

## WOMNH Conference

# Female Networks of Knowledge: Natural History between Private and Public Spaces

International & interdisciplinary conference on women, science and museums



19 & 20 November 2026

Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria



The conference organized by the *Natural History Museum Vienna*, *Museum für Naturkunde Berlin* and the *WOMNH Network* aims to explore how women have shaped scientific knowledge through networks that crossed domestic, social and institutional spaces such as natural history museums. Focusing on early modern figures as well as the increasing disciplinary differentiation of women scientists in the 19th century, it highlights diverse formats of knowledge exchange such as salons, scientific associations, museums, etc. Bringing together historical case studies and methodological reflections from the WOMNH network (established in 2024), we aim to foster and develop future women research in a variety of areas.

### Registration

Registration for the conference is now open. Please use the following links to register separately for **one or both days**!

**Registration Day 1** (November 19th): [Link Registration Day 1](#)

**Registration Day 2** (November 20th): [Link Registration Day 2](#)

### Important information:

- **Admissions:** Doors will open (at Maria Theresien-Platz, 1010 Vienna) at 8:45 AM on both days.
- **Entry Requirements:** Please print out your registration confirmation email and bring it with you. You will need to present this printout at the museum entrance (Maria-Theresien-Platz) to gain admission.

### Contact:

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[WOMNH](#) – Women in Natural History Museums and Collections

# Preliminary Programme

## **DAY 1: Thursday, 19 November 2026**

### **09:00 – 09:55 Welcome Notes:**

Welcome by Director General **Dr. Katrin Vohland** (NHM Vienna) and WOMNH Network (Laurence Talairach, Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel & Sabine von Mering)

### **09:55 – 10:35 Keynote Talk:**

**Prof. Laurence Talairach** (Alexandre-Koyré Center, Institut Universitaire de France (IUF), University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès): Seaweed Hunting in Nineteenth-Century Britain: From Local Communities to Transnational Networks of Female Beachcombers

### **10:45 – 11:55 Session 1: Early Women Naturalists**

**Romana Sammern** (Universität Salzburg): Collecting, Making, Healing: Medici Women and Networks of Medical Knowledge

**Noemi Di Tommaso** (University of Milan): Invisible Hands in a Visible Space: Francesca Fontana in Ulisse Aldrovandi's Natural History Museum

**Fiona Mountain** (Cotswolds): Eleanor Glanville: Lady of the Butterflies

### **13:00 – 14:10 Session 2: Women in Earth Sciences and Microscopy**

**Richard Fallon** (Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge): The Art of Graptolites: Women, Objectivity and Judgement in Edwardian Palaeontology

**Grace Exley** (Cambridge University Library, Darwin College): 'Written and edited by his wife': Re-reading life writing as a space of scientific expression for women

**Emily Whittingham** (University of York): 'Your charming philosophers': Female participation in networks of eighteenth-century microscopy

### **14:10 – 15:35 Session 3: Networks Across Boundaries: Women, Science, and Power**

**Luiza Teixeira-Costa** (Meertens Institute - Humanities Cluster, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences): Creating new networks: the discovery of Dutch female mycologists in the Flora Batava (1800-1934)

**Louisa-Dorothea Gehrke** (Dresden University of Technology): Healing the household, healing the colony? - Indonesian-European plant specialists in an "imperial cloud" of knowledge

**Magdaleen Du Toit** (University of Johannesburg): "Brothers" in the Domestic Sphere: Lucy Lloyd's Private and Public Knowledge Networks in 19th-Century South Africa

**Dorit Brixius** (Dresden University of Technology): Gertrud Tobler-Wolff (1877-1948) and fibre research in the Third Reich

**15:35 – 17:00 Session 4: Women, Art, and the Making of Knowledge**

**Cam Sharp Jones** (British Library, London): Personal but not private - the entomological research of Elizabeth Ann Kemp

**Joyce Dixon** (independent researcher): Picturing the Holophusicon: Precision and Imagination in the Art of Sarah Stone

**Meike Knittel** (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin): “J’espère que vous accorderez à Madame votre épouse la part qu’elle mérite à votre gloire...” – On women’s role in the production of botanical illustrations in eighteenth-century scholarly households

**Max Koss** (Leuphana University of Lüneburg): Between Culture and Nature: Women’s Philanthropy in the United States

17:00 – 17:15 **Sabine von Mering** (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin): Making Women Count: From Data Gaps to Connected Knowledge

**18:00 – 20:00 Evening Event**

Tour of the NHM Vienna

Women and Poetry with **Brigitta Schmid** (NHM Vienna) and **Clara Battiston** (University of Turin / Oxford University Museum of Natural History)

**DAY 2: Friday, 20 November 2026**

**09:00 – 09:05 Welcome**

**09:05 – 10:50 Session 5: About Networks: From Private to Official Spaces**

**Stephanie Reitzig** (Columbia University, New York): “Wat belongs ye museum I am in hops to dispose of it”: Widows and the Afterlives of Collections

**Joe Caygill** (University of Leeds, University of Cambridge): Catherine Strickland and the Management of Public Science Through Private Memory

**Anna Pelliccia** (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome): The Living-Lab of Evolution: Female Networks in the Making of Scientific Knowledge at Down House

**Sandra Klos** (Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW)): Ladies’ Committees and their Roles in International Scientific Conferences in Vienna, 1873–1914

**Kimberly M. Glassman** (Fitzwilliam Museum, Newnham College, University of Cambridge): Reading Women Not Between the Lines, but on the Page in the Writings of John Lindley (1799–1865)

**10:50 – 12:20 Session 6: Women in Museums and Beyond: Knowledge, Education, and Scientific Practice**

**Jane Melville** (Museums Victoria Research Institute, Melbourne): Jane Ward Tost (1816-1889) and Female Knowledge-Making in 19th Century Natural History Museums

**Biruni Hariadi** (Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History): “To many, she is ‘Miss Peabody’”: Women Science Educators at the Peabody Children’s Museum, 1926–1940s

**Meg Burgess** (University of York, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew): Gap Occupiers: Two Women and Irish lichenology

**Martina Motta & Martino Lorenzo Fagnani** (University of Pavia): A woman between marine biology, materiality, and networks: the case of Jeanne Villepreux (1794–1871) (University of Pavia): A woman between marine biology, materiality, and networks: the case of Jeanne Villepreux (1794–1871)

**13:20 – 14:35 Session 7: Women and the Making of Natural History in Italy**

**Francesca Bottura, Andrea Tenca & Fedra A. Pizzato** (University of Verona): Women in Between: Family, Friendship and Science at the Natural History Museum of Verona

**Claudia Addabbo** (University of Padua), **Federica Bonacini, Valentina Boscariol & Elena Canadelli**: The women behind the botanical collections: an Italian case study

**Elena Buccarelli** (University of Florence), **Stefano Cannicci, Isabella Gagliardi, Giuseppe Fabrizio Turrisi, Annamaria Nistri, Angelica Crottini**: Women, Zoology and scientific culture: reconstructing Enrica Calabresi’s scientific profile

**14:35 – 16:00 Session 8: Making Women Visible: Recovering Women’s Histories in Natural Sciences**

**Luisa Kapp** (Senckenberg Frankfurt): Hidden in Plain Sight: Women’s Networks of Knowledge at Senckenberg Nature Research

**Aria Tilove** (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin): FIND HER: A booklet tracing the (in)visibility of women at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

**Sophia Gräfe** (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin): Images, Archives and Women’s Labour in the History of the Natural Sciences

**16:30 – 17:00 Outlook & Farewell – WOMNH Manifesto**

**17:00 End of conference**