

---

**Socio-Cultural Project Fidias: The Lights of Luaces**

---

08/08/2017



Self-taught, Pedro Alberto Luaces Torres is a well known artist from Pinar del Rio whose work as a restorer is felt in every corner of Pinar del Rio city and in other places.

They say everything he touches changes into a wonder. I didn't believe in those words until I discovered Pedro Alberto Luaces Torres little by little his inborn skills as an artist. Pinar del Rio, his homeland, has in him and in his community project Fidias two inseparable allies, always willing to collaborate to make of the city a prettier and more attractive space.

Young, talented, Cuban through and through, with Pinar del Rio in his heart and feelings, Luaces gives his best when his efforts are needed. Hence he was involved in every last work scheduled to restore for the celebrations of July 26<sup>th</sup> and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since Pinar del Rio was proclaimed a city, next September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Milanes Theater, José Martí Park, the restaurant-cabaret El Criollo, the Museum of Natural Sciences are some of the most recent works where Fidias has left its print for the wellbeing of the community.

**- How and why was project Fidias born?**

"It was born from the degree of decline of the works of Decorative Arts and the shortage of restorers in the country and, especially, Pinar del Rio.

"Art work collectors came here, I joined them and I saw that many were deteriorated. Then ideas came popping inside my head so I could restore them.

"The first works were handmade at my dining room table back home. Then when collectors came visit me and they saw the final result they were shocked. They were the first ones in encouraging me to keep doing that work and I created a workshop.

"As I don't have an artistic training that made me worry more about the world of restoration. I got involved with boys who were majoring in that line of work and I created a small workshop. Many other youngsters who liked what they did joined; because it was a way of taking to practice the knowledge they have learned at school and, at the same time, they explored a field they didn't approach much at the academy.

"It was interesting to them because they had to manipulate the works of artists: sculptures made of brass, marble, china pieces. And through the clients who visited us I started to purchase new working tools and look for information in catalogs bought abroad.

"Then the collectors themselves wanted to incorporate what they already had. They had pieces that were beyond salvation then I had the idea of reproducing them. Then, the clients told me that if I was able to do that, with such a level of accuracy, then I could create others. That's when the idea of exploring new lines of work was born."

**- How many years have you worked as a restorer?**

"Around 27, the early years was during the harsh time of the Cuban economic crisis. You have to make your living. I was barely twenty odds years old back then."

**- When is the project born?**

"There was this director in the province Culture headquarters who knew about our work. He proposed the idea of creating the project; he said the acquired knowledge could be passed down to the community, to the new generations, to start a sort of school-workshop.

"The idea thrived. First I joined the Cuban Association of Artisans and Artists (best known as ACAA) after that I joined the Cuban Fund of Cultural Assets as a creative group. Then we moved here—where we are today—; we had already increased the production lines and we were looking for space and better conditions that suited what we were doing."

**- Why Fidias?**

"We worked with old works; we needed to look for information and going through history we found the work of Fidias—the Greek sculptor—, which was very much what we were doing. Then we named the project after him."

**- Isn't it awesome what you have accomplished?**

"I never really imagined it. I wanted to study marine biology, but those studies were closed and so I studied veterinary. I worked eight years as a vet, kind of trying to find what I wanted.

"Once I entered the world of Decorative Arts, the group is born. Many people gave me advice. We had a solid structure and we came up with the idea of creating carpentry, blacksmith, pottery workshops. That allows to self-finance, to be an institution which is not a burden for the local Government. Of course, without straying from the cultural world, of the community project. It was also a way of employment for the artists and artisans of Pinar del Rio, because the province doesn't have, in this regard, a very strong market."

**- However, leaving for Havana is not part of your dreams. Others have moved to the capital...**

"I believe my mission is here. I have created a structure and there is no need. I worked in the capital with Eusebio Leal once, in Quinta de los Molinos, in the Old Square, but you see, I came back. I feel much supported in my province by the Government and the Communist Party, I feel loved. What else can I ask?"