

PÂTE DE VERRE – THE LOST-WAX TECHNIQUE

1. The sculptor produces an initial model in clay, based on pencil drawings. This is used to produce an original model in plaster which is further worked by the artist to perfect volume, details and expressions.
2. This plaster sculpture is then used to produce a negative, hollow mould in elastomer.
3. Hot liquid wax is poured into the hollow elastomer mould. The wax

cools and sets, resulting in an original sculpture in wax.

The artist further refines this wax sculpture. When finished, it is encased in refractory plaster. The entire assembly is then placed in a kiln. The wax melts and runs out of the refractory plaster casing through a drain hole. The wax is said to be 'lost'.

4. The hollow refractory mould is carefully filled with different sized and different coloured particles of fragmented crystal (the 'groisil'), and is then placed in a kiln. The

temperature is gradually raised to 1,000°C for about ten days.

The groisil melts and flows into all the crevices in the mould.

The temperature is then gradually reduced.

5. Once cooled, the plaster mould is broken, revealing the sculpture in pâte de verre.
6. The colour, shape and quality are carefully checked, and various finishing operations are carried out (cleaning, polishing, buffing, burnishing).

