

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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LAST CHANCE TO SEE WORLD DEBUT **ANCIENT ROME & AMERICA** EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Philadelphia Exclusive Exhibition Closes August 1

Philadelphia, PA (July 12, 2010) – Only three weeks remain for visitors to experience the critically acclaimed ***Ancient Rome & America*** exhibition, which made its world debut at the National Constitution Center on February 19 and will conclude its exclusive Philadelphia run on August 1, 2010. Described by the *Wall Street Journal* as “revelatory,” with displays that are “emotionally resonant” and “visually striking,” this multi-million dollar, artifact-rich exhibition showcases the surprising connections between the lost world of ancient Rome and modern America.

The National Constitution Center is the only museum in the world where visitors can see this unprecedented collection of rare artifacts and artwork. Following the exhibition’s run, the artifacts will be returned to more than 40 lending institutions in the United States, as well as Italy’s leading archaeological collections in Florence, Naples, and Rome.

As part of the Center’s *5 After 5: Summer Nights* promotion, visitors have the opportunity to see the exhibition for only \$5 on Thursdays in July from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. During the extended hours, visitors can also participate in an array of interactive activities, guided tours, and special programming.

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ADD ONE/ROME LAST CHANCE

From June 5 through August 1, 2010, visitors can purchase a summer ticket package that includes admission to *Ancient Rome & America* at the National Constitution Center and *Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt* at The Franklin Institute. Tickets are \$37.00 for adults, \$32.00 for seniors, and \$25.00 for children, and are available exclusively at the Independence Visitor Center concierge desk, or by calling 800-537-7676 or visiting www.independencevisitorcenter.com.

To augment the exhibition, a final evening program will be held on Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 6:30 p.m., in conjunction with *Ancient Rome & America*. Historian Eran Shalev will discuss his new book, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, which explores classical influences on the historical consciousness of early America. This event is presented in partnership with the Library Company of Philadelphia. Admission is free, but reservations are required and can be made by calling 215.409.6700.

“The National Constitution Center is proud to have created this world-class exhibition in partnership with Contemporanea Progetti,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO David Eisner. “We hope that everyone will take advantage of this final opportunity to see the impressive collection of artifacts, which showcases Rome’s legacy and profound impact on our nation’s founding.”

Ancient Rome & America was created by the National Constitution Center and Contemporanea Progetti of Florence, Italy, in collaboration with the Ministero per i Beni e Le Attività Culturali, Rome, Italy. Through a never-before-seen collection of over 300 artifacts from Italy and the United States, including marble sculptures, paintings, jewelry, coins, and ceramics, the 8,000 square foot exhibition draws striking comparisons between Roman and American culture, from theories of government to slavery and civil war, to continental expansion and worldwide influence.

The exhibition is organized into five galleries: Introduction, Building a Republic, A Classical Revival, Expansion and Empire, and Enduring Legacy. Highlights include:

- Two eagles depicting this classic symbol shared by ancient Rome and America.

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ADD TWO/ROME LAST CHANCE

The American eagle is carved from gilt wood. It was made in 1804 by Samuel McIntire, an important early American architect. Of the Roman eagle, only the bronze head remains. It likely originated from the top of a Roman army military standard.

- Roman busts of Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, and Cicero. American busts of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, each portrayed in togas.
- Gladiator/Football helmets. Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Harold Carmichael's helmet will be on display with a gladiator helmet and four original pieces from the gladiator barracks of an amphitheater in Pompeii – a "greave" (shin guard), two spearheads, and a dagger.
- Excavated remnants from Pompeii, including silverware, a preserved piece of a wall fresco, and the cast of a man who did not escape the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.
- A selection of classical works belonging to the Founding Fathers that helped shape their political thought during the early years of the American republic. John Adams' personal copy of Plutarch's *Lives*, John Dickenson's personal copy of the works of Roman historian Tacitus, and John Quincy Adams' personal copy of Cicero's *De Oratore*.
- Two letters from August 1776 exchanged between John and Abigail Adams. In them, Abigail signs her name "Portia" after the wife of the Roman Senator Brutus. The letters are filled with classical references and ideas of republican virtue.
- Slave collars from ancient Rome and the United States. Both ancient Rome and America prior to 1865 were slave societies. Made in the early 1800s, the slave collar from the U.S. is a rare artifact that can be tied to one man's quest for freedom. Ben, a slave who worked on a farm in Pennsylvania, tried to escape three times, and after the third time, his owner had an iron collar made for him.

The exhibition concludes with a video presentation about Rome's legacy. Though the Roman Empire declined and fell, it remains a powerful influence on the western world. As visitors depart the exhibition, they will be left to ponder the lessons ancient Rome teaches us about our nation's future.

Regular admission to *Ancient Rome & America* is \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$12 for children ages 4-12. Active military personnel and children ages 3

ADD THREE/ROME LAST CHANCE

and under are free. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production "Freedom Rising," is included. iPod audio tours cost an additional \$5. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

CBS 3 and The CW Philly are the official media partners of *Ancient Rome & America*. CBS 3 (KYW-TV) and The CW Philly 57 (WPSG-TV) are part of CBS Television Stations, a division of CBS Corporation.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising." The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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