SYMBIOSIS 2025

Envisioning Natural Histories

November 3–7, 2025
Vienna, Salzburg and Innsbruck
Austria

naturhistorisches museum wien nhm

MUSEUM FÜR NATUR & TECHNIK HAUS DER NATUR SALZBURG

WISSENSCHAFT W&K KUNST

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Cover: Wolfgang Grassberger, 1952, From the Realm of Our Work, 400 × 180 cm (Haus der Natur, Repro: H. Auer) Commissioned by E. P. Tratz, founder of the Haus der Natur, this painting depicts different ways how a museum visualizes natural histories. Ignorant of his and the museum's role during the Nazi-regime, the picture is also testimony of Tratz's urge for permanent self-expression – he can be seen three times in the surroundings of "his" museum.

SYMBIOSIS 2025

Envisioning Natural Histories

Natural history museums are institutions where histories of nature are constructed and communicated. Since their inception, museums have employed artistic means to create compelling visual representations of nature and its history in visitors' minds. These representations have evolved over time, reflecting different institutional approaches that range from emphasizing 'pure science' to engaging in the popularization of knowledge. By rendering the invisible visible, art not only enhances scientific communication but also challenges established visualizations of natural history.

In November 2025 the **Haus der Natur**, together with the **Natural History Museum Vienna** (NHMW) and the Inter-University Organization **Arts & Knowledges** (University of Salzburg, Mozarteum University), organised a Symbiosis Conference entitled 'Envisioning Natural Histories'. The aim was to create an opportunity to engage with different historical and contemporary perspectives on the subject and to explore the epistemological potential of artistic imagery in a museumx context, deepening our understanding of the relationship between art and science in shaping natural histories.

SYMBIOSIS is an interdisciplinary network that aims to shed light on the interaction between the arts/humanities and natural history museums and collections. It was founded by researchers from the **University of Birmingham** (UK) and **Mount Allison University** in Canada, as well as museum experts from the **Museum für Naturkunde Berlin**, the **Natural History Museum in Vienna,** the **Oxford University Museum of Natural History** and the **Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto**.

Find out more about SYMBIOSIS:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/symbiosis

SYMBIOSIS 2025

The Conference Programme

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Monday, 3 Nov. 2025 (Vienna)

Envisioning Natural Histories

Venue: **NHM Vienna, Lecture Hall**

13:00–13:20 · **Conference Opening, Welcome Addresses & Organizational Remarks**
Katrin Vohland · Robert Lindner · John Holmes · Pia Schölnberger

Evolution, Mythology, Hybridity in Science and the Arts

p. 7

Venue: **NHM Vienna, Lecture Hall**
Panel 01 Chair: **Achim Saupe**

13:30 · **Werner Michler** · **Natural History, Evolution, Literature:** Some Views from Austria

14:15 · **Further discussion & Coffee & Tea Break**
Info-Table: **Mythical creatures in the Libraries and Archive** with **Sarah Fiedler**, **Leah Karas**, **Mario-Dominik Riedl** and **Jana Schamall**

14:45 · **John Holmes** · **The Protean World of Erasmus Darwin:** Mythology, Epic Poetry and the Origins of Evolutionary Theory

15:05 · **Billie Gavurin** · **Creatures approaching man:** Darwinism and the Mythic Hybrid at the *Fin de Siècle*

15:25 · **Isabel Davis** · **Jenny the Talking Fish:** Monsters, Myth and the Imprinted Imagination

15:45–16:15 · **Further disc. & Coffee & Tea Break**

Shapeshifting and Reworlding: On Mixed Forms and Meanings

p. 11

Venue: **NHM Vienna, Lecture Hall**
Panel 02 Chair: **Andreas Kroh**

16:15 · **Academic and artistic dialogue**
Anna Pasco Bolta, **Janine Rogers** and **Cody Barton**

17:00 · **Guided tours to the roof of the museum**
Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel, **Leah Karas**, **Mario-Dominik Riedl**

Evening Event

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Venue: **NHM Vienna, Hall X / Dinosaur Hall**

18:30 · **"Eat and Be Eaten"** Artistic intervention by **Anna Pasco Bolta** · **"Poetic & Musical Metamorphosis"** poetry by **Brigitta Schmid** and music by **Irmi Wolvin**

20:00–21:00 **Finger food & chill out**

Tuesday, 4 Nov. 2025 (Vienna)

Revisioning Natural Histories (I): Invisible Women in Natural History

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Panel 03 — Venue: **NHM Vienna, Lecture Hall** — Chair: **Anita Hermannstädter**

9:00 · **Laurence Talairach** · **Drawn from nature':** Jemima Blackburn's Self-Portraits and the Construction of a Female Scientific Self

9:20 · **Luisa Kapp** · **From Recovery to Reframing:** Women's Hidden Histories at Senckenberg Nature Research

9:40 · **Sabine von Mering** · **Hidden in Plain Sight –** Identifying and Acknowledging Women in Natural History

10:00 · **Rachel Parle** · **Monumental Figures –** A 21st Century Response to Victorian Statues

10:20–11:00 · **Discussion & Coffee & Tea Break**

Revisioning Natural Histories (II): Revisioning Prehistory

p. 17

Panel 04 — Venue: **NHM Vienna, Lecture Hall** — Chair: **Karina Grömer**

11:00 · **Katharina Reblay-Salisbury** · **PreHERstory:** Women's Lives in Prehistory through the Lens of Archaeological Science

11:45 · **Discussion** – Venue: Hall XVI

12:00 · **Caroline Posch**, **Mathias Harzhauser**, **Julia Landsiedl** and **Georg Schuberth** · **Re/Envisioning Prehistoric Times:** The New Ice-Age-Children's Hall, Curatorial and Artistic Strategies

13:00–14:30 · **Lunch Break**

Revisioning Natural Histories (III): Uncomfortable Pasts & Possible Futures

p. 19

Panel 05 — Venue: **DECK 50** — Chair: **Jasmin Spreer**

14:30 · **Liz Hide** · **Telling Uncomfortable Stories:** Dykes, Dinosaurs and Charles Darwin in the Sedgwick Museum

14:50 · **Anton Zwischenberger** · **Natural Histories Reloaded:** New Forms of Presenting History in Digital Realities

15:10 · **Katrin Vohland** and **Iris Ott** · **Envisioning Possible Futures for the Natural History Museum Vienna**

15:30–17:00 · **Further Discussion and independent visit of the museum**

17:15 · **Departure to Westbahnhof** (Railway station) Train to Salzburg: **6:08-8:38 pm** Westbahn 968, Wien–Salzburg

Wednesday, 5 Nov. 2025 (Salzburg)

Envisioning Natural Histories

Venue: Haus der Natur, Lecture hall

9:00-9:15 · **Welcome Address and Organizational Remarks**
Robert Lindner

Natural History Museums Past, Present and Future

p. 22

Panel 06 — Venue: **Haus der Natur, Lecture Hall** — Chair: **John Holmes**

9:15 · **Jack Ashby** · **Nature's Memory:** Behind the Scenes at the World's Natural History Museums

10:00 · **Paul Smith** · **Natural History Museums as Repositories of Scientific Memory**

11:00 · **Coffee & Tea Break**

11:30 · **Robert Lindner** · **A Museum for Everyone –** 101 Years Haus der Natur

12:00 · **Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel** **Visualising Historicity** – Natural History Museums as Built "Timescapes"

12:45 · **Lunch** (Catering at Haus der Natur)

Illustrating Natural Histories Art meets Science

p. 26

Panel 07 — Venue: **Haus der Natur, Lecture Hall** — Chair: **Janine Rogers**

13:45 · **Hans Walter Lack** · **The Münch-Bellinghausen Collection of Botanical Illustrations in the Haus der Natur, Salzburg**

14:15 · **Kurt Chytil** · **Paul Pfurtscheller, a Biologist and Teacher between Science and Art**

14:45 · **Christoph von Hagke** · **Analog Processes in Geology and Art**

15:15–15:45 · **Coffee & Tea Break**

16:00–17:30 · **Robert Lindner** and **Barbara Loidl** · **Guided tour to the exhibitions**

Evening Event

p. 29

Visit to the print workshop "Grafische Werkstatt"

17:30 · Walk through the old town of Salzburg to "Grafische Werkstatt"

18:00 · Visit to the print workshop "Grafische Werkstatt": Martin Gredler · Printing from Copperplate and Stones · Kamile Jadevičiūtė · Following the Stones. From Stone to Print

20:00 · **Joint Dinner at a nearby restaurant**

Thursday, 6 Nov. 2025 (Salzburg)

Contested Images *p. 31*
Decolonising Natural History

Venue: **Haus der Natur, Lecture Hall**
Panel 08 Chair: **Robert Lindner**

9:00 · Laurin Blecha · Salzburg Beyond the Alps: Colonial Entanglements and Decolonial Reflections

9:15 · Jack Ashby · Giving Credit and Acknowledging Violence: Telling Honest Stories about Natural History Collections

9:30 · Benjamin Pollitt · Timelines and Haloes: The Case for Indian Natural History Artists in Early Sydney Cove

9:45 · Sabine Eggers · Tsantsa Realities: Fakes, Trades, Myths and Arts

10:00 · Discussion, World Café (Coffee & Tea)

11:30 · Lunch (Catering at Haus der Natur)

12:30–13:00 · Walk through the old town of Salzburg to the Archabbey of St. Peter

Telling Natural histories *p. 34*

Venue: **Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg**
Panel 09 Chair: **Romana Sammern**

13:00 · Wolfgang Wanko · The „Kunst- und Wunderkammer" (Chamber of Art and Wonders) – History and Change

13:30 · Eva-Maria Troelenberg and **Matthias Bruhn Art/Nature:** Making Natural Histories

15:00 · Coffee & Tea Break (Romanesque Hall of St. Peter)

16:00 · Sonja Führer · Guided tour to the historical library of St. Peter

16:30 · Norbert Urban · Guided tour to the mineralogical collection of St. Peter

(Story)Telling Natural Histories *p. 36*

Venue: **Haus der Natur, Dinosaur Hall**
Artistic Lecture Chair: **Werner Michler**

18:00–19:30 · Artistic Lecture:
"Poetry, naturally?"
by **Mara-Daria Cojocaru** and **Jan Wagner**

After that Conference Dinner
(Haus der Natur, Dinosaur Hall)

Friday, 7 Nov. 2025 (Innsbruck)

Salzburg–Innsbruck
8:45 · Meeting point: Salzburg Main Station
Train to Innsbruck: 8:58–10:44 RJX 660,
11:04 · Bus to Ambras (Travel time approx. 0:15)

Schloss Ambras *p. 37*
The First Museum in the World

Guided tour Venue: **Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck**

11:30 · Katharina Seidl
Guided tour through Schloss Ambras (self-description: the first museum in the world that is still found in the same place it was established, 1564)

After that Refreshments (Curtesy of Schloss Ambras)

ca. 14:00 · End of SYMBIOSIS 2025

Trains back to Salzburg:

14:16–16:03 pm
RJX 565, Innsbruck–Salzburg
> continues to Vienna (arrival time 6:32 pm)

15:14–17:02 pm
RJX 869, Innsbruck–Salzburg
> continues to Vienna (arrival time 7:32 pm)

16:16–18:03 pm
RJX 567, Innsbruck–Salzburg
> continues to Vienna (arrival time 8:32 pm)

Evolution, Mythology, Hybridity in Science and the Arts

Panel 01

Chair: **Achim Saupe**
Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

Panel 01 · MON 3 NOV 2025 · 13:30

Werner Michler University of Salzburg

Natural History, Evolution, Literature: Some Views from Austria

Mr. Darwin could consider himself fortunate to be a "British subject" and "not a native of Austria, Naples, or Rome," according to Charles Dickens' magazine "All the Year Round" on the occasion of Darwin's "Origin of Species". Looking at the enthusiastic reception of the theory of evolution among Austrian intellectuals, Austrian citizenship would certainly not have been a great misfortune. The theory of evolution boosted the rise of political and cultural liberalism and provided its proponents, especially literary authors, with keywords and concepts, but also with new versions of images, narratives, and plots, which literature then fed back into cultural discourse. The lecture deals with literature and evolution in Austria in the "long" 19th century, with a few excursions into contemporary literature.

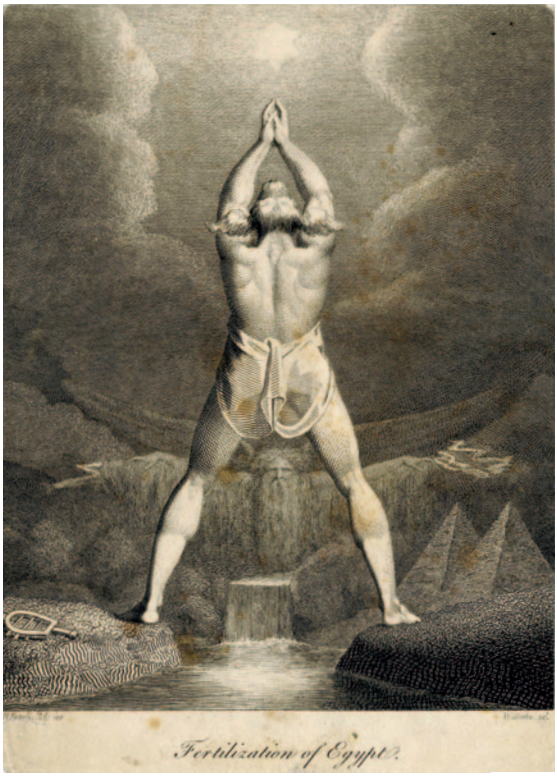
Panel 01 · MON 3 NOV 2025 · 14:45

John Holmes University of Birmingham

The Protean World of Erasmus Darwin: Mythology, Epic Poetry and the Origins of Evolutionary Theory

The first book to set out a comprehensive account of biological evolution in English was published in 1803. Written by Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin, it was called *The Temple of Nature; or, The Origin of Society*. Darwin had been working privately on this theory of evolution since around 1770. He proposed it publicly in one chapter of his multi-volume biological and medical textbook *Zoonomia* in 1794, but to write a thorough account of its processes and implications he turned to a very different genre. *The Temple of Nature* was written as a didactic epic poem, modelled on Lucretius and Ovid, and accompanied by copious scholarly and scientific notes. It was a form Darwin had used to popular acclaim in two earlier poems, *The Loves of the Plants* (1789) and *The Economy of Vegetation* (1791), which were written alongside *Zoonomia* and together made up a single work called *The Botanic Garden*.

In this talk I will examine the relationship between poetry and science in Darwin's thought and work. For Darwin, poetry is not simply a means to make science attractive or to sugar the pill of a controversial theory. It comes to constitute his scientific theory itself. Darwin considered myths to be allegorical representations of ancient science, so mythic poems like Homer's *Odyssey* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were repositories of knowledge and understanding that modern science seemed to be increasingly corroborating. Homer's characterisation of the sea-god Proteus and the all-pervading metamorphoses of Ovid's poem become for Darwin emblematic of a living world that is continually in flux and of living forms that are always liable to transformation. At the same time, epic similes and the tendency to parallelism inherent in the heroic couple enabled Darwin to recognise affinities between animals and plants, while the freedom that poets such as Lucretius and Milton had to interrogate imaginatively the origins of life gave him license to imagine for himself our own origins in and kinship with microscopic organisms.



Emma Crewe, 'Flora at Play with Cupid',
from The Loves of the Plants
Wellcome Collection gallery (2018-03-29):
https://wellcomecollection.org/works/bm4ke39r
CC-BY-4.0 – CC BY 4.0

In addition to discussing Darwin's poems themselves, I will consider the role played by their illustrations in helping to capture Darwin's evolutionary vision. While *The Botanic Garden* was illustrated with botanical drawings and images taken from classical cameos, it also saw Darwin and his publisher initiating a collaboration with allegorical and mythological artists including Henry Fuseli, William Blake and Emma Crewe. By looking at a selection of these images, it is possible to see how they inflect and celebrate not only Darwin's poetry but also his scientific worldview.

Billie Gavurin University of Birmingham

Creatures approaching man: Darwinism and the Mythic Hybrid at the *Fin de Siècle*

This talk examines the close relationship that existed between myth and evolutionary science during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The influence of scientific thought on nineteenth-century mythography is well known: myth scholars including Friedrich Max Müller, Edward Burnett Tylor, and James Frazer liberally employ the language and imagery of contemporary geology and palaeontology in their writings on ancient belief systems. Myths are figured as fossils or geological strata, through whose examination the past development of cultures and beliefs may be charted.

I will suggest that evolutionary literature of the late nineteenth century was, in turn, deeply influenced by ancient myth. The status of myths as hereditary narratives, handed down to us from earlier societies, links them with the idea of evolutionary adaptation through inheritance, while questions of growth and transformation are central to both myth and evolutionary theory. Both hostile and approving nineteenth-century responses to evolutionary theory frequently draw attention to perceived connections between this new hypothesis and ancient mythology: Darwinism, with its emphasis on species alteration, is likened to Ovid's tales of metamorphosis, while the scientist himself is depicted in satirical cartoons as a mythic form – a human-ape hybrid.

An 1874 cartoon from the magazine *Figaro* depicting Darwin as an ape-human hybrid

The final portion of the talk will focus specifically on such hybrid figures, arguing that the reciprocally close ties between mythography and evolutionary science at this time set the stage for the classical mythic hybrid to become an unlikely embodiment of Darwinian anxieties and fantasies at the *fin de siècle*.

Isabel Davis Natural History Museum, London

Jenny the Talking Fish: Monsters, Myth and the Imprinted Imagination

In 1859 or 1860 the obstetrician Alfred Meadows (1833–87) attended to 36-year-old Mrs R who was in labour at seven months' gestation. Mrs R's pre-term child was born with developmental differences so profound that it lived for less than an hour. Meadows asks Mrs R about what she thinks has happened. She puts the baby's unusual physiology down to her 'very great affection' for the 'talking fish', a performing seal affectionately named Jenny, which was then being displayed in London's Piccadilly.

The bones of the talking fish – a male monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) – are now in the research collections at the Natural History Museum, London. This paper explores Mrs R's self-reported maternal impression, considering how it might fit (or not) with shifting ideas of evolution. It also discusses the transference of Mrs R's dead child into its medical research context, comparing it to the British Museum's acquisition of the seal specimen after its death in 1863. The sorting mechanisms that governed these material transfers also distanced lay people, women like Mrs R, from professionals like medic Alfred Meadows and, at the British Museum, Richard Owen and John Edward Grey. Print culture and museum display shaped Mrs R's access to knowledge, and what content was considered acceptable in both precincts was changing.

Now, museums are seeking to reconnect collections with their publics, and, at the same time, natural science collections are urging a greater human connectedness to nature. Further, to ground people in their place in evolutionary history and deep time is another challenge again. What 'connectedness' means precisely and how it should be achieved, either in relation to museum collections, nature or time, is harder to articulate. Questions of taste and tolerance and attitudes to bereavement and death, will set the limits on whether and how fully those connections can be made. If reconnection is the aim, then Mrs R's case is worth considering, sitting the juncture when people, nature, understandings of time and collections were apparently coming apart.

'The Performing Fish',
The Illustrated London News,
Saturday May 28th 1859,
p. 516. Picture No 14151532
© Illustrated London News Ltd/Mary Evans

Shapeshifting and Reworlding:
On Mixed Forms and Meanings

Panel 02

Chair: **Andreas Kroh**
Natural History Museum Vienna

Panel 02 · MON 3 NOV 2025 · 16:15

Anna Pasco Bolta Independent artist and researcher
Janine Rogers and **Cody Barton** Mount Allison University

Academic and Artistic Dialogue

In this presentation we will explore the possibilities of mixed forms in artistic, academic, and visitor/outreach experiences of natural history museums, and consider how concepts of hybridity, transition, and shapeshifting can create a "reworlding" approach to knowledge-making. We look at the potential for representative thinking as a resource for understanding natural history.

Forms of representation are not mere reflections of reality but living processes that shape how worlds are thought, perceived, and inhabited. They transform, overflow, and contaminate one another, generating new meanings in the process. Rather than remaining stable, they are inscribed in flows of memory, materiality, and temporality that render them porous to everything surrounding them. What emerges is not the opposition of fixed categories, but a fabric of relations where meanings, bodies, histories, and landscapes are continuously reshaped.

Approaching this process from different contexts, the three presenters will discuss how concepts of natural history may cease to be conceived as an ordered archive of objects and instead unfolds as a web of transformations, where what has been excluded or overlooked may come into existence. Pasco Bolta will lay the conceptual groundwork for this way of thinking from the perspective of an artistic creator, Rogers will show the intellectual history of such thinking practices, and Barton will discuss the experience of the museum visitor in spaces of mixed meaning and transformation. The panel as a whole will explore how interdisciplinarity is an approach in natural history museums that itself is a form of shapeshifting or hybridity with positive impacts on museum workers and visitors.

A natural history museum, seen in this way, can be understood as a superorganism: a continuously adapting constellation where specimens, knowledge, stories, and practices modify one another and generate new modes of relation. The museum then emerges as a porous space, perhaps open to contamination and frictions, yet receptive to forms of knowledge that arise from interaction and shared transformation.

Artistic Intervention

Brigitta Schmid (Poetry), **Irmi Wolvin** (Cello)

"Poetic & Musical Metamorphosis"

Anna Pasco Bolta Independent artist and researcher

"Eat and Being Eaten"

"Eat and Be Eaten" is a performance based on the symbiotic relationship known as endosymbiosis – the intimate and evolutionary connection between the bacteria in the human gut and our bodies, mediated by food. Through a sensory and aesthetic experience that interweaves tasting, poetry, storytelling, music and a series of interactive sculptures, the work invites us to traverse different levels of perception and scales: from the microbial, in which we become aware of the invisible life that metabolises our food, to the geological, using concepts such as deep time, the deep time of the Earth.

The performance is presented in the Dinosaur Hall of the Natural History Museum Vienna – a space permeated by material traces of extinct life forms. Amongst the fossils, which stand as tangible evidence of extinctions and profound transformations in the history of the Earth, the work unfolds an embodied narrative about the interdependence of all life.

Eating and being eaten links biological, temporal and affective levels to show how our most everyday practices – such as eating – connect us to long-term evolutionary, ecological and symbiotic processes. Within the framework of the Envisioning Natural Histories congress, the work is intended as a proposal to rethink museum narratives – from a situated sensibility that understands the body as a place of knowledge and art as a medium for developing new perspectives on natural history.

© Sima Dehgani

Performative artwork "Eat and Being Eaten" of Anna Pasco Bolta, 2024.

Instead of illustrating the visible, the performance makes the intimate and invisible visible: symbiosis as a life-giving principle, metamorphosis as a constant of time, and natural history as a continuous web of relationships, memories and transformations.

Panel 03 · TUE 4 NOV 2025 · 9:00

Laurence Talairach
Alexandre-Koyré Center|/University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès

Drawn from nature: Jemima Blackburn's Self-Portraits and the Construction of a Female Scientific Self

Throughout the nineteenth century, British women had limited, if any, access to scientific institutions. While many of them took an active part in the making of natural history, their scientific work was generally carried out behind the scenes, their contributions remaining invisible in histories of natural history. Seen as assistants to a husband, father or brother, they have been defined observers rather than interpreters of science, 'gatherers' rather than 'namers', or 'cultivators of science'.

This paper focuses on the case of Victorian artist and ornithologist Jemima Blackburn (1823–1909). Both woman, visual artist and naturalist, Blackburn received lessons by Edwin Landseer, drew the animals at the London Zoological Gardens and often visited the British Museum. She also knew renowned Victorian naturalists like Richard Owen, and corresponded with men of science and natural history illustrators. As this paper will argue, while drawing animals 'from nature', Blackburn frequently captured her own fieldwork as an ornithologist. By analysing Blackburn's self-portraits, this paper will show how the visual artist shaped a scientific *persona* which enabled her to carve a place for herself and assert her own authority in the field. Drawing upon Barbara T. Gates's study of women's self-effacement strategies, I will therefore explore Blackburn's presentation of herself as a woman, artist and ornithologist, and point out how the scientific *persona* she devised for herself conflated scientific observation, objectivity and genteel femininity.

Jemima Blackburn, *Jemima being shown a sea-eagles nest at Inver Aylort* [sic]. Ink drawing. 20 June 1863. 22.5 x 16.5 cm. [From Rob Fairley, Jemima: The Paintings and Memoirs of a Victorian Lady (London: Canongate Books, 1998)

Luisa Kapp
Senckenberg Nature Research / Goethe University Frankfurt

From Recovery to Reframing: Women's Hidden Histories at Senckenberg Nature Research

This paper investigates the structural mechanisms through which women's contributions to the *Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung*, "Senckenberg Nature Research", (founded 1817 in Frankfurt, Germany) have been obscured in institutional narratives. Using feminist epistemologies, it analyses three case studies – Wilhelmine Meyer, nineteenth-century collector; Tilly Edinger, pioneer of paleoneurology; and Margot Perl, twentieth-century technician – to show how scientific authority was constructed through practices of exclusion, misattribution, and erasure. The paper argues for a shift from recovery to reframing: expanding definitions of authorship, labour, and contribution in natural history institutions.

Women in the entomological section.
© Senckenberg Archiv, Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung

Sabine von Mering Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Hidden in plain sight Identifying and acknowledging women in natural history

Women can be found everywhere in natural history museums but you have to look hard to find them. They are often hidden – behind men, in footnotes and acknowledgements, in letters, under their husbands' names, and in field notebooks and archival records. Women have worked as collectors, preparators, illustrators, and assistants, as scientists cataloguing and describing new species or they supported science as patrons. However, their contributions often remain invisible, their stories untold, their images unnamed.

At the *Museum für Naturkunde Berlin*, the open working group *FIND – Frauen in der Naturkunde* (Women in Natural History) brings together researchers and museum professionals from different departments to identify women associated with the museum and its collection. In collaboration with partners from the international network *WOMNH – Women in*

Natural History Collections and Museums, we examine the roles women have played in creating natural history collections and museums. Our work highlights their often overlooked presence and invisible labour, and investigates knowledge gaps.

The open knowledge base Wikidata provides a collaborative and multilingual tool to document the findings as structured, referenced and semantically enriched data. Identifiers for these non-male contributors work as digital anchors, enabling scattered information from various sources to be linked. By connecting people with collections, archives, publications, expeditions, other people and societies, we are contributing to a growing biodiversity knowledge graph that helps to uncover hidden relationships and insights. Wikidata serves as an index and finding aid as well as a hub for external identifiers linking to other databases and authority files. Various tools can reuse data from Wikidata to visualise connections and networks.

Building on this growing dataset, exemplary women active in different roles and disciplines were selected for in-depth studies. Drawing on different collection items such as specimens, correspondence and other archival documents, scientific contributions of these hidden agents are studied. The process of excavating and documenting traces of their life and work is shown, focusing on museum employees and other hidden participants in the construction of natural history.

International and interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as working with students, helps to shed light on such little-known biographies and to initiate follow-up research. By generating more structured data and contextualised information, we hope to reduce the gender data gap, create more visibility for these hidden figures and to acknowledge their contributions. This will then potentially also transform into more complete stories to be told and create a better representation of women in museum exhibitions.

Two female staff members of the MfN Mammal collection sitting on a taxidermied musk ox, unknown photographer, around 1910
(Archive Museum für Naturkunde Berlin: MfN, HBSB ZM B II / 440).

Rachel Parle
Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Monumental Figures
A 21st Century Response to Victorian Statues

Oxford University Museum of Natural History is home to one of the largest and most important collections of Pre-Raphaelite sculpture in the world. Located around the main court of the Museum are 19 statues of men in science – all white Europeans. When the Museum first opened it was planned that each pillar around the court would host a statue of one of the great '*founders and improvers of natural knowledge*'. They were paid for by private subscription, including by Queen Victoria, with the last statue added in 1915. Today, five plinths remain empty, and over 100 years later, the Museum team are taking a fresh look at the statues and what they represent to 21st century audiences. With over 800,000 annual visitors from around the globe, much of our audience would not see themselves represented amongst the founders and improvers, and the message that is communicated is that science is the domain of white European men only. This speaks against the inclusive approach of the Museum, and the wider University, and in particular the Women In Science agenda. A group has been formed at the Museum to explore how the statues can be recontextualised and become more representative of our audience. In this talk Rachel will share insights into the project's progress so far, look at other examples of statue interventions, and also share some big ideas for the future.

Statues in the 'central court' of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Left to right: Charles Darwin by Henry Hope-Pinker; Isaac Newton and Galileo by Alexander Munro.

Left image:
Statue of Gottfried Leibnitz by Alexander Munro.

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury
University of Vienna

PreHERstory:
Women's Lives in Prehistory through the Lens of Archaeological Science

Interest in the prehistory of women – their roles in society, activities, and status – has a surprisingly long history. One of the earliest lectures on this topic was delivered by Matthäus Much in 1882, followed by Johanna Mestorf, a renowned female prehistorian, who explored the significance of daggers in Bronze Age women's graves at the joint Austrian and German Anthropology Congress in Vienna in 1889. Both scholars not only highlighted the roles of women in prehistoric societies but also underscored the importance of women as researchers in the field of prehistory.

The perspectives of these early researchers, while genuine, were often shaped by the societal norms of their time. Women's activities were typically seen as confined to the domestic spheres, child-rearing, and food preparation. Pottery and textile production, for instance, were traditionally regarded as women's work – until these activities became more sophisticated and economically significant, at which point they transitioned to being considered men's work. For decades, interpretations of women's roles in prehistoric societies relied heavily on burial archaeology and artistic depictions. However, recent advancements in archaeological science have introduced new methods that provide more concrete insights into labor division and task allocation across age and gender groups.

Techniques such as fingerprint analysis on pottery, DNA extraction from objects and soil, and activity-related traces on skeletal remains now offer a clearer picture of who performed specific tasks in prehistoric societies. DNA analysis and proteomics have significantly improved the accuracy of chromosomal sex identification, enabling more precise associations between grave goods and the sex of buried individuals. These advancements not only reduce margins of error but also open the door to exploring gender systems beyond the binary framework, revealing social structures and identities that differ from contemporary norms. This paper reflects on the historical trajectory of research into women's prehistory, from its 19th-century origins to the transformative impact of modern scientific methods.

Caroline Posch, **Mathias Harzhauser**, **Julia Landsiedl** and **Gregor Schuberth**
Natural History Museum Vienna

Re/Envisioning prehistoric times: The New Ice-Age-Children's Hall, Curatorial and Artistic Strategies

In May 2025, the new children's hall *Ice Age Children and their World* opened its gates at the *Natural History Museum Vienna* (NHMW). The topic 'Ice Age' in itself, is an all-time favourite in the museum world.

However, in these exhibitions, Upper Pleistocene "reality" is usually told from an adult In the newly designed hall, the curators took a new approach: the theme is linked to the world of children's experiences. This reflects both recent research and a key fact about prehistoric societies, where 40–60 % of the population were under 15. It was therefore time to put the youngest members of the Ice Age at the center of attention.

The exhibition concept was developed jointly by the NHMW departments of Prehistory, Geology, Science Communication, and Exhibition Management, with input from school-children. The design was realized by the architectural firm Schuberth und Schuberth.

The aim is an intergenerational experience where tactile and interactive elements invite playful exploration. The hall now forms an Ice Age landscape with four themed zones – environment, home, hunting and gathering, and art and play – showcasing originals and replicas.

Objects are displayed to engage all ages, supported by audio, videos, reconstruction drawings, and hands-on media stations created especially for the new hall.

Panel 05 · TUE 4 NOV 2025 · 14:30

Liz Hide
Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge

Telling Uncomfortable Stories: Dykes, Dinosaurs and Charles Darwin in the Sedgwick Museum

At the intersection of the academic university and its publics, the Sedgwick Museum plays an important role in training and inspiring the next generation of Earth scientists: toddlers roaring at the dinosaurs, schoolchildren learning about the rock cycle, undergraduates carrying out projects and gaining valuable work experience, and more. The recognised crisis in diversity within the Earth science sector gives this work a direction and an urgency if future Earth scientists are to be representative of global communities and contribute effectively to a fair and equitable global future. Yet the extractive and exploitative history of the science, a range of unhelpful popular geologist stereotypes and the continued marginalisation of Black people, people of colour, women, LGBTQ+ people and disabled people, are all barriers to participation in Earth science. Uncovering and sharing stories that challenge these barriers is central to the work that the Sedgwick Museum is doing to make Earth science a field where everyone feels welcome and everyone can contribute.

Charles Darwin's rock collection from his round-the-world voyage on HMS Beagle is one of the highlights of the Sedgwick Museum's collections, and the Museum's displays champion his contributions to the developing science of geology. Recent work focusing on a small number of ore specimens Darwin collected in Chile in 1834-5 and the extensive notes that he made at this time provide insights into mining conditions, ore processing, speculative investment and the economics of critical mineral production at the time. This enables the Museum to tell a different story about these specimens, one which uses the mineral specimens to open up conversations on the role of mining in global trade and human exploitation. Stories like these can be uncomfortable and challenging to tell, especially for staff whose background and training are in science. The Museum has been exploring ways to support staff and develop their skills and confidence in this area, enabling them to participate in an ongoing dialogue with visitors, colleagues, creative practitioners and communities. This in turn informs an open and diverse approach to interpretation and programming across the Museum, and a shift in attitudes towards participation in the science. The impacts are incremental, but they reinforce the Museum's commitment to addressing barriers to participation in Earth science.

Anton Zwischenberger
Natural History Museum Vienna

Natural Histories Reloaded:
New Forms of Presenting History in Digital Realities

Natural history museums have traditionally used art to render the invisible visible and to shape cultural perceptions of nature. Today, digital spaces extend these representational practices into participatory and interactive realms. Social media and digital games, in particular, illustrate how new forms of knowledge transfer and engagement are emerging. On platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, scientific insights are communicated through visual storytelling to diverse audiences, transforming collections and research into dynamic cultural narratives.

Digital games, in turn, create immersive environments in which natural histories are actively experienced and co-created. Both fields demonstrate how new media challenge established epistemological patterns in natural history, encouraging us to reconsider the relationship between science, art, and digital culture. This lecture will address these dynamics and present examples of best practice designed to inspire further reflection and discussion.

Image from the social media campaign on women in the Natural History Museum Vienna, March 2025.

Katrin Vohland and **Iris Ott**
Natural History Museum Vienna

Envisioning Possible Futures for the Natural History Museum Vienna

Images play a major role for communication. Also natural history museums utilized this methodology to communicate their contents. For instance, the *Natural History Museum Vienna* (NHMW) is organised like a walk-in textbook (Begehbares Lehrbuch), illustrating the walk through the Earth system and the evolution of animals up to humans. Intended and unintended, the architecture, drawings, and figures transport the value system – or better – the various value systems of the proponents. As ethics and norms changed over time and are diverse throughout the world, some implicit and explicit narrative hurt

© NHMW, Christine Rittmansperger

The so called „Darwin-Frieze" in the upper dome hall, where Johannes Benk addressed the relationship between humans and animals.

specific groups. For instance, the presentation of humans from indigenous cultures all over the world was paralled to early humans "without culture". In fact, the NHMW was framed the „nature" museum which includes indigenous or „primitive" people, in contrast to the Museum of Fine Arts (KHM).

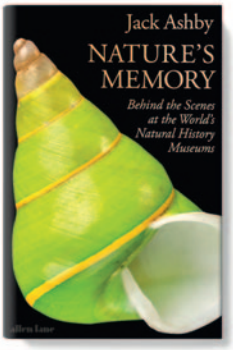
In order to "decolonize" natural history museums, we want to make these values and narratives visible and support a public discourse. „Decolonisation" not only refers to indigenous people and other cultures, but also to gender issues. Consequently, we also want to de-patriachalize the museum. In NHMW for example, not a single female scientist is represented among all the many statuettes and figures.

Another example is the Benk-fries which shows the enigmatic Darwin setting which pointed to the enormous foresight of Hochstetter to adopt the evolutionary theory and accept the humans and apes are related; it also shows a figure hunting for a baby ape, somehow puzzling. What does this tell us? Is it a pure information how people hunt? Is it some kind of finding it very normal to hunt and kill animals to do research or to be able to observe them in a showcases?

We see our responsibility in making implicit assumptions about the human-nature relationship visible and start a public discourse how to develop them in future using different means. It starts with more educational formats informing our audiences about the diversity of nature and evolutionary processes but also involves other groups and stakeholders in order to mutually broaden our vision. The Deck 50 provides one of these infrastructures. The central infrastructure, the building itself, also conveys messages to us. That is why we want to open up the building in the future; we want to open up the collections and scientific findings. The museum's vision is to be an open and welcoming place, an enrichment in the digital world, and an important player in the field of Global or Planetary Health.

Panel 06 · WED 5 NOV 2025 · 9:15

Jack Ashby
Cambridge University Museum of Zoology



Nature's Memory:
Behind the Scenes at the World's Natural History Museums

Jack Ashby's new book, *Nature's Memory* shares hidden stories behind the world's iconic natural history museums, from enormous mounted whale skeletons to cabinets of impossibly tiny insects.

Look closely and all is not as it seems: these museums are not as natural as we might think. Mammals dominate the displays, for example, even though they make up less than 1 percent of species; there are many more male specimens than females; and often a museum's most popular draw – the dinosaur skeletons – are not actually real. Over 99 percent of museum collections are held in immense, unseen storehouses. And it's becoming clear that these institutions have not been as honest about their complex histories as they should be. Yet it is also just starting to be understood that their vast collections are indispensable resources in the fight against biodiversity loss and climate catastrophe.

In this talk, Jack will share stories from the three main themes of the book: How well do natural history museums really represent nature, how did they really come together, and how can they help save the world?

Part of the whale warehouse at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum Support Centre.

Paul Smith
Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Natural History Museums as Repositories of Scientific Memory

Museums are often described as storehouses for community and societal memory, but the same is true of scientific collections as archives of planetary record. The oldest surviving natural history collections preserve specimens that span over four hundred years of collecting, and the Museum of Natural History in the University of Oxford is an example of one of those institutions. The founder collections were made by the Tradescant family, father and son, and the oldest specimens recorded were collected in 1618 on an expedition to the Russian Arctic. Collections assembled by the Tradescants, ranged from eastern North America to Arctic Europe, eastwards to western Asia and southwards to Saharan Africa.

The existence of collections extending back in age for over 400 years allows for a wide range of scientific enquiry. At the most basic level, collections document biodiversity, sometimes of rare and cryptic species such as Wallace's giant bee. The anatomical and genomic records of recently, and less recently, extinct organisms are of course also preserved, and in an Indian Ocean context, the remains of the dodo, *Raphus cucullatus*, provide an iconic example of this. Similarly, parasitic, symbiotic and commensal relationships may be preserved in historical collections, which are of increased interest in relation to the development and spread of zoonotic diseases. Of equal but more subtle importance, however, is the accumulation and preservation of time series data. The older natural history collections record ecosystems spanning the pre-industrial context, the industrial peak and, in some cases, a de-industrialised setting. The classical story of the response of the peppered moth, *Biston betularia*, to industrial pollution shows how museum collections have an important role from both a phenotypic and genotypic perspective. Other time series are preserved in collections in relation to trace element/isotope geochemistry and phenology, both of which can have a critical role to play in understanding protracted, large-scale environmental change. The presentation will examine the utility of collections across this wide range of enquiry, demonstrating the importance of natural history museums as major components of research infrastructure.

Megachile pluto,
Wallace's giant bee/raja ofu

Robert Lindner
Haus der Natur – Museum für Natur und Technik, Salzburg

A Museum for Everyone
101 Years Haus der Natur

For 101 years, the *Haus der Natur* has been popular with people looking for the fascination of nature. Unlike natural history museums up to that time, it did not teach a systematic curriculum of biology when it was founded in 1924, but rather set nature in a relation to humans and human culture.

On July 15, 1924, the *New Museum for Descriptive and Applied Natural History* opened its doors for the first time. In the period immediately after the First World War, which was characterized by economic hardship and inflation, the museum became a popular attraction. The focus here was on communicating knowledge, with the exhibitions being characterized by a high degree of vividness. From the very beginning, non-professionals were involved in the design of the exhibitions. Within a few years, the "new type of local museum" with a strong Salzburg connection turned into a "world museum". In 1936, the museum changed its name and was renamed the "Haus der Natur" (House of Nature). Innovative educational concepts were used in the exhibition right from the start. The movements of animals were compared with human technology, and representations of nature in folklore, legends and art were included.

Visitors became researchers: So much can be learned from nature! Teaching the laws of nature was the declared aim of a new type of museum, an educational institution for all people. This made the museum one of the pioneers of museum design and education in the 1920s. It presented objects to touch, admire and marvel at. Normally invisible processes were illustrated using motion models. In a sense these "moving models" anticipated the concept of a "science center".

The Hall of Prehistory and Reptiles in the 1930s.

Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel
Natural History Museum Vienna

Visualising Historicity
Natural History Museums as Built "Timescapes"

The emergence of museums as an independent building task in the 19th century is due to a new historicizing view. Not least due to the theory of evolution, history became *the* grid with which nature and culture could be organized and understood. This talk will look at the building task of the "natural science museum" and its relationship to history. Prominent new buildings e.g. the *Oxford University Museum of Natural History*, the *Natural History Museum in London*, the Gallery of Zoology in Paris, the *Museum für Naturkunde* in Berlin or the *Naturhistorisches Museum Vienna* translated historicity in different ways into space and decoration.

Hans Canon: The circle of Life, NHM Vienna

Hans Walter Lack
Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin

The Münch-Bellinghausen Collection of Botanical Illustrations in the Haus der Natur, Salzburg

The Münch-Bellinghausen collection of botanical illustrations comprises around 10.000 prints and drawings documenting vascular plants. Gathered by Konstantin Freiherr von Münch-Bellinghausen (1752–1838), this material remained in the hands of his descendants until it was donated to the Society for the Foundation and Maintenance of a Free Catholic University in Salzburg in 1904. Deposited on loan in the nascent Haus der Natur in 1924, the collection was donated to this natural history museum in 2015.

Arranged according to the Linnaean system as interpreted by Kurt Sprengel (1766–1833), the collection serves as time capsule with the illustrations of various formats kept loose in folders. The overwhelming majority are prints taken from a broad spectrum of sources, drawings make up only a small fraction of the whole. There is neither a geographical nor a taxonomic focus, though many prints originate from illustrated book published in Central Europe, in particular Vienna.

Amongst the watercolours copies of both preexisting prints and new illustrations based on plant specimens are found. Gems include a watercolour ascribed to Franz Anton Scheidl documenting a seed cones of *Pinus nigra*, grisaille copies based on engravings published in the Flora Danica and the only copy of the scarcely known early 'print-on-demand' re-edition of individual engravings first published in Pierre-Joseph Redouté's Les Liliacées.

Coloured engravings published in the works authored by Nikolaus Joseph and Joseph Franz Jacquin are particularly well represented in the Münch-Bellinghausen collection and offer insights into production of these great flower books in Vienna. Interestingly the herbarium material complementing this collection of plant illustrations is kept in the *Moravské zemské muzeum* in Brno.

Barringtonia asiatica (L.) Kunz. Copperplate engraving from Forster, Journey 1: t. 6 (1778). – Salzburg, HdN, SZB-MB-00248.

Kurt Chytil Teacher, Vienna

Paul Pfurtscheller, a Biologist and Teacher between Science and Art

Paul Pfurtscheller (1855–1927) was born in Salzburg. After graduating from high school, he relocated to Vienna, where he pursued natural history at the University of Vienna, for which he received his doctorate in 1878, and where he spent his entire professional career of teaching. In 1897, Pfurtscheller married Constantine Schollian, whose family of art patrons enriched him both financially and artistically.

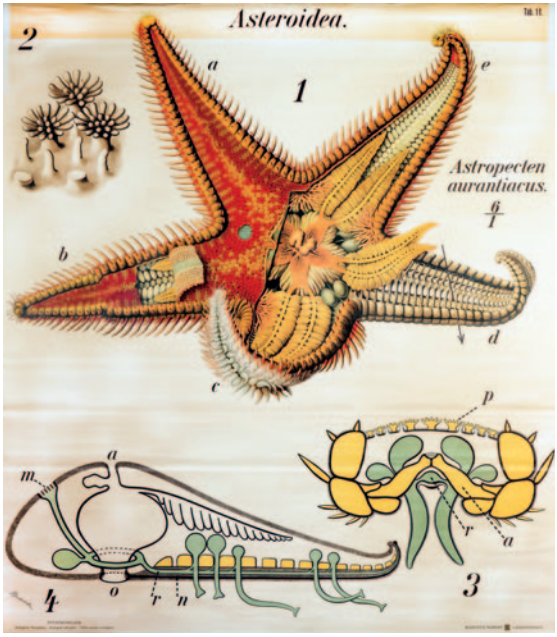
It was also in Vienna where he became a member of the Zoological-Botanical Society, where he was able to connect with the leading scientists of the time. As an admirer and contemporary of Ernst Haeckel, he was committed to the correct and artistic representation of anatomy. As he researched the methodology of wall charts in practice, he changed and enriched the didactics of teaching.

One of his students, Paul Kammerer, later an assistant at the Vienna Vivarium and known as the "toad kisser" due to his experiments with midwife toads, characterized him as an excellent teacher.

From 1902 to 1927, Pfurtscheller published 39 zoological wall charts and their accompanying booklets. Pfurtscheller planned to publish 70 wall charts, but died in February 1927. The last plate he was working on in 1927, was completed by the Cliché artist Hugo May and the biologist Josef Fahringer, the brother of the academic painter Carl Fahringer.

The panels were available commercially even until after 1963 and today, the surviving pieces enjoy worldwide attention and admiration from both scientists and collectors. They are not simply schematic images of small animals with a view of their internal organs, but anatomical still lives that deserve close examination due to the composition of their motifs, their color tonality and accuracy.

Pfurtscheller can certainly be placed in the art-historical development of anatomical depictions and still life painting. The fact that his wall panels are still used today underlines their timeless significance.



Wall Chart by Paul Pfurtscheller: Asteroidea, First Edition: 1904, A. Pichlers Witwe & Sohn

Christoph von Hagke
University of Salzburg

Analog Processes in Geology and Art

Craquelure, i.e., the fine network of cracks developing on paintings over centuries, is one of the most widespread manifestations of material aging in cultural heritage objects. Craquelure encodes information on painting techniques, material properties, environmental history, and authenticity. Crack geometries emerge from the complex interaction between pigment and binder properties, primer and support structures, and long-term physical and chemical processes. While early studies classified craquelure visually, often linking specific patterns to regional schools (e.g., Flemish vs. Italian), recent advances in imaging and quantitative analysis have enabled objective measurements of crack morphology, including length distributions, orientations, and network connectivity. Techniques such as Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), 3D microscopy, and hyperspectral imaging now provide high-resolution surface and subsurface data, which make more sophisticated analyses possible.

Despite these advances, the mechanical origin of craquelure remains incompletely understood. Numerical simulations capture some aspects of crack formation but struggle with the heterogeneity and long timescales involved. Analog experiments, while insightful, are limited to short durations, whereas real paintings evolve over decades to centuries, often exhibiting both brittle and ductile deformation modes. Strikingly, many craquelure geometries resemble fracture networks in layered geological materials, where layer-parallel extension produces structures ranging from brittle, rate-independent fractures 'to rate-dependent, periodic boudinage features. In structural geology, quantitative methods such as structure-from-motion photogrammetry have become standard for characterizing fracture networks across scales, offering a powerful methodological framework for craquelure analysis.

In this contribution, it will be shown how geological concepts and digital modeling techniques can be applied to the analysis of craquelure, using The Fish Market with the Sale of the Red Mullet of Emperor Tiberius (ca. 1621, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna) as a key case study. This painting, created collaboratively by Peter Paul Rubens, his workshop (possibly Anthony van Dyck), and Frans Snyders, integrates figural and still-life elements painted with differing techniques and material properties, likely producing contrasting craquelure morphologies within a single artwork. By combining advanced imaging and geological fracture analysis, the project aims to bridge art history, conservation science, and structural geology, ultimately advancing both the understanding of craquelure formation and the development of new tools for authentication, conservation, and art-technological research.

Visit to the print workshop "Grafische Werkstatt"

Martin Gredler
Grafische Werkstatt im Traklhaus, Independent artist

Printing from Copperplate and Stones

Martin Gredler runs the Graphic Workshop, a studio that has served artists as an open studio, mediator and place to exchange knowledge for over 70 years. Gredler explains the technical processes that lead from conception to sketch to finished printing using two classic printing techniques: gravure printing and lithography. The complex analogue production processes, which have changed little in the past centuries, as well as their sensual physical results, are able to take on a mediating position in the contemporary visual arts. The filter processes that the pressure goes through from the matrix to the result can provide information about the intention and content of the artwork and make the artistic attitude transparent. Printmaking encompasses a variety of artistic results, ranging from scientific precision to expressive design, in which technique directly influences the aesthetic effect and artistic content. In this place, where generations have worked in a wide variety of styles and highly divergent artistic approaches, one thing remains constant: the desire to bring an individual idea into concrete form by limiting technology.

Kamilė Jadevičiūtė Independent artist, Salzburg

Following the Stones. From Stone to Print

Lithography is a printmaking technique based on the principle that oil and water repel each other. It relies on chemical processes rather than physical carving or engraving. Traditionally, the technique involves drawing with greasy materials (such as lithographic crayons or ink) onto a flat, fine-grained limestone surface. The stone is then treated with a solution of gum arabic and acid, so that the drawn areas attract ink while the undrawn areas repel it when moistened with water.

Lithography, like any other printmaking technique, allows for the direct expression of the artist's hand. It offers the ability to capture subtle marks, gestures, and tonal variations, making it especially well-suited for expressive and detailed artwork.

Untitled, Adneter Marmor Lithographie
(Adneter Scheck), 24 × 31 cm, 2024

Untitled, Adneter Marmor Lithographie
(Wimberg-Plattenbruch), 24 x 31 cm, 2024

In my artistic practice, I use the lithographic technique in an unconventional way. When I discovered broken lithographic stones in a printmaking studio, their raw material presence – detached from their conventional role in image reproduction – sparked my interest in geology. I began engaging solely with their fractured forms. My focus shifted to their geological materiality and the fundamental steps of the lithographic process: rolling up the stones, etching, and printing.

Learning more about the history, geological processes, and formation of Solnhofen limestone—the fine-grained stone traditionally used in lithography – has deepened my understanding of the principles behind the technique itself and led me to reconsider the essence of what lithography can be. I began to notice, collect, and print other fine-grained stones in nature that resemble the qualities of traditional lithographic stones. My experiments with these stones produced results that were not very different from those achieved with traditional ones. I began to wonder: What if I tried printing from stones that aren't conventionally considered suitable for lithography?

In my work, I aim to reveal the stone's unique geological qualities and allow them to emerge in the print, without imposing my artistic marks. I treat the stones as a medium – packed with information and stories – trying to read and reveal their hidden narratives through the printmaking process.

Panel 05 · THU **4 NOV 2025 · 9:00**

Laurin Blecha
University of Salzburg

Salzburg Beyond the Alps: Colonial Entanglements and Decolonial Reflections

European colonialism has left visible and invisible traces in our cities – from monuments and street names to museums and their collections. Often overlooked in public perception, these remnants have been altered, destroyed, or deliberately ignored. While the legacy of colonialism is typically associated with major powers like France or Britain, even countries like Austria – and cities such as Salzburg – are entangled in what scholars call "colonialism without colonies".

Although landlocked and seemingly remote, Salzburg's role as a hub on long-distance trade routes like the Salt Road connected it early on to global networks shaped by colonial dynamics. This perspective highlights how so-called "smaller" places were deeply embedded in larger colonial systems. This talk aims to critically explore Salzburg's (post)colonial past by examining its entanglements with European colonialism and highlighting the ongoing significance of these legacies in public and historical discourse.

Image generation with AI: Postcolonial interpretation of Salzburg. Created with DALL·E via ChatGPT, OpenAI, 2025

Jack Ashby
University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge

Giving Credit and Acknowledging Violence: Telling Honest Stories about Natural History Collections

Despite a late start, our sector is now making good progress in understanding the kinds of questions we should be asking of our organisations' histories and practices, and many museums have begun work to address them.

This talk shares broad ideas stemming from research into the colonial histories of specimens in natural history museums – with particular emphasis on Australian mammals – exploring different kinds of injustice involved in their acquisition. This will include collections made by members of the military whilst administrating wartime concentration camps; specimens that were exported alongside Indigenous remains following acts of genocide; and collections amassed using unacknowledged Aboriginal labour in a post-frontier landscape after Indigenous populations had been dispossessed of their land and/or sovereignty. A key aim of the third example is to recognise and celebrate a greater diversity of people who were involved in key discoveries in the history of science. The paper intends to raise questions for discussion about telling honest stories involving violence in collections; and the anonymisation of First Nations collectors.

A trophy photograph of a hunted thylacine (Thylacinus cynocephalus) dated 1869

Benjamin Pollitt University College London

Timelines and Haloes: The Case for Indian Natural History Artists in Early Sydney Cove

In his essay, 'Early Sydney: A Land of Wonder and Delight' (2021), Richard Neville identifies characteristics of Indian art in the so-called 'Sydney Set', an album of paintings of Australian birds in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, produced

around 1791–92. He also tentatively suggests 'Sydney origins' to these works. This paper examines a range of primary sources to test Neville's theory, presenting evidence to support the case that these forgotten masters did, indeed, reside in Sydney Cove, producing images of Australian natural history alongside their British contemporaries.

John Hunter, *Pigeon of Norfolk Island*, 1790?, *Birds & flowers of New South Wales drawn on the spot in 1788, '89 & '90.* Watercolour, 22.6 x 18.3 cm.
National Library of Australia, PIC MSR 12/1/4 #T1233 NK2039/77

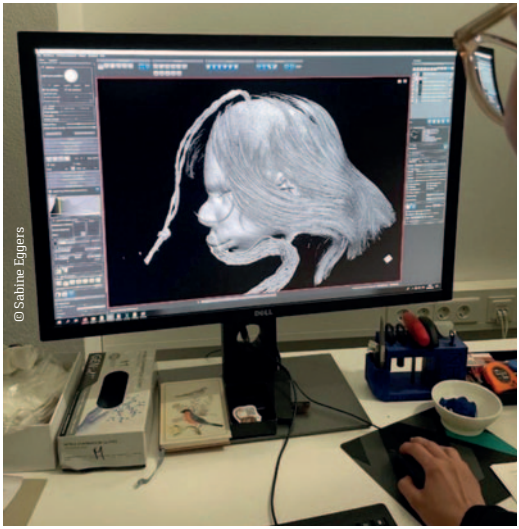
Panel 08 · THU 6 NOV 2025 · 9:45

Sabine Eggers
Natural History Museum Vienna

Tsantsa Realities: Fakes, Trades, Myths and Arts

The fascination for the human head across time and space is intriguing. It is prominent in mythology, arts, numismatics, politics, in popular sayings and science. For Anthropology, heads as mummies, crania and prepared/shrunken heads or tsantas were collected greedily in the past. Especially tsantsas transitioned from precious and exotic showpieces to shamefully hidden complications. This is so in many institutions worldwide. However, a trade of these human remains flourishes in the internet at high prices.

Here we give an overview of how, when and where tsantsas were produced, what the purposes where then and more recently to produce, collect and trade them. We also describe how they reached different, but mainly Austrian, institutions and discuss how to distinguish between the real and the „fake" ones. The aim is to discuss the anthropological, ethnographic, artistic and ethical aspects of tsantsas in the museum context.



3D scanning by Viola Winkler at the NHM of a tsantsa from the Weltmuseum Wien

Telling Natural histories

Panel 09

Chair: **Romana Sammern**
University of Salzburg

Panel 09 · THU 6 NOV 2025 · 13:00

Wolfgang Wanko
Museum St. Peter, Art-Collections of the Archabbey of St. Peter

The "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" (Cabinet of Art and Wonders) – History and Change

With the completion of the building complex around the Cathedral Square, Prince-Archbishop Guidobald Count Thun (1654–1685) also created the "Kunst und Wunderkammer" (Chamber of Art and Curiosities), which, together with the new painting gallery, was intended to satisfy the curiosity of the prince-archbishop's guests. The display cases (which are still preserved in their original form today) mainly contained precious objects from the rock-crystal cutting workshop, also founded by the prince-archbishop, as well as rare minerals, fossils, and shells. Wood and ivory carvings as well as various pieces of jewellery and the spiral-shaped horn of a unicorn completed the list of exhibits in this collection, which was rather insignificant compared to other art chambers.

When the premises were donated to St. Peter's Abbey in 1814, the emptied cabinets were used, among other things, to house Abbot Dominkus Hagenauer's collection of wax works and the abbey's natural history collection was stored in the Long Gallery.

In 1974, with the opening of the Salzburg Cathedral Museum, the old display cases were refilled again and the Chamber of Curiosities made accessible to the general public for the first time. The aim was to reflect the Baroque juxtaposition of artistic and curious objects, so that even today, mundane items can be found alongside scientific instruments and natural history specimens.

View of the Baroque "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" (Cabinet of Art and Wonders) at St. Peter's Abbey, as reconstructed in 1974.

Panel 09 · THU 6 NOV 2025 · 13:30

Eva-Maria Troelenberg Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf
Matthias Bruhn Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design

Art/Nature: Making Natural Histories

Since antiquity, natural history and the evolution of art and technology have been considered parallel phenomena. Yet there are very different ways to bring their 'history' into a visual order. The first part of the presentation will explore notions of art versus nature, examining art historical categories of order, especially from a transcultural perspective. The second part of the presentation will discuss some examples.

Panel 09 · THU 6 NOV 2025 · 16:00

Sonja Führer Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg

Guided tour to the historical library of St. Peter

The library of St. Peter's Abbey bears witness to the religious and cultural activities of the monks of St. Peter. Dating back to the Carolingian Period with the oldest liturgical and theological manuscripts, and continuing through the universal library of the Baroque period, an extensive collection of books has been assembled which, through continuous expansion, documents the Benedictine Order's appreciation of science and education to this day.

Panel 09 · THU 6 NOV 2025 · 16:30

Norbert Urban Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg

Guided tour to the mineralogical collection of St. Peter

The mineral collection of the Archabbey of St. Peter was systematically compiled from the end of the 18th century onwards. Abbots Dominicus Hagenauer (1786–1811) and Albert Nagnzaun (1818–1856) constantly added to it with great personal commitment, collecting many minerals themselves, exchanging some with colleagues, and purchasing others. After the death of P. Vital Jäger (1858–1943), the last curator of the collection, no one took care of the minerals. The collection was locked away in the old display cases for nearly half a century and was not accessible.

In spring 2009 the objects were re-recorded and catalogued in a dedicated database. In the summer of 2011, new drawer cabinets were purchased, and all objects were finally sorted. The collection contains many treasures and special items whose great value was only recognised after this re-cataloguing. It comprises 25,000 objects from the entire former Austro-Hungarian Empire, from large parts of Europe, as well as other continents.

(Story)Telling Natural Histories

Artistic Lecture

Chair: **Werner Michler**
University of Salzburg, Department für New German Literature

Panel 10 · THU **6 NOV 2025 · 18:00**

Mara-Daria Cojocaru
Independent poet, Hamburg

Jan Wagner
Independent writer and poet, Hamburg

Artistic Lecture:
"Poetry, naturally?"

What stories can poetry tell about nature – and with nature? How does poetic language shape our understanding of the natural world, and where does it diverge from the narrative forms of science? In this lecture performance, poets Mara-Daria Cojocaru and Jan Wagner read from their work and discuss the role of poetry in natural history, multispecies relations, and the poetics of storytelling.

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Schloss Ambras

Guided tour | Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck

Guided tour · FRI 7 NOV 2025 · 11:30

Katharina Seidl
Schloss Ambras Innsbruck, KHM-Museumsverband

Guided Tour to Schloss Ambras
The First Museum in the World

Ambras Castle lies on the southern outskirts of the Tyrolean provincial capital of Innsbruck. In 1564 Ambras Castle became the residence of the Tyrolean Landesfürst (Count) Archduke Ferdinand II, who settled here with his young family, his wife Philippine and their two sons. The cultural-historical significance of Ambras Castle is undoubtedly based on the fact that Archduke Ferdinand II brought together his – at that time already widely famous – collection of armour, weapons, portraits, natural objects, the newest scientific instruments, musical instruments, and works of art, as well as a library. To this end, Ferdinand caused the Lower Castle to be erected, as a specific building identified as a 'Musaeum'. This makes Ambras Castle the first museum in the world. Here, the building itself has become an exhibit, and only here can the historically earliest systematic concept for collection and presentation be experienced at its original site.

After the death of Ferdinand II (1595) and the sale of the collections to Emperor Rudolf II, the castle became a quieter place. Eventually the Napoleonic Wars at the end of the eighteenth century brought upheaval, when the Ambras collections were evacuated from Innsbruck to Vienna on grounds of security. The objects in the collection were, for the most part, made available to the public at Belvedere Palace in Vienna after 1819. In 1881 the decision was taken to make Ambras Castle accessible to the public again, a decision that has continued uninterrupted until today. Since 1919 Ambras Castle and its collections are the property of the Republic of Austria. The museum is administered by the KHM Museum Association.

Speakers at the Conference

Jack Ashby

Cambridge University Museum of Zoology

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Jack Ashby is the Assistant Director of the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge. His zoological focus is the mammals of Australia, but his work more broadly explores the biases influencing how nature is presented to the world, particularly through museums and their colonial legacies. His books, *Nature's Memory: Behind the Scenes at the World's Natural History Museums*, *Platypus Matters: The Extraordinary Story of Australian Mammals* and *Animal Kingdom: A Natural History in 100 Objects* combine these scientific and social stories.

Cody Barton

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Cody Barton is completing his undergraduate degree in English and Community Engaged Learning at Mount Allison University in Canada. He is the research assistant for the project *The Nature of Knowledge; Literary Humanities and Global Challenges in Museums.* In summer 2025, he was a public engagement intern at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, on the *Natural Heritage & Science Scheme*, with the theme of "We are Nature".

Laurin Blecha

University of Salzburg,

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Laurin Blecha is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of History, University of Salzburg. He received his PhD in 2021 from the University of Vienna with a dissertation on Nicaraguan historiography and is currently writing a book on the Austrian scientist Karl Scherzer. His research focuses on the history of knowledge, Latin America, and Austria's imperial and colonial past.

Matthias Bruhn

Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design

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Matthias Bruhn is an art historian and Professor of Art Studies and Media Theory at the University of Arts and Design in Karlsruhe. He led the Research Centre for Political Iconography at the Warburg Institute in Hamburg and, from 2005 to 2018, directed the "Technical Image" department at the Humboldt University of Berlin's Hermann von Helmholtz Centre for Cultural Techniques. His research interests include the role of images as carriers of knowledge and arguments in science, technology and politics.

Kurt Chytil

Teacher, Vienna

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Kurt Chytil taught biology for four decades at public high schools in Vienna after finishing his studies at the University of Vienna. Every year, he organised projects for his classes and in 2014, these included a documentation of the bio-historical teaching materials available at the school BORG I, Hegelgasse 14. Together with fine art photographer Werner Buhre, they captured around 150 specimens, minerals and wall charts. Fascinated by the later, Chytil has been researching ever since its creator: biologist, didact and artist Paul Pfurtscheller.

Mara-Daria Cojocaru

Independent poet, Hamburg

Mara-Daria Cojocaru is a philosopher and poet whose recent work explores multispecies poetics and interspecies ethics. She publishes in both academic and literary contexts. Her award-winning poetry collections are published by Schöffling & Co., most recently Anstelle einer Unterwerfung (2016) and Buch der Bestimmungen (2021).

Isabel Davis

Natural History Museum, London

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Isabel Davis is a cultural historian and Research Theme leader at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research, at the intersection of medical and environmental history, particularly focuses on histories of (in)fertility. Her book, Conceiving Histories: Trying for Pregnancy, Past and Present (MIT Press, 2025), combines memoir and history with illustrations by her long-term collaborator, visual artist Anna Burel. At NHM London she supports arts and humanities research across collections.

Sabine Eggers

Natural History Museum Vienna,

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Sabine Eggers was trained as a human biologist at the universities of São Paulo, Vienna and Durham. She got her PhD in 1995 and was a professor for medical genetics and bioarchaeology at the university of São Paulo until 2016. Since 2017 she is the curator of the international osteological collection at the Anthropology Department of the NHM in Vienna. Provenance research and repatriation of human remains as well as reconstruction of lifeways of past populations of Europe and South America are her main activities.

Sarah Fiedler

Natural History Museum Vienna,
head of the libraries department

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Sarah Magdalena Fiedler has been Head of the Libraries Department at the Natural History Museum Vienna since December 2022. Her main areas of interest are bibliographic standards, authority data, electronic resources, and open access. She studied Celtic Studies at the University of Vienna from 2005–2011.

Sonja Führer

Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg (Library)

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Sonja Führer studied at University of Salzburg and finished with a degree in German and History in 2001. She became librarian at the Library of St. Peter's Archabbey in 2001 and completed her studies with Courses in library sciences in Vienna and Graz. She is Head Librarian since 2009, a member of the board of the Austrian Monastery Libraries and co-initiator of the library catalogue of Austrian religious libraries (KOBi).

Billie Gavurin

University of Birmingham

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Billie Gavurin is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Birmingham. She is interested in the intersections of mythology and early evolutionary theory, and her post-doctoral research project focuses on counter-factual depictions of prehistoric hominins from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth. Her first monograph, which will examine the relationship between Darwinian thought and mythic animal-human hybrids at the fin de siècle, is under contract with Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin Gredler

Grafische Werkstatt im Traklhaus, Independent artist

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Martin Gredler is a visual artist, painter, printmaker and director of the printmaking studio "Grafische Werkstatt im Traklhaus". His artistic work centres on themes of life and death, drawing inspiration from nature and its representation across various periods and contexts. Gredler's creative process is deeply rooted in traditional methods, yet he places strong emphasis on experimentation – inviting chance and accident to shape his prints and paintings. As both practitioner and mentor, he fosters a collaborative atmosphere that encourages dialogue and the exchange of ideas among artists, bridging historical techniques with contemporary perspectives.

Karina Grömer

Natural History Museum Vienna

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Karina Grömer (female) is the director of the Department of Prehistory, Natural History Museum Vienna. As an archaeologist, she studies the material culture of the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age in Central Europe, including theoretical aspects like identity, innovation and creativity, functional design theory, visual coding, design concepts, sociological and semiotic studies. Her focus research embraces textile archaeology. She also has the aim to bridge gaps between research institutions (Universities, Academies) and cultural heritage institutions and is active in various dissemination activities.

Christoph von Hagke

University of Salzburg

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Christoph von Hagke is Professor of Geology at the University of Salzburg. He received his PhD from the Free University of Berlin and, after a postdoc at Caltech, USA, habilitated at RWTH Aachen. His research combines rock mechanics with landscape evolution. He uses geological knowledge and analytical techniques to bridge between science and arts. For his interdisciplinary research, he was awarded the Outstanding Early Career Scientist Award by the TS Division of the European Geoscience Union.

Mathias Harzhauser
Natural History Museum Vienna
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Mathias Harzhauser is head of the Geological-Paleontological Department of the Natural History Museum Vienna (Austria). His research topics include the palaeobiogeographic and climatic development of Eurasia over the last 30 million years. He is corresponding member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences since 2017 and was appointed university professor at the University of Graz in 2022.

Anita Hermannstädter
Museum für Naturkunde Berlin
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Anita Hermannstädter is a trained historian, museum professional, and, since 2012, Co-Lead of the Center for Humanities of Nature at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin. Her work focuses on transdisciplinary projects and novel collaborations that open up diverse perspectives on the natural history museum and its collections. Anita is also engaged in the strategic development of the MfN regarding the societal role of research museums and international relationships. She has been a founding member of Symbiosis, and of WOMNH – Women in Natural History Museums and Collections. Since 2022, Anita has been a board member of ICOM NATHIST.

Liz Hide
Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge
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Liz Hide is Director of the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge. Previously she led the University of Cambridge Museums Consortium and was Curator of Invertebrate Palaeontology at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh; she has also been a freelance consultant focusing on advocacy and strategic planning for university museums and natural science collections. She is deeply committed to the role that natural science museums can play in addressing social inequality, and to making the Museum an inclusive and audience-focused space.

John Holmes
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John Holmes is Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Birmingham and President of the Commission on Science and Literature. He is one of the founders of Symbiosis and has co-organised conferences for the network in Porto, Oxford and Paris. His books on the connections between science and the arts include *Darwin's Bards* (2009), *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* (2018) and *Temple of Science: The Pre-Raphaelites and Oxford University Museum of Natural History* (2020).

Kamilė Jadevičiūtė
Independent artist, Salzburg
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Kamilė Jadevičiūtė is a printmaking artist working with lithography. She studied Graphic Arts at the Vilnius Academy of Arts (MA, 2021). Since 2022, she lives in Salzburg, printing from locally collected stones. The connection between geology and printmaking drives her recent projects, including Following the Stones, Re/desensitize, Steingefühl, Sediments of Time, and Fossils of the Future.

Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel
Natural History Museum Vienna
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Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel is an art historian, curator and museologist at the Natural History Museum Vienna. Her research focuses on the epistemological function of natural history museums as mass media and producers of visual communication. Architecture, furnishings, object histories and colonial contexts and marginalized histories are among her research subjects.

Luisa Kapp
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Dr Luisa Kapp is a postdoctoral researcher at Senckenberg Nature Research, currently working on the BMFTR project "Secret Service: Women. Research. Senckenberg", uncovering the forgotten or overshadowed roles of women in the natural sciences. She is also a lecturer in Moden History at the Goethe University Frankfurt. She completed her DPhil at the University of Oxford with an interdisciplinary dissertation on Victorian etiquette and social norms, combining historical, sociological and literary approaches. Her current work explores intersections of gender, culture, and knowledge production in the long nineteenth- and twentieth centuries.

Leah Karas
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Leah Karas is Deputy Head of the Libraries Department at the Natural History Museum in Vienna. She studied social and cultural anthropology at the University of Vienna and library and information studies at the Austrian National Library. Her interests include gender and popular media within colonial contexts, museum libraries, and conceptualizing library outreach programs.

Andreas Kroh
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Andreas Kroh is a palaeontologist and biologist. He works at the Natural History Museum Vienna as deputy general director. Until the end of October 2025, he was head of the NHMW's publishing house, which, in addition to publications, also encompasses the website and social media, as well as photography and film production. As of November 2025, as Head of the Central Research Laboratories, he will be responsible for the NHMW's research infrastructure. Furthermore, he is also intensively involved in collection digitization and database development.

Hans Walter Lack
Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin
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Hans Walter Lack studied biology at Vienna University where he received his PhD in 1973. After shorts stays at Salzburg and Munich Universities he started to work as plant taxonomist in the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin (BGBM) in 1975. Following his habilitation HWL was appointed director at the BGBM in 1990 and professor extraordinary at the Freie Universität Berlin. He was a visiting fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford and held visiting professorships in Coimbra, Patras and Pisa. His research interests are focused on the taxonomy of flowering plants, globalization phenomena and the history of botanical illustration.

Julia Landsiedl
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Julia Landsiedl is a scenographer and curator. With a degree both in design (University of Applied Arts Berlin) and law (University of Vienna) she ran her own independent design studio for more than a decade. In 2021 she

joined the NHM Vienna as its head scenographer. As such her work focuses on three-dimensional, visual science communication, currently reimagining and -implementing parts of the museum's permanent exhibition, i.a. the existing zoological and future botanical collection.

Robert Lindner

Haus der Natur – Museum für Natur und Technik, Salzburg

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Robert Lindner studied biology at the Universities of Vienna, Salzburg and Sheffield, where he received his PhD in 2000. In these years, when he was still a biologist he was interested in birds, seabirds as well as high alpine birds, their behaviour, ecology and demographics. Since 2008 he headed the collection department at the Haus der Natur and was involved in the development of databases as well as – in varying functions – the realisation of exhibitions. He has been director of the Museum since 2022.

Barbara Loidl

Haus der Natur – Museum für Natur und Technik, Salzburg

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Barbara Loidl studied Biology at the University of Salzburg. Her scientific background spans a wide range of disciplines — from marine biology to alpine ecology and microbiology — reflecting her broad curiosity and interdisciplinary approach. As Head of Exhibitions at the *Haus der Natur* in Salzburg, she is dedicated to creating spaces where science meets curiosity and wonder. Her work focuses on transforming complex scientific ideas into immersive experiences that connect people emotionally and intellectually with the natural world.

Sabine von Mering

Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

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Sabine von Mering is a biologist and data scientist working at the *Museum für Naturkunde Berlin*. Within the Science Programme *Collection Future*, she focuses on opening up, linking and contextualising collection data. Her research interests lie at the intersection of biodiversity, data science and history – research expeditions, (hidden) collection agents and their networks including women in natural history. As an active Wikimedian, she promotes the use of the open knowledge base Wikidata as a research tool.

Werner Michler

University of Salzburg

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Werner Michler teaches Modern German Literature at the University of Salzburg. His particular areas of research interest include Austrian literature from the 18th century onwards, literature and natural science, the theory and history of literary genres, and literary translation.

Iris Ott

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Iris Ott is Head of Science Communication at the NHM Vienna. She studied prehistory and ethnology in Vienna and Tübingen, Germany. She has special formations in museology and critical diversity practice. Together with the ars electronica future lab she developed Deck 50, a room for science communication at the NHM. Her special focus lies on developing participatory and diversity sensible formats.

Rachel Parle
Oxford University Museum of Natural History
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Rachel Parle is interim Head of Exhibitions and is responsible for Oxford University Museum of Natural History's programme of temporary and permanent exhibitions. She has a background in museum education and primary school teaching, and has worked in museum interpretation for over a decade. Rachel has a particular interest in the combination of art alongside scientific content, and enjoys sourcing contemporary artwork to engage visitors with the themes in the Museum's special exhibitions.

Anna Pasco Bolta
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Anna Pasco Bolta (Barcelona, 1990) explores how life and existence are sustained through research intertwining art, science, and technology from an ecological perspective. She exhibits internationally, collaborates with scientific institutions, and has shared her research through teaching at the Technical University of Munich and at other universities and cultural spaces. Her work has received multiple awards and grants such as the Ricard Camí Prize (2025), New Media München (2023), and Stiftung Kunstfonds (2022).

Benjamin Pollitt
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Ben Pollitt is an Associate Lecturer in History of Art at UCL. He completed his PhD at UCL in 2020. His thesis looked at the Pacific images of John Webber, the artist who accompanied James Cook's third voyage. His research has been published in leading journals in the field, such as Art Bulletin, Oxford Art Journal, RES, and Art History. He has also received several prestigious fellowships, including an AHRC International Fellowship at the Library of Congress, which he will be taking up next year.

Caroline Posch
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Caroline Posch is the curator of the Stone Age collection at the NHMW. In her research, she occupies herself with Stone Age raw material procurement strategies, theories of landscape usage and modelling of human movement and mobility. Furthermore, she has broad experience in science communica-tion as well as outreach to the public. She
is one of the two scientific curators of the newly opened children's hall "Ice Age Children and their World".

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury
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Katharina Rebay-Salisbury has been a Professor of Prehistory of Humanity at the University of Vienna since 2023 and leads the research group "Prehistoric Identities" at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Enthusiastic about the European Bronze and Iron Ages, her research focusses on combining interdisciplinary approaches for insights into people's lives, identities and social relations in prehistory. Her current research explores themes such as sex and gender, motherhood, kinship, mobility and migration through ERC and FWF-funded projects analyzing burial contexts and human remains from Central Europe.

Mario-Dominik Riedl
Natural History Museum Vienna

Mario-Dominik Riedl is an art historian and curator of the picture collection of the Archive for the History of Science at the NHM-Wien. His field of research is the standardization and development of scientific illustration from the late 17th to the early 20th century. The history of collections, as well as the depiction of displacement and genocide throughout the ages. For his research, he mostly draws on the collections held in the Natural History Museum Vienna.

Janine Rogers
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Janine Rogers is the Professor of Medieval Literature in the Department of English Literatures at Mount Allison University in Canada. Her current primary research area is in the field of literature, science and natural history museums. Her current research project is *The Nature of Knowledge: Literary Humanities and Global Challenges in Museums of Science* on the intellectual heritage of medieval manuscript culture in the history of science and natural history museums.

Romana Sammern
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Romana Sammern is an art historian at the inter-university organization Arts & Knowledges, a cooperation between the University of Salzburg and the Mozarteum University Salzburg. She researches and teaches at the intersection of the body, image, and medicine in the early modern period. She holds a PhD in art history from Humboldt University of Berlin. In 2024, she completed her habilitation in art history and visual studies at the University of Passau.

Achim Saupe
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Achim Saupe is a historian and managing director of the Leibniz Research Alliance "Value of the Past", and previously of the Leibniz Research Alliance "Historical Authenticity". In this context, he develops and coordinates transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary projects, particularly between basic historical research and research museums. His own research focuses on the history and theory of historiography, the relationship between history, memory, and cultural heritage, and urban history.

Jana Pia Josefa Schamall
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Jana Schamall is currently studying for a Bachelor's degree in German Philology at the University of Vienna. Their academic interests focus on Early New High German literature (i.e. Frühneuhochdeutsche Literatur) from the print era, historical linguistics, and the study of youth language. Jana Schamall has gained practical experience through an internship at the publishing house of the Natural History Museum in Vienna. She is planning to further her studies about children's and young adults' literature.

Brigitta Schmid
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Brigitta Schmid, born in Lower Austria, is a scientist, communication expert, and poet. She studied biology, paleontology, management, and history in Vienna and Klagenfurt. She has been working as an editor of popular science texts at the NHM Vienna for several decades, and since 2020 she has specialized in science communication through poetry...

Gregor Schuberth

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Gregor Schuberth studied architecture at the Vienna University of Technology and in Berlin. In 2005, he and his sister Johanna founded the firm Schuberth und Schuberth – Architecture and Interior Design. The studio has designed numerous exhibitions and realised residential, conversion, extension and office buildings. Their largest project to date was the BUWOG headquarters on Vienna's Rathausstraße, while their smallest projects included inner-city sausage stands ('Bitzinger' and 'Das goldene Würstel').

Katharina Seidl

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Katharina Seidl is an art historian at Ambras Castle, Innsbruck, where she works as curator and head of art education. She holds a PhD in art history from the University of Innsbruck, where she completed her dissertation in 2003 on 'The Alps: Image and Reality'. Her research focuses on Renaissance medicine, the healing arts, and culinary culture.

Paul Smith

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Paul Smith has spent his career working in university museums in Cambridge, Copenhagen, Birmingham and Oxford. As a geologist, he has over thirty-five years' experience of Arctic field expeditions and his geological research is focussed on the interactions of Earth systems and organisms from the late Neoproterozoic to the Ordovician. Paul also has interests in the application of new technologies to museums, particularly in the areas of 3D visualisation and the evaluation of user experience.

Jasmin Spreer

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Jasmin Spreer is leading the redesign of the website for the Natural History Museum in Vienna and also works as a freelance journalist, focusing on climate and biodiversity topics. She studied journalism and PR at FH Joanneum in Graz and OsloMet in Oslo. She is particularly interested in solutions journalism and innovative ways of addressing multiple crises.

Laurence Talairach

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Laurence Talairach is a Professor of English at the University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès an associate researcher at the Alexandre-Koyré Center, Paris. She has also been appointed a senior member of the Institut Universitaire de France (IUF) for 2025–2030. Her current research looks at the forms of natural history knowledge produced by British women in the nineteenth century and aims to reassess female natural historians' scientific expertise.

Eva-Maria Troelenberg

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Eva-Maria Troelenberg is a historian of modern and contemporary art and Islamic art. From 2018 to 2022, she was a professor of modern and contemporary art at Utrecht University; since 2022, she has been a professor of transcultural studies at the University of Düsseldorf. Her research interests include transcultural art, museum history, the arts and visual cultures of the modern Mediterranean, and Islamic art history and Orientalism.

Norbert Urban

Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg

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Norbert Urban is honorary curator of the Mineralogical Collection of the Archabbey of St. Peter, Salzburg.

Katrin Vohland

Natural History Museum Vienna

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Katrin Vohland is Director General of the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (NHM Vienna), Austria. From her formation she is biologist. She studied in Bielefeld and Bayreuth and did her PhD with Max-Planck Institute in Manaus, Brazil. Her main research interest is in the interface between science and different public audiences including policy. She develops Open Science strategically for the collections, the museum and beyond, including Citizen Science where she is active to employ integrative and reflective approaches.

Jan Wagner

Independent writer and poet, Hamburg

Jan Wagner is a German poet, essayist, and translator renowned for his precise observations and style. His poetry collection Regentonnenvariationen (2014) received the Leipzig Book Fair Prize, and in 2017 he was awarded the prestigious Georg Büchner Prize. His most recent poetry volume is Steine & Erden (Hanser, 2023).

Wolfgang Wanko

Museum St. Peter, Art-Collections of the Archabbey of St. Peter

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Wolfgang Wanko studied art history and archaeology at the University of Salzburg where he graduated in 1995. He began to work at the art department at the Archabbey of St. Peter in 2005. Since 2014 he has been director of the Museum St. Peter.

Irmi Wolvin

Independent artist, Vienna

Irmi Wolvin, born in Vienna, is a cellist, composer, singer, and producer. She studied cello at the Vienna Conservatory, jazz with Simon Frick, and piano and composition with Emanuel Schulz. Her work spans classical, jazz, film, pop, and baroque. She performs solo and in ensembles like the Vienna Improvisers Orchestra and has collaborated with Rod Stewart. Her music has been featured on Ö1, ORF, and Classic FM.

Anton Zwischenberger

Natural History Museum Vienna, Online- & Social Media-Communication

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Anton Zwischenberger is Social Media Manager at the Natural History Museum Vienna. His work focuses on digital communication, science communication, and the link between museums and new media. He is a historian, experienced project manager, and author of publications on corporate histories and history marketing. For several years, he has also worked on digital games and history and is a founding member of the AKGWDS – Arbeitskreis für Geisteswissenschaften und Digitale Spiele

Natural history museums have a rich history of drawing on the arts to interpret nature, incorporating natural forms into the design and decoration of their architecture, and collecting natural history paintings and illustrations alongside their specimens. They investigate life on Earth and shape our perception and understanding of nature, but they are also embedded in political and social systems, reflecting cultural values and contributing to their transformation. Their collections thus reflect the entangled global history of the natural sciences.

naturhistorisches museum wien nhm

MUSEUM FÜR NATUR & TECHNIK HAUS DER NATUR SALZBURG

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