



Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá Collaborates to Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution's Partnership with Panama



Panama has long had a special relationship with the Smithsonian Institution. When early naturalists first came to survey for the development of the Panama Canal in 1910, they were invited to survey the entire isthmus. Those early Smithsonian expeditions formed the basis for the development of a premier research institution, the [Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute](#) (STRI), designed to foster scientific studies of the rich biological diversity of the tropics.

In celebration of the upcoming 100th year anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution's partnership with Panama, the [Smithsonian Latino Center](#) (SLC); STRI; and the [Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá](#), Panama City, PAN (Museo), a Smithsonian Affiliate, are presenting "Panama at the Smithsonian," with eighteen cultural events and an exhibition.

The Museo produced a colorful, bilingual calendar of events and program guide for the ongoing events. A series of concerts both in Washington, DC and New York, NY feature Panamanian jazz and indigenous music. Onstage discussions explore such topics as the 1989 U. S. invasion of Panama, toppling Manuel Noriega; the art of the Spanish Caribbean, Panama, and Peru; and a talk with legendary Panamanian musician, composer and actor, Ruben Blades.

In addition, the Museo is sharing a children's puppet play, originally written and produced by the Museo, for Smithsonian audiences. Staff from the Museo will work with the Smithsonian's Discovery Theater to present "El Tremendo Encontron" or "The Tremendous Encounter," a fun-filled puppet show bringing to life the meeting between the native people of Panama and the Spanish Conquistadors along the beautiful River Chagres. During the journey, a mysterious pirate appears who has his eyes set on finding gold. "Tremendous Encounter" will be performed October 1, 2 and 9 at the Discovery Theater in the Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center.

Further collaboration between the SLC, STRI, and the Museo will feature a bilingual exhibition that creates a framework for understanding Panamanian history, beginning with the geological history of the isthmus and culminating with the expansion of the Panama Canal and its challenges for the future. The exhibition highlights key chapters from indigenous settlement through Panama's 20th century struggle for sovereignty. "Panamanian Passages" will be on view at the Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center, October 5, 2009-May 31, 2010. The Museo is also collaborating with the [Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center](#), STRI and the SLC to create bilingual interactive field trip opportunities that highlight Panama as a global crossroads. Tours will include a scavenger hunt through the exhibition, a hands-on education station, and an interactive knowledge game, designed to appeal to middle school and high school age groups.

For further information regarding "Panama at the Smithsonian," please contact Alma Douglas, National Outreach Manager, at adouglas@si.edu or (202) 633-5305.