

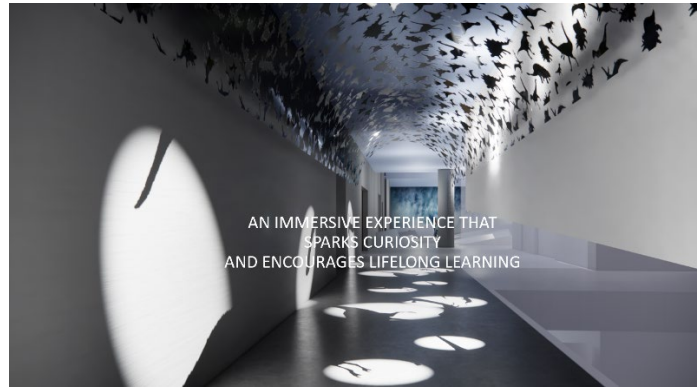
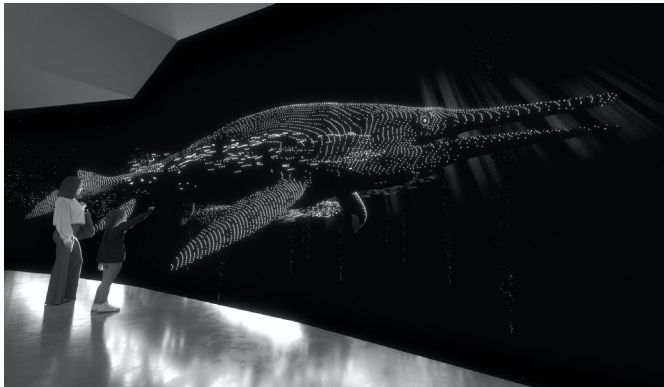
MEDIA CONTACT:

Don Vetter | Director of Public Relations, *Deep Time* - donald.vetter@nevadaart.org

Dana Sullivan Kilroy | Publicist, *Deep Time* - dana.sullivankilroy@nevadaart.org

Jeremy Higginbotham | Publicist, *Deep Time* - jeremy@sendreceive.eu

Amy Oppio, Chief Operating Officer | Deputy Director - amy.oppio@nevadaart.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Swimming with the Sea Dragons: Nevada Museum of Art Immersive Exhibition Highlights the Art and Discovery of Nevada's Ichthyosaur

Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada

September 7, 2024 through January 11, 2026

Reno, Nevada (update July 31, 2024)— Long before there were humans or even dinosaurs, there were ichthyosaurs — colossal marine reptiles that swam and thrived in an ancient ocean in what is known today as Nevada.

Ichthyosaurs have returned for a new exhibition beginning Sept. 7, 2024 at the Nevada Museum of Art, where visitors will journey through Nevada's prehistoric past with spectacular, never-before-seen fossils of these 250-million-year-old sea reptiles. Anchoring the exhibition is a full-size, interactive ichthyosaur that reacts to human movement and presence, giving guests an opportunity to "swim" alongside the ancient reptile while fully grasping the size and magnitude of the gigantic creature.

Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada is inspired by a thesis on *gigantism* introduced in 2024 by Dr. Martin Sander, Professor of Vertebrate Paleontology at University of Bonn, Germany. Dr. Sander travels to rural Nevada annually to study and excavate fossil beds containing the prehistoric ichthyosaur. Certain species were larger than a locomotive and are considered by some to be the largest reptiles to have ever lived on Earth. Ichthyosaur eyes measured nearly a foot in diameter, the largest of any vertebrate animal. The ichthyosaur, meaning "fish-lizard" in Greek, inhabited prehistoric seas for 160 million years before extinction.

The exhibition is the largest gathering of giant ichthyosaur fossils assembled under one roof. Spanning 9,000 square feet, the exhibition combines science with art, history, and design to tell the story of the rise and fall of the ichthyosaur, and its unique connection to Nevada. Highlights of the exhibition include:

- Recently discovered fossils from the newest ichthyosaur species, *Cymbospondylus youngorum*, excavated in the Augusta Mountains of Nevada.
- Fossils, photographs and field journal pages from the 1905 Saurian expedition to Nevada's Humboldt Range.
- Fossils excavated from the quarry known today as Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Historic Park.
- The story of fossil hunter Mary Anning, the first woman to discover an ichthyosaur fossil in Great Britain in 1811.
- Striking examples of paleoart, revealing how artists and scientists have long worked together to imagine the world's prehistoric marine creatures.
- One of the nation's largest collections of vintage prehistoric animal toys amassed by Jack Arata after visiting the ichthyosaur fossils in Berlin, Nevada as a young boy in the 1950s.

The exhibit also highlights the contributions of unsung woman paleontologist Annie Alexander, detailing many of her fossil discoveries in Nevada's outback. Additionally, the Museum is publishing a children's storybook centered on Alexander's numerous expeditions.

Guests begin a time traveling journey via a room-sized light installation, titled *Swell*, by contemporary artist Anthony McCall. In the main gallery, guests encounter displays representing Nevada mountain ranges, discovering over 20 fossil specimens excavated between 1868 and 2022. Featured within the exhibition is an impressive full-size visualization of an ichthyosaur that reacts to human movement and presence created by Los Angeles-based digital technologist and animator Ivan Cruz.

Fossil specimens are on loan from the collections of the Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County, with permission from the Bureau of Land Management; University of California Museum of Paleontology at Berkeley; Cincinnati Museum Center; Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology; California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; Natural History Museum of Utah; and the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas.

Deep Time is co-curated by Ann M. Wolfe, the Museum's Chief Curator, along with lead paleontologist Dr. Martin Sander. It is designed by award-winning exhibition designer Nik Hafermaas of Berlin, Germany.

This year-long exhibit builds anticipation for the March, 2025 opening of the Museum's Charles and Stacie Mathewson Education + Research Center. In addition to increasing the galleries dedicated to permanent collections, the expansion will grant additional access to the Museum's extensive art, archive and library collections through a renovated and expanded Center for Art + Environment. The Center for Art + Environment is an internationally recognized research center promoting the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their environment.

RESOURCES

See a video of Dr. Sander's 2023 Nevada expedition:

- YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvgOsb3kTIY>

Full digital press kit:

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16dSMhlpZNTh0f2tf8Z8k7NclKQia6qeD?usp=sharing>

SPONSORS

Deep Time has been made possible by the generosity of the following sponsors: Lead Sponsors: Anonymous; Margaret and Charles Burback; Barbara and Tad Danz; Nevada Division of Museums and History; Reno Orthopedic Center; Elizabeth and Henry Thumann; Wayne L. Prim Foundation Major Sponsors: The Bretzlaff Foundation; Laurel Trust Company; Maureen Mullarkey and Steve Miller; Linda and Alvaro Pascotto; Volunteers in Art of the Nevada Museum of Art Sponsors: Carole Anderson; Betsy Burgess and Tim Bailey ; John Cunha; The Deborah and T.J. Day Foundation; Estelle J. Kelsey Foundation; Debra Marko and Bill Franklin; Yvonne L. Murphy, PhD; Nevada Arts Council | National Endowment for the Arts; Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority; Robert Z. Hawkins Foundation; Sandy Raffealli; Whittier Trust; Tom and Bonda Young Supporting Sponsors: Gail and Robert Aldrich; Chica Charitable Trust; Tammy and Michael Dermody; Viki Matica and Doug Brewer; Charlotte and Dick McConnell Additional Support: Brian Kendig; Bureau of Land Management; Nancy and Alan Maiss and the Nevada Mining Association.

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The Nevada Museum of Art is the only art museum in Nevada accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). A private, nonprofit organization founded in 1931, the statewide institution is supported by its membership as well as sponsorships, gifts and grants. Through its permanent collections, original exhibitions and programming, and E.L. Cord Museum School, the Nevada Museum of Art provides meaningful opportunities for people to engage with a range of art and education experiences. The Museum's **Center for Art + Environment** is an internationally-recognized research center dedicated to supporting the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their environments. The Center houses unique archive materials from more than 1,000 artists working on all seven continents, including Cape Farewell, Michael Heizer, Walter de Maria, Lita Albuquerque, Burning Man, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Great Basin Native Artists Archive, Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains*, and Trevor Paglen's *Orbital Reflector*. Learn more at nevadaart.org.

Land Acknowledgement

The Nevada Museum of Art acknowledges the traditional homelands of the *Wa She Shu* (Washoe), *Numu* (Northern Paiute), *Newe* (Western Shoshone), and *Nuwu* (Southern Paiute) people of the Great Basin. This includes the 27 tribal nations that exist as sovereign nations and continue as stewards of this land. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these Indigenous homelands.