

## Furniture Restoration: Leticia's Passion

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- Cédric Lecler



### **Furniture Restoration: Leticia's Passion**

The initial aim of Leticia da Costa Gonçalves, when she enrolled in the Conservation and Restoration course at the Institute of Arts and Crafts of the Lisbon Autónoma University, was to draw original function away from materials and objects.

Three years later, having gained her diploma, Leticia realised that she felt passionately about the restoration of furniture and other objects (she also took a course in the restoration of Porcelain and Glazed Earthenware at the Ricardo Espírito Santo Institute).

Together with her sister, she opened an atelier in the Principe Real quarter, and it was there, in the midst of all these objects waiting for a “lifting”, that I found her hard at work in her atelier, which smelt strongly of turpentine and wax.

Restoration is a true passion for Leticia, and she explained to me the different stages of her work. First of all, she treats the object against parasites and other wood-borers. This is followed by cleaning (with or without liquid remover), after examining the object's structure (solidness). Then comes the work of volumetric reconstruction, which consists of repairing the damaged or bored parts, and replacing missing parts. The small pieces – for example, the finger of a statue – are rebuilt and sculpted by Leticia herself.

Lastly comes the finalisation work, in which Leticia prefers to use lacquer-glue (reversible coating) instead of varnish (very difficult to remove in the case of any future problems).

**Letícia, who was born in and loves Lisbon, has now spent seven years restoring (what I call giving new life to) every kind of object, from a simple chair to a piano with marquetry decoration.**

**Leticia's atelier in Travessa da Piedade is visited by a wide range of customers; she works for private people as well as for Churches and Convents, and even for the Presidential Palace. It was she, for example, who restored the Sacristy doors of the São Vicente Monastery.**

**Do not hesitate to visit her, or to consider her, if you have a cupboard, a table, a piano, or anything else to which you may wish to give a new life.**

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