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New Sciencenter exhibition reveals inside story about toys

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Tompkins Weekly Staff

ITHACA – Have you ever wondered how twisting the knobs on an Etch A Sketch® creates a picture? Or how those hungry hippos gobble up marbles with the touch of a switch?

Well, those secrets are just some that will be revealed in the Sciencenter’s new exhibition, “Toys: The Inside Story,” which officially opened last week.

With different hands-on stations highlighting the five toy components – pulleys, cams, gears, linkages, and circuits – Toys offers hours of exploration for guests of all ages. Experiment with simple and complex pulley systems while trying to draw a picture using a giant Etch A Sketch®, then peek inside the toy to see how it all works! Operate a Hungry Hippo® to see out how linkages create complex movements. Discover what happens when a circuit closes with an inside look at the game Operation®, and take the circuit challenge to try to keep a circuit open as you move a ring along a twisty rod.

Using all of these different components, guests can then create their own toy-like combinations. Set various objects in motion while experimenting with different sizes of gears and see which combination makes the ballerina spin the fastest. Connect moveable pulleys in endless combinations and discover which arrangement allows for the wildest optical illusion. And find out how linkages and cams work together to make Mr. Machine® march.

“Toys: The Inside Story” was developed by the Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich, Vermont, with funding from the National Science Foundation through the TEAMS collaborative.

The exhibition is included with regular admission to the museum, which is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. General admission is \$8 (ages 2 – 64), \$7 for seniors (ages 65+), and free to members and kids under 2. For Sciencenter membership information, current programs and activities, visit www.sciencenter.org. The Sciencenter is a member of the Discovery Trail.



Photo by Gary Hodges

A patron explores the new “Toys: The Inside Story” exhibit, now open at the Sciencenter.

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