The role of sculpture in the Parisian decorative arts (Mons, 29 Aug 15)

Mons, Belgium, Aug 29, 2015
Registration deadline: Aug 26, 2015

Leon Lock, Low Countries Sculpture Society

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on the occasion of
MONS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2015

The role of sculpture in the design, production collecting and display of Parisian decorative arts in Europe (1715-1815)

Saturday 29 August 2015, 9.45 am - 6.30 pm

With special thanks to the Galerie Kraemer, Paris, for its support on the occasion of its 140th anniversary in 2015

Maison de la Mémoire de Mons, ancien couvent des Sœurs Noires, rue des Sœurs Noires 2, accessible via the porch on rue du Grand Trou Oudart, Mons

9.00-10.00 Registration and coffee

9.45-10.00 Welcome and introduction
Jean Schils/Werner Oechslin/Léon Lock

Session 1: Sculpture as a theme / sculpture as an object, within French decorative arts
Chair: Guilhem Scherf, Musée du Louvre, Paris

10.00-10.25 Luca Raschèr, Koller Auktionen, Zürich, Humanité et bestiaire en bronze sur les meubles français du XVIIIe siècle

10.30-10.55 Dr Charles Avery, Cambridge, An elephantine rivalry: the ménagerie clocks of Saint-Germain and Caffiéri

11.00-11.25 Virginie Desrante, Cité de la Céramique, Sèvres, Petite sculpture et objets de luxe, le biscuit de Sèvres – une révolution esthétique

11.30-11.55 Xavier Duquenne, Brussels, Le sculpteur de la cour Augustin Ollivier, de Marseille, au Palais de Charles de Lorraine à Bruxelles

11.55-12.15 Discussion

12.15-13.10 Lunch

Session 2: The role of the sculptor within the design and production processes
Chair: tbc

13.15-13.40 Jean-Dominique Augarde, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ébénistes, Paris, De Houdon à Prud'hon, la collaboration entre sculpteurs et bronziers d'ameublement de 1760 à 1820

13.45-14.10 Audrey Gay-Mazuel, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, Du dessin au montage, les sculpteurs dans l'atelier de l'orfèvre parisien Jean-Baptiste-Claude Odiot (1763-1850)

14.15-14.40 Jean-Baptiste Corne, Ecole du Louvre/Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, Le sculpteur ornemaniste à la veille de la Révolution. Une condition sociale en mutation?

14.40-15.00 Discussion

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

Session 3: French sculptural decorative arts in international perspective
Chair: Prof Dr Dr h.c.mult. Werner Oechslin, ETH Zürich/ SBWO Einsiedeln

15.30-15.55 Dr Léon Lock, University of Leuven, Comment la rocaille parisienne conquit Munich. Le rôle de l'architecte et ornemaniste François Cuvilliés (Soignies 1695 – Munich 1768)

16.00-16.25 Guido Jan Bral, Brussels, Les ducs d'Arenberg, mécènes des arts décoratifs parisiens à Bruxelles (1765-1820)

16.30-16.55 Sir Timothy Clifford, Former Director, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, Title to be confirmed.

16.55-17.15 Conclusions and discussion

17.15-18.30 Reception

REGISTRATION
Free for members of the Low Countries Sculpture Society and of the Maison de la Mémoire of Mons, but registration compulsory: info [at] lcsculpture [dot] org. Seating limited so book early to avoid disappointment. Non-members €25 per person.

OPTIONAL LUNCH
Full sit-down on-site lunch €25 per person, to be booked and paid in advance. Closing date for lunch applications and payments: Wednesday 26 August 2015 at 12 noon.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AND TRAVEL FROM PARIS
Hotel rooms have been pre-booked for foreign participants. Anyone wishing to take over these reservations, please contact us. A limited number of train tickets from Paris to Valenciennes and back (with transfer by car to/from Mons) is also available.

PAYMENTS

By bank transfer or by credit card (details/forms available on request)

GALA EVENING ON FRIDAY 28 AUGUST
Those who register for the international conference, will receive an invitation to attend the Gala Evening organised the night before in a spectacular country house not far from Mons. This evening will see the launch of the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Library Appeal.

CONFERENCE THEME
Between 1715 and 1830 Paris gradually became the capital of Europe, “a city of power and pleasure, a magnet for people of all nationalities that exerted an influence far beyond the reaches of France”, as Philip Mansel wrote, or as Prince Metternich phrased it, “When Paris sneezes, Europe catches cold”. Within this historical framework and in a time of profound societal change, the consumption and appreciation of luxury goods reached a peak in Paris.
The focus of this one-day international conference will be to investigate the role of the sculptor in the design and production processes of Parisian decorative arts, from large-scale furniture and interior decoration projects to porcelain, silver, gilt bronzes and clocks.
In the last few years a number of studies were carried out under the auspices of decorative arts museums and societies such as the Furniture History Society and the French Porcelain Society. It now seems appropriate to bring some of these together to encourage cross-disciplinary approaches on a European level and discussion between all those interested in the materiality and the three-dimensionality of their objects of study.
The relationships between, on the one hand, architects, ornemanistes and other designers, and on the other sculptors, menuisiers, ébénistes, goldsmiths, porcelain manufacturers, bronze casters and other producers, as well as the marchands merciers, will be at the heart of the studies about the design processes.
A second layer of understanding of the importance of sculpture in the decorative arts will be shown in the collecting and display in European capitals in subsequent generations, particularly those immediately after the French Revolution, as epitomised by King George IV.
Overall, the intention of this conference is to attempt to shed light on the sculptural aspect of decorative arts produced in Paris in the long 18th century and collected and displayed in the capitals of Europe. Without pretending to be exhaustive, this study day – and its publication – hopes to bring together discussions about the histories and methodologies that could lead to furthering the study of hitherto all too often neglected aspects of the decorative arts.

Research questions may include (non-exhaustive list):
- What are the specificities of the Parisian approach to three-dimensional sculptural design that made it collectable, or was it only collectable in Europe due to its availability at vastly reduced prices when the art market was flooded by the revolutionary auctions?
- What relationships can be established between the “Frenchness” of sculptural designs produced in Paris and the large number of “foreign” designers and craftspeople there (coming in particular from the Low Countries and Germany)?
- What was the impact of public authorities (e.g. guilds and schools), intermediaries (marchands merciers, agents, etc.), private salons, societies and other networks, on the three-dimensional design aspect decorative arts produced in Paris?
- Taste leaders: the role of the monarch, the court, Paris vs. Versailles, and their interest in “sculptural” decorative arts

- Taste disseminators: the role of prints and treatises regarding “sculptural” decorative arts
- The collaborative efforts between architects, designers, sculptors, cabinet makers, “porcelainiers”, bronze casters, goldsmiths, engravers, etc. were they specific to luxury items produced in Paris? Were certain disciplines more appropriate for “sculptural design”?
- How do case studies inform us about the role of sculptors in the design and production processes for decorative arts?
- How is sculptural illusionism in painted decorative panels, such as those by Tournai-born Piat-Joseph Sauvage (1744-1818) or in the Casa del Labrador at the royal palace of Aranjuez, related to the design and perception of Parisian decorative arts?
- What was the impact of collectors of old/existing Parisian decorative arts on the design of spaces to display these in European capitals?
- Are centre-periphery theories applicable to the interpretation of decorative arts produced in Paris and its hinterland? Is the work of Abraham Roentgen and his bronze casters an appropriate case study for this?

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Reference:
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