

BRITISH MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS & GALLERIES 2003-2006

(major exhibitions in bold, some dates are tbc)

NEW GALLERIES:

Opened 3 November 2003

Living and Dying: The Wellcome Trust Gallery

The next stage in the return of the Museum's magnificent ethnographic collections, this new permanent gallery compares the strategies employed by western and non-western cultures in coping with life's everyday challenges and misfortunes and maintaining a sense of health and wellbeing. Star objects include the Easter Island Statue, gold masterpieces from ancient Peru and Bolivia, an art installation made up of all the pills and medicines a person in the developed world consumes in a lifetime and the Apocalypse horsemen from the Mexican Day of the Dead.

Opened 12 December 2003

Enlightenment: Discovering the world in the 18th century

Featuring some 5000 objects, this new permanent gallery in the historic 'Kings Library' will be devoted to the origin of museums and how scholars and explorers at the time of the European Enlightenment in the 18th and early 19th centuries made sense of their world by shaping and classifying it according to Enlightenment principles of science, rationality and progress – principles very much still operative today.

CONTINUING EXHIBITIONS:

Until 14 March 2004

Buried Treasure: Finding our past

The first major national exhibition of British archaeology in over 20 years examines how much chance archaeological discoveries have revolutionised our understanding of our past and features some of the country's most important British treasures such as the magnificent Mildenhall tableware, which will be shown in its entirety and will tour the country for the first time, and the iconic Lewis Chessmen which featured in the first Harry Potter movie.

Until 25 April 2004

Fred Williams: An Australian Vision

(Drawings and watercolours by the renowned Australian artist)

Fred Williams (1927-82) is a key figure in 20th century Australian art, renowned in his native country for his singular vision of the Australian landscape. Williams remains little known in Britain, but a recent generous gift from the artist's widow of seventy etchings and nine drawings and gouaches has enabled the British Museum to present his particular interpretation of the Australian landscape to a new audience.

Until 25 April 2004

Arts of Japan: A selection from the permanent collection

The collections of traditional Japanese arts at the British Museum are the most comprehensive in Europe. Highlights of this exhibition include material related to *karakuri* automata, domestic porcelains from the Shibata Gift and several outstanding newly acquired paintings which are on view for the first time.

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FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

Alexander Walker bequest

3 June – 26 September 2004

Alexander Walker (1930-2003) was one of the most influential film critics and historians of his era, with a world-wide reputation. He was also a highly discerning collector of modern art and at the time of his death his collection consisted of about 200 modern works on paper. His entire collection was bequeathed to the British Museum and is the largest and most important such bequest that the Department of Prints and Drawings has received in the past fifty years. This exhibition will feature a selection of these works from artists as diverse as Giorgio Morandi, Philip Guston, Chuck Close, Jasper Johns, Lucien Freud, Paula Rego and Chris Ofili.

2 July 2004 - 27 March 2005

Mummy: the inside story

Using cutting-edge computer graphics and the latest scientific and medical research, this groundbreaking new exhibition will allow the visitor to view a 'virtual unwrapping' and autopsy, of a 2800 year old Egyptian mummy using computer images of astonishing clarity. Visitors will sit in a state-of-the-art immersive theatre

and will be equipped with 3D glasses in order to explore every aspect of the mummy's body and scrutinise the objects inside the wrappings.

22nd July 2004 - 16th January 2005

Status Symbols identity and belief on modern badges

An exploration of the symbolic power of badges and other similar objects to express identity and belonging, belief and dissent. This exhibition includes badges from around the world and from all periods, ranging from the mass-produced to the individually-crafted, the official and the subversive, the familiar and the strange, but all of them are powerful statements of the diverse ways people define themselves and others. As well as examining attitudes to individual and group identity, the exhibition explores the origin, use and subversion of symbols, and shows how badges can create dialogues between conflicting views.

9 September 2004 - 9 January 2005

Kingdoms of the Ancient Nile: Treasures from the National Museum of Khartoum

Sudan has long been eclipsed by its northern neighbour, Egypt. This exhibition, focussing on recent archaeological discoveries, will highlight the extremely rich and diverse cultures which flourished in Sudan for millennia and made it not only Egypt's trading partner but its rival on the Nile.

7 October 2004 - 30 January 2005

The Japanese Sword

7 April - 26 June 2005

Creating Celebrity: Kabuki actors, artists and poets in 19th century Osaka

14 April - 21 August 2005

Ancient Persia

26 January – 30 April 2006

Michelangelo

For images or further information please call the Press Office on 020 7323 8583/8522 or email media@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.