



FACTVM
FOVNDATION
FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
IN CONSERVATION

Clarity

20-04-2013



In Bologna the Factum Arte operations and office were being set up last week by Adam Lowe and Gregoire Dupond. A team began the recording of the great doors of the Basilica of San Petronio (after a little hiatus as the scaffolders released the statues from their shrouds) and work continued on the digital restoration of the Bologna map from the Vatican Sala Bologna...while I was rather more prosaically participating in a conference in London.

The London result, for me, was very positive, a re-affirmation of the need for clear - and if necessary disruptive - thinking and explanation. In our case, the Foundation has so much to do and in achieving its aims it needs extreme clarity about what those aims are and how people can help. It also needs to maintain a pragmatic attitude to present mores and understanding - we are constantly finding new approaches and new tangents in technology that help us and which may transcend existing thinking which we need to follow. A physical example of our aims, the Lucida scanner, is being deployed in a number of places now and that is exciting - as are the places..... and the technology and the thinking that made it work.

Clarity. The Foundation is dedicated to the continuing development and use of non-contact high-resolution digital recording in the preservation, understanding and public exhibition of objects and sites from our cultural heritage. What we inherit does not exist in a fixed state of being, it is constantly changing through the effects of natural and human intervention - it is a living biography - and we want future generations to at least have what we inherited, as we inherited it.

Which takes us to Bologna, among the Factum project sites - the earthquakes there last year alerted many to the dangers our heritage faces - but earthquakes and dramatic or tragic events as in Mali or Aleppo are only - sadly frequent - outward signs, much is going on silently and imperceptibly. We need to be very active in making records and then using them to advance our understanding and relationship with what we are custodians of for the future. That's what they're doing - up on the scaffold - Pedro, Bianca, Naoko and Greg with highly sophisticated equipment, dextrous movements and a profoundly acute eye - recording exactly what is there - to be preserved digitally and safely. The purpose is clear and the activity is very exciting.