

## ‘Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian’ is Predictable, Clustered Drive!

Submitted by [Ebeth](#) [1] on May 22, 2009 - 1:30pm

- [Amy Adams](#) [2]
- [Ben Stiller](#) [3]
- [Bill Hader](#) [4]
- [Elizabeth Opprieht](#) [5]
- [Hank Azaria](#) [6]
- [Jonah Hill](#) [7]
- [Movie Review](#) [8]
- [Night at the Museum](#) [9]
- [Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian](#) [10]
- [Owen Wilson](#) [11]
- [Ricky Gervais](#) [12]
- [Robert Ben Garant](#) [13]
- [Robin Williams](#) [14]
- [Shawn Levy](#) [15]
- [Steve Coogan](#) [16]



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The sequel “[Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian](#) [17]” is, presumably, an effort by director [Shawn Levy](#) [18] (“[Night at the Museum](#) [19]” in 2006 and “The Pink Panther”) and writers Robert Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon (who both wrote the first film) to weave together an exciting and educational film.

After all, the concept remains clever and plot endless in possibilities. Museum exhibits come to life through ancient magic with wildlife running amuck, significant historical figures repossessed and left to interact as well as all sorts of artifacts renewed and at the disposal of all.



Ben Stiller returns as heroic museum guard Larry Daley in “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian”.

*Photo credit: Doane Gregory, Fox Pictures*

Add to this formula a knockout cast – with [Ben Stiller](#) [20], [Amy Adams](#) [21], [Owen Wilson](#) [22], [Hank Azaria](#) [23], [Robin Williams](#) [24], [Steve Coogan](#) [25], [Ricky Gervais](#) [26], [Bill Hader](#) [27] and [Jonah Hill](#) [28] – and one can expect hilarity and stimulation.

Instead, the filmgoer will quite amazingly find little engagement in this movie and instead will be confronted with a predictable, “when’s it

going to end?” storyline that amounts to little but clustered drivel. The opposite of stimulating, the film simply numbs and dumbs the mind.

Upon opening, we find that former museum guard Larry Daley (Ben Stiller) has left his job at the Museum of Natural History to pursue a more lucrative career: inventor and infomercial personality. It becomes clear through rushed and skipped-about scenes that he’s unfulfilled in his new life and is quickly led back to wander the halls of his former museum-guard dwellings.



Egyptian pharaoh Kahmunrah (Hank Azaria) strikes a villainous pose in “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian”.

*Photo credit: Doane Gregory, Fox Pictures*

Upon his return to the Museum of Natural History, Larry finds that the majority of the exhibits he came to know in the original “Night at the Museum” are being shipped for storage in the basement of the Smithsonian.

Larry does little about this until he gets a frantic phone call from the miniature cowboy, Jedediah (Owen Wilson), who pleads for help at the awakened Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Jedediah states that Egyptian royalty Kahmunrah (Hank Azaria) is attacking and threatening evil reign.

Larry is quickly off to intervene in the battle and save his former comrades.

In its entirety, the plot of this film feels like a garage sale jigsaw puzzle: its pieces out of order, warped and shoved into places they don’t go with a few extra pieces thrown into the box.

One could imagine the writers clinging hard to some original ideas of how to personify the exhibits – while trying to mix these pieces with pop-culture and product promotions – and then trying too hard to make it appeal broadly within the given time. The end result is rushed and fragmented. It leaves one to wonder if the Smithsonian has ever seemed so “empty”.

There are, though, a few bright points scattered about the otherwise lacking experience. These moments include the scenes carried by Hank Azaria’s Kahmunrah. Azzaria chattering out the snappy lines of an Egyptian ruler reincarnate with a lisp is a priceless comic choice.

Amy Adams embraces her role as Ameila Earhart and is bright and commanding with it. Unfortunately, the script leads her character into a rather one-dimensional role and down the path of a grossly undeveloped and seemingly pointless romance. She is memorable, however, for the spunk she brings to the screen.





Amy Adams is famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart in “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian”.

Photo credit: Doane Gregory, Fox Pictures

Jonah Hill as a Smithsonian guard has great execution while bantering with Stiller’s Larry. Chalk up quite a few funnies in their interaction. However, the various talents (i.e. Robin Williams as Teddy Roosevelt) go greatly underused with essentially too much too quick for any sort of real connection or care.

Though providing some unique and notable moments where famous statues and paintings are brought to life, special effects dwindle in their effectiveness. Scenes toward the conclusion of the main conflict become reminiscent of 1990s video games graphics.

#### RELATED CONTENT



[See our high-quality, 29-image gallery for “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian”.](#) [29]



[Read more film reviews from critic Elizabeth Opprecht.](#) [5]

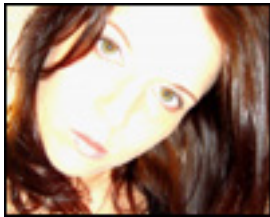
Ben Stiller’s performance can only be described as disengaged. Bill Hader’s portrayal of General Custer is distractedly corny and riddled with a cartoonish overacting though he – like Amy Adams – feels poorly scripted. In a similar boat, Owen Wilson as Jedediah struggles through his scribbled and thoughtless lines.

Overall, “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian” falls short of its predecessor. The tale of a father and son regaining connection, a resolved romantic subplot and the resolving of conflict within the wakened exhibits were all chapters explored and resolved in the first. The sequel is unoriginal – revolving again around unresolved conflict between exhibits and an attempt at a romantic subplot.

This time, we find the idea riddled with far too many details, dead-end chapters and underdeveloped characters. Instead of a trip to this film, a trip to an actual museum is recommended. At least then one would be certain that cherub sculptures look like cherubs – not the Jonas Brothers – and Einstein is not famous for his disco song references.

*“Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian,” which stars Ben Stiller, Amy Adams, Owen Wilson, Hank Azaria, Robin Williams, Steve Coogan, Ricky Gervais, Bill Hader and Jonah Hill from director Shawn Levy and writers Robert Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon, opened everywhere on May 22, 2009. The film is rated PG for mild action and brief language.*

By ELIZABETH OPPRIECHT  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[elizabeth@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:elizabeth@hollywoodchicago.com) [30]



[30]

© 2009 Elizabeth Opprieht, HollywoodChicago.com

**Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 6:26pm*):**  
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/7808/night-at-the-museum-battle-of-the-smithsonian-is-predictable-clustered-drive/>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/ebeth>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/amy-adams>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/ben-stiller>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/bill-hader>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/elizabeth-opprieht>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/hank-azaria>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jonah-hill>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/night-at-the-museum>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/night-at-the-museum-battle-of-the-smithsonian>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/owen-wilson>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/ricky-gervais>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/robert-ben-garant>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/robin-williams>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/shawn-levy>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/steve-coogan>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/night-at-the-museum-battle-of-the-smithsonian>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/shawn-levy>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/night-at-the-museum>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ben-stiller>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/amy-adams>
- [22] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/owen-wilson>
- [23] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hank-azaria>
- [24] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/robin-williams>
- [25] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/steve-coogan>
- [26] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ricky-gervais>
- [27] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bill-hader>
- [28] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jonah-hill>
- [29] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/7793/slideshow-29-image-gallery-for-night-at-the-museum-battle-of-the-smithsonian>
- [30] <mailto:elizabeth@hollywoodchicago.com>