

Love's Matter (Neuchâtel/online 12–13 Nov 26)

Neuchâtel, University of Neuchâtel / Online, Nov 12–13, 2026

Henriette Marsden

Love's Matter: The Material Culture and Art of Affection, 1700–1900.

This workshop sets out to explore how love, as material culture, social performance and artistic practice, shaped and was shaped by the material conditions of modernity from the early 18th to the end of the 19th century. The selected papers will explore the aesthetic properties of romantic desire, amicable companionship, familial connection, charitable responsibility, and political allegiance within the context of empire, global trade, and colonialism.

The workshop is organised in the context of the 9th edition of the Entretiens de la Fondation Maison Borel, held by the Institute of Art History and Museology at the University of Neuchâtel. These study days aim to foster the exchange of ideas and perspectives on methodological issues across various disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Thursday, 12 November 2026

Room R.O.12, Espace Tilo-Frey 1, University of Neuchâtel

09:00 Registration & Welcome Coffee

09:30 Henriette Marsden (University of Cambridge) & Lara Pitteloud (University of Neuchâtel), Introduction

10:00 Keynote Lecture: Dr. Sally Holloway (University of Warwick), "I observed in the midst of the jungle a beautiful column": Practices of Love and Grief in Eighteenth-Century Britain and India

11:15 Coffee Break

Panel 1 – Distant Desires: Flirtation, Fantasy, and the Imagined Other

11:30 Silvia Amadori (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), Intimate Gazes: Erotic Materiality of Lovers' Eyes

11:55 Dr. Sofya Dmitrieva (University of Oxford, Voltaire Foundation), L'heure du berger: Shepherd Love in Eighteenth-Century Material Culture

12:20 Dr. Cynthia Sadler (University of Rostock), The Bold and the Subtle: Women Loving Women in Eighteenth-Century Paris

12:45 Q&A Session and Discussion

13:15 Lunch Break

Panel 2 – Love Tokens: Gift Exchange, Attachment, and Social Obligation

14:15 Dr. Stephanie Koscak (Wake Forest University), “Short of Money”: Coins, Care, and Precarity in Eighteenth-Century London

14:40 Dr. Maggie Kalenak (University of Cambridge), “Obsolete lollypops” and “Tassel-trimmed” boot bags: Love Tokens and the Material Culture of 19th-Century English Engagements

15:05 Maya Wassell Smith (Cardiff University, Royal Museums Greenwich), ‘I Came Home with Lots of Toys’: Sailors, Love, and Coercive Giving

15:30 Q&A Session and Discussion

16:30 Demonstration of the “Automates Jacquet-Droz” (for the participants only), Musée d’art et d’histoire de Neuchâtel (Esplanade Léopold-Robert 1)

19:30 Workshop Dinner in Neuchâtel (for the participants only)

Friday, 13 November 2026

Room R.S.38, Espace Tilo-Frey 1, University of Neuchâtel

Panel 3 – Affective Surfaces: Material Interfaces of Feeling

09:45 Dr. Eliza Goodpasture (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford), To my Friend: The Painted Canvas as a Conduit for Friendship in the Art of Annie Swynnerton and Susan Isabel Dacre

10:10 Dahi Jung (University of Zurich), Intimate Surfaces: Pith Paper, Touch, and the Making of Love in Nineteenth-Century Britain. The presentation will also include her paper awarded the VKK-S/ASHAA Prize

10:45 Q&A Session and Discussion

Prize Ceremony of the Swiss Association of Art Historians

11:15 Award Ceremony of the “Prix d’encouragement à la recherche en histoire de l’art 2026” of the Foundation Alfred Richerich and the Swiss Association of Art Historians

Senior Category – Tactile Knowledge: Crafting Nature with Pith Paper in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Albums in Britain. To be presented together with Dahi Jung’s paper in Panel 3

Dahi Jung (University of Zurich)

Junior Category – The Catalogue as Stand-Alone Exhibition. How Seth Siegelau Conceives of a New Exhibiting Medium for Conceptual Art

Leo Kaut (University of Basel)

12:00 Apéritif dînatoire (Sponsored by VKKS)

Panel 4 – Generative Care: Emotional Expression and Artistic Practice

13:30 Dr. Federica Vermot (University of Lausanne), "Jusqu'au bout des doigts": Sculpted Hands as Intimate Portraits

13:55 Dr. Marie-Charlotte Lamy (University of Basel), For the Love of Dog: Picturing Interspecies Companionship

14:20 Linnéa Kluge (Heidelberg University), "I Divided Everything for My Five Children": Maternal Love and Material Survival in Anna Marie Lieb's World of Care and Confinement

14:45 Q&A Session and Discussion

15:15 Coffee Break

Panel 5 – Emotional Regimes: Affective Authority, Patriotism and the Rites of Love

15:30 Jakob Spengler (University of Bern), Learning to Love the Nation? Affective Objects in the Festivals of the Helvetic Republic (1798–1803)

15:55 Dr. Javier Sadarangani (University of Bern) – online, Masculine Friendships among Chilean Politicians: Letters and the Material Practice of Love, 1808-1861

16:20 Dr. Moisés Prieto (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Love, Longing and Loyalty: Authoritarian Rule and Material Culture in the Atlantic Space (ca. 1800s–1840s)

16:45 Q&A Session, Discussion & Conclusion

Conception of the Workshop

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University of Neuchâtel, Espace Tilo-Frey 1, R.O.12 & R.S.38

Join online: <https://unine.webex.com/meet/lara.pitteloud>

Registration is not required.

Reference:

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