

## Messel on Tour: State of the Arts

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The UNESCO World Heritage Monument Messel Pit is an Eldorado for palaeontologists because of its rich and highly diversified invertebrate and vertebrate fauna that reflects a 48-million-year-old ecosystem right down to the smallest details. Especially the mammals are world-famous because of their diversity and excellent preservation. Excavations, research work, the curation and public presentation of fossils from this fossil site are primary duties of the Hessisches Landesmuseum (HLMD) that also houses the oldest and one of world's most important respective collections.

In 2001, HLMD acquired an excellent private Messel collection (BEHNKE Collection, BC) which consists exclusively of aesthetically pleasant and rare specimens. The approval of monetary support for this acquisition was combined with the obligation to make it available to the general public. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inclusion of the Messel Pit in the UNESCO World Heritage List is an appropriate reason to guarantee such an access, now – in the

form of an exhibition that is able to travel around the world. This exhibition will not only present the BC fossils, but also all other important specimens from the HLMD collection. Among them is the unique, world famous anteater *Eurotamandua joresi*, the primordial tapir *Hyrachyus minimus*, and, of course, the famous primeval horses of the genus *Propalaeotherium*. It will be the most complete and spectacular assemblage of rare and famous Messel fossils that has ever been brought together and arranged as a touring exhibition ready for public display. It will exclusively consist of originals and include not a single cast.

The exhibition will be presented at HLMD in the second half of 2006 and is available for further bookings then. The EAVP 4 presentation will provide information concerning the basic concept, the displayed fossils, the architecture, as well as the presumed loaning fees.

Updates will be available at [www.hlmd.de](http://www.hlmd.de), and more detailed personal questions will be answered under [messel-on-tour@hlmd.de](mailto:messel-on-tour@hlmd.de).