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## Valerian masterclass invites public to meet cartoonist Mézières and concept artist Sylvain Despretz

To kick off the public days at the Paris Air Show on Friday 23 June, CNES and French motion picture company EuropaCorp held a masterclass entitled “Valerian: space guest”. This one-of-a-kind event was a chance to meet cartoonist Mézières, author of the Valerian sci-fi comic series, first published in *Pilote* magazine in 1967, and concept artist Sylvain Despretz.

At this year’s Paris Air Show, CNES is showcasing its space programmes in a futuristic pavilion with a special focus on digital technologies. Inside the pavilion, which takes the form of the Intruder spaceship from the movie Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets, directed by Luc Besson, CNES invites visitors to learn more about its activities in six key areas—Innovation, Climate, Exploration, Cooperation, Applications and Inspiration—plus an outside installation all about the Mars 2020 mission.

To kick off the public days at the show, CNES also organized a masterclass entitled “Valerian: space guest” with publisher Dargaud and film company EuropaCorp. This one-of-a-kind event took place at 2 p.m. on Friday 23 June, just days before the movie’s much-anticipated release on Monday 26 July. Visitors had the chance to meet Jean-Claude Mézières, author of the comic strip series *Valérien et Laureline*, published by Dargaud, and Sylvain Despretz, concept artist for the movie adaptation. CNES engineer Frédéric Masson also talked about how science fiction has provided inspiration for his work as an engineer.

Two players in innovation thus came together against the futuristic backdrop of the CNES pavilion at the Paris Air Show. On the one side, CNES, as France’s national space agency, is driving innovation and disruptive, forward-looking approaches to technology, providing inspiration for its industry partners and spurring their development in space. From the success of the Rosetta-Philae mission to Thomas Pesquet’s achievements and the Taranis satellite, which is capturing imagery of sprites from an altitude of 700 km, the universe still holds many exciting mysteries, which CNES is attempting to unlock.

Sharing latest advances in space and astronomy with the largest number and making them want to learn more, inspiring vocations and promoting the space sector is all part of CNES’s role, reflected in this unique partnership at the Paris Air Show, which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Valerian, meanwhile, is the archetypal adventurer, who with Laureline sets out on a mission to an extraordinary intergalactic city. Alpha is an ever-expanding metropolis inhabited by thousands of species from the four corners of the galaxy. But it is threatened by a mysterious dark force. Valerian and Laureline must race to identify the menace and safeguard not just Alpha, but the very future of the universe.

Driven by shared values of innovation, boldness and the desire to explore, CNES and EuropaCorp joined forces at this year’s show to convey one of the latest human adventures that is resonating with the public: the conquest of space!

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### Contacts

Fabienne Lissak – Head of Media – Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 78 37 / [fabienne.lissak@cnes.fr](mailto:fabienne.lissak@cnes.fr)  
Pascale Bresson – Press Officer – Tel: +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39 / [pascale.bresson@cnes.fr](mailto:pascale.bresson@cnes.fr)