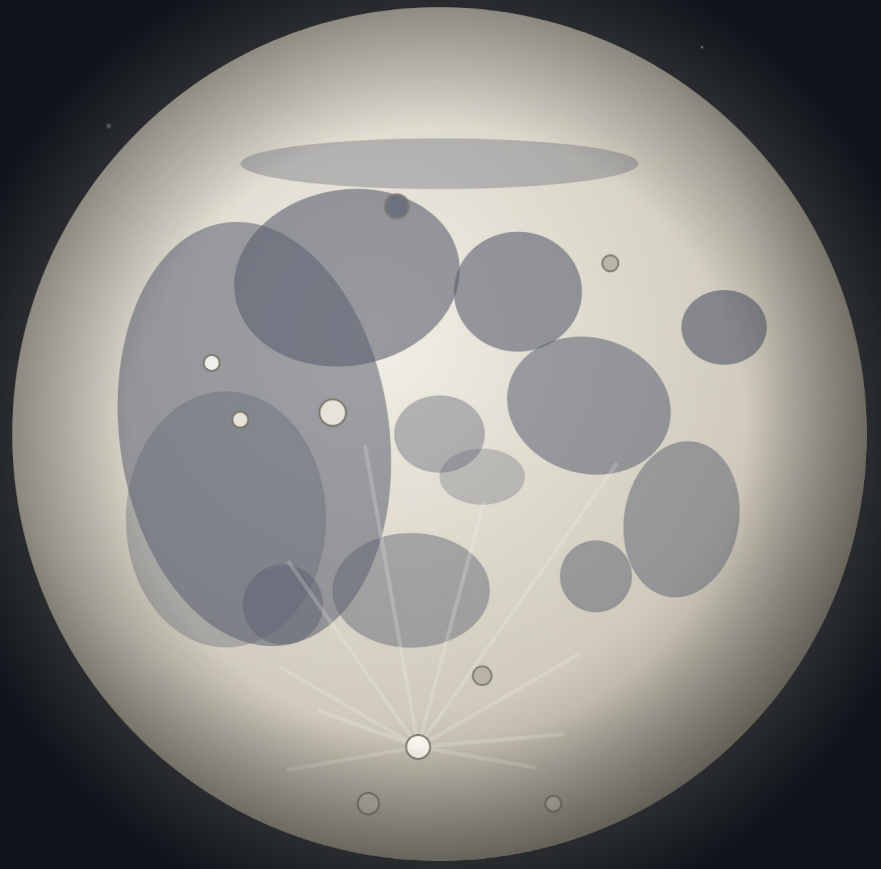
PANIC

The backup planet.

REASON 4 OF 5

POETRY

Every human who ever lived has looked up at this same face.



REASON 5 OF 5

physics

The quietest place we can reach.

No wind

No ocean

No traffic

A telescope on the far side. A seismometer in the dark.

WHY NOW?

1972–2026

A museum.

Footprints, flags, silence.

THIS DECADE

A construction site.

Landers, rovers, a first base.

The first to arrive will pick the landing sites, claim the ice, and **write the rules.**

This afternoon: Living on the Moon, technical, legal and societal challenges.

35

Gene Kranz, flight director in the Apollo 11 control room, July 1969.

35

Gene Kranz, flight director in the Apollo 11 control room, July 1969.

By his own account: the oldest person in the room.

APOLLO, BEHIND THE FOOTPRINTS

12

walked.

400,000

made it possible.

Engineers | Programmers | Welders | Lawyers | Accountants | Seamstresses

HANDS UP

ENGINEERS? LAWYERS? BUSINESS? COMMUNICATION? BIOLOGY?

That’s the next

400,000.

THIS TIME

BELGIUM IS IN IT FOR REAL.

Belgian hardware is already part of:

ARTEMIS

NASA’s return to the Moon, with Europe on board

ARGONAUT

ESA’s European lunar lander

MOONLIGHT

ESA’s lunar communications and navigation service

The people who build it are right behind those booths.

THE NEXT PERSON TO WALK ON THE MOON IS ALIVE TODAY.

The people who’ll get them there?

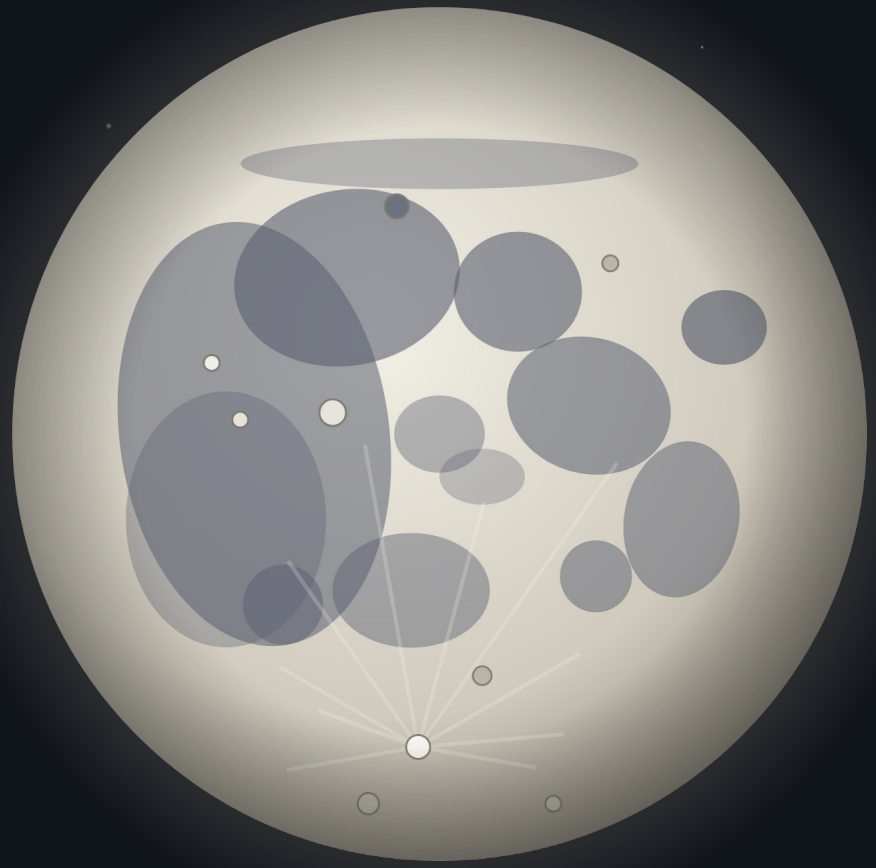
SOME OF THEM ARE IN THIS ROOM.

1954: a Belgian went to the Moon on paper.

THIS TIME, LET'S GO FOR REAL.

Thank you!

Arnaud Stiepen · Nexus



NEXT SPEAKER

ANKE MAYER

EUMETSAT

HR Business Partner

NEXT SPEAKER

ALEXANDRE DE GERADON

Telespazio BeNeLux

Corporate Communication & CSR Manager

NEXT SPEAKER

MICHAEL MARECHAL

Aerospacelab

Head of Manufacturing Operations

NEXT SPEAKER

ADRIEN DECLEIRE

Nexova Sopra Steria

[Title to confirm]

ENJOY YOUR LUNCH.

Visit the booths: the people who’ll take you to the Moon are standing behind them.

Switch to Space 5 · MIX Brussels