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Utah sculptor bringing life-size humpback whales to the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium

In a discrete concrete warehouse located in downtown Salt Lake, Sculptor Stephen Kesler (aka Tusk) is in the final stages of creating two life-size humpback whales. The display is to be installed in the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium this fall.

Tusk, with the assistance of his brother Dan Kesler, have been fabricating a 50 foot long humpback mother and its 20 foot calf by carving polystyrene foam connected to an internal structurally engineered steel support frame. One of the biggest challenges the duo has faced is fitting the massive adult whale through the front doors.

“There's a six foot by nine foot door at the aquarium we need to fit this 50 foot whale through so engineering it to break into eight smaller pieces then quickly assemble it on-site was something we started brainstorming months before the carving foam was here,” said Tusk.

Assisted by the talents of structural engineer Jay Adams and steel fabricator Adam Hernandez, the final design includes a 3' x 3' tunnel in the adult whale which will be used to crawl through while bolting the parts together, keeping the on-site patching to a minimum. After the tail section is bolted on, there's an escape hatch that will be permanently closed before the final hanging.

“The mother whale is my largest sculpture yet and keeping it all in perspective while carving is quite challenging, a spatial memory test of sorts, running back and forth between sides to make sure they match symmetry,” said Tusk.

Tusk started studying humpback whales last summer, creating two study maquettes (scale models) and using the final clay design for the foam enlargements.

The media is invited to Tusk's warehouse on Tuesday to film and photograph the Humpback sculpture in its final stages, as well as interview Stephen Kesler (Tusk). Please RSVP to Shelby at Loveland Living Planet Aquarium.

WHAT: Humpback Whale Sculptures for Loveland Living Planet Aquarium revealed

WHEN: Tuesday, August 4th 3:00pm



LOVELAND LIVING PLANET
AQUARIUM

WHERE: Tusk Sculpture warehouse: 925 S. Jefferson Street, Salt Lake City

About Stephen Kesler/Tusk Sculpture

Stephen's works include the aquarium's 40 foot whale shark and four manta rays and the Hogle Zoo's giraffe family in the main plaza. Sculptures still to be unveiled by the Kesler brothers (Tusk Sculpture) are a 30 foot giant squid and life-sized sperm whale head which are waiting in line for install at the Aquarium. You can follow the whale's progress on Instagram (@stephenkesler_tusk) or checkout his other works at www.tusklife.com

About the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium

The Aquarium is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Aquarium's mission is to inspire people to explore, discover and learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems. Advance tickets and memberships may be purchased online at www.thelivingplanet.com. Ticket sales help support the Aquarium's mission. The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium is located at 12033 South Lone Peak Parkway in Draper, Utah.

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