

Retropolis

Saving Pompeii's ruins, one pixel at a time.

Ever since the lost city was found, tourists, looters, and Mother Nature have taken a toll on Pompeii. To preserve what's left of the Roman ruins, scientists are now using 3-D scanners and imaging software (adapted from the oil and gas industry) to generate the most detailed record to date. The digital re-creations, including these of the city's forum, are so accurate that the site can be studied onscreen instead of on the ground. Researchers bombarded the area with 350 million laser beams shot from shortrange scanners. Eventually, they'll be able to use the data - along with that from powerful radar, satellite imagery, aerial photography, and GPS readings - to interpolate missing elements. In August, preservationists from Unesco and UC Berkeley plan to take aim at another disappearing piece of history: the Talibanblasted Bamiyan Buddhas.



University of Ferrara & Kacyra Family Foundation

- *Ted Smalley Brown*