



MUSÉUMS **NATURE** MONTRÉAL

Biodôme
Insectarium
Jardin botanique
Planétarium



PRESS RELEASE
Program

Starting January 28 at the Montréal Planetarium *In Search of Our Cosmic Origins*

Montréal, January 21, 2010 – As part of ongoing commemorations of the International Year of Astronomy, Montréal's Nature Museums will be presenting an all-new show at the Montréal Planetarium **starting January 28, 2010: *In Search of Our Cosmic Origins***. The multimedia show, produced by the ESO (European Southern Observatory) and the Association of French-speaking Planetariums (APLF), is intended for ages 12 and up.

Where do we come from?

How was our Universe formed? Is it really possible to look back in time to “see” the beginnings of the Universe? How can a cloud of gas and dust turn into a planet? These are just some of the questions answered in the new show, ***In Search of Our Cosmic Origins***. Highly advanced research is focusing on the Universe today, and talented scientists are devoting all their energy to this topic. This intense desire to understand the mystery of our origins has led to the creation of a huge astronomical project: ALMA.

ALMA: an ambitious, thrilling project

The *Ataca Large Millimeter/Sub-millimeter Array*, or ALMA, is the result of a partnership between authorities in East Asia, Europe and North America, in collaboration with Chile. It is one of the most ambitious scientific projects ever undertaken. The goal is to create a vast radiotelescope array at an altitude of 5,000 metres on the Chajnantor plateau, in one of the world's most arid places, Chile's Atacama desert. The main array consists of 54 radiotelescopes, each 12 metres in diameter, with 12 additional radiotelescopes to simulate a giant antenna 16 km across. ALMA is scheduled to begin operating in 2011. And what is the purpose of this fantastic array? To look back in time and reveal the origins of stars and galaxies!

Antennas peering into the farthest reaches of the Universe

Ariane, a young astronomer and virtual host, explains the fascinating story of ALMA and shares some basic cosmological knowledge to help the audience understand how this amazing array of antennas will work. She explains how ALMA can help answer questions that have intrigued humankind since time immemorial. The radiotelescope array will allow astronomers to observe galaxies and stars as they take shape, and the formation of distant extra-solar planets. At last, we will be able to grasp the architecture of the Universe and our cosmic origins.

Absolutely spectacular!

Audiences will be carried off to the edges of the Universe for a captivating exploration of our origins and our future. It's an opportunity not to be missed for curious minds and all science and astronomy enthusiasts!

Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium – helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.

museumsnature.ca

For more information: museumsnature.ca

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