

**NATURAL  
HISTORY  
MUSEUM**  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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**NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES  
COUNTY TO OPEN  
NEW DINOSAUR HALL ON JULY 16**



**14,000-Square-Foot Permanent Exhibition—Featuring World’s  
Only  
T. rex Growth Series and Large-Scale, Never-Before-Displayed  
Mounts—  
Brings Paleontology Alive**

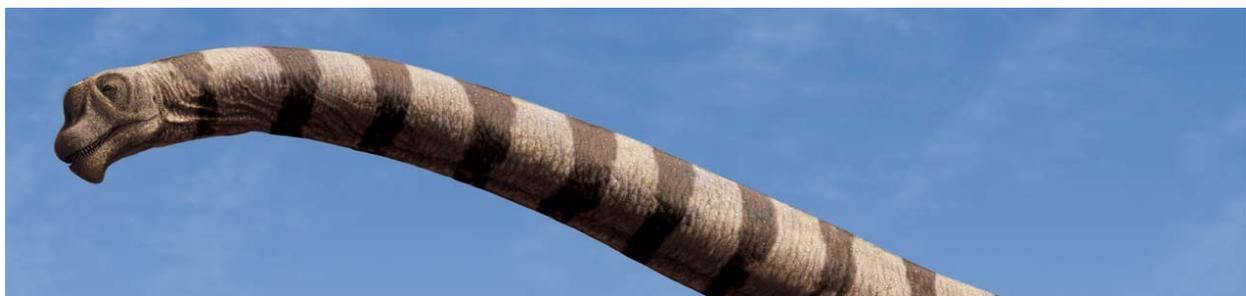
**LOS ANGELES, CA** — On July 16, 2011 the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) will open its all-new, 14,000-square-foot **Dinosaur Hall**, marking the halfway point of the Museum’s seven-year transformation. Twice the size of the Museum’s old dinosaur galleries, the new permanent exhibition will features over 300 fossils and 20 complete mounts of dinosaurs and sea creatures. The hall will rival the world’s leading dinosaur halls for the number of individual fossils displayed, the size and spectacular character of the major mounts, including the world’s only *Tyrannosaurus rex*

growth series, and the accessible integration of recent scientific discoveries and research into the displays.

In the new, spacious, light-filled galleries, visitors come face-to-face—and in some cases can walk underneath—huge prehistoric skeletons, as well as see the dinosaurs as they were in life, illustrated on giant murals and animated in hands-on interactive and multi-media displays. In addition to views on this grand scale, visitors can also get a very detailed, close-up look at fossils—they can touch several, look at many through magnifying glasses as a scientist would, and in the interactive displays, excavate from simulated dirt and rock as paleontologists would.

Throughout the exhibition, visitors will encounter science not as static information, but as a vibrant, ongoing investigation into dinosaur mysteries—some resolved, and some still being explored. They will learn that the investigations are still taking place today, reinforcing the fact that discovery is not just something that happened in the past; it is work that is happening now, all around us.

“The new Dinosaur Hall is an exciting realization of the goal of our institution-wide transformation, which is to bring the Museum’s research and collections vividly to life for a public that is hungry for the real thing—an encounter with authentic fossils and with the genuine, fascinating process of scientific exploration,” said Dr. Jane Pisano, NHM President and Director. “This exhibition will emerge as one of the great dinosaur experiences in the world, and a major reason why NHM is one of America’s leading natural history museums.”



### **Standout Specimens**

To provide insight into how scientists puzzle out answers to questions about dinosaurs—to reveal the stories *behind* these astonishing specimens—the exhibition draws from the ambitious discovery and research programs of the NHM’s in-house Dinosaur Institute (DI), directed by world-renowned paleontologist and exhibition lead curator, Dr. Luis Chiappe. The DI’s field research program has located key specimens all over the

world, from the dinosaur-rich badlands of the American West to remote parts of South America and Asia.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the **T. rex growth series**, containing an extraordinary fossil trio of the youngest known baby, a rare juvenile, and a recently-discovered young adult, one of the ten most complete *T. rex* specimens in the world. The Dinosaur Hall's other standout exhibits include an imposing new **Triceratops**; the armor-backed **Stegosaurus**; the predator **Allosaurus**; a 68-foot, long-necked **Mamenchisaurus**; and **giant marine reptiles** that swam in the oceans covering what is today California. Two-thirds of the full fossil skeletons have never been displayed before. Specimens that were previously seen have all been re-articulated into more dynamic new poses based on recent scientific findings.

“We hope to inspire new generations of scientists, since this exhibition highlights the experience of going outdoors and finding treasures, and then understanding how they fit within the current scientific record,” said Dr. Chiappe. “Most dinosaur exhibitions are organized around specific types of dinosaurs or by periods of time. Our approach is to use new discoveries and research findings to bring visitors into the world of dinosaurs, exploring the great questions of how they lived, behaved, and died, and whether they still exist.”



### **The Exhibition Experience**

The Dinosaur Hall extends through two adjoining two-story galleries. One is a part of the recently restored 1913 Building (the Beaux-Arts structure that was the Museum's original home). The second belongs to the newer 1920s Building, which has been seismically renovated and outfitted with floor-to-ceiling windows that give passersby in Exposition Park a peek at the giants inside.

One of the exhibit goals was to bring visitors closer than ever to the real specimens—85 percent of the exhibition's fossils are the real thing, not casts or reconstructions—and remove barriers whenever possible. To accomplish this, the major fossil skeletons were

placed on special platforms that allow the fossils to be shown without glass barriers, and to pass directly underneath a dinosaur neck and stand under a *T. rex* skull.

This is a key to the exhibition's visitor experience, as many of these fossils were prepared and articulated in recent years, using modern methods that forgo the thick layers of shellac used by paleontological conservators of decades past. Never-before-seen details of the fossils are revealed. Some specimens have rich red and green hues, colored by the minerals in the lands where they were found. Some contain visible traces of skin textures, respiratory systems, and in one instance, the stomach contents of a last meal.

The Dinosaur Hall is organized around a series of questions: What is a dinosaur? What was their world like? How did they live, grow and behave? And finally, what happened to them?

A quick walk through the exhibit reveals these main ideas, as they appear on large, colorful mural illustrations. For visitors who crave more background, context, and stories of discovery, multi-layered content is available for readers in text and in touchscreen kiosks, and for young non-readers, in simple mechanical, manual games.

Upstairs on the mezzanine are displays about the lab and field aspects of paleontology. These are hands-on experiences, with touchable specimens, magnifying glasses, and a look at the tools and tricks of dinosaur research—from a camping supply list for a fossil hunting expedition, to Dr. Chiappe's hand-written field journals.

### **Gallery One**

As visitors enter the exhibition's first gallery, they are immediately greeted by a magnificent, never-before displayed *Triceratops*, mounted on a contoured platform with details of the new research that has re-interpreted, via the animal's forelimb, how this huge creature walked in life.

Framing the gallery is a 40-foot "fossil wall" showcasing 100 diverse dinosaur specimens—an artful take on traditional paleontological display, with bones, teeth, eggs, footprints, skin patches, and coprolites (fossilized droppings). Two touchscreen kiosks work as virtual catalogs here, allowing visitors to explore what each bone is, and in some cases, turning them around 360 degrees on the screen.

The exhibition's largest specimen, a 68-foot *Mamenchisaurus*, stands in front of the gallery's large central windows with its long neck and tail sprawling throughout the gallery. This is one of the exhibit's few casts—most other mounts include real fossils.

Suspended from the ceiling overhead, and also viewable from the gallery's new mezzanine, are marine reptiles that lived in the warm sea that once covered California. Here, visitors will come face to face with the exhibit's marine monsters. The mosasaur *Plotosaurus* and the plesiosaur *Morenosaurus* are both cantilevered over the main floor in a breathtaking, gravity-defying scene. In some cases, large fossil plaques show animals still encased in that dirt and rock—a display method that offers staggering glimpses of prehistory. There is a mosasaur plaque, for instance, that reveals traces of a partial body outline, skin color markings, external scales, a downturned tail, branching bronchial tubes, and evidence of the animal's last meal 85 million years ago—fish.

At the end of Gallery One, visitors will get an insight into the field experiences and work done by the Dinosaur Institute expedition teams, led by Chiappe. On five synced screens, video from a recent field expeditions in Utah shows the often grueling conditions and exciting moments of discovery that characterize Dinosaur Institute excursions. Nearby, a specimen is displayed, in the plaster “jacket” with which it was transported out of the quarry it was found in.

## **Gallery Two – 1913 Building**

### **The *T. rex* Growth Series**

The show-stopping centerpiece in this gallery is the platform featuring a very special trio: the young adult *Tyrannosaurus rex* nicknamed Thomas after the discoverer's brother (34 feet, and approximately 17 years old) joined by a 20-foot juvenile (approximately 14 years old) and an 11-foot baby (2 years old). The growth series is a fascinating look at the ways that *T. rex* specimens grew, a process that included incredible growth spurts and body changes. After hatching as a 2-foot, 6-pound baby, for example, a *T. rex* could reach 30 to 35 feet (10,000 to 12,000 pounds) in less than two decades.

But the growth series is also a snapshot of dinosaur life: the terrain on which they are mounted finds Thomas and the baby standing on one side, while the juvenile lurches toward the carcass of a duck-billed *Edmontosaurus*. Though nearby content is careful to point out that theories about a long-extinct animal's behavior are just that, the scene intends to raise questions about the behavior of the *T. rex*.

In another panel, the mystery of how and when the large dinosaurs died out is introduced, with evidence for a mass extinction event at the end of the Mesozoic. This section also highlights the evolutionary connection between dinosaurs and birds, providing compelling evidence about why the latter should be considered living dinosaurs.

The second level of the exhibition takes a closer look at the science behind these specimens, from how we know where to look for specimens to the work we do in paleontology labs. One area focuses on field work and the surprising data that a quarry can reveal in addition to its fossil treasures and examples of excavation methods (which, unlike lab work, have not changed drastically over the last several decades). Multi-media interactive kiosks allows visitors to “excavate” specimens and investigate the finds. The companion area focuses on laboratory discoveries—research tools that have evolved to include high-tech microscopes, CT scans, and genome studies.

### **Behind the Scenes of the Exhibition**

Many of the Dinosaur Hall’s specimens were discovered by the Museum’s in-house Dinosaur Institute (DI), whose staff, volunteers and graduate students are under Dr. Chiappe’s direction. The DI’s ambitious field research program has located key specimens all over the world, from the dinosaur-rich badlands of the American West to remote parts of South America and Asia. Notable accomplishments include sauropod discoveries (including “Gnatalie,” named for the biting gnats that pestered her excavators) and dinosaur trackways in Utah; research that reveals a relationship between North American and Iberian dinosaurs; the discovery of an extraordinary dinosaur nesting site, with thousands of fossil eggs, in Patagonia, Argentina; and the identification and naming of North America’s tiniest dinosaur, the *Fruitadens haagarorum*.

But perhaps the DI’s biggest success story is Thomas the *T. rex*, one of the most complete *T. rex* specimens in the world, and for NHM visitors, the most familiar. Excavated by DI paleontologists in Montana from 2003 to 2005, the specimen was brought to the Museum and prepared in a working paleontology laboratory in full view of the public.

Like Thomas, many specimens in the exhibition made their way from fossil fields to the Museum, to undergo conservation work and to be researched by DI staff. Footage from DI expeditions will be used in the multi-media components of the Dinosaur Hall, revealing the challenges of working in fossil beds—hardships like piercing sandstorms and the dilemma of transporting thousand-pound fossils out of remote badlands are dramatically juxtaposed against the thrilling moments of discovery.

### **The Exhibit Team**

This is a project five years in the making with hundreds of contributors. Inside NHM, the

Dinosaur Hall was supervised by Dr. Karen Wise, VP of Education and Exhibits. Dr. Chiappe was its lead curator; Jennifer Morgan was its project manager.

The exhibition was designed by Brooklyn-based Evidence Design, with graphics from Los Angeles' Kim Baer Design Associates (KBDA). Lexington was the fabricator, and New York-based United Field created its multi-media assets. Two of North America's finest fossil mount makers worked on the exhibition. Phil Fraley Productions—the company that headed the articulation of Sue, the iconic *T. rex* of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History—undertook the *T. rex* specimens, the giant marine reptiles, and the *Triceratops*. The Ontario, Canada-based Research Casting International remounted the exhibition's largest specimen, the 68-foot *Memenchisaurus* and six additional medium-sized mounts.

The seismic retrofit and historic renovation of the Dinosaur Hall galleries was led by CO Architects Principal, Jorge de la Cal, and Cordell Corporation President, Don Webb, with Matt Construction.

### **NHM Next**

The Dinosaur Hall is the latest component of NHM Next, the \$135 million campaign that will transform the Museum and is designed to engage its public as never before in the drama, excitement and wonder of the natural world and the scientific enterprise. Over the course of seven years, NHM is restoring its magnificent home and building a soaring new public entrance; remaking its spacious grounds in Exposition Park into a new nature destination and learning environment in the heart of the city; and thoroughly reinventing its exhibitions, bringing visitors into contact in new ways with the Museum's outstanding research program.

The institution-wide self-transformation began in December 2006 with renovation work on the Museum's historic core, a Beaux-Arts structure by Hudson & Munsell that in 1913 became the first dedicated museum building in Los Angeles to open its doors. The metamorphosis continued in July 2010 with the first major new permanent exhibition—***Age of Mammals***, featuring a wealth of specimens from both the NHM's and the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits' Ice Age fossil collections. The first installations in the stain glass topped, renovated **Haaga Family Rotunda** also debuted.

Now at its midpoint, this unique public-private partnership has raised more than \$94 million — more than 70 percent of its goal. By the Museum's centennial in 2013, the NHM Next Campaign will have supported five new permanent exhibitions; a new pedestrian bridge and car park in 2011; an exhibition about Los Angeles' natural and cultural history in 2012; and 3.5 acres of urban nature experiences and the *Nature Lab*

in 2013. By the centennial celebration in 2013, NHM will complete the **Otis Booth Pavilion**: a light-filled, three-story Museum entrance at the focal point of the new North Campus. The Pavilion will dramatically showcase one of the Museum's signature specimens: its 63-foot-long, 7,000-pound fin whale.

When the Otis Booth Pavilion is inaugurated, the self-transformation will be complete, and the NHM will greet its centennial as a renewed, restored and expanded institution. A total of 108,000 square feet of indoor space will have been renovated and reinstalled. Twelve new galleries and five new exhibits will bring collections and research together as never before. And NHM's new "front lawn" will spread out to Los Angeles residents and their visitors from around the world, to make the Museum what it should be—a gathering place for everyone who wants a deeper appreciation of the connections between our society and the natural world.

### **NHM Amenities**

Coinciding with the opening of the Dinosaur Hall, NHM inaugurates the first elements of a major new public approach to the Museum. Along busy Exposition Boulevard, in between two dedicated stops that are being built for the Metro Expo Line (Los Angeles' new 8.5-mile light rail line), a new car park and Museum entrance plaza will open directly opposite the campus of the University of Southern California. The new Museum entrance will welcome visitors with amenities including a ticket booth, park benches, and a pedestrian bridge sweeping across the grounds to the building's north side.

The Museum has renovated and expanded its Museum Store to nearly three times the size and opened a satellite store next to the new Dinosaur Hall. Visitors will also find the new NHM Grill, a full-service restaurant with indoor/outdoor seating and a healthy array of breakfast and lunch items for the whole family. A new group sales program and offerings of behind-the-scenes tours for out of town visitors will be available this summer.

### **About the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County**

NHM is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90012, near downtown. It is open daily from 9:30 am to 5 pm. It was the first dedicated museum building in Los Angeles, opening its doors in 1913. NHM has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history—with more than 35 million objects, some as old as 4.5 billion years. The Natural History Family of Museums includes the NHM, the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits (Hancock Park/Mid-Wilshire), and the William S. Hart Museum (Newhall, California).

### **Dinosaur Hall Ticket Information**

Advance online ticket sales for the Dinosaur Hall are available at [nhm.org/dinosaurs](http://nhm.org/dinosaurs). Admission to Dinosaur Hall is included in regular Museum admission: Members and children under 4 are free; children 5-12 are \$5; youth 13-17 are \$8, college students w/ ID and seniors 62 + are \$9; and adults are \$12.

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