

## Supernova 1987A in the LMC

Almost 5 years after the explosion, this NTT exposure (left) in the light of  $H\alpha$  was obtained by ESO astronomers Christian Gouiffes and Massimo Della Valle on December 1, 1991. Both the inner oval nebula and the outer filaments are clearly visible. The exposure time was 10 minutes with a seeing of approximately 0.65 arcsec.

SN 1987A is situated SW of the Tarantula Nebula in a complex region containing extended emission nebulosities. Just south of it is a darker area of higher absorption, possibly the interstellar cloud in which the young star SK -69° 202 was formed, some million years ago.

The frame below is an enlargement of an [NII] image, processed to better show the details of the SN 1987A surroundings.

The small frame at the bottom shows the same area in continuum light, in a spectral region with no emission lines. The magnitude of the supernova itself has now decreased to about 18, and it has become significantly fainter than the two stars in the multiple system SK -69° 202, in which the brightest star exploded on February 23, 1987.

