Wild Color
Delve into the color spectrum like never before as you make your way through immersive rooms, each representing a color of the rainbow. Color-saturated spaces awaken the senses with vibrant specimens, photo-worthy displays, and shifting soundscapes. Marvel at the beauty and power of color in the natural world.
Exhibition Details

Size: 5,000 ft² (465 m²)

Ceiling Height: 12 ft (3.66 m)

Languages: All text in English and Spanish; language may be converted by host venues

Science Advisor: Dr. Deborah Bekken, Director of the Gantz Family Collections Center

Features:

- Nearly 200 Zoology, Botany, and Geology specimens
- 16 atmospheric murals, 2 ambient scent stations
- 5 tactile interactive elements
- 3 videos and 8 soundscapes
- 4+ photo opps
The Big Idea

Escape the everyday and explore the natural world through the wonder of color.

Anywhere you look in nature, color holds meaning. It evokes emotion, signals alarm, creates disguise and illusion. In this special exhibition, you’ll learn how to decode the hidden messages that different colors can send. Then, explore some of nature’s mysteries that are hidden in plain sight: creatures that change color, plants and animals that give off an eerie glow, and shades of color that the human eye can’t detect.
Experience Bubble Plan

The three primary-color galleries (red, yellow, and blue) are large. Each will feature a central experience that stays consistent in format, but carries different content, featuring the color highlighted in that gallery.

The three secondary-color galleries (orange, green, purple) are smaller, and serve as transition spaces between the primary colors.

The finale brings all the colors into play and launches visitors out into the world with questions, ideas, and conversation.

The bubble sizes in this diagram represent the relative weight of sections in the experience.
Schematic Floor Plan
Field Museum Floor Plan
Exhibition Walkthrough
RED-EARED SLIDER
ORANGE ROUGHY
YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN
GREEN LACEWING
BLUE TORCH CACTUS
PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRYWREN
TORTUGA DE OREJAS ROJAS
RELOJ ANARANJADO / HOPLOSTETE
MARTA DE CUELLO AMARILLO
CRISOPA DE ALAS VERDES
CARDÓN AZUL
RATONA AUSTRALIANA DE CORONA MORADA
Section 1: Red and Orange
Begin your journey through the color spectrum among the rich, luxurious hues of rubies and garnets. See how nature uses vivid red in the warning colors of king snakes and velvet ants, but also the attractive shades of fruits and flowers. A cornucopia of bright orange shells and birds follows.
RED

It lends rubies and roses their alluring charm, coral snakes and fire ants their warning alarm.

Whether mountain, or forest, or desert, or sea, it’s the hue nature uses to say, “Notice me.”

ROJO
Engalan los rubies y las rosas, alerta de corallíjos y hormigas rojas.
En la montaña, bosque, desierto o mar, natura nos dice, “me tienes que mirar”.
Object Groupings in Red

- Red as warning
- Pigments from food
- Red hair and fur
- Red to attract
- Mixed red
ORANGE

A zingy, citrus zap
sizzling, crackling spark;
a color
a flavor
dazzling electrical arc—
a bouncing buzz of energy
between red's heat and
yellow's glow
The neon flash of a
salamander's tail
in a dappled creek's
bubbling flow.

NARANJA
Un chico vibrante
clavados sorprendentes;
un color
un sabor
electro y desmarambante.
La energía de un zumbido
entre ahullado y colorado.
El rastro de salamandra
voluntaria en un retoque.
Single Object Grouping in Orange

• Mixed Orange
Section 2: Yellow and Green
Among yellow dandelions, bees, field mice, and butterflies, go ahead and “try on” butterfly wings to see how you look. This sunny space gives way to a forest of green leaves and the creatures that camouflage themselves among them.
YELLOW TO BE SEEN
AMARILLO PARA SER VISTO

To the human eye, flowers in bloom can be an explosion of eye-pleasing color. But allowing color to actually be functional. Flowers produce the flashy colors to entice pollinators to move from flower to flower, allowing them to reproduce.

MAMMALS AND MELANISM
Object Groupings in Yellow

- Butterflies
- Melanin in fur
- Bees, their mimics, flowers
- Mixed yellow
GREEN

The soft and vibrant glowing in a lustrous leaf uncurling,

Earth's eternal emerald weave, nature's flag unfurling.

VERDE

El brillo suave y vibrante del follaje creciente.

La umbra le constante que la naturaleza doce, siempre.
These predators use their green coloration to blend into the leaves as they wait for unsuspecting prey.
Object Groupings in Green

- Mixed green
- Camouflage
- Leaves
Section 3: Blue and Purple
A centerpiece of the exhibition is the blue multimedia space, where the deep blue seas and skies surround you. Investigate how insects, fish, and reptiles create blue with microscopic light-bending textures, then marvel at surprisingly purple animals and plants.
BLUE

Jays and martins stroke the sky
our marbled planet swirls—
air and ocean intertwined
a liquid, breathing world.

AZUL
Charas y martines acarician el cielo
del planeta jaspeado que gira
aire y mar entrelazados
un mundo líquido, aéreo.
Object Groupings in Blue

- Marine life
- Structural color
- True blue?
- Blue as display
Single Object Grouping in Purple

- Mixed purple
Beyond the range of human sight, there’s a violet hue of greater energy: ultraviolet. Explore and compare the dramatic color shifts of animals, plants, and minerals under UV lights.
ULTRAVIOLET

Beyond the range of human sight, there's a violet hue of greater energy: ultraviolet. Some substances can absorb UV light and then release that energy slowly, shifting it to a frequency we can see. This fluorescence can show us invisible patterns in nature that we're just beginning to discover and understand.

ULTRAVIOLETA

El ultravioleta es un tono morado de gran energía que es invisible para el ojo humano. Algunas sustancias absorben la luz ultravioleta y emiten energía lentamente, cambiando a una frecuencia que podemos ver. Esta fluorescencia puede mostrar patrones invisibles en la naturaleza que estamos empezando a descubrir y entender.
Press and hold for UV light
Para ultravioleta mantener presionado
Press and hold for UV light
Fluorescent Under UV

- Minerals
- Fossil shells
- Lichens
- Scorpion
- Southern flying squirrel
Section 4: Black and White
Experience the extremes of dark and light—from birds with feathers so black they absorb nearly all light, to the reflective white underside of a silver fern.
BLACK OUT

Most of the colors we see are reflections of light, but black is the absence of light. True black is hard to find—even “black” paint only absorbs about 95% of visible light. But some deep-sea creatures, like the anglerfish, have evolved ultra-black scales, making them nearly invisible to their prey.

NEGRO TOTAL

La mayoría de los colores que vemos son reflejos de luz, pero el negro es la ausencia de luz. La verdadera negrura es difícil de encontrar—más de 95% de la luz es absorbida por el negro. Pero algunos animales, como el pez anglerfish, han evolucionado escamas negras extremas, lo que los hace casi invisibles para sus presas.
STARTLING BLACK AND WHITE

Being black and white is a great way to make a statement. Contrasting stripes and spots can help animals identify members of their own species, warn enemies to stay away, or even make their outlines harder for predators to see.

ASOMBROSO BLANCO Y NEGRO

Blanco y negro juntos causan una gran impresión. Las rayas o manchas contrastantes sirven como identificación de la propia especie, advertencia a los enemigos o camuflaje contra los depredadores.
Black and White Objects

- Black and white
- Black
- White
Section 5: Wildly Colorful
The finale of specimens and media brings together the entire rainbow to answer some big questions: Why is nature so colorful at times? How can plants and animals change color? How do we make colors from nature? And how can we connect to color in nature?
CHANGING COLOR

Color in chameleons is not fixed; it also changes with the seasons. In hot climates, chameleons can change color to blend with their surroundings or to communicate with others. New research shows that light and heat conditions may trigger changes in their pigmentation.
For the male peacock jumping spider, just one color is not enough as he attracts his mate with bold hues and dramatic dance moves. Wildly colorful creatures may also use their multiple hues to blend into a colorful environment or even to confuse predators. And sometimes an abundance of color is simply a beautiful mystery.
Wildly Colorful

- Natural dyes
- Iridescence
- Color mutation
- Color changing
“So take a moment today to soak up Earth’s beauty and to consider what lies just beneath the surface of nature’s wild color.”
Optional Elements
Acrylic Hexagons

- **Description**: Multicolored acrylic decorative hexagons with nature images etched in the centers
- **Notes**: Travel with exhibition; installation is optional
Tri-colored light interactive (RGB experience)

- **Description:** RGB lights projected onto white surface that allow visitors to make interesting, playful shadows
- **Notes:** Does not travel with the exhibition; can be sourced and reproduced by host
Stencil Gobos

- **Description:** Gobos that create decorative patterns on the floor
- **Notes:** A selection of gobos for the Orange, Yellow, and Green galleries are included; host to supply the lights on which the gobos are installed (lights do not travel with the exhibition)
Dazzle Wall Graphic

- **Description**: The “Dazzle” pattern, which is printed on a Field Museum-provided dimensional scrim, can also be printed for use as a wall treatment, if desired
- **Notes**: A print file is available upon request for use in the Black and White section
Carnovsky RGB Wallpaper

- **Description**: Wallpaper that reveals different animals when exposed to changing RGB lighting
- **Notes**: Wallpaper available for purchase; venue must provide lighting
Interactive Light Table

- **Description**: Interactive light table with multicolored acrylic overlays
- **Notes**: Originally designed and produced by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for their 2023-2024 presentation of *Wild Color*
Social Media Projection

- **Description**: Crowdsourced social media element featured as a finale projection; showcased visitors’ hashtagged photos of color “in the wild”
- **Notes**: Originally integrated into the Field Museum’s presentation through a third-party photo-gathering and permissions platform called Crowdriff