Sculpture and Trompe l’œil in European Ceramics (Mons, 10-13 Jul 26)

Hôtel de la Roche, Mons, Belgium, Jul 10–13, 2026
Deadline: Dec 12, 2025

Dr Léon Lock

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.

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'oeil, 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'oeil 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'oeil 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 at the château d’Ecaussinnes-Lalaing, Fondation van der Burch
Bernard Dragesco, Dragesco-Cramoisan Gallery, Paris / Château de Barly
Errol Manners, E & H Manners Gallery, London

Sylvie Milasseau-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
Théodore and Clotilde de Brouwer, château d'Ecaussinnes-Lalaing, Fondation van der Burch
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 ».
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 AS PLANNED
Friday 10th July 2026
(8.18-10.42 Paris > Nord-Mons by train OUIGO)
(10.19-12.20 Paris Nord > Maubeuge by TER train + 12.25-12.55 Maubeuge > Mons by taxi)
(11.31-12.42 Brussels Airport Zaventem > Mons by SNCB train)
(11.48-12.42 Brussels Central > Mons by SNCB train)
(timing tbc. Airport of Brussels South Charleroi > Mons by FLIBCO coach)
14.00-21.00 Optional excursion in the vicinity of Mons and Inaugural Keynote Lecture at the château d'Ecaussinnes-Lalaing

Saturday 11th July 2026
8.00-18.00 Optional excursion

Sunday 12th July 2026
9.30-17.00 Entire day of conference

Monday 13th July 2026
9.00-13.00 Half day of conference
13.00 Closing lunch

(14.19-15.13 Mons > Brussels Central by SNCB train)
(14.19-15.31 Mons > Brussels Airport Zaventem by SNCB train)
(Flights from Brussels Airport Zaventem after 17.30)
(14.22-16.45 Mons > Paris Nord by OUIGO train)
(14.45-15.15 Mons > Maubeuge by taxi + 15.42-17.42 Maubeuge > Paris Nord by TER train)
(Flights from Paris Charles de Gaulle or Paris Orly after 20.30)
(14.00-14.50 tbc. Mons > Airport Brussels South Charleroi by FLIBCO coach)
(Flights from Brussels South Charleroi Airport after 17.30)

PRACTICAL ASPECTS
The conference has an international and multidisciplinary orientation. As such, we hope to attract lively participation from junior and senior scholars in the history of ceramics, sculpture, archaeology, ethnography, as well as practitioners of restoration-conservation in the same and other relevant fields. Short papers (maximum 30 minutes) of new research or work in progress may be presented in English or French. A minimal passive knowledge of English and French are highly recommended to enable full participation in the ensuing discussions, which form the core of the seminar.
The Society covers accommodation expenses for foreign speakers at the conference, as well as group meals and the optional excursions. On the other hand, travel arrangements to and from Mons are the responsibility of the individual participants and their travel expenses will not be reimbursed.
Please send participation proposals with a 200-word abstract of the intended paper and a 200--word CV by email to: info @ lcsculpture.art. We prefer to receive your abstract written in your mother tongue. We will then have it professionally translated into English and French for our Scientific Committee. We will inform of the Scientific Committee's decision in December.

CALL FOR PAPERS: The deadline for submitting proposals is 12th December 2025 at noon

TIMING AS PLANNED
12th December 2025 at noon
Deadline for submission of paper proposals

Mid-December 2025
Scientific Committee's decision

January to 30th April 2026
Writing of papers by the speakers, in their mother tongue

30th April 2026 at noon
Deadline for submission of full papers, with their accompanying PowerPoint presentation

May 2026
Independent peer review and final paper acceptance by the Scientific Committee

June 2026
Professional translation of the papers and PowerPoint presentations, in English and French

12th-13th July 2026

Conference at Mons

July-October 2026
After the conference, potential changes and corrections to the papers done by the speakers

31st October 2026
Deadline for submission of papers in their final version to be published, together with the images

Spring 2027
Publication

Reference:
CFP: Sculpture and Trompe l'œil in European Ceramics (Mons, 10-13 Jul 26). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 27, 2025 (accessed Oct 30, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/51234>.