



## Museum of Classical Archaeology

### Press Release

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#### **Simulacra**

**An exhibition by Zachary Eastwood-Bloom**

4 April– 9 June 2023

**Installation: Monday 3 April**

**Website:** <https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum/exhibitions/exhibitions/simulacra>

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is excited to host an exhibition by artist Zachary Eastwood-Bloom.

This is an unusual exhibition. Eastwood-Bloom is an artist who describes himself as ‘fascinated by the intersection of art and technology’ – and this exhibition is the very embodiment of that fascination. It features works created not by the hand of the artist himself but by computers: artificial intelligence and machine learning, trained by 3D models of Greek and Roman sculptures and images extracted from paintings. The resulting sculptures are famous works viewed through a glass darkly, as if pixelated or distorted into something new and unexpected – and almost but not quite no longer recognisable.

There is, then, something uncanny about the resulting works. The computer doesn’t know, of course, when it is looking at a famous masterpiece – and works like these are sometimes called machine learning hallucinations, a phrase which hints at the fantastical forms which the algorithm has dreamed up. By using machine learning in his artistic process, Eastwood-

Bloom is exploring the ways in which technology can be used to push the boundaries of traditional art forms. His sculptures and images are not simply copies of classical works, but rather, they are unique creations that challenge our preconceived notions of what art can be.

Featured in the show are not only works from the artist's archive but also four new sculptures, on display for the first time and created for this exhibition. These works are the product of the pandemic, the result of digital research conducted over lockdown and funded by Creative Scotland – and made manifest for the first time, transformed from digital form and made manifest through 3D printing. On display in a gallery full of nineteenth century plaster casts, Eastwood-Bloom's interest in emerging technologies of reproduction functions as an addendum to the Museum's permanent collection. His, in other words, is a story about copying cultures – not as a dusty, out-of-date mode of representation which belongs in the past but as one which collides with us in the here-and-now of the twenty-first century.



Images (copyright the artist):  
Simulacra: Male Seated (2023)



Human Error (2022), blown glass

## About the artist

Zachary Eastwood-Bloom explores the notions of human progress in relation to historical ideas, scientific development, and digital technology, as well as the ways in which humans attempt to understand the world around them, using methods such as storytelling, religion, science, or technology. He originally studied ceramics at Edinburgh College of Art, before going to London to earn his Master's Degree in ceramics and glass at the Royal College of

Art. While studying at the RCA, he began to explore the use of digital technologies in relation to a broad range of materials – this marked a shift in Zachary's practice, in which he began using digital technologies in combination with sculpture and drawing in his practice. Much of Zachary's work engages directly with Greek mythology, even as it takes various forms.

## **Visiting Museum of Classical Archaeology**

The Museum is open to the public Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm, and on Saturdays (during university term-time only) until 11 June. There is no need to book, but more information on our continued Covid-secure measures can be found on our website.

<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](http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum)



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