

# SCULPT 2021

Shaping Genealogies  
1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Sculpture



O Desolado, Século XX (Roma, 1972). Reis, António Soares dos (1842-1889). Pedra (mármore de Carrara). Fotografar: José Pessoa, 2001 Copyright© DGPC - Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis

## Book of Abstracts

ONLINE  
7-8 OCT 2021



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# Contents

<b>Program</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Alison Yarrington</b> <i>Shaping Sculptural Histories, Mapping Sculpture and Beyond</i> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Session I. 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Eduarda Vieira, et al.</b> Geo-SR project: Goals and Outputs .....	<b>7</b>
<b>José Guilherme Abreu, et al.</b> The transition between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century sculpture. A genealogy of masters .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Nicol Maria Mocchi</b> Marino Marini and the Community of Exiled Artists in Switzerland during World War II .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Session II. 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Jan Zacharias</b> Jewish Christ? Aspects of religious and artistic identity in the sculpture of late imperial Russia .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Anatoly Rykov</b> Strategies of deconstruction. Adolfo Wildt and his “necromonger empire” .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Ana Lourenço Pinto</b> History of Art and Materiality in Portuguese Neobaroque Sculpture, from late-Romanticism to modern synthesis .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Thayer Tolles</b> <i>António Soares dos Reis and Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An Artistic Friendship</i> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Session III. Artistic and Practice-based Research</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Agnès Le Gac</b> Technical data and memories of the oldest twentieth-century mouldmaker in Portugal: Manuel Branco (1925 –) .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Pablo General-Toro, et al.</b> The "Ephemeral" Foundry on Rua Malmerendas in Porto: History of the First Exclusively Artistic Foundry in Portugal .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Agnès Le Gac</b> Who was 'Faiunça'? .....	<b>19</b>

<b>Session IV. Material and Technical Studies .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Emanuela Fragoso, et al.</b>	
The Head of Legros - Rodin's Black Patina .....	22
<b>Łukasz Żuchowski</b>	
Xawery Dunikowski and the materials of Polish modernist sculpture .....	23
<b>António Mário Almeida, et al.</b>	
Exploring portable Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity avails in the Conservation Assessment of Plaster Sculptures in Museum environment .....	24
<b>Laura Castro</b>	
<i>Walls, and pillars – a call for protection. Reflections on sculpture in the museum</i> .....	25
<b>Session V. Conservation .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Frederico Vaz</b>	
Lisbon's Public Sculptures: Management and Conservation of City Heritage .....	27
<b>Davy Depelchin, et al.</b>	
Immaterial icons? Conserving Constantin Meunier's sculptures of labor .....	28
<b>Elsa Murta</b>	
Soares dos Reis' plaster models: technical production and the challenge of the conservation and restoration .....	29
<b>Session VI. Documentation and Digital Heritage .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Sebastien Clerbois</b>	
A 3D Potree tool for the technological study of sculpture .....	31
<b>Frederico Henriques</b>	
3D digitalization of a collection of plaster sculptures by João da Silva (1880-1960) .....	32
<b>Ana Lúcia Teixeira da Silva</b>	
"O Desterrado" by António Soares dos Reis – biographical notes .....	33
<b>Session VII. Plaster .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Biancalucia Maglione</b>	
A Material That "Lends Itself to Fine Interpretations". The Status Of Plaster In Marino Marini's Oeuvre .....	35
<b>Chiara Marabelli</b>	
The Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: past, present and future possibilities of archaeological cast collections .....	36
<b>Elisabeth Manship, et al.</b>	
Re-envisioning criteria for documentation of plaster artist models in museum collections .....	37

## October 7<sup>th</sup>

9h00

**Platform access/Registration**  
Conference Opening

9h10

*Eduarda Vieira, Conference Chair, Director of CITAR*  
*Maria Coutinho, Vice-Director of CITAR*  
*Nuno Crespo, Director, School of Arts, Universidade Católica Portuguesa*

9h30

**Keynote Speaker: Alison Yarrington**  
(Loughborough University-UK)  
***Shaping Sculptural Histories, Mapping Sculpture and Beyond***

### Session I

**19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture**

**Chair: Maria Coutinho**

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

10h10

**Geo-SR project: Goals and Outputs**

*Eduarda Vieira et al.*  
CITAR, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

10h30

**The transition between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sculpture**

*José Guilherme Abreu et al.*  
CITAR, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

11h10

**Marino Marini and the Community of Exiled Artists in Switzerland during World War II**

*Nicol Maria Mocchi*  
Independent researcher, Milan, Italy

11h30

Pause

### Session II

**19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture**

Chair: José Guilherme Abreu

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

11h50

**Jewish Christ? Aspects of religious and artistic identity in the sculpture of late imperial Russia**

*Jan Zacharias*  
The Institute of Art History, Charles University, Czech Republic

12h10 **Strategies of deconstruction. Adolfo Wildt and his “necromonger empire”**  
Anatoly Rykov  
St. Petersburg University, Russia

12h30 **History of Art and Materiality in Portuguese Neobaroque Sculpture, from late-Romanticism to modern synthesis**  
Ana Lourenço Pinto  
Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon, Portugal

**Session's Q&A**

13h00 **Lunch**

14h30 **Keynote Speaker: Thayer Tolles**  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA)  
***António Soares dos Reis and Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An Artistic Friendship***

**Session III**  
**Artistic and Practice-based Research**  
**Chair: Eduarda Vieira**

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

15h00 **Technical data and memories of the oldest twentieth-century mouldmaker in Portugal: Manuel Branco (1925 –)**  
Agnès Le Gac  
Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

15h20 **The "Ephemeral" Foundry on Rua Malmerendas in Porto: History of the First Exclusively Artistic Foundry in Portugal**  
Pablo General  
CITAR, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

15h40 **Who was 'Faiunça'?**  
Agnès Le Gac  
Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

16h00 **Pause**

**Session IV**  
**Material and Technical Studies**  
**Chair: Rui Bordalo**

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

16h20 **The Head of Legros - Rodin's Black Patina**  
Sara Fragoso *et al.*  
Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

16h40 **Xawery Dunikowski and the materials of Polish modernist sculpture**  
Łukasz Żuchowski  
Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw, Poland

17h00 **Application of Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity for the Condition Assessment of Plaster Sculptures: a preliminary study**  
António Mário Almeida *et al.*  
Minho University, Portugal

17h20 Q&A and Closing

## October 8<sup>th</sup>

9h30 **Keynote Speaker: Laura Castro**  
(Director of Northern Portugal's Regional Directorate of Culture, Portugal)  
***Walls, and pillars – a call for protection. Reflections on sculpture in the museum***

**Session V**  
**Conservation**  
**Chair: Salomé Carvalho**  
(Soares dos Reis National Museum, Porto, Portugal)

10h10 **Lisbon's Public Sculptures: Management and Conservation of City Heritage**  
Frederico Vaz  
Municipality of Lisbon, Portugal

10h30 **Immaterial icons? Conserving Constantin Meunier's sculptures of labor**  
Davy Depelchin *et al.*  
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

10h50 **Soares dos Reis' plaster models: technical production and the challenge of the conservation and restoration**  
Elsa Murta *et al.*  
José de Figueiredo Laboratory, DGCP, Lisbon, Portugal

11h10 Pause



**Session VI**  
**Documentation and Digital Heritage**  
**Chair: Rui Bordalo**

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, School of Arts, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

11h30 **A 3D Potree tool for the technological study of sculpture**  
Sebastien Clerbois  
Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

11h50 **3D digitalization of a collection of plaster sculptures by João da Silva**  
Frederico Henriques et al.  
CITAR, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

12h10 **Survey of Watermarks and Paper Types in Soares dos Reis' Drawings - A Method of Study and Classification**  
Paula Mesquita Santos  
Soares dos Reis National Museum, Porto, Portugal

12h30 **"O Desterrado" by António Soares dos Reis – biographical notes**  
Ana Lúcia Teixeira da Silva  
Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto, Portugal

12h50 **Session's Q&A**

12h00 **Lunch**

**Session VII**

**Plaster**

**Chair: Elsa Murta**

(José de Figueiredo Laboratory, DGCP, Lisbon, Portugal)

14h30 **A Material That "Lends Itself to Fine Interpretations". The Status Of Plaster In Marino Marini's Oeuvre**  
Biancalucia Maglione  
University of Florence, Italy

14h50 **The Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: past, present and future possibilities of archaeological cast collections**  
Chiara Marabelli  
School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK

15h10 **Re-envisioning criteria for documentation of plaster artist models in museum collections**  
Elisabeth Manship et al.  
University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland

**Debate & Network**

16h10 **Conference closure**

October 7<sup>th</sup>

### ***Shaping Sculptural Histories, Mapping Sculpture and Beyond***

In this keynote my focus is the evolution, realization and varied outcomes of the AHRC-funded *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951* <https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/> (2007-11). Originated by Ann Compton, Director and Editor, working with our colleagues at the University of Glasgow, the V&A, the Henry Moore Institute, TRIARC Trinity College, Dublin, and the University of Ulster, the major product of this UK-wide collaborative project was an open access online database that captured over 50,000 records relating to sculpture in the UK. The timeframe, from the Great Exhibition of 1851 to the 1951 Festival of Britain, saw art practices transformed by a range of factors including the growth of teaching institutions, museums and exhibiting societies. With the aim of providing the first authoritative study of sculptors, and sculpture's related businesses and trades it revealed a multiplicity of art infrastructures, professional networks, and cultural geographies in place across the Britain and Ireland in which creative collaboration was crucial. The initial research programme was carried out across 17 cities in Britain and Ireland, with the result that *Mapping Sculpture 1851-1951* now enables researchers to explore the wide range of significant regional sculptural activity alongside the metropolitan that it was so often overshadowed by. Preceded by the PMSA National Recording Project and followed most recently by the innovative Art UK Sculpture, the latter constituting largest cataloguing project of sculpture in the public domain in the UK, *Mapping Sculpture 1851-1951* is seen as part of the need for greater public understanding of and access to sculpture and its multiple histories.

**Keynote Speaker:** Alison Yarrington

(Loughborough University-UK)

#### **Author's Curriculum Vitae**

Alison Yarrington is Professor Emerita of Art History and Dean of the School of Arts, English, Drama and Publishing at Loughborough University, specializing in the history of British art and sculpture c.1750-1914, including sculpture's display histories, the Anglo-Italian marble trade and, more broadly, British-Italian cultural transactions and the history of collections and collecting. She was the Principal Investigator for the AHRC and British Academy- funded project *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951*, with the Institute of Art History, University of Glasgow, the V&A and the Henry Moore Institute. Her publications include studies of public sculpture, notably on monuments to Nelson and Wellington; articles and chapters on women sculptors, country house collections and galleries and on Anglo-Italian cultural exchanges, *The Lustrous Trade* with Cinzia Sicca, and co-edited *Travels and Translations: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*. She is a member of Art UK's 'Your Sculpture' Steering Panel and chairs the Advisory Board of the *Sculpture Journal*.

## **Session I. 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture**

Chair: Maria Coutinho

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

## **GEO-SR Project - Goals and Results. An Overview**

Eduarda Vieira <sup>[1]</sup>, Salomé Carvalho<sup>[2]</sup>, José Guilherme Abreu<sup>[1]</sup>, Rui Bordalo<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts, Portugal

<sup>[2]</sup> Soares dos Reis National Museum, Porto, Portugal

### **Abstract**

This communication aims to outline an overview of the GEO-SR project, concerning its general objectives and main achievements. Geo-SR was a pioneer project in the field of study of the work of one of the greatest contemporary Portuguese sculptors, António Soares dos Reis (1847-1889), focused on the material and technical analysis of his plaster and stone artworks.

GEO-SR was carried out with the partnership of *Direção Geral do Património Cultural* (DGPC) and the Soares dos Reis National Museum in Oporto. Thirty-five plaster and stone sculptures were selected for the analytical study including the national treasure *O Desterrado*. The analytical study was conducted by GeobioTech from the University of Aveiro and the Physics Laboratory from the University of Minho with the collaboration of the University of Valladolid (Spain). Distinct analytical techniques were performed, including Raman XRF, SEM-EDS, and IRT, in order to understand the composition of old materials, some alteration phenomena in *O Desterrado's* marble stone, the sculptor techniques (casting and coating recipes), as well previous interventions of restoration.

One of the main goals was to draw low cost strategies for material studies and monitoring plaster collections in museums and to promote knowledge transfer between scientific areas of Civil Engineering to Conservation- Restoration field by applying the UPV technique to sculpture analysis.

The project outputs will be highlighted as well as the methodological adjustments that proved necessary to be undertaken within the COVID19 Pandemics.

### **Keywords**

Soares dos Reis 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture, Plaster/Stone; Analytical Study, Museum Sculpture Network

# The transition between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sculpture. A genealogy of masters.

José Guilherme Abreu<sup>[1]</sup>, Rui Bordalo<sup>[1]</sup>, Salomé Carvalho<sup>[2]</sup>, Eduarda Vieira <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts, Portugal

<sup>[2]</sup> Soares dos Reis National Museum, Porto, Portugal

## Abstract

In order to understand the paradigmatic change occurred between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture (and art) and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is crucial to understand that while being a clear regressive trend, eclecticism was an artistic movement that had a major and most effective role in the deconstruction of style. Before eclecticism, the genealogic evolution of art was formed by sequential series of singular styles. After eclecticism, there was no longer place for style, or at least for any single style.

So, we arrive to our thesis: the transition between late 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture and early 20<sup>th</sup> century one, was the result of the switching from a paradigm formed by consecutive series of single artistic styles, to a modern one formed by concomitant and independent artistic currents.

Reflecting about that transition, we think that its launch was initiated by the sculptural work of Soares dos Reis, Auguste Rodin, Camille Claudel and Constantin Meunier, for there is a complementar relationship between the sculptural production of these four late 19<sup>th</sup> century masters, as we will try to show. While developing specific focus and expressions, the work of these masters share common concerns, intentions and goals, emerging among them a clear commitment to create a sculpture for their time.

Finally, we think that common commitment gave birth to four 20<sup>th</sup> century artistic lines, such as Renato de Fusco postulates: *Expression line*, *Formativity line*, *Oneiric line* and *Social Art line* (Fusco, 1988). Each one of them, developing its own scopes and goals, in a most inter-independent way.

## Keywords

Art History; 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture; Stylistic genealogies; Late 19<sup>th</sup> century sculptural masters.

# Marino Marini and the Community of Exiled Artists in Switzerland during World War II

Nicol Maria Mocchi <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Independent researcher, Milan, Italy

## Abstract

This paper explores Marino Marini's self-imposed retreat in Tenero-Locarno, Switzerland, where he and his Swiss-born wife Mercedes Pedrazzini, better known as Marina, took refuge from the war between the winters of 1942 and 1945. There, surrounded by the peaceful Alps, one of the most important yet little studied periods of his career unfolded, marking a significant turn in his artistic and intellectual identity — from a conservative, if not reactionary, position to a more progressive stance. Against the backdrop of the dramatic war years, my paper will examine and further discuss Marini's fruitful relationships with the broader Swiss art scene of the 1940s, when a network of personal contacts with artists (Germaine Richier, Fritz Wotruba, Hugo Weber, Alberto Giacometti, among others), events like collective exhibitions, and mutual artistic influence can be pieced together around his figure. What did living and working confined to neutral Switzerland mean for Marini who earned praise in Fascist Italy? How did the socio-political disruptions and his closeness to anti-Fascist circles possibly weigh in his artistic and ideological shift? What contributed to his new language, marked by disproportionate shapes and corroded surfaces, and made of widely available and inexpensive materials such as terracotta and gesso? How did his Swiss creations (Female nudes, Archangels, Horses and Riders) fit into the historical-artistic debate of the time, poised between expressionist and surrealist poetics, neo-Cubist abstractions and more conservative tendencies? Last but not least: which were his subsequent artistic developments, both in style and syntax, once he returned home and resumed his professorship at the Brera Accademia di Belle Arti?

These are just some of the questions that I will address, surrounding a topic, which is crucial to reconstruct a notoriously problematic part of Marini's production and, more broadly, to reassess the impact that his work had on the changing artistic and cultural scene of the mid-1940s.

## Author's Curriculum Vitae

Nicol Maria Mocchi is an art historian specializing in Italian modern and contemporary art. She holds a PhD from the Università degli Studi, Udine, and MA and BA degrees in Art History from the Università degli Studi, Milan. Since 2010 she has collaborated with Milan's Superintendence of Fine Arts and with the Archivio dell'Arte Metafisica. She was the recipient of post-doctoral fellowships at the Center for Italian Modern Art in New York (2016, 2019-20) and at the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte in Paris (2021). Her main research interests are the connections and exchanges between diverse visual cultures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with an emphasis on Swiss-German, Anglo-American, and Italian artists and movements. Her research also focuses on Metaphysical Art, from its philosophical-cultural sources to its international spread and reception. She is currently working on the manuscript for her second book concerning Marino Marini's sojourn in Switzerland during World War II.

## **Session II. 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European sculpture**

Chair: José Guilherme Abreu

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

# **Jewish Christ? Aspects of religious and artistic identity in the sculpture of late imperial Russia**

Jan Zacharias <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> The Institute of Art History, Charles University, Czech Republic

## **Abstract**

There were not many examples of Jewish artists in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia. And even fewer are to be found among sculptors. Russian sculptor of Jewish origins and Jewish faith Mark Matveevich Antokolsky (1840-1902) was one of them. In 1874, 1878 respectively he executed a celebrated yet controversial statue called Christ before the People. The statue was displayed at the World Exposition in 1878 in Paris and Antokolsky was honored by légion d'honneur for it. However, the statue was thoroughly discussed and criticised and the argument about the ethnicity of Christ was of great importance.

Antokolsky intended to incorporate Christ into the Jewish context. He argued (however in his private correspondence and not publicly) that Jesus developed the teaching of Moses concerning the love to one another. That rather affected argumentation was an attempt to make connections between Judaism and Christianity though based on „ecumenical“ efforts to emphasize common human values. Antokolsky also added some elements, which should emphasize the national identity of Christ. He placed the kippah on Christ's head. Though Christ's appearance is rather free of oriental stereotypes, often used by the artist of the period, Antokolsky nevertheless identified him by using kippah as a Jew. The critics of Antokolsky in this respect argued, that Christ should be depicted according to the tradition, avoiding any national appropriation. Thus the religious identity of the artist found its expression in the work of art. There is still one aspect of the statue, which was not yet fully explained. The statue bears the title Christ before the people and it refers to the biblical event (Math. 27.11-26) when the people had to decide between Jesus and Barnabas, choosing the latter to be freed. In this respect appeals the statue to the religious feelings of the viewer forcing her or him to be confronted with Christ, pushing the viewer to the same position as the ancient people were. Paradoxically enough it is now Christ who is on trial again, which response to the principle of kenosis (self-humiliation of Christ) quite actual in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia.

This paper aims to reconstruct complex relations between the religious and national identity of the artist and representation of religion in the work of art taking the statue Christ before the People as an example.



# Strategies of deconstruction. Adolfo Wildt and his “necromonger empire”

Anatoly Rykov <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> St. Petersburg University, Russia

## Abstract

Although Adolfo Wildt’s images are not a complete equivalent of the “necromonger aesthetics” from “The Chronicles of Riddick” (2004), the question of kitsch and protofascist aspects of his art remain actual. But here comes another level of meaning in Wildt’s oeuvre which resembles postmodern philosophy and double coding of contemporary artistic strategies. Investigation of Adolfo Wildt’s oeuvre in this special context of critical expressionism (strategies of deconstruction of Magnasco, Hogarth or Daumier, for instance, and twentieth-century authors) should be an important step towards non-discriminatory theory of (post)modernism.

## Keywords

Symbolism; Postmodernism; Deconstruction; Eroticism; Sculpture; Art theory.

## Author’s *Curriculum Vitae*

Anatoly Rykov is Professor of Art History at St. Petersburg University. His habilitation dissertation, as well as his book *Postmodernism as Radical Conservatism*, considered the connotations of right-wing politics/philosophy in the contemporary US “left” art criticism (*October* journal). Prof. Rykov’s PhD dissertation concerns the social aspects of David Hockney’s art. A. Rykov has written on a range of subjects in the Renaissance, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art. His recent publications include *Politics of Avant-Garde* (Moscow, 2019), *Marxism and Loneliness* (On the “Political Unconscious” of the Contemporary Social Sciences in the West); *Origins of the Avant-garde*; *Formalism/Sociology of Art*; *Around Leonardo da Vinci: modernism, terror, dreams and metahistory*; *Politics and biological discourse*. His current research project focuses on issues of convergence between political and sacral discourses in twentieth-century theories of art. Research interests: interdisciplinary studies in Modern and Contemporary art, art historiography, theories and methodologies of Art History, art and politics.

# History of Art and Materiality in Portuguese Neobaroque Sculpture, from late-Romanticism to modern synthesis

Ana Lourenço Pinto <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon, Portugal

## Abstract

The theme of Portuguese Neobaroque Art enables a multidisciplinary approach to the sculpture works that express this artistic aesthetic. Therefore, starting from the doctoral work that we are developing in the area of Art and Heritage Sciences at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon, we propose its complementarity with the material and technical analysis of the works of art in question.

Thus, we continue the work developed in the article, already published, “The Portuguese Neo-Baroque Sculpture: state of the art, between Traditional and Modern” (Cadernos de Arte Pública/ Public Art Journal, Vol. 2, Nº 1 (2020): Sculpture: Studies, pp.24-35). If this is an essay dedicated to surveying the state of the art on the subject, as well as the stylistic and iconological analysis of illustrative sculptures of the Portuguese Neo-baroque, from the point of view of Art History, we will now carry out a reflection on the issues convened by subsequent research, mainly related to the creative and productive processes. From the forms of academic sculpture of French matrix represented in the work of António Teixeira Lopes (a conventional artist, in terms of the materials used), to the interpretations of modern synthesis incorporated by Maximiano Alves (innovative, in the use of cement in Sculpture in Portugal), Neo-baroque allows us to explore in an unprecedented way the evolution in the materials and technologies used by sculptors, from the late nineteenth-century romanticism to the statuary of the Portuguese Estado Novo in the twentieth century.

We open the concept beyond the mere revival or reinterpretation of the Baroque matrix of the 17th and 18th centuries, based on the classical tradition of Antiquity, making it closer to a Warburgian approach to how these influences resonated in the European artistic culture of the 19th and 20th centuries, and meshed with the innovations and technological permanencies of Sculpture in Portugal.

Furthermore, we will reflect on the relationship between form and meanings immersed in the work of art, through its material processes, in an attempt to answer the questions raised in the dimensions of public and private art of this sculptural production.

## Keywords

History of Art, Materiality, Sculpture, Neo-Baroque, Portuguese Art, Art Theory.

## ***Antônio Soares dos Reis and Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An Artistic Friendship***

Born just five months apart, Soares dos Reis (1847-1889) and Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) shared a close friendship in Paris (1868-70) and Rome (1871-72), about which little is known.

According to Saint-Gaudens's *Reminiscences* (1913), Soares dos Reis was "an exquisite talent" and "the kindest man in the world." Yet, there are no extant letters between the two sculptors and few references to their friendship in published or archival sources. Some aspects of their relationship may be discerned in their choices of studies and sculptural subjects. They also had overlapping interests—as teachers and public sculptors—and life patterns—aspiring outsiders in Paris and Rome, difficult marriages, and mental health issues.

This paper will trace the time that these two artists spent together in Paris and Rome through the lens of Saint-Gaudens, an artist of French-Irish parentage who grew up in New York. It will examine their concurrent work on sculptures they each considered "trumpets of ambition": Soares dos Reis's *Desterrado* (1872; Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis) and Saint-Gaudens's *Hiawatha* (1871-72; carved 1874; The Metropolitan Museum of Art). It will also loosely trace the arc of Saint-Gaudens's career after he returned to New York, as he became the leading American sculptor of his day, pursuing subjects and styles very different from those in Rome.

**Keynote Speaker:** Thayer Tolles

(Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA)

### ***Author's Curriculum Vitae***

Thayer Tolles is Marica F. Vilcek Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A sculpture specialist, she served as editor and co-author of a two-volume catalogue of the Metropolitan's historic American sculpture collection (1999, 2001) and has lectured and published extensively on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century topics. Among her exhibitions are *Augustus Saint-Gaudens in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2009) and *The American West in Bronze, 1850-1925* (2013-15), both accompanied by publications. A graduate of Williams College, Dr. Tolles received her M.A. from the University of Delaware and her Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Since 2017 she has served as the President of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, the nonprofit partner of the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, in Cornish, New Hampshire.

### **Session III. Artistic and Practice-based Research**

Chair: Eduarda Vieira

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

# Technical data and memories of the oldest twentieth-century mouldmaker in Portugal: Manuel Branco (1925 –)

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## Abstract

Within the monumental sculptural artworks produced in Portugal in the second third of the 20th century, which presented a large number of technical challenges, this paper involves addressing technical data and memories entrusted to us by the oldest twentieth-century portuguese mouldmaker: Manuel Branco.

Born the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1925, he will soon be 96 years old.

While he began his apprenticeship as «Formador» (mouldmaker, in English) at the age of 12, he still shows a great ability for remembering the professional activity he carried out over decades.

This approach aims at giving an overview of the practices that this mouldmaker inherited through his peers, while knowledge of previous centuries had changed little in Portugal during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century [1-2] and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century [3].

Particular attention will be given to the collaboration he had with several sculptors, and with sculptor Leopoldo de Almeida (1898–1975) in particular [4], when he worked for him during the 1960s, because of photographs that suitably document the different work steps involved in Sculpture.

It is a question of cross-checking two types of sources:

1) visual records belonging to several institutions, namely drawings by Leopoldo de Almeida, which are part of the Centro Artes Caldas da Rainha (Inventário LA) [4], photographs by the Novaes Brothers, of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation collection (FCG-Fundo M. Novais) [4], journalistic photographs by others, preserved in Torre do Tombo Archives (ANTT), but also photographs and drawing from Manuel Branco's private collection;

2) an oral source, in the form of the testimony by Manuel Branco as mouldmaker, therefore a primary source which plots a sort of everyday life that is wholly artistic and experienced in the first person.

Both sources help account for a number of closely related aspects, between human resources, professional skills and craftsmanship, authorship issues, material composition, technical features, workshop secrets, even anecdotes specific to certain circumstances that visual data alone cannot disclose.

Therefore, reliable visual records and narrative materials will be explored, in order to save from oblivion data that allow a more extensive and concrete reading of Sculpture praxis in this period of art history.

This approach aims also at giving greater visibility to mouldmakers, who assisted with all aspects of the statuary production and whose know-how was decisive in the implementation of works conceptualized by renowned sculptors. Without the cooperation of the mouldmakers, most state commissions for monumental public art, now integral part of our Culturage Heritage, would have not taken place.

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[2] FRADE, Marta Alexandra da Costa, Conservação e Restauro de Esculturas em Gesso - Valorização, Metodologia, Ensino. Tese de Doutoramento em Belas-Artes, Universidade de Lisboa, Faculdade de Belas-Artes, 2018.

[3] FULLER Joseph, *Manual do Formador e Estucador*. Lisboa: Biblioteca de Instrução Profissional, [1920].

[4] MEGA Rita, *Vida e obra do escultor Leopoldo de Almeida (1898-1975)*. Tese de Doutoramento em Belas-Artes, Universidade de Lisboa, Faculdade de Belas-Artes, 2012.

### **Keywords**

Statuary; Sculptor; Mouldmaker; Maquette; Clay model; Plaster model; Art technological sources; Oral testimony; Manuel Branco; Leopoldo de Almeida.

# The "Ephemeral" Foundry on Rua Malmerendas in Porto: History of the First Exclusively Artistic Foundry in Portugal

Pablo General-Toro <sup>[1]</sup>, Rui Bordalo <sup>[1,2]</sup>, Carlo Bottaini <sup>[2,3]</sup>, Patrícia Moreira <sup>[1,4]</sup>, Eduarda Vieira <sup>[1]</sup>

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## Abstract

The history of artistic foundries in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Portugal has yet to be written. This is a scarcely explored topic, but very relevant to contribute to the history of sculpture in Portugal.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century, the monopoly of the casting of statues in Portugal was in the hands of the foundry of the Lisbon Army Arsenal. Formerly known as Fundação da Artilheria, it had produced the equestrian statue of D. José I in 1775. This monument is recognised as the first bronze sculpture cast in Portugal. However, from the 1860s, some industrial foundries also began receiving commissions for bronze sculptures.

In 1861, following the sudden death of D. Pedro V, some social and military circles in Porto tried organising initiatives to erect a memorial to the deceased king.

Of these projects, only the one organised by an association of 500 people dedicated to trades related to art and industry came to fruition. As a result, the monument to D. Pedro V, located in the Praça de Batalha in Porto, was inaugurated on 26 January 1866.

For the casting of the monument, the artists' association conveyed the particular decision to develop a workshop exclusively for this purpose. Thus, the ephemeral foundry of Rua Malmerendas, active from May 1863 to January 1866, was born.

This novel historical study aims to bring to light an unprecedented project in Portugal, which took the form of a foundry built exclusively to cast one of the first commemorative bronze sculptures in Porto. This study covers the initial organisation, the raising of financial resources through subscriptions and events, ending with the foundry and the monument's placement in the square where it stands to the present day.

This study also aims to place the Rua Malmerendas foundry as Portugal's first exclusively artistic workshop in this area, despite its short life marked by a series of technical difficulties caused by inexperience. Even so, more than an anecdote, the existence of Malmerendas foundry marks a milestone in the casting of bronze sculptures in Portugal, a methodology practised subsequently by industrial and military companies in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century and sculpture foundries throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

## Keywords

Artistic foundry, Malmerendas, D. Pedro V, Portugal, Monument.

# Who was 'Faiunça'?

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## Abstract

The monumental Sculpture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Portugal, was conceived by eminent artists [1], such as Diogo Macedo, Francisco Franco, Leopoldo de Almeida, Barata Feyo, António Duarte, Helder Baptista, Martins Correia, Lagoa Henriques, Anjos Teixeira, among others.

The ambitious projects of these sculptors would not have been materialised without the work of the 'formadores', the mouldmakers who ensured the passage from their first maquettes in clay to models in clay and plaster at different scales, to the full-size model having in view the achievement of the final work (according to the technical processes of sculpture or casting).

In the present case, it is a question of rescuing an intangible heritage: the memory of José de Jesus Branco (1931-1982), or José Branco, nicknamed 'Faiunça', who supported many of the most renowned sculptors at the time, as well as students of the Lisbon School of Fine Arts, within the framework of Sculpture training and education.

While this individual, who died prematurely at the age of 51, left in oblivion, a detail account of the underlying methodology to recover elements relating to his biography, and some, to his phisionomy, will be provided.

Elements, difficult to collect because of their dispersion, but particularly diverse, will be explored, such as:

- the oral testimony of Faiunça's elder brother, Manuel de Jesus Branco (1925 -), still alive, as a primary source which constitutes a key component of this research;
- the documentation of the years Faiunça spent as resident at Casa Pia in Lisbon, in the 1930s, as historical sources providing timely information on his youth and his apprenticeship as formador;
- photography, as a very informative visual source when it enjoys additional data about its context;
- naturalistic and modeled portraits of Faiunça by masters with whom this mouldmaker collaborated, as a three-dimensional sources of great plastic expressiveness;
- oral and written testimonies from various actors involved in the artistic environment of the 1960s --students of Faiunça, sculptors, founder--, as living memories of a particular era.

These complementary traces of a life constitute today an intelligible and coherent whole. It is therefore possible to begin to outline the profile of 'Faiunça', this man who had an enormous capacity of work and of adaptation to the capricious creativeness of the artists he collaborated with. It is time to place great emphasis on mouldmakers, those acolytes considered subordinate but absolutely essential in every stage of the sculpture process; this process still being too often accepted as the merit of the sculptor alone.

With this research about "Faiunça", as with Manuel Branco his brother (see elsewhere), who put himself at sculptors' disposal, with all his energy, technical and manual skills, and great ingeniousness, our purpose is to give account of the importance of the role the mouldmakers played in the implementation of a tangible heritage considered unparalleled.

[1] TEIXEIRA, José Manuel da Silva, *Escultura Pública em Portugal - Monumentos, Heróis e Mitos (sec. XX)*. Tese de Doutoramento, Especialidade Escultura, Universidade de Lisboa, Faculdade de Belas-Artes, 2008.



**Keywords**

Mouldmaker; Sculptor; Maquette; Clay model; Plaster model; Art technological sources; Oral testimony; Manuel Branco; Public Art.

## **Session IV. Material and Technical Studies**

Chair: Rui Bordalo

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

## The Head of Legros - Rodin's Black Patina

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### Abstract

This paper presents results from the investigation of a black patina on Auguste Rodin's 1910 bronze Head of Legros (Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon). Chemical patination was customarily used to colour copper alloy sculptures in the 19th century. Despite their wide-spread use, very little is known about their production. Rodin's Head of Legros was patinated by a specialist, Limet, but his technique was kept secret. To understand the colouring procedure, a multidisciplinary and multi-analytical approach was used to identify the elements, compounds, and to understand the complex stratigraphy.

A XIX century historical recipe database on patination techniques was created to identify chemical reagents and methods used as described in the literature. Historically accurate reconstructions of black patinas were prepared according to a selection of relevant recipes.

When adequate, all historical materials, and reference materials and minerals, employed in the laboratory for the production of patina reconstructions samples, and the micro-samples extracted from the Head of Legros, were characterized by: optical microscopy; colorimetry; elementary characterization was made by PXRF-ED, XRF-ED, SEM-EDS and  $\mu$ PIXE; and structural and molecular characterization of the composition of the strata in the patina system was performed by  $\mu$ -DRX,  $\mu$ -Raman spectroscopy and  $\mu$ - FTIR spectroscopy.

Amongst the findings was the identification of a complex stratigraphy that corresponded to the construction of a patina in two distinct phases. To account for this, it was hypothesized that the initial coating was not successful which may have then required a second patination.

The historical reconstructions provided the chemical explanation on the need for the second patination. Structural and molecular characterization data, supported by elementary characterization data corroborated by historical recipe database allowed the identification of two possible formulations used in the patination methodology consisted in a solution of copper sulphate and zinc chloride; and the black colour was probably then fixed using a polysulphide solution heated with a torch. The second method, which was applied over the first, involved the application of a solution of copper and silver nitrate heated with a torch. We also consider the hypothesis that locally, specific solutions were eventually applied in the cheeks to achieve certain tones. The colour was stabilized with a polysulphide solution. The final finish was created by the application of a coating with white wax mix with carbon black and ash.

The 3-part methodology, combining historical technical database, material characterization, and reconstructions has allowed a greater understanding of these complex chemical coatings of the black patina of Head of Legros.

# Xawery Dunikowski and the materials of Polish modernist sculpture

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## Abstract

Xawery Dunikowski (1875-1964) was a seminal figure in the field of 20<sup>th</sup> century European sculpture, figuring in his own time among the greatest modernist and early avant-garde sculptors such as Jacob Epstein, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Gustav Vigeland and Emille Bourdelle. A friend of Pablo Picasso and David Alfaro Siqueiros, favourably reviewed by Andre Gide and mentioned in The Vorticist Manifesto as one of the pivotal practitioners of the new, cubist-inspired sculpture, today he remains relatively unknown outside of Poland, partially because of his involvement with the communist regime after the Second World War.

Apart from presenting the artist's profile against the background of the modernist movement taking shape at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the aim of the presentation is to describe the role of the sculptural materials he used, mainly plaster, bronze and polychromed wood.

Dunikowski, despite his ostentatiously declared lack of interest in sculptural materials, experimented in his work with the properties of plaster. Initially, this material was used to achieve the effects of a naturalistic portrait with an expressive texture, close to Rodin's work (Portrait of the Mother, 1898). With time, however, the autonomous treatment of the material used for more and more abstract, allegorical representations, characterized by drastic, expressive planar cuts (Fate, 1904), is noticeable. The progressive monumentalization of Dunikowski's plaster works led to problems with their preservation, including the group Yoke (1902), destroyed during transportation. On the other hand, the desire to remove the pedestal and involve the viewer directly in the reception of the work led to the extreme case of the destruction of the artist's works during the exhibition in 1907 (cycle Pregnant Women, before 1906). Interesting from the conservator's perspective is Dunikowski's decision to leave the damaged hand of one of the figures without repair and to keep it in later bronze castings. Thus, he recorded the trace of the attack, on the one hand emphasizing the myth of a rejected artist, stigmatized by society that did not understand him, on the other - he opened his work to interference from the outside, documenting it in a more durable medium.

Bronze was used by Dunikowski mainly to preserve his works and sell them. However, the versions of the works remade in polychrome wood, clearly developed the original artistic program, enriching it with associations borrowed from both 'primitive' (Self-portrait. I Am Walking Towards the Sun, 1916-1917) and medieval sculpture (Maternity, 1927). Characteristic of them are the polychromes, clearly inspired by the local variety of modernist art, mainly by the works of the painter, poet and playwright - Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907).

The central thesis of the article is that, together with the artists of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Dunikowski strove to transcend the limits of sculptural materials. His fascination with esoterically treated scientific concepts, above all with that of the 'fourth dimension', found its echo in works that went beyond the physical limitations of the sculptural medium, developed in order to achieve the effects of abstract monumentalism focused on spatial issues.

## Author's Curriculum Vitae

PhD candidate under tutorship of Prof. Iwona Luba at the Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw. Currently working on the PhD thesis on Xawery Dunikowski's relationship with the scientific topic of the 'fourth dimension' and related art-theoretical topics at the beginning of the twentieth century.

# Exploring portable Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity avails in the Conservation Assessment of Plaster Sculptures in Museum environment

António Mário Almeida <sup>[1]</sup>, Mário António Pereira <sup>[1]</sup>, Graça Vasconcelos <sup>[2]</sup>, Salomé Carvalho <sup>[3,4]</sup>, Rui Bordalo <sup>[4]</sup>, Eduarda Vieira <sup>[4]</sup>

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## Abstract

Ultrasonic pulse velocity (UPV) is generally used in Civil Engineering as an in-situ and non-destructive methodology to assess the condition of construction materials. Given the fact that non-contemporary sculpture was traditionally made with similar materials – stone, wood, clay or plaster – a hypothesis arose regarding the possible contribution of UPV for the conservation assessment of sculptures with stone-based materials. Plaster is a fragile material, very susceptible to internal and external fractures, alterations and losses. Museum sculptures cannot be moved to a laboratory, due to conservation protocols and therefore portable UPV could, in theory, play an important role in assessing these artistic structures in-situ. There are scarce references to such a methodology, and its implementation implied a partnership with Soares dos Reis National Museum (Porto, Portugal) for an experimental approach to three plaster sculptures made by A. Soares dos Reis: “St. Joseph”, “St. Joachim” (both made in 1880) and “Narcissus” (1881). The aim of this study was to assess if portable UPV could help to detect superficial and internal damages and differences between the original plaster and added materials. UPV uses two transducers: a very high frequency pulse emitter (54 kHz or 150 kHz, depending on the type of transducer) and a receiver which measures the transit time, or the Time-of-Flight (ToF), between the transducers. Depending on the relative orientation of the transducers, the measurements are said to be direct, indirect or semi-direct. The distance between the transducers (the shortest path) divided by the ToF gives the velocity of propagation of longitudinal mechanical waves in the material, for the frequency used. If the shortest effective path does not match the measurement of the distance between the transducers, the time of flight is longer than it should be. Therefore, obtaining a lower velocity than the expected for a given material allows to identify an internal defect, a different material or alteration. An excessively high attenuation can also occur, depending on the extension of the wave path, or an interruption of the signal transmission due to the existence of a fault or due to the signal propagation in a material whose acoustic impedance is very different from the original material. When this happens, the signal may be lost. Before using UPV in situ, laboratory tests were carried out with plaster prototypes and different types of measurements. A fundamental part of the testing process involved the experimentation of flexible materials that could play the role of interface between the transducers and the sculptures. This is of the most importance in order to guarantee that the methodology is entirely safe concerning conservation standards.

This work is part of a larger research project dedicated to the study of Soares dos Reis sculpture (GEO-SR: multidisciplinary approach to alteration, alterability and conservation of Soares dos Reis’ geomaterial sculpture – breaking boundaries in museum paradigms and creating value in changing societies through culture - PTDC/ART-OUT/31304/2017/POCI-01-0145-FEDER-031304).

## Keywords

UPV; Sculpture; Plaster; Conservation; Museum; Soares dos Reis.

October 8<sup>th</sup>

***Walls, and pillars – a call for protection. Reflections on sculpture in the museum***

Through some cases of Portuguese institutions, this communication proposes a bird's eye view of some of the issues raised by the exhibition of sculpture collections in a museum context and a comment on the repertoire of models, devices and environments most commonly used. This commentary inevitably brings up references to the relationship between sculpture and architecture which, inside the museum, takes on new contours.

**Keynote Speaker:** Laura Castro

(Director of Northern Portugal's Regional Directorate of Culture, Portugal)

***Author's Curriculum Vitae***

Laura Castro is an art historian and the current director of the Regional Directorate of Culture of the North (Portugal). She holds a PhD in Art and Design from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Porto, a Master's in Art History from the New University of Lisbon, and a degree from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Porto. She is also a lecturer at the School of Arts at the Catholic University of Portugal, of which she was director between 2013 and 2017, and a researcher at CITAR - Research Centre in Arts Science and Technology - of the same school. She is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and the Portuguese Association of Art Historians (APHA), belonging to the board between 2005 and 2009.

## **Session V. Conservation**

Chair: Salomé Carvalho

(Soares dos Reis National Museum, Porto, Portugal)

# Lisbon's Public Sculptures: Management and Conservation of City Heritage

Frederico Vaz <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Municipality of Lisbon, Portugal

## Abstract

The city of Lisbon reflects itself in its urbanism, architecture, history, art, but mainly in its statuary and public art. From monumentality to modernism, crossing various historical periods, it creates a unique symbiosis between the city and its statues. More than a representative or figurative note, more than an element in urban design, sculpture assumes in Lisbon's context a landmark merging time, space and art.

Between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary era, various materials were used. From limestone to granite, from bronze to steel, ceramic materials and even reinforced concrete. The current presentation intends to make an overview on Lisbon's public sculptures, historical periods, materials, it's main management challenges in terms of conservation, maintenance, restoration and inventory, presenting some showcases, such as the conservation of the statue of D. José I and the busts from the Garden of São Pedro de Alcântara.



# Immaterial icons? Conserving Constantin Meunier's sculptures of labor

Davy Depelchin <sup>[1]</sup>, *et al.*

<sup>[1]</sup> Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

## Abstract

Although suited for experiencing heritage, micromuseums cause gigantic challenges. Precisely the problems and issues of such small scale museums (and, even more in particular: sculpture museums) will be addressed and tackled in a holistic project on the Meunier Museum, for which the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium will collaborate with the University of Antwerp. It will mobilize an important series of scholarly resources and will generate new experiences and insights that are relevant and innovating in museology and heritage sciences and practices.

## Keywords

Art history; History; Conservation-Restoration Science; Museology; Critical Heritage Studies; Policy Studies; Tourism Studies; Cultural Management Sciences.

# Soares dos Reis' plaster models: technical production and the challenge of the conservation and restoration

Elsa Murta <sup>[1]</sup>, Michèle Portela <sup>[1]</sup>, Maria Inês Gomes <sup>[1]</sup>, Paula Mesquita Santos <sup>[2]</sup>

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## Abstract

António Soares dos Reis was one of the most promising names in Portuguese sculpture from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After his academic career in Porto, he was a Government scholarship holder in Paris and Rome, where he performed his greatest work, *O Desterrado*. He was distinguished with a title of Academic Merit at the Academia Portuense de Belas Artes and also by the Academia de Belas Artes de Lisboa. In his career, some religious works are known, based on the study of the model but where the classical influence in terms of characterization persists. On a monumental scale, Soares dos Reis will stand out with Brotero for Botanic Garden of Coimbra and D. Afonso Henriques for Guimarães. Among his most creative works we can see *Cabeça de Negro* and *Flor agreste*. It's worth noting the success of this prototype in reproduction sculpture.

Soares dos Reis' natural gifts for the fine arts and the knowledge obtained during his academic career provided him with the tools for teaching and executing his work, clay models as a transitional material and original plaster models. The Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis (MNSR) houses among other works of art a great number of original plaster models. Nowadays, they are a source of technical information due to the execution marks left on the support. In a work project delineate between MNSR and José de Figueiredo Laboratory, six plaster sculptures were selected, with obvious problems of alteration, to start the intervention process of conservation and restoration of the body of work authored by the sculptor who gave its name to the Museum. The plaster sculptures *Cabeça de Negro* (83 Esc MNSR), *Bust of Fontes Pereira de Melo* (Dep. 18), *Narciso* (3 Esc MNSR), the neo-gothics *São Joaquim* (8 Esc MNSR) and *São José* (7 Esc MNSR) and *Brotero* (58 Esc MNSR) were selected.

From the marks present on the plaster, the methods of execution using clay were identified. There are visible fingerprint marks, incision from the metal sheets used to separate the different parts of the mould, and slight contrasting plaster stains, probably corresponding to the release agent used to separate the mould from the model. They present the marks of use and exposure to environmental conditions for more than a century, still in the Academia Portuense de Belas Artes, in the Museum's exhibition rooms or in reserve locations. The models showed minor damage to the plaster support, fractures at the base and gaps due to mechanical shock, longitudinal cracks and late interventions. Superficially adhering dust, stains from different origins and/or release materials and a gray wash.

The challenge of the intervention was the conservation and restoration of the constituent material, plaster, which is characterized by being friable, hygroscopic and susceptible to biological colonization. The aim was of maintaining the authenticity of the works of art, the patina and the integrity of the academic testimonies of the technical execution.

## **Session VI. Documentation and Digital Heritage**

Chair: Rui Bordalo

(Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Research Center for the Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR))

## **A 3D Potree tool for the technological study of sculpture**

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### **Abstract**

Within the framework of an ARC dedicated to the study of the consequences of the industrial revolutions on sculpture (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries), the Université libre de Bruxelles has developed a 3D tool for the study of sculpture, using the open-source WegGL based point renderer Potree.

The communication proposes to make a first survey on its functionalities and possibilities. In the long term, the aim is to offer the scientific community a collaborative online tool for the identification and study of technical markers, in particular for bronze sculpture.

### **Keywords**

Photogrammetry; Potree renderer; Digital humanities; History of art; Sculpture.

## 3D digitalization of a collection of plaster sculptures by João da Silva (1880-1960)

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### Abstract

This abstract is about the 3D digitalization of a collection of masterpieces made by the João da Silva (1880-1960) sculptor, belonging to the “Sociedade Nacional de Belas-Artes”, in Lisbon. João da Silva was born in Lisbon on December 1 of 1880. He began his career as a chisel and jeweler in the workshops of Leitão & Irmão (around 1893). He pursued studies abroad, at the School of Industrial Arts in Geneva, where he studied chiseling, and at the School of Fine Arts in Paris, where he earned a degree in Sculpture and Medallists. In 1906, already in Portugal, he developed the activities of sculptor, goldsmith and medallist and taught Applied Art, Goldsmithery and Drawing at the Marquês de Pombal School, between 1909 and 1914. As a sculptor, he distinguished himself as a medallist but also dedicated to the study of animals.

The collection, to which these abstract addresses, is made up entirely of small sculptures measuring between 10 cm to 50 cm in height.

The main purpose of the project was to create a digital collection of the plaster sculptures, from Casa-Museu João da Silva, using a methodology of a non-contact survey to conduct the three-dimensional modeling of real objects. The product of these digitalization had several applications, such as:

- Assessment of conservation condition of each sculpture;
- Documenting and preserve digitally the shape and size of sculptures at risk of loss, due to their state of conservation;
- Creation of multimedia content combining text, animation, video, and interactive content forms;
- 3D printing of some pieces to be shown at “João da Silva: o escultor animalista” exhibition at Sociedade Nacional de Belas-Artes (SNBA, 28 julho 2020).

The three-dimensional modeling was made by photogrammetry in a traditional photographic studio. The photographic setup involved three illuminators with calibrated light, a table with an infinite plane, a cube box for some shining pieces, and a tripod. The acquisition was made in 40 pieces for 5 weeks. The output of the work generated a 90 GB digital database. Some of the pieces were printed in a powder binding 3D printer followed by the finishing, i.e., by the post-printing process of smoothing, filling, priming, sanding, and painting the surface of the print before the exhibition.

The 3D digitalisation was also a contemporary strategy to characterize the artistic technique, a way to understand geometrically issues of the objects. The project had as final output the safeguard of the sculptures, the documentation of the material, technique, and state of conservation.

### Keywords

João da Silva; 3D modeling; Photogrammetry; 3D printing.

## **“O Desterrado” by António Soares dos Reis – biographical notes**

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### **Abstract**

Cultural heritage is, of all goods, popular manifestations, cults, traditions, both material and immaterial (intangible) the one which demonstrates most historical and cultural importance for a community. They are symbolic representations of a cultural expression and, therefore, are preserved to ensure their continuity. Thus, it is possible to let future generations know about them and their past. The heritage of a society derives from choices made according with the participation of the State through specific laws, institutions and policies to determine which artifacts one considers important in representing their own identity, historic validations and values.

This paper reflects on the material and immaterial elements that compose the biography of ‘O Desterrado’, the iconic statue by António Soares dos Reis, which belongs to the collection of Museu Nacional dos Reis, in Porto (Portugal). This statue, in particular, is full of meanings and symbols related to Portuguese culture, therefore it seems pertinent to question if its iconic status can only be related to its excellent execution as a sculpture exercise or if there is something immaterial that we need to consider. We believe that the non-material qualities of the artifacts reflect sensory and emotional expressions that may constitute different perception tools for the museum’s visitor. On the other hand, the creation of layers with meaning is also responsible for creating a more harmonious relationship between the visitor, the piece, the museum and its community. We assume that the experience that comes from the creation of biographical narratives translates into a moment of learning, in a museological context, given the multiplication of meanings associated with it. We also recognize that with the development of these capacities, it is possible to attribute value to the Portuguese Cultural Heritage – creating meaning and desire for that. In agreement with Kopytoff (1986), contemporary Western thought places physical objects and people in opposite poles. Since individuals are only allowed individualization and singularization, the relationship between visitors and works of art becomes reductive since, in most cases, plastic and aesthetic exploration gains greater relevance. Contrary to this trend and with the objective of fostering a plural and multiple interest in the statue ‘O Desterrado’, we developed a biography in order to contribute to a more intimate relationship between the piece and those who cross with it.

We believe that some artifacts have a material and an immaterial dimension. In our case, with ‘O Desterrado’ we assume that this categorization proves to be restrictive, since it limits his biography beyond its materiality. We are convinced that by asking people questions about an artifact, we would be able to let them know more about its history. It would allow us to experience an educational moment that could be reflected in a greater and deeper knowledge about the statue.

## **Session VII. Plaster**

Chair: Elsa Murta

(José de Figueiredo Laboratory, DGCP, Lisbon, Portugal)

# **A Material That “Lends Itself to Fine Interpretations”. The Status Of Plaster In Marino Marini’s Oeuvre**

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## **Abstract**

“The unpolished wood, and more the plaster, this unpleasant material that, when does not harden and noble itself, such as in the case of stucco, causes immediate tactile sensations intolerable to many people, like the velvet or the peach peel: these are the favorite materials of Marino’s sculpture. A sculpture that, in fact, most of the time does not gain added value if translated in bronze”.

With these words, in 1950, Cesare Brandi described the interest of the Italian sculptor Marino Marini (1901-1980) in a material, commonly considered as humble, that is, plaster. Even if Marini often used plaster in a ‘traditional’ way to realize casts suitable for the translations to bronze or other materials, these sculptures are very often – since the early 1920s – considered by the artist not only as translation tools and ‘mediation’ between the idea and the final plastic artwork, or academic exercise, but also as works with a proper autonomy that is able to render them final and definitive.

The plaster, for Marini, had the same status as other materials, that the artist did not consider more ‘noble’ than the first one. Plaster, as Brandi stated, has qualities that, unlike the brilliance of the bronze, do not ‘violate’ the compactness of the sculpture’s volume. To witness this tendency, it is, on one hand, the artist’s practice to add on the plaster surface some polychromatic signs (i.e. the Portrait of Monique, 1950), and to treat the matter with scratches and notches; on the other, the importance of the plaster is expressed by its presence in the most important Marini’s exhibitions (see for example the case of the plaster version of the Cavaliere, 1936, the very first important example of this theme in Marino’s oeuvre, which was displayed in the same year at the Venice Biennale, or the Biennale of 1948, where, on six sculptures presented, four was made of plaster).

Through careful bibliographic research and the direct study of many works, the purpose of my paper is to clarify the use of plaster in Marini’s artistic practice, both when the plaster is a unique piece, and when it is in relation with versions in other materials (in the historical sources such as exhibition catalogues or papers, the critics usually did not distinguish the version, and the material, of Marini’s sculptures).

## **Keywords**

Sculpture, Plaster, Italian art, Venice Biennale, Art criticism, Portrait



# The Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: past, present and future possibilities of archaeological cast collections

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## Abstract

In this paper, I would like to share some ideas emerging from my doctoral project, which focuses on cast collections from the Antique and their ambiguous status of copy/original in museums. My case study is the Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (UK).

Originated in Italy, plaster casts proliferated across Europe from the 16th century onwards. Being their movement physical as well as symbolic, these sculptures reinforced the shaping of Western aesthetic canons. In fact, casts were greatly demanded and praised following their form and the cultural and moral values embedded with them.

At Oxford, plaster casts were firstly displayed in the principal rooms of the then University Galleries (one of the two original nuclei of the Ashmolean) alongside antiquities, as perfect substitutes for the absent bronze/marble. Once the Chair of Classical Archaeology and Art was established in 1884, they changed purpose: by falling under the direct responsibility of the Professor, they lost the allure of artistic pieces and became a primary tool for archaeological scholarship. In this sense, casts were physically manipulated in order to reconstruct lost masterpieces, were used to re-join sculptural groups belonging to different museums, and were studied to further develop the study of Classical sculpture in general.

The nature of archaeological plaster casts has always been ambiguous. In museum collections today casts are accessed museum objects, and yet the usual interpretative focus is on the model from which they derive. For instance, in the Cast Gallery descriptive labels of the pieces almost completely dismiss the stories of casts as modern creation, the cast-making and discourses on reproductive practices in diverse media, felt to be not relevant. Such an exclusion, a conscious curatorial choice, greatly impacts on visitors' experience, since some people think to engage with actual Graeco-Roman antiquities.

Luckily, the situation is changing now. Starting with activities promoted by the Museum itself, since last year casts are presented as 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century objects in the Ashmolean online catalogue. Again, interviews with both the public and the Ashmolean staff, the core of my fieldwork, have confirmed that the integration of the ancient and modern perspectives to the museum narrative is necessary to express casts' full potential, and to rethink about copies in more creative and transformative terms.

## Keywords

Plaster casts, Classical archaeology, Museum interpretation, Authenticity

# Re-envisioning criteria for documentation of plaster artist models in museum collections

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## Abstract

Plaster artist models in museum collections have often been considered as secondary objects since they represent a working stage in the process of creating a sculpture rather than the final work. Yet the fact that these objects were a crucial intermediary step in the sculpting process means that they represent a valuable testimony of aspects of the sculptor's work that are often not apparent or have been eliminated in the final sculpture. Plaster artist models therefore are important in illuminating aspects of the artist's technique or working process that would otherwise be difficult to reconstruct and thus it is crucial that particular kinds of information about these objects are collected and presented within a suitable context so that their importance can be fully understood.

Studies of plaster artist models are often tied to research concentrating on final sculptures and thus plaster artist models as a category are often considered in a relative rather than an independent way. In addition, these objects often feature complex methods of construction and involve the use of a wide variety of materials, leading to difficulty in their classification and accurate documentation. Consequently, standard methods of collecting and recording basic information about objects in museums (databases, photography, condition reports, restoration reports, scientific reports, and references in literature) often are not structured in a way that best reflects their complexity and captures enough specific information about context and materials to represent their history, contextual significance in the sculpting process, physical and material qualities, and identify specific exhibition and conservation needs. This paper proposes a set of criteria to use in collecting information about plaster artist models in museum collections that has been developed in the context of a larger research project about the plaster models of the Swiss sculptor Vincenzo Vela (1820-1891). This method of systematic and concise documentation seeks to situate models within a suitable historical and technical context to best present their material and physical characteristics as well as to reflect their importance as part of the sculpting process.