

European Gilt Bronze (Mons, 9–12 Jul 27)

Hôtel de la Roche, Mons, Belgium, Jul 9–12, 2027

Deadline: Sep 14, 2026

Léon Lock

Third Edition of the Annual International Conference on European Sculpture and Decorative Arts: European Gilt Bronze. From the Renaissance to the Present Day.

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 gilt bronze, aims to address issues relating to all types of gilt bronze, from furniture ornaments to figurative sculpture in the round, via relief sculpture and fully functional works of art, like candelabra.

The design and manufacture of gilt bronze has always been a complex and expensive process, requiring a wide range of skills and specialisms, whether it be the casting of brass, chasing and finishing, gilding or any other form of embellishment, or assembly methods. Disentangling these has proven to be particularly strenuous and few art historians, conservators and material technicians have attempted to study this field – a field that has often suffered from inappropriate methodologies taken from the world of the history of painting or sculpture (notably « connoisseurship »). All this despite the fact that a number of precursors paved the way to an enriched – or even holistic – approach to the subject, for instance Jennifer Montagu's *Roman Baroque Sculpture*, *The Industry of Art* and her subsequent works on bronze and gilt bronze.

It is the present conference organisers' belief that a proper history of European gilt bronze needs to be rooted both in extremely diligent archival research, combined with a deep knowledge of material practices. It is thus only the combined efforts of art historians and material scientists that can yield a truthful view of the design, production, consumption, collecting and display of gilt bronzes.

Our conference proposes to study cases that can shed light on this reality, 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 gilt bronze may be studied.

The rich tradition of Parisian gilt bronze will be taken as a practical starting point during the excursion in Paris before the conference, while it is hoped that the conference itself will study the whole range of production centres in Europe and beyond.

2027 COMMITTEE OF HONOUR

Dr Alan Darr, Detroit Institute of Art
Dr Jennifer Montagu, The Warburg Institute, London
Prof em Dr Hans Ottomeyer, München

2027 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Jean-Dominique Augarde, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ebénistes, Paris / Mons
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Dr Arie Pappot, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Luca Raschèr, Zürich
Prof em Dr Volker Seiberth, University of Heidelberg / The Low Countries Sculpture Society

2027 ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Lionel Arsac, Château de Versailles
Dr Katia Berseneva, Ecole du Louvre, Paris
Tobias Desmet, Gallery Desmet, Brussels
Me Guillaume Hambye, notary, Mons
Dr Léon Lock, The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels / Mons
Grégory Maugé, Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Maîtres Ébénistes, Paris / Mons
Sylvie Millasseau-Wengraf, art historian, Switzerland
Thierry Naveaux, The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels / Mons
Dr Bertrand de Royere, Roma
Renaud Serrette, Mobilier National, Paris
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 2028 in a new academic journal dedicated to European sculpture and decorative arts, based on our annual international conferences.

PROGRAMME AS PLANNED

Friday 9th July 2027
before 14.00 Individual travel to Paris
14.00-19.00 Optional excursion in Paris
20.00 Group dinner
Night in Paris

Saturday 10th July 2027

10.00-17.00 Optional excursion in Paris

19.22-21.42 Paris Nord > Mons in OUIGO train

22.00 Welcome drink in Mons

Night in Mons

Sunday 11th July 2027

9.30-17.00 Entire day of conference

Night in Mons

Monday 12th July 2027

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)

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

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 bronze, sculpture, archaeology, as well as practitioners of scientific technical analyses and 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 conference.

The Society covers accommodation expenses in Mons for foreign speakers at the conference, as well as group meals and the optional excursions (but not accommodation in Paris). 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.

CALL FOR PAPERS: THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS IS 14th SEPTEMBER 2026 AT NOON

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 July.

TIMING AS PLANNED

14th September 2026 at noon: Deadline for submission of paper proposals

End of September 2026: Scientific Committee's decision

until 15th March 2027: Writing of papers by the speakers, in their mother tongue

15th March 2027 at noon: Deadline for submission of full papers, with their accompanying Power-Point presentation

April 2027: Final paper acceptance by the Scientific Committee

May 2027: Professional translation of the papers and PowerPoint presentations, in English and French

15th May 2027: Publication of the conference programme

11th-12th July 2027: Conference at Mons

July-October 2027: After the conference, potential changes and corrections to the papers done by the speakers

31st October 2027: Deadline for submission of papers in their final version to be published, together with the images

Reference:

CFP: European Gilt Bronze (Mons, 9-12 Jul 27). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 17, 2026 (accessed Jul 18, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/53498>>.