

The Manitoba Museum

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Prehistoric Creatures Come Alive at The Manitoba Museum

The Manitoba Museum is the FIRST Museum in Canada to Offer Cutting-Edge Animation Technology

Tank-like trilobites lumber towards you. Giant cephalopods lunge at their prey, while ancient eurypterids swim placidly by. Be magically transported to an underwater environment that existed over 450 million years ago—when the Churchill area was blanketed by a tropical sea.

Ancient Seas, a dramatic new animated exhibit that is the first of its kind in Canada, will open at The Manitoba Museum on March 25.

The Manitoba Museum worked closely with Phlesch Bubble, an Australian digital production studio, to be the very **first** Canadian museum to offer this cutting-edge technology. Projected on three enormous screens spanning 7.5 meters, the installation of the *Ancients Seas* exhibit completes the recent renewal of the Museum's Earth History Gallery.

As more and more people become concerned about climate change, the *Ancient Seas* exhibit is of great relevance, says Dr. Graham Young, the curator in charge of the project.

"*Ancient Seas* is very clear evidence of global change—the world has certainly changed beyond recognition," explains Dr. Young, the Curator of Paleontology & Geology for The Manitoba Museum. "This exhibit enhances people's knowledge of the world that immediately surrounds us, so we can understand how we got to be where we are today."

The *Ancient Seas* animation has well over a hundred separate layers sourced from an equal number of 3D animation files, all requiring compositing without a single error. This posed quite a challenge for its Australian creators.

"On some of the creatures, we went through model after model after model—what Phlesch Bubble sent us initially is nothing like what we ended up with," Dr. Young recalls. "Because we know the area so well, we were able to correct things as minute as the angle of the ripples on the seafloor sediment. The result is one of the best depictions of ancient life in the world."

Dr. Young used his own personal expertise, drawn from years of working at the Churchill site—where some of the original ancient shoreline is still preserved—to make the rendering as realistic as possible. The curator spent more than a year consulting with the animators from Australia, experts from the Royal Ontario Museum, and universities and museums in Manitoba, Saskatoon, Ohio, Leicester (UK), Uppsala (Sweden), Berlin, and Russia.

Ancient Seas coincides with a number of steps the Museum is taking to make its exhibits more interactive and dynamic. They also launched a new website this week, available for viewing at www.manitobamuseum.ca.

Click here for a sample of *Ancient Seas* animation:

http://www.manitobamuseum.ca/main/wp-content/uploads/museum_screen2.html

Ancient Seas was made possible primarily through a capital grant from the Province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Museum is a non-profit organization with approximately 40% of its operating funding coming from admissions, membership sales and private donations.

For more information, please contact:

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