

LACUNAE

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM Paris, December 6-8, 2022

Common dictionary definitions of "lacuna" all refer to notions of lack, emptiness, absence, or even failure, deterioration or insufficiency. It is also a deficiency of knowledge in French – we will thus speak of "avoir des lacunes" (having gaps) in a field. This notion is common to many fields, but it is more complex than this list suggests. If it is indeed a lack, it is dynamic and significant. This reality is not simply an absence, but rather a form of negative trace (in the literal or archaeological sense) of what was present or complete and which, for one reason or another, has disappeared in a kind of amputation. Except in the French case of knowledge yet to be acquired, the lacuna poses the question of the origin and nature of what was, as much as of its becoming and of the practices that it calls for: to recover, to restore or not, and in what way. It also leads us to question the way in which this encounter with the lacuna takes place between the present (today's researchers, curators and restorers and artists who are faced with this lack) and the past (yesterday's producers of reality), whether it is distant or very recent. This emptiness questions the theoretical or real completeness, insofar as the lacuna puts this notion into perspective: what is it? What loss does the lacuna signify if it is indeed a lack? Is it the result of a voluntary and conscious action or not? What meaning can be given to it and how can we experience it today?

Moreover, the lacuna is globally apprehended from a negative angle since it is perceived as a loss compared to a totality, imaginary or real, and is inscribed in a fantasy of the full, a myth of an unaltered whole. However, if the world did not contain lacunae created in the course of the very long human history, life would be impossible. Voluntary or involuntary, these lacunae created over time also make today's reality possible. Even on the scale of human existence, the loss of memory linked to a post-traumatic shock is a form of resistance of the individual confronting a past event to allow him to continue to live: the psychic lacuna takes on a saving role. On the other hand, hypermnesia, which leads to forgetting nothing, is, for those who suffer from it, a form of curse that impairs the individual's ability to function. Forgetting is a necessity that liberates. On the scale of men as well as of the world, without lacunae, the clutter of minds or places would make life impossible. The lacuna thus, by its nature, generates a necessary reflection on the time and the places, real as imaginary, in which it is registered.

Finally, although it may seem obvious in the West, the notion of lacuna also has a very strong cultural dimension. It is not perceived in the same way throughout the world, to the point that the word does not exist in certain languages, such as Chinese. In its heritage dimension, the "lacuna" in its primary sense is translated in a different way, in terms as well as in practices: the values attached to this notion and the reactions it provokes vary greatly according to time and place.

This notion of "lacunae" is therefore both a reality of the present and a subject for researchers from a wide variety of backgrounds: archaeologists or archivists who themselves create lacunae in their practice (excavations, sorting, etc.), historians, anthropologists, literary scholars, philosophers, heritage restorers, artists, etc. Each one faces these lacunae, questions them, puts them in perspective, transforms them into explanatory or analytical subjects. Some will try to understand them, to fill them (intellectually or materially), while others will make them an object of creation.

In an indicative way, **three axes** could structure the conference without exhausting the universe of possible questions:

- **The desired lacuna**, as an element of creation, artistic, as an archival practice;
- **The lacuna experienced** as an element of degradation that questions the authenticity of the object, from a cultural and historical perspective that does not apprehend it in the same way according to time and cultural areas;
- **The filling of the lacuna** (what is done with the lacuna; interventions of restoration to fill it).

The Héritages research centre is taking up this notion for its first international and resolutely multidisciplinary conference. It will be held **in Paris from December 6 to 8, 2022, at the Jacqueline Lichtenstein Auditorium, Galerie Vivienne.**

It will combine classical academic presentations, major conferences and round tables, as well as performances by artists or researchers on the theme. Under the aegis of the Scientific Committee, the symposium is organized by Héritages, in partnership with the Institut national du patrimoine.

Anne Lehoërf
University professor,
Member of the Héritages research centre, on behalf of the Scientific Committee

Members of the Scientific Committee:

Julie Amiot-Guillouet (Héritages)
Étienne Anheim (École des hautes études en sciences sociales)
Grégory Delaplace (École pratique des hautes études)
Anne-Julie Etter (Héritages, Fondation des sciences du patrimoine)
Christian Hottin (Institut national du patrimoine)
Nathalie Koble (École normale supérieure)

Chantal Lapeyre (Héritages)
Christine Laurière (Héritages)
Sandie Leconte (Institut national du patrimoine)
Anne Lehoërff (Héritages)
Olivier Zeder (Institut national du patrimoine)

Secretary of the Scientific Committee:

Solène Hazouard (Héritages)

Proposals for papers (20 minutes) should be sent before May 16, 2022 to the following address: aac.colloque.lacunes@gmail.com. They will include a title and an abstract of 1500 characters (spaces included), the indication of the axis chosen among the three proposed, as well as a short bio-bibliographical note of 600 characters (including spaces).

Response of the Scientific Committee and selection of the selected papers: mid-June 2022.