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## Dynamic Discussion and Live Music Series —First Fridays at *the Natural History Museum*—

***Series on “The Diversity of Life” presents provocative public forums and live performances inspired by biodiversities in the natural and the cultural worlds***

***Participants Include: Science writer Margaret Wertheim, MacArthur Award-winning paleontologist Geerat J. Vermeij, musicians The Life Force Trio, Hu Vibrational, NHM curators and more***

LOS ANGELES, Calif (December 14, 2006)—The Natural History Museum stays open late for its monthly *First Fridays* series of evening events featuring engaging original discussion, film, live performance and curator-led tours on **January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, and June 1.**

Created to engage the public in an open, dynamic and thought-provoking dialogue, this Winter/Spring *First Fridays* series is entitled “The Diversity of Life.” The interactive series presents a cross-section of contemporary perspectives on aspects of biodiversity and how it relates to our cultural world and daily lives. Upcoming *First Fridays* will treat biodiversity from six different perspectives, including shifting habitats, environmental “hot spots,” the economics of ecology, climate change, migration and the complex ocean environment. Each themed evening features a curator-guided tour through one of NHM’s galleries, a moderator-led forum with today’s top thinkers, scientists, environmentalists and authors followed by live performances by acclaimed musicians and DJs.

“*First Fridays* at the Natural History Museum is really environmental culture in the making,” said Vanda Vitali, the Museum’s Vice President of Public Programs. “Our upcoming *First Fridays* events directly engage the community, featuring live, audience-led debates that encourage visitors to contribute questions and concerns to the discussion. Guests can continue the debate afterwards in our In/ter/act space or experience performances by provocative artists from a variety of musical disciplines.”

*First Fridays* events include:

**Friday, January 5, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

***Your Place or Mine?***

Explore the places we call “habitats” — our home, body, the natural landscape, cityscape, or places that may have existed yesterday, evolved to this day, or may occur tomorrow. **Dr. John Harris**, Chief Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits, leads a guided tour and presentation in the African Mammal Hall. Join moderator **Hope Tschopik Schneider**, host and science writer **Margaret Wertheim**, and ocean activist **Wallace J. Nichols**, director of the Pacific Ocean Region at the Blue Ocean Institute, as they discuss how shifting boundaries may stress or destroy places, species, or change the things we produce. This thought provoking dialogue precedes performances by experimental soul group **The Life Force Trio** and the creative, cosmic-percussion ensemble **Hu Vibrational** in their west coast debut.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 p.m.):** Dr. John Harris  
**Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim,  
Wallace J. Nichols  
**Performances (8:00 p.m.):** The Life Force Trio; Hu Vibrational

**Friday, February 2, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

***Full House***

This evening takes a look at “places on earth with an extremely high density of diverse species. NHM History Curator **Dr. Bill Estrada** provides a curator-guided presentation before **Hope Tschopik Schneider**, **Margaret Wertheim** and **Charles Ofria**, Michigan State University Director of the Digital Evolution Lab, discuss how digital technology can illuminate these complex natural environments — and how this research can provide insight to urban environments like Los Angeles.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 p.m.):** Dr. Bill Estrada  
**Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim,  
Charles Ofria  
**Performances (8:00 p.m.):** TBA

**Friday, March 2, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

***Opportunity Knocks***

NHM takes a provocative approach to life’s dynamic system, examining how innovation, economic competition, and the power of “market” forces shape new ecologies in both the natural and cultural worlds. How might the decline of one species, such as dinosaurs, and the rise of others, most notably mammals, actually occur? **Dr. John Harris** provides a curator-guided presentation before **Hope Tschopik Schneider**, **Margaret Wertheim** and MacArthur Award-winning paleontologist **Geerat J. Vermeij** look at the parallels that might be found between the competition for resources in natural ecologies and competition in human markets.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 p.m.):** Dr. John Harris  
**Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim and  
Geerat J. Vermeij

**Film (7:30 p.m.)** Premiere of NHM original film, “Opportunity Knocks”  
**Performances (8:00 p.m.):** TBA

**Friday, April 6, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

*Fast Forward*

What will Southern California — and the world — look like in 100 years? As the public dialogue on climate change intensifies, **Hope Tschopik Schneider**, **Margaret Wertheim** and **Michelle Wyman**, Executive Director for the US Office of ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), explore the differences we can imagine in our natural and cultural worlds in the next century — and what we can do to manage and sustain our development. A curator-led tour by NHM Ornithology Collections Manager **Kimball Garrett** precedes the discussion.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 PM):** Kimball Garrett  
**Discussion (6:30 PM):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim and Michelle Wyman  
**Performances (8:00 PM):** TBA

**Friday, May 4, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

*Should I Stay or Should I Go?*

Many life forms have migrated to alternate territories providing food, shelter, and other forms of support. NHM explores the phenomenon of migration using a fascinating case study: minute life forms called microbes. Caltech’s **Jared Leadbetter**, **Margaret Wertheim** and **Hope Tschopik Schneider** explore how these tiny specimens have adapted to their environments. A curator-led tour of NHM’s Ancient Latin American Hall by Latin American Archaeology Curator **Dr. Karen Wise** precedes the discussion.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 p.m.):** Dr. Karen Wise  
**Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim and Jared Leadbetter  
**Film (7:30 p.m.)** Premiere of NHM original film, “Should I Stay or Should I Go?”  
**Performances (8:00 p.m.):** TBA

**Friday, June 1, 2007 (extended Museum hours to 10:00 p.m.)**

*Point Break*

On the last evening of this season’s *First Fridays*, NHM provides a look at life on the edge of one of the most compelling and daunting biodiversities on the planet: the ocean. NHM Malacology Curator **Ángel Valdés** illuminates this intricate life system with a curator-led gallery tour before **Hope Tschopik Schneider** and **Margaret Wertheim** tackle questions about how humans will be able to interface and adapt, naturally or technologically, in order to cross over to the “blue border” of the ocean biosphere.

**Guided Tour/Presentation (5:30 p.m.):** Dr. Ángel Valdés  
**Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Hope Tschopik Schneider, Margaret Wertheim and  
**Film (7:30 p.m.)** Premiere of NHM original film, “Point Break”  
**Performances (8:00 p.m.):** TBA

## **Ticket Information**

*Standard Museum admission fees apply. Tickets available onsite on the day of the event. Curator-led tours, films, discussions and performances are available on a first-come, first-served basis:*

Adults and nonmembers	\$9
Seniors (62+); Children 13 through 17; Students 18+ with ID	\$6.50
Children 5 through 12	\$2
Children under 5	FREE
Museum members and USC Students with ID	FREE

For updated program information, visit [www.nhm.org/firstfridays](http://www.nhm.org/firstfridays).

## **About the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County**

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County serves more than one million families and visitors annually, and is a national leader in research, exhibitions and education. The Museum was the first cultural institution in Los Angeles to open its doors to the public in 1913 and has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history—with more than 33 million objects, some as old as 4.5 billion years.

*First Fridays*, which began in September 2004, is a dynamic discussion and performance series at the Natural History Museum that bridges contemporary science, culture and individual experience.

Located at 900 Exposition Boulevard, the Museum is open seven days a week, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Museum hours are extended to 10:00 p.m. for each First Friday event (January-June, 2007). For 24-hour Museum information please call (213) 763-DINO or visit the Museum's website at [www.nhm.org](http://www.nhm.org).