

# The Sant Ocean Hall - Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

Washington DC



**V**ast. Varied. Vital. 70% of our planet is covered by ocean. At 26,000 square feet Ocean Hall is the largest exhibition developed by the museum. The goal of the exhibit is to take visitors on a journey through the ocean, from ancient seas to living reefs. Our role was to create a compelling, immersive environment that allows visitors to take in the awe of ocean life. Working with the restoration architects, we specified skylight control shades assuring an artful balance of contrast ratios between daylight, exhibit accent lighting, and video projection.



At the main entry point of the exhibition, we designed both the hardware and content for an LED video presentation. The “vessels” appear to fill and empty with the ebb and flow of the tide. Across the central 74’ high gallery close-proximity lighting systems within casework employ latest-generation IR Halogen lamps to both reduce wattage and simplify maintenance. Layers of light are employed to create a hierarchy of lighting cues. LED and fiber optic luminaires are also used in display cases to eliminate UV & IR radiation on delicate organic artifacts.

Exhibit Design: Gallagher & Associates and D+P  
Photo: Jay Rosenblatt and Steven Rosen  
Completed: 2008