

BRITISH MUSEUM EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS 2011



Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World

3 March - 3 July 2011, Room 35, £10, Members free
Tickets on sale now

At the heart of the Silk Road, Afghanistan was a historic link between ancient Iran, Central Asia, India, China and the more distant cultures of Greece and Rome. The country's unique location resulted in a legacy of extraordinarily rare objects, prized both for their wonderful craftsmanship and aesthetic beauty. The exhibition features over 200 objects from 2000 BC to the 1st century AD, including gold ornaments from a burial site of a nomadic tribe and limestone sculptures of a Greek city. The objects, all from the National Museum in Kabul, were hidden from the Taliban by Kabul Museum officials to ensure their safety, and now tour the world showcasing the remarkable achievements of Afghanistan's past.

Supported by Bank of America Merrill Lynch



Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe

23 June - 9 October 2011, Reading Room,
Admission charge, Members free
Tickets on sale from April 2011

This major exhibition brings together for the first time some of the finest sacred treasures of the medieval age. It features over 150 objects drawn from over 40 European church treasuries, including the Vatican, museums in the USA and the British Museum's collection. The exhibition focuses on the peak of the practice of venerating relics in medieval Europe, and objects include relics of the Holy Thorn, fragments of the True Cross, the rib of St Peter, the breast milk of the Virgin Mary, reliquaries made to hold relics of St Thomas Becket, and the hair of St John the Evangelist.

Sponsored by John Studzinski



Creative Beginnings: European Art in the Ice Age

27 October 2011 - 19 February 2012, Room 35
Admission charge, Members free
Tickets on sale from July 2011

This exhibition presents exquisite examples of Ice Age sculpture, carving, drawing and personal ornament from across Europe. It will be the largest exhibition on this subject ever displayed in the UK and will include around 100 objects that date to between 40,000 and 10,000 years old. Many of these objects are made of mammoth ivory and they represent the beginning of modern thought, culture and religion. The influence of Ice Age art on 20th-century artists, including Picasso and Modigliani, will also be explored.

Images from top: Gold crown. From Tillya Tepe, Afghanistan, 1st century AD. National Museum of Afghanistan. © Musée Guimet/Thierry Ollivier. Detail of the Holy Thorn Reliquary, Paris, France, late 14th century. Carving of the tip of a mammoth tusk depicting swimming reindeer. Late Ice Age, about 13,000 years old. Found at Montastruc, central-southern France.