

THE APOLLO AWARDS 2014
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Digital Innovation of the Year

From the tomb of Tutankhamun to the Mappa Mundi, the Factum Foundation is using technology to record and conserve the world's most fragile artefacts

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Factum Foundation
www.factumfoundation.org

Since the end of April this year, visitors to the Valley of the Kings in Egypt have been able to see two versions – the original and a facsimile – of the burial chamber of Tutankhamun. The facsimile, made by Factum Arte and funded by its sister organisation Factum Foundation, arrived in Egypt in November 2012, 90 years to the month after Howard Carter unsealed the 3,000-year-old tomb; in spring the copy moved to Luxor (Fig. 1), to a site next to Carter's house, now a museum, which sits at the entrance to the Valley.

The plan to make a copy and to close the original chamber to the public (probably in 2015) is the result of a collaboration between Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Society of Friends of the Royal Tombs of Egypt and the University of Basel; all were concerned about the deteriorating condition of the open tombs in the Valley. In the case of Tutankhamun's tomb, the presence of 1,000 visitors a day was raising humidity in the chamber, and daily dusting was removing paint from surfaces. The site was a perfect example of the ongoing conflict between access and conservation. As James Macmillan-Scott, president of the Factum Foundation explains, 'When we discovered it was being completely destroyed by people going there to enjoy it, the irony of that seemed to be something that we needed to deal with.'

Factum Arte, which is based in Madrid and Bologna, was founded by the British artist Adam Lowe in 2001. After success as a painter, Lowe became interested in the technical challenges of conservation and fabrication and the company he set up with Spanish artist Manuel Franquelo now makes work for many well-known artists, including Anish Kapoor and Marc Quinn. As the company's profile grew, so did Lowe's interest in conservation. He set up the Foundation in 2009 and, according to Macmillan-Scott, the structure of the business is simple: 'Adam is an extraordinarily clever human being who finds

ways of doing things for many artists, and the profits that are made by Factum Arte support the Foundation.' While Factum Arte can be working on about 70 to 100 projects at a time, the Foundation, says Macmillan-Scott, 'normally has about 10 projects on the run' and works only with 'advanced technology in the conservation of our heritage'.

Tutankhamun's burial chamber is perhaps the best example so far of how Factum is documenting works of art with the most advanced methods currently available. The most important element of this strategy is the Lucida 3D Scanner (Fig. 2), which was developed by Manuel Franquelo, especially for Factum's work in Egypt. The scanner can capture the relief of surfaces, light and dark, and a range of finishes. Crucially, it records the data as raw video with its own recording software – so that the information doesn't have to be exported in a lower resolution (which is what all other scanners currently do). The ability to record surfaces as closely as this also allows for a new examination of fragile paintings and documents by scholars. Last year Factum scanned the Hereford Mappa Mundi, which is kept in a sealed glass case that is only opened once every two years. In 2007 it installed a copy of Veronese's *Wedding at Cana* (1563), now owned by the Louvre, in its original home of San Giorgio di Maggiore in Venice.

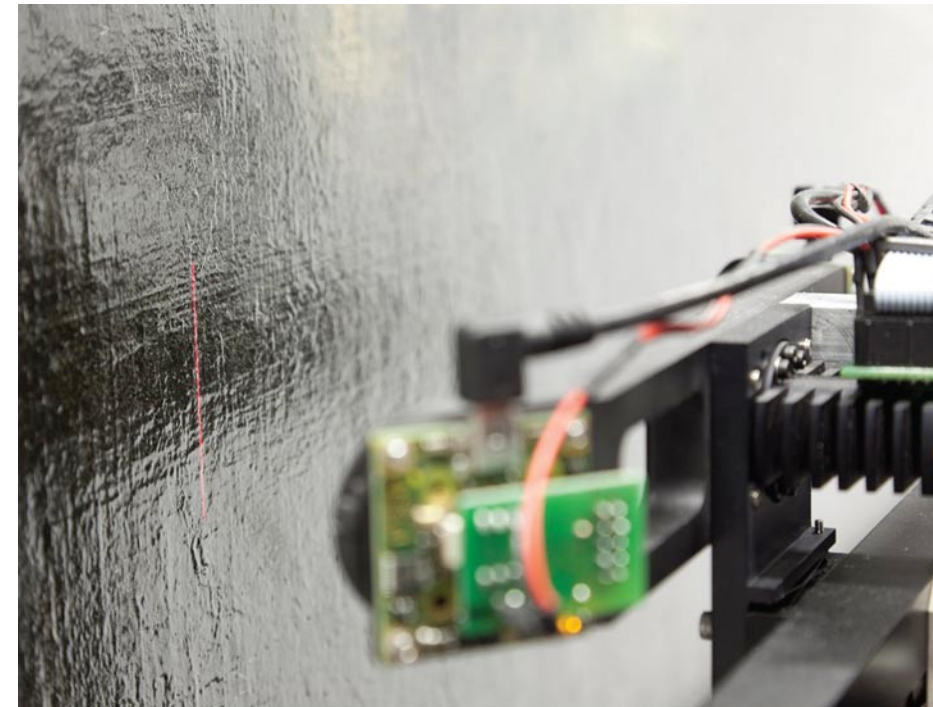
Remarkably, the Foundation is willing to make Factum Arte's software and hardware available to anyone who wants it. Macmillan-Scott says, 'We're not jealous of anything and if somebody wants to come along and copy it, they can.' Factum is now making a facsimile of the tomb of Seti I, which is 50 times as big as Tutankhamun's; it has also just signed an agreement with the Lebanese government heritage agency to work in Baalbec. The Foundation is also busy raising money to give scanners to museums that want to record what they have. Macmillan-Scott says, 'What we're doing is helping preserve wonderful things and if we can get more people to do it, the better... We don't have to do it ourselves.' 

1 The facsimile of the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun being moved into the facsimile of the burial chamber, in 2014
Photo: © Alicia Guirao
Courtesy Factum Arte

2 The Lucida 3D Scanner, developed by Manuel Franquelo, can capture dark, glossy surfaces such as varnished paintings
Photo: © Alicia Guirao
Courtesy Factum Arte



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Shortlist

After Dark

www.afterdark.io
Tate Britain, London

For five nights in August, four robots equipped with cameras roamed the galleries of Tate Britain and live-streamed their journeys to a microsite. A few of the robots' online observers were also allowed to log in and manoeuvre them by remote control. The project was conceived by London-based design studio The Workers, winners of the first IK Prize (Tate's award for digital innovation) in 2014.

Art Detective

www.thepcf.org.uk/artdetective
Public Catalogue Foundation

Art Detective, which launched in March 2014, is a digital network that accompanies the Public Catalogue Foundation's online database of the oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom. It aims to improve knowledge of the UK's public collections by connecting members of the public with academic and trade specialists, hosting discussions online in a number of thematic and regional forums.

Building the Picture: Architecture in Italian Renaissance Painting

www.nationalgallery.org.uk
National Gallery, London

The National Gallery's first online catalogue was written and edited by Amanda Lillie from the University of York, with contributions from Caroline Campbell and Alasdair Flint. It was published in April 2014 to accompany the first exhibition in the UK exploring the role of architecture in painting – and the first exhibition anywhere to focus on architecture in Italian Renaissance painting.

Vastari

www.vastari.com

Vastari aims to put museum curators and private collectors in touch with each other through its searchable, secure database of art works of art. Museum curators can search for objects and collectors can make it known that they are willing to lend to exhibitions. The database is available only to registered curators and collectors.