

MAKERS AND FAKERS:

HOW COPIES, REPLICAS, CASTS AND
FAKES 'MAKE' MUSEUM COLLECTIONS



MONDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER & TUESDAY
1ST OCTOBER 2024

Pitt Rivers Museum
S. Parks Road, OX1 3PP

BOOK ONLINE:

TICKETS £10

MAKERS AND FAKERS:



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Historically, museums have been spaces for material experimentation, the practical manipulation of objects, and the testing of hypotheses. Objects were modelled, moulded, reproduced, and shared with others. They were faithfully copied, used, damaged, and fixed as part of experimental investigations into their possible uses and the technology behind their making. Annual Reports of the Pitt Rivers Museum describe students at the museum making “flint implements...spinning or weaving” and puzzling out “the scales of... musical instruments”. A now infamous anecdote involves the censure faced by a museum curator following an incident with a thrown boomerang in the nearby University Park.

Casts and copies of unique or rare objects were faithfully made so as to share with other museums and audiences, as well as to facilitate embodied interactions. Rare photographs and artworks were rephotographed and reprinted for display and dissemination, and photographs of objects were exhibited to ‘stand in for’ the real thing in displays, alongside rubbings, moulds, and paper squeezes. The replica or facsimile gained a value and status as simulacrum but also as an object that could more readily teach the body about its referent than the fragile original could ever do.

Museums also acquired ‘fakes’, objects purporting to be something that they are not. These ‘fakes’ were often made by similar or even identical processes to those used by museum workers for experimental purposes, and distinctions between benign copies and malicious fakes were often lines drawn through the politics of gender and class (Briefel 2018). Some ‘fakes’ even gained notoriety—becoming collectable objects in their own right, and many ‘fakers’ went on to instruct museum professionals in the skills of their trade.

Not all copies were made inside the museum’s walls. Moulds for casts and paper squeezes were often made on colonial expeditions, and involved the labour of many—often unacknowledged hands (Reynolds-Kaye 2022). As Foster has noted, ‘replicas embed many stories and embody considerable past human energy’. Thinking critically about replicas and copies requires a commitment to recognising the networks of people and things—both within and outside of museum spaces—which made their production and circulation possible.

Experimental practices in museums have declined steadily over the years, and yet the products of this activity remain in collections in the present. Whilst distinctions between ‘authentic’ and copied objects have always existed in museums, the appetite for displaying copies and models for teaching and research purposes diminished rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century. Whilst some early practices such as the once celebrated cast galleries have become historical objects in their own right, they now mostly occupy ancillary rooms or corridors, except where they have become too integral to remove, such as most large dinosaur skeletons in natural history museums. And yet in recent years developments in 3D and computer modelling have bought replication back into the forefront of museum practice.

This two-day object and practise-based workshop brings together makers, academics, and museum practitioners to consider the nature and role of copies, casts, replicas and fakes in museums, the social and cultural practices that gave rise to them, what we can learn from them, and what museum futures they may have.

MAKERS AND FAKERS: CLOSED SESSIONS



OBJECT
HANDLING

*Monday 30th September | Visiting
Researchers Room*

11:00-12:30

Object Handling facilitated by Dr Chris Morton, PRM & Dr Beth Hodgett PRM

Closed session for workshop speakers only. Object handling of casts, copies, replicas and fakes from the PRM Collection.

REPLICA
MAKING

*Tuesday 1st October | Old Library and
Blackwood Seminar Room*

09:00-12:00

Replica making facilitated by Dr James Dilley of Ancient Craft & Graham Taylor of Potted History

Closed session for workshop speakers only. Join Dr James Dilley and Graham Taylor as they lead us through the process of flint knapping and making a replica Samian-ware pot.

MAKERS AND FAKERS: DAY 1 | TALKS



REPLICAS,
MODELS & FAKES

13:30–15:15 | Lecture Theatre

PROFESSOR SALLY FOSTER

University of Stirling

New Futures for Replicas: Reasons to rethink and revalue the contribution of makers and their craft

DR ANDREW SHAPLAND

Ashmolean Museum | Jesus College, Oxford

Replicating Knossos at the Ashmolean's 'Labyrinth' exhibition

PROFESSOR PATRICIA KINGORI

Nuffield Department of Population Health | Somerville College, Oxford

Taking Fakers Seriously

FLINTS AND
EOLITHS

15:30–17:00 | Lecture Theatre

DR JAMES DILLEY

Ancient Craft

Replicating Ancient Craft

PROFESSOR ROY ELLEN & ANGELA MUTHANA

University of Kent

Eoliths in Context: Neither hoaxes nor frauds **Pre-recorded presentation*

DR HELEN WICKSTEAD

Kingston University

Photography and Archaeological Stone Collecting: From the discovery of deep time to the eolithic controversies

MAKERS AND FAKERS: DAY 2 | TALKS



FAKERS AND
MAKERS

13:00-15:00 | Lecture Theatre

REBECCA LOUGHEAD

Society of Antiquaries

Fakes in the History of the Society of Antiquaries

AMALIA WICKSTEAD

UCL | Ashmolean Museum

Casting the British Empire: Plaster copies of classical sculpture and colonial complicity

DR ELAINE CHARWAT

UCL | Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Replica-makers as authenticators: The curious case of William P. Pycraft

REPLICA POTS,
POTTERY AND
TECHNOLOGY

15:15-16:30 | Lecture Theatre

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Potted History

Potted History

DR SARAH DOHERTY

Department of Continuing Education, Oxford

Scrapes, Strings and Striations: Replicating an Ancient Egyptian potter's wheel

PLENARY
DISCUSSION

16:30-17:00 | Lecture Theatre