



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### *Mummified Hand*

Egyptians believed that a person was made up of the physical body, as well as the *ren* (the name), *shuyet* (the shadow), *ka* (the life-force), *ba* (the personality), and *akh* (the spirit). Mummification rituals were meant to preserve not only the body, but all components that make up an individual for eternity

Priests, sometimes dressed as Anubis, the god of mummification, would embalm the body and prepare it for burial. The type and quality of mummification depended on one's economic class. The body was treated with natron and oils, which dessicated and preserved the body. Specific mummification practices, such as the treatment of internal organs, varied through time and according to the social class of the deceased. The mummy wrappings (linen) were infused with a special religious meaning. As the priests wrapped the mummy, they would read spells and place amulets on the body to protect it in the afterlife.

Unknown (Egyptian)  
*Mummified Hand*, no date  
mixed media

8 1/8 x 3 1/8 in. (20.6 x 8 cm)

Acquired through the Egypt Exploration Fund through the efforts of Professor Richard Austin Rice, 1881-1903  
SEG.10.27

#### Source

Ikram, Salima. *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt*. Great Britain: Longman, 2003.



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## DISCUSS

### *Mummified Hand*

Ancient Egyptians hoped that their mummified remains would reside undisturbed in their tombs, helping to secure their place in the afterlife. However, many tombs have been disturbed, both by tomb robbers in ancient times and by archaeologists in modern times.

Do you think tombs should continue to be excavated by archaeologists? Why or why not?

Should mummies and other artifacts be on display in museums around the world, or do they belong in Egypt?

What are the benefits of having ancient artifacts on display in museums? What are the drawbacks?

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## CREATE

### *Mummified Hand*

This hand went through a lengthy mummification process. Now you can try your hand at mummification! Experiment with the same chemical formula utilized in ancient Egypt, using ingredients easily obtained at your local grocery and drug store.

- Mummify an Apple  
[http://www.sciencekidsathome.com/science\\_experiments/mummy\\_experiment.html#more](http://www.sciencekidsathome.com/science_experiments/mummy_experiment.html#more)
- Mummify an Apple - 2  
[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/dailylp/dailylp/dailylp102.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/dailylp/dailylp/dailylp102.shtml)
- Mummify a Hotdog  
[http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project\\_ideas/HumBio\\_p022.shtml](http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project_ideas/HumBio_p022.shtml)
- Mummify a Chicken  
<http://www.mummytombs.com/mummymaking/mummychicken3.htm>

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