2018 Rubin Prize Winner - Gurtina Besla

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The American Astronomical Society's Division on Dynamical Astronomy (DDA) is pleased to announce that the 2018 recipient of the Vera Rubin Early Career Award is Professor Gurtina Besla of the University of Arizona. We recognize Professor Besla for her trail-blazing research on the origin and dynamics of the Milky Way and the Local Group of galaxies.

Professor Besla earned her Ph.D. at Harvard University in 2011 under the direction of Lars Hernquist. In her dissertation she developed novel theoretical models of the dynamical interaction between the Milky Way Galaxy and its satellites the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) and the Small Magellanic Cloud (SMC). Her models incorporated high-precision astrometry of the LMC and the SMC obtained in the Hubble Space Telescope era, and led to the surprising conclusion that these dwarf galaxies are undergoing their first encounter with the Milky Way. Professor Besla's work is influential in constraining the dark
matter distribution in the Local Group by understanding the dynamics of the tracers of the Milky Way's halo and making predictions for future dark matter detection experiments. Professor Besla has also made important contributions to observational programs to increase our knowledge of the mass and kinematics of the Local Group.

Professor Besla will be invited to give a lecture at the next annual DDA meeting, which will be held at the University of Colorado, Boulder in spring 2019. The Rubin Prize is the newest award given by the DDA; this is only the second time it has been presented.

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