

Ancient plaster: casting light on a forgotten sculptural material

**Tuesday 30 - Wednesday 31 March 2021
Online**

Hosted by The British Academy, London

Convenors:

Emma Payne, King's College London

Abbey Ellis, University of Leicester/Ashmolean Museum

Will Wootton, King's College London



The British Academy

Day 1: Tuesday 30 March 2021

13:45 Welcome

Session 1: Ancient plaster objects

Chair: Abbey Ellis (University of Leicester/Ashmolean Museum)

14:00 Emma Payne (King's College London)
Making plaster in antiquity

14:30 Kathryn Tubb (University College London)
Thoughts on the disposition of the 1983 cache of plaster figures from 'Ain Ghazal

15:00 Dimitri Laboury (University of Liège, Belgium)
In the workshop of an ancient Egyptian sculptor

15:30 *Break*

Session 2. Panel Discussion: The material of plaster and its working properties

Chair: Emma Payne (King's College London)

Martin Hanson (Wimbledon College of Art)

Clare Venables (Minerva Stone Conservation)

Thomas Schelper (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)

Veronika Tocha (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)

PRE-WATCH: Before the session, participants should watch the three videos created to demonstrate various aspects of the working of plaster:

Plaster piece-moulding by Thomas Schelper

Modelling in plaster by Clare Venables

Life-casting in plaster by Martin Hanson

Session 3: Making sculpture – plaster and related materials

Chair: Amanda Claridge (Royal Holloway, University of London)

16:30 Rachel Mairs (University of Reading)
Plaster casts and the transmission of iconography: a Central Asian perspective

17:00 Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA)
The material behind the masterpiece: plaster and the production of chryselephantine statues

17:30 Amanda Claridge (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Discussion and end of day comments

18:00 End of first day of conference

Day 2: Wednesday 31 March 2021

Session 4: Cast for display?

Chair: Will Wootton (King's College London)

- 13:30 Amanda Claridge (Royal Holloway, University of London)
The Baiae casts in context
- 13:50 Eckart Marchand (The Warburg Institute/International
Research Group 'Bilderfahrzeuge')
Standing in for the final work: the use of full-scale models in
early modern Europe
- 14:10 Chair: Will Wootton (King's College London)
Amanda Claridge (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Dimitri Laboury (University of Liège, Belgium)
Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA)
Rachel Mairs (University of Reading)
Eckart Marchand (The Warburg Institute/International
Research Group 'Bilderfahrzeuge')
Thomas Merrett (City & Guilds of London Art School)
Panel discussion exploring plaster objects surviving from
the Greek and Roman periods – sculptures or models?

PRE-WATCH: Before the session, participants should watch the
video:

Using plaster models to make marble sculptures by
Thomas Merrett

- 14:40 *Break*

Session 5: Life-casting

Chair: Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA)

- 15:00 Kelsey Shawn Madden (University of Sheffield)
Non-elite Roman plaster death masks revisited: practicality,
purpose, and memory preservation
- 15:20 Veronika Tocha (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)
Casting from life. A delicate matter
- 15:40 Chair: Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA)
Nigel Konstam (Verrocchio Arts Centre, Italy)
Alexander Lumsden (Bronze Age Foundry)
Kelsey Shawn Madden (University of Sheffield)
Veronika Tocha (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)
Martin Hanson (Wimbledon College of Art)
Panel discussion on the role of life-casting in antiquity

PRE-WATCH: Before the session, participants should watch the
two prepared videos:

*PLASTER and the age of bronze casting and Dynamic
Wax Casting* by Alexander Lumsden
*A sculptor's perspective: the evidence for life-casting in
ancient Greek sculpture* by Nigel Konstam

16:10 *Break*

Session 6: The future

Chair: Will Wootton (King's College London)

16:30 Chris Dorsett (University of Oxford)
Re-treading the art school corridor to 'Cast Contemporaries'

16:50 Abbey Ellis (University of Leicester/Ashmolean Museum)
Plastering over the cracks: looking to the future

17:10 Will Wootton (King's College London)
Discussion and end of day comments

17:30 End of the conference