

A Review of the Race Exhibit at the Liberty Science Center

I'm going to be totally frank. This exhibit wasn't what I was expecting at all. I was expecting... I don't know, something about different cultures, our ancestors journey from Africa. They were all there. But when I got to the introductory video, which intoned "What is race? Race is something humans have invented.", I knew that the exhibit would be a lot more than that, and totally different than what I expected.

It was. I had never really thought about it, but "race" is a human invention. We are all homo sapiens, and so we all are, essentially, the same. Sure, a man from England and a man from India or Africa will obviously look different, but if you could walk all the way from England to Africa, you would see a range of colors, and nowhere would you be able to say "There, this is where the switch happens.". The color of your skin depends on where you live in the world and how much sunlight you get.

With that in mind, I ambled off to have a look around the exhibit. There were lots of buttons to push, levers to pull, but not so much as in other exhibits. There was a lot of reading to do, and a lot more learning possibilities. Unfortunately, what some children were obviously doing was running around bashing buttons, staring at what happened for about 2 seconds (thanks to television commercials, this is now the attention span of the average child), bashing the button a few more times and then running off to find something else. I found a couple of devices that had obviously been bashed too many times, including a video screen that was humming and scrolling eye-watering colors across it's screen.

But that's enough ranting for one review. I can go on about school parties visiting museums for days. Now I will tell you a bit about the exhibit. There was a lot of reading to do, and for that I was glad, because people tend to be quiet when they're reading, and not when pressing buttons at random. There were also television screens dotted here and there across the room. They were mostly videos of scientists talking about important issues (racism, slavery, and the like), and I found it very interesting to sit down and watch them. I seemed to be about the only person doing so. There were also little gadgets around, like a simulation of how the human genome can travel, a video about the human genome and a device that showed you what your hands look like up close, among other things. Around the room I spotted a few artifacts that had some significance to the topic being talked about.

In conclusion, I really enjoyed the Race exhibit, and I feel that I probably needed about 3 hours to get through it all. I'm sad that I wasn't able to finish it entirely.

A Review of Hurricane on the Bayou

Hurricane on the Bayou was quite a roller-coaster ride. It started by showing you the bayou as it was before hurricane Katrina swept through that area. Then it showed you, through the science work of a fourteen year old fiddle prodigy, that the wetlands were disappearing. This may not seem like such a bad thing to you, but the disappearing of wetlands is very bad for the area. The wetlands do a lot to slow down a hurricane, and without the wetlands, a hurricane could cause enormous damage.

Then it showed how people were asked to evacuate New Orleans as Katrina swelled up over the ocean. Some did. Many couldn't. When the storm swept into the city, many were unprepared for the sheer force of the hurricane. Without the wetlands there to stop it, there was nothing to halt the hurricane as it moved towards New Orleans.

After the storm, it showed what was being done to help New Orleans and what could be done to prevent another hurricane of that magnitude. This involves preserving our wetlands, planting more trees so that the soil will not erode so easily, not polluting the atmosphere, which is killing the trees that hold the soil in, and having levies that let the water through in small doses.

I really enjoyed the movie Hurricane on the Bayou and it certainly gave me food for thought.