

THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Fantastic Creatures

A TOURING EXHIBITION FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Fantastic Creatures

Throughout history, human societies have imagined mythical creatures and beasts. This innovative and engaging new touring exhibition brings together a colourful menagerie of fantastic creatures and examines how they have given form and expression to basic human hopes and fears.

Content

Fantastic Creatures is a unique exhibition which comprises a culturally diverse selection of stunning objects from across the world, selected by the British Museum's expert curators. The exhibition explores the common themes that recur in widely different civilisations, ancient and modern, and why fundamental human needs are served by the invention of mythical creatures and beasts.

The exhibition is divided into nine sections which address many fascinating questions and ideas, such as what lies beyond the visible horizon, how humans make sense of the world and explain its mysteries and dangers, the human relationship with the animal kingdom, the nature of good and evil, and what it means to be human.

- Good and evil
- Symbolic power
- Fact and fiction
- Creatures of outer space
- At the boundaries
- The threat from nature
- Horribly human
- Picturing the divine
- Fear and protection

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1. Martin Schongauer (c. 1440/53–1491), engraving of a griffin. Germany, 1470–1482.
2. Human-faced monster figure made of glazed earthenware. From China, Tang dynasty, AD 618–906.
3. Solid-cast bronze standing sphinx. From Egypt, Late period, c. 600–300 BC.
4. Nasca pottery vessel. From Peru, 100 BC–AD 600.
5. Articulated figure of a dragon made of gilded iron. Made by Myochin Kiyoharu in Japan, 18th–19th century.

Further information

Curators

Alexandra Villing is the curator of Greek pottery in the Department of Greece and Rome at the British Museum. Assistant curator Victoria Turner works in the Department of Greece and Rome.

Size

- Approximately 150 objects
- Space requirements: approximately 1000m²

Further details of this exhibition

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www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours

Note: A confirmed exhibition object list will be provided at a later date.





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COVER: Papier mâché and clay dance mask in the form of the demon Rakshasa. From the workshop of Sri Kajal Datta, West Bengal, India, 1994. ABOVE: Icon depicting The Miracle of St George and the Dragon. Made in Novgorod, Russia, early 16th century.