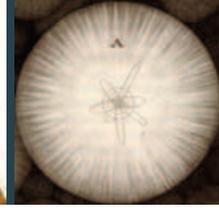
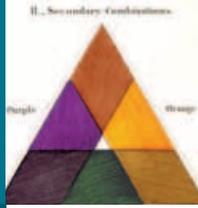
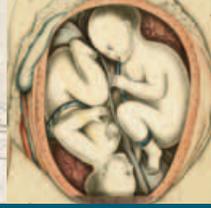


DIBNER HALL *of the*
HISTORY OF SCIENCE



BEAUTIFUL
SCIENCE
IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

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NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION SHOWCASING HISTORY OF SCIENCE OPENS NOV. 1

The 2,800-square-foot Dibner Hall will examine great achievements in science from Ptolemy and Copernicus to Newton, Darwin, and Einstein

Press Preview: 10 a.m. to noon, Friday, Oct. 31

SAN MARINO, Calif. — The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens opens a new permanent exhibition on Nov. 1, showcasing some of science's greatest achievements, from Ptolemy to Copernicus, Newton to Einstein. The 2,800-square-foot Dibner Hall of the History of Science comes as a result of the marriage of The Huntington's history of science materials with the Burndy Library, a 67,000-volume collection of rare books and manuscripts donated to The Huntington in 2006 by the Dibner family of Connecticut. Combining the two collections makes The Huntington one of the world's most important centers for the study of the history of science.

"We're calling this 'Beautiful Science: Ideas that Changed the World,'" says Daniel Lewis, The Huntington's Dibner Senior Curator of the History of Science & Technology. "We want people to think about the beauty of science in a historical context—the elegant breakthroughs, the remarkable discoveries, and the amazing people and stories behind them."

Based on the strengths of the Library's holdings, Lewis has highlighted four areas of exploration: astronomy, natural history, medicine, and light. A gallery on each focuses on the changing role of science over time, particularly the astonishing leaps in imagination made by scientists over the years and the importance of written works in communicating those ideas. Works in the exhibition represent centuries of thought, showing how knowledge has become more refined over time.

For example, until the 15th century, Earth was generally considered the center of the universe, and the gallery devoted to astronomy will show just how that perspective shifted—beginning with a 13th-century copy of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, a classic Greek text from the second century. The version on display is a Latin manuscript transcribed by monks in southern France in 1279. The work was heralded as a remarkable mathematical achievement and did a sophisticated job of predicting the position of the planets. But it wasn't until sometime later that scientists determined that the planets revolved around the

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Sun, points made in various degrees by Copernicus and Kepler. The 1566 edition of Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* includes censor marks by the first owner, a concession to the pressure of Church officials who considered the work blasphemous. Over time, the planets would be further studied, and their motion better understood, through the works of Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton. Also in the exhibition: a 1913 letter from Einstein to the great astronomer George Ellery Hale and a 1923 logbook from astronomer Edwin Hubble, writing about the observations he made using the 100-inch Hooker telescope atop Mt. Wilson.

"I see this as an extremely important moment for The Huntington," says Steven Koblak, Huntington president. "This exhibition has the potential to give visitors a much deeper understanding of how we know what we know, how knowledge has advanced over time, and how we have relied on a base of evidence to build that knowledge. People will walk into this exhibition space and be completely awestruck by the power and range of human achievement on display." An accompanying education program for middle and high school students will highlight the scientific method of experimentation: observing, testing, measuring results, and reporting on them.

The four themed galleries in Dibner Hall comprise a reconfigured wing of the Huntington Library, which was built in 1919. A fifth gallery will be a designated reading area, where visitors can curl up in oversized chairs with a copy of *The Origin of Species* or one of a number of books and ponder great moments in the history of science.

Working with in-house designer Karina White, Berkeley-based Gordon Chun Design has transformed a space formerly occupied by 18th-century French art, installing books among vibrantly colored walls, interactive computer terminals, and replicas of scientific instruments, including a Galilean telescope and a 17th-century microscope. A prism experiment shows how white light can be split into the colors of the rainbow and how those colors can then be recombined into white light.

"One of the challenges of library exhibits is that we are limited to showing just one opening of a book at a time," says White. The team working on the display is addressing that challenge by reproducing dozens of pages from books and scattering them on the surrounding walls.

The impact is particularly effective in the gallery devoted to natural history. "The effect, we hope, is reminiscent of the curiosity cabinets so popular in the 18th and 19th centuries," says Lewis, referring both to rooms and small boxes that were assemblages categorized by scientific theme and meant to evoke wonder. An additional goal is to get people as close to the original books as possible—"to see the detail they would miss even at a modest distance," says Lewis.

A display in the reading room carries the goal further, allowing visitors to leaf through a 300-year-old book. They can also turn virtual pages of rare volumes at a computer terminal in the natural history section.

The exhibition hall is made possible by the Dibner family, celebrating Bern and David Dibner and the Burndy Library; the Ahmanson Foundation; and Anne and Jim Rothenberg.

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[Editor's Note: High-resolution digital images for publicity use are available on request.]

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ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens is a collections-based research and educational institution serving scholars and the general public. More information about The Huntington can be found online at www.huntington.org.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Huntington is located at 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, Calif., and is open to the public Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from noon to 4:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Sunday, and Monday holidays from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day through Labor Day) are 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed Tuesdays and major holidays. **Admission on weekdays:** \$15 adults, \$12 seniors (65+), \$10 students (ages 12–18 or with full-time student I.D.), \$6 youth (ages 5–11), free for children under 5. Group rate \$11 per person for groups of 15 or more. Members are admitted free. **Admission on weekends and Monday holidays:** \$20 adults, \$15 seniors, \$10 students, \$6 youth, free for children under 5. Group rate \$14 per person for groups of 15 or more. Members are admitted free. Admission is free to all visitors on the first Thursday of each month with advance tickets. Information: 626-405-2100 or www.huntington.org.