



# IT'S ROCKET SCIENCE

For almost two years, the Portuguese photographer Edgar Martins was allowed behind the scenes at the European Space Agency and its partner organisations around the world, from Russia to Spain to French Guiana. His exploration introduced him to everything from space simulators and testing machines to a living room designed for Mars. Many of the ideas he saw being developed at the frontiers of space science will eventually trickle down to the rest of us. Photographs from Martins' project will be exhibited in London later this month, and a new book of his work will be published in May



**Facing page** Assembly of the Near InfraRed Spectrograph, an instrument on the James Webb Space Telescope at ADS Ottobrunn, Germany, which can observe more than 100 astronomical objects simultaneously over a wide field of vision

**Above** The Mars-500 living pod, an ESA experiment at IBMP in Russia simulating a flight to Mars and back for a six-strong crew

**Right** At ESA-ESTEC in The Netherlands, physical properties measurement machines are used to test spacecraft systems



**Above** A SCAPE (Self-Contained Atmospheric Protection Ensemble) used at CSG – Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana

**Right** At ESA-ESTEC, this "Multishaker" tests a spacecraft's ability to withstand the violent ride into orbit



**Below** Pokémon cards taken by ESA astronaut Jean-François Clervoy on the space shuttle Discovery during a Hubble repair mission; the Rubik's Cube that accompanied Clervoy on three space missions (and inspired a scene in the film Gravity); and the 2008 launch of the STS-122 mission space shuttle as pictured by astronaut Léopold Eyhart's nine-year-old son



Edgar Martins' "The Rehearsal of Space & the Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite" is published by La Fabbrica/The Moth House next month. A touring exhibition of this work opens at The Wapping Project Bankside, London, on April 25 (thewappingproject bankside.com). Earlier stages of Martins' project featured in FT Weekend October 19/20 2013