

News Release

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Cranbrook Institute of Science

39221 Woodward Avenue

P.O. Box 801

Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0801

Phone: 248-645-3200

Fax: 248-645-3050

<http://science.cranbrook.edu/>

Contact: Stephen Pagnani, Head of Marketing

Phone: 248-645-3224

E-mail: spagnani@cranbrook.edu

Cranbrook Institute of Science presents *The Peopling of Planet Earth*

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich., Nov. 18, 2009 – During this year’s Thanksgiving weekend, on Nov. 27 and 28 from 1-4 p.m., Cranbrook Institute of Science will present *The Peopling of Planet Earth*, an event that explores the origins of human life and the migration journey of our ancient ancestors across the planet. Visitors will learn how fossil and genetic evidence help answer questions about the human history and have the opportunity to participate in related hands-on activities and live demonstrations.

Through examination of the museum’s comprehensive, newly updated cast collection of hominin skulls and bones dating back up to seven million years and including a skeletal cast of “Lucy”, Cranbrook scientists will present fossil evidence for an African site of human origin. “We will explain the genetic pattern for the peopling of planet Earth and show how to obtain genetic evidence that is recorded in the human genome,” says Michael Stafford, director of Cranbrook Institute of Science.

Activities include DNA extraction demonstrations, a chance to swab your cheek to participate in National Geographic’s Genographic Project, searching for fossils in archeological dig boxes and attending *The First Americans*, a program that highlights native technologies and artifacts.

Traveling back in history, visitors will have the opportunity to reproduce prehistoric art using images from 3,000 year old Sanilac, Mich., rock carvings (petroglyphs) or to color accurate take home renditions of the spectacular 30,000 year old wall paintings from the Chauvet Cave in France.

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A lecture by Cranbrook geologist John Zawiskie at 1:30 p.m. each day will provide an analysis of the markings on the well publicized boulder recently discovered in Grand Traverse Bay, which some suggest may be the earliest rock art in North America.

“The Peopling of Planet Earth is a wonderful complement to the Institute’s new Hall of Global Cultures and The Story of Us exhibit highlighting common themes among cultures throughout time and led by a hologram-like guide among more than 300 objects from the Institute’s anthropology collections,” says Stephen Pagnani, head of Marketing at the Institute.

The event also ties in with the temporary exhibit Artology, the fusion of art and science, which will feature the movie The Jungle Book on Nov. 27 at 7 p.m. as part of its film series. The Peopling of Planet Earth activities and the Artology screening of The Jungle Book are both free with admission

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Cranbrook is an internationally renowned educational community dedicated to excellence in the arts, education and science. Cranbrook is located at 39221 Woodward Avenue in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and comprises its Academy of Art, Art Museum, Institute of Science, Schools and other affiliated cultural and educational programs.