



RAMSES

& THE GOLD OF THE PHARAOHS



Rare coffin of Ramses II coming to the Australian Museum

An Australian exclusive: ornate sarcophagus of the Egyptian Pharaoh will be revealed in Sydney in an extraordinary international loan



The sarcophagus of Ramses II. Photos: © Sandro Vannini / © Yvan Lebert, World Heritage Exhibitions

Sydney, 24 October 2023: In a coup for Australian audiences, the Australian Museum is honoured to announce that the sarcophagus of Ramses II - one of the most impressive royal coffins from ancient Egypt ever to be discovered – will be included in the upcoming exhibition, *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs*, opening in Sydney on 18 November.

Exclusive to the Australian Museum and on direct loan from Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, Ramses' coffin is rarely permitted to leave Egypt and Sydney will become only the second city in the world, after Paris, to showcase the extremely valuable artefact.

Australian Museum Director and CEO, **Kim McKay AO**, said: "The beautiful sarcophagus of Ramses II will be the star attraction in the *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs* exhibition and is a wonderful opportunity for Australian audiences to see this rare, fragile artefact in real life. Ramses' coffin is a work of inestimable value and a powerful symbol of one of the greatest leaders of the ancient world. Egyptians worshipped their Pharaohs, and their devotion to Ramses II can be seen through the craftsmanship of the coffin."

This exceptional loan is the result of a long-standing working relationship between McKay and the curator of *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs*, Dr Zahi Hawass, the former head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, as well as the exhibition partners, Neon Global and World Heritage Exhibitions.



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Dating from the late Eighteenth Dynasty, the carved cedar coffin of Ramses II and its occupant was discovered in 1811 within the Royal Cache at Deir el-Bahari – an Egyptian archaeological site located on the west bank of the Nile River, opposite the city of Luxor and east of the Valley of the Kings. The cedar coffin was not originally designed for the pharaoh. Probably dating from the late Eighteenth Dynasty, it would have once been overlain with gilding and inlays in precious stones or glass. The surface was then stripped and painted yellow, with a handful of details highlighted in bright colours and the eyes outlined in black.

The recumbent king is represented as Osiris, one of the most important gods of ancient Egypt: arms crossed on his chest, he holds two royal sceptres and wears the Nemes headdress decorated with the erect cobra and false beard braided beneath his chin. A number of inscriptions can be found on the coffin: on its lid, two large cartouches recall his birth name of “Ramses, beloved of Amun” and throne name “Powerful is the Maat of Ra, he whom Ra has chosen”.

McKay said: “We are honoured, and extremely grateful, to the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, Neon Global, World Heritage Exhibitions and renowned archaeologist, Dr Zahi Hawass for their support and generosity to secure the coffin for Sydney audiences.

“I have known Zahi for over two decades and when I visited the exhibition in Paris in April this year and saw the reaction of the crowds to this incredible artefact, I knew we had to have the coffin in Sydney. This international collaboration between two countries, as well as our exhibition partners, World Heritage Exhibitions and Neon Global, marks a new chapter in the way we share culture with our visitors and is an opportunity for the Australian Museum to enhance its international reputation.”

World Heritage Exhibitions CEO, **John Norman**, said: “The coffin of Ramses II was one of the most popular objects in *Ramses & The Gold of the Pharaohs* in Paris, so we anticipate Australian audiences will find this priceless artefact equally enthralling. Shown in Australia for the very first time, *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs* and the extraordinary loan of the coffin direct from Egypt, highlights how dynamic international relationships develop across the globe.”

The coffin of Ramses II joins over 180 priceless artefacts and ornate golden treasures in *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs*, including one-of-a-kind relics such as sarcophagi, animal mummies, magnificent jewellery, spectacular royal masks, exquisite amulets – many of which have never left Egypt before. All of the objects in the exhibition have come from museums and historical sites in Egypt and are on loan from Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities.

Exclusive to Sydney, *Ramses & The Gold of the Pharaohs* is an interactive museum experience that provides visitors with a window into the life and accomplishments of King Ramses II, more commonly known as Ramses the Great, who ruled Egypt for nearly 67 years – the second longest reign of any pharaoh in Ancient Egyptian history. Ramses was known as a mighty warrior who secured peace with his neighbours, led an extensive building campaign that included scores of gigantic monuments to himself, and is believed to have fathered over 100 children. The exhibition also features a virtual reality experience that takes visitors on a whirlwind tour of two of Ramses’ most impressive monuments: the Tomb of Queen Nefertari, his favourite Royal Consort, and the temples of Abu Simbel.

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Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs comes to Sydney after successful seasons in Houston, San Francisco and Paris. Sydney will be the fourth of ten cities in the world to receive the exhibition.

Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs - exclusive to Australian Museum - 18 November 2023 until 19 May 2024

Tickets: Adult from \$38, Concession from \$32, Child from \$25.

Book now: through [Ticketmaster](#) For more information: <https://australian.museum/exhibition/ramses/>

Media: downloadable images, biographies, press releases can be found [here](#)

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Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs is presented in partnership with World Heritage Exhibitions, Neon and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, with the support of Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Proudly supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW Blockbusters Funding initiative. Generously supported by Major Exhibition Partner, Adventure World.

About the [Australian Museum](#)

The Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation's first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. As custodian of more than 22 million objects and specimens, the AM is uniquely positioned to provide a greater understanding of the region through its scientific research, exhibitions, and public and education programs. Through the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM also plays a leading role in conserving Australia's biodiversity through understanding the environmental impacts of climate change, potential security threats and invasive species.

About [NEON](#)

NEON, formerly Cityneon, is a global leader in creating and producing experiential entertainment. NEON enjoys worldwide partnerships with The Walt Disney Company and Marvel Entertainment for *Marvel Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N.* and *Marvel Avengers Station: Evolution*, 20th Century Studios for *AVATAR: The Exhibition*, Hasbro for *Transformers: The Experience*, NBCUniversal for *Jurassic World: The Exhibition*, and Lionsgate for *The Hunger Games: The Exhibition*. It also has a partnership with Warner Bros. Themed Entertainment to produce two brand-new, unique global touring-themed art experiences inspired by the WIZARDING WORLD set to debut in Cologne, Germany in December 2023, and DC slated to launch in 2024. The Company also partners with the governments of Egypt and Peru for their original artifact IP experiences, *Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs* and *Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru*, respectively, plus authentic artifact tours *Pompeii: The Exhibition*, *Mummies of the World: The Exhibition*, and *Victoria the T. Rex*. The Group's IP experiences are powered by ANIMAX, a fully owned subsidiary and a world-class creative animatronics powerhouse that specializes in research and development, engineering and entertainment robotics, with state-of-the-art facilities located in Nashville, US, Wuxi, China and the Middle East. NEON's global partnerships have enabled the Group to bring compelling experiences that leave lasting memories to millions of visitors in more than 70 cities to date globally.

About World Heritage Exhibitions

World Heritage Exhibitions (WHE) is renowned for producing, promoting, and designing the finest quality museum content on the globe. Their exhibitions have captivated, educated, and inspired visitors in virtually every major market on the planet. With a combined 150 years of exhibition experience, the WHE executive team has been responsible for touring many of the world's most valuable treasures, including objects from King Tutankhamun's tomb, relics from Cleopatra's Royal Palace, artifacts from the Titanic, items from the discovery of Pompeii,



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and more. Their exhibitions have now been enjoyed by over 30 million people spanning six continents, and their collective expertise has come together in one of the industry's most influential touring exhibition companies.

About [Adventure World](#)

Adventure World is an established and passionate group of global adventurers. With over 40 years of experience, Adventure World has been curating authentic and sustainable travel experiences to guarantee its guests experience the lifeblood of a destination, with the flexibility of customisable itineraries. All Adventure World product is underpinned by its Travel with Purpose charter, to celebrate and conserve culture, create socio-economic benefits for communities, protect wildlife and restore marine life all the while creating authentic opportunities for like-minded travellers aid us in the mission. We work closely with our partners TreadRight Foundation, Animals Asia and the Australian Museum, and work towards meeting 11 of the United Nations' Global Sustainable Development Goals and putting into action, our travel with purpose philosophy.

