

NEWS RELEASE

Jill DiSanto
 Public Relations Director
 215.898.2956
jdisanto@upenn.edu

Penn Museum Awarded a 2020 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities



PHILADELPHIA — The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, also known as the Penn Museum, has been awarded a \$750,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that will help catalyze fundraising as the Museum shifts into the second phase of its *Building Transformation* project.

The grant will support renovation of the Penn Museum’s historic Egyptian Wing, the first stage in creating its forthcoming **Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries**. These dramatic galleries will be reinforced and reconfigured to highlight and display the soaring 23-foot columns of the 13th century BCE Palace of Merenptah—the only pharaoh’s palace outside Egypt—in the upper galleries, and an intact Old Kingdom tomb chapel in the lower galleries. The new galleries will also display, for the first time, the Museum’s important collections from ancient Nubia.

"Support from the National Endowment for the Humanities signals that the overall *Building Transformation* and the new **Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries** are remarkable on a national level," says Amanda Mitchell-Boyask, Co-Interim Director and Executive Director of Advancement at the Penn Museum. "This grant will enable us to re-envision our **Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries**, giving visitors the opportunity to experience the majesty and ingenuity of ancient Egypt and spark new understanding about the people who lived there long ago."

The grant will support much-needed air conditioning and electrical and mechanical upgrades throughout the Museum's entire Egyptian Wing. It will also add individual study spaces and a seminar room to the storerooms, expanding access to the collections for students and researchers.

The Challenge Grant will provide \$750,000 once the Penn Museum has raised \$3,000,000 in additional gifts from other donors.

Other recent grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities include a \$215,000 NEH CARES emergency relief grant to support Penn Museum operations and public engagement through digital programming during the COVID-19 pandemic; and a \$250,000 grant in 2017 for the **Middle East Galleries**, which were the first galleries to open as a part of the Museum's *Building Transformation* project, dramatically reconfiguring the building's accessibility.

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About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.

About the Penn Museum

Since 1887, the Museum has been transforming our understanding of the human experience. Dedicated to building connections between cultures, the Museum welcomes everyone to uncover the past, gain an understanding of our shared humanity, and find one's own place in the arc of human history. For more information, follow **@PennMuseum** on social media, visit www.penn.museum, or call 215.898.4000.