

## NEWS RELEASE

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# Ultimate Dinosaurs Take Over the ROM

Cutting Edge Technology and Hands-On Activities bring these  
Big, Bizarre, and Brand-New Dinosaurs to Life



*Africa.* Julius Csotonyi, Illustrator. (c) 2011 Royal Ontario Museum

(Toronto, Ontario – June 20, 2012) Forget about the dinosaurs you know– prepare for a whole new breed of beast! On June 23, 2012, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) launches the world premiere of *Ultimate Dinosaurs: Giants from Gondwana*, presented by Raymond James Ltd., one of North America's leading full-service investment dealers. In this original exhibition curated, designed, and produced by the ROM, some of the largest and most unusual dinosaurs from the Southern hemisphere make their first stop in Toronto before embarking on an international tour.

Based on new, groundbreaking research from scientists around the world, this exhibition reveals strange-looking dinosaurs unfamiliar to North Americans that evolved in isolation in South America, Africa, and Madagascar. *Ultimate Dinosaurs* features cutting edge **Augmented Reality (AR)** experiences, used in creative ways to bring these specimens to life as never before. The ROM is the first Museum in Canada to use AR on this scale. Other innovative technologies are used in the exhibition to illustrate the

story of how a dynamic Earth with drifting continents affected the evolution of dinosaurs, from a Southern perspective.

For the first time ever, the ROM has produced a marketing campaign using AR in select advertisements, putting a 3-D dinosaur at your fingertips.

Janet Carding, the ROM's Director and CEO, states, "This world premiere exhibition offers visitors the opportunity to experience dinosaurs never seen before in the ROM - or anywhere in Canada. Thanks to the tremendous work done by the Museum's curatorial and exhibitions staff, visitors will come face to face with these strange species in exciting ways, including cutting edge augmented reality."

This scientifically rigorous exhibition is supported by the strength of the Museum's in-house research and curatorial teams, led by Dr. David Evans, Curator, Vertebrate Palaeontology in the ROM's Department of Natural History.

"*Ultimate Dinosaurs* brings together some of the most exciting discoveries made in the last two decades," says Dr. David Evans. "It is a must-see for people of all ages interested in dinosaurs or the history of life on our Earth".

"Raymond James is proud to partner with the ROM as the exhibition's presenting sponsor to help bring these giant southern dinosaurs to life in this one-of-a-kind exhibition," says Paul Allison, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Raymond James Ltd. "The ROM continues to break new ground in its efforts to enhance the cultural and educational experience for its guests, including the use of Augmented Reality in the exhibition. We are confident this exhibition will prove to be another fascinating and fun-filled adventure for dinosaur explorers of all ages."

### **Exhibition Background**

*Ultimate Dinosaurs: Giants from Gondwana* tells the story of the break-up of Pangaea into the continents that we know today and how that affected the evolution of dinosaurs during the Mesozoic, 250 – 65 million years ago. When dinosaurs first appeared around 240 million years ago, the Earth was assembled into the giant supercontinent Pangaea. As Pangaea divided first into Laurasia in the north and Gondwana in the south, and later into the many continents of today, dinosaurs were passengers on these drifting land masses. As a result, an amazing diversity of species evolved. Their imposed geographic isolation helped promote their evolution into an incredible array of unusual forms that dominated wherever they lived.

Surrounded by stunning life-like environmental murals immersing visitors in the land of the dinosaurs, the exhibition features real fossils, skeletons, **and 17 full-scale skeletal casts**, many of which have never been seen before in Canada.

Visitors are greeted by the largest dinosaur ever mounted in Canada - the *Futalognkosaurus* – upon entering through the Museum’s main Bloor Street West entrance. A giant long-necked sauropod and one of the biggest animals to have ever walked the Earth, this dinosaur stretches 110 ft. long and, alive, would have weighed as much as 10 elephants.

In Garfield Weston Exhibition Hall, the exhibition will be presented chronologically in five sections:

The **first section** explores Pangea and the origin of dinosaurs during the **Triassic Period (250-200 million years ago)**, a time when they were small and inconsequential. Early mammal relatives and land-dwelling crocodile-relatives were the dominant creatures on land. Animals such as the crocodile relative *Prestosuchus*, a five metre long predator, were the most fearsome animals of the time.

**Section two** introduces us to the **Jurassic Period (200-145 million years ago)** when dinosaurs took over the planet, from the Arctic to Antarctica. In this section, as we watch Pangea divide, we become aware that the dinosaurs living on these land masses were also separating from one another, sending them on different evolutionary pathways. Here, visitors see a mother *Massospondylus* from South Africa and come face to face with the crested carnivore *Cryolophosaurus*, a large predatory dinosaur that lived in what is now Antarctica.

The exhibition’s **third and largest section** focuses on the **Cretaceous Period (145 – 65 million years ago)**, when Gondwana fragmented and formed the continents of the Southern Hemisphere, including **Africa, Madagascar and South America**. As groups of dinosaurs became isolated on these separate landmasses, they evolved into some of the biggest, boldest, and most bizarre dinosaurs.

- ❖ The first of the southern continents in this section is **Africa**, with the scene set as a watering hole at dawn. Here, visitors meet the 40-foot long *Suchomimus* with its long, crocodile-like skull, and the sail-backed herbivore *Ouranosaurus*, both found in what is now the Sahara desert.
- ❖ The next land mass on display is **Madagascar**, with the scene set in the middle of an electrical storm. Here visitors meet the plant-eating crocodile *Simosuchus*, and come face-to-face with the spectacular original fossil skull of the predator *Majungasaurus*.

- ❖ The third continent explored in the exhibition is **South America**, depicted as a sun-lit scene in the middle of the day. The carnivorous *Carnotaurus* is one of the showcased dinosaurs from this continent, with its pair of bull-like horns and a mouthful of menacing teeth.

The exhibition's fourth section illustrates how vastly different the plants and animals, including dinosaurs, came to be in the south compared to the north by the end of the Age of Dinosaurs. In this dramatic conclusion, visitors see what are perhaps the two largest land predators to have ever lived – *Giganotosaurus* from South America and *Tyrannosaurus rex* from North America – as they face off to illustrate their different ecosystems.

### **Augmented Reality and Interactive Technology**

Visitors can experience these bizarre creatures as never before through the use of **Augmented Reality (AR)**, layering jaw-dropping virtual experiences over real environments. This is the first time the ROM has used AR technology in an exhibition setting. At two different points in the exhibition, visitors can scan dinosaur skeletons through a tablet screen provided and watch as the dinosaurs transform before their eyes - becoming animated and covered in skin. Towards the end of the exhibition, visitors become part of a reactive AR experience, as two large digital murals depicting dinosaur habitats react to visitors' motion, inviting them to stop and explore life like a dinosaur.

### **Ultimate Family Fun**

*Ultimate Dinosaurs* offers an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages. Children will love the Dino Adventure Trail where they can follow in the footsteps of the palaeontologists who unearthed these strange creatures. Hands-on activities include touchable bronze casts, a touchable Dino Lab with real fossils, and interactive education pods that put everything about Southern Dinosaurs at your fingertips.

A wide range of dinosaur-inspired programming accompanies the exhibition. Coming this fall, on select weekends the Museum hosts *Dinosaur Hunter* afternoons featuring a lively meet-and-greet with well-known dinosaur experts followed by a family friendly talk in the ROM's Signy and Cléopée Eaton theatre. In addition to meeting the dino hunters, the Museum will offer free special events and activities for dinosaur lovers of all ages. Dig for bones, make your own fossils, build a dinosaur, and see and touch real specimens from the Museum's vaults. Crafts, costumes, special film screenings, and scavenger hunts will fill visitors' days with dino delight.

## **Friends of Palaeontology**

The Friends of Palaeontology, a membership program at the ROM, offers an exciting opportunity to become involved in a community of individuals and families who are fascinated by fossils (including dinosaurs) and the history of life, and who are interested in supporting palaeontology and palaeontological programming at the Museum. Friends of Palaeontology members receive all the benefits of ROM membership, as well as invitations to events and programs highlighting the research, fieldwork, and discoveries of ROM palaeontologists and their colleagues around the world; e-newsletters featuring updates on the ROM's amazing fossil collections, new acquisitions, gallery developments, feature exhibitions, curatorial achievements, upcoming events, and more.

For more #UltimateDinos news, follow the Museum's palaeontology experts on twitter @ROMpalaeo.

For more information on the exhibition, programming, and ticket sales as it becomes available, visit [www.rom.on.ca/dinos](http://www.rom.on.ca/dinos).

# **ULTIMATE DINOSAURS GIANTS FROM GONDWANA**

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