

## Sculpture and Trompe l'œil in European Ceramics (online, 12–13 Jul 26)

Online, Jul 12–13, 2026

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, 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.

### Online Conference

The conference will take place without audience (apart from the speakers and moderators), 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>

### 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

#### 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

#### 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.

#### Reference:

CONF: Sculpture and Trompe l'œil in European Ceramics (online, 12-13 Jul 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 2, 2026 (accessed Jul 2, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52859>>.