

Modern and Contemporary Sèvres: Innovation Through Tradition

Dates	Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 June 2021
Times	11.00-13.00
Location	Zoom Webinar
Tutor	Elisabeth Bogdan
Level	All Levels



Manufacture de Sèvres, Cup and saucer (Gobelet 'Calabre' et soucoupe of the first size) 1765 (detail)

Course Description

The Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres is associated with 18th century technical and aesthetic innovative brilliance, and the Wallace Collection holds one of its most comprehensive and important historic collections. Moving beyond the Wallace Collection's Rococo and Neoclassical porcelain, this course will consider the Factory's more recent history during the 20th century and beyond the millennium. We'll explore the Sèvres of the Art Nouveau to Art Deco period, which secured it as a major modern manufacturing leader of taste, luxury and dynamic innovation. We'll also consider how early 20th-century commitment to both tradition and modernity continued after the Second World War - and how today, Sèvres's exciting and rotating portfolio of international contemporary art, design and retail collaborations is a testament to it remaining at the forefront of innovation and cultural relevance.

Session One - Taste, Luxury and Modernity: The Sèvres Factory 1900-1939

Our first session introduces Sèvres's shift into 20th-century modernity. We'll consider the Factory's important aesthetic and technical responses to the Art Nouveau movement while building on its tradition of quality and luxury craftsmanship. After 1900, Sèvres embraced avant-garde early modern painting, applied arts, and interiors. In this session we'll also explore how the influence of the Wiener Werksätze in Vienna, the impact of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, and the advancing ceramic technologies of Germany before World War I inspired the factory to push for innovative excellence in the 1920s and 1930s Art Deco and French Modernism periods. Art, design and craft figures highlighted in our first session will include Auguste Rodin, Dagobert Peche, Alexandre Sandier, Georges Lechevallier-Chevignard and Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann.

Session Two - Creating A Contemporary Legacy: Sèvres Design and Collaboration, Postwar to Now

In our second session we'll consider the Sèvres Factory's continuing response to aesthetic and manufacturing innovation, from the post-Second World War years to the recent collaborative and contemporary period. Just as the 20th century began with enthusiasm for the modern avant-garde, Sèvres retained its reputation from the late 1940s to the 1970s as a leader in art and design collaboration, working with and influenced by such figures as Alexander Calder and Serge Poliakoff. In the decades approaching the millennium, Sèvres moved in step with postmodern art and design influences and important new kinds of collaborations were initiated, working with artists and designers including Louise Bourgeois, Ettore Sottsass, Bertrand Lavier, Yayoi Kusama, Michele De Lucchi, and Andrea Branzi. We'll see how building on its centuries' long foundation of tradition and excellence, Sèvres today continues this approach with collaborators such as Les Ateliers Courbet and Scholten & Baijings, together with a number of contemporary artists and designers.

Course Tutor

Elisabeth Bogdan came to London over 30 years ago from Canada to study the History of Design at the Royal College of Art, after working for a number of years in a Toronto auction house. Since then, Lis has taught in the visual arts and on art world practices at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, at Cardiff Institute of Art and Design, Southampton Solent University, Oxford Brookes University, and for the past 17 years, at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. Her specialist teaching extends from 18th century to contemporary European and American design, decorative art and architectural history. Additional to leading the Institute's Decorative Art and Design semester course for almost 10 years, Lis teaches on the MA in Fine and Decorative Arts and Design, for the Institute's Professional Programmes, and has contributed to courses at the V&A. She has published for the Journal of Design History, Phaidon Press and for The Decorative Art Society.

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 Webinar. For more information, including instructions on how to download and use the system, please visit www.zoom.us/support.

Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for all three dates. Ticket holders will be emailed the Zoom link, Webinar ID and Passcode 48 hours in advance of the first course session, which should be retained for accessing all three sessions.

Course Recording

This course will be recorded. Following each session, ticket holders will be emailed a link to view the recording, which will be available for one week only.
