

PRESS KIT





Normal Studio, Jean-François Dingjian et Eloi Chafaï ©Morgane Le Gall

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès announces the third biennial Skills Academy, dedicated to artisan skills, expertise and creativity. Meeting every two years, the Academy gathers artisans, designers and engineers for a nine-month programme focusing on a shared exploration of new avenues for innovation in the field of artisan expertise.

Following the first Academy, exploring the world of wood (directed by Patrick Jouin), and the second, centred on the theme of clay and ceramics (directed by Guillaume Bardet), the third edition—in 2017— will be devoted to metal, under guest designers Jean-François Dingjian and Eloi Chafaï of Normal Studio.

The Foundation's Skills Academy programme explores future applications for artisan know-how and expertise, with a two-fold focus on skills transmission and innovation. Academy participants enjoy an unparalleled opportunity to enrich their knowledge through a series of lectures and master classes led by acknowledged experts, followed by an experimental, hands-on workshop exploring current and future practice in their field.

The Academy reflects the Foundation's vocation to accompany artisans, designers and not-for-profit organisations as they explore innovative new skills to transform our world, now and into the future.

METAL: THE THEME FOR THE SKILLS ACADEMY #3

The third Skills Academy will invite twenty professionals —artisans, designers and engineers—to explore the latest innovations and applications of one ancestral raw material: metal.

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AN ACADEMY FOR SKILLS AND KNOW-HOW

THE ACADEMY AIMS TO

- TRANSMIT knowledge and best practice across a range of sectors (design, the applied arts, engineering science) central to the world of artisanship, and its continued relevance in today's society.
- EXPLORE emerging knowledge and expertise by bringing together professionals from a variety of disciplines in the world of artisanship, design and engineering.
- PROMOTE knowledge-sharing and exchange by creating a unique forum for dialogue and mutual inspiration. The Academy promotes excellence, transmission, and shared intelligence.

THE ACADEMICIANS

The Academy is open to around twenty professionals of all ages —artisans, designers, and engineers—currently active in France and neighbouring countries. Ten artisans/master craftspeople, five designers, five engineers. The Academy is aimed at professionals seeking to enhance their training and skills.

The Academy offers its participants unrivalled scope to:

- Enhance their skills and knowledge, and learn new competencies as part of a challenging forum for exchange with leading craftspeople, designers and engineers.
- Examine their own practice in relation to other areas of expertise; discover technical innovations, new concepts and the tools that will shape know-how in tomorrow's world.
- Share knowledge and ideas across disciplines, outside the hierarchies of their professional communities.
- Step out of their comfort zone, find inspiration and take time to examine their own and others' expertise from a new perspective.

A TWO-STEP PROGRAMME

• PHASE 1

January to June 2017:

- lecture series/master classes
- welcome Weekend for participants, in January 2017
- one week-end and four Saturday sessions from February to June 2017, combining lectures and master classes

Locations: Paris, the Paris region and sites across France.

Planning: Morning sessions – lectures/talks.

Afternoons – Master classes (for Academicians only).

Lectures and talks take place in Paris, in association with leading institutions connected to the Skills Academy theme for 2017. The morning lectures are open to members of the public with a particular interest in the Academy's topic (advance booking required). Lecture topics for the third Skills Academy will be announced in December 2016.

• PHASE 2

A seven-day workshop in Summer 2017.

The workshop/master-class takes an experimental approach, applying the skills and knowledge acquired during Phase 1 of the Academy. It will be held at a partner institution connected with the Academy's theme.



APPLICATIONS CALENDAR AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

An information and applications packet is available for download at: www.fondationdentreprisehermes.org

MAY 2 > JULY 10, 2016 (date as postmark):

Call for applications (hard copies only – paper or CD-ROM).

Candidates must submit:

- a cover letter (maximum 2 pages).
- a CV
- a short filmed presentation providing a succinct overview of the candidate's expectations as a Skills Academy participant, their reasons for applying to the third Academy, and their particular interest in the Academy topic (optional maximum length 5 minutes).
- a portfolio of work (optional).

Applications should be mailed to the following address: Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Académie des savoir-faire 24 Faubourg Saint-Honoré 75008 Paris

France

OCTOBER 2016

40 shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview (30-45 minutes per candidate) by a jury headed by guest designers Jean-François Dingjian and/or Eloi Chafaï (Normal Studio).

NOVEMBER 2016

Announcement of the twenty retained candidates.

THE **THEME** FOR THE SKILLS ACADEMY #3

METAL

Continuing the prospective, experimental approach of the first two Academies to their respective topics (wood and clay/ceramics), the third Skills Academy completes this exploration of the three primal, raw materials that have shaped mankind's technical advancement from earliest times to the present.



A DIVERSE ARRAY OF SKILLS...

Wrought iron, casting, campanology, fine metal-working, sheet metal-work, bronze casting, armoury, body-work, chasing, engraving, enamelling, gilding, sculpture, pewter wares... Metalwork encompasses numerous skilled trades in the applied arts, and broader groupings within industry: steel-making, metallurgy, the automobile sector, building and construction, tool-making and machine tools, boiler-making, roofing, bar turning, structural metalwork, soldering, plumbing, and more. Due to the very wide range of activities centred around metal-work in the artisan sector, fine jewellery-making will be reserved for a future, dedicated Academy.

... AND MATERIALS

Reflecting the diversity of skills and trades outlined above, the generic term 'metal' covers a range of materials, functions and applications, from precious to everyday metals, including pure metal ores (iron, copper, gold, silver etc.) and alloys (bronze, brass, cast iron, steel and titanium etc.). Throughout history, mankind has experimented to modify pure metals, enhancing their properties and extending their applications; metal remains the focus of significant research and development initiatives today.

A COMPLEX HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM, A CHALLENGE TO THE MODERN WORLD...

Historically, the skills required for smelting and metal-working were considered the pinnacle of the symbolic hierarchy of manual trades: Hephaestus, the Greek god of what we define today as artisanship, is a blacksmith or goldsmith, like St Eligius (the Christian patron saint of metalworkers and coin collectors). Skilled metalworkers were often singled out as a challenge to authority, and even thought to possess magical powers. Metal working was dangerous, complex and demanded significant energy sources —small wonder its practitioners enjoyed a certain ambivalent mystique. Metal is the raw material of treasure and jewellery, coins, tools and weapons—items of priceless symbolic and practical value.

From the dawn of the Second Industrial Revolution, improved metal alloys opened the way to widespread use of metals – especially steel – in industry and construction. Steel symbolised the triumph of industry: bridges, railways, cars and ships covered the globe, while steel-framed buildings soared skywards to previously unimagined heights. Since the late 20th century, new information and communications technologies have spurred a sharp rise in demand for rare and precious metals, forcing us to re–think their use at a time when our demand for natural resources is faced with very real limitations.



DISCOVER, UNDERSTAND, EXPERIMENT

In choosing this cross-disciplinary theme, the Skills Academy offers professional artisans, designers and engineers an unrivalled opportunity to explore every aspect of this core medium —chemical, physical, economic, symbolic or cultural—in the company of an outstanding group of specialists, with a particular emphasis on ground-breaking, innovative approaches.

For the twenty selected participants, the Skills Academy aims to provide valuable time out from their professional careers, to explore new avenues and approaches, alternative tools and ground-breaking research centred on a material at the core of their day-to-day professional practice.

The Foundation's third Skills Academy features a two-fold programme: a survey of the latest research and expertise on new applications and innovations in the world of metal and its associated materials (talks and lectures with designers, artisans, research scientists and engineers), followed by a practical, experimental, week-long workshop and master-class based on exchange, knowledge-sharing and collaboration between participants from a wide range of professional backgrounds, led by guest designers and programme directors Jean-François Dingjian and Eloi Chafaï (Normal Studio).

The Skills Academy reflects three core concepts underpinning the work of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès: transmission, creativity and sustainability.

THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès supports men and women seeking to learn, perfect, transmit and explore the creative gestures that shape our lives today and into the future. Guided by our central focus on skills and innovation, the Foundation's activities follow two complementary paths: know-how and creativity, know-how and the transmission of skills.

The Foundation develops its own programmes in the contemporary visual arts (exhibitions and artists'residencies), photography (Immersion), performing arts (New Settings), design (the Prix Émile Hermès) and craftsmanship (the Skills Academy), together with international calls for projects promoting biodiversity and solidarity. At the same time, we support the activities of organisations in these areas, around the world.

The Foundation's unique, diverse activities are governed by a single, over-arching belief: *Our gestures define us*.

www.fondationdentreprisehermes.org





Normal Studio, Jean-François Dingjian et Eloi Chafaï ©Morgane Le Gall

'We aim for simplicity. Not because we want specifically to be associated with rudimentary objects, nor because we believe in naturalism or spontaneity. Simplicity means cutting complex forms with a scalpel.' NORMAL STUDIO, alias Jean-François Dingjian and Eloi Chafaï (Designers of the Year at Maison&Objet Now! 2010) are an industrial design agency founded in 2006, specialising in mass-produced consumer items and experimental micro-series, exhibition design, and interiors for showrooms and boutiques.

Normal Studio promotes simple, understated design with an emphasis on everyday, familiar forms —essential, timeless, intuitive objects devoid of superfluous elements, style statements or ornamentation. The pair was artistic directors for Tolix from 2007 to 2013, and collaborate with brands including Tefal, Eno, Schneider Electric, and Ligne Roset. In 2010, their work was the subject of a dedicated exhibition —Normal Studio, design élémentaire—at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. A number of their designs have entered the permanent collections of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and France's Fonds National d'Art Contemporain. They were awarded the VIA Carte Blanche in 2015, and are currently researching the use of random moulds for blown forms, for a lighting collection at CIRVA (France's Centre International de Recherche sur le Verre et les Arts Plastiques). In 2015, the pair were awarded the title of Chevalier in France's Ordre des Arts et Lettres.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DINGJIAN was born in 1966. He graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts in Saint-Étienne in 1993, and immediately founded the design and graphic arts review Azimuts, while at the same time developing a programme on the relationship between design and small and medium-sized businesses, for France's Rhône-Alpes regional council. His project 'Design and Local Knowledge' won the 1996 Agora Design Bursary, achieving widespread recognition for his already distinctive, minimalist work. He won the Prix de la Ville de Paris in 1999, and presented the exhibition Kid's Kreo at Galerie kreo in 2000. Jean-François Dingjian designed the scenography for the exhibition L'Homme Paré at the Arts Décoratifs (Paris) and developed Paysage de Table ('Tablescape'), a research project on porcelain for the CRAFT. He was appointed projects director at ENSCI-Les Ateliers (France's national school of industrial design) in 2005.

ELOI CHAFAÏ was born in Paris in 1979 and came to creative design via street graffiti. This spatial approach, in relation to the built environment, underpinned his growing familiarisation with certain forms of abstraction. He enrolled at ENSCI-Les Ateliers in 1999, and graduated in 2006. In the same year, he won the Grand Jury prize at the first-ever Design Parade at the Villa Noailles (Hyères).

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High-resolution visuals are available for download at: www.fondationdentreprisehermes.org/Phototheque (password on request)

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