

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FACT SHEET

Exhibition: Treasures of Tutankhamun

Dates in Washington: November 17, 1976 - March 15, 1977

Content: Fifty-five treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun are being sent by the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United States in an unprecedented loan of the famous hoard. The exhibition will be seen in six cities throughout the U.S. over a period of two and one-half years. This tour, beginning in the nation's capital at the National Gallery of Art, extends to virtually every section of the continental United States.

Some of the most beautiful and representative of the objects found in the tomb of the boy-pharaoh Tutankhamun (1334-1325 B.C.) are included. Chief among them is one of the most remarkable effigies in the history of man, the gold mask of Tutankhamun, inlaid with carnelian, lapis lazuli, colored glass and quartz, the wooden gilt statuette of the Goddess Selket, the gilded figure of Tutankhamun harpooning and a small gold shrine of marvelous craftsmanship. The exhibition also includes superb examples of jewelry and furniture.

Negotiations: Arrangements for the tour involving six American museums across the country, were announced in October 1975 in an agreement signed by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was designated, by mutual consent of the six participating museums, manager of the consortium following a request of the Egyptians for a sponsoring organization in the U.S. Negotiations for the exhibition were concluded in November 1975 in agreements with both the Organization of Egyptian Antiquities and the Director of the Cairo Museum.

Insurance: The Metropolitan Museum, in its capacity as head of the consortium, made application to, and received from, the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities federal insurance under the new Arts and Artifacts Indemnification Act (effective January 19, 1976), which virtually eliminates insurance costs for the exhibition both in transit and while the objects are in this country.

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Support:

The exhibition has been made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, matching grants from the Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Charitable Trust and from the Exxon Corporation.

Dates and Places of Tour:

National Gallery of Art Washington, D.C.	November 17, 1976 - March 15, 1977
Field Museum (in joint sponsorship with the University of Chicago)	April 15, 1977 - August 15, 1977
New Orleans Museum of Art New Orleans, Louisiana	September 15, 1977 - January 15, 1978
Los Angeles County Museum of Art Los Angeles, California	February 15, 1978 - June 15, 1978
Seattle Art Museum Seattle, Washington	July 15, 1978 - November 15, 1978
Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, New York	December 15, 1978 - April 15, 1979

Installation:

The installation has been designed not only to reveal the inherent beauty and craftsmanship of each object, but to suggest the excitement of the discovery of the tomb in 1922 by archeologists Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon, and equally important, the painstaking and expert work entailed in the removal of thousands of objects from the tomb's four chambers. The works of art in the exhibition were chosen not only for their variety of subject matter, material and sheer beauty, but to give an accurate image of the contents of the four rooms as they were entered: the Antechamber, the Burial Chamber, the Treasury and the Annex. The fifty-five objects will be presented in all six museums in approximately the same order, following as much as possible the manner in which they were excavated. Excerpts from Carter's journal give descriptions of some of the exciting steps taken in the opening of the tomb, and photograph murals of pictures taken on the site during the six-years of excavation, many of them by Harry Burton, a photographer on the staff of the Metropolitan Museum excavation then in progress near the site of the Tutankhamun discovery, are also used.

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Tutankhamun:

Tutankhamun's life and reign are known only in fragmentary detail despite the amount of material found in his tomb. His parentage is not certain. Some authorities believe he was a son of the heretic Akhenaton (1350-1334 B.C.) by a minor wife, not Nefertiti. Others believe he was a son of Akhenaton's father, Amenophis III (1386-1349 B.C.). In any case, his right to the Egyptian throne was established through marriage to princess Ankhesenpaaton, the third daughter of Akhenaton and Nefertiti.

He was born about the year 1343 B.C. during a time of Egyptian history not only of unprecedented internal upheaval, but of unequalled material riches. Akhenaton and Nefertiti had been fanatically devoted to a new faith, the worship of the deity Aten. They had built a new city and splendid temples to it at what is today Tell el-Amarna, removing their court to the new site from the traditional capital at Thebes. Their heretic reign brought about unrest and demoralization among the conservative and devout Egyptian people.

The events surrounding Akhenaton's last reigning years are obscure. Tutankhamun ascended the throne when he was about nine years old, although the country was largely governed by his chief Vizier Ay and his Commander-in-Chief Horemheb.

Tutankhamun's reign returned the capital to Thebes, reopened the temples and restored the country to the traditions and worship of the old gods.

Tutankhamun died prematurely in 1325 B.C. at about eighteen years, of an unknown cause. Because his death was so sudden, his own tomb was still unfinished, and Tutankhamun was buried in the tomb that had been prepared for his Vizier Ay.

That Tutankhamun was not buried in the tomb being prepared for him elsewhere but in Ay's tomb, contributed to the fact that the exact whereabouts of his burial was for so many centuries unknown. Thus, unlike previous royal tomb discoveries, all wholly ransacked by centuries of tomb robbers, not only had Tutankhamun's mummy been preserved intact but most of the funerary treasures and the King's personal possessions have survived virtually untouched.

Discovery of the Tomb:

The most spectacular archeological discovery of the twentieth century was made by the British archeologist Howard Carter and his sponsor, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon, just as they were about to abandon their up-to-then futile search for the tomb of Tutankhamun.

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Carter had long been convinced that Tutankhamun, too, was buried in the Valley of the Kings where the plundered tombs of the Imperial Egyptian pharaohs had been found. But six seasons and 200,000 tons of upturned sand had revealed nothing.

Returning once more for a short two-month dig to a small, unexplored area at the foot of the approach to the Tomb of Ramesses VI, the long-dreamed-of discovery was made.

On November 22, 1922, Carter, with Lord Carnarvon at his side, made the fateful incision in the tomb's Antechamber that revealed the treasure hoard concealed there for more than 3000 years.

The Metropolitan Museum's expedition was working near the site of the discovery, and when Carter realized the enormity of the impending task of recording, photographing, transporting, and conserving the incredible treasures he had just found, he asked for and received the help of four members of the Museum expedition: draughtsman Lindsley F. Hall, architectural assistant Walter Hauser, archeologist Arthur C. Mace and photographer Harry Burton. Over the next ten years, these men worked hand-in-glove with Howard Carter in the painstaking and exhilarating work of clearing the tomb.

Revenues from
the Expedition:

Four publications, including a fully illustrated color catalogue and a major hardcover book, Tutankhamun: His Tomb and Its Treasures, prepared by the Metropolitan Museum are being issued. The Metropolitan has also produced a wide variety of related sales items including an engagement calendar, post cards, color slides and posters. A group of jewelry reproductions and adaptations, made from molds taken by the Metropolitan reproduction sculptors directly from the original objects in Cairo, will also be sold at the exhibition sites.

The proceeds from the sale of all printed material and reproductions at the exhibition will be donated, after expenses to the work of the Organization of Egyptian Antiquities, principally for major renovations of the Cairo Museum but also for certain renovations to the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.

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The Metropolitan Museum has been retained as consultant for these renovation projects. A contribution by an anonymous donor will enable the Metropolitan Museum to provide further technical assistance, expertise and basic equipment for the renovation work.

All costs of transportation and installation of the exhibition in the United States will be borne by the six participating institutions. There will be no admission charge to the exhibition.

Publications:

Treasures of Tutankhamun. Catalogue of the exhibition by I.E.S. Edwards, formerly Keeper of Antiquities, The British Museum. 176 pages, including 64 pages of color plates. 8-1/2 x 11. \$6.95.

Tutankhamun: His Tomb and Its Treasures. Edited by Katharine Stoddert Gilbert, to be distributed by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 256 pages, including 100 plates. 8-1/2 x 11. Justaposition of modern color photographs by Lee Boltin of the objects, with step-by-step excavation photographs by Harry Burton taken as the tomb was being cleared. \$35.00.

Wonderful Things: The Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun. A picture book consisting of a selection of 110 of Harry Burton's original black-and-white photographs printed from the original glass negatives. Text drawn from Howard Carter's Journal, contemporary letters, press clippings. 112 pages, paperbound. 8-1/2 x 11. \$3.95.

Tutankhamun's Jewelry. An introduction to Tutankhamun's Jewelry by I.E.S. Edwards and extended captions on design, materials and significance. Forty-seven color photographs by Lee Boltin of a representative selection of pieces from the tomb, many of which have never been published in color. 30-40 pages, 16 color plates. 8-1/2 x 11. \$3.95.

Reproductions:

Jewelry and sculpture. More than 100 different designs. \$1.50 to \$1,500.00.

Honorary Committee
to the
Exhibition:

Ismail Fahmy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Gamal el-Outerfi, Minister of Culture and Information of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Mohamed Ashraf Chorbal, Ambassador from the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United States

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Mohamed Gamal el.-Din Mokhtar, President of the Organization of Egyptian Antiquities

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Yussef es-Sebsai, former Minister of Culture and Information of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Abdel Quader Selim, General Director of the Cairo Museum

Ibrahim el-Nawawy, First Curator of the Cairo Museum

Salch Ahmed Saleh, Director of Scientific Research and Restoration, Organization of Egyptian Antiquities

Christine Lilyquist, Curator of Egyptian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Herman Eilts, Ambassador of the United States to the Arab Republic of Egypt

James Holloway III, Admiral U.S.N., Chief of Naval Operations

END

November 17, 1976

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202-737-4215, ext. 224.