PLASTER CASTING

Fri 05 Sept 2003

Materials you will need for basic Plaster Casting:

Bucket, Plaster of Paris (or commercially available casting material for hands, feet, etc.), Clean Water, Stirring Stick, Release agent, Rubber Gloves, Molding Container (made from foam core/hot glue, plastic, etc.), Tape.

Other Great Materials to Try (available at Studio Art or Michael's Art Supply):

Plaster Bandages, Epoxy Resin, Wax, Silicone (and there are many others)

USING PLASTER OF PARIS TO CAST SOLID OBJECTS

Instructions by Dan Bracey and John Davis (3rd Year Undergrads)

1. Draw plan and section of the object you are trying to create.

2. Use foam core to create a mold of the negative spaces in the plans and sections. When making the mold, be sure to seal the edges with a hot glue gun and then reinforce the outside with duct tape or magic tape.

3. Go outside to the Work Terrace and find a flat, level surface. You should wear an apron or old shirt to protect your clothing. Also, if your skin is sensitive, you should wear rubber gloves.

4. Mix the plaster and water using a piece of wood or plastic spoon. DO NOT MIX USING YOUR HANDS. For every two parts plaster, add one-part water. Do not mix more water than you can use in 30 minutes. (It is also possible to add colored pigment, textures at this time).

5. Stir until mix is of an equal consistency. (Suggested Step: Spray “Pam” or another release agent (such as baby oil or Vaseline) onto the mold.)
6. Pour Plaster into the mold until it is halfway full, shake the mold occasionally and tap the sides to make sure no air bubbles get trapped in the mold. (Optional Step: For large models or thin surfaces, we highly recommend that you incorporate metal reinforcement into the cast. Metal wire or steel rods work well. This will substantially strengthen the object.)

7. Pour the rest of the plaster into the mold, continue shaking the mold and tapping the sides.

8. Leave the mold for several hours. The object will not be completely hardened for 24 hrs.

9. When the casting has hardened, remove the foam core. The object can be sanded lightly to remove any rough edges or debris. If you are working inside – be sure to use a drop cloth or newspapers to collect the debris.

**USING PLASTER OF PARIS TO CAST OBJECTS, BODY PARTS, ETC.**

The process is broken into two parts. First, you need to cast the desired object in plaster. This will leave you with a “void” or negative of the object. **If you are casting parts of your body you must use some type of release agent. Vaseline works best.** Second, you need to fill the negative space of that cast with plaster, or another material. Be sure to use a good release agent and know where your mold breaks will be.

**BOOKS ON RESERVE IN THE LIBRARY**

*Modeled Sculpture and Plaster Casting / Auerbach, Arnold, 1898- (1962)*

*Sculpture: Technique, Form, Content / Williams, Arthur (1989)*

**PHOTOCOPIED PACKETS OF CASTING INFO**

These will be placed on the bulletin board opposite the elevator of the 3rd Floor.