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Young V&A

***Making Egypt* | Exhibition Highlights**

Saturday 15 February – Sunday 2 November 2025

Young V&A

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Young V&A's second exhibition ***Making Egypt***, created for children and families, takes visitors on a fascinating journey through the ancient past to modern day, **exploring ancient Egypt's creativity and how it continues to influence art, design and popular culture.**

Exhibition overview

The exhibition is divided into three sections – **Storytelling, Communicating and Making** – each exploring Egyptian creativity through a different lens. Journeying from sunrise to sunset along the Nile, *Making Egypt* invites visitors to encounter the landscapes, stories and people that inspired ancient Egypt's creative language, with playful illustrations of gods **Amun, Thoth and Ptah** by artist **Jean Wei** guiding the way.

Throughout, **contemporary responses from jewellery and fashion designers, graphic novelists, ceramic artists** and beyond will spotlight ways in which ancient Egypt's beliefs, stories and characters continue to inspire makers today. Their works will be shown alongside sketches and design images, photos of workshops, tools and quotes from the artists themselves, unpacking their creative processes.

Storytelling

The exhibition opens at sunrise on the Nile with *Storytelling*. Here, young visitors will be introduced to some of Egypt's major myths, and their key storytelling ingredients.

The section opens by exploring how religious significance and meaning was overlaid onto the natural world. Objects featured include **a small wooden painted model**

funerary boat, an important piece of religious and funerary equipment, **dating back approximately 4,000**

years. Connections to the natural world can also be seen in decorative personal items, including **amulets**, small charms worn on the body thought to protect and invoke power, and **figurines**, which were used as temple offerings. An **amulet of Taweret, dating to 664 BC – 332**

BC, the protective Goddess of childbirth and fertility, which takes its form from creatures which roamed the Nile's surrounding landscapes – a hippopotamus, crocodile and lion - will sit alongside a **glazed figurine depicting a hippopotamus head**, an animal often associated with chaos and the forces of the natural world, **dating back**



Wooden Funerary Boat approx. 3000 years old. Courtesy of Chiddingstone Castle

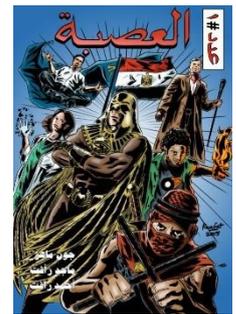
over 3,500 years. Marjan van Aubel Studio's self-powering illuminated solar tapestry *Ra* (2022) and Azza Fahmy's *Lotus Pectoral* collar, which showcases the Lotus flower in its many natural forms, will also feature.

Storytelling will further delve into the key narrative cycles of ancient Egypt's myths, which were used to explain natural events, or present a religious origin for beliefs and rituals. This section will spotlight some of ancient Egypt's most influential stories, from competing **creation myths** to **the story of Osiris**, which young visitors will be able to experience through the eyes of ancient Egypt's makers, featuring **ancient statuettes, figures, amulets, painting** and a **sistrum musical instrument**. Here, young visitors will also be able to take an interactive quiz to find out 'Which Egyptian god are you?'

Storytelling will finish by looking at how **comics, movies** and **pop culture** have re-cast Egypt's ancient gods into modern icons, from action-adventure film **The Mummy (1999)** to collectible **Yu-gi-oh cards**. As part of the section's final stop, young visitors will be able to discover the Egyptian comic book series **El3osba (The League)**, with sketches by the comic's co-founder, artist **Ahmed Raafat**, alongside popular favourites Marvel Comics' **Moon Knight** and DC Comics' **Doctor Fate** and **Black Adam**.



Lotus Pectoral. Courtesy of Azza Fahmy



El3osba (The League). Art by Ahmed Raafat

Communicating

The exhibition's second section *Communicating* will spotlight how the stories Egyptians told were communicated through writing and art. *Communicating* will showcase different written languages used in Egypt, including **hieroglyphics** and **hieratic**, and how meaning was communicated not just verbally, but visually, encouraging young visitors to think about different ways they might communicate their own stories today. Within this section, **hands-on activities** will invite young visitors to **test their own skills of drawing with scale, deciphering hieroglyphics** and **exploring the meanings of colours**.

Visitors will have the chance to see the tools used by ancient Egyptians to illustrate their visual language, including a **rare carved wood Scribe's palette**, used to hold ink and brushes, a **plasterer's trowel**, used to create a smooth surface for tomb paintings, and a **pigment grinder**, used to create vibrant colours for paints and inks, with colour forming a language in its own right. Fragments of **ostraca** - flakes of limestone written, drawn and sketched upon by scribes and draftsmen in ancient Egypt - will also be available to view, from an **intricately sketched design of a temple doorway**, and **delicately drawn owl** used to spell an 'M' sound in hieroglyphics, to a written account of the **hardships of military life**.



Inner sarcophagus of Princess Sopdet-em-haawt. Courtesy of David Aaron davidaaaron.com

Communicating will also explore the role of writing and drawing in connection to the afterlife. Coffins and sarcophagi were often decorated with depictions of gods and goddesses, with scenes detailing the afterlife the deceased person hoped to attain, and physical attributes to indicate their status while they were alive. Reaching over 2 metres in height, the extraordinary **fully painted** and meticulously preserved **inner sarcophagus of Princess Sopdet-em-haawt** will form the centerpiece of *Making Egypt*.

Making

Making Egypt's final section will uncover how the Egyptians materialised their beliefs, bringing visitors into the setting of a bustling workshop. Here, young visitors will be encouraged to ask questions of why objects were made, what they were made of and how they were made.

Multiple **Egyptian faience shabtis dating to 380 BC – 343 BC** will be displayed, which represent a handful of over 300 small funerary figures discovered in the **tomb of Djedhor** and which were believed to serve the dead in the afterlife. The shabtis will sit side by side Syrian archaeologist and ceramic artist **Zahed Tajeddin's** contemporary response **'Nu' shabtis**, 2015, created using a reinvented faience technique, which reimagines the figures waking in the 21st century and finding there is no afterlife and labours to perform, and discovering new things to do with their life.

Making will also look to the popular **process of moulding**, a technique used to mass produce amulets, rings and small figurines in ancient times, which is still used by makers today. **Touch samples of different raw materials, moulds and amulets** will be available to handle, with ancient moulds used to create beads for bracelets, rings, amulets and figurines, displayed. A **hands-on activity** will encourage young visitors to **design their own amulet**, with a chance to see **the process of making a faience amulet** in action in a **new film with artist Zahed Tajeddin**.

Modern day toys and games bring to life the building blocks of ancient Egyptian architecture, from **LEGO's Great Pyramid of Giza** to **self-made video tutorials** on how to **create your own ancient Egyptian world** in the video game **Minecraft**. Young visitors will be able to **touch and feel samples** of the different stones which Egyptian's used to create their monumental architecture, as well as watch an **engaging new film** showcasing the art technique of stone carving with **stone carver and stonemason Miriam Johnson**.



'Nu' shabtis by Zahed Tajeddin, 2015. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London



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How to Build Ancient Egypt in Minecraft. Courtesy of Danymok

Notes to Editors

For further PRESS information about Young V&A, please contact press.office@vam.ac.uk or 02079422490. A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

About Young V&A

Young V&A is a museum sparking creativity now and for the future. Created with 0-14-year-olds, it is a place for young people to imagine, play and design, and get inspired by a collection of 2000 toys, characters, objects and artworks from around the world and throughout history. Rooted in its local community with 150-year heritage as East London's first museum, Young V&A works to energise young creators everywhere, as well as empower everyone to promote creativity for the next generation and support the teaching of art and design education for all.

With support from:



Dr Steve and Mrs Lorraine Groves, The William Brake Foundation and the estate of the late Sabina Stevenson, in memory of Hugh James Stevenson.

About Commercial International Bank S.A.E.

Established in 1975, Commercial International Bank (CIB) is Egypt's leading private sector bank. Each of CIB's 8,238 employees is dedicated to achieving the bank's mission: delivering a distinctive customer experience through innovation and data analytics to provide customer-centric solutions and services that meet their needs. With a well-established network of over 200 branches, first-rate remote channels, and digital solutions, CIB provides individuals, households, high-net-worth individuals, large corporations, and small businesses with exceptional, 24/7 services.