

American Museum of Natural History

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The American Museum of Natural History Announces *Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry*

Exhibition Opening May 9 Explores the Power of Jewelry in Hip-Hop
and its Relationship to Identity and Personal Style



On May 9, the American Museum of Natural History will open [*Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry*](#), a special exhibition that celebrates hip-hop's cultural influence through spectacular custom-made jewelry worn by some of its most iconic stars. *Ice Cold* will feature dozens of stunning jewelry pieces that trace the history of hip-hop from the 1980s to today, including Slick Rick's gem-encrusted crown, the Notorious B.I.G.'s legendary gold 'Jesus piece', the diamond-studded Roc-A-Fella medallion for the record label co-founded by Jay-Z, Nicki Minaj's sparkling 'Barbie' pendant, and pieces from Erykah Badu, A\$AP Rocky, Joey Bada\$\$, FERG, and Tyler, the Creator, among others. *Ice Cold*, which builds on New York City's celebration of the 50th anniversary of hip-hop as a global phenomenon, is included with general admission and will be on view in the Melissa and Keith Meister Gallery within the Museum's [Allison and Roberto Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals](#).

"These jewelry pieces are not just magnificent in and of themselves, they're an important part of hip-hop history and hip-hop culture as artists claimed and transformed traditional symbols of luxury and success," said Sean M. Decatur, President of the American Museum of Natural History. "Hip-hop jewelry has had a huge impact on our wider modern culture, and we are excited to provide our visitors the opportunity to see these remarkable pieces, especially in the context of our Mignone Halls dedicated to gems and minerals."

Ice Cold will trace the evolution of jewelry in hip-hop over the past five decades, starting with oversized gold chains embraced by rap's pioneers in the 1980s and moving through the 1990s, when emcees turned business moguls sported record label pendants sparkling with diamonds and platinum. Fueled by hip-hop's exponential growth in the 2000s through today, the genre's most influential artists have turned to multi-colored, avant-garde jewelry with designs that reference high fashion, pop culture, rap history, and more. *Ice Cold* will present exquisite examples of pieces from each decade and highlight hip-hop jewelry as enduring statements of individuality, empowerment, and resilience in the hip-hop community and global culture at large.

"Jewelry is a cornerstone of hip-hop culture and you can see the evolution of jewelry alongside the rise of hip-hop itself," said *Ice Cold* guest curator Vikki Tobak. "From being a culture formed in communities and neighborhoods, and then stepping into its power and starting to impact global pop culture, hip-hop and its jewelry tell a bigger story. This exhibition explores that world of hip-hop's culture of adornment and celebrates the pioneering artists and jewelers who made it all come together."

"*Ice Cold* will truly spark a sense of excitement and curiosity into our world of jewelry and baubles as an extended form of hip-hop culture which has inspired the global stage as an extension of our art," said hip-hop icon and *Ice Cold* senior advisor Ricky "Slick Rick" Waters. "This collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History is a harmonious blend of creativity and cultural significance. I'm very honored to be a part of creating a unique and immersive experience for the Museum's visitors in such a renowned space in the mecca of New York City."

Ice Cold Curatorial Team and Advisory Board

Ice Cold is being developed by a curatorial team and advisory board that includes artists, industry professionals, jewelers, and academics. The exhibition is curated by guest curator Vikki Tobak, journalist and author of [Ice Cold: A Hip-Hop Jewelry History](#), published by Taschen, and guest co-curators Kevin "Coach K" Lee, founder and COO of Quality Control Music, and Karam Gill, creative director and filmmaker behind the 2021 documentary series [ICE COLD](#).

The curator of the Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals is Kate Kiseeva, assistant curator in the Division of Physical Sciences. The exhibition is designed by the Museum's award-winning Exhibition department.

The advisory board for *Ice Cold* includes Slick Rick as senior advisor; Lenny S Santiago, Roc Nation executive, creative curator and photographer; Mandy Aragones, co-founder, Victory Patch Foundation; Timothy Anne Burnside, museum specialist in Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of African American History and Culture; Tanisha Ford, scholar, author and professor in the History Department at the Graduate Center at The City University of New York; Alex Moss, jewelry designer and co-founder, Alex Moss New York; Peter J. Nash a.k.a. Pete Nice, hip-hop historian and former rapper and record producer; and Bevy Smith, author and television and radio host.

The Allison and Roberto Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals

Ice Cold is presented in the Melissa and Keith Meister Gallery, a space for rotating exhibitions within the Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. The Mignone Halls feature specimens from the Museum's world-renowned mineral and gem collection, including two of the largest amethyst geodes on public display, the legendary 563-carat "Star of India" sapphire, the 9-pound almandine Subway Garnet, and the 632-carat Patricia Emerald, among others. The Halls' exhibits tell the fascinating story of how the vast diversity of mineral types formed on Earth, how scientists classify them, and how humans have used them throughout the millennia for personal adornment, tools, and technology.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869 with a dual mission of scientific research and science education, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The

Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space including the Hayden Planetarium, and the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation. The Museum's scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 33 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum offers two of the only free-standing, degree-granting programs of their kind at any museum in the U.S.: the Ph.D. program in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Earth Science residency program. Visit amnh.org for more information.

Photo: Slick Rick, Credit: Photograph by Janette Beckman, Courtesy of Fahey/Klein Gallery

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