A large projection screen will bring visitors face-to-face with ancient marine life in the new Origins of Life Gallery.

Journey Through Time: New Origins of Life Gallery

Traveling back 13.8 billion years, the new Origins of Life Gallery will bring to life the story of our beginnings and unravel the remarkable history of the evolution of life.

This immersive gallery will take visitors on a journey through billions of years as they discover the origins of our Universe, planet and life on Earth. It is one of nine new engaging and interactive galleries in the new Exhibits & Research Wing as part of Phase 2 of the Centennial Campaign.

The Museum possesses one of the world's largest collections of Late Devonian fossils, including Dunkleosteus terrelli, an ancient predator fish that will be on display in the new Origins of Life Gallery.

In the Origins of Life Gallery, a walk-in theater recreates the Big Bang event using striking animation and graphics. Guests will witness the evolution of the Universe from the first fraction of a second through the formation of Earth and the Moon, setting the stage for the compelling story that unfolds in the subsequent galleries.

WORLD-CLASS COLLECTIONS

At the core of this gallery will be some of the Museum's impressive ancient fossils. The Museum boasts one of the world's largest collections of Late Devonian arthrodires (an extinct group of armored fishes) and sharks.

"One of our strengths is our significant research collection of Cleveland Shale fossils," said Dr. Andy Jones, director of science and William A. and Nancy R. Klamm endowed chair of ornithology. "Scientists from around the world use this collection for research. It will be a privilege to share this Cleveland resource with visitors."

Most of this remarkable collection was discovered in a famous rock formation known as the Cleveland Member of the Ohio Shale (or, Cleveland Shale). This distinctive black shale is located near the Museum. The combination of low oxygen levels at the sea bottom and a lack of predators led to the exquisite preservation of these fossils.

Beyond teeth and bones, the Cleveland Shale captures details of soft cartilage, gills, brain casings—even stomach contents of a fish's fateful last meal. Through the Museum's exploration and fieldwork, it has amassed a treasure trove of fossils that were entombed in sediment millions of years ago.

LIFE IN THE DEVONIAN

Visitors will be plunged underwater into the "Age of Fishes" through an interactive video exploring the ancient Devonian sea. In this vivid seascape, guests will meet *Dunkleosteus terrelli*, a huge predatory fish that once ruled this world. Specimens from the Museum's vast collections, including three articulated Dunkelosteus mounts, serve as awe-inspiring fossil evidence of these prehistoric creatures. A full-size model will illustrate what the giant shark-like predator would have looked like in the flesh.

"Origins of Life will showcase some of our rarest and most important fossils," said Dr. Joe Hannibal, curator of invertebrate paleontology." This includes fossil Devonian shark containing the remains of the two strange arthropods that it swallowed before death, and plants that were buried at the bottom of a Cleveland-area sea some 360 million years ago."

ANCIENT LIFE ON EARTH

The gallery will also explore key moments in the early evolution of life and depict some of the conditions that supported ancient forms of life on Earth.

The gallery will feature a stunning display of colorful minerals in an array of shapes and textures from the Museum's mineralogy collection. These beautiful specimens are the amazing product of mineral evolution that occurred from the Big Bang until present time.

The gallery will also illustrate the diversity and scale of plants that thrived in Pennsylvanian (Coal Age) forests. Visitors can "plant" one of the cast fossils and watch it grow and become part of an ancient forest environment in a virtual diorama.

"Scientists from around the world use this collection for research. It will be a privilege to share this Cleveland resource with visitors."

Specimens of the giant spined millipede *Myriacantherpestes* will also be highlighted in the gallery. Guests can sit next to a 6-foot-long model of an extinct millipede called *Arthropleura,* the largest land-dwelling arthropod of all time.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Origins of Life will cover an incredible span of time, telling the remarkable story of how life took hold on our planet. It will unlock for visitors a meaningful understanding of what the early Earth was like, opening a window into innovations of evolution while revealing our connections to the past and present.