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***¡CUBA!* OPENS AT THE EXPLOREUM SCIENCE CENTER EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE ISLAND'S RICH BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURE**

Cuba is a place of exceptional biodiversity and cultural richness, and now an exclusive bilingual exhibition at the Exploreum Science Center will offer visitors fresh insights into this island nation just 94 miles from Florida's shores. With a close look at Cuba's unique natural history, including its native species, highly diverse ecosystems, and geology, *¡Cuba!* also explores Cuba's history, traditions, and contemporary Cuban voices to inspire novel perspectives on this dynamic country. Organized by the American Museum of Natural History in New York, *¡Cuba!* will be on view from February 1, 2024, to July 27, 2024.

A long, open boulevard evoking the street life one might find in a Cuban city will invite visitors to discover Cuban culture through music, games, and a variety of interactive experiences. Included are:

- a gallery showcasing contemporary Cuban art
- a display on the cultivation of one of Cuba's most famous crops, tobacco
- an introductory film about Cuba's history
- highlights of Cuba's 16 baseball teams.

The exhibition will also include live animals, specimens, and lifelike models, such as a re-creation of the Zapata wetlands and a reconstructed cave environment, along with an open coral reef diorama that showcases some of Cuba's endemic wildlife. There will be life-sized portraits of modern Cubans and a 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air that reveals the story behind the vintage cars of Cuba's streets.

"We really want to surprise visitors with details about Cuba that they've never thought about before," said *¡Cuba!* co-curator Chris Raxworthy, curator, Department of Herpetology, at the American Museum of Natural History. "We hope this exhibition relays an understanding of who the people of Cuba are, how the island nation is biologically unique, how it is connected to the world, and what it's like to live in Cuba now."

"*¡Cuba!* tells a story of a place that we all dream of visiting. A unique place, seemingly frozen in time, with beautiful ecosystems, incredible culture and food, and wonderful people. With over 300 years of shared history, it only makes sense that *¡Cuba!* would make its last stop in Mobile, Alabama, the sister city to Havana. It's going to be a city celebration of our connection to Havana and Cuba throughout the run of the exhibit."

Throughout the run of the *¡Cuba!* exhibition, the Exploreum will be screening an accompanying movie, *Cuba*, in the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Digital Dome Theater (formerly IMAX).

For groups and field trips please contact Monica Dunklin at mdunklin@exploreum.com or call 1-251-208-6880. Please direct other inquiries to our Box Office at 1-251-208-6893.

Additionally, there will be an opening gala taking place on January 25, 2024, at the Exploreum Science Center. Tickets will be on sale beginning November 1, 2023. Gala highlights include live music performed by New Orleans Cuban musical act Mofongo Latin Band and performances by Mobile Ballet, as well as signature cocktails, catering by Las Floriditas, additional libations by Braided River Beer, wine provided by United-Johnson Brothers of Alabama, LLC, and an exclusive first look at the ¡Cuba! exhibit. Please contact Natasha Stowers regarding tickets and table reservations at nstowers@exploreum.com.

¡Cuba! Sponsors Include:

Title Sponsor: City of Mobile

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Major Partners: Mobile County – District 2 & AUSTAL USA

Media Sponsor: WKRK-TV5

Hotel Sponsor: Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel

Educational Sponsor:

University of South Alabama's Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences

Additional Sponsors/Partners: Alabama Power, Spire Energy, Blue Cross And Blue Shield of Alabama, Mobile County Marketing Fund, Las Floriditas, Mobile Ballet

Exhibition Organization

¡Cuba! is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (amnh.org) in collaboration with the Cuban National Museum of Natural History.

To supplement the ¡Cuba! exhibition, a new feature film will be premiered in the PCI Digital Dome theater, titled "CUBA". CUBA tells the powerful story of a land preserved in time, yet poised on the cusp of dramatic change. The nation's vibrant culture, meticulously maintained colonial architecture, and pristine ecosystems provide a vivid window into the island's history and spirit. CUBA will transport audiences across breathtaking landscapes, under the ocean surface to iridescent reefs, and into streets throbbing with music and dance in the heart of Havana. Through the eyes of Cuban artists, historians, and scientists, the film provides an intimate look at this vivacious island nation. Filmed exclusively for giant screen formats, CUBA reveals why Cuba continues to stir the imagination of the world. CUBA is produced by Golden Gate 3D, in association with BBC Earth, Giant Screen Films, and the Giant Dome Theater Consortium.

CUBA Digital Dome Movie Sponsor: Poarch Band of Creek Indians

About the American Museum of Natural History (amnh.org)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869 with a dual mission of scientific research and science education, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space including the Hayden Planetarium, and the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation. The Museum's scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum offers two of the only free-standing, degree-granting programs of their kind at any museum in the U.S.: the Ph.D. program in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Earth Science residency program. Visit amnh.org for more information.

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