

What to make of ‘photographic proof’ of insect life on Mars? More than likely, they’re just rocks

William Romoser, a professor emeritus who specializes in arbovirology (the study of viruses transmitted by arthropods) and entomology at Ohio University, has compiled photographs from NASA Mars rovers that he says are evidence of life on Mars.

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Now, if you really squint at these images and have already read that someone else thinks that they look like insects and reptiles, you might think they look like insects and reptiles, too. But, according to David Maddison, a professor in the integrative biology department at Oregon State University, this “proof” is likely just [an example of pareidolia](#), a phenomenon in which people see patterns in random data.

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“It is vastly more parsimonious to presume the blobs are simply rocks. As has been said, ‘extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence’; those pictures are far, far less than extraordinary,” [Maddison says].

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[T]o the untrained eye, to the person who might only have time to skim the headline on his or her commute home, [overblown claims like this](#) can be damaging.

“When we have this kind of sensationalist headline, it’s really hard for the public to know whether or not this is true,” [planetary scientist Nina] Lanza said.

Read full, original post: [It’s Still Not Aliens: ‘Mars Bug’ Claim Could Damage the Search for Life](#)