

## Early Career Research Profiles

This profile series on young members of INHIGEO is to create a space where early career scholars can present their studies and research interests within the history of the geological sciences to the whole membership and anyone who receives the newsletter, in order to highlight their field of expertise. It is hoped this will lead to contacts and collaborations for the future through our extensive network. Our first profile is on a recent PhD graduate from France.

**Name:** Maddalena Napolitani

**Studies:** PhD in history and theories of arts, research unit SACRe-*Sciences Arts Création Recherche*, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 2020.

**Award:** Prize of the Società Geologica Italiana “Premio Quintino Sella per la storia delle geoscienze” for the article *Born with the taste for sciences and the arts. The science and the aesthetics of Balthazar Georges’ Sage mineralogy collections (1783-1825)*”, *Centaurus*, volume 60, n° 4, 2019, p. 238-256, awarded in 2020.



**Title of PhD:** *The Nation’s Stones. The mineralogy collections of the Parisian École des Mines (1760-1825).*

As part of my dissertation, I studied these collections using an interdisciplinary approach, questioning the visual and material culture of the time related to minerals and Earth sciences. I also investigated the changes within scientific collecting practices between the Ancien Régime and the Restoration periods, and especially the notion of “national soil” related to minerals, which becomes a powerful means for building the new State and its monuments (My dissertation has been accepted by an editor for publication as a book in 2022).

**Research interests:** From the painted decoration of the *École des Mines* (1850s), mostly representing geological landscapes, I am currently interested in the production of a new visual culture related to Earth sciences during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the frame of their wide dissemination. Paintings, but also books’ illustrations and exhibitions in World’s fairs, witness a new aesthetic approach to Earth sciences and new political and economic issues embodied in such representations.



Fig. Claude Hugard de la Tour, *La Mer de glace*, 1862, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Chambéry. Photo credits: Musées de Chambéry - Didier GOURBIN

### Publications:

M. Napolitani, *L’expédition en Sibérie de Jean Pierre Alibert: un homme de la Renaissance au XIXe siècle*, working papers of the research unit LUHCIE, Université de Grenoble Alpes, 2020, online cf. <https://luhcie.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/type-publication/working-papers>

M. Napolitani, “Viaggio al centro della Terra: gli allestimenti immersivi degli ingegneri dell’École des Mines di Parigi, dalle pitture ai diorami (XIX-XX secolo)”, in J. Arnaldo, S. Costa, D. Poulot et A. Rosellini (dir.), *Ambiances. Esperienze immersive nell’arte e al museo*, Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2021, p. 179-192.

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