

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

STENCIL COPIER

Metal, iron, copper and wood

H. 40 x L. 50 x W. 35 cm

1920-1930, England, London, Tottenham Hale

MAH.2018.3134

The *stencil* copier now in exhibition, is part of the MAH's Science and Technology Management Unit and was donated by the Direção das Obras Públicas de Angra do Heroísmo [local Public Works Department], in 1978. It's the 7th model from a patent invented and developed by David Gestetner.

Gestetner was born in Hungary, in 1854, and still at young age, left to live and work in Wien, in the area of *stocks*. His function was to copy, by handwriting, the records of the daily activities. Thereby, with the aim of making it easier, more practical and flexible, he developed, among other things, a device named *Gestetner Cyclostyle Machine*, that revolutionized the operation of several businesses and industries, being also used in schools and churches. This invention allowed the reproduction of several documents copies, through the use of a *stencil*, a thin sheet of paper cover by a wax layer and a piercing pen with a metal end, the *Cyclostyle Pen*, also patented by Gestetner. The fact that the copies were mechanically identical meant that revision was useless.

In first place, the *stencil* was put in the lower frame with a metal plate, in a way that, through piercing, it was created a matrix of the text to be reproduced. Later, the already pierced *stencil* was placed in the upper frame and a blank sheet would be inserted in the lower frame. The following step would consist in rolling the cylinder by hand, in a way that the ink would be evenly scattered over the stencil, transferring the text. At the end, the printed paper was taken out and another one would be put in place.

David Gestetner went to live in London in 1881 and, in 1906, he opened the *Gestetner Works*, that was in business until the 70's, counting on with more than 6000 workers, in the 50's and 60's.