SMITHSONIAN TO PRESENT PETER RABBIT EXHIBITION
“Peter Rabbit’s Garden” to Celebrate the Life and Works of Beatrix Potter

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History will host the world premiere of “Peter Rabbit’s Garden,” a multi-media exhibition on the literature and life of Beatrix Potter. The children’s book author and illustrator is best known for the creation of Peter Rabbit, the title character of the early 20th-century British author’s first in a series of 23 tales published between 1902 and 1930. The exhibition opens on Feb. 9 and continues through May 26.

In addition to introducing the character of Peter Rabbit, the exhibition will acquaint visitors with the richness of Potter’s achievements in art, science and land preservation.

"This extraordinary show will appeal to adults and children alike," said Dennis O’Connor, director of the Museum of Natural History. “We have a special opportunity to demonstrate how Beatrix Potter was affected by the natural world and how she, in turn, inspired children through her work and cared for the environment that fueled her creativity."

Born in London in 1866, Beatrix Potter became a keen observer of natural life at an early age. Starting as a child, she filled sketch books and journals with her observations on the world around her. She also delved substantially into scientific theory and as a landowner adopted methods of agricultural preservation. Potter built up a 4,000-acre estate in the English Lake District of 15 farms that she ultimately donated to the National Trust of England.

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The exhibition is divided into nine areas: Introduction, Peter’s Friends, A Victorian Childhood, A Life in Nature, Mr. McGregor’s Garden, The Tales of Beatrix Potter, In Beatrix Potter’s Footsteps, The Storytelling Tree, and The Gallery. An audio-visual theater will complement the exhibition with presentations on Beatrix Potter and her work.

Exhibition Highlights:
- All 23 of the "little books" as well as a giant "little book" that gives biographies of the characters such as Benjamin Bunny, Jemima Puddle-duck, Mr. Jeremy Fisher, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle, Mr. Tod and others
- Presentations of Potter’s scientific work including her theory on the germination of spores
- A giant flower pot and vegetables
- Photographs of Beatrix Potter with her family and friends taken by her father, an early expert in the field of photography
- A 360° panorama of Potter’s famous Hill Top garden in the English Lake District
- A story-tellers tree, where young visitors will hear Potter’s tales read aloud

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive museum gift shop.

“Peter Rabbit’s Garden” draws on material held in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in England and the Frederick Warne Archive.

The exhibition is made possible in part by support from Voyager Expanded Learning and Bank of America.

The National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., welcomed more than 9.5 million people during the year 2000. Opened in 1910, the museum located on the National Mall is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world’s most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. The museum is part of the Smithsonian Institution, the world’s largest museum and research complex. The National Museum of Natural History is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except December 25. Admission is free.

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