

## The process of sculpting and the appreciation of plaster sculptures

The classic process of making large sculptures, such as the ones found on monuments, largely consist in first, the sculpting in clay of a prototype, this is then, using molds, made into a model plaster sculpture where further details are added and finally, it's sculpted a life-sized plaster sculpture used to cast the one in metal. While the first stage in clay is often discarded, some of the plaster sculptures, both the model as the full sized one, have lived till nowadays.

In 1891, Luz Soriano, a Portuguese historian, after his passing, left in his will a sum of 30:000\$000 to 35:000\$000 reis to erect a monument in honor of Afonso of Albuquerque, a Portuguese sailor and viceroy of the Portuguese colonies in India.

This request was later turned into a national contest, where artists and architects came together to create a model of the monument to be judged and picked. Eight sculptures entered this contest, the first three were, according to the rules of this contest, donated to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon. Though only two have survived in till this day albeit with degradation issues.

The first prize model monument, sculpted and designed by António Augusto da Costa Mota (uncle), was then used as reference to create the life size one. To create such sculpture, it was used the casting installations of the Portuguese military in Lisbon, called Fundação de Cima, the 4 meter plaster sculpture created to cast the metal one, remains in the custody of the military, now being a part of an enormous set of plaster sculptures all created with the sole purpose of casting in metal to display in squares and gardens.

Having both the model and the plaster sculpture used for casting is very rare, as plaster was a medium previously often overlooked and mostly used for previews of the final product, but the conservation and restoration of these works is immensely important because it's not just something one can throw away. It's a piece of history, it shows the process of the creation of art and can preserve valuable information for future restoration in case of the degradation of the final sculpture.

**Célia Lucas** (PT) University of Lisbon, Faculty of Fine Arts, Lisbon, Portugal, started her university studies in 2019 with the degree in Sciences of Art and Heritage, there she specialized herself in Conservation and Restoration of plaster that began a deep interest in the field. From there, she applied to get her masters degree in Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Art where she currently studies.

**Marta Frade** (PT) University of Lisbon, Faculty of Fine Arts, Center of Research and Studies in Fine Arts (CIEBA), Lisbon, Portugal, began her training at the Professional School of Heritage Recovery in Sintra in 1997, where she cultivated her interest in the heritage executed in plaster. This material proved to be of the utmost importance in her academic career. She completed her degree in Conservation and Restoration at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar in 2005. Since 2011 she teaches as an Invited Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon and finished her PhD in Conservation and Restoration of plaster sculpture in 2018.