



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Art of Organizing Work: Structures, Procedures, and Economies of Craft Workshops in Early 20th Century

26 and 27 June 2025

VENUE

German Center of art history Paris
DFK Paris, Hôtel Lully
45, rue des Petits-Champs
75001 Paris / France



DEUTSCHES FORUM
FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE
CENTRE ALLEMAND
D'HISTOIRE DE L'ART
PARIS

ZI ZENTRALINSTITUT
FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE


LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

The Art of Organizing Work: Structures, Procedures, and Economies of Craft Workshops in Early 20th Century

How do artists and craftspeople work together? How do these collaborations affect their respective statuses and the value of their products? How are decisions made during the processes of design and execution? What effects do the particular geographical, political and economic conditions have on the production process, reception and marketing of the art objects created?

These are some of the questions the conference will consider in relation to the period starting from the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900, which also took stock of the state of arts and crafts production at that time, until the beginning of the Second World War. This period is characterized by the increasing mechanization and automation of the production processes of arts and crafts objects, with established artists increasingly becoming involved in their manufacture. Discussions on the collaboration between the so-called “fine arts” and craft often revolve around the influence of art on craft. Our focus is on the reciprocity of exchange within this cooperation and the discursive intermingling between these two fields. How is work structured and what kinds of organizational forms are found in different types of workshops? How are these related to artistic demands, or to the use and functions of the manufactured objects?

In many avant-garde movements, the applied arts played an important socio-cultural and political role. The economic side was often ignored however, for the sake of the requisite social interventions. In what ways do economic and political conditions determine the production processes and the cooperation between art and craft? What role do educational ideals and programs play? How does the educational training in workshops differ from that in art academies, beyond the orientation towards sales? What avant-garde practices found their way into the workshops and how does this affect production? And conversely, how does the knowledge of materials, techniques and processes generated in workshops influence forms of artistic expression?

The conference addresses a diverse range of disciplines including art, design and cultural studies, sociology, and in particular organizational sociology, and the economic sciences, and seeks new perspectives on artistic production at the margins of “classical modernism”.

Thursday, June 26, 2025

15:30

Welcome and Introduction

Peter Geimer (DFK Paris)

Léa Kuhn (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte München)

Beate Söntgen (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

Chair: Léa Kuhn (ZI München)

15:45 – 16:30

Sophia Prinz (ZHdK Zürich)

The Beauty of Making. Practices, Materials and Forms in Design Processes

16:30 – 17:15

Jérémie Cerman (Université d'Artois)

“Modern” Decorative Arts in Paris Department Stores:

The La Maîtrise Workshop at Galeries Lafayette

17:15 – 17:45

Coffee break

17:45 – 18:30

Klára Němečková (Kunstgewerbemuseum der
Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

*The Emergence of the Design Profession at the Deutsche
Werkstätten Hellerau*

18:30 – 18:45

Small break

Chair: Timon Beyes (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

18:45 – 19:45

Keynote by **Robin Holt** (University of Bristol)

The Workshop as an Entrepreneurial Venture:

Ethel Mairet, Weaving and the Imperative of Work

19:45

Reception with buffet dinatoire

Friday, June 27, 2025

Chair: Lena Bader (DFK Paris)

10:00 – 10:45

Anaëlle Vaissié (Université Paris-Nanterre)

*Makers, Translators or Designers? Embroiderers and Lacemakers in the France
of the Belle Epoque*

- 10:45 – 11:30** **Melanie Vietmeier** (Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München)
Art and Life intertwined. The Blue Rider's Collective Practices in Reverse Glass Painting and Folk Art
- 11:30 – 12:00** Coffee break
- 12:00 – 12:45** **Petra Lange-Berndt** (Universität Hamburg)
Monte Verità as Craft Workshop: Working on the Body, 1900–1917
- 12:45 – 13:45** Lunch at the DFK Paris
- Chair: Beate Söntgen** (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)
- 13:45 – 14:30** **Jordan Troeller** (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)
The Subversive Stitch of Zurich Dada
- 14:30 – 15:15** **Mirjam Deckers** (University of Groningen)
*Gunta Stölzl & the “Werkstattgedanke”:
Redefining the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop*
- 15:15 – 15:45** Coffee break
- 15:45 – 16:30** **Vendula Hnídková** (Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)
Pavel Janák. A “petit capitaliste” and producer of Czech design
- 16:30 – 17:15** **Vera Wolff** (Universität Zürich/documenta Institut, Kassel)
Transwar Material Aesthetics
- 17:30** End of the conference

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE – CONCEPT

Léa Kuhn (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte München)

Beate Söntgen (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

Image: Anonymus, 'View into the ladies' etching room
in Gallé's glass manufactory in Nancy, ca. 1894–1913, black & white photography

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