

News

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SMITHSONIAN'S NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM TO OPEN "DINOTOPIA"

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History will open the new exhibition "Dinotopia" on April 24. "Dinotopia" draws on the works of author and illustrator James Gurney, whose stories tell of a fantastic world in which humans live peacefully alongside dinosaurs. The exhibition features original artwork from Gurney's best-selling series of *Dinotopia* books that depict a lost island continent filled with an array of dinosaurs long thought extinct. "Dinotopia" remains on view through Sept. 2.

The exhibition opens before the first episode of a six-hour live action television miniseries by Hallmark Entertainment inspired by Gurney's books. The Smithsonian's "Dinotopia" will include videos and models from the miniseries, which will air on the ABC Television Network on May 12, 13 and 14.

"Dinotopia" coincides with the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Dinotopia: A Land Apart From Time*, the first in Gurney's series of books detailing the utopian world of Dinotopia. The award-winning collection of beautiful illustrations and spellbinding stories has been translated into 18 languages and sold more than 3 million copies.

"'Dinotopia' will captivate visitors of all ages with its detailed artwork, imaginative characters and interactive components," says Robert Sullivan, Associate Director for Public Programs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. "The exhibition is the culmination of a long association between the Smithsonian and one of the world's foremost storytellers, James Gurney."

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With consultation from Smithsonian experts, Gurney incorporated suggestions for scientific accuracy into his stories so that the exhibition provides both an entertaining and educational experience for museum-goers.

Exhibition Highlights:

- 30 original oil paintings from the *Dinotopia* books
- Never-before-seen unpublished paintings by Gurney on exhibit for the first time
- Architectural models used for Gurney's illustrations
- Model of the Dinotopia float in the 2001 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, which showcased one of the dinosaurs from the upcoming Hallmark television miniseries
- Video clips from the making of the television miniseries

Michael Brett-Surman, Museum Specialist for Dinosaurs, and other Smithsonian staff worked closely with Gurney as scientific consultants on many of his paintings and writings. Brett-Surman advised the author on an array of subjects ranging from the appearance of the dinosaurs to the physical geography of Gurney's imaginary island. The exhibition will include captions for much of the original artwork detailing the science behind the story and exploring the interplay between fact and fantasy for visitors to the exhibition.

"The Smithsonian's 'Dinotopia' will open the door to an exciting world where science and imagination are intertwined," said Sullivan. "'Dinotopia' will enable visitors to experience and understand both aspects of Gurney's creation."

"Dinotopia" is made possible through the generous support of Hallmark Entertainment.

The National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., welcomed more than 8.4 million people during the year 2001, making it the most visited natural history museum in the world. Opened in 1910, the Museum is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world's most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. It also fosters critical scientific research as well as educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists and curators to the public. The Museum is part of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and research complex. The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History is open for special summer hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day from May 24 through Sept. 2. Admission is free.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Images are available upon request.
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