

The Roman National Museum at Palazzo Massimo is hosting a superb and original exhibition called “Mostri, creature fantastiche della paura e del mito” (Monsters, fantastic creatures of fear and myth). The show brings together over 100 works from 40 museums, depicting fantastical creatures, all in a series of dark passages intended to resemble the Minotaur’s labyrinth.



*Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

There are griffins, chimeras, gorgons, centaurs, sirens, satyrs, harpies, sphinxes, alongside the Minotaur, Scylla and Pegasus, all represented on different types of objects: sculptures, architectural decorations, vases, frescoes and mosaics. They range from the Bronze Age to Imperial Rome.

I explored the exhibition and was spellbound by the mythical creatures I saw. Here is a selection of some of my favorite “monstrous” artefacts.



*Black figure amphora showing a Chimera, 550-525 BC, Tolfa Group from southern Etruria, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Gorgon's head, from the Temple of Venus and Roma in Rome, 2nd century AD, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Painted travertine slab showing two griffins attacking a panther, 340 BC, found in tomb 58 at Andriuolo, Paestum, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo*

*Massimo, Rome*

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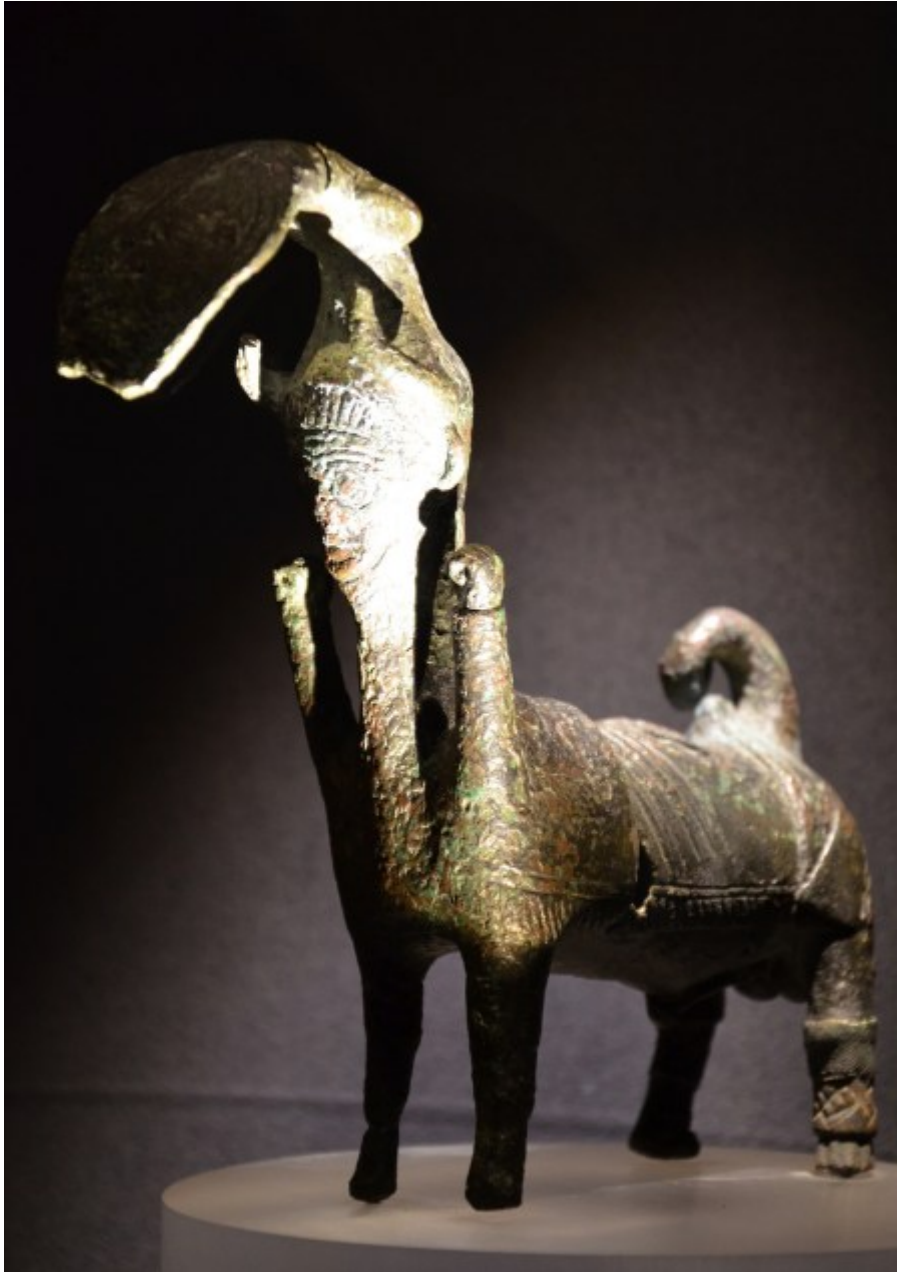
*Fresco depicting a griffin attacking one of the Arimaspi (legendary Scythian), from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, 1st century BC, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Mosaic with a ketos (sea monster) found at Caulonia (Monasterace) in the Casa del Drago, 3rd century BC, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Bronze statuette of a Centaur, 8th-7th century BC, Monsters.  
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*Marble group of a Nereid on a sea monster, from Rome, 1st century BC, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Terracotta acroterial statue of a Harpy/Siren, from Gabii, end of 6th century BC - beginning 5th century BC, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Hydria (ceramic water container) with Heracles and the Lernaean Hydra (an ancient serpent-like water monster), from Etruria, attributed to the Painter of Aquila, 530-500 BC, Monsters.*

*Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Red-figure plate showing Bellerophon riding Pegasus and a Chimera, by the Baltimore painter, second half of the 4th century BC, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Terracotta statue of lion-headed man with gold and silver insets, 6th-5th century BC, from Tharros, Sardinia, Monsters. Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo Massimo, Rome*

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*Marble statue of a Minotaur, part of a group with Theseus, 1st century AD,  
found in Rome in Via San Tommaso in Parione in 1895, Monsters.  
Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth Exhibition, Palazzo  
Massimo, Rome*

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This exhibition is monstrously beautiful and I would recommend anyone to go and see it. “[Monsters: Fantastic Creatures of Fear and Myth](#),” is on view at the fabulous Palazzo Massimo until June 1, 2014. Visit the museum website for more info [here](#).

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