Paper Matters: Global Perspectives on Decorated Paper (Hamburg, 30 Sep–2 Oct 26)

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), Hamburg University, Warburgstr. 26, 20354 Hamburg, Sep 30–Oct 2, 2026
Registration deadline: Sep 29, 2026

Theresa Zischkin

Decorated paper is a global phenomenon since at least the early modern period. The ERC-funded project GLOBAL DECO PAPER (Decorated Paper in the Early Modern Islamicate World: Aesthetics Techniques and Meaning in Global Contexts), at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, systematically studies the production, use, and significance of decorated paper in a globally comparative perspective.

With the workshop "Paper Matters: Global Perspectives on Decorated Paper", the project ventures out to the CSMC (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures) in Hamburg to discuss decorated paper with distinguished scholars, some of whom are also artists, from the fields of art history, conservation (science), digital humanities, history, manuscript studies and codicology, and material culture studies.

The materials discussed will take us from Song-period China (960–1279 AD) via early modern Asia and Africa to Europe and contemporary paper decoration practices. Presentations will discuss various historical paper decoration techniques and their uses, focus on practices of collection and reuse, investigate possibilities for the conservation of decorated paper, and consider exchange between artisans across half of the globe. The programme furthermore features a demonstration of paper decoration as well as an exhibition and a discussion of European decorated papers.

Visitors are welcome to join this workshop after registration on the website: https://www.globaldecopaper.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/workshop/. Please note that this is an in-person event that will neither be recorded nor streamed.

Programme:

30 September 2026

16:00-17:00 Guided Tour I of the CSMC Mobile Lab by Dr Sebastian Bosch (speakers and chairs only)

17:00-18:00 Guided Tour II of the CSMC Mobile Lab by Dr. Sebastian Bosch (speakers and chairs only)

19:00 Dinner (speakers and chairs only)

1 October 2026

9:00 Registration

9:15 Introduction by Prof Dr Konrad Hirschler & Prof Dr Kaja Harter-Uibopuu

9:30-11:30 Panel 1: Objects in Motion: Anthologies and Alba Amicorum
Chair R.B. Davidson MacLaren

• Yana van Dyke and Dr Jake Benson: Unravelling an Enigma: A Collaborative Analysis of the Composition, Creation, and Current Condition of Metropolitan Museum of Art 1997.71
• Prof Dr Marika Keblusek: Collated Paper: The Material Construction of Alba Amicorum
• Prof Dr Robyn Radway: The Consumption of Eurasian Decorated Papers in Sixteenth-Century Central European Alba Amicorum

11:30–13:00 Visit to the State and University Library Hamburg and viewing of the album amicorum of Caspar von Abschatz (Cod. in scrinio 198a) with Dr Anne Liewert (speakers and chairs only)

13:00-14:00 Lunch (speakers and chairs only)

14.00-16.00 Panel 2: Constructing the Decorated Surface
Chair Prof Dr Uta Lauer

• Dr Nil Baydar: The Technical Construction of Decorated Papers in the Albums of Qalandar Pāshā
• Dr Yan-chiuan He: The Vanished Patterns: Song Dynasty Embossed Decorate Paper and the Culture of Writing
• Dr Jaimee Comstock-Skipp: Amazing, Technicolor Yūsuf ū Zulaykhā Manuscripts from Bukhara

16:00-16.30 Break

16:30–17:30 A Survey of the GLOBAL DECO PAPER Project by Prof Dr Ilse Sturkenboom, Hanieh Arjomand-Fard, Lily Baumeister, Yih-chuen Liao, Negar Kazemipourleilabadi, Theresa Zischkin

19:00 Dinner (speakers and chairs only)

2 October 2026

9:00-9:30 Exhibition and discussion of European Decorated Papers by Susanne Krause, Dr Henk Porck and Julia Rinck

9.30-11.30 Panel 3: Living Traditions: Contemporary Practice and Historical Techniques
Chair Susanne Krause

• Esma Akoğlu: Around the World in 80 Cuts: A Brief Review of the Technical and Aesthetic Aspects of “Kaatı”, the Art of Turkish Paper-Leather Cutting, Through the Observation of Historical and Contemporary Examples
• Paul Hepworth: Decorated Papers of the Shah Tahmasp Album and Directions for Research

• Anita Chowdry: Strange Creatures in the Margins: Looking at Gold-painted Margins in Persian Manuscripts

11.30-12.00 A Demonstration of Preparing Gold-sprinkled Paper by Anita Chowdry

12:00-13:00 Lunch (speakers and chairs only)

13:00-15:00: Panel 4: Techniques of Repetition and Surface Transformation
Chair Prof Dr Nuria de Castilla

• Prof Huan-shen Lin: Gold-Decorated Paper (Jinhuajuan) from a Conservation Perspective: Towards a Classification of East Asian Decorated Processed Paper
• Rita Capitani: A Spray-Stencilled Yemeni Manuscript under the Microscope
• Elena Laura Jakobi: Collecting and Exchanging Knowledge of Marbled Paper in 17th-Century Europe – A Reconstruction Based on Manuscript Sources

15:00-15:30 Break

15.30-17.30 Panel 5: Collection Practices, Conservation and European Perspectives
Chair Dr Henk Porck

• Prof Dr Negar Habibi: Paper Matters, or How to Make New Ones: Persian Folios in the Jean Pozzi Collection
• Marjana Uhde: Carl Beitel (1866–1917) and the Decorated Papers of the Wiener Werkstätte
• Amélie Couvrat Desvergnes: Borders Without Borders: Reimagining the Persian Muraqqa with European Decorated Papers in the So-Called Nasir al-Din Shah Decoupage Album (c. 1888)

17.30-18.00 Closing Discussion and Publication Plans

19:00 Dinner (speakers and chairs only)

Reference:
CONF: Paper Matters: Global Perspectives on Decorated Paper (Hamburg, 30 Sep-2 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 7, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54129>.