

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 9, 2018

HIDDEN GEMS OPENS AT THE NAT NOVEMBER 10

Brand-new exhibition in Balboa Park allows visitors to discover rarely seen gem and mineral collection on every floor of the San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat)

SAN DIEGO, CA—Get to know The Nat’s sparkly side in an all-new exhibition experience titled [Hidden Gems](#). Opening to the public on November 10, 2018, the “deconstructed” exhibition will display more than 100 stunning objects from the Museum’s [mineralogy collection](#), many of which have never before been on public display.

Unlike traditional exhibitions that are housed within a defined gallery space, *Hidden Gems* is a vertical exploration of The Nat’s collection. Several cases of gems and minerals will be displayed on each level of the Museum. They will be located right outside the elevators so each time visitors reach a new level they’ll experience something new. This unique, vertically aligned exhibition experience is included with admission and free for members.

“Our visitors spoke and we listened,” said Judy Gradwohl, president and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum. “*Hidden Gems* answers guest feedback and our desire to find a long-term display space for these spectacular specimens. Each level of the Museum will delight visitors with gems and minerals to see or touch, while investigating the key geological features that led to their creation.”

This deconstructed gallery allows The Nat to deliver on several visitor expectations: the Museum can showcase gems and minerals on a long-term basis, activate spaces that were previously underutilized, and retain the ability to host rotating exhibitions created in-house in more traditional galleries.

San Diego County is one of the best known gem producing regions in the world, and visitors will get to check out some of these local riches—luminous quartz, gleaming topaz, and the signature hot pink tourmalines that have brought fame to San Diego mines. Visitors will walk away with an understanding that gems and minerals are valuable for several reasons: they have aesthetic value as natural objects, tell the geologic story of our region, and have practical uses that touch our daily lives.

Hidden Gems is being created by the Museum’s award-winning in-house Exhibits team with guidance from subject matter expert Dr. Terri Ottoway, who currently serves as curator at the [Gemological Institute of America](#) (GIA). The Carlsbad-based nonprofit organization is the world’s foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones, and pearls and the leading source of knowledge, standards, and education in gems and jewelry.

“Creating this exhibition has allowed us to completely transform certain spaces of the Museum,” said Michael Field, director of experience design at The Nat. “Our elevator landings, while often looked upon as a functional space, are actually incredibly valuable real estate within the Museum. I’m pleased we’re able to utilize this space in a meaningful way and put more objects on display for our guests to enjoy.”

While the exhibits can be experienced in any order—regardless of which level of the Museum a visitor starts or ends on—each floor will display objects that deliver on a different theme:

- Fluorescence (Lower Level)
 - An exhibit inspired by fluorescent mineral properties—the objects will demonstrate that raw minerals can look seemingly normal in the daylight, and have a magical glow underneath a black light
- Introduction/Worldwide Phenomena (Level 1/Atrium)
 - An introductory wall will explain the premise of *Hidden Gems*
 - A sampling of the nearly 4,000 minerals that can be found on our planet
 - An exhibit dedicated to dazzling birthstones
- San Diego County (Level 2)
 - A gem pocket that depicts how our region’s rugged mountains conceal natural marvels
 - An exhibit focused on San Diego’s star mineral, pink tourmaline
 - Displays interpreting the geology behind San Diego’s gem wealth
- The Value and Application of Materials (Level 3)
 - Exhibits compare uncut and cut stones, and highlight raw minerals that we extract from our planet
 - A display of minerals used to make items like smartphones, which affect our daily lives
- Geologic Diversity (Level 4)
 - Gorgeous gems and minerals of different colors, shapes, and sizes demonstrate Earth’s vast geologic diversity

Further connecting the different levels will be a sculptural element and large-scale murals inside the elevator landings and the elevators themselves.

To help celebrate the grand opening of *Hidden Gems*, the Museum is developing numerous education materials for schools and public programs, including:

- Nature & Me Storytime: Rock On | Thursday, November 8 | 10:15 AM
 - Visitors can enjoy an imaginative journey into our local geology through dynamic readings given by the Museum’s Education staff. This program is open to all ages with a parent, but suggested for ages 1–5. [More](#).
- The Secret Society of Adultologists: Shiny Pretty Things | Friday, November 16 | 7–10 PM
 - Join us for the shiniest, sparkliest, and showiest Secret Society of Adultologists yet. This 21-and-up event will feature iridescent specimens, opulent foods, and effervescent cocktails. It’s all about the bling, so guests are encouraged to dress to impress. [More](#).
- Rocking Out! Family Day | Sunday, November 18 | 11–3 PM
 - Delve into the fascinating world of rocks and minerals. Take a journey through *Hidden Gems* and marvel at the beauty and history. Visitors can perform experiments, learn about different rocks and minerals, and make a craft to take home. [More](#).

The exhibition is made possible with funding from the J. W. Sefton Foundation, Pamela and G. Stuart Bruder, the County of San Diego, and the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

Admission and Hours

General admission includes access to all other exhibitions within the Museum as well as access to 2D and 3D films in the Subaru 3D Experience of the Charmaine and Maurice Kaplan Theater.

Admission [rates](#): \$19.95 adults; \$16.95 seniors/students/military; \$11.95 youth (3-17). Members and children 2 and under are free. The Museum is open from 10 AM to 5 PM daily—only closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. For more information, please visit sdnat.org/hiddengems or access the Museum's [online press kit](#).

About the San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat)

The San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat) is one of California's oldest and most respected cultural and science institutions. Founded in 1874 by a small group of citizen scientists, the Museum's mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of Southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico; and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. The Museum is located at 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101 in Balboa Park and is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. For more information, call 877.946.7797 or visit sdnat.org. To stay up to date on Museum news, follow The Nat on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and join the discussion on [Facebook](#).

About the Gemological Institute of America (GIA)

An independent nonprofit organization, [GIA](#) (Gemological Institute of America), established in 1931, is recognized as the world's foremost authority in gemology. GIA invented the famous 4Cs of Color, Clarity, Cut and Carat Weight and, in 1953, created the International Diamond Grading System™, which is recognized around the world as the standard for diamond quality. Through research, education, gemological laboratory services and instrument development, the Institute is dedicated to ensuring the public trust in gems and jewelry by upholding the highest standards of integrity, academics, science and professionalism.

###