

3D Scanning Technology Helps Solve Dutch Shipwreck Mysteries



Maritime archaeologists from Flinders University in South Australia are using 3D photogrammetry, laser and CT scanning to capture the highest possible level of detail of the last remaining 17th and 18th century scale model ships in the Netherlands to help shed light on the demise of the full size versions off the coast of Australia 300 years ago.

The 'Ship Shapes' project, has the potential to reveal what happened to the most famous Dutch shipwrecks including the *Batavia*, the *Vergulde Draak*, the *Zuiddorp*, the *Zeewijk* and at least three others believed lost in Australian waters. The scans will be used to create reconstructions and animations as well as 3D prints and even virtual reality simulations.

"Since their discovery in the 1960s and '70s, these shipwrecks have been studied intensively but there are still many gaps in our knowledge due to the fragmentary nature of the archaeological evidence," said Flinders University researchers John McCarthy. "Less than 20 contemporary models of these ships are known to survive globally, mostly held in Dutch museums. Our aim is to survey as many of these models as possible with cutting-edge techniques."

Funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Canberra, the program has the support of several museums, including the Rijksmuseum and the Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam, as well as the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency and leading Dutch ship expert Ab Hoving.

The Netherlands and Australia have recently signed an agreement on joint management and research of shipwrecks, sunken relics and other underwater cultural heritage. Dutch and Australian maritime archaeologists from the Western Australian Museum and Flinders University are currently undertaking fieldwork at the sites of the Dutch shipwrecks *Zeewijk* and *Batavia*.

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