

Press release

Multimedia

**From October 8, 2011
to March 4, 2012**

DNP, Gotanda Building, Tokyo

Offerings for Eternity in Ancient Egypt: a Question of Survival

Louvre - DNP Museum Lab
Eighth presentation in Tokyo



Presentation room © photo DNP

Louvre - DNP Museum Lab, a joint project led by the musée du Louvre and Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd (DNP) that seeks to investigate new approaches to art viewing, has chosen, as the theme of its eighth presentation, to explore Egyptian Antiquities, one of the most popular departments in the musée du Louvre and a subject with many enthusiasts in Japan.

Focusing on a selection of works that illustrate the principle of funerary offerings, an essential ritual in ancient Egypt, a visitor circuit comprising seven multimedia resources offers a hands-on experience for discovering and understanding the aesthetics and vision specific to this civilization for around three millennia. Two of the multimedia resources developed for this presentation will be later relocated to the permanent exhibition rooms of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities in the musée du Louvre in Paris.

Aims of the eighth presentation and principles of mediation

Funerary offerings formed an essential ritual for the ancient Egyptians, as a guarantee of a food supply for all eternity. The seven works on display here testify to the various methods employed to ensure that they would want for nothing in the afterlife. The eighth presentation offers an insight into the way that these works relate to beliefs typical of the Egyptian civilization.

As these keys to understanding also apply of course to works of Pharaonic art in other museums throughout the world, we hope that they will remain with visitors for their future encounters with Egyptian art.



Take part in the offering ritual © photo DNP

Organization : musée du Louvre, DNP, with the cooperation of JAL
Academic advisers : Hélène Guichard, chief curator and Jean-Luc Bovot, researcher, department of Egyptian Antiquities, musée du Louvre.

Direction de la communication
Anne-Laure Béatrix
Adel Ziane

Contact presse : Marion Benaiteau
marion.benaiteau@louvre.fr
Tél. + 33 1 40 20 67 10 / + 33 6 88 42 52 62



Stela of Sakherty, chamberlain, C. 1970–1900 BC
Painted limestone. Musée du Louvre, Department of Egyptian Antiquities
© 2011 musée du Louvre / Christian Décamps

Decipher a funerary stela: the stela of Sakherty

At the heart of the eighth presentation stands a funerary stela made of limestone. It was commissioned by Sakherty, chamberlain of Sesostri I, to guarantee the availability of the offerings he would need to survive in the afterlife. The stela was probably placed as a sign of devotion at Abydos, a holy city dedicated to Osiris, the god in the Egyptian pantheon who presided over the world of the dead. The foodstuffs, cited in the hieroglyphics or depicted on the stela, were supposed to provide eternal nourishment for Sakherty, his wife, and his parents shown before a table laden with provisions.

The multimedia resource used to explain this stela is based on the way that a researcher would study and decipher it, while remaining ever focused on the object as a whole.

A reproduction of the stela of Sakherty is therefore on continual screen display. This image acts as an interactive menu; the information gleaned through browsing allows viewers to reconstruct the stela piece by piece.

Visitors can then access further information stored in the system on any detail of interest to them. In this way, the resource prompts visitors to look at the work carefully, while creating an active learning environment.



Decipher a funerary stela © photo DNP

This multimedia system will be relocated to the Department of Egyptian Antiquities (room 23, first floor, Sully wing). It will provide keys to deciphering the other stelae, in addition to the stela of Sakherty, exhibited in this room.

Take part in the offering ritual

The offering table also displayed here was carved for the practice of funerary offering ceremonies for the royal chancellor Horiraa. The Egyptians believed that purifying the table with incense or performing libation with pure water would activate the offerings depicted on it and that the deceased would receive real food in the afterlife.

When faced with a work originally intended for a specific purpose, particularly in the case of ritual objects, it is essential to understand the context of its production and the way that it was used, and to find the best way of explaining this.

Such was the genesis of an interactive multimedia resource to allow visitors to participate in a ritual offering. This device offers an active hands-on experience whereby visitors can handle accessories to awaken their interest in the work and glimpse an insight into its meaning.

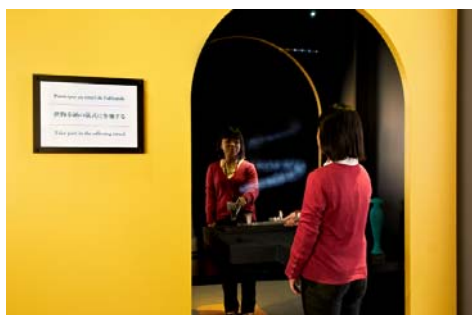


Offering table of Horiraa, chancellor to the king
C. 664–525 BC. Basalt. Musée du Louvre, Department of Egyptian Antiquities
© 2011 musée du Louvre / Georges Poncet

While performing the ritual before a reproduction of the offering table of Horiraa using replicas of a censer and a vase, visitors can visualize the effect of their actions by means of a system combining multiple technologies - sensors, augmented reality (AR), and computer graphics (CG).

Discover the conventions of Egyptian art through works in the Louvre's collection

In ancient Egyptian art, aesthetic concerns were not a priority; the aim above all was to obtain a magical effect. This is why the conventions that governed artistic representation endured throughout the some three millennia of the Pharaonic period,



Take part in the offering ritual © photo DNP



Discover the conventions of Egyptian art © photo DNP



Model of a plucked and trussed goose
C. 2700–2200 BC. Painted limestone. . Musée du Louvre, Department of Egyptian Antiquities
© 2011 musée du Louvre / Christian Décamps



Digital caption panel © photo DNP



Manufacturing technique of soft-paste porcelain
© photo DNP

providing the visual aspect so characteristic of this art.

As part of the Eighth presentation, a multimedia resource has been developed to allow visitors to discover the codes of artistic representation, illustrated with various representative works from the Louvre's Egyptian collections.

This system will be relocated to the musée du Louvre in Room 21, on the first floor of the Sully wing, as a key to understanding a visit to the Department of Egyptian Antiquities. So as not to impede artwork viewing while at the same time allowing collective manipulation, the device takes the form of a table that can accommodate four users simultaneously.

Digital caption panel

Offerings of real provisions were placed on trays like the one on display here so that the deceased would be able to eat in the afterlife. Three-dimensional models of food might also be placed in the tomb, as a magical means of ensuring the eternal availability and unlimited supply of the item represented. The tray and scale models of lettuce and plucked goose are exhibited together here to explain how the Egyptians had recourse to numerous solutions to guarantee their survival in the afterlife. In the Eighth presentation, each display case is equipped with a digital caption panel unit combining printed text and a small screen that displays information about each object and its role within the concept of funerary offerings. This prompts visitors to observe the work before them in greater depth.

Relocating multimedia resources to the musée du Louvre

With the October 2010 launch of a second round of presentations as part of the Museum Lab project, exhibition resources developed in Tokyo are gradually being transferred to the musée du Louvre in Paris in order to offer visitors from around the world the unique experience of Museum Lab's new approach to discovering art via multimedia. Since June 2011 two of the resources developed for the Seventh presentation may now be seen in the permanent collection exhibition rooms of the Department of Decorative Arts (Rooms 93 and 95, on the first floor of the Richelieu wing).

In 2012 it will be the turn of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities to play host to two multimedia displays ("Decipher a funerary stela: the stela of Sakherty" and "Discover the conventions of Egyptian art through works in the Louvre's collection").

The Louvre-DNP Museum Lab project

Born of the collaboration between Dai Nippon Printing (DNP) and the musée du Louvre, Museum Lab was first launched in 2006. Its main dedicated space in Gotanda (Tokyo) is the site of unique exhibitions, offering an original, multi-faceted, and leisurely take on artworks from the musée du Louvre by incorporating the technological advances of multimedia displays.

Practical information

Address: DNP-Gotanda Building, 1st floor, 3-5-20, Nishi Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo.

Dates and opening times : From October 8, 2011 (Sat.) to March 4, 2012 (Sun.), from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Closed on Fridays if a public holiday, during periods of maintenance and artwork replacement, and during New Year holidays.

Free admission, booking required.

Information and reservation : website: <http://museumlabor.jp> or telephone: +81 (0) 35435 0880