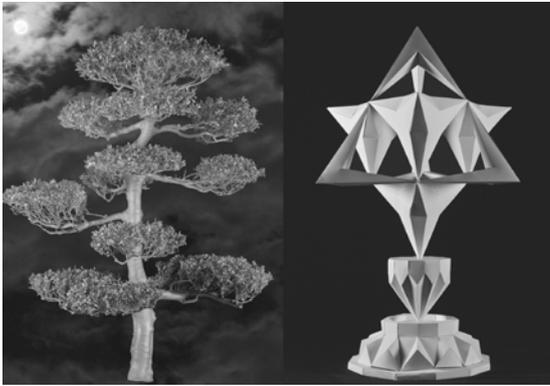




FACTVM  
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IN CONSERVATION

## Technology finds a way

07-05-2013



As usual we are starting the new week with a menu of opportunities and projects that are both exciting and also daunting. But because there is a vein running through everything we do and that vein is technology the horizon is always more biased to the exiting as opposed to the daunting. The 'let's find out' as opposed to 'oh, no, how?'

This week Factum Arte's tree is being unveiled in London at the Connaught, whose tree it is to become - under the eyes of landscaper Tom Stuart-Smith in whose garden design it is to live and it is a symbol of a thing we forget sometimes. There is always a way to do something and it doesn't need to be harmful or too difficult. The tree is a facsimile of a real tree - the real one stood in the Connaught internal garden but just could not survive without the sun - the replacement has perfect leaves and branches and a trunk and twigs and buds and looks like a tree - but it is cast in brass (bead blasted to create the sheen) and doesn't need the sun except to add to its lustre. It is unique and required some remarkable thinking, skill, patience, dexterity and inspiration to make it - and it is now to be exposed to the (rather weak) sun of the courtyard and our gaze. The inspiration came from Wenzel Jamnitzer in the CXVIth which was interpreted by Adam and team in 2013 - but that is a story for another week, though you might investigate Jamnitzer as he is almost the definition of inspiration.

Finding ways to do things is what technology allows us and what technology gives us. It lets us advance, think around obstacles, create new paths. I once had a small electronics company - this was in the 70s - and the chief engineer (read only for chief) was a wonderfully optimistic person who told me many times that 'you can do anything with electronics, if you know how'. It was the 'know how' qualifier that I failed to fully grasp at the time, but I was very young.

If we don't know how we have to find a way and that is really what the Factum Foundation - depending for its innovation on Factum Arte, who makes trees that might, perhaps, one day be a forest of brass trees in the desert - is all about. For the Foundation it is about finding ways to record and preserve and then, having found them, helping custodians and conservators and owners and others understand how to record exactly and precisely what we have so that we can preserve it and understand it. Future generations, who will wonder at the object we have recorded - and remember, the original will be a different object, as the natural state of things is dynamic - will know exactly and precisely what it looked like the day we scanned it, right now. That is a tremendously valuable, relatively easy and completely harmless way of using technology at its purest. That's what we do.