

## Frequently Asked Questions - Ecole Camondo

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### I- **Definition of the school and the professions taught**

#### 1. What courses do you offer?

The school runs two degree courses:

1. the 5-year degree course leading to the qualification of Interior and Product Designer, recognised by France's professional certification body, the Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles (RNCP).
2. the Initiation to Space course, catering to a dual clientele:
  - a one-year foundation course preparing students for admission to public and private schools of art, applied arts and architecture.
  - a refresher course, available as in-house professional training. In this case, the course can be attended either over the whole year or during a 10-week period corresponding to a study theme.

#### 2. What are your specific teaching aims?

- The degree course provides a dual training organised around space (interior design) and the object (product design). This transversal approach is unusual since most schools only offer specialisations after a one or two-year foundation course. Alongside spatial and product design, a variety of other cultural, aesthetic and technical disciplines are taught within a broad-based approach to art in general.
- The Initiation to Space course is a multidisciplinary workshop preparing for specialisation in fields of art and the applied arts.

#### 3. Why choose the Ecole Camondo?

- Our dual degree course in interior and product design develops a full capacity to adapt to constantly evolving professions and a variety of commercial sectors, and facilitates finding employment.
- The Ecole Camondo is recognised by the French Ministry of Education (decree of 27 January 1989) and regularly inspected by it (the school's documentation service and pedagogy, the granting of teaching authorisations and an annual audit of the school's activity). 5-year degree course students are eligible for state grants and scholarships.
- The title of Interior and Product Designer obtained by 5-year degree course graduates is recognised by France's professional certification body, the Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles (RNCP).
- The school is part of Les Arts Décoratifs, a state-approved non-profit-making institution comprising four museums (Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée de la Mode et du Textile, Musée de la Publicité and Musée Camondo) and an excellent decorative arts library. Ecole Camondo students benefit from free and privileged admission to the museum's permanent collections, exhibitions and documentation centres. Since the Musée des Arts Décoratifs' reopening in September 2006, the school's history of design classes are held in the museum itself.

#### 4. What are the school's links with Les Arts Décoratifs?

The Ecole Camondo is a teaching department of Les Arts Décoratifs.

#### 5. What are the school's links with the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs (ENSAD)?

None. We are two completely separate schools. ENSAD is part of the French Ministry of Culture. It provides ten specialisations in the applied arts.

#### 6. Are you an interior decoration school?

There is an important difference between interior *decoration* and the interior *design*. The interior decorator deals solely with decorative effects and finishing. The interior designer can modify spaces under specific conditions (see question 7), and therefore exercises a higher level of responsibility than the interior decorator. The decorator also does not have the designer's level of technical knowledge.

7. What is the difference between *architecture* and *interior design*?

There is a difference of scale: the architect builds; the interior designer intervenes in a space already built or works in collaboration with an architectural team. He is not authorised to sign construction permits and must be advised by an engineer if he modifies a space's structural components (demolishing a load-bearing wall, for example). The scale of his work entails reflection on man as space's constant reference. It prioritises ergonomic problems, detail and finishing and a space's practical uses (the creation of a doorway, for example).

In architecture, technical concerns predominate, whereas in interior design formal considerations come foremost.

8. What is the difference between industrial and product design?

The product design taught at the Ecole Camondo is design related to the components of the domestic interior: furniture, everyday household objects, textiles, etc. This does not include high-tech objects such as telephones and large household appliances.

The Ecole Camondo also teaches urban design: urban furniture, lighting, services studies, etc.

9. Who are your teachers?

They are all professionals recognised in their main fields of activity: architects, interior designers, designers, artists, graphic designers, art historians, communication professionals, philosophers, etc. This diversity reflects the diverse disciplines taught at the Ecole Camondo.

10. Do you run in-house training courses or evening classes?

The Ecole Camondo is an accredited provider of in-house professional training and students attend its Introduction to Space course in this capacity (particularly individual training courses). However, the school does not run specific in-house training courses or evening classes.

11. What professions do you provide training for?

Principally the professions of interior designer and product designer, which are often practiced together, hence our Interior and Product Designer qualification. Our transversal pedagogical approach provides the student with increased job opportunities after graduation. Some graduates become stage designers, event designers and artistic directors. These professions can be practiced on a self-employed basis or as a salaried employee in both the public and private sectors. French employers include the department stores (Printemps, Galeries Lafayette, Bon Marché), multinational groups such as l'Oréal, and state institutions.

12. Do you have a careers service? Does it receive many job offers?

The Ecole Camondo's careers service actively seeks employment for graduates. The service regularly receives offers for long and short-term employment and freelance work.

13. Do Camondo graduates easily find work?

For several years after graduation, graduates often do freelance or salaried work before starting their own design studio, either alone or in partnership.

14. Who are the school's famous graduates?

Philippe Starck, Pierre Paulin, Jean-Michel Wilmotte, Marie-Christine Dorner, Patrick Rubin, Mathilde Brétilot, Patrick Bouchain, Frédérique Valette, Henri Rivière, etc.

15. Is the Ecole Camondo's diploma the equivalent of a master's degree? What does it enable one to do?

The diploma is not recognised as a master's degree, since only national diplomas validated by the Conseil National de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche (CNESER) have this classification. On the other hand, the school's diploma is recognised by France's professional certification body, the RNCP (Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles) as a level I qualification and by the Conseil Français des Architectes d'Intérieur (CFAI).

16. What is work experience equivalency?

This is a means of obtaining all or part of the Ecole Camondo's Interior and Product Designer qualification by other means than study, through the recognition of the equivalency of other experience, particularly professional.

17. Do you practice work experience equivalency?

Yes. After initial vetting of an equivalency request, the candidate produces a dossier with the aid of a rapporteur appointed by the Ecole Camondo, then explains the competencies he has acquired through experience (at least 3 years in interior and product design) to a jury.

18. What disciplines are taught?

The disciplines are grouped into three study units related to:

1°) carrying through an interior design or product design project.

2°) formal and technical experimentation through workshops.

3°) the acquisition of project tools: wide-ranging knowledge and skills including drawing, construction, technology, representation, communication, history, proficiency in English, methodology, contemporary culture, etc.

The initial, 3-year course teaches fundamental skills with a complementary approach, particularly with regard to form-related skills. Project methodology is taught from the 2nd year onwards. The 4th and 5th years focus on the acquisition of autonomy. Students work on an individual basis, but also have the opportunity of group work in workshop situations.

19. What is the proportion of supervised school work and personal work?

Over the 30-week university year, an average of 24 hours of weekly courses and workshops are led by teachers and 20 hours are spent on personal work. Work is intensive, particularly during workshops and when personal projects have to be submitted for evaluation. The school is open for personal work until 11pm daily.

20. Do you have partnerships with companies?

Yes, many, especially from the 3rd year onwards, to immerse students in professional life and to help graduates find work.

Examples:

- Alsace Tôlerie – objects for an online site;
- L'Oréal Professionnel – product promotion and research into new services;
- Jardiland – 'acrobatic plants' and the 'water in gardens' theme;
- Calligaris – small furnitures to be transformed
- Hyatt – hôtel du Louvre réhabilitation

Teams (technical, commercial, communication, design, etc) from partner companies come to the school to propose a specific project to students. The winners of these competitive projects are chosen by a jury of professionals.

21. Do courses include internships in companies?

Yes, a minimum of two compulsory, validated internships at the end of year 3 (2 months) and one at year 4 (4 months). These internships are proposed by the school, which receives more internship offers from companies than requests from students.

22. Do you run international exchanges?

Yes, for a semester and very selectively (a few students during years 3 and 4). We run exchanges with schools who teach the same interior and product design specialisations, in Brussels, Milano, Glasgow (Erasmus+), Montréal and Buenos Aires. Selection criteria for these internships include education level, autonomy and language constraints.

23. What software packages do you teach?

Architectural, graphic design and video software packages are all taught at the Ecole Camondo: Autocad, Cinema 4D, Final Cut, Rhinocéros, Photoshop, Indesign, Illustrator. Mac and PC computers are available.

24. What are the criteria for admission to following years?

Students are evaluated chiefly by continual examination of their coursework. This can take various forms depending on the discipline: drawings, models, formal installations, displays of imagery and plans, dossiers, etc.

25. What is the annual dropout rate?

There is no predetermined rate. Studies are demanding throughout the 5-year degree course and admission to the following year is by no means automatic. Each year, decisions are made concerning students repeating a year or changing stream. In recent years, more than 4 out of 5 students were admitted to the following year, and 60% of students go on to graduate in 5 or 6 years. Students can repeat the 5th year free of charge.

26. What is the academic rating of the 3-year diploma?

The diploma was instated in June 2005. It has no academic accreditation and its future professional recognition will depend on the professional performance of the few students who choose to end their studies at this stage. They usually find work in interior design studios or with manufacturers. Some students may voluntarily decide to change their study specialisation with other professions in mind (graphic design, architecture, etc.). However, the overwhelming majority of students pursue the school's degree course through to graduation.

27. Do you run a refresher course in the applied arts?

The term MANAA refers only to preparatory courses for admission to the Education Nationale's superior schools of art: ENSAAMA-Olivier de Serres, Duperré, Estienne, Boulle, ESAAT at Roubaix and the Lycée La Martinière Terreau at Lyon.

28. Do you run a foundation course or an equivalent of a refresher course?

A "preparatory course for superior schools of art or applied art" is often taken to mean a year of artistic training whose main aim is the acquisition of basic artistic skills, particularly drawing. Several workshops provide this type of tuition in Paris and a list can be provided on request.

Within this type of artistic training, the Introduction to Space course, created in 2002, has two specificities: it caters for a dual clientele and training is partially based on a thematic approach exploring a multiplicity of scales from space to object, rather than an exclusively disciplinary approach.

The course caters for:

- students preparing admission to a school of art, applied art or architecture and wishing to strengthen their understanding of a specialisation in more depth beforehand. Admission to these public or private schools depends on passing a competitive entrance examination or selection process and presupposes a certain maturity, the ability to assert one's personality and specific skills, demonstrated particularly by a personal work portfolio. The Introduction to Space course, focussed on space and the object, enables the acquisition of these different competencies.
- People wishing to enlarge their field of competencies via complementary training in the field of creation. People in employment can attend the course as in-house professional training.

The Introduction to Space course can be attended for the whole year or during a 10-week period devoted to a study theme. The annual 720 hours of courses run from early September to late May. Each week comprises up to 23 hours of classes.

29. What does the Introduction to Space course curriculum include?

The course enables experimentation and acquisition of knowledge and skills via several pedagogical means:

- The drawing classes, the indispensable tool for representing and developing an idea: graphic techniques, materials and formats, etc.
- courses in the history of the decorative arts based on selected iconography and commentaries,
- thematic workshops providing frameworks for cultural discovery and formal experimentation: colour, volume, models, representation, photography, etc.
- a 'free' workshop, in which students can pursue and develop a personal interest of their choice,
- an end-of-year module focussing on the preparation of a work portfolio and its oral presentation.
- interventions by specialists and visits related to the thematic workshop in progress.

**Two study themes**

Thematic workshops explore multidisciplinary approaches to experimentation with space and the object in all their complexity and richness. The fine and applied arts, literature, film, theatre and music all play their part in our understanding of our sensibility and the development of the imagination.

1st semester/ Personal Space and daily practices: the body, sensation, perception, movement :

Our discovery of our environment is based on our perceptive awareness. The different ways of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and feeling shape our idea of the world from our 'intimate' to our 'social' body, from room to house, to street and district.

2<sup>nd</sup> semester/ from life at home to urban environment :

Our gestures, objects and rituals measure and determine our domestic environment

Theme 3/ Urban Environment: strata and transversalities.

The urban environment is the result of a gradual, stratified maturation. Throughout the world, it is the field of intervention and experience for diverse professions with convergent skills (architects, geographers, landscape designers, engineers, artists, filmmakers, poets) using their specific techniques, tools and vocabularies.

30. How is one admitted to the Introduction to Space course?

An admission test: on two recto-verso A4 sheets, candidates express as they wish (writings, drawings, photos, etc.), the personal reasons for their interest in the fine and applied arts and send this to the Ecole Camondo between 15 January and 1st June.

31. How many students attend the Introduction to Space course?

In 2014/2015, 36 students attended this course

32. Do Introduction to Space course students benefit from French national health coverage and student grants?

The Introduction to Space course is recognised as a university course and entitles one to student status (access to the CROUS university services), but does not provide eligibility to state scholarships and grants (which the 5-year degree course does).

33. What can one do after the Introduction to Space course year?

Successful completion of the Introduction to Space results neither in a diploma nor university equivalency but all students go on to pursue further studies.

34. Do Introduction to Space course students take the competitive entrance examination for the Ecole Camondo degree course?

Yes, the Introduction to Space course is a training course completely independent to the degree course, and prepares students for study in other fields.

35. What can one do after the Introduction to Space course?

Around one third of students go on to attend schools of interior design or product design. Others pursue studies in other fields such as architecture, window dressing, textiles, fashion, graphic design, fine art, strip cartoons, etc.

36. Does one have to have the baccalauréat or equivalent to attend the Introduction to Space course?

The baccalaureat or equivalent is required.

**The competitive entrance examination for the degree course**

37. Does one have to attend a foundation course in order to pass the competitive entrance examination for the Ecole de Camondo degree course? If so, which one?

A foundation course is highly recommended since the examination requires a certain level of artistic competency and in the oral interview candidates have to present a personal work portfolio difficult to constitute alone. Artistic competency is only one of the elements evaluated by the jury. Personal motivations and artistic ambitions are also taken into account. Students who have just passed the baccalauréat exam are rarely admitted. Those who are admitted must have benefited from prior knowledge of an artistic milieu and drawing classes (either in their lycée or in extra-curricular classes such as those run by the Ateliers du Carrousel during the school year or holiday periods, and only if they have a very high level of proficiency. The Ateliers du Carrousel, like the Ecole Camondo, is part of Les Arts Décoratifs.

38. Who can enter the competitive entrance examination?

In 2008, the baccalauréat or equivalent is required. Exceptions to this rule may be consented by a commission and on the basis of the personal experience already acquired by candidates. Students educated abroad must have a recognised baccalauréat equivalent and excellent command of written and spoken French.

39. Does the Introduction to Space course facilitate admission to the degree course?

The Introduction to Space course is not a specific foundation course preparing admission to the Ecole Camondo's degree course. Its field of investigation is broader than space and the object, and it also prepares for further education in the fine arts, architecture, graphic design, textiles and strip cartoons, etc.

40. Is there an age limit?

No, unlike admission to public schools.

41. How can one gain admission to a year higher than first through transfer of study credits?

One is required to pass the competitive entrance examination (commun exam for all candidates). The Ecole Camondo jury decide at which level each candidate is allowed to enter, according to his/her previous curriculum.

42. When does one take the competitive entrance examination?

In May 2015

43. What does the competitive entrance examination comprise?

It comprises 2 phases.

- Three examinations (on May, Saturday 9th ):

- A written examination (commentary on a text, photograph or work, etc.),

- A drawing,

- A three-dimensional object (production of a model).

Examples of subjects: written commentaries of a visual document (a postcard of the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris) and an imaginary description of what is 'outside the frame', preparatory sketches and construction of a corresponding three dimensional model.

- One week later, a 20-minute interview with a jury of Ecole Camondo teachers (discussion of the candidate's personal motivations and presentation of a personal work portfolio).

44. What is the examination's success rate?

About 60 students are admitted to to the first year. Due to the increasing number of candidates, the examination is more competitive. The success rate in 2014 was 40%.

45. Are French students eligible for a state grant or scholarship?

Yes for the degree course, but not for the Introduction to Space course. Grant requests are made individually by Internet (there is no longer a 'paper' application form) before April, therefore before the entrance examination.

46. What are the tuition fees?

- 7,565 € per year for the degree course (+ 220 € registration fee for the first year).
- 5,400 € per year for the Introduction to Space course (+ 300 € registration fee)

Payment can be spread out.

47. Are scholarship students entitled to reduced tuition fees?

As the school does not receive state funding it is self-financed, from tuition fees and the apprenticeship tax. The school private donation funds may enable a reduced payment of tuition fees for certain students experiencing financial difficulties. A social commission meets in June, immediately after the competitive entrance examination, and makes all decisions concerning those reductions.

48. Are your students entitled to student national health coverage?

Yes, for the degree course and the Introduction to Space course.

49. Do you have an in-house cafeteria?

Not a specific one but students have access to the cafeteria of the Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture and to the CROUS university restaurants.

50. How can I find accommodation in Paris? Does the school provide accommodation?

The school does not provide accommodation and has no allocated rooms in university residences. The list of CROUS university residences is provided.

51. What materials and service expenses (prints, etc.) should one budget for in addition to tuition fees?

This varies greatly from student to student. Basic equipment has to be acquired during the first year, and kept throughout the degree course. Some students evaluate expenses at around 100 € per month (materials, prints, etc.). The students' office sometimes buys in bulk to obtain discounts.

52. Does one have to have a laptop?

This is not obligatory but advisable, especially from the 2nd year of the degree course onwards.