



## DINOQUEST: A TROPICAL TREK THROUGH TIME The Making of a Dinosaur

Each of the life-sized dinosaurs and reptiles on display at the Missouri Botanical Garden in the “DinoQuest: A Tropical Trek Through Time” exhibition started out small.

Creator Guy Darrough of Lost World Studios begins each creature as a model in miniature. He replicates this smaller version by carving out basic shapes—limbs, torso, neck and head—from a four-by-four-by-eight-foot chunk of Styrofoam. These large Styrofoam shapes are then covered with a thick layer of clay in one- to two-foot-wide pieces. Darrough carefully sculpts this clay “skin,” blanketing it with tiny details and creases using custom tools.

Once these minute details have been pressed into the clay exterior, he covers certain body parts section by section with liquid rubber, waits for it to harden, and then adds a layer of fiberglass. He then pulls the fiberglass and rubber shells off separately—these two pieces are the new molds from which multiple dinosaur parts can be created. The end result, after months of work, is a sturdy, fiberglass dinosaur kit.

Darrough then assembles the new dinosaur piece-by-piece, fitting body parts together, connecting the seams and adding details. He uses a special putty to create dinosaur skin and cover connections.



Once the dinosaur is fully assembled, the colors and patterns are airbrushed with acrylic paints. The realistic eyes given to each dinosaur come from a company that manufactures human glass eyeballs. Darrough custom orders each pair to his exact specifications, from eyeball diameter and pupil size to color flecks.

Darrough uses fossil bones and other research materials to guide the accuracy of his creations. Inspiration comes from a variety of animals; for example, a bobcat’s slit eyes are similar to a Raptor’s. Or, a photo of elephant skin can serve as a basis for the skin texture of a Camerasaurus.

From scratch, a 35-foot dinosaur can average about 2,000 hours of labor. However, once a life-sized mold has been created, the replication process is slightly less daunting. Darrough may be able to get a few dinosaurs from a single mold before its details are lost. Also, by manipulating the arms and legs, he can create varied poses from the same basic body shape. Once the original Styrofoam dinosaur shape is no longer needed, the foam is “recycled” by sculpting a smaller dinosaur from it.

In the end, Darrough hopes he has created something with aesthetic appeal that offers an unmatched photo opportunity. “I’m going for the ‘click’ of the picture,” said Darrough.

**For more information, contact the Public Relations Department at (314) 577-0254 or (314) 577-5141 or check the Garden’s Web site at [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org). Media materials may be downloaded at [www.mobot.org/press](http://www.mobot.org/press). For 24-hour recorded visitor information, call (314) 577-9400 or 1 (800) 642-8842 toll-free.**

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