

# ArtiFactsheet: Zoetrope

The zoetrope is one of the earliest animation devices. Invented in 1834 by William George Horner, it was originally named the Daedalum or “wheel of the devil”. It was not very popular until around 1867, when it was rediscovered and patented by William F. Lincoln in the U.S., and Milton Bradley in England. It was Lincoln who gave it the name “zoetrope” or “wheel of life”. With the invention of more sophisticated animation devices, such as the praxinoscope, and ultimately film and television— interest in the zoetrope declined significantly. Today, it is rare to find a zoetrope in a person’s home, although it is still used by some artists and animators.

Many artifacts related to zoetropes can be found in the collection of Ingenium – Canada’s Museums of Science and Innovation:  
[ingeniumcanada.org/ingenium/collection-research/collection.php](http://ingeniumcanada.org/ingenium/collection-research/collection.php).

## Fun Fact

The largest zoetrope ever made measured 9.9 m in diameter. It was created by Sony and spun at a speed of 25 frames per second.

## Artifact Details

Zoetrope, Before 1900  
Manufacturer: London Stereoscopic Photographic Co.  
Artifact no. 1987.0280.001

Manufactured in London, England, the base of the zoetrope pictured below was built out of wood, while the drum was built out of metal, possibly tin. The drum was painted black on the outside and white on the inside. Zoetrope strips would be placed inside of the drum.

