

Inscribing Love (Hamburg, 30 Sep–2 Oct 24)

University of Hamburg, Sep 30–Oct 2, 2024

Deadline: Mar 31, 2024

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Inscribing Love. The Materialisation of Affects in a Global Perspective.
Workshop.

The transmission of love requires a materialisation in the form of a written artefact. Following Niklas Luhmann, love can be understood as a code of communication requiring a medium that he defines as informed material, e.g. an inscribed object. One obvious example is the love letter that might be seen as a handwritten artefact through which a lover expresses his or her affection. Since a letter serves to bridge a physical distance or substitute for an absence, the material quality of the letter is of particular importance. In addition to letters, numerous other forms of materialisation and inscription are used to convey emotions: one might think of love locks, testaments, farewell letters, carvings in bark, dedications, autographs, funerary spaces, poetry albums, friendship books or forms of ostentatious affective expression as in tattoos as inscriptions on the human body.

The workshop will hence focus on written artefacts that are supposed to express love for another person. We deliberately leave the concept of love open, as it encompasses diverse meanings in different cultures and epochs; instead, we focus on practices that are intended to communicate love by inscribing a material object. We want to explore if written artefacts, through their various forms of inscribed materiality, are historically, culturally or gender-specifically bound to certain practices, and represent closeness to a loved person. Rather than deciding whether an emotion expressed in an artefact corresponds to a “real” emotion, we want to analyse to what extent the expression of love is linked to certain practices of material authentication: this raises the question of the originality of the written artefact, which is particularly revealing when compared in a global perspective.

The workshop will take place between 30th September and 2nd October 2024 within the framework of the Cluster of Excellence “Understanding Written Artefacts”, based at the University of Hamburg, and is linked in particular to the two research fields of “Inscribing Spaces” and “Creating Originals”: <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de>

Please send an abstract and a short CV until 31/3/24 to Jenny.Koerber@uni-hamburg.de

Reference:

CFP: Inscribing Love (Hamburg, 30 Sep–2 Oct 24). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 22, 2024 (accessed Mar 19, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41286>>.