

# **Casting Department**

0055

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Last updated on March 01, 2017.

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Casci, Paul, b. 1872-d. 1956
<b>Title</b>	Casting Department
<b>Call number</b>	0055
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1960-2010
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Casting Department of the Penn Museum was begun in the 1890s and continued until 2010. The museum staff was initially in charge of making the casts. Those involved in the early days included Paul Casci, the first museum restorer, and M. Louise Baker, the official museum artist. The Casting Department papers consist of 0.5 linear feet of annual reports, list of available casts and prices, and labels from the Museum casting department. The material has been divided into three series: Annual Reports, Labels, and List of Available Casts.</p>

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## Biography/History

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The casting department began in the 1890's, originally making the casts for scholarly purposes. The museum staff was initially in charge of making the casts. Those involved included Paul Casci, the first

museum restorer, and M. Louise Baker, the official museum artist. Between the 1920's and 1930's the casts transitioned to being sold in the education department. Through 1964 the education department was in charge of the casting department until the Women's Committee took over in later years. With this shift, the casts were now made by volunteers and sold in the museum shop. Due to renovations in the West Wing of the museum in 2010, the department lost their work area. The museum shop was also outsourced to the Event Network. These changes led to the end of the casting department. The department officially ended on June 30, 2010.

Paul Casci was born and educated in Fiesole near Florence, Italy. The son of a cobbler, he was expected to follow in his father's footsteps. In addition to assisting his father after school, Paul ran errands for the village sculptor in exchange for lumps of clay with which to learn this trade. The village also had an antique shop where Paul learned the difference between art and careful fakes.

It was in Florence, while working at a gallery the Casci met Dr. Tait Mc Kensie of the University of Pennsylvania. Tait offered Casci a job at his gallery if he came to America. Once working in Philadelphia, Casci applied to The University Museum at Dr. Tait's suggestion and was hired by George Byron Gordon. He has repaired and restored priceless items from Roman glass to Egyptian portals.

Casci worked closely with artist Mary Louise Baker who was born in 1872 in Alliance, Ohio the descendant of Pennsylvania Quaker families. She returned to Pennsylvania to complete her education and taught in several one-room school houses prior to 1900. In 1900, determined to follow a career in Art, she enrolled at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art in Philadelphia, the precursor to the Philadelphia College of Art.

Ms Baker worked as a freelance artist in the early twentieth century while teaching painting at The George School in Newtown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. After making some drawings for Clarence B. Moore of the Academy of Natural Sciences and some commercial illustrations, her versatility became known within the community.

Beginning in 1908, Baker began a series of watercolor drawings of Mayan pottery which were published by the University Museum in 1925. She was commissioned in 1931 to make watercolor reproductions of some of the finest examples of Maya pottery which involved travel to New Orleans, Yucatan, Guatemala, Honduras and San Salvador. She was the first woman to be sent on such a trip. Baker who was attracted to aviation as much as art "loved every minute of it."

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## Scope and Contents

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The textual records consist of 0.5 linear feet of annual reports, list of available casts and prices, and labels from the Museum casting department. The material has been divided into three series: Annual Reports, Labels, and List of Available Casts.

The annual reports series contains the report from 2001 and each report from 2006 to the end of the department in 2010. These reports reflect upon the casting departments' year, mainly focusing on yearly expenses and earnings, as well as the members involved. The labels series includes two copies of each label that was included with a cast. The labels contain information about the history of the artifact and sizing information. The list of available cast series contains the list from the 2009 to 2010 year. Included in the list are the artifact number, description of the artifact, and the pricing.

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## **Administrative Information**

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **PERSONAL NAME(S)**

- Baker, Mary Louise, b. 1872-d. 1962
- Casci, Paul, b. 1872-d. 1956

## Collection Inventory

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<b>ANNUAL REPORTS 2001-2010.</b>	Box 1
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<b>LABELS.</b>	Box 1
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<b>LIST OF AVAILABLE CASTS 2009-2010.</b>	Box 1
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