



Annual Symposium of the Groupe de Recherche en Histoire de l'Art Moderne

Call for Papers

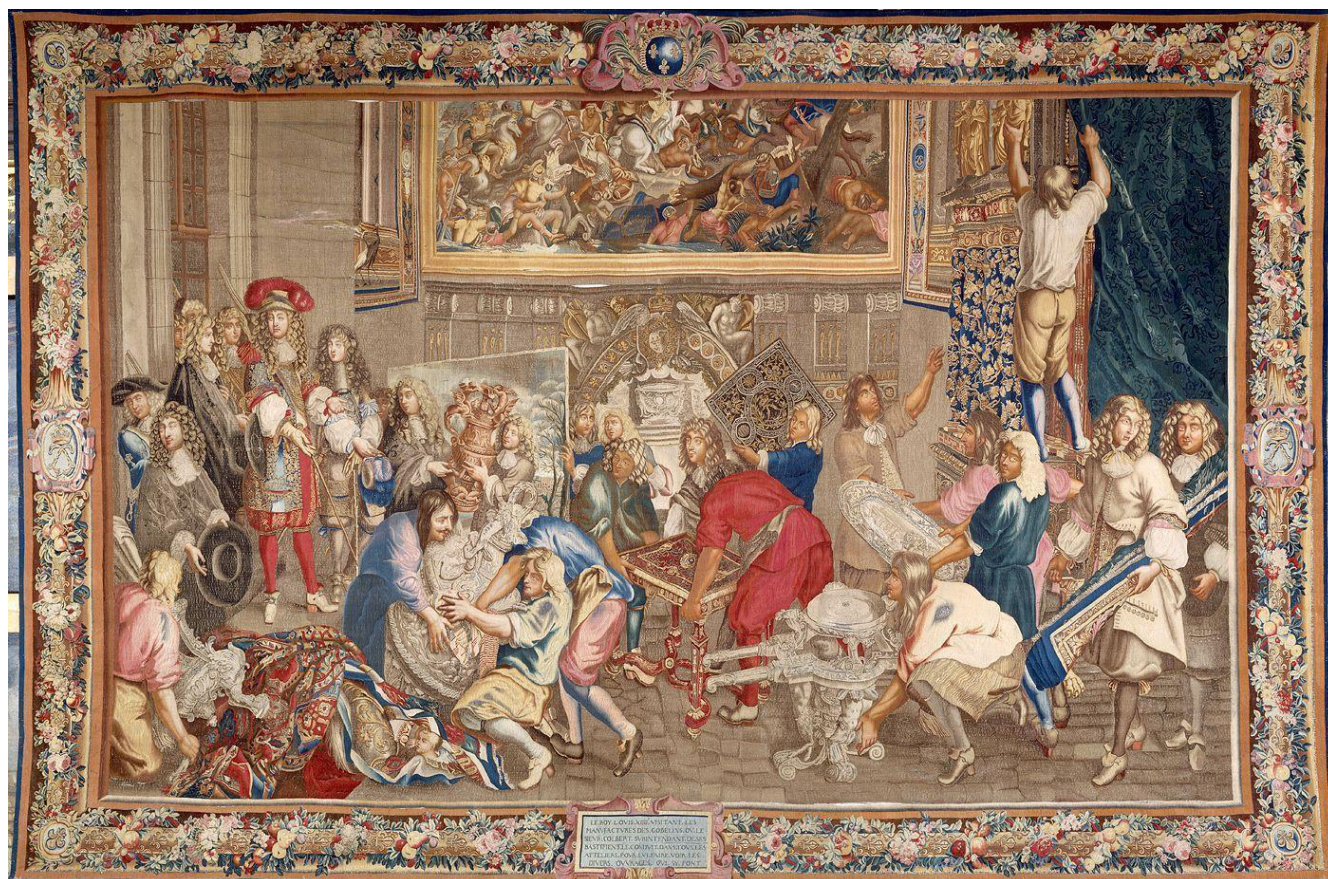
**Crafting Everyday Life.  
Art Manufactories in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

June 11 and 12, 2026

Salle René Jullian

Galerie Colbert (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/INHA)

2 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris



*The History of the King Series, Leblond Workshop, King Louis XIV Visiting the Gobelins Manufactory, after Charles Le Brun and Simon Renard de Saint-André, Gobelins Manufactory, 1729–1734, low-warp tapestry, wool, silk, and gold thread, 370 cm x 576 cm, Versailles, Palace of Versailles.*

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

Following the merger of the **Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres & Limoges** and the **Mobilier national** under the title **Manufactures nationales – Mobilier national & Sèvres** on January 1, 2025, the **Groupe de Recherche en Histoire de l'Art Moderne (GRHAM)** has chosen to dedicate its annual symposium to the art manufactories of the 17th and 18th centuries. This institutional reorganization serves as an invitation to re-examine the history of manufactories—not as a static "golden age," but as a fluid history marked by internal ruptures and the constant redefining of the links between the State, artists, and workers.

While a segment of historiography has focused on the role of **Jean-Baptiste Colbert** in the development of manufactories from the 1660s (Minard, 1998), the concept of the "manufactory"—plural and evolving—must be understood in its broadest sense. It cannot be reduced to Colbert alone, nor even to royal initiatives such as Louis XIII's creation of the **Savonnerie** tapestry manufactory in 1628. From the early 17th century, the term "manufactory" referred simultaneously to a site gathering specialized workers, an economic structure, and a production space (Bély, 1996). Some, like the **Gobelins**, **Saint-Gobain**, or **Sèvres**, were established or controlled by the State ; others simply benefited from privileges. Although the 1790s marked a major break in the organization of corporate labor (the Le Chapelier Law and the Allarde Decree, 1791) as well as in the relationship with the academies (1793), manufacturing activity continued and adapted to the new powers in place. On a European scale, terms such as *Manufaktur*, *fabbrica*, or *fábrica* reflect a diversity of models, practices, and organizations that invite a comparative approach, oscillating between craftsmanship, proto-industry, and political stakes. One of the major objectives of this symposium lies in the comparative, non-hierarchical study of different manufactories across France and Europe. It will jointly examine works, motifs, and labor systems, starting from the material and technical conditions of fabrication as well as the modes of collaboration between artists and artisans within the European sphere.

Understanding the 17th- and 18th-century manufactory means studying the links—sometimes harmonious, sometimes conflicting—between **mechanical arts and liberal arts**, between art and craft, and between the figure of the artist and that of the worker. From Furetière's *Dictionnaire* (1690) to the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1784), the manufactory appears inseparable from manual labor and the fabrication of utilitarian objects, some of which constitute true works of art. This symposium will specifically explore the shifts between the "art object" and the "object of use." Furthermore, a distinction between different production actors emerged within these establishments. This deepened starting in the *Grand Siècle*, notably with the rise of academies (Michel, 2012 ; Guilois, 2018 ; Guichard, 2002-2003), which institutionalized the separation between the artisan (the possessor of mechanical *savoir-faire*) and the artist (valued for intellectual creativity and membership in the liberal arts). This hierarchy of status sheds new light on the organization of manufacturing labor and the underlying social, artistic, and economic stakes.

Recent research and exhibitions has shown the extent to which manufactories were sites of collaborative creation. Whether in tapestry—**Mortlake**, **Gobelins**, **Beauvais**—or ceramics—**Sèvres**, **Meissen**, **Chantilly**, or **Doccia**—monographic studies have demonstrated how artists nurtured, guided, or transformed manufacturing practices. Works dedicated to Le Brun, Coypel, De Troy, or Oudry, along with exhibitions such as *Poussin et Moïse* (Mobilier national 2011), *La fabrique de l'extravagance* (Chantilly, 2021), or *L'Amour en scène!* (Tours, 2022), have highlighted how artists participated in inventing models, adapting to technical constraints, and constructing aesthetics specific to each establishment. By moving beyond the monographic framework to question the modalities of collaboration—continuities, adjustments, discordances, reappropriations, copies—this symposium will illuminate how a "multi-handed" work is forged and better define the role of manufactories in the circulation of styles, models, and expertise in the early modern period.

In this perspective, the study of manufactories can no longer ignore an approach expanded to include **savoir-faire, materials, and technical innovations**. Manufactories were sites of experimentation where new pastes, enamels, and improvements in weaving or dyeing were developed at the intersection of empirical skill and scholarly knowledge. The "**material turn**" (Roche, 1997 ; Guichard, 2015 ; Nègre, 2016) has brought art history closer to the history of technology and economics, revealing the importance of transfers : the migration of specialized workers, exchanges between the provinces and the capital, and European—or even global—circulations, as shown by research on *indiennes* and printed cottons. Following the reflections

of Liliane Hilaire-Pérez, Fabien Simon, or Marie Thébaud-Sorger (2018), techniques are no longer viewed as simple "applied sciences," but as knowledge in their own right. The concept of "**open technique**" (Foray & Hilaire-Pérez, 2006) invites us to consider manufactories as network hubs where workshop practices, State policies, and market dynamics intersect. This symposium will study the nature of these transmissions : imitation, adaptation, innovation, or appropriation.

The **question of the motif** constitutes another fundamental field of exploration. Studying the "journey" of motifs—from their invention to their technical adaptation—allows us to address the close relationship between the creative and productive processes and to measure the popularity of forms across different materials and establishments. *Toiles de Jouy* have revealed the crucial role of designers like Lagrenée or Huet; recent research on textile design (Gril-Mariotte, 2023) recalls the long tradition of collaboration between academic artists and manufacturing workshops. The study of the diffusion of models—from the importation of a "French taste" at Meissen to the mutual adaptations between Sèvres and Wedgwood, or the role of intermediaries like Nicodemus Tessin the Younger—invites us to question the existence of motifs specific to certain types of production, as well as the methods of their displacement or transformation. This symposium proposes to examine how motifs travel and reinvent themselves across materials and workshops, and to evaluate whether artists working for multiple manufactories adapted their methods or transported the same formal vocabulary from one medium to another.

Finally, the **sociological approach** to royal manufactories reveals a structured professional environment that varied greatly by institution. Far from the traditional guild system (Bonnet 2015 & 2017), royal manufactories formed centralized, hierarchical production spaces where workers, artists, and administrative staff worked under a director appointed by the Crown. Research by Isabelle Gensollen highlights this organization : the decisive role of the director-general, the strict control of finances, and the political role of manufactories as instruments of monarchical prestige. Simultaneously, other studies—from Maës to Cournat—sketch the internal social realities, from life within the Gobelins enclosure to the mobility of entire families, revealing logics of networks, lineages, and technical specialization. Together, these works describe a complex sociology where the manufactory appears not only as a site of production but also as a living environment and a political tool. Using a comparative logic, this symposium aims to take stock of the various manufacturing modalities in France and Europe from the early 17th century to the Revolutionary period.

**Proposals for papers should focus on the following three axes:**

### **Axis 1: Living the Manufactory : Organizations, Crafts, and Economies**

This first axis proposes to explore life within the manufactories, with an emphasis on social, economic, and organizational dimensions. The objective is to analyze the diversity of crafts and the division of labor, the training of workers and apprentices, as well as the interactions between artists and artisans—which were often hierarchical yet always interdependent. By studying administrations and economic models—whether royal, privileged, or private manufactories—we can better understand the roles of the State and directors in structuring production, circulating models, and bringing objects to market.

### **Axis 2: Making, Copying, Translating : Creative Processes in the Manufactory**

This second axis focuses on the production practices and expertise developed within the manufactories. It proposes to study technical gestures, the materials employed, and the innovations implemented to meet both artistic demands and material constraints. Themes such as motifs—their reproduction, adaptation, or translation from one medium to another—as well as multiple production and copying, allow for a deeper grasp of the interactions between creation and fabrication. **Intermediality**—the transition from a drawing to a tapestry, a print to a textile, or a model to porcelain—opens a rich field of investigation into the internal circulation of forms and shared invention. Contributions may also question how technical experimentation and the manipulation of materials contribute to the construction of specific manufacturing aesthetics. Finally, the question of rights over motifs and inventions opens a reflection on intellectual property and the recognition of creators within these collective workspaces.

### Axis 3: Manufactories in Networks : Mobility, Partnerships, and Inspirations

This final axis explores the interactions between manufactories and the ways in which actors—artists, artisans, and intermediaries such as merchants—shape the production and dissemination of forms and savoir-faire. The aim is to analyze the horizontal and vertical mobility of artists and artisans, whether within a single manufactory or between different workshops, as well as the role of merchants in creating, adapting, and transmitting models. Contributions may examine how these interactions structure manufacturing practices, influence stylistic and technical choices, and participate in the emergence of artistic and productive networks on both a national and European scale. The modalities of joint commercialization by manufactories and merchants will also be analyzed.

**Proposals may address one or more of these themes, as the axes are intended to be indicative rather than restrictive.**

The symposium will focus on **art and armament manufactories**, as well as specific **textiles** (*indiennes, toile de Jouy*), in France and across Europe. Priority will be given to approaches focusing on production, practices, and the relationships between artists and artisans, as well as the translation from one medium to another.

Consequently, **non-artistic industries**—such as tobacco manufactories or other strictly utilitarian productions like broadcloth (*drap*)—are excluded. Likewise, the mere study of exchanges between Paris and the provinces, or between France and abroad, which has been extensively covered by traditional historiography, is not the primary focus of this meeting.

The emphasis will be placed on the **internal dynamics** of the manufactories: the horizontal and vertical mobility of artists and artisans, the technical and iconographical transfers between materials and media, and the role of merchants in the creation and dissemination of forms. The objective is to move beyond classical institutional approaches to offer a **"bottom-up" reading** of manufacturing practices, while facilitating comparisons between different national and European traditions, and between royal and private manufactories.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals for papers—whether individual or collaborative—may be submitted in either **French or English**. They should be approximately **300 words** in length and may take the form of general overviews or specific case studies. Applicants are also requested to attach a **curriculum vitae**.

- **Submission deadline** : March 29, 2026
- **Submission and contact email** : [asso.grham@gmail.com](mailto:asso.grham@gmail.com)

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Symposium dates : June 11 and 12, 2026

### About the Organizing Association

The **GRHAM (Groupe de Recherche en Histoire de l'Art Moderne)** is an association of early-career researchers specializing in 17th- and 18th-century art history. Its mission is to bring together the various actors within the discipline, whether or not they are members of the academic community. The GRHAM contributes to the field's influence by covering the latest research developments (scientific meetings, publications, exhibitions, etc.) and by hosting monthly lectures, an annual symposium, and occasional visits.

### Organizing Committee

**Élisa Bérard** (PhD candidate, Sorbonne Université), **Maxime Bray** (PhD candidate, Sorbonne Université), **Justine Cardoletti** (PhD candidate, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), **Romane de Chastellux** (PhD candidate, Sorbonne Université), **Défendin Détard** (PhD candidate, Sorbonne Université), **Maxime-Georges Métraux** (expert, Galerie H. Duchemin), **Maël Tauziède-Espariat** (Associate Professor, Université Paris-Nanterre), all members of the Board of the Groupe de Recherche en Histoire de l'Art Moderne (GRHAM).

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