

Call for abstracts

Precious Kitchen – La Chutothèque TALM

■ SYMPOSIUM, THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2025

France, Le Mans (and videoconference)

**Re(chute) : Contribution to a prefiguration of
Subaltern Material Studies in the field of design**

TALM Higher School of Art and Design

TALM Higher School of Art and Design is one of France's largest public teaching institutions for the visual arts. At its three campuses (Tours, Angers and Le Mans), it offers DNA courses in art and design - Diplôme national d'art (equivalent to a bachelor's degree), as well as DNSEP courses - Diplôme national supérieur d'expression plastique (equivalent to a master's degree), enriched by specialities specific to each campus (textile experimentation, digital creation, animated film, sculpture, geo-materials, conservation-restoration, sound design, computational and mechatronic design, Fine art-Architecture-Design, Design and Territories).

Centred on the student's project, the teachers (artists, designers, architects, photographers, video-makers, digital arts specialists, etc.) offer each student the opportunity to experiment with techniques and know-how and to invest in the widest possible range of artistic modes.

The Precious Kitchen - La Chutothèque TALM project

In summer 2022, TALM Higher School of Art and Design won the *Supporting green alternatives* call for projects under the France 2030 programme supported by the French government and managed by the Caisse des dépôts, for the *Precious Kitchen - La Chutothèque TALM* project. The aim of this call for projects is 'to encourage the emergence of more green technical solutions and processes in cultural practices, to enable the widespread use of these solutions and processes, and to promote new, more sustainable uses in the cultural sector'. The *Precious Kitchen - La Chutothèque TALM* project is also supported by several public institutions, including the local authorities that founded TALM Higher School of Art and Design, as Le Mans Métropole, which is making available the studio facilities of the chutothèque, located in the former Maison des quartiers des Maillets, in Le Mans.

Developed in partnership with the *Precious Kitchen* association, this project, which runs

from 2023 to 2026, involves the creation of a technical workshop dedicated to reusing scraps of local industrial and craftspeople to create art and design. Located in Le Mans, the facility will include a materials storage area, an experimental workshop/laboratory and an exhibition space. Unique in France, this workshop is dedicated to experimentation, innovation and creation in the visual arts. It teaches students at TALM-Le Mans how to use local resources to create new forms.

The Chutothèque embodies a circular economy approach to culture by prospecting, transporting and transforming materials that are considered useless and cumbersome. The aim is to reduce the environmental impact of art and design schools, encourage innovative creative approaches and seek post-carbon aesthetic and economic perspectives.

TALM's Chutothèque has a rich annual programme of workshops, events, workshops, exhibitions, educational modules and conferences. The project includes a research dimension that has led the school to develop a state-of-the-art study Reuse and creation, and two open-source digital tools for managing stocks of materials and measuring the environmental impact of the workshop, which will be disseminated in the near future.

This operation is supported by the French government as part of the Supporting Green Alternatives in Culture initiative in the cultural and creative industries sector of France 2030, operated by Caisse des Dépôts.

→ **Description of the project on the TALM website**

→ **Precious Kitchen online platform**

The Subaltern Material Studies

Subaltern Material Studies is an emerging field of research that has yet to be defined, at the crossroads of design, social sciences, environmental history and critical studies. Following on from Subaltern Studies, which in the 1980s proposed to reconfigure the writing of history from the point of view of the dominated, this field aims to examine the material surpluses resulting from the excesses of human production, particularly those generated by the dominant extractivist and productivist regimes. Scrap, waste, offcuts and leftovers become objects of study, no longer as marginal residues, but as indicators of power relations, symbolic orders and forms of material organisation. Their analysis requires close attention to practical situations, documented by in-depth field surveys, to grasp the dynamics of processing, reuse, misappropriation or resistance that they give rise to. In this way, the field aims to unravel the tensions between the passive reconstitution of the existing economic order and the active reconfiguration of imaginaries and practices of “doing with”.

Call for contributions – Symposium

The aim of this study day is to test and raise new questions, through a cross-disciplinary approach, about the Chutothèque as a tried and tested model for a studio for the visual arts and design based on the reuse of industrial and craft scraps. Based on the Chutothèque project - a concrete matter, an emerging practice, a physical space - this collective reflection will seek to extend, shift and enrich the questions that such an approach raises, from the point of view of conception and creation in art and design, as well as the cultural, social, economic and philosophical implications.

The aim is not to comment on or evaluate a particular device, but rather to use the experience of art and design through reused scraps as fertile ground for questioning:

- What happens to creation when it relies on the residual?
- What does waste reveal about our ways of living and producing?
- What are the conditions that make such a shift possible in terms of projects, materials and value?
- How, and under what conditions, do such devices transform our imaginations?

Through communications from researchers in the social sciences and humanities, this study day will bring art and design into dialogue with other forms of knowledge which, each in their own way, have explored the question of the remnant, the residual, the misappropriation, the reuse, the common or the rejected.

RESEARCH AREAS

Contributions may focus on one or more of the following areas of research. It is also possible to propose other research areas in the abstracts.

■ ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Sensitive arrangements and the desirability of scraps

Based on experiments on the perception of non-standard places and materials, this area explores how educational and material environments influence the reception of “non-standard” materials.

Drawing on contributions from environmental psychology, the aim is to examine the way in which spatiality, colours, shapes and contexts draw the outlines of the way we use and imagine abandoned materials.

■ ANTHROPOLOGY OF MATERIALS

Remnants, waste, resources: biographies of materials

Based on ethnographic surveys of salvaged materials (in urban, craft or industrial environments), this area examines the ‘social life’ of objects and materials.

How does a material become waste? How can it be re-circulated, re-purposed and revalued? What social, emotional or symbolic values are attached to it?

An example of a study we will be looking at: re-qualifying materials in informal economies

■ PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND AESTHETICS

The scrap as a resource: towards a thinking of the second gesture

This theme brings together the fields of environmental ethics and critical aesthetics to examine what it means to “give a second life” to a material, and what this implies for our aesthetic and political values.

Can we think of an ethic of “doing with”? What affects, what forms, what narratives emerge from materials that are already there? Is there a specific “beauty” in waste?

■ CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Thinking about the robustness of a design system based on residual flows

Drawing on research into the circular economy, this area looks at the feasibility and viability of systems based on scraps, in conjunction with businesses and institutions.

What logistical, legal and economic models would enable such circulation? Under what conditions does it become structural rather than anecdotal?

Examples of studies called upon: material intermediation platforms, industrial donation systems, re-use conventions.

■ LAW AND POLITICS OF THE COMMONS

Materials to be shared? Towards a scraps legislation

This theme explores the legal and political implications of sharing residual materials: who owns the scraps? Can they be considered as commons? What is the legal framework for passing them on?

Through case studies of collectives, fablabs and third places, the aim is to consider forms of governance of materials, in relation to teaching, production and research.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Symposium languages: French and English
- Talk duration: 20 minutes
- Abstracts must be submitted by **15th September 2025** (in French or English):
 - Title
 - 5 key words
 - Abstract (between 400 and 500 words + bibliography)
- Please send proposals to the following email addresses : **chloe.bousquet@talm.fr** and **service-projets@talm.fr**
- The results of the selection process will be announced by mid-September 2025.
- The cost of travel and accommodation for the speakers will be covered by TALM Higher School of Art and Design, within the limits of the fixed rates in force.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

■ **Miguel Mazeri**

DPLG architect, PhD in social anthropology, EHESS, coordinator of the DNSEP/master Design and Territories at TALM-Le Mans

■ **Ludovic Germain**

Designer, Ensci graduate, TALM-Le Mans teacher

■ **Victoria Kawolh**

Technical manager of La Chutothèque

■ **Chloé Bousquet**

TALM Project Manager