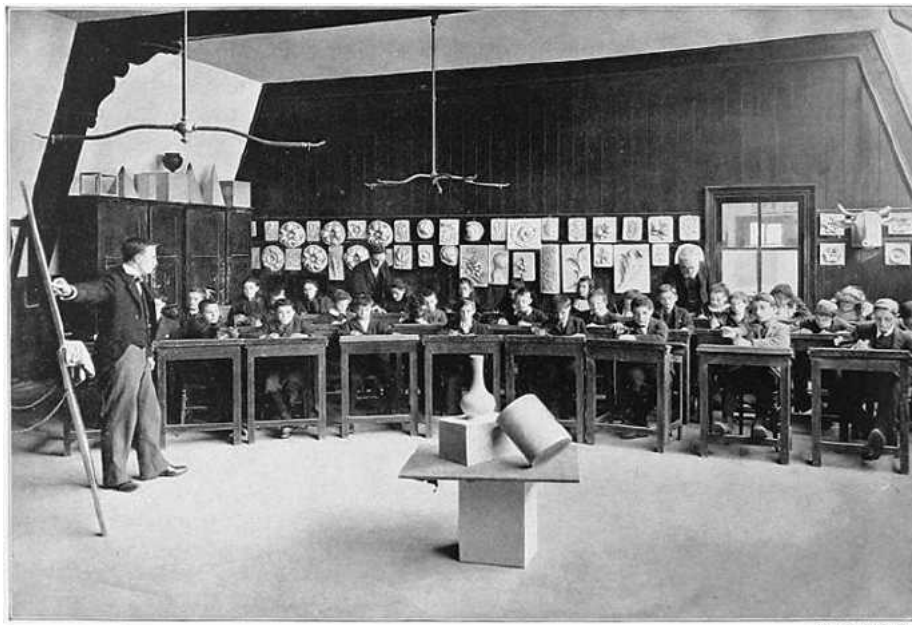




Utrecht Art Supplies
Just for Fun: Study from Casts



Plaster casts have long been a staple tool for traditional artists learning proportion, value and volume in drawing and painting.



This photo (ca. 1897) of an art class in a London school shows rows of casts on the wall behind the students.



Casts enable detailed study of figurative elements when a life model is not available.
(Painting by Adolph Menzel)



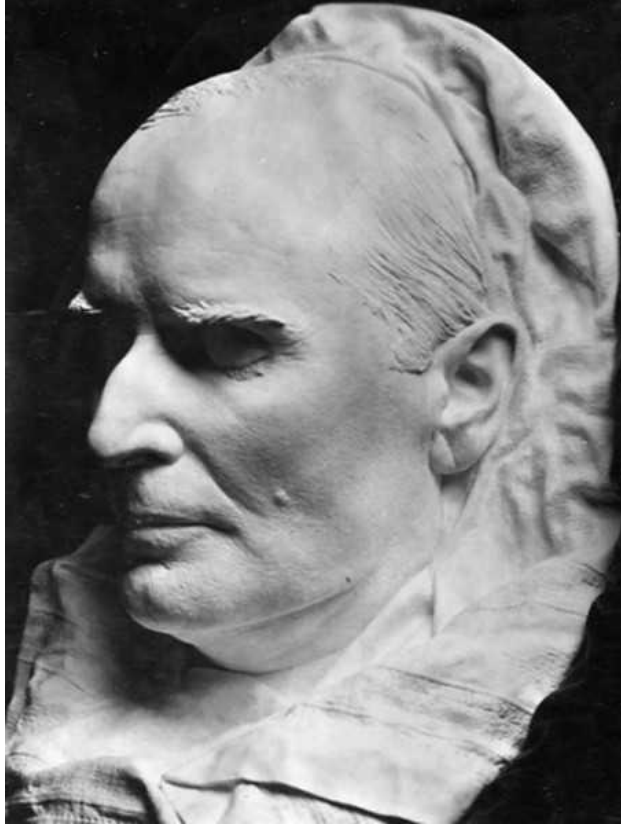
Some museums display full scale casts of classical sculptures, giving students a good impression of the forms, flow and proportions of the originals.



17th c still life by Cesar Boetius van Everdingen



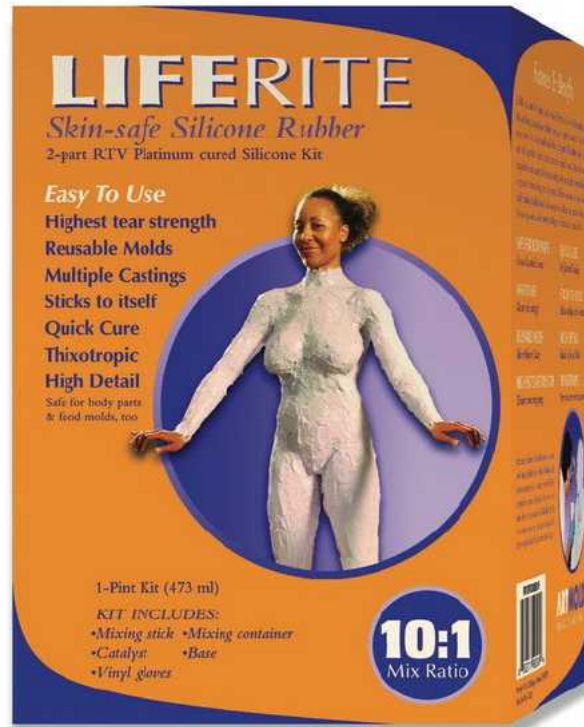
Some collections even include monumental-scale and architectural casts.



Plaster replicas are also used to capture the likeness of living or deceased individuals.



Materials are available for artists to make their own life casts in-studio.



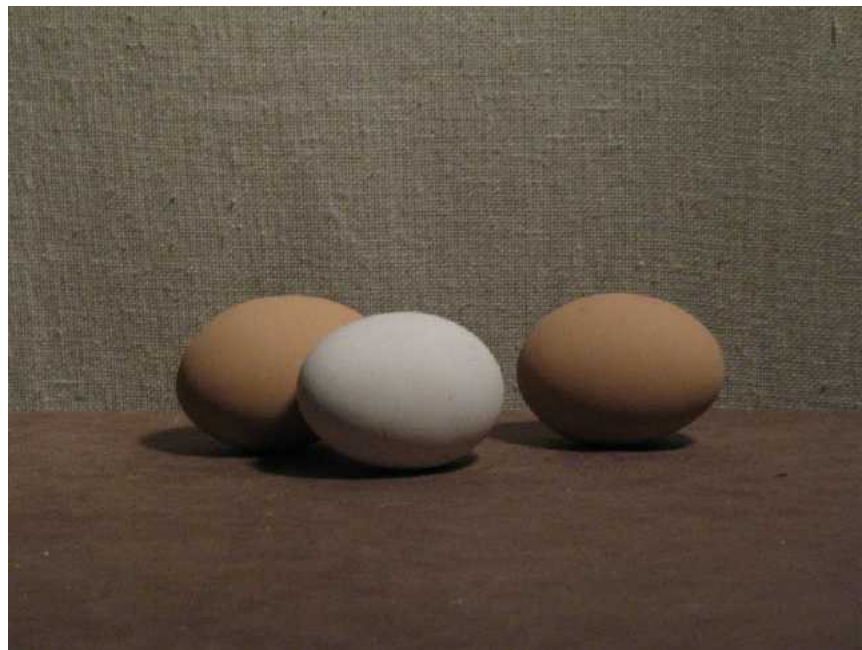
Special, skin-safe products can be used for casting directly from the life model. This type of kit produces a durable silicone mold which can be used again and again. Before attempting to cast any part of a model, read and understand all instructions and safety precautions.



Small-scale, basic casting kits with alginate-type material produce a mold that can be used once.



Casting materials can also be used to duplicate three-dimensional art and other objects. Some products are designed to take an impression of solid objects such as sculptures or primary castings. (Cast of sculpture by Rodin)



Hollowed egg shells can be filled with plaster to create permanent, realistic egg forms for still life.



Products that are painted on can be used to capture fine detail and texture.



After creating a mold from the primary cast, multiples can be produced. A negative plaster mold can also be used to create papier mache masks like the one shown here.



Hardware/construction grade plaster can be used for bulk outer molds. Select high-quality, fine textured plaster for detailed, clean looking casts.



A release agent may be necessary to ensure the mold does not stick permanently to the original. The release agent should be chosen appropriately for the type of mold and original to be used. Cooking spray or petroleum jelly may be adequate for rough plaster work, but specialty silicone products are available for more refined work and for materials incompatible with oil-based agents. Use only skin-safe release agents for life casting.



Manufactured casts are available for use in the studio and classroom. Shown: Detail from Michelangelo's David



A faceted head study helps demonstrate the modeling of the human face.



Casts depicting detailed musculature are helpful in mastering structural anatomy.



"The View of the Plaster Cast Collection at Charlottenborg Palace" by Christen Købke, 1830

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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