



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Delle Willett, Director of Marketing
619.255.0244, dwillett@sdnhm.org
OR
Hallie Shere, Marketing Communications Specialist
619.255.0189, hshere@sdnhm.org

My Torah: Contemporary Art in the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibition

San Diego; October 26, 2007—Local artist Becky Guttin has loaned her contemporary piece, *My Torah*, to the San Diego Natural History Museum’s exhibition *Dead Sea Scrolls*, on display through December 31. *Dead Sea Scrolls* is the largest, most comprehensive exhibition of Dead Sea Scrolls ever assembled. The biblical texts represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls library continue to be of political, personal, and spiritual importance today.

“*My Torah* is a contemporary piece of art, inspired by the Torah and by the Dead Sea Scrolls. I could call it a self-portrait. In one way, my Jewish and Mexican heritages are present. In another, it follows the body of language of my work. *My Torah* has some characteristics of a real Torah, and also significant personal perception and content,” says Becky Guttin.

My Torah is made out of aluminum, wood, lines from four different books—Mahzor Tom III, Vienne 5695 (1935); Holy writings, Warsaw 1879; Desert book from the Bible, Warsaw 1895; and Gates, with an unknown date—and a Mexican market sack made out of natural roots. The sack was originally made to carry corn and beans.

One of the unique elements of the exhibition is the tracing of the meaning and transmission of these sacred texts through many centuries and different cultures. *Dead Sea Scrolls* features the original 2000-year-old scrolls, 1000-year-old biblical manuscripts from The Russian National Library, 800-year-old Bibles from the British Library, 400-year-old Ethiopic manuscripts, and even modern hand-scribed texts. Guttin’s *My Torah* is an example of a different type of transmission of ideas, by using the scrolls and their teachings to inspire artistic works.

Guttin has participated in numerous exhibitions in a dozen countries and has been featured in 24 solo exhibitions in Mexico, the United States, and Israel. Her art is featured in permanent collections, museums, public spaces, and private collections. Guttin also volunteers at Scripps Hospital, Encinitas, where she leads art-therapy workshops.


On June 29, the Museum opened the largest, most comprehensive exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls ever assembled. The exhibition—created and assembled by the Museum—includes authentic Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient illuminated manuscripts, artifacts, landscape and aerial

–OVER–

photography, and interactive displays about science, discovery, and exploration. This exhibition will not travel. The presenting sponsor of *Dead Sea Scrolls* is the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation.

Celebrating its 133rd year, the San Diego Natural History Museum is the second oldest scientific institution in California, third west of the Mississippi. A binational museum, its mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. Located in Balboa Park at the intersection of Village Place and Park Blvd., it is open daily except for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Phone: 619.232.3821. Website: www.sdnhm.org.

#

The *Dead Sea Scrolls* exhibition, presented by the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation, is a joint production of the  Israel Antiquities Authority, the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation and the San Diego Natural History Museum. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.