Beauty Studies in the Premodern World (Online, 2 Feb–6 Jul 26)

Online, Feb 2–Jul 6, 2026

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Beauty Studies in the Premodern World - CHSTM Working Group.

This group provides a transdisciplinary forum for scholars engaged with the cultural histories of beautification and bodily care in the premodern global world. We approach beauty practices as historically situated techniques and materials applied to the body to maintain, enhance or restore appearance. They encompass not only cosmetic treatments and grooming routines but also forms of tacit knowledge related to health, hygiene, status and identity. While the historiography of science and medicine has increasingly recognized domestic and artisanal knowledge, beauty practices remain strikingly under-explored within these frameworks. We reposition beauty not as a superficial concern but as an historically significant domain of knowledge making using the analytic tools of a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

Participation requires prior registration, which follows a two-step process: https://www.chstm.org/group/beauty-studies-premodern-world

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Programme for the first half of 2026

Monday, February 2, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CET
Current research: Seminar with Laurence Totelin (Cardiff University): Recreating Ancient Cosmetics: Joys, Pitfalls and Engagement Opportunities

Monday, March 2, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CET
Seminar with Victoria Munn (University of Auckland) on Early Modern Hair Dye Recipes

Monday, May 4, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CEST
Seminar on The Authorities of Cosmetic Knowledge with Montserrat Cabré (University of Cantabria) and Mónica Durán (University of Granada)

Monday, June 1, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CEST
Current research: Seminar on Bathing Women in Late Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts with Sabrina Jocher (University of Salzburg)

Monday, July 6, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CEST
Seminar on Beautifying Practices in Arabic Medieval Medical Compendia with Anna Gili (University of Padua): Medical Beauty Prescriptions. A reading of al-Rāzī's Kitāb al-Man□ūrī and al-Ma□ūsī's

Kitāb al-Malakī

Reference:

ANN: Beauty Studies in the Premodern World (Online, 2 Feb-6 Jul 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 8, 2026 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/51424>.