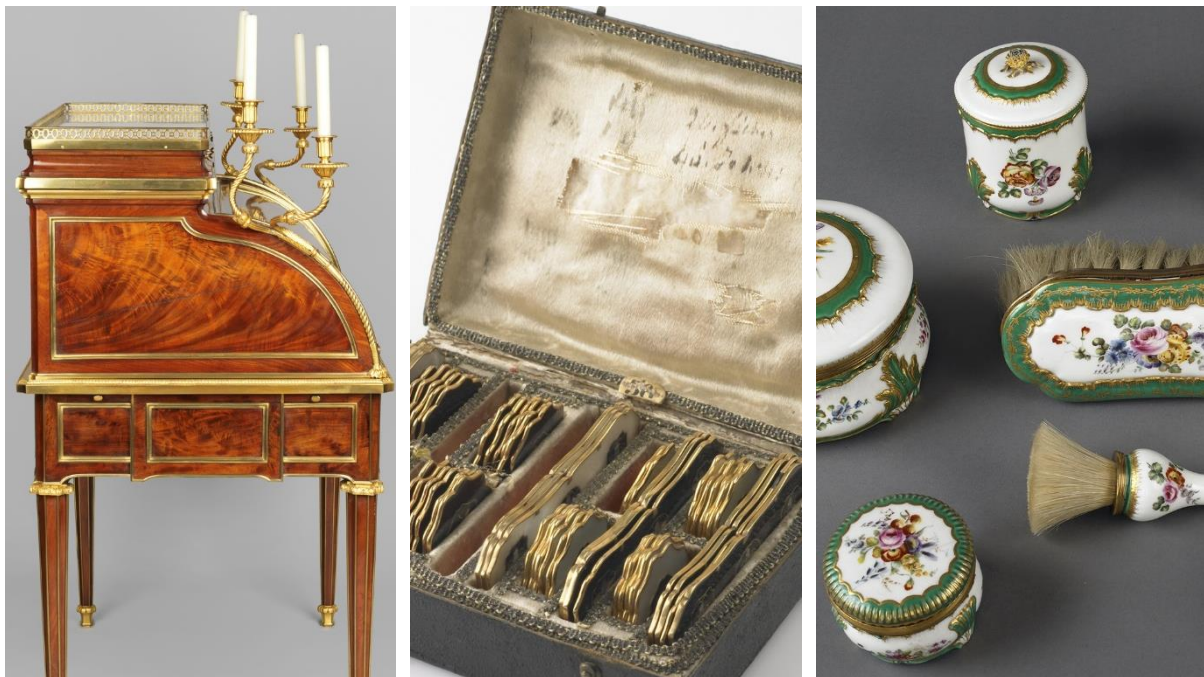


Interiors and the Art of Living at the Time of Riesener and Marie-Antoinette

Dates	Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 March 2021
Times	11.00-12.45
Location	Zoom (online)
Level	All Levels



L-R (detail): Jean-Henri Riesener, *Cylinder Desk*, c.1785;
French, *Box with 66 Games Counters*, c.1750-70;
Manufacture de Sèvres, *Toilet Service*, 1763

Course Description

As we stage a display in the museum of our most sumptuous pieces of Riesener furniture, this course seeks to look at them in the context of interiors, and what Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, diplomat and ex-Bishop of Autun, famously called the time of 'la douceur de vivre', literally the sweetness of being alive.

Riesener was the most celebrated cabinetmaker in Paris in the two decades before the French Revolution. He was Marie-Antoinette's favourite cabinetmaker, and delivered furniture to Louis XVI and the royal family, and aristocratic and wealthy patrons. We'll take examples of Riesener's work, as well as pieces from other cabinetmakers, as our starting point for exploring contemporary interiors and daily occupations such as gaming, reading and writing - and the accessories needed for these activities, such as candlesticks, inkstands or game counters. We'll also consider evolving styles, the use of textiles and panelling, and the taste for Chinese and Japanese lacquer to help you build a broader understanding of the interiors, furniture and decorative arts of the period.

Session One

We'll begin our course at Versailles, focusing on the King's Cabinet de Travail (study) and how the room evolved from the days of Louis XIV, to its transformation under Louis XV. It was for the Cabinet de Travail that Riesener made his most celebrated piece of furniture, the King's Desk, and where it can still be found today. We'll look at its importance in the evolution of the decoration and furnishings of the room, and the intricate ways in which the furniture and room formed a harmonious interior.

The 18th century was the time of the Enlightenment and the age of reading and writing, which contributed to an increase in the number and variety of desks. To complete our first session, we'll look at other types of desk made by Riesener and other cabinetmakers, which were commissioned and used by both men and women for serious work or lighter writing.

Session Two

Our second session will be devoted to other types of furniture and the interiors they were placed in. We'll focus on Marie-Antoinette's Cabinet Interieur (her private sitting room) at Versailles, which tells us about the Queen's changing taste and her developing interest in Japanese lacquer. Our focus will then move to Louis XVI's Cabinet des Jeux (Games Room) at Versailles, where the King and his guests gathered at the end of the day to enjoy a game of tric trac, quadrille or whist. Through considering the different pieces of furniture needed at different moments of the day, daily life in the late 18th century will be revealed to us, from the rituals of the morning toilette to the passion for games.

Course Tutor

Christylle Phillips holds an MA in Decorative Arts from the Courtauld Institute. For almost 30 years, Christylle has delivered talks and courses at the Wallace Collection, where she has developed a deep interest in decorative arts, and particularly furniture of the 18th century. She has lectured for Glasgow University, Buckingham University and the V&A.

Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

Joining Information and Format

This course will be taught through Zoom. For more information, including instructions on how to download and use the system, please visit www.zoom.us/support.

Each course session duration is 105 minutes, including a five-minute break and short Q&A session with the tutor.

Participants will be emailed the Zoom Meeting ID and Passcode 48 hours in advance.
