

Pompeii and the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius Relive in Chicago Exhibition

On view until January 15, 2024, at the MSI-Museum of Science and Industry

Paola Sammartano



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Nearly two thousand years ago, in 79 A.D., the city of Pompeii was trapped in a time capsule by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Practically forgotten, it began to be unearthed in the 1700s, when the King of Naples, Charles of Bourbon, gave impetus to the excavations. The amphitheater, the villa of Cicero and the temple of Isis were uncovered. Soon, Pompeii became one of the most sought-after destinations in Europe by both scholars and the curious, who could enter an 'intact' Roman city and see much of the life of the time.

Pompeii: The Exhibition (running until January 15, 2024) recreates this feeling through immersive multimedia experiences, marble and bronze sculptures, jewelry, gladiatorial armor and full-body casts of the victims of the eruptions.



Photo by Jeff Schear Visuals

The exhibition invites visitors to step back in time, offering a glimpse into the daily life and culture of this ancient Roman city. It also introduces the tragedy caused by the eruption, which fixed and lost in time Pompeii for centuries. The show depicts daily life through a combination of projections, audio, video, and photographic murals as well as more than 150 artefacts from the collection of Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy.

Some immersive experiences feature holographic gladiator fights or a 4D Mount Vesuvius eruption simulation, followed by full body casts of humans who perished during the tragic event. "The blend of scientific discovery and media-rich way of retelling history allows guests to travel through time and immerse themselves in Pompeii with real-life examples of archaeology, geology, earth science, art history, culture, and more", Chevvy Humphrey, president and CEO of Museum of Science and Industry, says. "The story of Pompeii's destruction and preservation is well-known for providing a perfect encapsulation of life in Roman times. We wanted to bring this historic event back to life and allow visitors to relive it vividly", John Norman, President of World Heritage Exhibitions, producers of *Pompeii: The Exhibition*, adds.

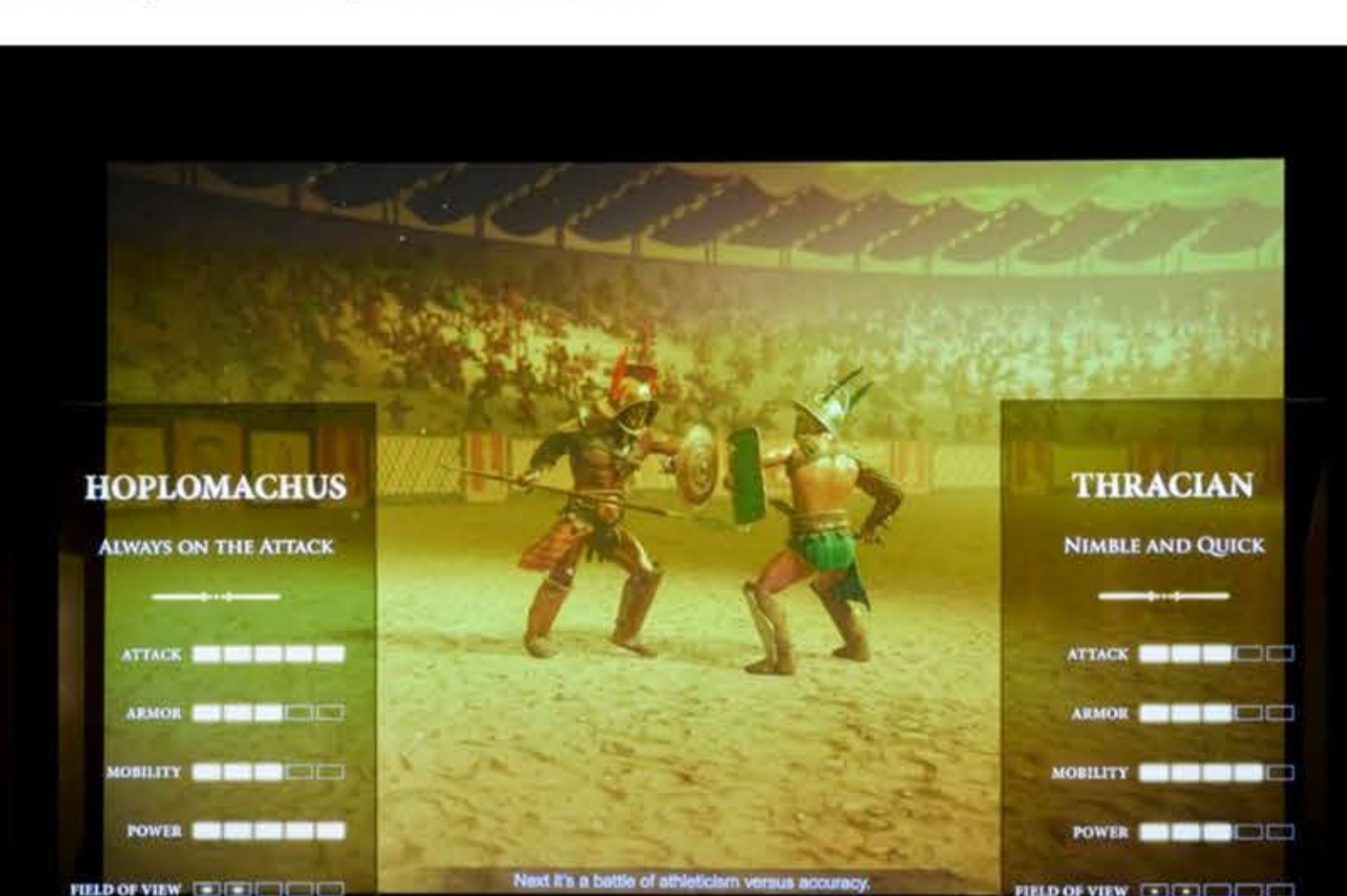


Photo by Jeff Schear Visuals

Three new artefacts from the ruins of Pompeii have been added to the exhibition on the occasion of the "Vesuvius Day" (August 24th), which commemorates the anniversary of Mount Vesuvius' eruption. There is a Mosaic of a Garum Amphora, that once decorated the house of Aulus Umbricius Scaurus, Pompeii's leading producer of garum the famous fermented fish sauce, so appreciated by the ancient Romans. The second manufacture is a terracotta Jug in the Shape of a Rooster, designed for serving wine and beverages, which was found in the House of Venus in a Bikini. The third one is a terracotta Jug in the Shape of a Dog, which depicts the head and fur of a sitting dog (or a fox).



Photo by Jeff Schear Visuals

"Nestled within the exhibition, are lessons about ancient Roman, the natural world, and what scientific advancements can tell us about events that occurred thousands of years ago", says Dr. Voula Saridakis, MSI curator and historian of science and technology. The exhibition at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, provides a better understanding of industrial life and how people lived, worked and found entertainment in the commercial port and strategic city of Pompeii, frozen in time with volcanic ash and lapilli. A final note: the World Heritage Committee has just approved the proposal to extend the Buffer Zone of the UNESCO 829 "Archaeological Areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata", including ten municipalities with an extension of more than 17 square kilometers (they were 0,24 in the original one, involving only four municipalities).

For more information:

<https://www.msichicago.org/explore/whats-here/exhibits/pompeii/>

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Museum of Science and Industry

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Chicago MSI Museum of Science and Industry Pompeii

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