

# Press Release

## British Museum

### Forthcoming

### Exhibitions

### 2022

Press images here: <https://bit.ly/3BGqzRx>

Exhibition titles and dates are subject to change and should be checked with the press office before publication. Full details will be announced at forthcoming press conferences.

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#### **Exhibition highlights 2022**

- **The world of Stonehenge** 17 February – 17 July 2022
- **Feminine power (title tbc)** 19 May – 25 September 2022
- **Decoding hieroglyphs (title tbc)** 13 October 2022 – 29 January 2023

Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum said, “Since re-opening in May 2021 we have welcomed visitors back to the British Museum with critically acclaimed exhibitions that have explored medieval England with Thomas Becket, Nero’s ancient Rome and now Hokusai’s Great Picture Book of Everything. 2021 will end with a rare glimpse into ancient Peru, immersing visitors in 3,000 years of history from the Andes.

“Next year we will explore some of our deepest history, from ancient Britain, the story of feminine power across the ages, through to the unlocking of ancient Egypt’s written history. These world-class shows will explore familiar stories anew, reaching into the past to bring to life the origins of where we come from. Our exhibitions programme allows us to collaborate with museums and communities from across the world, share skills and knowledge and learn more about the Museum’s collection.

“All of this work feeds into our future planning as we move the British Museum towards an exciting period of transformation with our masterplan. This will deliver major refurbishments to infrastructure and redisplay the entire collection across all of our sites. Our work will give a new and powerful presence to the Museum’s collections from all parts of the globe and will make it easier to understand the connections between different cultures, both ancient and modern, and restore the fabric of our wonderful historic building.”

#### **Major ticketed exhibitions**

##### **The world of Stonehenge**

17 February – 17 July 2022

The Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery

Built 4,500 years ago around the same time as the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt, Stonehenge is the world’s most sophisticated prehistoric stone circle and is one of the

most famous landmarks on the planet. Yet much about it is still shrouded in uncertainty, speculation and folklore.

For the very first time in a major exhibition in the UK, the secrets of these ancient stones will begin to be revealed. It will bring the story of Stonehenge into focus, revealing that prehistoric Britain was a place of big ideas, commerce and travel, rather than a shadowy land of mystery.

Visitors will journey back to the time of its construction around 3000–2500 BC and will discover hundreds of objects brought together from across the UK and Europe. They include the 3,600-year-old Nebra Sky Disc, the oldest surviving representation of the cosmos. Rediscovered in 1999, this exhibition marks the first time it has ever been seen in the UK.

The age of Stonehenge, and the vast interconnected world that existed around it, will be illuminated like never before.

Organised with the State Museum of Prehistory, Halle/Saale, Germany.

To coincide with the exhibition, a beautifully illustrated catalogue, *The world of Stonehenge*, written by Duncan Garrow and Neil Wilkin, will be published by the British Museum Press in February 2022. British Museum exclusive paperback, £25, ISBN 9780714123486. Hardback, £40, ISBN 9780714123493.

### **Feminine power (title tbc)**

19 May – 25 September 2022

The Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery

From divine to demonic, the representation of feminine power in world belief and mythology has played – and continues to play – an important role in shaping global cultural attitudes towards women and gender identity.

This exhibition brings together ancient sculpture, sacred artifacts and contemporary art from five continents to explore the diversity of ways in which femininity has been perceived across the globe, from the ancient world to today. It explores the embodiment of feminine power in deities, goddesses, spirits and other beings, associated with diverse areas of human experience, from wisdom, passion and nature, to war, mercy and justice.

Enhanced by engagement with guest contributors, the exhibition explores the formation of cultural attitudes towards female authority and ideas about gender identity.

To coincide with the exhibition, a richly illustrated accompanying catalogue written by Belinda Crerar, will be published by the British Museum Press in May 2022. Paperback, £25, ISBN 9780714151304.

### **Decoding hieroglyphs (title tbc)**

13 October 2022 – 29 January 2023

The Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery

This exhibition explores how the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs unlocked one of the longest chapters of human history and changed our understanding of the world. Today the arts and culture of ancient Egypt are very familiar but, until the early 19th century, little was

known about the ancient Egyptians, how they lived, how they worshipped, their view of the world and their place within it. It was a time and place cloaked in mystery.

The first decryption of hieroglyphs in 1822 changed all that – the ancient Egyptians were able to speak to the modern world for the first time and the complexity of their culture was unlocked. As early Egyptologists decoded hieroglyphs on newly discovered documents and architecture, an ancient world opened up. The ability to read hieroglyphs pushed back our understanding of human history by 3,000 years.

Visitors can learn how the pivotal reading of the colour signs on the walls of temples and tombs and scribbles on papyrus enabled an entirely new level of understanding of the everyday lives of ancient Egyptians and their remarkable world. Everyone can become part of a journey and discover the stories of the ancient people, read the letters they sent each other, the poetry they read, the shopping lists they hastily created.

To coincide with the exhibition, a richly illustrated catalogue, edited by Ilona Regulski, will be published by the British Museum Press in October 2022. Paperback, £25. Hardback, £40.

## **Free Displays**

### **Prints from the court of Rudolf II in Prague**

Spring 2022

Room 90

The Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II Hapsburg (r. 1576-1612) was an avid collector and knowledgeable patron of the arts. He established his court in the Bohemian capital of Prague and transformed the city into a vibrant art centre. Painters Hans von Aachen and Bartholomeus Spranger, and sculptor Adriaen de Vries established a courtly style in Prague which was highly self-conscious and elegant. The emperor had a deep passion for the graphic arts, and appointed Aegidius II Sadeler as the first-ever imperial engraver, charged with translating the courtly style into print.

Although based in the Netherlands, Hendrick Goltzius and Jan Muller made engravings after designs by Spranger and De Vries. The prints made for Rudolph's court represent the apogee of engraving: expansive in scale and format, refined and elegant, virtuoso and dazzling, the prints attest to the ambition of their patron and the technical ingenuity of their makers. The exhibition examines printmaking from the court of Rudolph II in Prague and the spread of this influential style throughout Europe at the dawn of the seventeenth century.

### **Art Fund new collecting (title tbc)**

Spring 2022

Room 90

An exciting group of drawings by emerging British artists, acquired with an Art Fund New Collecting Award, will highlight new directions in the field of contemporary drawing as well as its relationship to the history of the medium. The funding was awarded to research, acquire and display around 15-20 drawings made by emerging artists who have studied, lived or worked in the UK, transforming the British Museum's holdings in this area. Works by artists including Sin Wai Kin, Somaya Critchlow, and Rosie Hastings & Hannah Quinlan will be shown alongside relevant works from the Museum's collection, highlighting the continuity of historical traditions of draftsmanship.

### **Hamish Parker gift (title tbc)**

Autumn 2022

Room 90

In 2020 the Museum received a gift of 147 works of art from the collection of Hamish Parker, a long-standing supporter of Prints and Drawings and Patron of the Museum. Primarily comprising prints and drawings made after 1970, the gift was judged by an expert panel to be pre-eminent and allocated to the Museum through HM Government's Cultural Gift Scheme. This exhibition will present highlights from this very significant gift, which includes work by major artists from around the world including Lucian Freud, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Richard Artschwager, Louise Bourgeois, Tiffany Chung, Dan Flavin, Susan Hefuna, Lee Krasner, Yayoi Kusama, Glenn Ligon, Blinky Palermo, Imran Qureshi, Kiki Smith and James Turrell.

### **The Asahi Shimbun Displays**

*The Asahi Shimbun Displays are a series of regularly changing free displays that allow the Museum to showcase important objects, to create small exhibits of topical interest and to learn more about improving the future display of objects elsewhere in the Museum. These displays have been made possible by the generous sponsorship of The Asahi Shimbun Company, who are long-standing supporters of the British Museum.*

### **The Asahi Shimbun Displays: Contemporary women artists of Japan (title tbc)**

2 December 2021 – 13 February 2022

Room 3

Through a selection of visually striking objects, this display explores the personal experiences and expressive visions of six internationally acclaimed female artists from the 1960s to the 2010s in the Museum's Japanese collection. The objects include photobooks, prints, a painting and a glass sculpture. While each of their stories is unique – as daughters, mothers, wives, single women, sisters, friends, etc. – the artists' works share a quiet sense of self-possession, suggesting ways that women navigate their paths through life in Japanese society.

### **The Asahi Shimbun Displays: Mary Gillick (title tbc)**

2 June – 31 July 2022

Room 3

This display focusses on the work of the sculptor Mary Gillick (1881-1965), who enjoyed a sudden burst of fame when, in her seventies, she won the competition to model the Queen's head for the 1953 UK coinage. The display follows her career, from her training at the Royal College of Art, where she discovered Renaissance medals, through her specialisation in medallion art, to her 1953 success and beyond. Highlights of the exhibition will be items presented to the British Museum by the artist's family in 2005, which included medals created by Gillick from the 1910s to the 1950s, a number of large-scale plaster models of the Queen's portrait, and documentation associated with that commission.

To coincide with the exhibition, an accompanying book, written by Philip Attwood, will be published by Spink Books in collaboration with the British Museum in 2022.

*Dates and subject matter of future displays tbc*



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**Further information** Contact the Press Office: 020 7323 8594/8394  
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**Images available here:** <https://bit.ly/3BGqzRx>