AVOIDING OBLIVION
Pharaonic Influence Over the Past 500 Years

June 28th - July 6th
Factum Foundation & Skene Catling de la Peña
for Masterpiece (Re)Discovery
CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Location 3
Tomb Layout 5

Objects -
Facade 9
Passage 17

The First Facsimile 21
Cannibalism in Europe 25
Tomb Raiders 29
Hacked Out & Sawn off 31
Digital Restoration 32
Squeezed to Death 33
The Sacred Cow 37
Howard Carter Before 1922 39
Creative Recording 45
Cabinet of Curiosities 47

Antechamber 51
Burial Chamber 55
Annex 57
Viewing Room 59
Exit 61
Project Team 63

Curated by
Adam Lowe and Charlotte Skene Catling
Exhibition designed by
Skene Catling de la Pena
Lighting designs
Neal Taylor, Spectrum Solutions and TM Lighting

With original watercolours by Howard Carter and vintage photographic prints by Harry Burton from the collection of Rupert Wace
Egyptologist Nicholas Reeves
and Gillray prints from Andrew Edmund

Based on the work of the
Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative
with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
the University of Basel and
the Friends of the Royal Tombs of Egypt

With thanks to
Lucie Kitchener, Craig Brown, and TM Lighting.
INTRODUCTION

Avoiding Oblivion – Pharaonic Influence Over the Past 500 Years is an exhibition created by Factum Foundation for Masterpiece Art Fair, 2022. On the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, it reveals how our fascination with Ancient Egypt began centuries earlier. The inaugural Masterpiece [Re]discovery invites visitors to engage with a prescient and powerful display that charts changing attitudes to preservation, the impact of time and the dynamic nature of originality.

The exhibition, curated by Adam Lowe and Charlotte Skene Catling and designed by Skene Catling de la Peña, embeds the plan of Tutankhamun’s tomb within a larger labyrinth that traces how Ancient Egypt has captured the public imagination for over five hundred years, from the Renaissance to the Romantics, through colonial discovery and scientific excavation to the future and virtual or augmented experience. The façade is Giovanni Piranesi’s Caffè degli Inglesi, an 18th century Egyptian architectural fantasy, originally created in Rome where travellers on the Grand Tour would meet. Cut-out windows reveal an animated journey through his Carceri, or ‘prisons of the mind’. Original objects and books such as Horapollo’s Hieroglyphica, originally printed in 1505, sit alongside Factum Foundation’s 21st century digital restorations of segments of tomb, Howard Carter’s delicate 19th century watercolours and Harry Burton’s monochrome photographs that capture the greatest archaeological discovery of our time.

Our knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Theban Necropolis is founded on tombs that were built to last for eternity and survived for over 3,000 years. These profound monuments, The Book of the Dead and the Pharaonic approach to magical transformation and the cycle of life, remain enigmatic and captivating. Looking back at Egyptomania through the ages we see very different behaviours and attitudes. Displays include ‘Cannibalism in Europe in the 19th century’ illustrating the way Egyptian mummies were bought, sold and eaten, to ‘Squeezed to Death’, ‘Tomb Raiders’ and ‘Hacked Out and Sawn Off’ that detail the destruction of the tombs by antiquarians and tourists alike. A facsimile of The Celestial Cow, otherwise known as The Myth of the Destruction of the Human Race, marks a turning point in the exhibition and signals the start of a different approach to looking, recording and preserving at this critical time in our collective history. It also leads us to question what we – individually and collectively – are doing during our lives, and how we ourselves will be perceived and remembered after we are gone.

With COP 27 taking place in Sharm El Sheikh in November, on the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun’s Tomb, sustainability is the focus and different approaches to the preservation of the tombs of the Valley of the Kings will be presented. A stark white space with the exact dimensions of Tutankhamun’s sarcophagus chamber contains technology that enables a virtual experience of the tomb at high-resolution while simultaneously enabling visitors to look through the eyes of others. Through the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative (TNPI), Factum Foundation has been working alongside the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the Valley of the Kings for over twenty years, rethinking preservation, stewardship, access and training, and demonstrating how digital data can enable positive change. While technology is usually seen as a force shaping the future, Factum uses it to look deep into the past. This innovative installation for MASTERPIECE [RE]DISCOVERY encourages visitors to understand the complexity of history in new ways and to challenge our own point of view and the limits of understanding.

This exhibition was initiated by Philip Hewat-Jaboor and has since become a tribute to him.
LOCATION

A view of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea & the Rotunda in Ranelagh Gardens
London, 1761.
Design

On the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, Avoiding Oblivion - Pharaonic Influence Over the Past 500 Years is a display that reveals how our relationship with ancient Egypt has evolved over time.

The design was subject to all the constraints of temporary fair construction, within which the goal was ultimately to create a sense of deep time and permanence. Typically, temporary fairs are installed in less than a week, remain in place for as long, and are then taken down and removed. All installations, almost without exception, remain on a single level. This is also true of Masterpiece Fair.

The design began with the overlaying of the plan of Tutankhamun’s tomb onto the site itself, which is a 14m x 15m rectangle. This became the main organizing principle, where the exhibition embeds the plan of the tomb within a larger labyrinth that traces how ancient Egypt has captured the public imagination for over five hundred years, from the Renaissance to the Romantics, through colonial discovery and scientific excavation to the future and virtual or augmented experience. This journey into the centre became a space to unravel the historic fascination with all things Egyptian, but also to explore how destructive that attention has been.

The design intention was not to mimic the ancient tomb, carved into rock, instead, it was to create an inversion. Rather than descending into the tomb, visitors are taken up a ramp that rises nearly a metre in order to experience the identical scale, proportions and relationships to each other of Tutankhamun’s Antechamber, Burial Chamber and Annex. These contain and explore recordings made at different times in the 20th and 21st centuries and demonstrate how the technological approach developed by Factum Foundation over the past 20 years can protect and help preserve these extraordinary, enigmatic tombs.
1. Passage - A chronological fascination with Ancient Egypt
2. Antechamber - 51 original photographs of the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb by Harry Burton
3. Burial Chamber - Virtual reality experience of the Tomb of Tutankhamun
4. Annex - Informal library and meeting space
5. Viewing Room
6. Exit
7. Piranesi stage and animated film
For the façade of Avoiding Oblivion, the trompe l’oeil openings in Piranesi’s Caffè degli Inglesi design have been cut away to become real windows. Set behind this, to create a complex layering of Piranesi’s work, is a screen on which an animated ‘fly-through’ of his prison fantasies, made by Grégoire Dupond and Factum Arte, plays on a long loop. These architectural mazes of the mind are an invitation to travel introspectively through space and time.

Pharaonic Egypt and the Theban Necropolis are the focus of this exhibition. ‘Avoiding Oblivion’ – both personally and collectively – was intrinsic to Pharaonic culture. Ensuring the continuation of a natural system whose complexity is still beyond our understanding over 3,000 years later, was of equal importance. The Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Preservation has been active in the Valley of the Kings since 2001 helping the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities with the ongoing work to ensure continuity and survival. Now more than ever, at this precarious point in our history, we need to learn these existential lessons.

This is a display about changing attitudes to knowledge and preservation, the impact of time and the dynamic nature of originality. Technology is usually seen as a force shaping the future. Here it enables us to look back into the past where reality seems more compelling than fiction. The knowledge contained in the tombs and temples of the Theban Necropolis reveal the complexity of history. With it we can look through fresh eyes to question our own world view.
Giovanni Battista Piranesi (or Cavaliere Giambattista Piranesi) introduced Egypt to the first wave of international tourists flooding to Rome on the Grand Tour. At the foot of the Spanish steps, English visitors met in the Caffè degli Inglesi to plan their days, discuss their purchases and share their adventures or discoveries.

Piranesi decorated the Caffè degli Inglesi in a way that seduced them with an idea of Egypt, the exotic, the oriental, Pharaonic culture and the great achievements of the world's longest running civilization. He filled their imagination with images of pyramids and Re, the personification of the energy of the sun. But where there is light there is also shadow. One of the most coveted trophies for the acquisitive British tourists, anticipating and encapsulating the dark satanic mills of the romantic imagination, was a set of Piranesi’s great etchings, The Carceri - prisons of his mind.

For the façade of Avoiding Oblivion, the trompe l’oeil openings in Piranesi’s Caffè degli Inglesi design have been cut away to become real windows. Set back behind this, to create a complex layering of Piranesi’s work, is a screen on which an animated ‘fly-through’ of his prison fantasies, made by Grégoire Dupond and Factum Arte, plays on a long loop. These architectural mazes of the mind are an invitation to travel introspectively through space and time.

To enter the virtual environment of Piranesi’s Carceri d’Invenzione is to penetrate what Margaret Yourcenar has called ‘Piranesi’s dark brain’. Each of the 16 prints has been transformed into a viscerally real space. Described by Victor Hugo as the ‘horrible Babel Piranesi dreamed of’, these prints were reportedly etched after an attack of delirious fever, and they have continued to exert a powerful hold on our collective imagination ever since their first publication in 1749. In the Carceri, Piranesi’s uniquely Venetian caprice is combined with the darker visions of baroque excess. This 12-minute performance celebrates the richness of Piranesi’s multi-layered vision and the potential of new technology.
In the 16th century, interest in Pharaonic knowledge and culture came back into focus. Horapollo (or Horus Apollo) is the name given to the author of the *Hieroglyphica* who is thought to have lived in Alexandria in the 5th century. *Hieroglyphica* contains nearly two hundred illustrations and explanations of Egyptian hieroglyphs, believed to be based on direct knowledge from the last remnants of the Egyptian priesthood. The text is known through a Greek translation discovered in the 15th century on the island of Andros and taken to Florence by Cristoforo Buondelmonti. It is now in the Biblioteca Laurenziana. From its first printed publication in 1505, it became very popular for its enigmatic, esoteric content. While seeking to revive knowledge of classical Greece, Buondelmonti found a key that opened the door to Ancient Egypt. The woodcuts are attributed to Jean Cousin or Jean Goujon.

*Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus*  
Athanasius Kircher, 1636, Rome,  
Private Collection  
Avoiding Oblivion

*Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* (The Coptic or Egyptian Forerunner), by Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, was published in Rome in 1636. *Prodromus* was the beginning of Kircher’s relationship with Egyptology. It contained the first ever published grammar of the Coptic language, which Kircher believed was what remained of the ancient Egyptian language. He set out to connect Coptic with many other languages including Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic. Jean-François Champollion, a later French orientalist and philologist Coptic scholar who deciphered the Rosetta Stone, said that ‘L’Europe savante doit en quelque sorte à Kircher la connaissance de la langue copte; et il mérite, sous ce rapport, d’autant plus d’indulgence pour ses erreurs nombreuses, que les monuments littéraires des Coptes étaient plus rares de son temps.’ (European scholarship more or less owes its understanding of the Coptic language to Kircher and in this regard he merits all the greater forgiveness of his mistakes given that Coptic literary materials were rare during his period.)
Kircher’s *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* is the culmination of his years of research in Egyptology. In Volume I he gives a general overview of Egypt’s geography, the Nile and the Egyptian pantheon. Volume II contains his research into hieroglyphs, their origin and method of interpretation, and in Volume III, he concentrates on the relationships between hieroglyphs, Chinese characters and Aztec writings.

The obelisks in Rome with their enigmatic inscriptions and a bronze tablet, known as the ‘Mensa Isiaca’ or ‘Bembine Tablets of Isis’, captured the imagination of the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher. The tablet is an example of Roman Egyptomania, probably produced during the 1st century AD. While the central figure is identifiable as Isis, most of the hieroglyphs, rituals and motifs lack verifiable sense or meaning. The *Mensa Isiaca* is in the collection of the Museo Egizio in Turin.
The Tomb of Seti I was discovered in 1817 but it was the exhibition of the facsimile made by Giovanni Belzoni at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly that stimulated the popular interest in Pharaonic culture, triggering a wave of Egyptomania. Attitudes to preservation at Belzoni’s time were vastly different to those that dominated one hundred years ago when Carter discovered the Tomb of Tutankhamun, or those that are emerging in today’s world of online and offline access.

The entrance passage focuses on 18th and 19th century Egyptomania. Displays include ‘Cannibalism in Europe in the 19th century’ illustrating the way Egyptian mummies were bought, sold and eaten, to ‘Squeezed to Death’, ‘Tomb Raiders’ and ‘Hacked Out and Sawn Off’ that detail the destruction of the tombs by antiquarians and tourists alike. A facsimile of The Celestial Cow, otherwise known as The Myth of the Destruction of the Human Race, marks a turning point in the exhibition and signals the start of a different approach to looking, recording and preserving at this critical time in our collective history. A projection mapped onto the surface shifts between showing how The Celestial Cow looked when Belzoni first found it, and how it looks today.

Rest assured, Sir, that one day you will have the pleasure of seeing some of the beautiful bas-reliefs of the Tomb of Osirei in the French Museum. That will be the only way of saving them from imminent destruction and in carrying out this project I shall be acting as a real lover of antiquity, since I shall be taking them away only to preserve them and not to sell them.

Jean-François Champollion the Young to Joseph Bonomi the Younger

Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) was one of the best-known figures in the revival of interest in Egypt. Following Napoleon’s campaign that led to the ‘discovery of Egypt’, the deciphering of hieroglyphs and the understanding of Pharaonic culture became entangled with Anglo-French politics and the modernising ambitions of Muhammed Ali Pasha al-Mas’ud ibn Agha, the Albanian Ottoman governor and de facto ruler of Egypt. This large fragment in the Musée du Louvre has acquired some of the qualities of Parisian taste during its time in France: diaphanous transparent fabrics over sensuous bodies, pastel colouring and a harmonious softness.

A facsimile of a fragment from the tomb of Seti I: Hathor welcomes Seti to the underworld
Factum Arte
Made with the permission of the Archaeological Museum, Florence

Seti I is welcomed by the goddess Hathor who offers him her necklace, which he touches with one hand while holding her other hand. The representation reveals a symbolic connection between King and deity.

Ippolito Rosellini (1800-1843) was an Italian Egyptologist who joined Jean-François Champollion in the Franco-Tuscan expedition to Egypt. In his work, I Monumenti dell’Egitto e della Nubia, he depicted the relief showing Seti I before the goddess Hathor, now held in Florence.

Rosellini and Champollion removed these matching threshold panels during a visit to Thebes where they were shocked to see the deterioration of the condition of the tomb in the years after its discovery.

They were cut from the wall and removed in one piece. This panel was restored in Florence in the 1930’s and has assumed some of the qualities dominant in Italy at the time; angular pleats and folds, clear sharp contrast and a slightly waxed appearance.

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Jean-François Champollion the Young to Joseph Bonomi the Younger
The walls of the entrance to Avoiding Oblivion are lined with black and white renders of the three-dimensional data recorded with the Laser scanner of the most elaborately decorated tomb in the Valley of the Kings, that of Seti I. The Tomb of Seti I was discovered by Giovanni Belzoni in 1817, but it was the exhibition of the facsimile he made at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly that stimulated the popular interest in Pharaonic culture and triggered a wave of Egyptomania. Attitudes to preservation at Belzoni’s time were vastly different to those that dominated one hundred years ago when Carter discovered the Tomb of Tutankhamun, in those that are emerging in today’s world of online and offline access. The Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative (TNPI) record at an unprecedented resolution of 100 microns, and in January 2022, they completed the high-resolution recording of the entirety of the tomb of Seti I.
Two sphinxes, back to back on a stone slab, support a stone ornament inscribed: ‘Egyptian Sketches, extracted from the Portfolio of an ingenious young Artist, attached to the Institut National at Cairo, which was found on board a Tartane intercepted on its Voyage to Marseilles——The Situations in which the Artist occasionally represents his Countrymen are a sufficient proof of an Impartiality and Fidelity, which cannot be too much commended: —indeed, we must suspect that his view of the flagitious absurdities of his Countrymen in Egypt, is nearly similar to ours, and that he took this method of portraying them, under the seal of confidence to his Correspondent at Paris.’

Behind the inscription is a pyramid up which climbs an ape dressed as a French officer holding up a large bonnet-rouge in order to place it on the apex. In his sash is a blood-stained dagger. A nude man, symbolizing Folly, wearing a fool’s cap, clutches his coat-tail, holding up a cap and bells, the cap on an ass’s head.

‘Egyptian Sketches’ depicting crocodiles mauling a group of men in the wild. The men are holding whips and ropes and there are drawings beside them with designs to trap and tame the crocodiles.
John Martin was introduced to the collection of the antiquarian Dr John Lee when he visited Hartwell House, near Aylesbury, sometime between 1811 and 1820. It was at this time that his interest in Egypt was triggered. King Louis XVIII, the exiled French King lived at Hartwell between 1809 and 1814 when he returned to France on Napoleon’s abdication. Death of the First Born was dedicated by John Martin to His Majesty Louis Philippe, King of the French, who died in exile in England in 1850.
CANNIBALISM IN EUROPE

This Mummy is certainly a most extraordinary relic; it is the body of a youth apparently about 17 or 18 years of age, and although it has probably been embalmed for nearly three thousand years, it is still entire, the flesh being rather shrunk than decayed; the teeth and nails are as perfect as during life, and much of the hair still remains; the abdomen bears evident marks of the opening made for the extraction of the bowels, and the flap is now sewed down; the brains have been extracted through the nostrils. The appearance of this Mummy is by no means so offensive as might be supposed. - Alfred Thornton, Don Juan; Life in London 1822

A Grand Tourist exploring the sites
Anonymous, Pencil, pen, ink and wash, 19th century, Private collection Rupert Wace

Inscribed on the mount, ‘Descent into the Mummy-Pits, nr. Medeenet Ahu. My guide is represented trying to break off one “nice foot”(!) as a memento of this fascinating spot.’

The Mummy of Seti I, partial unwrapping by Gaston Maspero, 1880’s
Photograph provided by Nicholas Reeves

The well-preserved mummy of Seti I was recovered by Émile Brugsch from the Deir el-Bahri royal cache.

Street vendor selling mummies
Felix Bonfils
1875, GEO-Special Ägypten, Nr 3. Juni 1993 S. 16 (Kommentar) und 17 (Foto).
Public domain
The suggestion of decay and change is inherent in the idea of a sarcophagus: the name conjures a flesh-eating stone container that protects the body and soul during its most vulnerable transformation. Metaphorically the sarcophagus is the container that ‘consumes’ its contents, protecting the original as it decays while ensuring the original can live again.

The sarcophagus has undergone substantial material change since its excavation. It no longer houses Seti’s mummy, which is now in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo. The alabaster, once white, has turned a honey colour through contact with London’s pollution and the gas lighting that was installed into the house in the 19th century. The Egyptian blue paste which once filled the carved decoration on the surface has fallen out; where traces of blue remain, they are 19th-century additions.

'Mummy Brown'
'Mummy Brown', 'Egyptian Brown' or 'Caput Mortuum' were the names given to an artists’ pigment made from the ground flesh of Egyptian mummies. It was in use as early as the 16th century, a warm rich brown between Raw Umber and Burnt Sienna. It became very popular in the 19th century with the growth of interest in Egypt. It is known that artists such as Delacroix, Alma-Tadema and Edward-Burne Jones used it. Due to the nature of production its qualities and composition were unreliable; it also took a long time to dry and interfered with the stability of other colours. In the early 20th century the raw materials were becoming scarce due to trade restrictions, but the pigment was stocked by the art supplier Roberson’s until 1964 when they announced that they no longer had enough body parts to produce more paint.

"We were let down by ropes, as into a well, with waxe-candles burning in our hands, and so walked upon the bodies of all sorts and sizes ... they gave no noisome smell at all. I broke of all the parts of the bodies in see how the flesh was turned to drugge, and brought home divers heads, hands, armes and feet, for a shew; [...] One little hand I brought into England, in shews; and presented it to my brother, who gave the same to a doctor in Oxford".

Sanderson, J. Personal Voyages, in Purchas His Pilgrims, 1625
In 1960, Sheikh Ali Abdel Rassoul, descendant of an infamous clan of tomb robbers and owner of an hotel on Luxor’s West Bank, received permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities to excavate the unexplored corridor leading out of the Sarcophagus room in the tomb of Seti I. It has long been assumed that there must be another chamber in the tomb. Sheikh Ali excavated about 137 meters of the corridor without reaching the end. The mysterious tunnel was fully excavated by Dr Zahi Hawass in 2008 and 2009. Dr Hawass reached the end of the corridor after over 200 meters, finding steps and details suggesting that significant discoveries lay in wait, but no chamber has yet been found.

Sheikh Ali Abdul Rasoul
Paul Strand
1946, Gurna, Upper Egypt
Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive

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Tomb of Khaemwaset (QV44),
Hallway of the burial chamber
1903, Glass plate and silver bromide
Archivio Museo Egizio, C00822
Belzoni christened his discovery in 1817 the ‘Tomb of Apis’ because of a mummified bull he found inside it. Soon after he called it the ‘Tomb of Psammis’. Champollion called it the ‘Tomb of Osirei’. Joseph Bonomi preferred the ‘Tomb of Oimenepthah I’. We now refer to it as the ‘Tomb of Seti I’ or the ‘Tomb of Seth’.

This scene, facing the Celestial Cow, is in one of the small rooms off the pillared section of the sarcophagus room. It was prepared for removal, but finally left in place and a squeeze (a mould) made from the surface.

Facsimile made by Factum Arte, 2022.
SQUEEZED TO DEATH

The Hall of Beauties based on photographs taken by Harry Burton after 1922

This shocking facsimile of a section of the tomb of Seti I as it is now, was made based on photographs taken by Harry Burton, a hundred years since the tomb was first discovered in near perfect condition. The red wax and white plaster are remains of a demonstration to show how ‘squeezes’ were used to make casts of the walls. The traces they leave are poignant reminders of how much damage was done in the name of preservation. Early tourists to Egypt travelling with Thomas Cook were given their own ‘squeeze kits’ to make souvenirs of their own with all the damage that ensued.

‘The walls of the tomb, I lament to say, have been literally knocked to pieces.’
- Thomas J. Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, London, 1834

A composite image made from photographs by Harry Burton taken in the Hall of Beauties, the Tomb of Seti I

Harry Burton made a photographic record of the entire tomb starting in 1921.
While attempting to preserve the 'Tomb of Seti I' for posterity, Belzoni recorded it in watercolour and produced wax casts of its walls. Wax casts or 'squeezes', were applied directly to the wall and reinforced with vegetable fibre for rigidity. Once removed, they were used to make plaster casts which were painted by hand using the watercolours as a reference.

The results amazed the audience at the Egyptian Hall in 1821, but the cost was high. A small number of surviving moulds still contain the original paint that was pulled from the carved relief surface. The first tourists to Egypt were encouraged to make their own plaster casts during their visits. The damage caused at this time is still visible today. This video demonstrates the methods used to produce wax, paper and plaster moulds.
THE MYTH OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HUMAN RACE

The Book of the Celestial Cow is also referred to as the "Myth of the Destruction of the Human Race". To paraphrase Erik Hornung, 'the evil inherent in mankind rebels against the natural order. It is annihilated by the fiery eye of Re incarnate in the goddess Hathor. The sun god and other deities then travel on the back of the celestial cow to the remote regions of the sky, leaving the preservation of earth in humanity's care.' In the Tomb of Seti I this scene, central to the understanding of the pharaonic texts, has been 'squeezed' (cast) so many times that it has lost its colour and acquired a waxy patina. A watercolour by Henry Salt, now in the British Museum, was made of the scene before it was cast by Belzoni. It has been 'projection mapped' onto the relief surface to create an illusion of how it may have looked.
Howard Carter (1873-1939) first went to Egypt in 1891, aged only 17; on his return following the discovery of Tutankhamun, in 1922, he was world famous. A decade after that, with the completion of his work, he ceased excavating to live a life of increasing isolation in a house he had built for himself at the entrance to the Valley of the Kings. He died in London in 1939.

Before Tutankhamun, Carter had had a mixed career. He had risen rapidly, ultimately to the position of Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Lower Egypt, but was obliged to resign from Government service in 1905 following an incident with a group of ‘rowdy’ French tourists at Saqqara. By the time the tourists finally left, guards had been hurt and chairs broken. Carter requested legal steps to be taken, but the French insisted he had been the aggressor.

Carter’s life took a new turn with his introduction to Lord Carnarvon, a wealthy British aristocrat whose archaeological dabblings needed professional supervision. He began to work for Carnarvon in 1907, and would never look back.
A selection of watercolours by Howard Carter from the private collection of Rupert Wace

Howard Carter began his Egyptological career as an artist with the Egypt Exploration Fund. Between 1894 and 1899 he worked as principal copyist at the Deir el-Bahri temple built by the female Pharaoh Hatshepsut. This watercolour was probably executed for sale as a tourist souvenir in his final year at the site.

1. General View of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1899, watercolour on paper

2. Winged Figure of the goddess Maat
Howard Carter
Signed, watercolour on paper

Behind the supporting cliff of Hatshepsut’s Deir el-Bahri temple lies the Valley of the Kings, a site which early captured Carter’s imagination and which he visited often. Imaginative copy of a scene in the tomb of pharaoh Seti I (KV 47), probably painted during the mid-1890s.

3. Portrait of Queen Ahmose
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1896, watercolour on paper

Carter’s skill at capturing ancient forms was second to none, and this particular watercolour, depicting Ahmose, Hatshepsut’s mother, would be reproduced in the final publication of the Egypt Exploration Fund’s work, The Temple of Deir el-Bahri.

4. Portrait of Queen Ahmose
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1897, watercolour on paper

This more elaborated version of the Ahmose portrait was kept by Carter himself until finally presented to a colleague, Rosalind Moss, in the 1930s. Other, less accomplished versions of the same subject-matter survive, evidently produced on commission or for general sale.

5. Under the Protection of the Gods
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1908, watercolour on paper

In this inspired composition, which he kept for himself, Carter combines in a single work his two great passions: Egyptology and ornithology. In a detail of decorated wall at Deir el-Bahri, the ancient vulture-goddess Nekhbet appears to offer protection to the nest of a modern hoopoe.

6. Sketch, The Daughter of Menna
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1911, watercolour on paper

One of the last dated watercolours to have come down to us: a detail of the duckhunting scene in the Theban tomb of Menna (TT 69). The rarity of Carter watercolours after this date is presumably explained by Carter’s new-found financial stability, and by the time he was choosing now to spend on his patron’s excavations and collection of Egyptian art.

7. The Lady Shepsut in the Tomb of her Husband, Userhat
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1910, watercolour on paper

By 1908, Carter had found his niche – as archaeologist to the fifth Earl of Carnarvon, whose lifestyle and contacts would change his life. This watercolour of a scene in Theban tomb of Userhat (TT 51) was produced in 1910, and depicts the owner’s wife, (Hat) shepsut. From its grand frame was clearly executed for a person of note.

8. Interior of an Unidentified Theban Tomb Chapel
Howard Carter
Signed, watercolour on paper

From the style of the artist’s signature, this misty view into the innermost reaches of an unidentified Theban tomb looks to be among the last of Carter’s known watercolours. Its unspoken question, ‘What lies ahead?’, provides an apt introduction to the astonishing developments which would now follow.
9. Small Objects
Howard Carter
Unsigned, watercolour on paper

The tomb belonging to Yuya and Tjuyu (being excavated under a concession to Theodore Davis) was the first truly staggering discovery to be made in the Valley since Belzoni’s uncovering of the tomb of Seti I in 1817 – remarkable not for its architectural splendour, like Seti, but for its spectacular contents. Here we see a selection of the smaller objects recovered: a gold-mounted staff, amulets and a faience tube containing kohl eye make-up.

10. Wooden Shawabti Figure of Yuya
Howard Carter
Unsigned, watercolour on paper

As with the later tomb of Tutankhamun, the tomb of Yuya and Tjuyu included several shawabti, or worker-figures, of exquisitely carved and embellished wood, each contained in its own dedicated, painted wood shrine.

11. Wooden Funerary Falcon
Howard Carter
Signed and dated 1901, watercolour on paper

In 1899, Carter was appointed Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Upper Egypt. In this position he enjoyed far greater interaction with visiting tourists, one of whom presumably commissioned this unusual watercolour to commemorate an antiquity that was either purchased or desired.

12. Dummy Vessels of Painted Limestone from the Tomb of Yuya and Tjuyu
Howard Carter
Unsigned, watercolour on paper

Following a fracas with a party of drunken French tourists in 1905, Carter was obliged to resign from his Inspector’s role and fall back on his talents as an artist. A tomb recently discovered by Theodore M. Davis in the Valley of the Kings would provide a first, much-needed commission.

13. Chair with Cushion and the Chair of Sitamun
Howard Carter
Unsigned, watercolour on paper

Even more extraordinary were the burial’s objects of daily life – here, two elaborately decorated chairs and a cushion, transferred directly from the home to the tomb for husband and wife to take their ease in the beyond.

14. Dummy Vases of Painted Wood
Howard Carter
Unsigned, watercolour on paper

Yuya and Tjuyu would soon be recognized as the great-grandparents of Tutankhamun, and the discovery of their richly provisioned and perfectly preserved burial would provide a curious augury of things to come.
CREATIVE RECORDING

Animation of a section of the Sarcophagus Chamber from the Tomb of Seti I
Data recorded in 2001
Rendered and animated by Irene Gaumé in Unreal Engine 5 in 2022

This animation is produced from the data recorded by Factum in 2001 in the tomb of Tomb of Seti I using a software called Unreal Engine 5 which is often used in gaming and capable of handling very large data. The level of reality achieved in real time as you move through the space takes advantage of the rapid developments being led by the gaming industry.
1. An assortment of routing tests and the ceiling plan of the pillared section of the sarcophagus room in the tomb of Seti I.

2. A 3D scan recorded with the Lucida Scanner and rematerialised with the Canon elevated printer, compared with the same detail recorded with a Lidar scanner. Both samples are mounted on a section of the ceiling from the Hall of Beauties with 19th century graffiti written with candle soot.

3. A coloured depth map shown alongside some facsimiles of fragments from the tomb of Seti I now at the Museum of Fine Art (MFA) in Boston.

4. Facsimile of a seal from the wall between the antechamber and the burial chamber that was removed by Howard Carter. This was recorded in 2009, with a number of other fragments that were being stored in the treasury.

5. De-materialising and re-materialising lies at the heart of Factum’s work. The physical object is reduced to a tonal greyscale from which its surface details can be remade and merged with colour data that’s recorded separately.

6. Noise in systems: looking at Gaussian Blur, moiré patterns and 3D printing residues. This case also contains random cleaning charts, and a composition with scarabs that plays with the changing nature of colour and the way it reflects light.

7. The Lucida Scanner and an explanation of Factum’s work with depth maps showing the relationship between relief and tone.

8. This case contains documents about the 3D recording of surface of the Tomb of Seti I and compares data gathered between 2001 and today. In it is a first A 1.5 square meter facsimile from the Hall of Beauties made in 2001 was the first successful merging of colour and relief data. It is the first facsimile from 2001 which shows all the steps involved in recording at the resolution needed to make a facsimile.

9. A demonstration of the recording of colour, and the system devised for colour matching to ensure an exact correspondence between the wall of the tomb and the facsimile. It shows the process of gaining an understanding of the materials of the tomb, and of how the Egyptians applied colour to the surface of the tomb. Both the colour itself and the way it is applied affect the way it is perceived. The case also contains a sample of the printed ‘skins’ Factum now uses to apply colour to the surfaces of facsimiles today.

10. Drawings made during the digital restoration of the Hall of Beauties and its production as a physical object.
ANTECHAMBER & BURIAL CHAMBER

The space of the antechamber and the sarcophagus room form the centrepiece of the exhibition. They are of the identical size and proportion of the original tomb of Tutankhamun, but the burial chamber is a pure, white volume, devoid of decoration or colour. In this space visitors are invited to experience the highest recorded digital data of the tomb through Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. Whatever they see is projected onto the screen, making it possible to literally ‘see through the eyes of others’.

The discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in November 1922 fascinated newspaper readers around the world – and photographers played a crucial role in bringing the tomb’s treasures to life. The original 1920’s press photos by Harry Burton to record the tomb and its antiquities capture the excitement of the excavation through a collection of original 1920’s press photos by Harry Burton to record the tomb and its antiquities. For the first two years of work on site, one newspaper – the London Times – had an exclusive contract with archaeologist Howard Carter and his sponsor, the Earl of Carnarvon. Made to sell on to other newspapers, these prints show the story Carter and Carnarvon wanted to tell. But they another story, too – about the British Empire’s influence in the Middle East, Egypt’s new independence, and the efforts both British and Egyptian excavators put into this remarkable find.
6. Carter, Callender, and one of the workmen, in the doors of the fourth shrine are opened to reveal the sarcophagus. Photograph taken on January 3, 1924; published in The Times, 25 January 1924.

7. Photograph by Harry Burton shows the head end of the 'lion' couch Burton used half-plate glass negatives (object no. 128) were taken only after cleaning and consolidation. Photograph taken early 1924; published in The Illustrated London News, 5 March 1924.

9. The Egyptian authorities installed a telephone in the Valley of the Kings. This photograph was published by The Times on 7 November 1923 and highlights the advances of modern technology in an ancient site.

14. By 10 November 1923 work began to remove the pottery and small objects from the Antechamber and Burial Chamber, Callender and Harris Abu Omar look on while Carter, a second foreman and small boy prise loose the wooden lid. Photograph taken on the 1st of 2nd December 1923, published in The Times, 28 December 1923.

20. Burton photographed the head-end of the lion couch which stood in the tomb against the back panel of the Antechamber. Photograph taken January 3, 1924; published in The Times of London News, 3 March 1924.

27. Burton photographed the hippo-headed crouching idol which was still in the tomb against the back panel of the Antechamber. Photograph taken January 3, 1924; published in The Times of London News, 3 March 1924.

Harry Burton Photographs Key

1. The rarely documented Harry Burton, posed in his opening panel certainly the excavation was under the tutelage of Howard Carter, the High Priest of Amun in the temple of the Deity of Amun. Photograph taken on 16 November 1923, published in The Times, 18 January 1924, in the Illustrated London News the following day.

2. Carter peers out from the doorway of the first shrine. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 6 and 10 February 1923.

3. Carter and Callender lift the first section of the wooden blocking now largely removed from the Antechamber, 30 November 1923. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 5 March 1924.

4. Carter’s secretary, Richard Bethell, takes a cigarette break in the shade of the wooden ‘staff’ office, recorded outside the tomb, December 1923.

5. Harris Abu Omar, Assistant Engineer, Carter and Callender lift the first section of the massive blocking now inside the Antechamber. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 18 January 1924.

6. Burton took several publicity pictures inside the tomb, carefully unrolled by the Stereoscopic and Geographic Society, 1917-1919. Photograph taken on 1 January 1924; published in The Times, 25 January 1924.

7. The idea of using the limited depth of field to workmen in the background. Photograph taken 28 December 1923; published in The Times, 5 March 1924.

8. Egypt’s foreign enemies are shown bound with papyrus and water lily plants, emblematic of the 23rd and 29th of Tuthankhamun’s tomb. Photograph taken on 29 November 1923. Published in the Illustrated London News, 1 January 1924.

9. Burton’s secretary, Richard Bethell, records the last section of the blocking now largely removed from the Antechamber, 30 November 1923. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 5 March 1924.

10. Burton took several publicity pictures inside the tomb, carefully unrolled by the Stereoscopic and Geographic Society, 1917-1919. Photograph taken on 1 January 1924; published in The Times, 25 January 1924.

11. Carter and the Egyptian authorities installed a telephone in the Valley of the Kings. This photograph was published by The Times on 7 November 1923 and highlights the advances of modern technology in an ancient site.

12. Photograph taken 16 February 1923; published in The Times, Liverpool Daily Post and in the Illustrated London News the following day.


14. By 10 November 1923 work began to remove the pottery and small objects from the Antechamber and Burial Chamber, Callender and Harris Abu Omar look on while Carter, a second foreman and small boy prise loose the wooden lid. Photograph taken on the 1st of 2nd December 1923, published in The Times, 28 December 1923.

15. Carter and Callender lift a section of the blocking now largely removed from the Antechamber, 30 November 1923. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 5 March 1924.

16. Burton took several publicity pictures inside the tomb, carefully unrolled by the Stereoscopic and Geographic Society, 1917-1919. Photograph taken on 1 January 1924; published in The Times, 25 January 1924.

17. Carter and Callender lift a section of the blocking now largely removed from the Antechamber, 30 November 1923. Photograph taken on 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 5 March 1924.

18. Signed glass and enamelled block-like objects from the funeral of a chariot (object no. 122). Photograph taken 1 December 1923; published in The Times, 18 January 1924, in the Illustrated London News the following day.


20. Burton photographed the head-end of the 'lion' couch Burton used half-plate glass negatives (object no. 128) were taken only after cleaning and consolidation. Photograph taken early 1924; published in The Illustrated London News, 5 March 1924.

21. Burton photographed the head-end of the 'lion' couch Burton used half-plate glass negatives (object no. 128) were taken only after cleaning and consolidation. Photograph taken early 1924; published in The Illustrated London News, 5 March 1924.

22. The Egyptian authorities installed a telephone in the Valley of the Kings. This photograph was published by The Times on 7 November 1923 and highlights the advances of modern technology in an ancient site.


24. As objects were removed and fresh pieces came into view, Burton was on hand to photograph film stock, cleared from the doors of the outer shrine. Carter and Mace (Hussein Abu Omar on the right) prepare to roll the fragile textile, its sequins now removed. Photograph taken on 30 November 1923; published in the Illustrated London News, 28 December 1923.

25. A free-standing lamp illuminates Carter, Callender and Hussein Abu Omar as they lift out a section of the outer shrine’s roof. Photograph taken 22 December 1923.

26. Burton photographed the head-end of the 'lion' couch Burton used half-plate glass negatives (object no. 128) were taken only after cleaning and consolidation. Photograph taken early 1924; published in The Illustrated London News, 5 March 1924.

27. Burton, photographed the hippo-headed crouching idol which stood in the tomb against the back panel of the Antechamber. Photograph taken January 3, 1924; published in The Times, 25 January 1924.
Virtual Reality Experience

The quality of the data required to make a facsimile is far higher than that required for screen-based display. The Oculus Rift is the highest resolution VR headset currently available. Using the data recorded by Factum in 2009, it is possible to achieve a level of mimesis where the digital and the physical merge.

Enlighten - Engage - Analyse - Preserve and Share

Since the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, visitor numbers have risen drastically while museums and collections around the world have focused on ticket sales and merchandising. This was briefly forced to change when the world ‘locked down’ with Covid-19. But rather than returning to ‘business as usual’, this is a moment for change. There is vast potential in digital data and presence online, for communication and research, and as archival and conservation tools.

In the emerging digital domain, new audiences have unprecedented access to information. Objects are rapidly becoming complex subjects, revealing subtleties and stories invisible through photographic reproduction alone. The 3D- and colour-recording work that began in 2001 in the tomb of Seti I, and continued in the Tomb of Tutankhamun in 2009, demonstrates the way new technologies can document and preserve the past. Rendering carried out by Irene Gaumé in Unreal Engine 5 in 2022.
The Annex is an informal meeting space for visitors to pause, read and talk. One wall displays the tomb of Tutankhamun ‘unfolded’, with a colour coded system that details cracks, injection holes, accidental damage, repainted areas and the space where the wall has been removed. On another is the large missing fragment taken from the south wall when Carter opened the tomb. There is also a collection of images made for display in the facsimile of the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings.
Viewing Room

The viewing room is a space for showing films made by Oscar Parasiego, that explain the process of rematerialising data and forming facsimiles.

Materialising Data
Filmed by Oscar Parasiego, Factum Arte

The data obtained after scanning and photographically recording the Tomb of Seti I was re-materialised using computer-controlled milling machines. Other panels were 3D printed using the Canon elevated printers. The panels were printed in 10 micron layers and used as moulds to generate exact replicas of the painted relief surface of the wall.

Aligning Colour and Relief
Filmed by Oscar Parasiego, Factum Arte

Factum Arte created an ultra-thin flexible elastic ‘skin’ of gesso to align the layered inkjet print onto the relief surface in perfect register. The skins with the colour information are positioned onto the surface of the relief using a pin registration system and adhered using a vacuum bag and polyester blankets to ensure perfect contact between image and support.
Since its founding, 200 years ago, Egyptology has brought us closer to the ancients and their understanding of the quandary of life and death, reminding us that no greater, more compelling mystery stands before us, much as it stood before them. But if Egyptologists have taught us anything, it’s that the ancients were as baffled as we are. Perhaps the future study of Egypt will transcend archaeological investigation to join a broader enquiry, focused on the effects of ideological conceits on human survival. Or who knows? In the next 200 years, we may all become the subject of some interplanetary study, we and our broken treasures. Even so, Egypt, the whole unfurled fabric of it, will still have something for everyone: proof, if only in hindsight, that we belong not to a civilization, nation, race or even species, but to a wondrous process whose outcome is unknowable and doesn’t really matter, so long as it continues.

- Maria Golia, A Short History of Tomb-Raiding (2022)

**Wallpaper (right)**

The wall covering artwork is a by-product of the work done by Teresa Casado at Factum Foundation as she transformed the 3D recording data of the burial chamber and sarcophagus of Tutankhamun for use in a virtual reality environment.
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