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Explore the Middle East

10 March - 30 April 2004



A series of events
celebrating the history
and cultures of the
'cradle of civilisation'

From the colossal winged bulls of Nimrud and Khorsabad to the golden treasures of Ur, and from the recently-acquired *Queen of the Night* (see front cover) to exquisite pottery made for the Ottoman court, the British Museum houses some of the most important Middle Eastern collections in the world. To celebrate this, and at a time of heightened interest in the region, the Museum is opening the doors of its Great Court to London Middle Eastern communities and the public at large for a series of special events including a spectacular festival weekend on 3-4 April.



Colossal statue of a winged lion from the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II, Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), northern Iraq, Neo-Assyrian, about 883-859 BC



The Iranian New Year 20-21 March

Enjoy an Iranian 'haft sin' New Year display in the Reading Room (Great Court, displayed 20 March - 4 April), and explore the New Year through storytelling and the classic family film *The White Balloon*.

Evening opening 2 April

Middle Eastern music, gallery talks, and a beautiful performance of *Queen of the Night: Transformations of Lilith* by renowned storyteller Pomme Clayton. Tickets available from the Box Office £5, concessions £3, BM Friends £3

Festival weekend 3-4 April

A spectacular weekend of stories, music, and craft exploring a range of Middle Eastern cultures.

Gallery talks and lectures

Frequent lunchtime lectures and gallery talks by renowned scholars from the British Museum, complemented by daily eyeOpener talks.

Storytelling

Including the Arabian Nights, the epic of Gilgamesh and Sinbad, every Sunday (except Easter Sunday). Stories for age 6 and above.

Hands On

An exciting opportunity to handle ancient Middle Eastern objects in the context of displays of related artefacts and books.

Every day, 11.00-16.00, Reading Room, Great Court.

Two-Day Conference: The Levant in transition - the Intermediate Early Bronze Age 20-21 April

A conference focussing on the still-enigmatic period at the end of the urban Early Bronze Age.

Tickets available from the Box Office £40, concessions £25, BM Friends £20

Limestone head of a bearded worshipper from Byblos, Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), made in Cyprus about 570-550 BC



With thanks to

Mr and Mrs M Azmoudeh

Mrs Fatima Maleki

Professor and Mrs Nasser D Khalili



ENCYCLOPAEDIA IRANICA



The Queen of the Night, a goddess of the underworld from the south of ancient Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) is a relief made of baked clay between 1800 and 1750 BC. She was acquired by the British Museum to mark its 250th anniversary in 2003. The Queen of the Night is being toured to six museums in Scotland, England and Wales through the Partnership UK programme. This is one of the many ways in which the British Museum makes its collection accessible to the public.

See 'the Queen of the Night' at:

www.mesopotamia.co.uk/queenofthenight/

www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass

Tour dates 2004-2005

Saturday 20 - Sunday 21 March 2004

The Burrell Collection

Pollok Country Park, 2060 Pollokshaws Road,
Glasgow G43 1AT

Telephone 0141 287 2550 www.glasgowmuseums.com

Saturday 27 - Sunday 28 March 2004

Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens

Burdon Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR1 1PP

Telephone 0191 553 2323 www.twmuseums.org.uk

Friday 16 - Wednesday 21 April 2004

Horniman Museum and Gardens

100 London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ

Telephone 020 8699 1872 www.horniman.ac.uk

Saturday 15 - Sunday 16 May 2004

New Walk Museum & Art Gallery

53 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA

Telephone 0116 225 4900 www.leicester.gov.uk/museums

7 September - 28 November 2004

National Museum and Gallery Cardiff

Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP

Telephone 029 2039 7951 www.nmgw.ac.uk

1 December 2004 - 19 April 2005

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3DH

Telephone 0121 303 2834 www.bmag.org.uk

For further information visit:

www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/news

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