

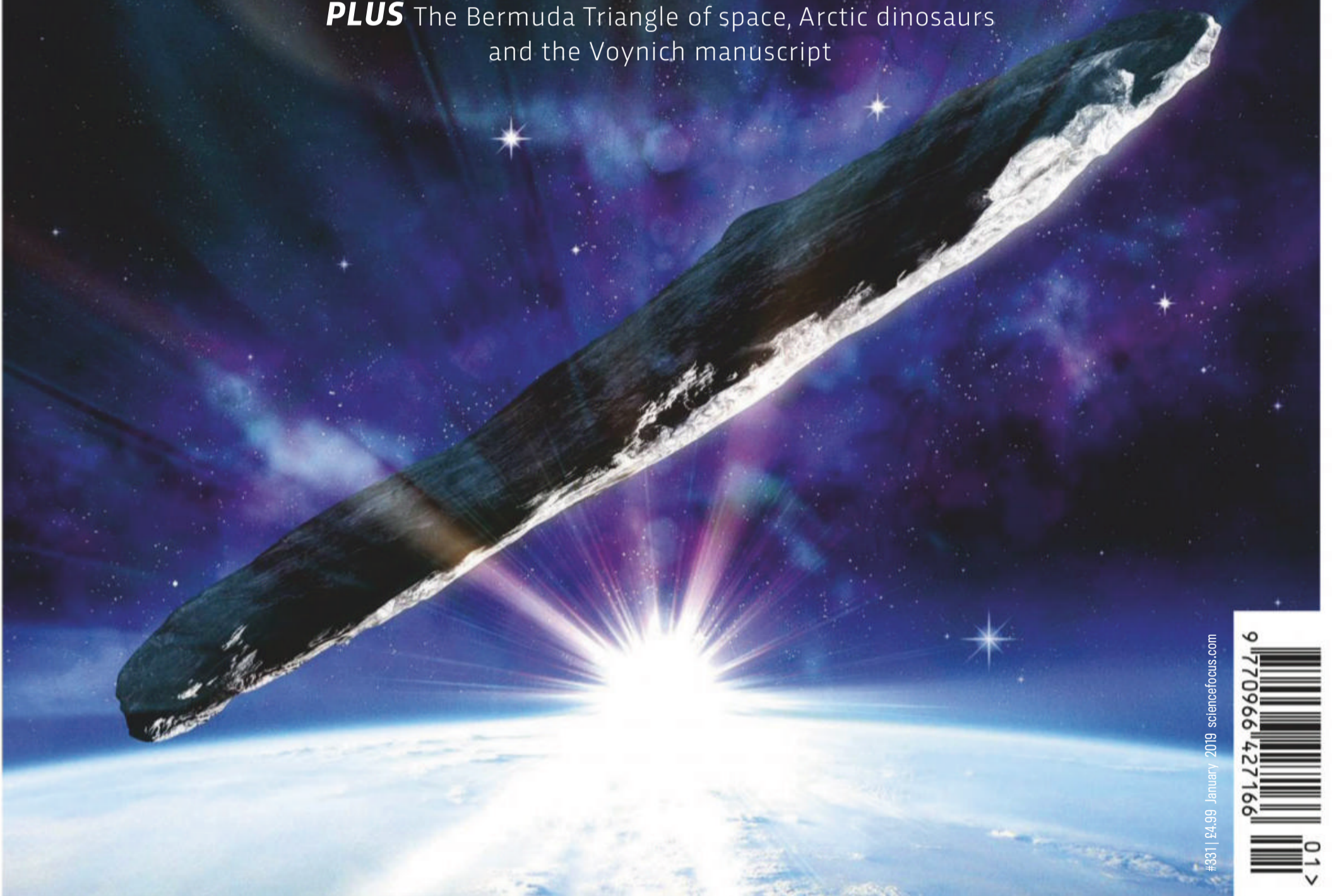
FOCUS

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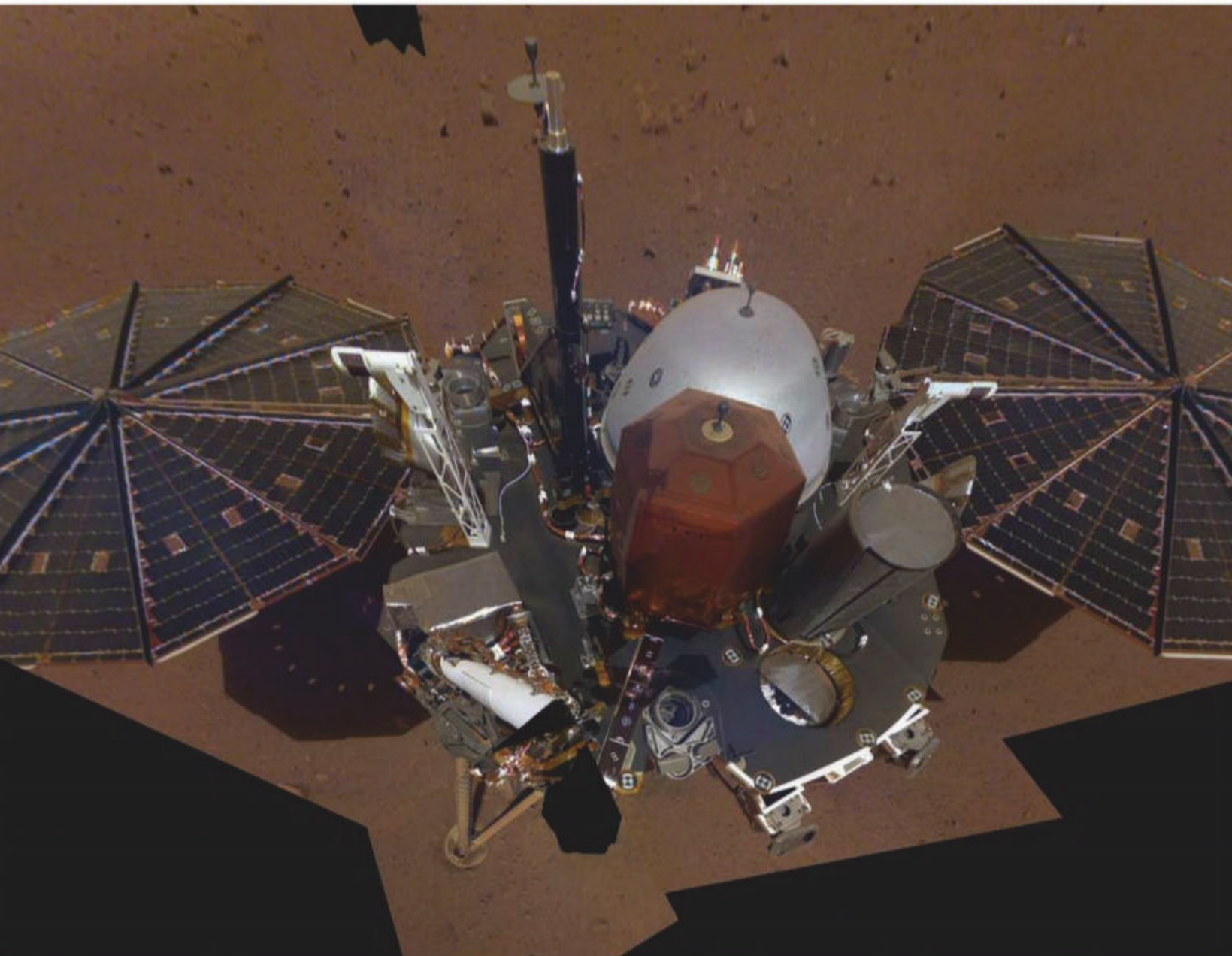
New tech that spots coronary disease before it happens

QUANTUM WEIRDNESS

How a living thing can be in two places at once

MY BRAIN MADE ME DO IT

Understanding the link between head injuries and criminal behaviour



SPACE

INSIGHT SENDS BACK FIRST SELFIE FROM MARS

This self-portrait was taken by NASA's InSight lander using a camera attached to its robotic arm. It's a composite image made up of 11 shots joined together to show the lander perched on the Elysium Planitia, a broad plain that straddles the Red Planet's equator where InSight has been positioned since successfully landing in late November.

In the coming months the InSight team will manoeuvre the lander's instruments – a seismometer and a heat probe – into position in the surrounding area in order to begin taking measurements.

"The near-absence of rocks, hills and holes means it'll be extremely safe for our instruments," said InSight's principal investigator Bruce Banerdt. "This might seem

like a pretty plain piece of ground if it weren't on Mars, but we're glad to see that."

InSight's mission is to give the interior of the planet the equivalent of a full-body health check. It will measure Mars's 'pulse' by monitoring the frequency and magnitude of the seismic activity (otherwise known as 'Marsquakes') and check its temperature by keeping tabs on the heat flow beneath the planet's surface.

It's hoped that the data collected will help the researchers to figure out how rocky planets, such as Earth and Mars, were formed. Here on Earth, most of the evidence has been erased thanks to the movements of tectonic plates over billions of years. Once operational, InSight will continue to collect data for 709 sols – Martian days – the equivalent to 728 Earth days.

THINGS WE LEARNT THIS MONTH

BLINKING HELPS US TO COMMUNICATE

Rapidly blinking to a conversation partner encourages them to talk more, while longer, slower blinks indicate that they should speak less, researchers at the Max Planck Institute in the Netherlands have found.

FOSSIL RECORDS FROM THE SO CALLED 'HUMAN AGE' WILL BE DOMINATED BY CHICKENS

For future inhabitants of the Earth, the Anthropocene – the geological epoch defined by human influence – will be most evident thanks to chicken bones. According to researchers from Leicester University, evidence of human impact on the planet will be easiest to detect by looking at the bones of domesticated chickens. More than 23 billion of the birds are alive on the planet at any given time, they say.

THE UTERUS MAY PLAY A ROLE IN MEMORY

In addition to growing babies, the uterus may also play an unexpected role in memory. Rats that have had their uteri removed performed worse in maze-based memory tests, a study at the University of Arizona has found. The effect could be due to hormones released by ovaries affecting the brain, say the researchers.