Disney releases Mars film to Imax theaters

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The Walt Disney Co. is releasing a film at 25 Imax theaters featuring the world's highest-resolution photographs of the planet Mars.

"Roving Mars," a 40-minute documentary film, tells the story of the two remote-controlled, four-wheeled "Rovers" sent to Mars in 2003. The Rovers were designed to last 90 days, but are still taking photographs.

Steve Squyres and Jim Bell of Cornell University designed the cameras for the Rover space vehicles, and helped make the film.

"One of our big goals was to make this an experience like you were

there," Bell said. "The impression we wanted to create was, you step out of your little capsule ... and you're seeing this alien landscape for the first time."

Planning for the film began even before the launch of the Mars missions. George Butler, a documentary maker, was working on an Imax movie with film editor Tim Squyres, who had discussed Imax productions with his brother, the Cornell scientist.

They approached producer Frank Marshall, who successfully pitched the idea to Disney. The company is scheduled to release the film on Friday.

The movie's photographs were gleaned from 400 hours of high-definition film taken during a three-year period on the Red Planet.

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