



## **ACCES Workshop – Casts, Models and Reproductions**

**27<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 13:00-17:00**  
**World Museum Liverpool**

All museum collections have or use replicas. Many collections have inherited these from previous generations, some may be accessioned, others hold a more liminal status in collections. Replicas have a long history in museums and contrary to received wisdom remained vital resources for museum display and educational initiatives for much of the twentieth century. This workshop explores some of the curatorial issues associated with this material within the specific context of collections from Ancient Egypt and Sudan:

- Should casts/reproductions/dioramas be accessioned? If so as what sort of objects? Or are they better retained as ‘teaching collections’? If accessioned, what sorts of information should be recorded and to what extent should it differ from the fields included if it was the original?
- Is it ever acceptable to display replicas without explicitly labelling them as such?
- Who owns the rights to a cast or reproduction? And how should these be managed given commercial interests?
- How can we piece together a history of reproductions when until recently many weren’t considered museum objects?
- Different generations of casts and models are clearly differentiated in terms of their materials: is it possible to establish a lexicon to describe these differences? Are there casts which include hazardous materials, particularly older ones? How are scaled up casts made? Can you tell between a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation cast or mould?
- Historically, what were the networks through which reproductions were circulated? How did they function in the standardization and dispersal of object knowledge?
- How do we treat modern day casting practices such as 3D printing for curators of the future? Should we be collecting examples?
- Should casts be treated as second class objects? Are they merely surrogates or proxies for the original?
- With casting and reproduction techniques ever improving how do we keep track of the casts and the real thing?
- How do we establish the uniqueness or otherwise of casts?

- How do students and visitors respond to casts? What is their value in teaching?

Confirmed contributions to date. We are still accepting abstracts.

### **Liverpool's Cast Collection**

*Ashley Cooke, World Museum Liverpool*

### **Modelling the Ancient Egyptian World, from Dioramas to VR**

*Margaret Maitland, National Museum of Scotland*

Ancient Egypt's extensive ruins and excellent preservation of artefacts have made it particularly appealing as an iconic representation of the past. Many varied attempts over the years have been made to model the ancient Egyptian world: from early artists like David Roberts and the Crystal Palace Egyptian Court, to Hollywood films and museum dioramas, and more recently video games and virtual reality. Being able to experience ancient Egypt can inspire, but the extent to which reconstructions go to fill in the gaps often stretch evidence into imagination. Using examples such as Cyril Aldred's dioramas from National Museums Scotland and the new Assassins Creed video game, this presentation will explore in particular the benefits and pitfalls of combining education and entertainment in seeking to model ancient Egypt.

### **With Professor John Garstang's Compliments: Sharing the unique through facsimiles**

*Dan Potter, National Museum of Scotland*

John Garstang was a man with a "*flair for finding the good site and an organiser with a positive genius for finance*" (Fairman 1956), this was reflected in his management of relationships with backers and in turn his relationship with finds. Over the course of his excavations in Egypt and Sudan, Garstang was involved in the discovery of a number of high profile objects. Realising that any single object could not be shared amongst his numerous backers he began distributing facsimiles of the exceptional objects. This paper will explore these casts and copies, many of which have often been treated with suspicion or have simply been forgotten.

### **The role of casts in the inter-war war years: new technologies of collecting**

*Alice Stevenson, Institute of Archaeology, UCL*

In the 1920s spectacular discoveries in the Valley of the Kings created new expectations of what constituted archaeological objects and the public's appetite grew for the sorts of "wonderful things" Carter's team were documenting. Yet 'minor antiquities', field documents and plaster copies of more substantial discoveries were increasingly all that was available to foreign excavators for export after post-war geopolitical shifts. During this period the renamed Egypt Exploration Society (EES) attempted to forge ahead with excavations at the site of Tell el-Amarna. In lieu of the quantities of finds previously taken for granted by missions, the EES had to find alternative strategies for satisfying museum demand that had previously incentivised financial support. Casts provided one means of recompense. Contrary to popular misconceptions the production of casts remained a key museum concern in the 1920s

and 1930s that the EES capitalized on. This talk explores some the motivations for acquiring casts in this period.

**The History of Egyptian Casts in the British Museum**

*Patricia Usick, British Museum, Department of Egypt and Sudan*