

# Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Travel the ancient Silk Road for the first time in Asia

*Opening show at ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands organized by American Museum of Natural History*

**Singapore** (1 February, 2011) Embark on an amazing journey on the greatest trading route known to man – the Silk Road – when *Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World* opens at ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands in February. Organized by the American Museum of Natural History and making its debut in Asia, this exhibition recreates the ancient cities of Asia and the Middle East between AD 600 and 1200.

Occupying approximately 1,500 square meters, this interactive exhibition will literally immerse visitors in the sights, sounds and even smells of the bustling marketplaces in Asia and the Middle East. Visitors will observe silk worms spinning cocoons in Xi'an, the imperial capital of the Tang; "walk" through the raucous night market of Turfan and survey the feathers, furs and spices on display; explore the ancient crafts of papermaking and glassblowing in Samarkand; and finally conclude their travels in Baghdad which was a hub of commerce and scholarship at the time. They will be greeted by life-sized camel models decked out in full caravan regalia, unravel the once carefully guarded secrets of sericulture that was behind the lucrative Chinese silk trade, witness first-hand a massive construction of a Tang-era loom, and engage the senses with the fragrances, flavors and wares of a bygone era.

Mr. Tom Zaller, Director, ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, said, "Visitors from Singapore and around the world, young and old, will enjoy this highly interactive exhibition. From silk-making, to the ancient crafts of papermaking and glassblowing, the universal themes of art and science are integral in the life and times of the people who lived in and travelled to these ancient cities. Equivalent to the 'information highway' of that time, the Silk Road was a significant factor in the transfer of knowledge in art, technology and commerce that led to the development of the world's greatest civilizations."

“The Silk Road was not a single road but an interconnected system of trade routes – like little truck stops. Someone would go from one populated area to another, offload their goods; those would be bargained and exchanged, and then would make a further journey with someone else,” said Mr. Mark Norell, Chairman and Curator-in-Charge of the Division of Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History. “No single person traveled the entire extent of the Silk Road. However, trade goods did. And more importantly, ideas associated with those trade goods did. Certainly, we can trace the spread of religion and spread of social trends to the goods...that moved along the Silk Road.”

Collectively known as the "Silk Road", the Silk Routes were crucial paths for cultural, commercial and technological exchange between traders, merchants, soldiers and nomads from Ancient China, India, Tibet, Persia and Mediterranean countries a millennium ago. It gets its name from the Chinese silk trade, which plied the 10,000-kilometer route. The Silk Road enabled people to transport goods, slaves and luxuries such as silk and other fine fabrics, perfumes, spices, medicines, jewels, glassware and especially knowledge between East, Central and Western Asia, and the Mediterranean.

Visitors will get to use a working model of an ancient astrolabe; view a replica of a Tibetan Buddhist sutra, or religious manuscript, made of exquisite silk; and get up close to a rubbing from a section of the more than 1,200-year-old Nestorian stele, which is an engraved stone pillar erected in Xi'an in 781 still standing today. Other highlights will be a two-foot-tall working model of a water clock designed by Islamic engineers 800 years ago and a 120-foot long mural – one of the largest ever painted for a museum travelling exhibition. Young visitors will have fun collecting stamps in a “passport” while on their Silk Road adventures, and enjoy computer-animated books that bring to life timeless tales told by Silk Road travelers.

*Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World* will be on show from February 17 to March 27, 2011. The exhibition is curated by Mark Norell, Chairman and Curator-in-Charge of the Division of Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, with guest co-curator William Honeychurch, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Yale University, with consultant Denise Leidy, curator of the Department of Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The world's first ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands will be unveiled to the world on the auspicious date and time of 17 February 2011 at 3.18pm. Boasting an iconic lotus-inspired design, the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands is set to become the heart of the growing ArtScience movement as well as the premier venue for major international touring exhibitions from the most renowned collections in the world. Featuring 21 gallery spaces totaling 50,000 square feet, the latest addition to Marina Bay Sands will deliver an impressive array of exhibits that embrace a spectrum of influences from art and science, media and technology, to design and architecture.

In addition to *Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World*, opening shows at ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands include *Genghis Khan: The Exhibition* and the Museum’s showpiece exhibition, *ArtScience: A Journey Through Creativity*.

OCBC Bank is the Official Card of ArtScience Museum.

**Visitor Information**

<b>Ticketing</b>	<p>Adult - \$30.00          Senior (65 years and above) - \$27.00          Child (2 - 12 years) - \$17.00          School Group (min. 25 pax) - \$10.00          Group Sales (min. 25 pax) - \$24.50</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prices are inclusive of 7% GST and SISTIC booking fee</li> <li>• Ticketed public entry is from <b>19 February</b> onwards</li> <li>• OCBC Cardmembers enjoy 20% OFF museum admission across all categories of individual tickets*</li> </ul> <p>*Payment must be made with OCBC Credit or Debit Card. Offer is not valid with other promotions, discounts and privileges.</p>
	<p>Tickets can be purchased on the ArtScience Museum website (<a href="http://www.marinabaysands.com/ArtScienceMuseum">www.marinabaysands.com/ArtScienceMuseum</a>), all Marina Bay Sands box offices, and all SISTIC channels</p>
<b>Opening Hours</b>	<p>10am to 10pm daily including weekends and public holidays. Last entry into the Museum is at 9.00pm.</p>

**About Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd**

Marina Bay Sands is the leading business, leisure and entertainment destination in Asia. It features large and flexible convention and exhibition facilities, 2,560 hotel rooms and suites, the rooftop Sands SkyPark, the best shopping mall in Asia, world-class celebrity chef restaurants, a casino, Paiza Club for premium players and an outdoor event plaza. Its two theaters showcase a range of leading entertainment acts and will include our resident performance, "The Lion King". Completing the line-up of attractions is the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands which will play host to permanent and marquee exhibitions. For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com).

**American Museum of Natural History (amnh.org)**

The American Museum of Natural History is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. Since its founding in 1869, the Museum has advanced its global mission to explore and interpret human cultures and the natural world through a wide-reaching program of scientific research, education, and exhibitions. The Museum accomplishes this ambitious goal through its extensive facilities and resources. The institution houses 45 permanent exhibition halls, state-of-the-art research laboratories, one of the largest natural history libraries in the Western Hemisphere, and a permanent collection of more than 30 million specimens and cultural artifacts. The spectacular **Frederick Phineas & Sandra Priest Rose Center for Earth and Space**, which opened in February 2000, features the rebuilt and rejuvenated Hayden Planetarium and striking exhibits about the nature of the universe and our planet. With a scientific staff of more than 200, the Museum supports research divisions in Anthropology, Paleontology, Invertebrate and Vertebrate Zoology, and the Physical Sciences. With the launch of the **Richard Gilder Graduate School** at the Museum in 2006, AMNH became the first American museum with the authority to grant the Ph.D. degree in comparative biology. The Museum shares its treasures and discoveries with approximately four million on-site visitors from around the world each year. It has produced exhibitions and Space Shows that can currently be seen in venues on five continents, reaching an audience of millions. In addition, the Museum's website, [amnh.org](http://amnh.org), extends its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond the Museum's walls.

## APPENDIX: TOP 10 THINGS YOU MUST SEE

### 1. Chinese Silks

During the Tang dynasty (618–906 A.D.), Chinese silks were prized throughout Asia for their vibrant colors and superior patterns. Pictured here are modern reproductions of Tang-era silks which were preserved in storerooms by the Japanese royal family.

© AMNH/D. Finnin



### 2. Astrolabe

This bronze astrolabe, made in Persia circa 1730–1775, has several inset plates for use by travelers at different latitudes. Persian and Arab astronomers introduced artistic design features, such as the decorative curlicues on the upper plate that point to locations of bright stars. AMNH Hayden Planetarium Collection 2046

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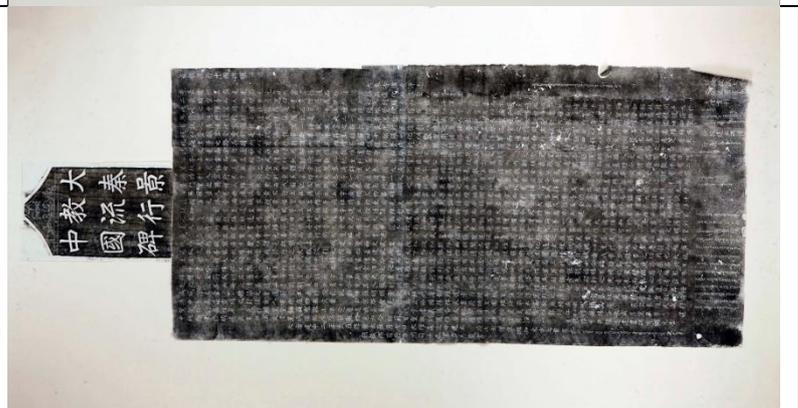
### 3. Silk Sutra

Beautiful and valuable, silk has long been used as a symbol of devotion in Buddhism. This Tibetan Buddhist sutra, or religious manuscript, is wrapped in cotton decorated with a square of red silk, a practice that reflects the importance of the silk and the sacredness of the text.  
© Courtesy of the AMNH Division of Anthropology



### 4. Nestorian Stele Rubbing

This rubbing shows a section of the more than 1,200-year-old Nestorian stele, an engraved stone pillar erected in Xi'an in 781, which is still standing today. Featuring engravings from different time periods as well as both Chinese characters and Christian iconography—including a small cross at the top—the text records how “the illustrious religion” (Nestorian Christianity) spread to China in 635 under the reign of the Tang emperor Taizong.  
© Courtesy of the AMNH Division of Anthropology



### 5. Chinese Musical Interactive

Children and adults electronically re-create the sounds of traditional Chinese instruments, such as a moon lute, a 4-string pipa, a drum, and cymbals, in this musical interactive in the Xi'an section of the exhibition.  
© AMNH/D. Finnin



### 6. Working Astrolabe

Visitors use a working model of an ancient Islamic astrolabe to determine the hour by marking the position of “stars” embedded in the surrounding exhibit.  
© AMNH/D. Finnin



### 7. Interactive Silk Road Map

An interactive electronic tabletop map in the Samarkand section of the exhibition invites visitors to discover the links among cultures, technology, and geography along the Silk Road. By pressing different buttons new information is projected across the map, revealing surprising connections.  
© AMNH/D. Finnin



### 8. Camel Caravan

At the entrance to the exhibition, *Traveling the Silk Road*, visitors come face-to-face with three life-size camel models decked out in full caravan regalia and loaded with trade goods. The camels and visitors are surrounded by a 120-foot-long mural depicting a landscape of sand dunes.  
© AMNH/D. Finnin



### 9. Turfan Night Market

The lush **Turfan** section of the exhibition transports visitors to a re-created night market in this desert city overflowing with all the goods—sapphires, silks, jades and rubies, leopard furs and peacock feathers, and fruits and spices—that would have captivated travelers over a thousand years ago.

© AMNH/R. Mickens



### 10. Arab Dhow

Visitors can walk through a 41-foot long portion of a full-sized model of a 71-foot long Arab sailing ship, called a dhow, split in half to reveal a cargo of ceramics and elaborate metalwork.

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