

Beauty Studies in the Premodern World (Online, 7 Sept 26–1 Feb 27)

Online, Sep 7, 2026–Feb 1, 2027

Deadline: Sep 7, 2026

Romana Sammern

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.

Registration: <https://www.chstm.org/user/register>

Winter 2026/27 programme

Monday, September 7, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CEST

2 Book presentations:

"Beauty: the Body as Artefact. Historical Sources from Cicero to Goya", ed. by Romana Sammern and Julia Saviello (Routledge 2026, OA, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003464846>) and "Selling Pharmaka, buying health in ancient Greece and Rome: retail therapy", ed. by Laurence Totelin (Routledge 2026)

Monday, October 5, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CEST

Seminar with Sean Coughlin (Prague) on "Alchemies of Scent: Five Years of Text, Experiment, Replication"

Monday, November 2, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CET

Seminar with Rose Byfleet on the medical aspects of perfume.

Monday, December 7, 2026, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CET

Seminar with Dorit Brixius (Dresden) on "Crafting Care: French Noblewomen, Cosmetics, Creativity and Knowledge Exchange in the Grand Siècle".

Monday, February 1, 2027, 8:00 - 9:30 pm CET

Roundtable discussion and Q&A with Sajed Chowdhury (Utrecht) about his new book "Women Writers and Alchemy in Early Modern Britain" (Cambridge University Press 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009744621>).

Reference:

ANN: Beauty Studies in the Premodern World (Online, 7 Sept 26-1 Feb 27). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 3, 2026 (accessed Oct 25, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/53546>>.