

1 Postdoc and 1 PhD Position at Centre André-Chastel, Sorbonne Université, Paris

Centre André-Chastel, Sorbonne Université-CNRS-MC, Paris

Application deadline: Apr 29, 2025

Florian Métral

Two positions are available at the André-Chastel Center, Sorbonne Université-CNRS-MC, Paris.

Please refer to the respective announcements under

[1] Postdoc Researcher in Art History: Visual Culture of the Cosmos in the Early Modern Period, 15th-17th Centuries

[2] PhD Position, History of Art / History of Science: "The Graphy of Origins", Early Modern Period, 15th-17th Centuries

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[1] Postdoc Researcher in Art History: Visual Culture of the Cosmos in the Early Modern Period, 15th-17th Centuries; the position starts on October 1, 2025 and is limited to one year.

Work Context:

The contract is part of the "Spectacles célestes. Images, savoirs et croyances sur le cosmos à la première modernité" project, affiliated with the CNRS Junior Professorship Chair Arts and Visual Culture - Graphic Expressions (ARVIGRAPH), covering the period 2024-2028.

This project focuses on the visual history of the cosmos in the early modern period (15th-17th centuries) and examines the complex interactions between visual and graphic forms, knowledge, beliefs, social and economic practices, as well as techniques, within the context of the "scientific revolution."

The selected candidate will need to propose a research project (1 page) focused on a new object or case study related to the visual culture of the cosmos, whether identified or not, that fits within the scope of the ARVIGRAPH Chair.

The chosen candidate will be supervised by Florian Métral, Art Historian and holder of the ARVIGRAPH Chair.

The candidate will be based at the Centre André-Chastel (Sorbonne University-CNRS-MC), where a fully equipped workstation will be provided.

The candidate will join the largest French research team in Art History, which consists of about fifty permanent members and more than a hundred PhD students, offering a particularly dynamic environment. Located in the Galerie Colbert, the Centre André-Chastel will also provide opportunities to collaborate with various partner institutions.

Pay grade: €3,081 / per month; research-related tasks such as presenting research results or working in

archives and collections may be funded.

Constraints and risks:

The position requires research in archives, libraries, and museum collections, mainly located in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Switzerland.

Mission:

- Conduct research in art history on the visual culture of the cosmos in the early modern period (15th-17th centuries) as part of the research project "Spectacles célestes. Images, savoirs et croyances sur le cosmos à la première modernité", affiliated with the ARVIGRAPH Chair (CNRS / Centre André-Chastel).
- Contribute to the various initiatives of the ARVIGRAPH Chair.

Activities

- Conduct research in archives, libraries, and relevant collections on the theme of the visual culture of the cosmos in the early modern period (15th-17th centuries).
- Prepare and submit at least one research article to a peer-reviewed journal.
- Present research at a minimum of three scientific events.
- Contribute to the research (iconography, archives, bibliography), initiatives, and outreach activities (seminars, conferences, courses, lecture series) of the ARVIGRAPH Chair.
- Write blog posts for the research blog "Cosmospectio", documenting the ongoing research within the ARVIGRAPH Chair.
- Prepare an application for the CNRS researcher competition.

Skills:

- A PhD in Art History (15th-17th centuries), with a strong focus on the history of knowledge and/or beliefs, a particular sensitivity to graphic culture, and possibly having previously addressed objects related to the visual culture of the cosmos.
- Excellent knowledge of archives, libraries, and collections.
- Excellent skills in preparing scientific presentations and writing publications in both French and English.
- Good skills in digital humanities.
- Ability to contribute to a research project involving national and international partners.

Application:

The application should be submitted via the following link until April, 29, 2025:

<https://emploi.cnrs.fr/Offres/CDD/UMR8150-REZKET-006/Default.aspx?lang=EN>

Required documents: A CV, a cover letter, and the description of a research project

Contact information:

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PhD Position, History of Art / History of Science: "The Graphy of Origins", Early Modern Period, 15th-17th Centuries; the position starts on October 1, 2025 and is limited to three years.

Description of the thesis topic:

This PhD project explores how the Renaissance – an era of knowledge synthesis and reconfiguration – laid the groundwork for investigating the origins of life and planetary formation. It focuses on the role of graphic media, broadly defined, in shaping these inquiries. This includes the production of images (drawings, engravings, maps) and textual strategies used to structure and communicate knowledge. The project

focuses on the lapidary imaginary, in which stones, during the 15th and 16th centuries, were imbued with cosmogonic and biogenetic meanings, contributing to an in-depth reading of the “Book of Nature.”

At the heart of this investigation is a singular stone: the Ensisheim meteorite, which fell in 1492 in Alsace, then part of the Holy Roman Empire. As the first observed meteorite fall in Europe, it is among the best-documented cases, both textually (pamphlets, diplomatic letters) and visually (engravings, illuminations, paintings). Although its extraterrestrial nature remained incomprehensible at the time, it bears witness to the profoundly interdisciplinary understanding of a celestial phenomenon that fascinated princes, theologians, humanists, publishers, and artists. This meteorite stands at the crossroads of discourses on stones and the living world, where theology, philosophy, and natural history intersect with magical and alchemical thought, empirical and scientific discourse. Artistic works and images emerge as privileged repositories of these narratives.

Four research axes, each based on a different “facet” of the Ensisheim meteorite, will address the core research questions from multiple perspectives:

1. Stones Fallen from the Sky
2. Collecting and Curating the Living
3. Mineral Geneses
4. A Graphic History of the Earth

By tackling aspects that have been overlooked by the history of science and neglected by art history, this PhD dissertation aims to enrich historiography on the Renaissance. On a theoretical level, it will provide new insights into the creative and visual processes involved in the construction of scientific knowledge. On a practical level, it seeks to offer analytical tools for better understanding how graphic representations lie at the heart of these processes.

The PhD candidate will:

- Conduct research in archives, libraries, and museum collections
- Work on translation and editorial tasks
- Prepare and submit at least one research article to a peer-reviewed journal and present their work at a minimum of three academic conferences
- Contribute to the research (iconographic studies, archival work, bibliography), initiatives, and outreach activities (seminars, symposia, lectures, lecture series) of the ARVIGRAPH Chair and the GRAPHORIGINS project
- Write blog posts for Cosmospectio, the research blog documenting the work conducted within the ARVIGRAPH Chair and the GRAPHORIGINS project

Work Context :

The PhD contract is part of two research projects (pay grade: €2,200 / per month):

1. The art history research project “Spectacles célestes. Images, savoirs et croyances sur le cosmos à la première modernité” (50% funded), affiliated with the CNRS Junior Professorship ARVIGRAPH, led by Florian Métral, art historian (CNRS/Centre André-Chastel).
2. The interdisciplinary research project “The Graphy of Origins. From the Ensisheim Meteorite (1492) and the Life of Stones in the Renaissance” (50% funded), awarded in 2025 as part of the PEPR ‘Origins’. The latter project is also directed by Florian Métral (CNRS/Centre André-Chastel) in collaboration with the Muséum national d’histoire naturelle (MNHN), Paris, represented by Matthieu Gounelle, Professor at the

Muséum and curator of the national meteorite collection.

The PhD dissertation will be carried out under a co-supervision agreement between these two institutions: Centre André-Chastel (Ecole doctorale 124) and Muséum national d'histoire naturelle. The PhD candidate will be supervised by Florian Métral, Junior Professor (CNRS/Centre André-Chastel) and Matthieu Gounelle, Professor (Muséum national d'histoire naturelle)

The candidate will primarily work at the Centre André-Chastel (Sorbonne Université-CNRS-MC), which is the largest French research center in art history, with over fifty permanent members and more than one hundred doctoral students, offering a particularly dynamic academic environment. Based at the Galerie Colbert, the Centre André-Chastel also provides opportunities to establish connections with various partner institutions.

Additionally, the candidate will work at the Institute of Mineralogy, Materials Physics, and Cosmo-Chemistry (IMPMC) and within the geology collections of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle

Constraints and risks:

The position requires research in archives, libraries, and museum collections, mainly located in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Switzerland.

Application:

The application should be submitted via the following link until April, 29, 2025:

<https://emploi.cnrs.fr/Offres/Doctorant/UMR8150-REZKET-005/Default.aspx?lang=EN>

Required documents: a CV, a cover letter, and the description of a research project

Contact information:

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Reference:

JOB: 1 Postdoc and 1 PhD Position at Centre André-Chastel, Sorbonne Université, Paris. In: ArtHist.net, Mar 4, 2025 (accessed Mar 5, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44083>>.