



NEWS

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NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

Funding Supports Development of Landmark Permanent Exhibition on the Environmental and Cultural History of Southern California with Local Artist Collaborations and Multimedia Engagement

LOS ANGELES, CA — Dr. Jane Pisano, President and Director of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, today announced that the James Irvine Foundation has approved a \$1 million grant to the Museum to support the development of ***Under the Sun: Los Angeles, California, and the World***, a landmark permanent exhibition scheduled to open in 2012. As part of the grant, *Under the Sun* will be informed by collaborations with local artists, arts educators, and curators and will engage the local community and other history, cultural and science organizations across Southern California. It will be the final component of a new suite of exhibitions and a dramatic, ongoing transformation of the Museum's galleries, exhibitions, and programs.

To date, no museum in Los Angeles has synthesized local history with the breadth and depth that the Museum is planning. *Under the Sun* will use hundreds of artifacts from the Museum's rich collection of natural and cultural history objects and documents, as well as immersive exhibitry, interactive technology and media installations to explore how a unique interplay between diverse human populations and the natural environment has shaped the history and culture of Southern California. Historical objects will help to tell the story of early Los Angeles; collaborations with local artists, arts educators, and curators will capture the

spirit and diversity of contemporary L.A.

The exhibit builds upon the innovative 2004 exhibition, *L.A.: light/motion/dreams*, for which the James Irvine Foundation provided crucial support. *Under the Sun* is similarly based in the Museum's cross-disciplinary expertise and collections, and informed by strategic partnerships and collaborations with artists. It will be presented in a 14,000 square foot gallery, where objects ranging from 65-million-year-old invertebrate fossils to Walt Disney's first animation desk to a scale model of downtown L.A. created as part of the U.S. Works Progress Administration in the late 1930s, will be seen alongside works of contemporary art, film, and photography.

"We are very grateful to the James Irvine Foundation for recognizing the importance of *Under the Sun*, an exhibition that will dramatize as never before the interactions between natural and human processes that have shaped Los Angeles from prehistoric times to the present day," Dr. Pisano said. "Encompassing diverse histories, experiences, creative expressions, and fields of study, this exhibition will inspire a sense of awe and wonder about the city and its composite places, a sense of connection to the others who live here, and an appreciation and awareness for the environment we inhabit."

"We are pleased to support this exhibition and the interdisciplinary approach the Museum is taking to tell the story of the interactions between Southern California's diverse populations and nature," said James E. Canales, President and CEO of The James Irvine Foundation. "This is the kind of innovative project that can help museums create deeper connections with their visitors."

Led by the History curators of the Natural History Museum, the team that is creating *Under the Sun* includes staff from the Museum's divisions of Anthropology, Mammalogy, Ornithology, Entomology, Mineral Sciences, Vertebrate Paleontology, and Invertebrate Paleontology. The staff exhibit team is working with a unique partnership of exhibit design

firm Christopher Chadbourne & Associates and local design and architectural firm Hodgetts + Fung, known for its many high profile projects in Los Angeles.

NHM Next

In 2007, the Museum launched an ambitious initiative to transform its facilities and present new exhibitions and programs. Overall, 81,000 square feet — more than half of the Museum’s public space — will be renovated and reinstalled. The Museum’s beautiful, historic 1913 Building will be a renewed focal point for new exhibits and its Rotunda will house changing displays of treasures from the permanent collection. New exhibitions will open every year, for three years: *Age of Mammals* in summer 2010; *Dinosaur Mysteries* and programmatic outdoor gardens in summer 2011; *Under the Sun*, as well as a newly conceived interactive exhibit space, which will replace the Museum’s Discovery Center, in 2012. Designed to benefit one million regional, national, and international visitors annually, the new exhibits and programs supported by the *NHM Next* campaign will tell the story of environmental change and enhance visitor experience by connecting people to nature in powerful ways.

About the Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90007. Open seven days a week, the Museum executes its mission to *inspire wonder, discovery, and responsibility in the natural and cultural worlds* through exhibits, lectures, workshops, family educational programs, and interactive science activities. The Museum is an active research center with a staff of full-time researchers and curators from 15 scientific and cultural disciplines that inform the array of popular public programs. The Museum opened its doors in 1913 and is now the largest natural history museum in the western United States. It has amassed one of the world’s most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history with more than 35 million objects. 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 Park and Museum (Newhall, California). This Family of Museums serves more than one million families and visitors annually, and is a national leader in research, exhibitions and education.

About The James Irvine Foundation

The James Irvine Foundation is a private, nonprofit grantmaking foundation dedicated to expanding opportunity for the people of California to participate in a vibrant, successful and inclusive society. The Foundation’s grantmaking focuses on three program areas: Arts, California Democracy and Youth. Since 1937 the Foundation has provided over \$1 billion in grants to more than 3,000 nonprofit

organizations throughout California. With \$1.3 billion in assets, the Foundation made grants of \$67 million in 2009 for the people of California.