

# TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

# CIRCUS!

## Science under the Big Top



*Kids of all ages will be amazed, thrilled and entertained as they discover the science behind Circus!*



### FEATURES

- Includes 5,500 sq. ft. (510 m<sup>2</sup>) of interactive exhibits
- Flexible design to accommodate many types of display areas
- Multi-station interactive exhibits
- Includes education and programming guidebook
- Bilingual English/French
- Includes maintenance manual

### RENTAL INFORMATION

- Includes an installation and take-down crew from Ontario Science Centre
- Installation and take-down each require a maximum of 10 working days
- Hosting staff of 4 to 6 recommended

## Come join the fun!



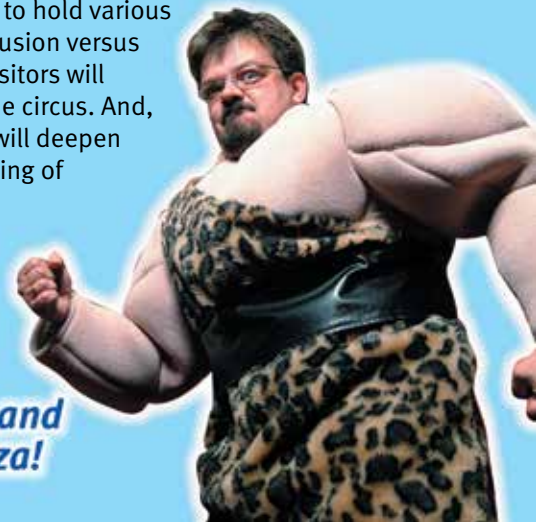
Get ready for **CIRCUS! Science under the Big Top**. It premiered at the Ontario Science Centre in June 2001 and began travelling in June 2002.

Science has always had an important role in the circus – and now more than ever the circus relies upon a balance of artistry and science to meet new challenges and fulfill audience expectations. Just as science can satisfy our need to understand, the circus meets our need to be amazed, thrilled and even perplexed.

Visitors will learn the science behind the circus by performing, examining and watching the art. They will also be invited to hold various circus acts up to scrutiny, investigating illusion versus reality, pseudo science versus science. Visitors will “live the science” through the magic of the circus. And, likewise, finding and feeling the science will deepen the visitors’ appreciation and understanding of the circus and its culture.

**So grab a bag of popcorn and host the Ontario Science Centre’s CIRCUS! at your Science Centre.**

***Circus!* is an interactive and educational extravaganza!**

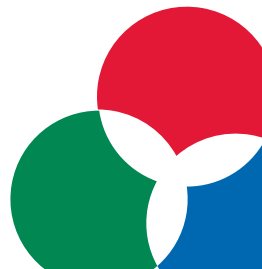


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ONTARIO  
**SCIENCE**  
CENTRE



Fill your Science Center with the sights and sounds of

# CIRCUS!

Science under the Big Top



**FEATS OF STRENGTH**  
Circus performer Mighty Atom amazed spectators by bending metal with his hair! How much force can you exert with your hands in order to bend a similar iron bar? Visitors discover how our bodies can use leverage, compression and tension to perform amazing feats of strength.

**ANIMAL COMMUNICATION**  
Animals communicate with each other through sound and motion. Have you ever listened to the sounds of an animal and tried to figure out what it is saying? Amazing images and stories, and interesting sounds will help you understand a lot more about animals.

## A COLLECTION OF MULTI-STATION INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

**ELASTIC ACROBATICS**  
Some of the most amazing performances in a circus occur overhead. Visitors will gain a better understanding of what it feels like by performing their own tricks while hanging in mid-air. Hanging onto a bar is easy, but is it as easy when letting go means falling to the ground? They'll appreciate the safety harness that is strapped around them.



**THE HIGH WIRE**  
How good is your balancing act? Visitors will strap themselves into a harness and see if they can make it across a nine-foot-high cable. Focus, concentration – a few tricks of the trade, are the keys to navigating this thrilling experience.

**BALANCE BAR**  
How good is your balance? Can you improve it? How does your body make those constant adjustments? Visitors are challenged to maintain their balance, not allowing their feet to strike the ground. Repeat the test with a pole similar to those used by high wire performers.

**CONTORTIONIST**  
Can a person really fold themselves into a small box? Explore the art of packanatomicalization (i.e. getting into small spaces). Discover how muscles, ligaments and tendons keep our skeletons from collapsing in a heap, while not holding them together too tightly to prevent us from moving. With stretching, we can help retrain the muscle reflex, so that muscles can be extended beyond a previous set threshold.

**CIRCUS MUSIC**  
The circus (traditional and nouveau) is filled with a symphony of sounds. Some of the sounds of the “big top” are as memorable as the smell of popcorn. Visitors create their own sounds to accompany circus performers, helping them to recognize music’s effect on our brain, the seat of emotions and memory, and our body.







## CIRCUS COSTUMES AND PLAY

Role playing; dress up; make-believe – these are some of the ways that children learn, and what better way to learn about the characters of the circus than to become those characters. For children and adults, turn into a ringmaster, a lion or balancing bear. A variety of costumes and activities help you become a circus performer.

## DIABOLO SPECTACLE

Physical prowess, daring and creativity are key ingredients, but science is the ultimate determinant of survival. In this exhibit, visitors will learn that Math and Physics do matter, especially when performing certain stunts such as those of the cyclist Daredevil Diavolo.

## BALLYHOO SILHOUETTE

Real or fake? Is it really happening or not? This audio-visual exhibit introduces visitors to many archetypal circus performers. These acts will be delivered by a promoter in the characteristic, hyperbolic, “ballyhoo” style – designed to rouse spectators and raise expectations. Visitors will then have the opportunity to examine whether the circus performer stands up to their own scrutiny.

## CIRCUS SMELLS

Even though the sense of smell seems less important to us than it is to other species, aromas from the past can evoke nostalgia in anyone. There is a physiological reason. Visitors are challenged to guess what they smell and discover that the human nose can differentiate among 10,000 different odours – sweet and foul.

## FLEA CIRCUS

Watch the circus action under a miniature Big Top – then peer into mini viewfinders to see real fleas “performing”. Are they or aren’t they really doing these stunts?

## CIRCUS LINGO

Test your circus lingo quotient while exploring the rich tapestry of expressions exclusive to the world of the circus. So, you flatties, walk in the back door of the big top with your annie oakley and enjoy until the blow off.

## HUMAN CANNONBALL

Being shot out of a cannon; is this an experience that any sane person really wants to achieve? Visitors will use cannons designed to fire non-human projectiles to learn that, “flying isn’t the hard part; landing in the net is.”

## PARADE REMNANTS

If the visitor thinks that the circus is all beauty and wonder, it is, except after the parade passes by and then someone has to deal with the leftovers. The leftovers can tell quite a tale. They tell the story of what an animal just ate, how they are feeling, and just how well their digestive system works.

## SIDESHOW

The Sideshow played a significant role as an early science museum.

A separate tent strung with colourful posters featuring Sideshow acts invites visitors to explore the history, mystery, illusion and reality of Sideshow performers and their talents.



## SWORD SWALLOWER

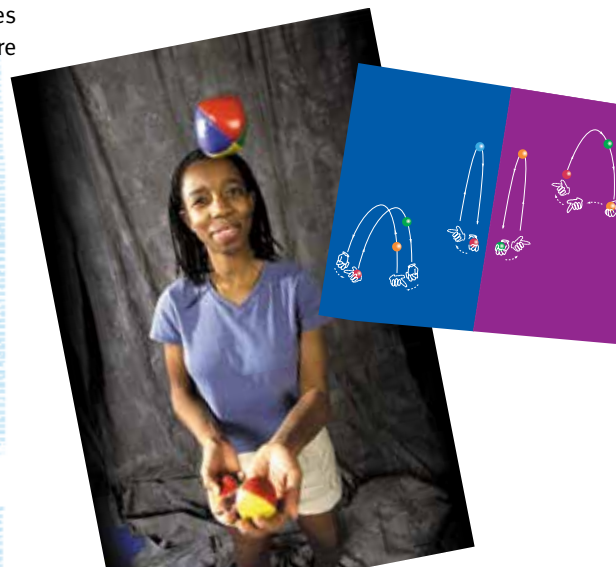
Can someone really swallow a 22-inch sword? Can you stomach finding out? Visitors will be able to initiate and control the movement of a sword swallower and to activate a fluoroscopic video to follow the path of the blade.

## CLOWN ALLEY

To make you laugh, a clown can spend over an hour preparing for a show, putting on makeup and choosing costumes. By entering our clown alley, visitors will learn about laughter and its importance in our lives. They will also see some of the tools of the trade and will be able to try some of those tools out in the costume and role-play area.

## JUGGLING

Science and math can be found even in the most unexpected places – a juggling act. Visitors will be able to juggle using various props after learning how to decipher the complex patterns and sequences involved.



*And here are some great programming and possible event ideas:*

**The Craft of Clowning**

**A Tumble or Two:  
Introduction to Safe Acrobatics**

**The Art of Balloon Twisting**

**Juggling Workshop**

**Shadow Puppetry**

**Magic and Illusions**

**The Trapeze: Learning to Fly**

**The Trampoline: Body Control**

**Circus Aerialist**

**Circus Movies  
(e.g. The Greatest Show on Earth)**

**Costume Contest**

**CIRCUS! Science under the Big Top is created and produced by  
the Ontario Science Centre.**

*The Virginia Air & Space Center in Hampton, Virginia, experienced its best March in history with an 80 percent increase in attendance over the previous year during the exhibition of Circus: Science Under the Big Top! The exhibit provided wonderful marketing opportunities with Ringling Brothers & Barnum Bailey Circus and unique ways to explore science while having fun. There was always a long line for the high-wire and the opportunity to flip like an acrobat. Our visitors keep asking when the exhibit will be at the Center again, so we are bringing it back in February 2006.*

**Kim Hinson, Deputy Director**  
Virginia Air & Space Center  
Hampton, Virginia



## TRAVELLING EXHIBITION BOOKING SCHEDULE

### AVAILABILITY

Please contact us to confirm the rental period of your choice

### UPCOMING VENUES

ASIA TRADE CENTER, JAPAN  
AUGUST 2016

### PREVIOUS VENUES

IMAGINATION STATION, OH  
October – December 2009

BISHOP MUSEUM, HI  
February – April 2010

PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER, WA  
June – August 2010

NEW YORK HALL OF SCIENCE, NY  
June – August 2011

THE MANITOBA MUSEUM, MB  
October 2011 – April 2012

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE, ON  
June – August 2012

WATERLOO REGIONAL MUSEUM, ON  
February – April 2013

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, PA  
June – August 2014

REUBEN H. FLEET SCIENCE CENTER, CA  
June – August 2015

For a complete list of previous venues or for more information, please visit our website or contact us directly.

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