

## Exhibition and education of a museum activity using paleoarts and advertising characters

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The Mizunami Fossil Museum opened in 1974 is a fossil-specific museum in Japan. Although its fossil collections are variable to study and educate, most information with the fossils have not been changed for 30 years. For example, a reconstructed model of the skeletons of *Desmostylus* that are the main exhibit was made when this museum opened, but now it is not supported by recent studies. In addition, the educational activities of the museum have been older-fashioned than those of others, which causes a problem such that many visitors mistake the *Desmostylus* for a dinosaur and lose interest in the same exhibition every year.

Recently, we have been performing the visual effects and PR activities to visitors by using paleontological arts (paleoarts) and advertising characters. We aim for these contents at conveying scientific knowledge to visitors correctly and intelligibly, and making a traffic line to our museum. Here, we explain the work process of these contents with reporting the effect that the museum acquired from them.

### 1. Paleoarts

We used reconstructed illustrations and a model based on the newest scientific knowledge at the 74th (2010) and 75th (2011) special exhibitions. Five illustrations of extinct animals including *Gomphotherium annectens* (Mammalia, Proboscidea) from the early Miocene Mizunami Group and illustrations and a model of Plotopteridae (Aves, Pelecaniformes) from the Oligocene Ashiya Group were made in the 74th and 75th, respectively. These illustrations and model were made on the basis of scientific data from paleontological journals, information of recent materials, and private communications to each specialist. During the process of making them, paleontologists provided paleoartists with variable comments and information from literatures, and the paleoartists kept making logs.

Over 90% of visitors and scientists regarded these activities as good, surveying by questionnaires about the exhibition in 2010. Therefore, we have been realized cooperating between scientists and artists, and educating for citizen, which are pointed by Tokugawa *et al.*, (2010).

### 2. Advertising characters and animation to explains exhibition

We made the advertising girl character, Mio Mizunami, illustrated by cartoonist, Shota Kawamura (P. N. ringo), for the museum. We used the character for PR activities such as explanation of fossils and deployment of movie. Because she is the character of a paleontological museum, we gave her accessories carrying out the motif of the fossils from the Mizunami Group. The main purposes of making her are to rise the name recognition of the museum and educate paleontology to young visitors.

The animation she appears in was released in 2011 by our paleontologist and artist team. The contents of the animation are explaining the exhibition of the museum and collection method of fossils. This animation was made for schoolchildren but contains the newest information about *Desmostylus* (Inuzuka, 1984, Inuzuka *et al.*, 1994), which adults can also enjoy. We employed a voice actress for Mio and adopted two local junior high school students for Desmo that is another character in the animation for the purpose of relation with social education.

As a result of using paleoarts and advertising characters, the concern about the museum of visitors and mass media became high. Especially the number of media coverage is 26 affairs in 2011. This is four times more against 2010 works. Therefore, we conclude that these contents are useful for the cognition and spread of a museum, fossils, and paleontology, and they are the effective means for gaining visitors.

**References** Inuzuka, 1984, *Mono. Assoc. Geol. coll. Japan*, 28, 101-118. Inuzuka, *et al.*, 1994, *The Island Arc*, 3, 522-537. Tokugawa *et al.*, 2010, *Abst. Prog. 159th regul. meet. Palaeo.Soc. Japan*, p. 46.

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