

STARTING FROM 2013, a project had been initiated to rehabilitate and refurbish the more than a hundred-year-old plaster cast collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. The re-display of selected pieces from the collection was made possible due to the reconstruction and extension of the Star Fortress in Komárom (North West Hungary) carried out between 2017 and 2019 as part of the Liget Budapest Project. Another part of the cast collection will be exhibited in a visible storage at the newly built National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre in Budapest. To celebrate this almost ten-year-long project, as a final event, the Museum of Fine Arts is organizing a conference, which brings together international and Hungarian scholars to discuss the history and future of European plaster cast collections. The contributions will focus on the formation, composition and presentation of historic cast collections, their reception and re-evaluation in the 20th and 21st century as well as the various roles and uses of plaster casts.



SESSION 1 THE FORMATION AND PRESENTATION OF HISTORIC CAST COLLECTIONS

“THE BEST LAID SCHEMES ...”. AN INVESTIGATION INTO HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO THE FORMATION OF PLASTER CAST COLLECTIONS

Eckart Marchand (Bilderfahrzeuge Research Group / The Warburg Institute)

In a speech in London in 1851, Ferenc Pulszky (1814–1897) outlined the concept of a museum that “contains all the documents of the plastic power of mankind”. He asked for completeness rather than rarity of objects, adding that what was not available in bronze or marble should be bought in plaster. From 1869 onwards, as director of the Hungarian National Museum, he applied this approach to building its cast collection, and when, around 1900, the Museum of Fine Arts was in the planning, Gyula Wlassics (1852–1937) and Gábor Térey (1864–1927) outlined in similar terms how its collection should be shaped.

In my paper I shall look at this and other cast collections where we have information about their planning and eventual composition. Examples will range from the 18th to 20th century and include European and South-American collections. I shall trace different approaches and analyse how the conceptual underpinning of acquisition may have expressed itself in the visual and physical qualities of these collections. I shall also ask the more pragmatic question to what extent any such plans were adhered to, and what kind of factors may have modified the outcome.

Eckart Marchand is a member of the International Research Group *Bilderfahrzeuge: Iconology and the Legacy of Aby Warburg* at the Warburg Institute, London. He has worked extensively on plaster and plaster casts, studying their functions both as copies of well-known originals and as models in sculptors’ workshops. Together with Rune Frederiksen, he has edited *Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present* (2010). More recently, he has edited and contributed to a special issue on the topic for *Sculpture Journal* (28/3, 2019), a periodical of which he is also co-editor.

THE COLLEONI MONUMENT AND THE MEDICI TOMBS. MONUMENTAL RENAISSANCE CASTS IN THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN BUDAPEST

Miriam Szócs (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

The Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest once owned a large collection of plaster casts of Classical Antiquities, medieval and Renaissance sculptures. Following the 19th-century European tendencies, the collection of plaster casts was created succeeding the foundation of the museum in 1896. In the Budapest cast collection, the copies of the Medici Tombs and the Colleoni monument can be considered as unique pieces: the museum ordered the replicas of the whole monuments, which was unusual in the case of other cast collections. Andrea del Verrocchio’s Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni entered the museum with the copy of its original plinth visible in Venice; the casts of Michelangelo’s Tombs of Lorenzo and Giuliano de’ Medici arrived with the copies of the architectural parts of the monuments. The lecture aims to present how the idea was developed to present in the museum’s permanent exhibition such monumental works in their entirety. In my paper, I will also present the history of these large copies referring to the history of the medieval and Renaissance plaster cast collection of the museum.

Miriam Szócs is Head of Department of Sculptures in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. She is specialized in Renaissance and Baroque bronzes and has a primary interest in the oeuvre of the eighteenth-century Austrian sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt. In 2014 she was Craig Hugh Smyth Fellow in Florence at the Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. Between 2013 and 2021 she worked on the project on the refurbishment of the plaster cast collection of the Museum of Fine Arts.

FROM NORTHERN ITALY TO HUNGARY: MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MONUMENTAL CASTS BETWEEN THE CAMPI CARLO MUSEUM IN MILAN AND THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN BUDAPEST

Flavia Berizzi (Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan)

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Campi Carlo – privileged formatore of the Brera Academy of Fine Arts and trusted collaborator of the institutions responsible for the protection of monuments in Lombardy – set up a rich collection of plaster casts in Milan, from the effigy of the masterpieces of ancient Greek and Roman art to replicas taken from medieval and Renaissance artworks by the great Lombard masters.

The latter constituted the peculiarity of the Campi Carlo Museum, attracting the interest – among foreign museums – of the newborn Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, which, between 1907 and 1909, commissioned ten casts on a monumental scale, some already available in the rich catalog of the Milanese gipsoteca, while others were expressly cast from the originals for the occasion: an operation of great technical complexity, resolved thanks to the development of the molding methods achieved in those years – in particular, the gelatin mold technique – to which Campi himself contributed.

Among the replicas that survived the Second World War devastation, five casts from Campi manufacture have been selected for the new exhibition and populate the large hall in the inner courtyard of the Star Fortress in Komárom.

Born in Bergamo, Milanese by adoption. Educated at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and the Sapienza University of Rome, Flavia Berizzi is specialized in the restoration of plaster casts and molding methods, with particular skills in digital documentation systems and new technologies applied to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage. Since 2015, she has been External Teacher for the conservation project of the gipsoteca of the Liceo Artistico di Brera (Brera Art School). At the Brera Academy, she is currently in charge of the 3D photogrammetric survey campaign of the founding nucleus of the plaster casts collection.

PLASTER CASTS OF ANTIQUITIES IN BUDAPEST AND KOLOZSVÁR/CLUJ-NAPOCA

Géza Andó (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest) and Eszter Süvegh (King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár)

After his appointment as director of the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, in 1869, Ferenc Pulszky began establishing a collection of plaster casts. This material subsequently formed the basis of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest which opened in 1906. The Museum of Fine Arts expanded the collection with a number of new copies, but the plaster cast exhibition did not open until 1913. In the meantime, 106 pieces of the material received from the National Museum were placed in permanent trust at the University of Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

The collection gained further significance by the fact that it contained a compelling group of copies of archaic and classical sculptures freshly unearthed in contemporaneous excavations in Greece. At the same time, copies of the most famous statues, obligatory elements of any such collection could not be missing from the material.

The two Laocoön versions of the collection illustrate the role of casts played in scientific research as well. The Museum of Fine Arts ordered a copy in 1907, supplemented by a bent arm found by Ludwig Pollack just a few years prior, depicting Laocoön according to Georg Treu’s reconstruction. The original statue was visible for several more decades in the form known until then, supplemented by Montorsoli’s raised arm. The Hungarian National Museum had an earlier plaster cast of this latter variant, which was eventually moved to Kolozsvár.

Géza Andó: As a member of the Collection of Classical Antiquities of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, he started working on the plaster cast collection in 1993, and has been working on the rehabilitation of the collection since 2000.

Eszter Süvegh: As an employee of the Collection of Classical Antiquities of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, she joined the antique plaster casts project in 2018 working on the preparation of the exhibition and the visible storage organized from the collection. A museum educator as well – assistant museologist at the King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár.

SESSION 2 THE ROLE AND USES OF PLASTER CASTS

THE ROLE OF ANCIENT PLASTER CASTS IN ANCIENT ART – THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Rune Frederiksen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen)

Plaster casts played a significant role in the making of ancient sculpture, not the least in the process of copying as well as transforming ancient Greek bronze originals into Roman copies in marble. This is documented by the findings of actual ancient plaster casts of sculpture from all over the ancient Roman world, from Spain to Afghanistan, from Libya to Great Britain. The written sources also describe the invention of plaster casting and both ancient Greek and Roman sources describe – to some extent – how casts were made and what purposes they served in the ancient world. What may the etymology of certain words and their combination allow us to conclude about technique and use? How far may we go when interpreting written sources? The texts are of very varied nature, poetry as well as prose, and there are issues of such as lack of contemporaneity between the date of composition of a text and the actual epoch it describes. This talk presents an in-depth analysis of some of the most important written testimonies of plaster casting and the various uses of plaster casts in antiquity.

Rune Frederiksen studied Classical Archaeology in Copenhagen and Rome with PhD from the Copenhagen Polis Center (2004). From 2003–2004 he was employed by the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and taught at the University of Copenhagen, and between 2004–2007 he held a research fellowship at Oxford connected to the University collection of plaster casts of ancient sculpture. From 2008–2015 he was based in Athens, from 2010 as the director of the Danish In-

stitute at Athens and from 2016 he has been employed by the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek as Head of Collections and Research. Rune has participated in and led a number of excavations around the Mediterranean and curated exhibitions in Denmark, England, Greece and Portugal.

19TH-CENTURY CONSTRUCTIONS AND MONUMENT RECONSTRUCTIONS IN HUNGARY IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL PLASTER CAST COLLECTIONS

Júlia Katona PhD (Hungarian University of Fine Arts – High School of Visual Arts, Budapest)

In 1904, the Plaster Cast Atelier connected to Budapest National Higher Industry School published its price list of plaster models and copies of sculptures made in its studios. The catalog was unique and the first of its kind in Hungary, as there had been no publication about plaster casts in trade with photographic illustrations before. Owing to this illustrated compilation, one can get a detailed overview of the composition of educational plaster cast collections of the period in Hungary. The presentation examines the link between the 19th-century constructions, the monument reconstructions and these plaster casts collections. Examples like the capitals designed by Ignác Langer for the Romanesque Hall of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, the architectural details of Matthias Church reconstructed by Frigyes Schulek, and other specimens testify to a close connection between the monument protection and art education of the period.

Júlia Katona is art historian, researcher, curator. She studied history of art at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) and got her PhD degree in the field of art history in the Doctoral School of Philosophy, Art History Doctoral Programme of Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) in 2017. Currently, she is working as the scientific secretary of the Museum of Applied Arts (Budapest) and the head of collection and curator at the Schola Graphidis Art Collection of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts – High School of Visual Arts (Budapest). In 2017 she was invited by the Institut national d’histoire de l’art (Paris) as an invited researcher with her research project “The Corpus of Pattern Books and Ornamental Prints Published in the 19th–20th centuries in Europe”.

Her fields of interests span across (1) research: ornamental art, theory of ornament, pattern books, rare book collections, plaster cast collections, history of architecture in the 19th–20th centuries, history of art education, Hungarian art, and (2) museum studies: museum informatics, integrated collection management systems, digitization, process management.

PLASTER CASTS AND ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION – THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HISTORICAL PLASTER CAST COLLECTION OF THE BME FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE

Eszter Hajós-Baku, PhD and Beáta Szűts (Budapest University of Technology and Economics)

The beginnings of architecture education in Hungary can be linked to the Faculty of Architecture at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (hereinafter referred to as BME). The best-known architects in the history of Hungarian architecture studied and taught here. Freehand drawing and its teaching dates back to the establishment of the institution, yet developments and changes in its methodology are still largely unexplored. Research of recent years on ornamentation and methodology has drawn attention to a unique segment of the university’s drawing education, including sample books as well as a collection of plaster casts. Once part of a huge collection, these plaster casts entered the institution as essential tools in the reform of drawing education, only to become oversized disposable objects ignominiously consigned to storage rooms and replaced by more up-to-date demonstrational tools and techniques a few decades later. Building from fragments, this paper seeks to unfold the history of the formation of a once significant collection, and by doing so, to enrich the history of architecture

education, and – even more directly relevant to the casts – the history and methodology of drawing education.¹

Eszter Hajós-Baku, PhD: Art historian, expert in preservation of built heritage. Graduated from Pázmány Péter Catholic University as an art historian in 2009. She received her PhD degree in 2018 at the BME Faculty of Architecture, Department for History of Architecture and of Monuments. Her main research area is sacred architecture in the interwar period especially in Hungary, with a special interest in foreign parallels, and the connection between architecture-liturgy and structure. She has coordinated some own research projects focusing mostly on sacral architecture between the world wars in Hungary. Besides the research of interwar period church architecture, she has a special interest in historical plaster casts. Recipient of the three-year research scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Arts Research Institute of Art Theory and Methodology.

Beáta Szűts: Art historian. Graduated from Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Piliscsaba-Budapest) with a major in art history in 2016. She began working in the Department of Graphics, Form and Design of BME in 2013. She participates in all aspects of the scientific and academic life of the department, including the organization of conferences and exhibitions. From 2016 she has been in charge of the management and study of the collections of historical plaster casts, historical textbooks and drawings. She has started a two-year-long Preservation of built heritage and monument protection specialist course (part-time education) in 2020.

¹The research program into the historical plaster cast collection of the BME Dep. of Graphics was supported by the National Culture Fund (NKA).

SESSION 3 RECEPTION, RE-DISPLAY AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

THE MAKING AND MEANING OF PLASTER CASTS IN THE 19TH CENTURY: THEIR FUTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Holly Trusted (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Soon after the Cast Courts (then the Architectural Courts) in the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) opened in October 1873, a contemporary noted with awe, "There are some impressions that can scarcely be effaced ..." That visitor experienced unique feelings of awe when he first saw the magnificent Cast Courts. Such an emotional response is still felt by many today when they enter the Courts. Can we today use these galleries to give ourselves a glimpse of the Victorian age, a theatrical sensation, and yet at the same time evoke the original Renaissance and medieval objects which inspired these great spaces? I believe we should and can convey the Victorian thrill, whilst simultaneously imparting scholarly information on the prototypes which inspired the plaster casts. I will discuss three main topics in my paper, all of which relate to this question of responses: how we address the great historic spaces housing the casts; the lay-out of the casts within those spaces; and finally how we convey information about the casts.

Dr Holly Trusted FSA (formerly Marjorie Trusted), is Senior Honorary Research Fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where she was previously Senior Curator of Sculpture. A graduate of Cambridge University and the Courtauld Institute of Art, she was responsible for the extensive renovations of the Cast Courts at the V&A from 2010 to 2018. She has lectured and published widely on British, Spanish and German sculpture; her book on German and Central European baroque sculpture is to be published later this year. She is co-chair and co-founder of the Public Statues and Sculpture Association, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

THE AVATARS OF THE COLLECTION OF PLASTER CASTS OF THE MUSÉE DES MONUMENTS FRANÇAIS, PARIS

Jean-Marc Hofman (Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine, Paris)

Opened in 2007 in the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, the Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine is dedicated to the discovery

and knowledge of French architecture and heritage. It houses an important collection of plaster casts inherited from the Musée de Sculpture comparée, founded in 1879 by the architect and theorist of historical monuments Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, renamed Musée des Monuments français in the 1930s. This cast collection is exceptional for its chronological coherence and its scope. It is a collection of architectural casts, some of colossal size made on French heritage monuments from the Middle Ages to modern times, with a strong predominance of the Gothic period. The choices that have been made over the years reflect the evolution of the currents of thought that have contributed to forging medieval archaeology as a scientific discipline. Since its creation, it has been one of the privileged supports for exposing and popularising French architecture through the presentation of its most famous monuments.

Since 2004, **Jean-Marc Hofman** is deputy curator of the cast gallery at the Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine. He has published articles on the genesis of the museum's collections, as well as on the individual and professional trajectory of cast makers and their workshops in Paris. He has curated about twenty exhibitions on archaeology, arts, and historical monuments.

REVERED AND REVILED. PLASTER CASTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Lorenz Winkler-Horaček (Freie Universität, Berlin)

The establishment and reopening of a new plaster cast collection is a momentous event that should be celebrated. Not only in Budapest, but also in other locales, old cast collections have been revitalized in recent years and decades. In doing so, a tradition that had been questioned in many places throughout the 20th century can be continued.

This lecture addresses discussions about casts in Berlin. Once highly revered, they stood for many years in the Neues Museum, and thus in one of the most prestigious institutions in the city. Starting in about 1910, they were gradually transferred to the Berlin University. Most of these casts were later destroyed – most of them after (not during!) the Second World War. What exactly happened to these objects can in some cases be reconstructed, but remains in most cases obscure. We can, however, look to the discourse from the 1920s, from which emerged a deep contempt for the cast as a copy. This discussion culminated in the 1930 call to sink the Berlin casts in the River Spree, which ultimately did not come to pass.

This debate and destruction were not only limited to Berlin but took place elsewhere in Europe and around the world. It is precisely because we are enthusiastic about casts again in the present and interact with them in new, creative ways that we should also be aware of this part of their history. The aim of this talk is thus to contribute further to this dialogue.

Lorenz Winkler-Horaček is the curator of the Cast Collection (Abguss-Sammlung Antiker Plastik) at the Freie Universität Berlin, where he is also a professor of classical archaeology. He received his doctorate from the University of Heidelberg in 1991 and worked for fourteen years at the University of Rostock. He habilitated in 2004 and moved to the Freie Universität Berlin in 2007. His field of research is heavily image-based and covers both the Greek and Roman periods. Additionally, he focuses on the history of casts. He has curated exhibitions on archaeological themes at the Berlin Cast Collection and has organized numerous events with contemporary artists.

Venue:

Schickedanz Hall, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest
Admission is free of charge

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PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 24TH MAY 2022

9.30 – 10.00 Welcome and coffee

10.00 – 10.10 Director's welcome
Dr László Baán (General Director,
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

10.10 – 10.20 Introduction – Miriam Szócs
(Head of the Department of Sculptures,
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

SESSION 1 The Formation and Presentation of Historic Cast Collections

Moderation: Márton Tóth (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)
10.20 – 10.40 "The best laid schemes ...". An Investigation into Historical Approaches to the Formation of Plaster Cast Collections

Eckart Marchand (Bilderfahrzeuge Research Group / The Warburg Institute, London)

10.40 – 11.00 The Colleoni Monument and the Medici Tombs. Monumental Renaissance Casts in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest

Miriam Szócs (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

11.00 – 11.20 From Northern Italy to Hungary: Medieval and Renaissance Monumental Casts between the Campi Carlo Museum in Milan and the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest

Flavia Berizzi (Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan)

11.20 – 11.40 Plaster Casts of Antiquities in Budapest and Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca

Géza Andó (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest) and Eszter Süvegh (King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár)

11.40 – 11.50 Q&A

11.50 – 12.00 Coffee break

SESSION 2 The Role and Uses of Plaster Casts

Moderation: Ágnes Bencze
(Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest)

12.00 – 12.20 The Role of Ancient Plaster Casts in Ancient Art – The Written Evidence

Rune Frederiksen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen)

12.20 – 12.40 19th-Century Constructions and Monument Reconstructions in Hungary in the Context of Educational Plaster Cast Collections

Júlia Katona, PhD (Hungarian University of Fine Arts – High School of Visual Arts, Budapest)

12.40 – 13.00 Plaster Casts and Architectural Education – The Reconstruction of the Historical Plaster Cast Collection of the BME Faculty of Architecture

Eszter Hajós-Baku, PhD and Beáta Szűts
(Budapest University of Technology and Economics)

13.00 – 13.10 Q&A

13.10 – 14.40 Lunch break

SESSION 3 Reception, Re-Display and Future Perspectives

Moderation: Júlia Katona (Hungarian University of Fine Arts – High School of Visual Arts, Budapest)

14.40 – 15.00 The Making and Meaning of Plaster Casts in the 19th Century: Their Future in the 21st Century

Holly Trusted (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

15.00 – 15.20 The Avatars of the Collection of Plaster Casts of the Musée des Monuments Français, Paris

Jean-Marc Hofman (Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine, Paris)

15.20 – 15.40 Revered and Reviled. Plaster Casts in the 20th Century
Lorenz Winkler-Horaček (Freie Universität, Berlin)

15.40 – 16.00 Discussion

16.00 End of day

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MUSEUM OF
FINE ARTS, BUDAPEST

PLASTER CASTS & CAST COLLECTIONS ACROSS EUROPE

HISTORY AND FUTURE

International Conference
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest