



PRESENTED BY BANK OF AMERICA

UNIONSTATION.ORG/TUT

## Original vs. Reproductions – Q&A

### **Q: Why does the exhibition use reproductions instead of original artifacts?**

**A:** This exhibition would be impossible to present without the use of reproductions, and there are multiple reasons for that...primarily, the original artifacts discovered in King Tut's tomb are no longer permitted to tour outside of Egypt. Therefore, in order to see the original artifacts, one must travel to Egypt, and in some cases, the originals of the objects that have been reproduced in the exhibition are no longer available for public display. Secondly, the exhibition is intended to tell the story of the original discovery of King Tut's tomb as Howard Carter found it in 1922 --the tomb was found brimming with treasure, many objects stacked on top of one another and some even haphazardly placed in the tomb – to display the original objects in this manner would be impossible and irresponsible. Therefore, the only way to present and provide an authentic feel of the burial chamber in its original state is through the use of reproductions – virtual archaeology, allowing us to rediscover worlds in an intact state, something no longer possible in reality.

### **Q: What are the benefits to using reproductions to tell the story of the discovery of King Tut's tomb?**

**A:** With the aid of exquisite, precisely crafted reproductions and reconstructions, *The Discovery of King Tut* allows a huge audience to access the fascinating world of the pharaohs without ever compromising the fragile, millennia-old originals which are no longer permitted to tour outside of Egypt. Visitors have the opportunity to step right into the wonder of the most famous archaeological discovery site of the twentieth century. It's as if the original excavation site in the Valley of the Kings has been reopened. It would be virtually impossible, and indeed highly irresponsible, to reconstruct the tomb treasures of Tutankhamun as a whole, especially to attempt to do so in their original configuration, as first seen by Howard Carter. Here, the best that can be done is to provide a reproduction of the treasures in the form of high-quality reproductions – and this is a good solution: unlike photographic documentation, a 3D reconstruction really delivers an exciting experience to all the senses, in that you can literally picture the item in situ and also have the sense of touch to inform you. A more intensive form of documentation is inconceivable.

### **Q: How many reproductions are used in the exhibition and where did they come from?**

**A:** More than 1,000 reproductions of the magnificent burial treasures have been reproduced down to the finest detail using traditional techniques by expert Egyptian craftsmen in consultation with renowned Egyptologists. Constant reference to photographs and various other depictions of the objects were used in order to replicate faithfully all the details, even the smallest elements of the inlays. In addition to the objects, the exhibition also includes reconstructions of three burial chambers within a fully three-dimensional, astonishingly accurate recreation of the excavation site.

### **Q: Are the replica's intended to replace the original artifacts?**

**A:** This unique, hugely entertaining and educational exhibition is not designed to replace the original artifacts, but to complement them by allowing visitors to experience the tomb and the indescribable treasures of King Tutankhamun just as they were when he died, and to relive the magical moment of their discovery as if they had been there themselves.



P: 816.460.6TUT  
WHERE KC CONNECTS, CREATES, DISCOVERS & CELEBRATES!





PRESENTED BY BANK OF AMERICA

UNIONSTATION.ORG/TUT

**Q: Are the use of reproductions something museums have done before?**

**A:** Original artifacts being reproduced for exhibition and classical museum displays is practiced under heritage conservation, where for reasons of preservation, sensitive originals are being exhibited less often. In Egyptology in particular, it has long been necessary to present burial chambers and their colorful wall-paintings by means of faithful replica constructions. For many years, copies from sites like the Cave of Lascaux or from various private Egyptian tombs such as those of Sennefer or Senedjem have been shown in successful exhibitions. Likewise, the reproduction of the Chinese Terracotta Army from the imperial tomb of Xi'an are often used in museum displays, sometimes alongside originals, to impart an incomparable impression of the diversity, majesty and the masterful skill of the Chinese imperial tombs. Conservators will likely continue to use reproductions when necessary to educate and culture society on historically significant events, allowing treasures of world heritage to be spared destruction through mass tourism, permitting the originals to be passed on to future generations.

**Q: From a scientific perspective, is it not disreputable to make replicas?**

**A:** The issue here then is less one of originality, of the authenticity of objects, and more one of preserving the contextual integrity, the physical documentation, of a set of tomb treasures assembled millennia ago that would never be possible to experience again with the use of original artifacts. Replicas are the ideal visual tool when it comes to showing people connections and contexts. They enable us to recreate archaeological sites that have long since been dispersed, to bring together objects that are now in different locations, and in some instances no longer available for public display. For reasons of conservation, this is simply not possible with originals. Egyptologists would certainly not want to work with replicas as replacements, but can to use them to help present knowledge to visitors – that knowledge having of course been gained from the originals.

**Q: How have Egyptologists assessed the work of the Egyptian artists who have made the reproductions that are used in the exhibition?**

**A:** Many renowned Egyptologists have commended the exhibition and the reproductions that are used in its display. It is generally believed that the Egyptian craftsmen selected to reproduce the objects have achieved the best possible results in their work. After reviewing the reproduced objects from the exhibition, the late Egyptologist Bob Partridge even detected details on the replica of the gold coffin that he was the first to discover on the original. University of Pennsylvania Professor of Egyptology, Dr. David P. Silverman, who served as the curator for the last King Tut exhibition that toured the United States containing authentic artifacts, has lent his support to the exhibition saying, "The concept of the exhibition really breaks new ground in presenting ancient Egyptian cultural history. Egyptian antiquities from King Tut's tomb can no longer travel outside Egypt, but this exhibition will make available nearly 1,000 precise replicas of breathtaking items found among the young pharaohs treasures."



P: 816.460.6TUT  
WHERE KC CONNECTS, CREATES, DISCOVERS & CELEBRATES!

