



Museum of Classical Archaeology

Press Release

A twist of the hand

An exhibition of contemporary works by James Epps

19 June – 4 September 2021

Installation: Monday 14 – Wednesday 16 June 2021

Website: <https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum/exhibitions/exhibitions/twist-hand>

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is excited to mark the summer with a bright and playful exhibition of new works by Norwich-based artist James Epps. James Epps was artist-in-residence at the British School in Rome for three months in 2017, and his work is inspired by the colourful worlds of the ancient Greek and Roman past.

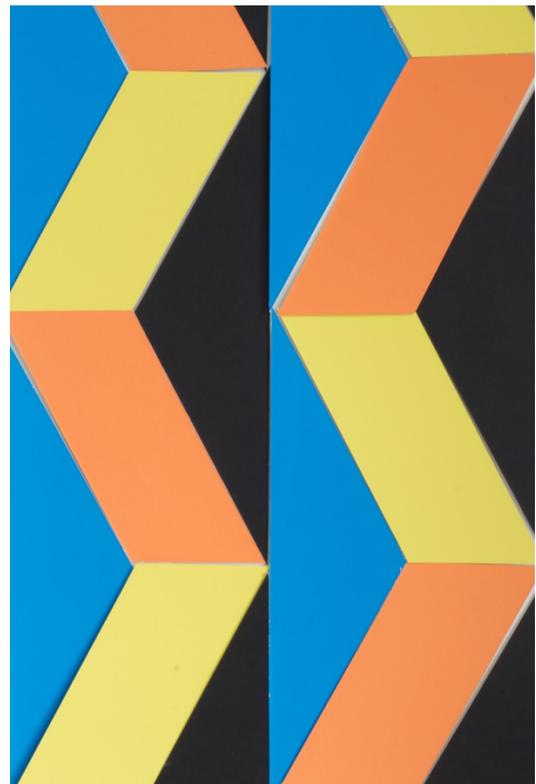
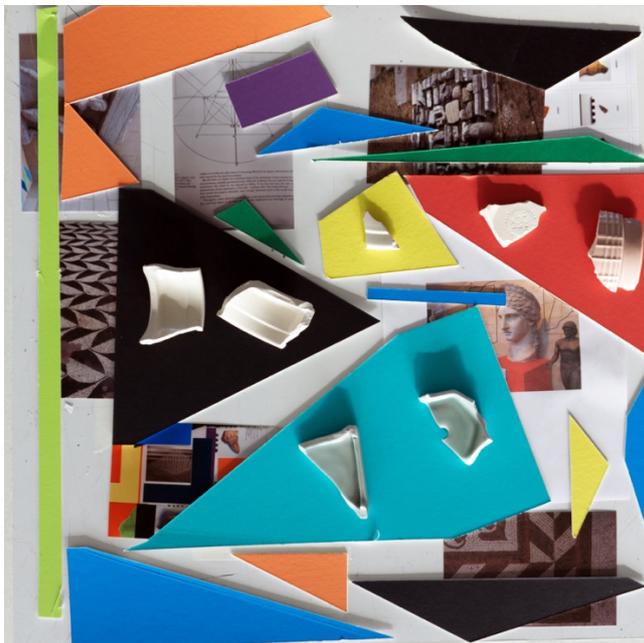
The artworks in *A twist of the hand* draw upon the use of pattern and colour in ancient art. Preserved architectural details, remnants of colour, geometric mosaics, and artefacts themselves: all serve as points of departure for the creation of new works, designed precisely for their locations in the Museum of Classical Archaeology's light and airy Cast Gallery. With both lively self-awareness, Epps evokes a vibrant vision of the ancient world, and invites dynamic new relationships of pattern and colour.

For Epps, his works are drawings, anchored to the Museum's walls through the application of coloured mountboard. These installations weave around the casts themselves, creating surprising splashes of colour throughout the Gallery. The works are directly inspired by the

Museum's own collection: 'I have traced shapes from the museum's collection,' Epps explains, 'to create new geometric compositions and looked to the sculptures' decorative motifs and their original contexts to create new works.' Visitors can catch a glimpse of the artistic process in the display cabinets in Bay C, where the artist has arranged pottery sherds from the Museum's reserve collection alongside materials and research sources from his own practice.

For Epps, what is so very important about the Museum of Classical Archaeology's collection is the way in which individual casts capture moments in an ongoing process of how artworks change over time. A statue like the Laocoon, where the successive restorations of the arm have transformed the look and impact of the sculpted group, is emblematic for Epps of how both casts and their originals are not fixed but ever evolving – and his works aim to create a compelling and complex dialogue between our contemporary moment and the historical past. 'It's extraordinary,' says Epps, 'how pattern and mark making endure across millennia and continue to have meaning for us, here and now.' In the presence of the object, but at historic distance, Epps' work urges us to look and look anew.

The development of work for this exhibition was supported by Arts Council England, Developing your Creative Practice.



Images (copyright: the artist):
James Epps, *The hand speaks*
James Epps, *Lightning strikes twice* (detail)

About the artist

James Epps creates both large scale site-site specific works and smaller paper- and object-based works. The physical qualities of the materials and location are instrumental in forming both, be it folding paper to create a shape or intersecting the architectural features of a space with a line. Epps considers his work within the practice of drawing, which is a methodology that allows for thought processes and physical actions to be manifested together.

Visiting Museum of Classical Archaeology

The Museum is open to the public Tuesday-Friday 11am-2pm, but we hope to increase these opening hours over the summer months. Currently, tickets can be booked in advance online and are released every Tuesday morning. Our priority is to keep visitors and staff safe, and as a result we are limiting the number of visitors who can be in our Cast Gallery.



Further information on the Covid-secure measures we have in place can be found on our website. We have been awarded the Visit Britain *We're Good to Go* Industry Standard mark. This means we have followed government and industry COVID-19 guidelines, have a Risk Assessment in place and have a process to maintain cleanliness and aid social distancing.

<http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum/visit-us>

About the Museum of Classical Archaeology

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is home to one of the finest surviving collections of plaster casts of Greek and Roman sculpture in the world, housed in its atmospheric Cast Gallery. Exhibitions are displayed amongst the casts, creating new dialogues between ancient and modern, antiquity and its reception. MoCA is one of eight museums and collections which work together as the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) and received funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.

For further information and images, please contact the Curator, Dr Susanne Turner
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www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum



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