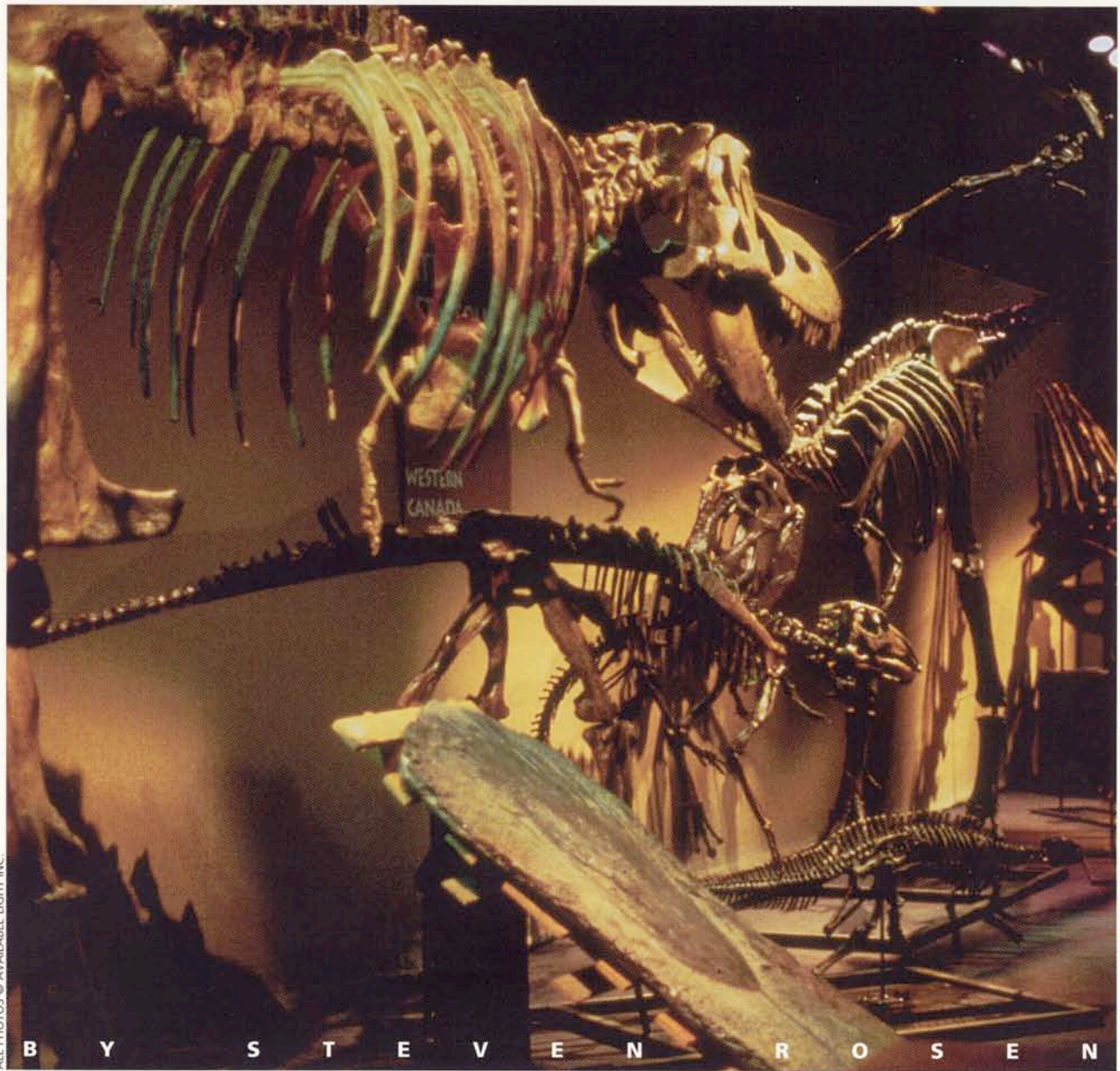


Jurassic PARs

A LOST WORLD THEMED
EXHIBIT SHEDS LIGHT
ON THE FOSSIL RECORD



ALL PHOTOS © AVAILABLE LIGHT INC.

B Y S T E V E N R O S E N



"THE LOST WORLD" EXHIBIT

PRODUCER

Dinosaur Exhibition LLC
Don Lessem, executive producer

EXHIBIT DESIGNER

Museum Design Associates
David Seibert, Heather Hogue, designers

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Available Light Inc.
Steven Rosen, principal; Katherine Abernathy, senior associate; Richard Testa, Shelly Sabel, associates

LIGHTING VENDOR

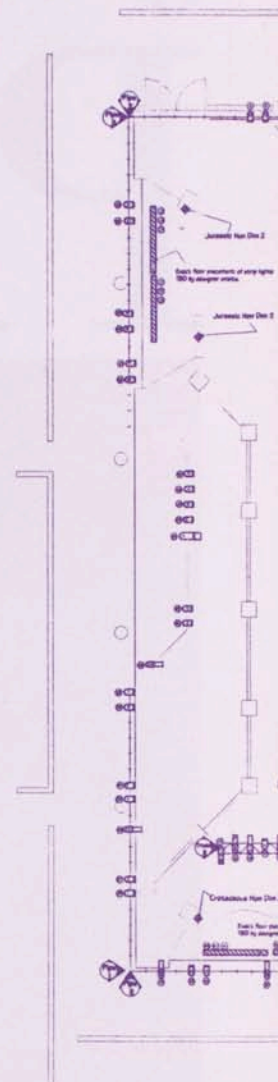
BML Stage Lighting
Eric Todd, president; Marc Wuchter, production electrician; Paulie Bugati, rigger

SCENIC FABRICATOR

Mystic Scenic Studios
Jim Ray and Jon Hondorp, principals;
Vicki Peterson, master carpenter

SELECTED LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

- (92) Altman 30° Shakespeares
- (27) Altman 20° Shakespeares
- (18) black MFL PAR-64s
- (87) black MFL PAR-56s with 300W incandescent lamps
- (10) black PAR-28 spots
- (23) black PAR-38 floods
- (5) black VN5P 12V 75W PAR-36s
- (13-16) CM Lodestar 1/2-ton chain motors with chain bag
- (6) Altman Zip Strips
- (9) Rosco variable-speed animation disk motors
- (3) Rosco variable-speed animation disk controllers
- (1) Reel EFX DF-50 hazer
- (1) High End Systems F-100 performance fog generator
- (1) ETC Expression 2X console
- (2) Littlite/CAE Littlites for control area



AVAILABLE LIGHT

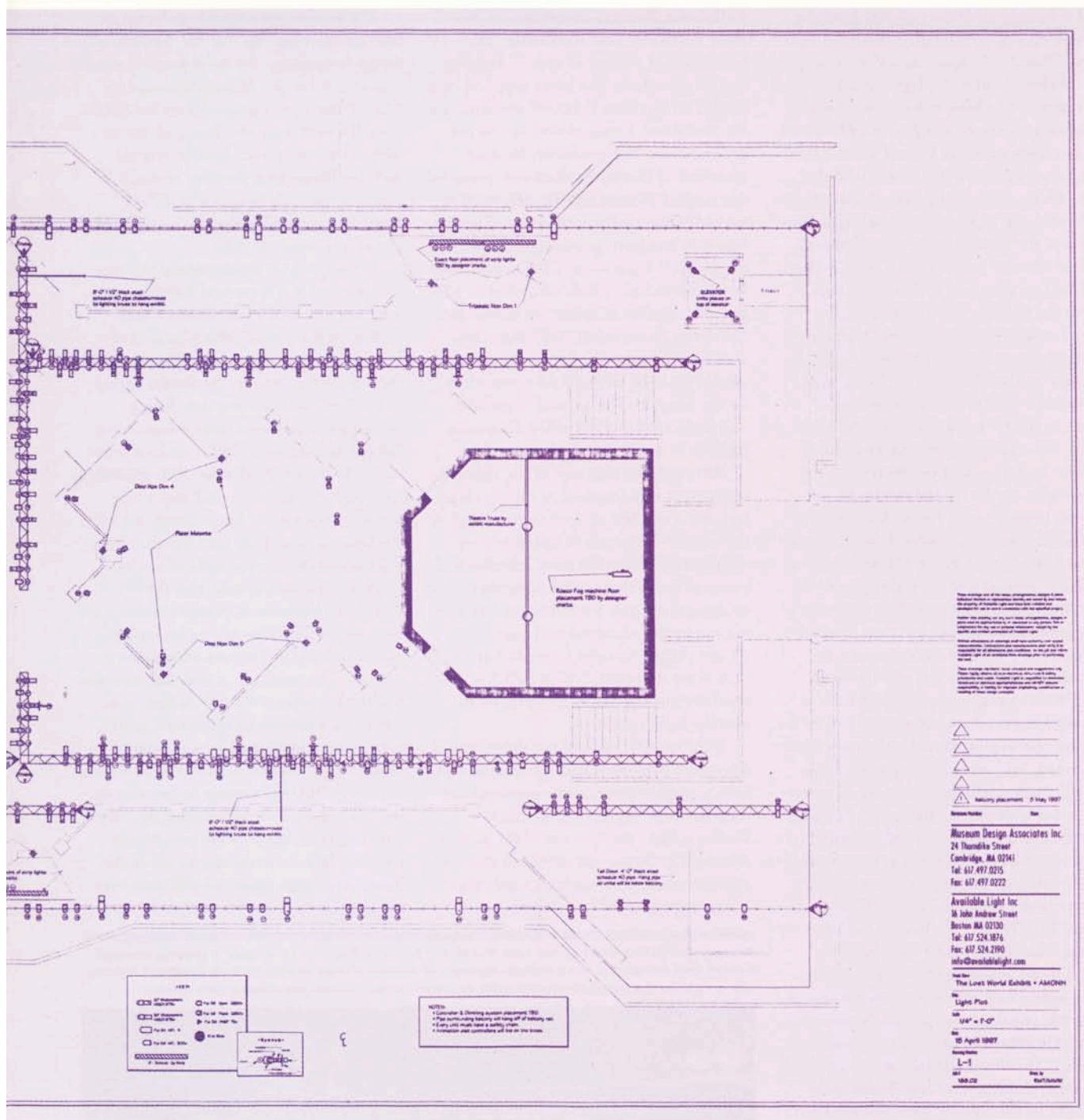
The *Lost World: The Life and Death of Dinosaurs* is the most elaborate traveling dinosaur exhibit ever mounted. Opened this past May at New York's American Museum of Natural History, the exhibit traces the entire history of dinosaur life. It features not only the creatures from Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* films but also the largest dinosaur ever reconstructed—a 72'-long (22m) Mamenchisaurus from China—

never before seen in North America.

Available Light Inc., my Boston-based design firm, has one foot in the corporate theatre/trade show arena and the other in museum/special space architecture, so this project was a perfect fit for us. After being approached by the exhibit designer, Dave Seibert of Museum Design Associates, in Cambridge, MA, we brainstormed about creating a combination theatrical/exhibit lighting system for the

inaugural installation. It was important to the exhibit's executive producer, "Dino" Don Lessem (the paleontology consultant on the films and *Jurassic Park: The Ride* at Universal Studios Hollywood), that the lighting help create a dramatic atmosphere for the exhibit's first stop on a North American tour.

The setting for the exhibit was the Hall of Ocean Life, a very large space dominated by a 94' (29m) blue whale. To help



This drawing and all the other drawings design a lighting system for a museum exhibit. The lighting system is designed to provide the quality of light required for the exhibit. The lighting system is designed to provide the quality of light required for the exhibit. The lighting system is designed to provide the quality of light required for the exhibit.

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The Lost World Exhibit • AMNH

Light Plus
 1/4" = 1'-0"
 15 April 1987
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keep the focus on the dinosaurs-in-residence. Available Light designers Kathy Abernathy, Rich Testa, and I wanted to define a lighting environment that was steamy, colorful, kinetic, directional, and highly focused.

This is, to my knowledge, the first time the American Museum of Natural History has installed a full-blown theatrical lighting system to complement an exhibit program. Hanging rock-and-roll style truss

with chain motors and installing theatrical lighting, dimming, and power distribution did raise a few eyebrows at this hallowed institution but, once a structural engineer gave us the thumbs up, the museum staff was enthusiastic and generous.

The contents of the exhibit included a number of dinosaur replicas and props from *The Lost World* movie, including a sport utility vehicle from Mercedes-Benz. Surrounding the movie props were a host

Theatrical lighting enabled Available Light to bring a touch of cinema to *The Lost World* exhibit (facing page). The company's light plot (above) preceded a complex installation allotted just "four agonizingly short days" to complete, says LD Steven Rosen. "The museum world has embraced stage design as a means of generating excitement, sizzle, marketing appeal, and hence, attendance," he adds.

of scholarly skeleton replicas from the three eras of documented dinosaur activity: Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous.

Although all of the lighting is theatrical in nature we chose to focus most of the lighting effects on the *Lost World* critters. Abernathy says, "A loop of kinetic lighting cues envelops the center island of the film's dinos and props. Broad strokes of color and highly directional light graze across the figures in an ever-changing array of color and motion." Says Seibert, "I had no idea how elaborate or evocative the lighting was going to be."

To define an environment that somehow transcended the museum's "Whale Room" a Reel EFX DF-50 hazer was used to reveal the dynamic beams of accent light. "In an attempt to localize the mist in the center area we hid the hazer in the back of the Mercedes; the fog lights on the rollbar produced awesome beams," says Testa. After a bit of experimentation we settled on a five-second burst of mist every 110 seconds. This produced just the right amount of particulate without revealing the hazer's location; also, we did not want Mercedes-Benz, the principal show sponsor, to think its souped-up car was burning!

With four agonizingly short days to assemble the entire installation before the press opening on May 21, the crew from Raritan, NJ-based lighting contractor BML Stage Lighting had to rig an extensive truss structure, along with hanging and cabling 240-plus overhead units in a few short hours. "We are getting used to delivering on the impossible schedules that clients demand," muses BML president Eric Todd. "We look at each project as a challenge to 'beat the clock.'"

I recall harassing the dinosaur assembly technicians with a constant barrage of "Is this one done and placed, because I'm about to focus 20 lights on the beastly thing!" On almost the last day of set-up we learned about several *Lost World* video kiosks on the balcony level that required banner accent lighting. The truss position was at too low an angle to properly accomplish the job, so BML riggers Paulie Bugati and Marc "Chainsaw" Wuchter consented to create lighting positions up in the ceiling adjacent to the motor pick points 45' (14m) in the air. I had never heard such a period of condensed yet poignant cursing, but when the task was complete, the banners glowed and a grime-covered Paulie announced, "Dat's niice...."

Another feature of the exhibit was the

Extinction Theatre, a multimedia intro show hosted by *Lost World* star Jeff Goldblum. A variety of special lighting and smoke effects (the latter supplied by a High End Systems F-100™ performance fog generator) accompanied the media presentation. The producer, Michael Jacobsen of Boston Productions, provided dry contact closure signals delivered at mutually agreed-upon intervals. These remotely triggered pre-assigned macros on our ETC Expression 2X (i.e. raise and lower house lights, lightning effects, and the introduction of theatrical smoke into the space as asteroids "fall" upon an unsuspecting crowd). These macros were loaded into one of two auto crossfaders on the console. The second crossfader was dedicated to the kinetic dinosaurs lighting loop previously discussed.

Although the majority of the lighting equipment was attached to the overhead trusses, a number of deck units added to the mystery. A series of uplights were distributed among the trees, shrubs, and props of the center island area; these sculptural accents were designed to create interesting shadows and highlights. At one point I thought I should have issued my assistant, Shelly Sabel, a machete to help place the uplights in just the right locations.

Additionally, each of the three eras of dinosaurs presented was introduced with both a graphic panel and a painted backdrop (built by Mystic Scenic Studios of Dedham, MA) reminiscent of the period. Altman Zip Strips custom-fitted into the exhibit casing uplit each painted drop in a liquid wash of vibrant colors.

The maintenance challenge began on May 24, opening day. We did a couple of things to minimize the need for daily maintenance: All of our Altman Shakespeare ellipsoidals were equipped with the 2,000-hour HX-601 (long life) lamp, all fixtures with color media were doubled-framed with the Rosco heat shield (a heat-stable polymer specially designed to deflect heat), and we limited the maximum intensity of any fixture to 90%.

Although a bit uneasy about the care and feeding of a theatrical lighting system, the museum's maintenance staff embraced the role of blown-lamp-and-burned-out-gel-replacement patrol. When the smoke machine in the theatre failed in the "on" position one day during morning maintenance, thus summoning the fire department, BML sent in a technician to repair the device. But, generally speaking, the museum staff did a fine maintenance job—I know because I had a couple of New York City friends check out the system every couple of weeks.

It is important to note that the American Museum of Natural History recognized the value of employing theatrical lighting techniques to enhance a display. The message is that the museum world has embraced stage design as a means of generating excitement, sizzle, marketing appeal, and hence, attendance. Says Lessem of the exhibit, which attracted 300,000 visitors before departing the museum on September 30, "My only regret is that it is not possible to recreate this environment for all of the North American cities we will visit over the next three years." □

Fantasy and fiction meet at *The Lost World: The Life and Death of Dinosaurs*, a touring museum exhibit that debuted at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. A theatrical lighting rig—a first for the museum—added sizzle to scenes recreated from the *Jurassic Park* movies.

