

October 7, 2016

## **Birch Aquarium Launches Immersive New Exhibit**

*Expedition at Sea: R/V Sally Ride Gallery brings guests closer to cutting edge research*

On October 28, Birch Aquarium at Scripps is launching *Expedition at Sea: R/V Sally Ride Gallery*, an immersive exhibit created to welcome America's newest research vessel into the research fleet at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego.

Combining science, art, and technology — along with hands-on learning for young aquarium guests — *Expedition at Sea* will provide a new lens through which visitors of all ages can connect with the global research activities of Scripps Oceanography scientists.

“We have created a new type of exhibit gallery that invites visitors to be part of Scripps’ expeditions seeking to better understand and protect the planet,” said Harry Helling, executive director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps. “By immersing our visitors into Scripps’ solutions-based science and exploration, we hope to inspire them to also be part of the solution.”

Through the gallery, guests will experience the sights and sounds of life and work aboard a research vessel at sea by taking a virtual tour of *R/V Sally Ride*; exploring seafloor mapping through augmented reality; immersing themselves in a 33-foot-long projected triptych showcasing images from *R/V Sally Ride*; and discovering specimens retrieved from the depths of the ocean during Scripps Oceanography’s 100-plus years of exploration.

Young learners will have opportunities to dress like ocean-going scientists, listen to stories from the ship’s crew, touch deep-ocean artifacts; and sort plankton (like the scientists are doing onboard *R/V Sally Ride*).

*Expedition at Sea* is a precursor to a major new exhibit, *The Expedition*, opening at Birch Aquarium in 2017.

The gallery is opening in conjunction with the celebratory arrival of *R/V Sally Ride*. The ship is owned by the U.S. Navy and operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The state-of-the-art research vessel is the latest example of UC San Diego’s ability to push boundaries and challenge expectations. It will help researchers solve the planet’s most pressing environmental challenges through discoveries in areas ranging from climate change, human health, and natural disasters to helping the U.S. Navy pursue national security objectives in an era of rapid environmental and social change. The vessel is named in honor of Sally Ride, the first American woman in space and former UC San Diego faculty member.

*Expedition at Sea* is included in Birch Aquarium admission, which is \$18.50 for adults, \$14 for children ages 3 to 17. [Annual memberships are also available.](#) For more information or to purchase tickets, call 858-534-7336 or visit [aquarium.ucsd.edu](http://aquarium.ucsd.edu). Proceeds support exhibits and educational programming at Birch Aquarium at Scripps.

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### **About Birch Aquarium at Scripps**

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the aquarium features more than 60 habitats of fish and invertebrates from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest to the tropical waters of Mexico and the western Pacific. An interactive museum showcases research discoveries by Scripps scientists on climate, earth and ocean science, and features five-dozen interactive elements. Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Birch Aquarium has an annual attendance of more than 450,000, including 40,000 school children.

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