

Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art Announces Upcoming Exhibition: Soulful Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt



"Soulful Creatures" marks the country's first major exhibition dedicated to the fascinating practice of animal mummification in ancient Egypt



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LAS VEGAS (February 10, 2026) – [Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art](#) (BGFA) is unveiling its newest exhibition, *Soulful Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, on display February 13 through September 13, 2026. Organized in partnership with the Brooklyn Museum, the exhibition is the first major U.S. presentation dedicated to exploring one of the most fascinating and mysterious aspects of ancient Egyptian culture – the mummification of animals.

Curated by Yekaterina Barbash, Curator of Egyptian, Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Brooklyn Museum and Edward Bleiberg, Curator Emeritus at the Brooklyn Museum, the exhibition brings together nearly 100 artifacts, including approximately 36 mummified animals and over 60 significant Egyptian masterworks that contextualize their role in ritual and religion.

Unearthed from more than 30 cemeteries during the 19th and 20th centuries, these remarkable animal mummies span Egyptian history from as early as 760 B.C.E. through the second century C.E. during the Roman period. The exhibition will discuss four fascinating categories: beloved pets; food offerings preserved for the afterlife; divine embodiments of deities; and votive gifts intended to carry prayers to the heavens.

Far more than curiosities, these mummies reveal the profound ways animals shaped Egyptian worldview. From cats, dogs and birds to snakes and crocodiles, animal mummies were deeply woven into the spiritual fabric of ancient Egypt. While their exact significance remains a subject of scholarly debate, this exhibition offers new insights into their origins, creation techniques and symbolic meanings, underscoring the powerful role animals played in religion, daily life and the journey beyond death.

"This exhibition celebrates the timeless bond between humans and animals. These extraordinary mummies reveal how creatures were not only companions, but also sacred symbols woven into the spiritual life of ancient Egypt. *Soulful Creatures* invites visitors to rediscover the powerful role animals played in faith, ritual and the journey beyond death," said MGM Resorts Director Art & Culture Demecina Gray. "We are honored to host this extraordinary and preeminent collection of world history."

Exhibition highlights include:

- **Ibis Coffin** (305–30 B.C.E.)
Elaborately gilded in silver, gold and rock crystal atop wood, this coffin contains a simple ibis mummy. While coffins of

this type typically feature bronze heads and feet, scientific testing suggests that the silver fittings are likely modern replacements for the original bronze elements.

- **Seated Statuette of Pepy I with Horus Falcon**(ca. 2338–2298 B.C.E.)

Located in the *Kings and Mummies* section, King Pepy I is depicted seated on his alabaster throne, wearing the tall white crown of Upper Egypt royalty, with the falcon of Horus peering over his shoulder. He is enveloped in a cloak associated with the Jubilee festival, which marked the king's continued vigor after the first 30 years of his reign. Scholars suggest that votive animal mummies may have been created for use in this important ritual two thousand years after King Pepy I's lifetime.

- **Crocodile Mummy** (664–30 B.C.E.).

The ancient Egyptians presented crocodile mummies to the god Sobek in hopes of gaining his assistance with everyday challenges. The practice was so striking to Greek historian Herodotus that he devoted two chapters of *The Histories* to crocodile worship, which he viewed as one of the most exotic aspects of Egyptian religion.

- **Lion** (circa 3300–3100 B.C.E.)

Symbolizing the power of the Egyptian king, images of lions were closely associated with royal might as well as powerful deities such as Sekhmet and Bastet. This image was carved during a period when kings were known to bury lions near their tombs.

Drawing on archaeology, cultural history and modern medical imaging conducted by the Brooklyn Museum in collaboration with Dr. Anthony Fischetti of the New York Animal Medical Center, *Soulful Creatures* reveals that many animal mummies are not always what they seem. Scientific analysis has produced surprising findings, including evidence that may support contemporaneous claims of corruption within some ancient animal cemeteries. X-rays and CT scans featured in the exhibition highlight how Egyptologists today use advanced technology to explore the many provocative theories surrounding the practice, origins, techniques and rituals of animal mummification.

Soulful Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt will be on display daily at Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art from February 13 through September 13, 2026, open from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Last admissions are sold 30 minutes prior to closing time.

Tickets are \$29 for adults; \$27 for hotel guests, seniors 65 and older, students, teachers and military; and \$25 for Nevada residents, with a valid ID. Children five and younger are free. Docent-led tours are available daily at 11 a.m. for an additional fee of \$10 per ticket.

For additional information, call (702) 693-7871 or (877) 957-9777 or visit bellagio.com/bgfa.

Image Credits: *Ibis Coffin. Possibly from Tuna el-Gebel, Egypt.* Ptolemaic Period, 305–30 B.C.E., with later additions. Wood, silver, gold, rock crystal, 15 1/16 × 7 15/16 × 21 15/16 in. (38.2 × 20.2 × 55.8 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 49.48. (Photo: Gavin Ashworth, Brooklyn Museum)

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About the Brooklyn Museum

Founded in 1823 as the Brooklyn Apprentices' Library Association, the Brooklyn Museum contains one of the nation's most comprehensive and multifarious collections, enhanced by a distinguished record of exhibitions, scholarship, and service to the public. The Museum's vast holdings span 5,000 years of human creativity from cultures in every corner of the globe. Collection highlights include the ancient Egyptian holdings, renowned for objects of the highest quality, and the arts of the Americas collections, which are unrivaled in their variety, from Native American art and artifacts and Spanish colonial painting to 19th and early 20th-century American painting, sculpture, and decorative objects. The Museum is also home to the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, which is dedicated to the study and exhibition of feminist art and is the only curatorial center of its kind.

The Brooklyn Museum is both a leading cultural institution and a community museum dedicated to serving a wide-ranging audience. Located in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its home borough and city. Few, if any, museums in the country attract an audience as varied with respect to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, educational background, and age as the Brooklyn Museum.

About Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art

An intimate, 2,600 sq ft experience, Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art is Las Vegas' premier exhibition space, located in the heart of Bellagio Resort & Casino in the pool promenade. Since opening in 1998, the gallery has presented exhibitions of artworks and objects drawn from internationally acclaimed museums and private collections, including: *American Duet: Jazz & Abstract Art*, *From Grain to Pixel: Contemporary Chinese Photography*, *ICONS of Contemporary Art*; *In Bloom*; *Ase: Afro Frequencies*; *Yayoi Kusama*; *Primal Water: An Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*; *Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*; *Town and Country: From Degas to Picasso*; *Fabergé Revealed*; and *Warhol Out West*.

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