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Ancient Egyptian Treasures Of ‘Ramses The Great’ To Land At De Young In August

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By Dania Kalaji
Bay City News Foundation

Ancient Egypt is migrating its way to the Golden (Gate) City -- minus the pyramids, Saharan desert sands, River Nile and blazing summer heat.

San Francisco's de Young Museum announced this week that it will host the touring "Ramses the Great and the Gold of Pharaohs" exhibition from Aug. 20 to Feb. 12, transporting museum goers back 3,200 years. This is the first new exhibition dedicated to Egyptian king Ramses II in 30 years, and the first to be presented in San Francisco.

More than 180 newly discovered gold and silver treasures including royal statues, sarcophagi, masks, jewelry and ornate golden tomb objects will be on display -- most of which have never left Egypt before.

Ramses the Great was the third king of the 19th dynasty of ancient Egypt and reigned from 1279 to 1190 BCE, the second longest reign in Egyptian history. He erected more monuments and statues than any other pharaoh and is considered the "height" of Egypt's power and glory.

The troves of work and art come from royal tombs of the 12th dynasty, about 600 to 700 years before Ramses II and of the 21st and 22nd dynasties, about 200 to 300 years after him.

Thomas P. Campbell, director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco said these "rarely seen" treasures are on an international tour and will soon return to Egyptian museums and they will likely not travel again for decades. The exhibition is currently on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science until June 19.

"Ramses II is considered to be the greatest king ever to rule Egypt," says Egypt's secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Dr Mostafa Waziri. "This exhibition will illuminate the pivotal moments that earned the great pharaoh his place in history, while bringing visitors face-to-face with absolutely stunning Egyptian artifacts."

Although treasures from Ramses the Great's tomb in the Valley of Kings will not be present, as it was plundered in ancient times, the exhibition makes use of artifacts from other royal tombs like archaeological sites Dahshur and Tanis.

On view for the first time, the grand installation also includes newly discovered animal mummies like small cats, lion cubs and a mongoose from the Saqqara necropolis.

Drone photography, immersive video, multimedia production and photomurals re-create the life and accomplishments of Ramses the Great, including his monumental building projects and triumph at the Battle of Kadesh against the Hittite Empire.

The exhibition offers a virtual reality component called "Ramses and Nefertari: Journey to Osiris," which will be installed in the museum's Piazzoni Murals Room and available for an extra charge.

"Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs" is one of the most remarkable exhibitions to ever tour the globe, and it is a true honor for it to visit the great city of San Francisco and the de Young museum. We encourage patrons from across the region, and the country, to make it a point to come and see this splendid display," Waziri said.

The new de Young exhibition follows the popular "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs" display back in 2009, which featured over 130 objects from the tomb of King Tut. Tut reigned in the 18th Egyptian dynasty and Ramses the Great followed directly after.

Tickets go on sale July 6, but museum members can purchase as early as June 22. For more information, visit <https://deyoung.famsf.org/>.

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