

NEWS RELEASE

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Jill DiSanto

Public Relations Director

215.898.2956

jdisanto@upenn.edu

INTRODUCING THE 'NEW' PENN MUSEUM

Historic moment marks shift from 'university museum' to 'museum for all'

PHILADELPHIA (Nov. 1) – The 'New' Penn Museum will debut more than 10,000 square feet of completely reimagined spaces, including its new **Sphinx Gallery**; a suite of **Africa Galleries**; a **Mexico and Central America Gallery**; the historic **Harrison Auditorium**; and its stunning new **Main Entrance**. Part of the Museum's ongoing multi-million-dollar *Building Transformation* project, this reopening marks a pivotal moment for the Museum, which has become an internationally recognized cultural destination, while staying true to its purpose as a teaching and research institution.

"These new galleries bring our beloved Sphinx front and center. They highlight the importance and richness of African material culture, and explore powerful ancient civilizations in Mexico and Central America," says Dr. Julian Siggers, Williams Director of the Penn Museum. "In addition to showcasing our collections in new ways, these reimagined spaces and expanded amenities transform how we engage with our guests—truly making this a museum for all, open to everyone. The 'New' Penn Museum invites all visitors to share the wonder of our human story, now more than ever before."

From his platform at the heart of the brand-new **Sphinx Gallery**, the museum's 25,000-pound Sphinx of the Pharaoh Ramses II will welcome guests as they meander through the light-filled **Main Entrance** area, which features abundant seating, two new elevators, and new accessible restroom facilities.

The 4,000-square-foot **Africa Galleries** showcase nearly 300 artifacts, addressing modern-day issues that surround the display of African art and material culture in the West. By tracing the paths of key objects from their African makers to the Museum, it is launching a critical conversation that will engage communities far and wide.



From a dramatic Sowei mask worn exclusively by women in Sierra Leone and western Liberia to a soldier’s uniform from Sudan, remarkable objects mix with newly commissioned contemporary art works, presenting unforgettable stories of Africa and its contributions to the world.

The 2,000-square-foot **Mexico and Central America Gallery** highlights 250 objects that illustrate the artistic traditions of distinct cultures, as well as the Penn Museum’s innovative research across the region.

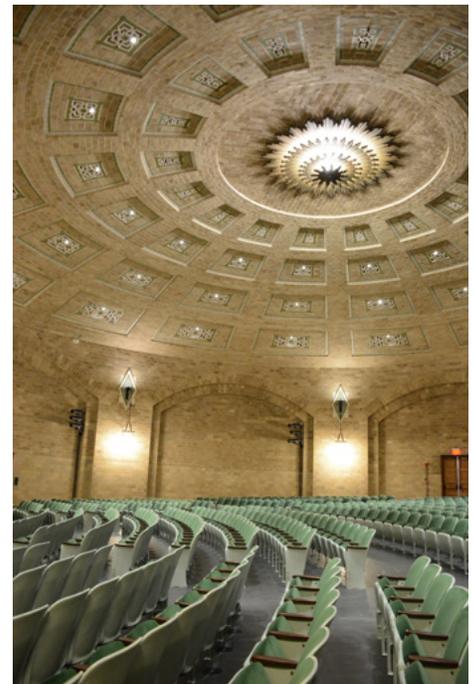
Unique to this collection are its breathtaking sculptures, including a statue of a Water Goddess—one of two known to exist in the world—along with four majestic Maya stone monuments, one of which helped researchers to crack the code in deciphering Maya writing, and a giant conch shell that once stood in the capital of the Aztec Empire.



Opened in 1915, **Harrison Auditorium** is a 614-seat performance venue that’s been historically restored to its original splendor, with upgrades that focus on greater accessibility and visitor comfort—such as air conditioning, new lighting and flooring, and enhanced state-of-the-art audio-visual systems. As one of the largest and most-used spaces at Penn, it will feature performances, lectures, lively debates, panel discussions, and documentary screenings.

The Museum is also expanding its **Global Guides** program, which hires refugees and immigrants to conduct tours of the museum’s galleries—bringing artifacts to life through their modern-day stories. Five new Global Guides from Mexico, Central America, and Africa will join guides from Iraq and Syria who lead tours of the Middle East Galleries. Included with admission, Global Guides Tours are available Friday through Sunday.

In addition to its reimagined spaces, the Museum will unveil a fresh visual identity which consists of a new logo, designed to connote openness. This new look further emphasizes its evolution from a ‘university museum’ to a ‘museum for everyone,’ welcoming guests with the message that the world is ‘closer than you think’ at the New Penn Museum.



About the Penn Museum

Since 1887, the Penn Museum has transformed understanding of the human experience. Dedicated to building connections between cultures, the museum welcomes everyone to uncover the ancient past, gain an understanding of our shared humanity, and find one's own place in the arc of human history. Visit www.pennmuseum.org or call 215.898.4000.

Admission

Admission to the "New" Penn Museum is \$18 for adults; \$16 for seniors; and \$13 for children ages 6-17; all tickets receive a \$2 discount if purchased online at www.penn.museum. Admission is **free** for children ages 5 and under; active duty U.S. military personnel, reservists, and veterans with identification; and patients at CHOP, the Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine, Abramson Cancer Center, or Penn Medicine/HUP with wristbands or appointment documentation. Museum members and PennCard holders are also free. Special admission discounts are also available for people with Access EBT benefits cards and Philadelphia City ID cards.