

LIFE'S A GALLERY

MACHU PICCHU AND THE GOLDEN EMPIRES OF PERU AT THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

GOLD AND GLITZ AND SOME STANDOUT ARTEFACTS STRAIGHT FROM PERU WILL TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN SYDNEY FOR THE SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITION

NOVEMBER 25, 2024

COPPER FUNERARY MASK WITH APPLICATIONS OF SHELL AND STONE, DEPICTING AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC VISAGE WITH FELINE FANGS/ COURTESY MUSEO LARCO/ AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

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HIS EXCELLENCY MR VITALIANO GASPAR GALLARDO VALENCIA, AMBASSADOR OF PERU, WITH TRADITIONAL DANCERS AT THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION | IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

MANZANITA
La Pampa y La Puna
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Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru has arrived at the Australian Museum, and no doubt like last year's summer exhibition, *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs*, will see thousands of Sydneysiders and visitors through its doors over the holidays, to gaze upon the wonders from way back in the past and over the seas.

With the travel company Adventure World as a major sponsor again, there's an expectation of a bump in tourism to Peru, much like there was last year to Egypt. Such effects on travel plans are complex and can last for years, but as with film, tourism boards and embassies have long seen the value of such shows, not only in terms of soft power, but for direct economic impact.



— AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM DIRECTOR AND CEO, KIM MCKAY AO AND IMPERIAL CHIMU LORD 📷 IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



— SCULPTURAL STIRRUP SPOUT BOTTLE DEPICTING AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURE WITH SUPERNATURAL TRAITS 📷 IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

Inkaterra, the luxury hotel group in Peru, have been part of the exhibition since its first conception over twenty years ago. The founder of the group, José Koechlin, is a pioneer of eco-tourism, opening his hotels in 1975, and placing the protection of the environment at the forefront since the beginning.

At the Machu Picchu opening, Gabriel Meseth from Inkaterra told Irresistible, "The exhibition is a great taste of Peru. It shows our diversity, culture, natural environment and our incredibly rich history. Inkaterra is one of the co-producers of the Machu Picchu exhibition, and we're thrilled to be here in Australia. We share so much with Australia, especially as we are both in the Southern Hemisphere! Peru is a very welcoming country, and we love visitors. We hope that the exhibition will inspire people to visit us. The new route from LATAM Airways is a gamechanger for Peru and all of South America. It's a wonderful bridge between our two countries."



— EAR ORNAMENT OF GOLD, SHELL AND STONE (TURQUOISE OR MALACHITE), DEPICTING EIGHT IGUANAS/ COURTESY MUSEO LARCO/ AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.



— 📷 IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

The exhibition was first shown in Florida at the Boca Raton Museum of Art in 2021, followed by the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France in 2022, and the Mudec Museum in Milan, Italy in the same year. The show is the largest collection of gold created by ancient societies in Peru to travel to Australia, and many of the artefacts are rare and come from the prized Andean royal tombs.

It's not all about the Incas, the show telling stories about all the civilisations that came before their more famous cousins over 3000 years of history and culture, including the Chavin, Chimu, Lambayque, Moche, and Nazca.



— IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



— DR JACOB L. BONGERS IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

Dr Jacob Bongers is a Guest Expert for the exhibition. He is an anthropological archaeologist currently conducting post-doctoral research at the University of Sydney. He has spent over 10 years carrying out archaeological fieldwork in Peru.

He told Irresistible, "It's wonderful to see ancient Peruvian culture here in Australia. I was brought in just a few weeks ago, and the Australian Museum has done an amazing job showcasing all the brilliant artefacts from ancient Peru, including stunning gold and ceremonial pieces."

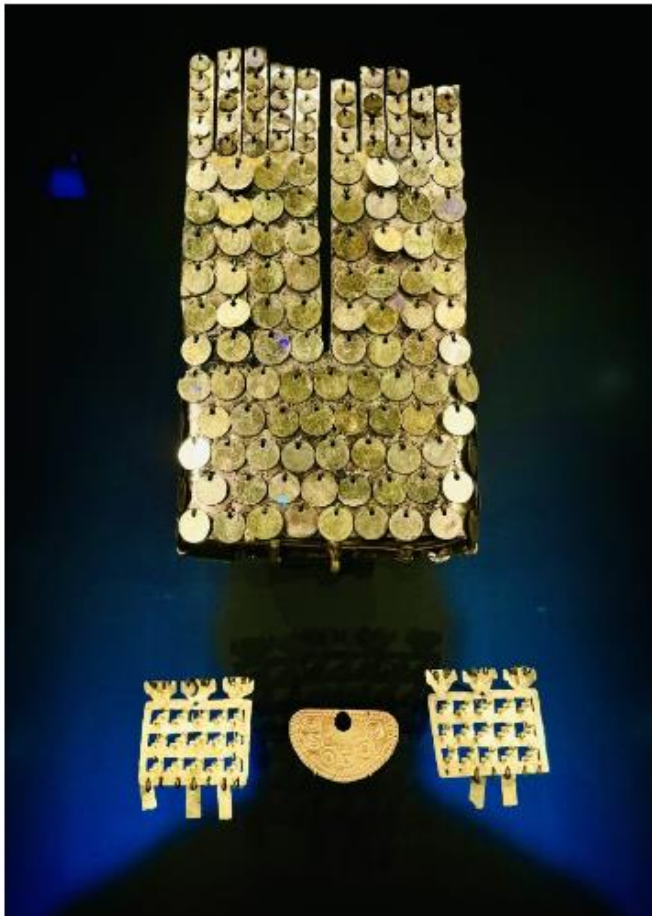
He went on to tell us about his time in Peru. "A lot of my work in Peru was researching how previous societies performed burial rituals in response to imperial conquests by the Inca and Spanish empires. I am currently interested in how past societies modified their landscapes to encourage people to come together. I am now part of a research team that is planning to do research along similar themes in collaboration with First Nations communities in western Arnhem Land. I've studied other ancient peoples as well, and what is common is that the social networks and how people socialised and organised was not only complex, but designed to produce impact. Ancient societies understood the importance of meeting up for trade and the exchange of knowledge. This exhibition highlights the vibrant cultures of ancient Peru and the splendour of Machu Picchu."

Reflecting the cultures and the times, there's a definite focus on cosmology and the ancient concepts of the afterlife, not that different to contemporary ideas, moving through the three planes of the universe: the above, the here, and the below.

An interesting selection of funerary objects illustrate the learning points, as do the animals that represent the the spiritual trifecta of different worlds in the cosmivision of the Incas; the condor for the superior world of the gods, the puma for the world of the living, and the serpent for the world of the dead.



A Spotify audio player interface for the track "El Condor Pasa" by "Los Incas". The interface is dark red and includes a thumbnail image of a person in traditional Inca attire, the track title, the artist name, a "Guardar en Spotify" button, and playback controls like a play button and a progress bar.



IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



WARRIOR DRESS. SET OF FORTY-TWO CIRCULAR METAL DISCS OF GILDED SILVER. IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

Moving away from threes, there's also plenty of twos, or to put it more archeologically, duality. There are beautiful metal vessels that are half gold and half silver; silver being the moon and gold being the sun. Plenty of other objects highlight two sides, representing rain and drought, man and woman, life and death, and of course, the overworld and the underworld.

Hero costumes worn by Lords and Warriors are displayed on mannequins, or over the shadow outlines of figures, and there's plenty of video footage with voiceover and dramatic cartoon depictions of human sacrifice to hold the attention of younger visitors.



THE GIFT SHOP IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES

After all the gold, the kids and the adult kids will be itching to get to the gift shop which has some charming knick-knacks made in Peru, and the virtual reality piéce de résistance experience at the end. A headset and a moving chair provide not only a fantastic and slightly dizzying trip over a visitor-free Machu Picchu, filmed during the pandemic, and guided by a back-from-the-dead Inca leader, but also a shoot themselves in the foot glimpse into the future of virtual and augmented reality educational experiences, when everyone will have a museum, or even a travel, experience, without ever having to make the effort to leave the chair in their own home.

pepe Vásquez
ritmo de negros
Jipi Jay
Muestra de audio Pepe Vásquez
+ Guardar en Spotify



IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



IRRESISTIBLE IMAGES



— FRONTAL ADORNMENT OF 18-KARAT GOLD HEADDRESS DEPICTING A FELINE HEAD WITH HALF MOON HEADDRESS AND TWO BIRDS/ COURTESY MUSEO LARCO/ AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

MACHU PICCHU

AND THE GOLDEN EMPIRES OF PERU



Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru

Saturday 22 November 2024 – 18 February 2025

Australian Museum, 1 William St, Darlinghurst NSW 2010

Some of the Peruvian themed events that will take place during the exhibition run include:

Conversations of the Golden Empires: From the Andes to the Amazon: Join experts for a journey through Peruvian archaeology and the spiritual legacies of its ancient empires. Date: Saturday 14 December 2024 – 10:30am – 11:30am | Ticketed event.

Conversations of the Golden Empires: Modern Discoveries of an Ancient Land: Explore Peru's biodiversity and its insights into ancient life, culture, and beliefs, guided by historians and scientists. Date: Saturday 8 February 2025 – 10:30am – 11:30am | Ticketed event.

Peruvian Nights at the Museum: Discover the wonders of ancient Peru after dark. Every Wednesday in January during Sydney Festival, the Museum is open late, giving you exclusive after-hours access to *Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru*.

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