
The Photographic Laboratory

Jean Grant

Yes, it was a big year at the O.I. and in the photo lab.

Probably the biggest change for the photo lab during 1976/77 was the route between the studio and the darkroom which goes through the basement. It was much more circuitous, and ever-changing because of the exhibit-building going on in the preparator's lab. As to the new exhibits, most of the photos on display were done commercially as we are not equipped or staffed to work at such size or volume. We did do some original and copy negatives as necessary for the Mesopotamian Hall and the Magic of Egyptian Art (as well as Tut publicity prints), but the photo lab had nowhere near the added work burden of the other basement folk.

The biggest photo order we had was photographing our colossal statue of King Tut, for which I found we also were not equipped or staffed, but borrowing lights from across campus, and props, stands, and help from Ray Tindel, our preparator, and with the volunteer help of Julia Maher and Richard Jaeschke, we did get the necessary color views. However, even all the above still didn't help us to figure out the electrical circuitry in this building—maybe a computer would—so next time I may ask our customers if they wouldn't be just as happy with a flashcube on the little ol' Instamatic.

That is one of our biggest problems: getting some of our customers to realize we don't do "Instamatic" photography (which is "aim and click") nor do we print by machine, as we feel that both in shooting and in printing we are imparting information (maybe to the next James Henry Breasted) and to get all we can takes sometimes many changes in the lighting to find it and many prints to show it properly. That is known as quality.

Our biggest photo order in terms of volume will probably be the Nubian publication, now under the guidance of Dr. Bruce Williams. After bowls, sherds, and pots I have composed a one-word essay . . . "Lots!"

Our biggest trophy is Volunteer of the Year and goes to two people, Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Suran of Shreveport, Louisiana, who volunteered to work during their vacations in our darkroom at whatever work the Museum Office wanted them to do. Unfortunately they took turns being out with respiratory conditions, but still fulfilled their pledge to work for us. We hope it was as pleasant and informative an experience for them as it was for us. Thank you again, Mr. & Mrs. Suran.