The Digital Penn Museum

The Penn Museum has extraordinary collections and resources. Now, they are more easily available than ever before: we have launched The Digital Penn Museum, a centralized online portal for our vast range of digital content (found at www.penn.museum/collections/). Visitors can explore the collections online through collections highlights that bring together resources for iconic objects like Queen Puabi’s headdress, which is grouped with its historical background, object records, excavation history, and online resources. Or they can learn more about the Hasanlu Lovers or the Taizong Horses; scroll through thematic groupings of objects like Flowers, Animals, or the Egyptian Afterlife; or find out more about our Roman glass or cuneiform collections, for instance. The Digital Penn Museum also makes available the Museum’s archival films like What in the World! episodes; Museum blog posts that delve into our collections in fascinating ways; exhibition websites; and Lecture Series recordings ranging from Great Riddles to Great Beasts, Secrets of the Silk Road to Great Voyages. The Digital Penn Museum really brings our digital resources together in unprecedented ways; I hope you will enjoy finding out more about your favorite parts of the collection and perhaps make some new discoveries as well.

The Digital Penn Museum makes available to virtual visitors near and far our collections and resources, encouraging exploration and learning. Of course, the Museum itself is also a site for exploration and questioning, for promoting discovery and conversation. In October, our Conservation Department celebrated its 50th anniversary with a symposium, Engaging Conservation: Collaboration across Disciplines, that brought together over 100 conservation professionals from nine countries. The Public Classroom @ Penn Museum explored in five public forum classes from September to November pressing questions of race and science, law, genetics, geography, and violence. In April, we will host a two-day conference with the Penn Law School’s Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law that will explore cultural heritage in times of armed conflict.

The Museum is, clearly, a place of many explorations. Our Building Transformation will result in a new Penn Museum that engages even more visitors, of many backgrounds and interests, in more than 35,000 square feet of renovated gallery space. The next few pages will present an overview of the three phases of this project and offer a sneak peek into our Galleries of the Ancient Middle East, opening in spring 2018. I hope you enjoy this preview, as well as this issue exploring some of the myriad facets of our work here at the Museum.

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