

Search

# Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean To Be Human?

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Exhibit Floorplan

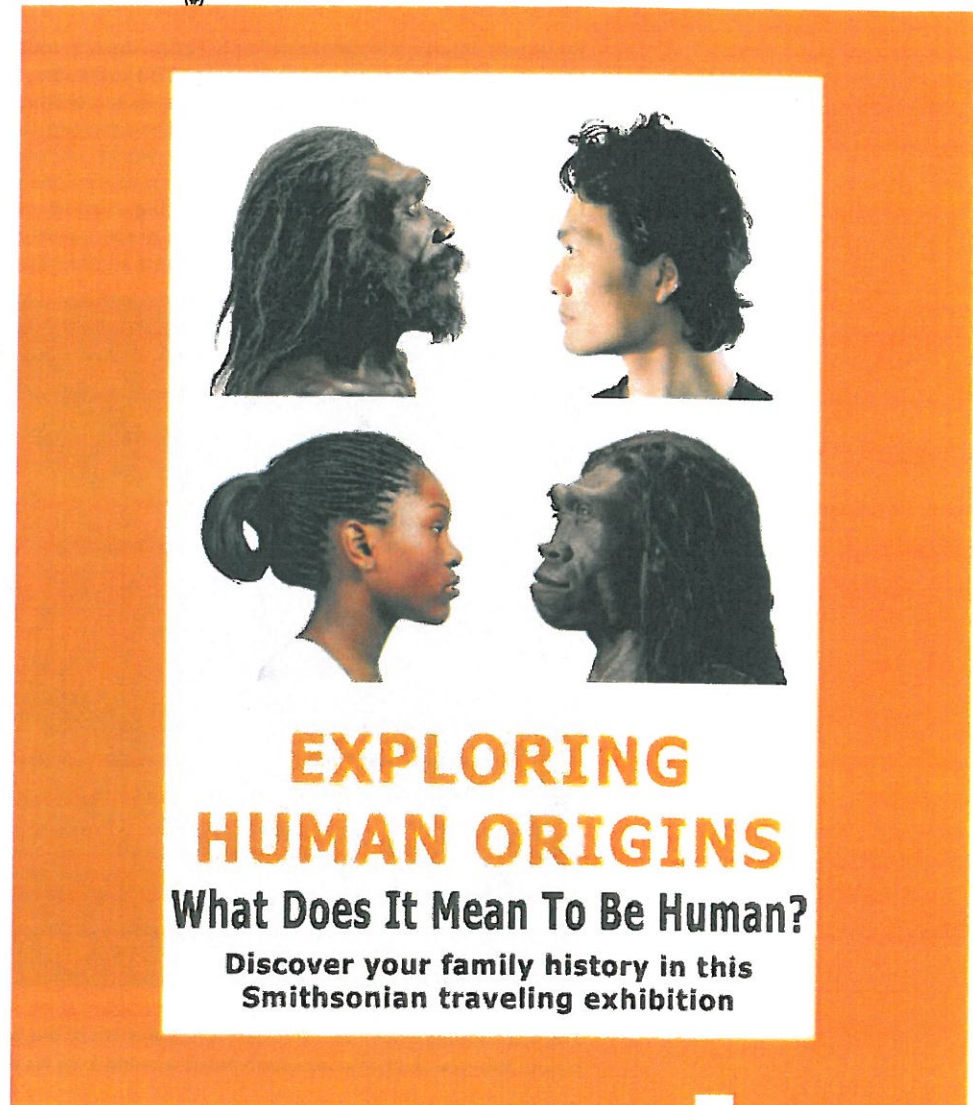
Exhibit/Interactive floorplan

Reconstructions of Early

Humans (Exhibit early human reconstructions)

Human Origins Traveling

Exhibit (Exhibit human origins traveling exhibit)



[http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Poster\\_0.jpg](http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Poster_0.jpg)

## Human Origins Hits the Road!

The Smithsonian Institution's Human Origins Program is proud to present a new traveling exhibit, *Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean To Be Human?* Developed in partnership with the [American Library Association](http://www.ala.org/) and made possible by a grant from the [John Templeton Foundation](http://www.templeton.org/) and support from the Peter Buck Human Origins Fund (Smithsonian), this exhibit will offer the content of the Smithsonian's Hall of Human Origins to communities around the country by bringing this temporary exhibition to 19 public libraries. The exhibit tour will begin March 31, 2015, and will be completed April 28, 2017. The exhibition and its associated public programs, including formal community conversations and science workshops, will engage audiences to explore the wonder of the scientific discoveries concerning human evolution and how these findings connect to diverse personal and societal perspectives about who we are as a



species and why it matters.

The purpose of this traveling exhibit and accompanying programming is to further a national discussion, through community conversations, on the life sciences and to build opportunities for audiences to connect their personal lives and viewpoints with the scientific exploration of human origins. The exhibit will be hosted by a diverse range of communities across the nation, from major urban centers to more rural areas that may not otherwise have access to the kind of content and programming the tour will provide. To tailor the experience of this exhibition to different locations, each library has assembled a panel of community members from diverse religious, educational, civic, scientific, and other backgrounds. These consultation panels will help create unique programming for each library as well as assist in facilitating the community discussions and other programs.

## Content

*Exploring Human Origins* features a 1200-square-foot display with panels, interactive kiosks, engaging media presentations, 3D skull casts, and a life-sized Neanderthal mother and child statue. The exhibition is designed to communicate compelling messages concerning the emergence over time of the defining features of *Homo sapiens* and the relationship of our species to the natural world. In contrast to a focus on particular fossils and species, our exhibition is an invitation to explore the milestones in the evolutionary journey of becoming human – from walking upright, creating technology, and living in variable climates to developments of the brain, society, symbolic language, and the exceptional presence humans have become in the history of life.



([http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Neanderthal statue \(الصور\)](http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Neanderthal%20statue.jpg))

The new traveling exhibition will feature a reproduction of this bronze statue created by John Gurche of a curious two-year old *Homo neanderthalensis* learning from his mother.

## Programs

### Community Conversations

In seeking to promote a respectful national dialogue about human evolution, the exhibit tour invites conversations at the local level. One of the highlighted programs of *Exploring Human Origins* will be an evening community conversation titled "What Does Human Evolution Mean to You? A Community Conversation", led by [Dr. Connie Bertka](http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic/connie-bertka) (<http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic/connie-bertka>) and [Dr. Jim Miller](http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic/jim-miller) (<http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic/jim-miller>), the co-chairs of the Smithsonian's Human Origins [Broader Social Impacts Committee](http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic) (<http://humanorigins.si.edu/about-bsic>) (BSIC), and members of the Smithsonian staff. The discomfort felt by many people about evolution, particularly at the nexus of scientific and religious perspectives, has resulted in a lack of opportunities for the public to participate in conversations that encourage discussion of both the science of paleoanthropology and personal understandings of human origins. Our approach aims to address openly the variety of religious and cultural perspectives that



intersect with scientific findings on human evolution, and to create room for discussions through civil and open dialogue that invites the public to voice their personal insights. In addition, we seek to explore with the public the idea that scientific and religious perspectives on human evolution need not inherently conflict, and that excitement about human origins research is not limited to scientists.

### Evening Science Lecture

In consultation with each library's programming committee and community panel, an evening science program will be offered at each library or another location in the community. [Dr. Rick Potts](http://humanorigins.si.edu/research/hop-team/rick-potts) (<http://humanorigins.si.edu/research/hop-team/rick-potts>) or [Dr. Briana Pobiner](http://humanorigins.si.edu/research/hop-team/briana-pobiner) (<http://humanorigins.si.edu/research/hop-team/briana-pobiner>) will give a general public talk about the latest research in human evolution and provide an overview of the themes and messages of the exhibition. This event will also involve local scientists in the area where possible.

### Educators Workshop

There will be a half-day educators' workshop for science educators in the area (teachers, museum educators, homeschoolers, etc.). The workshop will offer a unique opportunity for the project scientists to converse with local educators about how to present the subject of human evolution. Dr. Briana Pobiner, who leads the Human Origin Program's Education and Outreach efforts, will discuss educational approaches developed by the Smithsonian with input from the BSIC, as well as give educators an opportunity to express their experiences, conflicts, and apprehensions about teaching human evolution. The workshop will also introduce local teachers to the online, print, and other resources the Smithsonian Institution will make available to them and their students, as well as a set of skull casts that will be left in each community after the exhibit leaves for continued educational use.



([http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Skull cast.jpg](http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/Skull%20cast.jpg))

The traveling exhibit will include a set of 3D skull replicas representing significant discoveries in the field of human evolution.

### Clergy Tour

If individual libraries are interested in specifically engaging religious leaders and prominent members of faith communities on the topic of human evolution, the BSIC chairs will coordinate and participate in an event to explore the exhibit with the Smithsonian scientific and education staff. Participants will be invited to join in a discussion with their colleagues regarding questions the exhibit may raise for their communities. This event will also introduce the clergy to the work of the BSIC and resources at the intersections of science, evolution, human origins, and religious faith.

### Other Programs

In addition to these programs, libraries will host at least one other program per week while the exhibition is on display. These programs may include book discussion groups, panel discussions, children's activities, lectures on a variety of subjects relevant to human evolution, and more.

## Display Sites

The itinerary of our traveling exhibition is listed below. We invite you to see the exhibit and to attend the related events at one of these locations!

[Chesterfield County Public Library](http://library.chesterfield.gov/events/exploringhumanorigins/) (<http://library.chesterfield.gov/events/exploringhumanorigins/>);

Chesterfield, Va.

March 31–April 27

**The exhibit is here! Follow the programs at Chesterfield at [#originsatCCPL](https://twitter.com/hashtag/originsatccpl)**

(<https://twitter.com/hashtag/originsatccpl>)

[Orange County Library](http://www.ocls.info/) (<http://www.ocls.info/>); Orlando, Fla.

May 9–June 5

[Andover Public Library](http://www.andover.lib.oh.us/) (<http://www.andover.lib.oh.us/>); Andover, Ohio

June 19–July 16

[Ephrata Public Library](http://www.ephrapubliclibrary.org/) (<http://www.ephrapubliclibrary.org/>); Ephrata, Pa.

July 29–Aug. 25

[Oelwein Public Library](http://www.oelwein.lib.ia.us/) (<http://www.oelwein.lib.ia.us/>); Oelwein, Iowa

Sept. 6–Oct. 3

[Cedar City Public Library](http://www.cedarcitylibrary.org/) (<http://www.cedarcitylibrary.org/>); Cedar City, Utah

Oct. 16–Nov. 12

[Milpitas Library](https://www.sccd.org/) (<https://www.sccd.org/>); Milpitas, Calif.

Nov. 25–Dec. 22

[Spokane County Library](http://www.sclld.org/) (<http://www.sclld.org/>); Spokane, Wash.

Jan. 6, 2016–Feb. 2, 2016

[Pueblo City–County Library](http://www.pueblolibrary.org/) (<http://www.pueblolibrary.org/>); Pueblo, Colo.

Feb. 17, 2016–March 15, 2016

[Cottage Grove Public Library](http://www.cottagegrove.plinkit.org/) (<http://www.cottagegrove.plinkit.org/>); Cottage Grove, Ore.

March 27, 2016–April 23, 2016

[Springfield–Greene County Library](https://thelibrary.org/) (<https://thelibrary.org/>); Springfield, Mo.

May 7, 2016–June 3, 2016

[Peoria Public Library](http://www.peoriapubliclibrary.org/) (<http://www.peoriapubliclibrary.org/>); Peoria, Ill.

June 17, 2016–July 14, 2016

[Orion Township Public Library](http://orionlibrary.org/) (<http://orionlibrary.org/>); Lake Orion, Mich.

July 28, 2016–Aug. 24, 2016

[Skokie Public Library](http://skokielibrary.info/) (<http://skokielibrary.info/>); Skokie, Ill.

Sept. 7, 2016–Oct. 4, 2016

[Wyckoff Free Public Library](http://wyckofflibrary.org/) (<http://wyckofflibrary.org/>); Wyckoff, N.J.

Oct. 16, 2016–Nov. 12, 2016

[Tompkins County Public Library](http://tcpl.org/) (<http://tcpl.org/>); Ithaca, N.Y.

Nov. 25, 2016–Dec. 22, 2016

[Otis Library](http://www.otislibrarynorwich.org/) (<http://www.otislibrarynorwich.org/>); Norwich, Conn.

Jan. 7, 2017–Feb. 3, 2017

[Fletcher Free Library](http://www.fletcherfree.org/) (<http://www.fletcherfree.org/>); Burlington, Vt.

Feb. 18, 2017–March 17, 2017

[Bangor Public Library](http://www.bpl.lib.me.us/) (<http://www.bpl.lib.me.us/>); Bangor, Maine

April 1, 2017–April 28, 2017





[http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/TravelingExhibitMap\\_061019.pdf](http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/TravelingExhibitMap_061019.pdf)



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[http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/SI\\_Templeton\\_ALA\\_Logo](http://humanorigins.si.edu/sites/default/files/SI_Templeton_ALA_Logo)

