

Press Release



April 2013

Feline Imagery in Ancient Egypt, Subject of Exhibition On View at Brooklyn Museum July 24, 2013–December 2014

From domesticated cats to mythic symbols of divinities, felines played an important role in ancient Egypt imagery for thousands of years. Now, nearly thirty diverse representations of felines from the world-famous Egyptian holdings of the Brooklyn Museum will be on view in *Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt*. The exhibition, which explores the roles of cats, lions, and other feline creatures in Egyptian mythology, kingship, and everyday life, will be on view from July 24, 2013, through December 2014.

Likely first domesticated in ancient Egypt, cats were revered for their fertility and valued for their ability to protect homes and granaries from vermin. But felines were also associated with royalty and closely linked with a number of deities. Combining a lion's body and a king's head, sphinxes guarded temple entrances and provided protection as temple objects. The ferocious goddess Sakhmet, depicted as a lioness or lion-headed woman, and the goddess Bastet, represented as a cat or a cat-headed woman, together symbolized the duality of feline nature—caring yet dangerous. The male leonine gods Bes and Tutu were popularly worshipped as protectors of fertility, health, and fortune.

On public view for the first time will be an extraordinary gilded *Leonine Goddess* (770–412 B.C.E.), a lion-headed female crouching on a papyrus-shaped base, that entered the Brooklyn collection in 1937; the statuette was conserved for this installation. The exhibition's cats and feline divinities range from a large limestone sculpture of a recumbent lion (305–30 B.C.E.), to a diminutive bronze sphinx of King Sheshenq (945–718 B.C.E.), to a small cast-bronze figurine of a cat nursing four kittens (664–30 B.C.E.). Also presented are furniture and luxury items, decorated with feline features, in many media.

Divine Felines is organized by Yekaterina Barbash, Associate Curator of Egyptian Art at the Brooklyn Museum.

Contact:

Sally Williams, (718) 501-6330, sally.williams@brooklynmuseum.org
Adam Husted, (718) 501-6331, adam.husted@brooklynmuseum.org

Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052
T (718) 638-5000 F (718) 501-6134
www.brooklynmuseum.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$12; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$8. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48.

On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; first Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.