

CLEOPATRA

· THE SEARCH FOR THE LAST QUEEN OF EGYPT ·

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ROYAL COUPLE ARRIVES TO PHILADELPHIA'S FRANKLIN INSTITUTE AS INSTALLATION OF WORLD PREMIERE CLEOPATRA EXHIBITION BEGINS

*Exhibition Featuring Artifacts from Ongoing Searches into the Life and Times of
Egypt's Legendary Queen Opens June 5*

PHILADELPHIA (May 14, 2010) — Installation of the 150 artifacts that will be featured in the world premiere exhibition "Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt" began today in Philadelphia at The Franklin Institute, including two colossal granite statues from the 4th – 3rd centuries B.C. that weigh almost 10 tons. Opening June 5 and organized by National Geographic and Arts and Exhibitions International, with cooperation from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM), the exhibition will take visitors inside the present-day search for Cleopatra, which extends from the sands of Egypt to the depths of the Bay of Aboukir near Alexandria.

The exhibition will provide an inside look at two ongoing expeditions led by modern explorers Dr. Zahi Hawass, Egypt's pre-eminent archaeologist and secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, and Franck Goddio, French underwater archaeologist and director of IEASM. As a highlight, the exhibition will showcase artifacts from Goddio's continuing underwater search off the Mediterranean coast of Egypt, begun in 1992 and sponsored by the Hilti Foundation.

Installation began today with the two largest artifacts in the exhibition. Carved from red granite, the Colossal King and Queen statues represent rulers from the Ptolemaic era, the dynasty that included Cleopatra VII. At more than 16 feet tall and 5.5 tons, the king may have originally stood in a temple area. His double crown, uraeus cobra and kilt indicate his royal status. The king and the companion Colossal Queen statue, weighing in at 4 tons and standing about 16 feet tall, were pulled out of the Mediterranean Sea from the sunken ancient Egyptian city of Heracleion near Alexandria by Goddio's team in 2000.

The exhibition about the legendary queen, who remains one of history's greatest enigmas, will debut in the Mandell Center at The Franklin Institute from June 5, 2010 – January 2, 2011, then travel to four other North American cities.

TICKET INFORMATION

The exhibition will be open 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays (last entry at 3:30 p.m.); and 9:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays (last entry at 7 p.m.). Tickets are timed and dated, and advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended. For information on purchasing tickets, please call 1-877-TFI-TIXS or visit www.fi.edu. Information on discounted tickets for groups of 15 or more is available at 1-800-285-0684.

A number of hotels in Philadelphia also will feature **Cleopatra VIP Hotel Packages**, complete with two untimed VIP tickets to the blockbuster exhibition. For information about travel to Philadelphia and hotel packages, visit visitphilly.com/cleopatra or uwishunu.com or, call the Independence Visitor Center, located in Historic Philadelphia, at 1-800-537-7676.

About The Franklin Institute

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania's most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.

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