

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

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Because the Museum staff needed to focus on the renovation of the permanent galleries, it was decided to hold *Persepolis: Images of an Empire* over until September 3, 2017. The show has weathered well, and we still get vary favorable comments about it. We hope that it may be shown in other cities.

Although there were no changes in our special exhibits gallery, we have been able to use the lower level for several smaller shows. This is a high traffic area, and we often see people lingering over the material that we install there. *Don't Take My Stuff; Tell My Story* (see details in *Annual Report 2015–2016*, pp. 238, 270) continued to October 31, 2016. On November 22, 2016, we opened *Drones over the Desert*, focusing on the work of the Eastern Badia Archaeological Project headed by Yorke Rowan (fig. 1a–b). The show is composed of impressive aerial photographs taken by drone, a discussion of how such data can be used to analyze a site, and a brief panel about aerial photography at the Oriental Institute including Breasted's flights over Giza in a RAF plane in 1920 and the Megiddo expedition's



Figure 1a–b. Views of the exhibit, *Drones Over the Desert*; D. 29271 (above) and D. 29283 (below) (photos: Bryce Lowry)

experiments with a camera held aloft by a weather balloon. A looped video on a monitor has spectacular views of the area and amazing scenes of Yorke and his co-director Chad Hill catching the incoming drone. The show continues through August 13, 2017. The exhibit staff also assisted Research Associate Morag Kersel and Fiona Rose-Greenland, Research Director of the Past for Sale project, with the conceptualization and design of *The Past Sold: Cast Studies in the Movement of Archaeological Objects* that was presented at the Neubauer Collegium from April 3 to May 12, 2017.

As reported in last year's *Annual Report* (p. 246), the Museum installed a small case of photos and memorabilia in the lobby to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Volunteer Program. The exhibit, *Doing Business in the Ancient World*, on view in the lobby of the Booth School, has been renewed for another term.

Planning is in high gear for a variety of shows. The major one, *Becoming God in Ancient Egypt: The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, is curated by Foy Scalf. The show opens for our members October 1, 2017, and will run through March 31, 2018. It will be a more typical special exhibit with many objects from our collection as well as three loans from the Field Museum. It will be the first opportunity in almost a century to show our two Books of the Dead, *P. Ryerson* and *P. Milbank*, in their entirety. As with other special exhibits, it also provides the opportunity to include objects from the reserve collection. Another important benefit of the show is the two papyri have been photographed in color by Bryce Lowry. We are happy to be working with Robert Weiglein, a highly regarded exhibit designer, who has developed a very attractive floor plan divided by printed scrimms (fig. 2). Josh Tulasak has been an important member of the design team, helping turn Robert and Foy's ideas into reality. Our new head preparator Rob Bain hit the ground running, and with other members of his team, Erin Bliss and until recently, Kate Cescon, they have been building exhibit furniture and using their contacts to source the elements needed for the show. As is usual for our major shows, a fully illustrated catalog (edited by Foy) will be available. It contains essays by Book of the Dead experts throughout Europe and the US, and it is sure to become a standard reference for the topic. We owe Tom Urban of our publications office a tremulous debt for making the publication a reality.

Another upcoming show to be presented in the lower level traces the history of Hittitology at the Oriental Institute. It will open on August 24, 2017, in conjunction with the 10th International Congress of Hittitology.

Looking ahead to our centennial commemoration in May 2019, the Museum is meeting with the Centennial Committee made up of faculty, members, and members of our Visiting Committee to discuss what themes or aspects of the history of the Oriental Institute should be the focus of the exhibit. In addition, we will have a show at the Joseph Regenstein Special

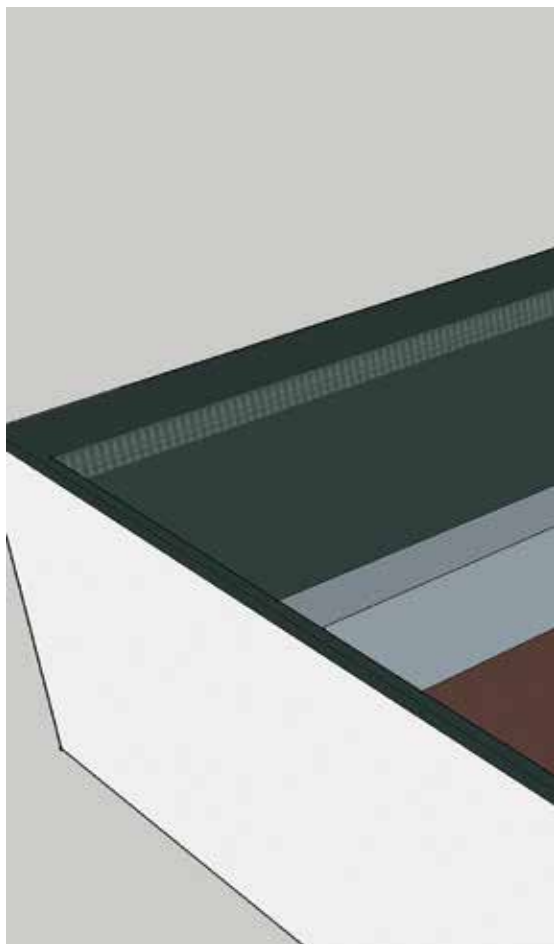




Figure 2. Schematic plan of the Book of the Dead show to open to members on October 1, 2017

Collections Research Center to be curated by our archivist, Anne Flannery. The design and installation of the remote show will be done by Joe Scott who, years ago, was a member of the OI exhibits team.

We are having only modest success in sending any of our shows to other museums, largely because of the staffing that it requires. A good model was an abbreviated version of *Our Work: Modern Jobs, Ancient Origins*, photos by Jason Reblando, that was loaned to the Badé Museum at the University of California at Berkeley where it was on view to the end of 2016. Photo-based exhibits present many fewer complications with security, conservation, and insurance.

The special exhibits program continues to fulfill its goals — promoting research on the collections, expanding our library of new photography, giving faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to curate an exhibit, and of course, to encourage the public to return to our galleries to see what is “new.”