



## Cosmic deflation

ALL important people have dressing rooms. This is the one for Russian cosmonauts.

It's based at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, outside Moscow. As might be expected from something that dates back to the Soviet space programme, the dressing room itself isn't terribly high-tech. "It's a fairly nondescript room with incredibly decorative brown carpets," says photographer Edgar Martins, who has gained access to Star City - or the more charming Zvyozdny gorodok, "starry townlet", in Russian - as well as other facilities operated by the European Space Agency and its partners. The result is a book and exhibition with the intriguing, Borgesian name *The Rehearsal of Space and the Poetic Impossibility to Manage the Infinite*.

What's he trying to say? "Space and the technological marvels that surround it have an immeasurable resonance on our social and individual consciousness," Martins says. "This is a topic that constantly draws us in, but which is perpetually out of reach."

Seeing the spacesuit changing room brought on feelings of excitement and anxiety, Martins says. "Excitement because since the age of 8 I had been obsessed with how spacesuits were stored. And anxiety because I knew I would have at most 20 minutes to photograph them and so wanted to make sure I did them justice." Did he try a suit on? "I did try on a glove."

The photos can be seen at the Wapping Project Bankside in London until 29 May. Rowan Hooper

## Photographer

**Edgar Martins** [edgarmartins.com](http://edgarmartins.com)

Image courtesy of the Wapping Project Bankside ([thewappingprojectbankside.com](http://thewappingprojectbankside.com)) and ESA ([esa.int](http://esa.int))