

WORKSHOP

Curating and Exhibiting Geology

Past Practices and Future Challenges

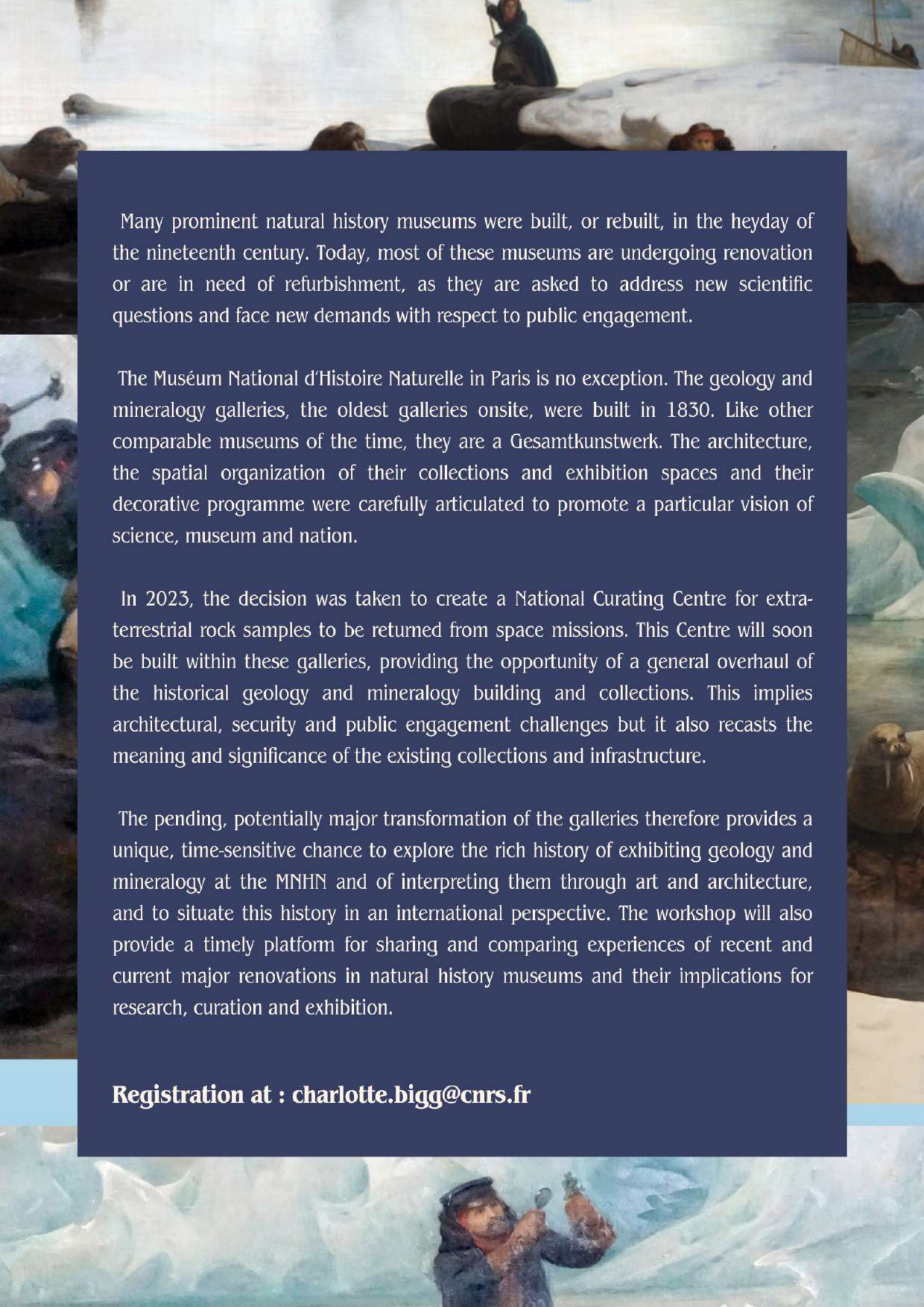


21-23

May 2024

- 📍 Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
 - 📍 Société française de Géologie Paris
- Organized by Charlotte Bigg, John Holmes,
Pierre Sans-Jofre
- Registration at : charlotte.bigg@cnr.fr





Many prominent natural history museums were built, or rebuilt, in the heyday of the nineteenth century. Today, most of these museums are undergoing renovation or are in need of refurbishment, as they are asked to address new scientific questions and face new demands with respect to public engagement.

The Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris is no exception. The geology and mineralogy galleries, the oldest galleries onsite, were built in 1830. Like other comparable museums of the time, they are a Gesamtkunstwerk. The architecture, the spatial organization of their collections and exhibition spaces and their decorative programme were carefully articulated to promote a particular vision of science, museum and nation.

In 2023, the decision was taken to create a National Curating Centre for extra-terrestrial rock samples to be returned from space missions. This Centre will soon be built within these galleries, providing the opportunity of a general overhaul of the historical geology and mineralogy building and collections. This implies architectural, security and public engagement challenges but it also recasts the meaning and significance of the existing collections and infrastructure.

The pending, potentially major transformation of the galleries therefore provides a unique, time-sensitive chance to explore the rich history of exhibiting geology and mineralogy at the MNHN and of interpreting them through art and architecture, and to situate this history in an international perspective. The workshop will also provide a timely platform for sharing and comparing experiences of recent and current major renovations in natural history museums and their implications for research, curation and exhibition.

Registration at : charlotte.bigg@cnrs.fr

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Tuesday 21st May

Curating and Exhibiting Geology and Mineralogy at the Muséum since 1830: Architecture, Art, Collections

 **Amphithéâtre de paléontologie, Galerie d'Anatomie comparée et de Paléontologie, 2 rue Buffon**

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Welcome by the organisers and by Alice Lemaire (MNHN head of libraries and documentation)

Perig Pitrou (CNRS, Maison Française d'Oxford), *A Social Approach to the Origins of Life*

Pierre Sans-Jofre, *Origins and History of the Gallery and Collections*

Amandine Postec (MNHN head of the conservation, restoration and digitization unit), *The artistic heritage of the gallery: works of art and sources*

Léo Becka, *François-Auguste Biard's mural at the Museum Between art, science and politics*

4:30 - 5:30 PM

Keynote lecture

Paul Smith, *Life as we know it? – a major redisplay programme at Oxford University Museum of Natural History*



WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Wednesday 22nd May

Curating and Exhibiting Geology and Mineralogy, Comparing Perspectives (part one)

 **Salle des Etudiants, IMPMC, MNHN, 43 rue Buffon**

10:00 - 11:30 AM

John Holmes, Paul Smith, Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel, Anita Hermannstädter, Janine Rogers, *Why SYMBIOSIS? Between preserving and rethinking - 19th century natural history museums on the way to the future*

Coffe break

**11:45 AM -
12:30 PM**

Patrick Wyse Jackson, *The Museum Building of Trinity College Dublin: a geological and natural history exhibit in itself*

Lunch break

2:30 - 3:15 PM

Julia Walter-Roszjár, *The meteorite collection at the NHM Vienna and related public outreach activities over time*

3:15 - 4:00 PM

Pandora Syperek, *Jewels of the Natural History Museum, London*

Coffe break

4:15 - 5:00 PM

Sébastien Soubiran, *Why should academic institutions spend time and money on historic natural history collections and museum structures?*



WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Thursday 23rd May

Curating and Exhibiting Geology and Mineralogy, Comparing Perspectives (part two)

 Van Straelen room, Société géologique de France, 77 rue Claude Bernard

9:30 - 10:00 AM

Solen Le Gardien, *Welcome and introduction to the history of the Société géologique de France*

10:00 - 10:45 AM

Maddalena Napolitani, *The Nation's Stones. From the Mineralogy Collections to the Museum of the École des Mines in Paris*

Coffee break

11:00 - 11:45 AM

Juliette Fritsch, *Exhibiting Deep Time: The challenge of meaningful exhibition design for geological timeframes*

11:45 AM -
12:15 PM

Christian Hottin, *general comment and discussion*

12:15 - 12:30 PM

Concluding remarks: *Collecting and Displaying the Origins of Life*

Lunch break

2:00 - 3:30 PM

 MINES ParisTech, 60 boulevard Saint-Michel

Guided tour of the Musée de minéralogie by Dylan Seguenot-Grapin, with Maddalena Napolitani

