



Museum of Nature and Science

PHILANTHROPIST LYDA HILL UNVEILS HER MOST RECENT TREASURE – THE RARE AND SPECTACULAR *EYES OF AFRICA* MINERAL – AT THE PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

A stunning, 2-foot-tall “alien eye” specimen makes its permanent debut at the Museum; learn the intriguing back story that began 10 years ago with a miraculous unearthing, an infamous white Mercedes, 400 diapers and a cult-like following

DALLAS (July 12, 2017) – Ten years after a spectacular “alien eye” mineral was unearthed by a miner in Namibia, the enormous and intensely beautiful specimen – dubbed *Eyes of Africa* – will make its debut at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science’s *Lyda Hill Gems and Minerals Hall*. An unprecedented discovery that has garnered a cult-like following in the mineral-collecting community, the 2-foot-tall *Eyes of Africa* is not only rare and mesmerizing, but the story – and 10-year journey – behind its discovery is unusual and intriguing.

Thanks to philanthropist, entrepreneur and internationally renowned gem collector Lyda Hill, *Eyes of Africa* is now on permanent display at the Perot Museum.

“My passion for science began as a child when I collected rocks,” said Hill. “So when I saw ‘Eyes of Africa’ – which is by far the largest and most important of all known specimens – and then heard the story behind its discovery, it captured my imagination in a big way. I’m delighted that millions of visitors to the Perot Museum will now get a chance to witness its radiance and glory for themselves.”

Composed of several white, semi-translucent quartz crystals and large, green and black Alien Eye Fluorites, *Eyes of Africa* was recovered from the Erongo Region of Namibia in 2007. Alien Eyes are a unique and unusual subset of fluorite, differentiated by a vivid green color and black outer zones that create a diamond shape at each crystal’s center. They also have a naturally formed, complex crystal habit in the form of cuboctahedra (eight triangular faces and six square faces). With light, Alien Eye fluorites glow with an incredible otherworldly quality that inspired their name. The total number of Alien Eye Fluorites recovered from this find is low, amounting to less than 30 fine specimens, due to the small pocket size and the fact that there was only one single discovery.

Head miner and Namibian local Herold Gariseb, along with his men, were the first to come across the spectacular specimen found in the Alien Eye pocket. Gariseb immediately knew *Eyes of Africa* was the “prize of the pocket” and determined it was too special for immediate release, despite high demand for these minerals. Not only was it the largest of all known specimens, but it had the highest quantity of Alien Eye fluorites from that pocket. Instead of going straight to market, he stowed it away in the trunk of his white Mercedes, and it went with him everywhere. As word got around, the white Mercedes became the White Whale for collectors, including Mark Kielbaso and Jurgen Tron who ventured for days looking for the infamous mineral-toting Mercedes. After finding Gariseb, they immediately made a deal to acquire *Eyes of Africa* and ended up purchasing 400 diapers to protect and ship the precious piece! Hill later acquired the mineral and, by offering it to the Perot Museum, will allow millions of children and adults to experience its wonder and beauty.

The Perot Museum is located at 2201 N. Field Street in Dallas, Texas. Museum general admission is free for members. For ticket information, parking maps and other details visit perotmuseum.org or call 214-428-5555.

About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. *The top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas, with campuses in Victory Park and Fair Park. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children's museum; a state-of-the art traveling exhibition hall; and The Hogle Foundation Theater, a National Geographic Experience. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit perotmuseum.org*