

Mineral Room: Workshop

The practice-based research in this MoCIA gallery was catalysed by the 2019 workshop *Camera Phone Recording its Own Mineral Condition*, held at the *Natural History Museum's Historic Mineral Gallery*. Participants received printouts highlighting minerals used in mobile phones and their global origins, encouraging them to use their phones to engage with the space. The workshop aimed to link the display of these minerals with their geopolitical and historical contexts, focusing on the relationship between the artifacts and their sources in today's global infrastructure.

One key focus was on indium, a crucial component in mobile screens, primarily refined in China to produce indium tin-oxide. While the gallery does not display indium itself, it does feature related minerals like sphalerite, the primary ore of zinc, from which indium is extracted as a by-product. Participants explored the connection between the mineral displays and their own mobile devices, particularly the relationship between the screen as a device and the glass protecting the artifacts. They captured reflections and light distortions, highlighting the interplay between technology and the physical exhibition.

The workshop drew inspiration from conceptual works by John Hilliard and Dan Graham but shifted the focus to contemporary concerns and technologies. Participants created video works that layered frames within frames, mimicking infinity mirrors. These pieces emphasized the digital nature of the medium while keeping the minerals in focus, linking the museum's historical context with modern technology. The collaborative nature of the workshop, where participants filmed each other's phones, highlighted the phone as an embodied tool for documenting the museum, fostering discussions about mineral extraction, imaging technology, and the ethical implications of viewing artifacts through a digital lens.