

CHILDREN'S TRAIL



Afghanistan HIDDEN treasures

from the National Museum, Kabul

**HAVE FUN EXPLORING &
MAKE SOME ART OF YOUR OWN**

**ART
GALLERY
NSW**

Collect
a pencil



Go on a journey
through the
exhibition



Discover
the artworks

★ **Look, draw and have fun!**

Afghanistan HIDDEN treasures

from the National Museum, Kabul

In 1988, these treasures from the National Museum in Kabul were hidden in vaults in the Central Bank at the presidential palace in Kabul. Only a few brave people, known as 'key-holders', knew where they were – they were the director and the curators. They risked their lives to keep the museum's precious objects from being destroyed. After 15 years, the vaults were opened to reveal the treasures had survived.

Many of these treasures show influences from places like Greece, Rome, China and India. This is because Afghanistan lay at the heart of the Silk Road, the name given to ancient trade routes stretching from China to western Europe. It was along these routes that traders and travellers spread ideas, cultures, inventions and products.

Presenting partners

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF AFGHANISTAN
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AFGHANISTAN, KABUL



NATIONAL
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Major partner



HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS

front cover: Crown, Tillya Tepe, Tomb VI, 100 BCE – 100 CE, gold

All works from the National Museum of Afghanistan. Photos: Musée Guimet/Thierry Ollivier

Children's trail developed by the AGNSW Public Programs Department. Text: Victoria Collings

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★ **Find** this wall sculpture.

This medallion was discovered by archaeologists when they were digging in the ancient city of Begram in Afghanistan. It looks like a Roman sculpture so it might have been traded by a Silk Road traveller from the Roman Empire.

Spot the holes in the top of the sculpture. What do you think they were for?

Imagine where this sculpture was placed when it was new.

Draw your idea here.



Medallion depicting a young man, Begram, room 13, 1st century CE, plaster, 22.3 cm

At home find out more about the Silk Road and find Begram on a map.



★ **Locate** this water spout.

This gargoyle-shaped waterspout was unearthed in the ancient city of Ai Khanum. It was attached to a fountain on the city walls. Ai Khanum was once ruled by the Ancient Greeks and this gargoyle looks like a Greek theatre mask.

Notice the carved lines in the stone and the hole where the water would pour out.

Look at the expression of the character. Describe what you think he was like?

Invent a story about this gargoyle and write it here.



Waterspout, Ai Khanum, 2nd century BCE, limestone, 21 x 40 x 19 cm

At home research where gargoyles are used today and what they look like. Draw your favourite one.



★ **Find** this strong, heroic character.

This sculpture is of Heracles, an Ancient Greek hero known for his strength and courage. He is placing a crown on his head and holds a club, a symbol of his power, in his left hand.

Pose in a way that shows off your strength and power. Is your pose different to this sculpture?

Draw yourself as a hero. What special powers would you like to have?



Statuette of Heracles, Ai Khanum, c150 BCE, bronze, 18.2 cm

At home read more about Ancient Greek heroes and heroines. Which one would you like to be? Create a character profile of your favourite one.



★ **Look** at this golden chariot.

This plate shows Cybele, the nature goddess, in her chariot being pulled by lions with golden manes. Beside her is Nike, a symbol of victory. Nike is looking to the right. Can you spot her wings?

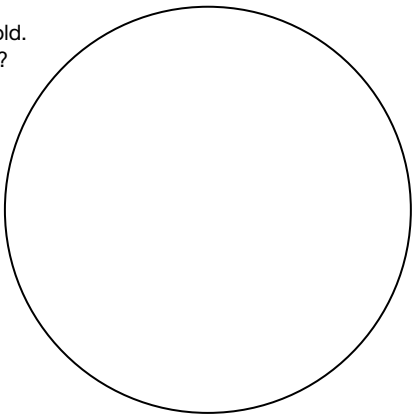
Find two more standing people on this plate. Why do you think they are silver, not gold like Cybele and Nike?

List all of the parts of the plate that are covered in gold. What effect does this have?

Design your own plate based on something you like in this exhibition.



Ceremonial plaque depicting Cybele, At Khanum, temple with niches, 3rd century BCE, gilded silver, 25 cm (diameter)



At home find out if you have any patterned plates in your home. Look at how they are decorated. Do they have stories? Draw your own plate design.



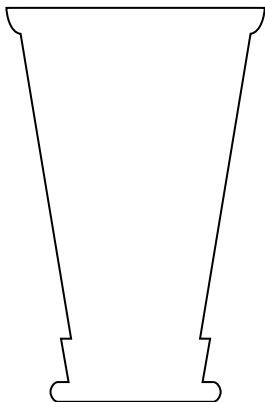
★ **Find** this decorative glass.

This glass beaker is 2000 years old so it is not surprising that bits of it are missing. Archaeologists had the painstaking task of piecing the fragments back together to reveal the colourful decorations.

Notice how outlines and colours are used to give the figures and shapes roundness.



Painted beaker, Begram, room 10, 1st century CE, glass, 12.6 cm (height), 8 cm (diameter)



Describe what you think the people are doing.

Design your own pictures and designs for this glass shape.

At home imagine you are an archaeologist who has to put something back together again to reveal what it is. Ask someone to cut up a magazine picture or photograph for you to piece back together. Is it easy?



★ **Find** this bronze basin.

The fish in this basin would have moved and shimmered once, as their fins and tails could flutter in water. Wires and weights would have been attached underneath to create movement.

Observe how the fins and tails are raised above the surface of the basin.

Notice the colour of the basin. It is made of bronze so it would have been a shiny, golden brown when it was new, but now it has aged and become green.

Spot the head of Medusa, a Greek monster in the centre. Medusa had the head of a woman and snakes for hair. Images of her head were used to frighten away bad things.

Draw a picture of Medusa frightening something away.



Aquarium, Begram, room 10, 1st century CE, bronze, 34 cm (height); 46 cm (diameter)

At home create a fish, or other animal decoration that has moving parts.



★ **Locate** this carved panel.

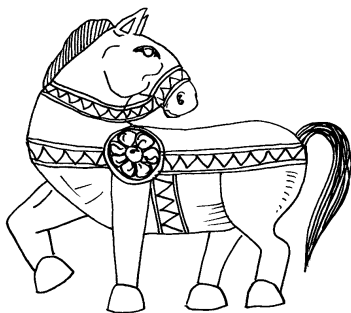
This panel was carved from ivory, which is made from the teeth or tusks of animals such as elephants. The design looks like carvings found in India so it tells us that people from different countries travelled through Afghanistan and traded with the people there.

Imagine the skill of the carver as they carefully cut and scraped into the ivory. **Role-play** how they would have to move their hands.

Look at all the different ivory carvings in this case. **Spot** the flower and plant shapes.



Design your own pattern around this horse shape.



At home cut and layer card or paper patterns and shapes to make your own decorative panel.



★ **Look** at these precious pendants.

These jewelled pendants were found in the tomb of a woman who lived long, long ago. The pendants would have been attached to her hair close to her face and would have sparkled and gleamed.

Look at the detail and different coloured gems and stones.

Notice how the 'dragon master' holds the S-shaped dragons so they curve around him.

Design your own special pendant with an animal decoration.



Pair of pendants depicting the 'dragon master', Tillya Tepe, Tomb II, 100 BCE – 100 CE, gold, turquoise, garnet, lapis lazuli, carnelian, pearls, 12.5 x 6.5 cm

At home cut shiny card to make your own jewellery design and decorate it with strands or paper, twisted pipe cleaners and dangling pieces to make it sparkle and gleam.



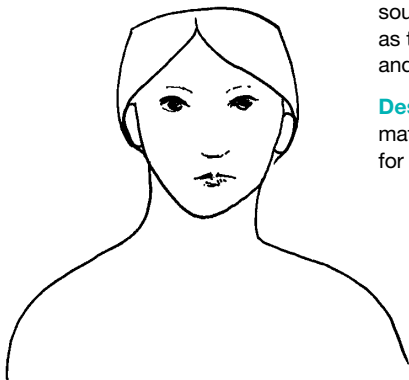
★ **Find** this sparkling, gold crown.

This crown once belonged to a young woman who would also have worn lots of gold jewellery covered in precious stones and gems. The crown could be folded and packed away so its owner could take it travelling.



Observe how the parts of the crown are wired together. Imagine the sounds it would make as the gold pieces moved and shimmered.

Design a crown and matching jewellery for this figure.



At home make your own crown and decorate it with stick-on gem stones, sequins or coloured paper.

Crown, Tiya Tepe, Tomb VI, 100 BCE – 100 CE; gold, imitation turquoise, 45 x 13 cm



★ **Spot** these circular buckles.

These buckles decorated a man's boots. They have loops on the back for straps to be threaded through. They are decorated with an image of a chariot being drawn by dragons.

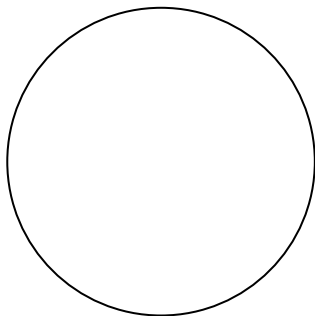
Count the turquoise stones around the edge of each buckle. Are they both the same?



Find the two dragons on each buckle that are pulling the men in their chariots.

Imagine the chariots are racing. Who will win?

Design your own buckle in this shape. Think about how you will decorate the edges



At home think about all of the jewellery and decorative objects you have seen in this exhibition and create your own designs for a man or woman to wear. Draw your ideas.