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PACIFIC VISIONS AT THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC REDEFINES THE ROLE OF AQUARIUMS

New wing opened May 24, 2019, features interactive exhibitions, the state-of-the-art immersive Honda Pacific Visions Theater, an art gallery that transports visitors under the ocean, and live animal exhibits



The new Pacific Vision wing at the Aquarium of the Pacific, Long Beach, CA © 2019 Tom Bonner

Long Beach, California – On May 24, 2019, the Aquarium of the Pacific opened its first major expansion in its two-decade history, welcoming the public to a new wing called Pacific Visions. Designed by the San Francisco-based architecture and design firm EHDD, Pacific Visions is a 29,000-square-foot, two-story, sustainable structure. This new building houses a state-of-the-art immersive theater, an art gallery, and a culmination gallery with interactives, game tables, and live animal exhibits. Through Pacific Visions, visitors can explore the most pressing environmental issues of our time and alternative pathways to designing a more sustainable future.

“After more than a decade of planning and building, we are excited to open Pacific Visions to the public,” stated Dr. Jerry R. Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific president & CEO. “Pacific Visions is unlike any other aquarium expansion project. We are taking a unique, unconventional approach in creating a space where the focus is on the one species that is affecting all others on Earth: humans. Pacific Visions is a place where scientists, policymakers, and the public can come together to explore solutions to create a better future for all.”

Pacific Visions’ cutting-edge technology and multisensory effects enhance the experience. All aspects of the new wing are meant to drive home the message that through creativity, innovation, and willingness to explore and accept new ideas, humans can create a better planet right here on Earth.

Reefs & Drifters is the inaugural installation in the 2,800-square-foot Pacific Visions art gallery and is designed by Convivial Studio, a European art and design practice. With exhibit elements focusing on corals and plankton, visitors are immersed in nature’s diversity and resilience through a multisensory experience featuring video projections accompanied by spatial soundscapes, a touchable coral sculpture wall, glass sculptures inspired by plankton, and a collection of mirrored exhibits called *Infinity Coral*.

Video projections in the main gallery space of *Reefs & Drifters* comprise two three-minute sequences, *Coral World* and *Plankton World*, each created with footage captured by scientists and underwater photographers.

Once visitors have made their way through *Reefs & Drifters*, they gather in a 2,600-square-foot **orientation gallery** that offers an 18-foot-wide virtual waterfall with interactive elements that respond to movement. A 26-foot-wide by 8-foot-tall LED screen on the adjacent wall plays a pre-show film that provides a visual tour through the history of life on our planet, highlighting how humans are connected with nature. The first eight minutes of the film include vistas of nature coupled with key messages and inspirational quotes and introduce the themes that will be explored further in the theater show. The orientation concludes with a two-and-a-half-minute narrated portion that challenges viewers to embark on a new path as the doors to the Honda Pacific Visions Theater open for the next stop on the journey.

Once seated in the 300-seat **Honda Pacific Visions Theater**, visitors will be immersed in ***Designing Our Future***, an 8-minute multisensory experience that includes stunning high-resolution views projected on a 130-foot-wide by 32-foot-tall screen that curves in a 180-degree arc and a 36-foot-wide floor projection disc. The show also engages the senses through fog, wind, scent, strobe lights, and seat vibration. The show was developed by the Aquarium and the multimedia design firm Cortina Productions in partnership with leading scientists, filmmakers, storytellers, and digital artists.

The Aquarium of the Pacific offers visitors who are deaf or blind a high-tech way to experience *Designing Our Future*. ‘Virtual touch’ devices, created by technology firm Ultraleap, control ultrasound waves to create tactile sensations in mid-air. These help convey the flow of the film in real time. Visitors will hold a hand over the device to experience sensations of bubbles popping, the rush of the ocean, and more. This is the first time this technology is being used to enhance film at an aquarium, zoo, or museum.



The new Pacific Vision wing at the Aquarium of the Pacific, Lona Beach, CA © 2019 Tom Bonner

sustainable; and three live animal exhibits.

The Pacific Visions experience ends in the **culmination gallery**, where visitors can test the knowledge gained throughout their journey using interactive game tables, displays, and live animal exhibits to explore what we can do to conserve the ocean and our planet. Designed by Bowman Change Inc. with Cortina Productions, the 5,000-square-foot exhibition features multiplayer interactive tables highlighting California's ongoing efforts to create resource sustainability; a 50-foot interactive media wall that visitors touch to reveal facts, videos, and innovations to make our food, energy, and water systems more

Pacific Visions' live animal exhibits include delta smelt (*Hypomesus transpacificus*), California yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*), and Pacific (*Crassostrea gigas*) and Olympia oysters (*Ostrea conchaphila*). These species serve as illustrations of how our production and use of resources impact wildlife and could potentially be made more sustainable. The Aquarium is the first public aquarium to exhibit delta smelt.

After experiencing Pacific Visions, visitors are invited to apply their newfound knowledge to make a personal action plan for sustainability through the Pacific Visions EcoAlliance app for Apple® and Android™ devices. Designed by Artifact Technologies, Pacific Visions EcoAlliance features an evolving set of interactive challenges that inspire players to conserve resources, build a community, and explore key sites around Long Beach. Players will also be able to collaborate on virtual projects using augmented reality, working together to visualize a sustainable future.

With the new expansion, the Aquarium continues its quest to create the aquarium of the future—a combination of aquarium, science center, art gallery, performing arts space, and think tank to explore solutions to some of our world's biggest environmental issues. The Honda Pacific Visions Theater is home to special programs at the Aquarium and serves as a platform to host performing arts events, panel discussions, community meetings, and educational seminars. Pacific Visions programs tackle issues including: climate change, extreme weather, sea level rise, water shortages, and creating a food supply to feed an additional 2.5 billion people by sustainably farming the land and the sea.

About the Pacific Visions Building

The new Pacific Visions building features a biomorphic structure that evokes the size, depth, variability, luminosity, and moods of the Pacific Ocean. Complementing the Aquarium's existing building, also designed by EHDD, Pacific Visions has a façade with more than 800 individually shaped panels that respond to changing light and weather conditions throughout the day with varying colors to mirror the effect of sunlight rippling on the ocean's surface. The general contractor for Pacific Visions is Clark Construction.

Pacific Visions earned the Two Green Globes certification from the Green Globes® building rating system for demonstrating leadership in best practices regarding environmental efficiency. Its sustainable design priorities include water and energy conservation, use of environmentally friendly materials, and greenhouse gas minimization.

Pacific Visions forms a natural extension of the Aquarium of the Pacific's existing facilities. Visitors move from Pacific Visions to the second floor of the main Aquarium building to continue to the educational exhibits and experiences well-known to Aquarium visitors since 1998.

About the Aquarium of the Pacific

The nonprofit Aquarium of the Pacific is a community gathering place where diverse cultures and the arts are celebrated and where important challenges facing our planet are explored by scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders in search of sustainable solutions. The Aquarium is dedicated to conserving and building nature and nature's services by building the interactions between and among peoples. Home to more than 12,000 animals, Aquarium exhibits include the *Tentacles and Ink* and *FROGS: Dazzling & Disappearing* exhibits. Beyond its animal exhibits, the Aquarium offers educational programs for people of all ages, from hands-on activities to lectures by leading scientists. To learn more about Pacific Visions, visit aquariumofpacific.org.

Campaign & Project Background

Pacific Visions is supported by the City of Long Beach with a \$15 million matching grant, a \$5 million matching grant from John, Michelle, Mario, and Therese Molina, and \$5 million from American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Private donations and commitments of \$1 million or more have been given by James and Marilyn Simons, Dr. Allen and Charlotte Ginsburg, Don Temple Family Charitable Foundation, PREMIER/SMG, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and one anonymous donor. Donations and commitments of \$100,000 or more have been given by the following corporations, foundations, and individual donors: Chip Conley; Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation; The Ahmanson Foundation; The Rose Hills Foundation; John and Nancy Edwards Family Foundation, Don Knabe, Los Angeles County Supervisor, Fourth District; Confidence Foundation; The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation; The Rudolph J. & Daphne A. Munzer Foundation; Esther S. M. Chui Chao; Kathleen M. Eckert; LGA Family Foundation; Pacific Life Foundation; California Resources Corporation; Edison International; The Boeing Company; W. M. Keck Foundation; Lakeside Foundation; Schulzman-Neri Foundation; Betty White Ludden; California Cultural and Historical Endowment; The Hearst Foundations; Johnny Carson Foundation; Farmers & Merchants Bank; Bob and Jennifer Hagle; King's Seafood Company; Tom Turney and Jill Boivin; Russ and Avalon Hill; Quiksilver; Henry and Paulette Matson; Mark Paullin; Peter and Cathy Ridder; Jerry and Margaret Schubel; and one anonymous donor.

To see the latest updates, visit pacificvisions.org and follow the hashtag #PacificVisions.