Towards a better understanding of French clockmaking heritage : an integrated study of the « pendules de Paris », using restoration processes

Project-based
PHD
2020-2023

Françoise Collanges
CONSERVATION

Conservation consultancy
Cultural heritage management
Horology and dynamic objects

The project

The project focuses on the **conservation-restoration of clockwork mechanisms**, and particularly on **the relationships between conservation practice, historical study and the construction of new knowledge and know-how**, for a body of objects widely represented in French public collections and foreign collections - the clocks called ‘pendules de Paris’.

This PHD aims to provide better theoretical and practical knowledge of objects, in order to **better understand, conserve and restore them**.

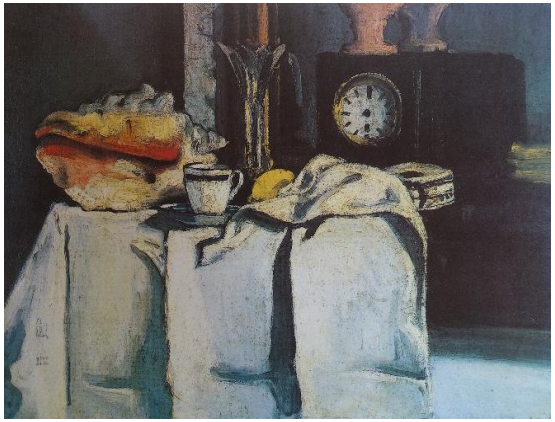
Methodology

From a corpus of French *pendules*, datable between the end of the 18th century and the First World War, the project aims to **develop methods** which will make it possible to simplify and improve the documentation not only of objects but also of actions carried out by conservator-restorers.

It therefore aims to situate **clockmaking** as a fully recognized field in **contemporary conservation-restoration.** It also seeks to further enhance the important contribution of conservator-restorers in developing **historical knowledge** of objects and to make them better understood.

The *pendules de Paris*

This term describes a large part of the French production of mantel clocks, commencing in the masterpieces of clockmakers of the second half of the 18th century and culminating in a fantastic industrial history from the 1820s until the middle of the 20th century.



Today, these clocks constitute **a major part of the French contribution to physical horological heritage worldwide**.

The study of their technical history in the 19th century tells a **story of industrial innovation** (F. Collanges, "The *pendule de Paris, from the workshop to the factory 1800-1910*", in *A General History of Horology*, Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and offers an example of **a breakthrough technology ending in worldwide export** over more than a century**.**

Their conservation brings us to the heart of the manufacturing and repair processes for complex machines.

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The student

Françoise Collanges is a consultant in heritage conservation, specialising in the **history of clockmaking** and **conservation-restoration.**

Her activities range from management of collections to restoration of specific objects. A specialist in preventive conservation and risk management for heritage, she is a trained first aider for items of cultural heritage in any crisis.

Keen on sharing her experience and knowledge, she provides training and teaching in several courses at the Ecole du Louvre (Paris) and West Dean College (UK).

Based in Belgium, she works in several European countries and enjoys a large professional network, which will be a major asset for this project.

She is accreditated for restoration of French Museum collections and a member of the Institute of Conservation, UK, and is a Council Member of the Antiquarian Horological Society, UK.

Conservation-restoration, a practical and scientific discipline

At the crossroads of the world of crafts and heritage sciences, conservation-restoration is based on direct contact with heritage objects.

It offers an approach combining scientific investigation and practical experience of ancient materials to develop sustainable conservation methods and techniques.

Conservation-restoration professionals take a pragmatic and informed look at the objects, for which they propose a treatment in a project approach.

For the clocks considered here, conservation-restoration requires the use of a range of vital mechanical skills and highly specialized knowledge in dealing with the world of engineered and volume produced objects.

A project-based PhD

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS SEINE Humanités Création Patrimoine
ÉCOLE UNIVERSITAIRE DE RECHERCHE

CY Cergy Paris Université and the French Institut du Patrimoine created this PHD to support an academic approach to conservation-restoration that will strongly rely on practical work. This new type of PHD was launched in 2018.

Find out more :

https://www.u-cergy.fr/fr/recherche-et-valorisation/ied/equipe-de-l-eur/doctorat-par-le-projet.html

CERGY PARIS UNIVERSITÉ

inp Institut national du patrimoine

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How to support this project?

The AGORA laboratory at CY Cergy Paris University accepted this doctoral project following a rigorous selection process. Several public collections are ready to facilitate access to their collections to support this work.

However, it will not happen without additional partners. Three to four years of dedicated work involves funding and support.

Two channels are at your disposal:

-Sponsorship

-The CIFRE convention

Sponsorship

Donations can be made generally towards the project, or be linked to a specific aspect of it. Any donations go to the University of Cergy, which ensures their use to fund the doctoral student. Donations are eligible for tax reductions in France of 40 to 60 per cent of the donation. Other jurisdictions may offer similar arrangements.

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The objective is to raise 70,000 to 100,000 Euros in funding for the three years of the doctorate.

Find out more:
https://www.economie.gouv.fr/entreprises/mecenat-dons-entreprise

CIFRE contract

The CIFRE convention associates **three partners** : a company / local authority / association, based in France, a doctoral student, and a research laboratory which supervises the thesis.

The company recruits the student for a 3-year permanent or fixed-term contract for a gross annual salary of €23,484 (€1,957 per month), and entrusts them with research work that is the subject of their thesis. It receives from the National Association for Research and Technology (ANRT) an annual subsidy of €14,000 for 3 years.

The total cost of financing by the company therefore amounts to one third of the contract, a more favourable option than sponsorship, with the guarantee of specific work carried out for the company by a highly qualified doctoral student.

Find out more: (in English) http://www.anrt.asso.fr/fr/cifre-7843

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