

World premiere of 'Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs' opens in Houston



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More than 180 artifacts are on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in the “Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs” exhibition. The exhibit runs through May 23.

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HOUSTON — Visitors to the Houston Museum of Natural Science have an exclusive chance to step more than 3,000 years back in time and learn about an Egyptian pharaoh who is considered among the most powerful.

The museum recently welcomed the world premiere of the “Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs” exhibition set to run through May.

The exhibition is the largest collection of Ramses II original artifacts from Ancient Egypt to have the approval to be shown outside the country in 32 years and includes 181 rare items as it explores the reign of Ramses II, according to the museum. Also known as Ramses the Great, the pharaoh ruled for 66 years and amassed one of the largest and richest burial chambers in ancient Egyptian history.

Houston Museum of Natural Science anthropology curator Dirk Van Tuerenhout said the exhibit offers a detailed account of life before, during and after the reign of Ramses II.

“The focus of the exhibit is Ramses II. The exhibit provides ample context to the importance of this pharaoh,” he said. “Visitors will also see artifacts from preceding and subsequent dynasties, clarifying what happened leading up to Ramses II and what came after his death.”

Van Tuerenhout went on to say the exhibition was of great importance and remains historically relevant.

“Living some 3,300 years ago, he (Ramses II) presided over one of the largest territorial expansions of the kingdom,” Van Tuerenhout said. “He reigned for a very long time, and that translated into the building of numerous structures throughout Egypt, and the commissioning of vast collections of art. Part of that heritage is on display in Houston. ”

Van Tuerenout said Ramses II fought against the neighboring empire of the Hittites and that the conflict concluded in a peace treaty — the earliest known peace treaty in human history.

Momtaz Louka, who moved from Egypt to the U.S. in 1983, said he was impressed with the accuracy and details of the exhibit.

“We learned about Ramses II in our history class in elementary school and still consider him one of the greatest rulers of our country,” Louka said. “I think it’s great to show the public a part of ancient Egyptian history that most people are not familiar with.”

The exhibition also features an immersive virtual reality experience depicted in a whirlwind tour of arguably Ramses’ most impressive monuments — the temples of Abu Simbel and Nefertari’s Tomb, which Louka said was one of his favorite parts of the exhibit.

“The virtual reality tour was a new experience for me, and I couldn’t believe how real everything looked. The Abu Simbel temple is the only one in Egypt I haven’t been to, so it was a really great experience,” said Louka.

“Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs” is open through May 23. Admission is \$20 for members, \$35 for adults and \$27 for children and seniors 60 and older.

For more information, visit www.hmns.org.

Tags

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