# Amazon's Blue Origin space mission draws mixed reactions over female empowerment and environmental claims



Amazon’s Blue Origin space mission, featuring a crew of female celebrities including pop star Katy Perry, has drawn mixed reactions following its 11-minute journey to space. The venture, promoted as a movement to empower women and protect the environment, has faced significant criticism, particularly on social media platforms.

The mission was positioned as a symbol of female empowerment, seeking to highlight women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and inspire a new generation of young girls to pursue careers in aerospace and related fields. However, many commentators have questioned the authenticity and execution of this message.

Wendy’s, the fast-food chain, posted on X (formerly Twitter), “When we said women in STEM this isn’t what we meant,” capturing the sentiment of disappointment shared by many. Model and activist Emily Ratajkowski labelled the mission "beyond parody" on TikTok, while actress Olivia Munn criticised it as "a bit gluttonous." A notable point of contention was the over-sexualisation of the crew’s appearance, notably Katy Perry’s tight, blue spacesuit described as resembling an outfit from an American Halloween parade combined with the application of full hair and makeup. These styling choices have sparked discussion about how women are portrayed in spaces that traditionally require technical expertise and professionalism.

The narrative expressed by the crew, including overt expressions of affection for the spacecraft, was also criticised for appearing to undermine the intellectual achievements of the women involved. This contrasts sharply with how male astronauts typically communicate about space missions, according to critics. Many observers took issue with the emphasis on celebrity and glamour, drawing parallels to entertainment phenomena such as the Avengers films or Spice Girls music videos instead of authentic STEM representation.

Despite the potential for the mission to be a significant milestone in addressing gender disparity in space, statistics highlight the ongoing inequality: only 12% of people who have travelled to space are women, and women occupy just a quarter of leadership roles in aerospace. Historically, systemic issues persist, exemplified by NASA delaying an all-female spacewalk in 2019 due to a lack of properly fitting spacesuits. The mission’s failure to mention and highlight key crew members like Amanda Nguyen, a Harvard astrophysics graduate and NASA intern who worked on significant projects such as the Kepler exoplanet mission before becoming a civil-rights activist, further fuelled criticism over prioritising celebrity over substance.

Another aspect under scrutiny was the mission’s environmental messaging. Katy Perry spoke about the mission’s goal being to inspire people to protect the Earth, saying, "It won't be about me; it will be about this beautiful Earth. I think from up there, we will think, 'Oh my God, we have to protect our mother.'" However, critics pointed out the inherent environmental cost of rocket launches, suggesting the mission's ecological claims were contradicted by its carbon footprint.

Kirsty Hathaway, executive creative director at Joan London, reflected on the wider implications for brands and campaigns attempting to marry social causes with high-profile stunts. Writing for Campaign Live, Hathaway emphasised the importance of aligning campaign narratives with public sentiment, especially amidst global financial uncertainties: "When the world is facing financial uncertainty, sending a bunch of rich people to space isn’t exactly what everyone wants to see. People just feel annoyed rather than empowered."

Hathaway also stressed that for campaigns promoting empowerment or social change, tangible action is crucial to retain credibility beyond initial appearances. The mission’s lack of a long-term strategy to support women in STEM, particularly in aerospace, led to it being perceived as a vanity project rather than a genuine effort to break industry barriers. "Representation matters but it needs to be followed with action to truly be meaningful," Hathaway stated.

The Blue Origin mission highlighted ongoing challenges in gender representation within STEM and aerospace industries, alongside broader debates about how celebrity culture intersects with social advocacy. While the mission garnered extensive media attention, the varied responses underscore the complexities involved in translating symbolic gestures into lasting change.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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