



FACTVM
FOVNDATION
FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
IN CONSERVATION



By the seaside

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Some of you might be reading this on a laptop whilst on holiday somewhere delicious - perhaps by the sea. And if that sea in a great ocean you might notice the fractal nature of the coastline as you sip your iced drink. It is jagged because the sea is doing its best to devour it and the coastline is fighting back where it is strongest.

I was on the Atlantic coast recently - not lounging with a cold drink sadly but discussing how the sand dunes can be productive - in fact how these particular arid sand flats were very productive. We were looking at a 500 hectare (about 1,250 acres) farm whose irrigation system was intricate but very efficient and allowed for two crops a year of tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, melons and also supported nut bearing *Pinus Pinea* (the base of pesto so deeply important especially had we been in Italy).

The farm was an example of a technology that is creating remarkable results - the sea tries to eat away the coast but the farm goes on producing.

Now, you know that if you owned a sculpture and it was standing as a sentinel on that coast it too would be fighting to stay there - the sea is one of the most destructive yet beautiful forces we know. Now imagine if that sculpture was in a museum - would it be safe? Not entirely, though perhaps thieves would be less able to approach it. It would still be subject to constant, if not so visible or dramatic, change. Every object is and that includes all the great cultural artefacts that we treasure. Every single one - through natural or human intervention - often both.

You also know by now, I hope, that Factum Foundation has - through advanced technology and the skills of Manuel Franquelo working with Factum Arte - perfected a way to preserve permanently those important objects that make us what we are, a civilised race (though if we look around us it is sometimes hard to say that without irony - we destroy so much of what we treasure). It is called the Lucida 3D Scanner, designed by Manuel Franquelo. We can record in exact detail those objects and make them subjects in an archive that future generations can use to see what we inherited and that archive can be used to make sure that whatever we do, even intentionally, to our inheritance can be monitored and referenced. And we can even, through other of Factum's extraordinary developments and innovations - recreate the object if it is in real danger from exposure to us or nature.

Just like the farm by the sea - technology now allows us to do things that were not imaginable a few years ago - and now it is our duty to do them.