
Sculpture and Trompe l'œil in European Ceramics, from Bernard Palissy to the Present Day

Second Edition of the Annual International Conference on
European Sculpture and Decorative Arts



Live on Youtube on Sunday 12 and Monday 13 July 2026, then in replay

A combined effort of the Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ébénistes and the Low Countries Sculpture Society, whose libraries and archives have merged and are housed in the Hôtel de la Roche (1750) at Mons, the *Annual International Conference* had its inaugural edition in July 2025.

This edition, dedicated to European ceramics, aims to address issues relating to figurative sculpture in the round, to relief sculpture and to *trompe l'œil*, all in the medium of ceramics. This includes the imitation of other materials, such as wood or precious stones, and the mimetic representation of animals and plants. Sculpture and *trompe l'œil* are recurring themes but have been little studied in a comprehensive manner in European ceramic art, not even in Art Deco ceramics, which frequently use sculptural forms, both in tableware and in purely decorative pieces.

The term *trompe l'œil* comes from the world of easel painting, and the conference will be an opportunity to define more precisely the use and usefulness of this term in the world of ceramics.

Our conference proposes to study cases that can shed light on this practice, from the Renaissance to the present day, in terms of the rendering of forms, colours and textures. These cases may concern the production, consumption, collecting and display of these types of ceramics throughout Europe and North America, from the Renaissance to the present day. Issues of design history, collaborations between creators and producers, artists and artisans, as well as the relations with any other people involved in the production of these ceramics may be studied. The theme will draw, in particular but not exclusively, on the rich tradition of ceramics in the Low Countries, from Antwerp majolica, via Tournai porcelain and Bouffioulx stoneware, to contemporary productions.

2026 Scientific Committee

Jean-Dominique Augarde, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ebénistes, Paris / Mons
Yves De Leeuw, collector and exhibition curator
Bernard Dragesco, Dragesco-Cramoisan Gallery, Paris / Château de Barly
Errol Manners, historic ceramics specialist, London
Sylvie Millasseau-Wengraf, art historian, Switzerland
Tamara Préaud, formerly Cité de la Céramique, Sèvres, and president, The French Porcelain Society, London
Dr **Miriam E. Schefzyk**, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Prof em Dr **Volker Seiberth**, University of Heidelberg / The Low Countries Sculpture Society
Pier Terwen, art historian and conservator of sculpture and ceramics, Leiden

2026 Organising Committee

Dr **Katia Berseneva**, Ecole du Louvre, Paris / The Low Countries Sculpture Society
Me **Guillaume Hambye**, notary, Mons
Laurence Lenne, Galerie Art & Patrimoine, Ath
Dr **Léon Lock**, The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels / Mons
Grégory Maugé, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ébénistes, Paris / Mons
Thierry Naveaux, The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels / Mons
Sébastien Tercelin de Joigny, Tercelin de Joigny Gallery, Mons / Seneffe
Jenny Tondreau, Collegiate church of Sainte-Waudru, Mons



Oral Publication

The conference will take place without audience (apart from the speakers, moderators and a few benefactors), but it will be filmed and broadcast live on YouTube for free, on our dedicated channel, « The Low Countries Sculpture Society ». **The relevant parts of the programme are highlighted in red.**

<https://www.youtube.com/@Lowcountriessculpturesociety>

Written Publication

The conference proceedings will be published in 2027 in a new academic journal dedicated to European sculpture and decorative arts, based on our annual international conferences.

Programme
Sunday 12th July 2026

- 9.30-10.00 Dr **Léon Lock**, The Low Countries Sculpture Society
Introduction
- Session 1: ***Trompe l'œil and mimesis I***
- Moderator: **Errol Manners**, historic ceramics specialist, London
- 10.05-10.50 **Patricia Ferguson**, London
Keynote Lecture *Nature, Artifice and Spectacle: the Conceit of a Lettuce as Large as Life for the European Table in the mid-18th century*
- 10.50-11.00 Discussion
- 11.00-11.30 Break
- 11.30-12.00 **Melody Hsu**, McGill University, Montreal
Book Flask: Trompe l'Œil and Deception in Early Modern Europe
- 12.05-12.35 **Mariette Boudgourd**, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris
Jardinières bûches, verres paysages et cendriers poissons. De nouvelles formes de la nature « genre Palissy » au XIXe siècle en France
- 12.35-12.45 Discussion
- 12.45-14.00 Lunch break
- Session 2: ***Trompe l'œil and mimesis II***
- Moderator: Prof em Dr **Volker Seiberth**, University of Heidelberg / The Low Countries Sculpture Society
- 14.00-14.30 Prof Dr **Nadia Mariana Consiglieri**, Universidad de Buenos Aires (*online*)
Reptiles, amphibians and trompe l'œil in a Bernard Palissy ceramic piece from the Museum of Decorative Arts in Buenos Aires
- 14.35-15.05 **Carina-Nathalia Madonna Visconti-Paff**, Sapienza Università di Roma
The Illusion of Lustre: Trompe l'œil in Hungarian Zsolnay Ceramics – Eosin Imitations of Metals and Nature in the Art Nouveau Style
- 15.05-15.15 Discussion
- 15.15-15.45 Break
- Session 3: ***The sculptor and the sculptural in ceramics***
- Moderator: **Bernard Dragesco**, Galerie Dragesco-Cramoisan, Paris/Château de Barly
- 15.45-16.15 **Jean-Dominique Augarde**, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ebénistes, Paris/Mons
Piat Joseph Sauvage et le Salon de 1798
- 16.20-17.05 **Errol Manners**, historic ceramics specialist, London
Keynote Lecture *Louis-François Roubiliac and Chelsea porcelain, a reassessment*
- 17.05-17.15 Discussion

Monday 13th July 2026

Session 4: ***Manufactures, workshops and sculptors in ceramics***

Moderator: **Sylvie Millasseau-Wengraf**, art historian, Switzerland

9.30-10.00 **Valérie Montens**, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels and

Elise Urbain Ruano, Domaine & Musée royal de Mariemont

Entre virtuosité technique et langage décoratif : la sculpture en porcelaine à la manufacture d'Ixelles de 1830 à 1953

10.05-10.50 **Carys Wilkins** et **Claire Blakey**, National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh

European ceramic sculpture rediscovered at National Museums Scotland

10.55-11.25 **Grégory Maugé**, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ébénistes, Paris / Mons and

Dr **Léon Lock**, The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels / Mons

La sculpture en céramique en Hainaut au XXe siècle

11.25-11.35 Discussion

11.35-12.05 Break

12.05-12.20 Conclusion

The above programme is non-contractual and subject to change without notice.

