

Head of Ramses II unearthed.

Archaeologists have discovered a red granite head believed to represent the 19th dynasty pharaoh Ramses II. The find, measuring 75 cm in height, was made at Tell Basta, about 80 km northeast of Cairo. It is thought to be part of a giant statue of the king dating back 3,000 years, the rest of which has not yet been found.

EGYPT NATIONAL THEATRE DESTROYED BY FIRE.

The main hall of Egypt's National Theatre in central Cairo has been destroyed by fire. The blaze broke out early in the evening of 27 September and is said to have been caused by an electrical fault. Three fire fighters had to be treated for smoke inhalation but otherwise there are no reports of casualties.

Lagos, Nigeria: Lagos Book and Art Festival 2008.

Musicians and performers from west Africa are to embark on a six-month tour of key cities in Nigeria to entertain young Nigerians and foster talent. "Rock 'n' Rule" is sponsored by local telecommunications company Globacom and follows a similar initiative involving

The tenth edition of the annual Lagos Book and Art Festival (LABAF) takes place from 7-9 November with the theme "Literacy and the Global Knowledge Society". Highlights include a conversation between William Mervin Gumede, author of "Thabo Mbeki and The Battle For The Soul of the ANC", and Dare Babarinsa, author of "House Of War", on the challenges of liberal democracy in Africa and a discussion on "Africa in the eyes of the other" drawing on novels and works of non-fiction about Africa including Paul Theroux's "Dark Star Safari", V.S Naipaul's "Half A Life", Shiva Naipaul's "North Of South", Gil Courtemanche's "A Saturday At the Pool In Kigali" and Karl Maier's "This House Has Fallen". There are also events for children and parties. For full programme details see the festival website.

LABAF is organised by the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), a group of artists, cultural activists, critics and arts patrons who work together to promote contemporary art in Nigeria and beyond. In 2006 the organization received the Prince Claus Award For Culture and Development from the Dutch government.

Maasai museum opens in Arusha.

A museum dedicated to Maasai culture has opened in the Meserani area about ten kilometres south of Arusha. The museum has been put together with assistance from representatives of east Africa's most well-known tribe. The display includes pictures of Maasai elders, warriors (Morans), women and children, clothes and everyday objects, which are arranged in replicas of Maasai huts and bomas (enclosures). There is also information about important cultural events and traditions such as circumcision, traditional medicine, meat eating and traditional dancing.

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CULTURE: MANDELA CAPE TOWN HOME TO BECOME MUSEUM.

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Art market at RaMoMa.

The Rahimtulla Museum of Modern Art is holding a monthly sale of Kenyan art at affordable prices at its premises in the Parklands area of Nairobi. On the last Saturday of the month visitors to the new, expanded museum and exhibition space can view and purchase works of art directly from the artists themselves for no more than Ksh10,000 per piece. The market is open 10.00-16.00.

RaMoMa, 2nd Parklands Avenue. For information tel. +254 (0)20 3748612/8, ramoma@africaonline.co.ke.

CULTURE: TANZANITE MUSEUM OPENS IN ARUSHA.

A museum dedicated to the extremely rare blue-purple gemstone Tanzanite has opened in Arusha. The so-called "Tanzanie Experience" is hosted by the Arusha Tanzania Tanzanite Foundation on the third floor of the Blue Plaza building in the city centre. It contains a video on the history of Tanzanite mining from the discovery of the gemstone in the Mererani hills near Arusha in 1967 to the present day, as well as a display of rough and cut gems and items made from Tanzanite, information on local geology and a laboratory. Entrance is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children with some of the proceeds being used to support development projects in the local community.

Mererani in the Simanjiro district south of Arusha is currently the only place in the world where Tanzanite has been discovered and is mined. Following its chance discovery by a Maasai tribesman in the 1960s it has enjoyed huge success on the international market, being described by specialists as "the gemstone of the 20th century". However production is characterised by regular accidents in the country's mines and the poor condition of local workers including children.

CULTURE: GIZA PYRAMIDS GET NEW SECURITY FENCE.

A 20 km fence complete with infrared sensors, security cameras and alarms has been erected around the three Giza pyramids and the Sphinx as part of efforts to keep hawkers and touts away from the area and protect the monuments. Visitors will now enter the site through a large brick building equipped with metal detectors and X-ray machines. The changes are part of a \$27 million project to improve facilities at the 5,000-year-old site, which also includes the installation of a new lighting system and the creation of a visitor centre, cafeteria and bookshop. However some traders have protested against the new fence, which they say will prevent them from accessing the site to earn a living.