



**The Franklin Institute  
Science Museum**

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**"MUMMIES: SECRETS OF THE PHARAOHS" UNRAVEL  
AT THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE'S IMAX THEATER, MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>**

**Philadelphia, March 6, 2007--** *Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs* brings to life ancient wonders, historic intrigue and a modern-day forensic adventure, all in one eye-popping new film, opening at the Tuttleman IMAX Theater on Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. A natural complement to *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs*, at The Franklin Institute through September 30, 2007, *Mummies* takes viewers on a journey back thousands of years to explore why mummification was so vital to ancient Egyptian life.

Why are people endlessly fascinated with mummies? The worldwide curiosity about mummification is an age-old phenomenon as enduring as mummies themselves. During Egypt's history, literally millions of mummies were made. In *Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs*, filmgoers will marvel at the sight of these human time capsules, shown in larger-than-life detail on the giant screen.

*Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs* unravels the mysteries enshrouding the ancient royal mummies, how they were embalmed and where they were hidden, and also recreates the dramatic story of their recovery—an "Indiana Jones"-type tale of tomb-raiders and hidden treasure that led to one of the most significant archaeological finds in modern history. Featuring top Egyptologists and researchers, Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, Dr. Bob Brier and DNA scientist Angelique Corthals, the film also embarks on a genetic analysis of mummies that could have huge implications for the study of modern human diseases.

The techniques and ingredients used for mummifying have only been pieced together in the last 15 years, after a 2,000-year memory lapse. The film then leaps ahead to the 1800s, when *Mummies* dramatically recreates the incredible events surrounding the late 19<sup>th</sup> century discovery of a cache of 40 royal mummies, including 12 Kings of Egypt, in a single tomb. Among them were three of the greatest pharaohs that ever lived: the legendary Rameses the Great—considered to be the pharaoh of the Exodus and perhaps the only face the world can see from the Bible—his father Seti I, and his son. Prior to that, not one pharaoh had ever been found. Believed by many to be the ultimate archaeological find, it was uncovered a full four decades before Howard Carter found the intact tomb of the boy-king, Tutankhamun.

Interwoven throughout the film's historic narrative is a modern-day forensic journey to extract clues about our past that might have an impact on our future. More than a decade ago, Dr. Brier and a colleague used the clues he had assembled to perform the first human mummification in the Egyptian style since the time of the pharaohs. Now, in the film, he and a DNA specialist check on the progress of that modern mummy, and conduct key genetic testing. The forensic aspects of the film include *a scientific first—a discovery that could help researchers understand how ancient diseases have evolved over time.*

The mummies of Egypt's pharaohs have meant different things over the centuries. For the ancient Egyptians, they were a source of hope for the afterlife; for the tomb-robbers, a source of wealth; for scholars, a source of knowledge, and for researchers, a source of genetic evidence that could advance medical science. For today's filmgoers, these mummies are a source of wonder for the whole family that can be experienced in the incomparable IMAX format.

After viewing *Mummies*, students can dig up treasures of knowledge through the educational materials developed by The Franklin Institute to enhance the *Mummies* experience. This educator's guide for fifth through ninth graders provides themed activities like do-it-yourself DNA extraction, ancient Egyptian medical remedies, and how to make a chicken mummy or a funeral mask.

Filmed by award-winning director Keith Melton (*Mystic India, Cirque du Soleil*) and renowned cinematographer Reed Smoot (*Mysteries of Egypt, Mystic India, Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*), with a screenplay by Arabella Cecil (*Kilimanjaro: to the Roof of Africa*), *Mummies* features breathtaking scenes of natural beauty and stunning locations combined with incredible CGI sequences, lavish sets and period recreations that immerse viewers in different eras of Egyptian history. IMAX cameras capture sweeping images of the swirling desert sand dunes and dramatic rocky cliffs of the Northern Sahara and the real wonders of Egypt at key historic sites with treasures honoring Egypt's most prolific pharaohs.

*Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs* is a production of Giant Screen Films and Gravity Pictures, in association with The Franklin Institute and the Museum of Science, Boston. Support was provided by the U.S. Dome Theater Alliance. The film is distributed by Giant Screen Films of Evanston, IL.

Show times for *Mummies* are 11AM, 3PM, 5PM, 7PM and 8PM seven days a week. Add an IMAX ticket to King Tut admission for \$5 (bought separately IMAX tickets are \$9). For additional show times, call the IMAX hotline at 215.448.1111 or visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).

Founded in honor of America's first scientist, Benjamin Franklin, The Franklin Institute opens its doors to over 1 million visitors each year. Today, the Institute continues its dedication to public education and creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology in ways that would dazzle and delight its namesake. The popular exhibit, "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs" is on view from February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. For more information, visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu) or call 215-448-1200.