

**1<sup>st</sup> WOMNH Workshop** (10-11 December 2024, online)

***“Tell me where the women are...”***

## **Women in Natural History Museums and Collections Network Launching Event**

WOMNH is an international network which promotes interdisciplinary collaborations between researchers and museum professionals. It examines the roles women have played across the globe in the making of natural history collections and museums, highlighting their often overseen presence and (mostly) hidden labour in museums, in the field, or at home. In particular, WOMNH promotes the investigation of knowledge gaps that arise from overlooking women as museum employees, collectors, donors, and practitioners of science, leaving them as invisible agents in the construction of natural history. Beyond exploring the invisibility of women, WOMNH also examines women visible as dehumanised objects (or subjects) of scientific studies in connection to marginalisation or colonialism. By looking at how women have contributed – both voluntarily and involuntarily – to the collections and generated knowledge of natural history museums, WOMNH relates as well to contemporary discussions around social justice, participatory sciences and colonial structures in science.



*'Common Objects at the Sea-Side Generally Found upon the Rocks at Low Water',  
Punch 35 (Aug. 21, 1858), 76*

### **Network Contacts:**

Linda Andersson Burnett, Uppsala University ([linda.andersson-burnett@idehist.uu.se](mailto:linda.andersson-burnett@idehist.uu.se))  
Anita Hermannstädtter, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin ([a.hermannstaedter@mfn.berlin](mailto:a.hermannstaedter@mfn.berlin))  
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WOMNH Network Website (*under construction*): <https://womnh.hypotheses.org/>

## **Workshop Programme**

**Day 1 – Tuesday, 10 December 2024 (14:00 – 17:00 CET)**

### **Zoom link for Day 1:**

<https://univ-tlse2.zoom.us/j/99884933641?pwd=GS8SU8XiaTl2k5gxgsb0ixraCdr7bw.1>

Meeting ID: 998 8493 3641

Code: 191375

14:00 – 14:10 **Welcome and introduction** (Anita Hermannstädter)

14:10 – 14:40 Short **introduction round** (all participants)

**Session 1:** Short presentations (part 1)

Chair: Anita Hermannstädter

14:40 – 14:50 **Linda Andersson Burnett** (University Uppsala) & **Laurence Talairach** (Alexandre-Koyré Center/University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès): "WOMNH-19: Women Collectors of Natural History in 19th-century Britain"

14:50 – 15:00 **Celia Emmelhainz** (Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History) & **Mary Margaret Lea** (National Museum of Women in the Arts): "Making Women Visible through the Museum Archive"

15:00 – 15:10 **Grace Ellis** (Yale University): "Storytelling and Silences: How the La Flesche Sisters Recorded Their Mother's Knowledge."

15:10 – 15:40 Discussion

15:40 – 16:00 **Break**

**Session 2:** Short presentations (part 2)

Chair: Sabine von Mering

16:00 – 16:10 **Hanna Wüste & Sarina Schirmer** (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin): "Fuzzy Entanglements. Female agency in colonial fieldwork"

16:10 – 16:20 **Elena Canadelli** (University of Padova): "Giving Voice to Italian Women in the History of Science: Museums and Exhibitions"

16:20 – 16:30 **Paola Di Lieto** (University of Padova and University of Venice): "Maria Luisa Bonelli and the Institute and Museum of History of Science in Florence"

16:30 – 17:00 Discussion

**Day 2 – Wednesday, 11 December 2024 (10:00-13:00 CET)**

**Zoom link for Day 2:**

<https://univ-tlse2.zoom.us/j/93187226474?pwd=acEwC4j3WUkUalosCbNb7Ua0HvbT0t.1>

Meeting ID: 931 8722 6474  
Code: 953986

10:00 – 10:10 Welcome and introduction, short recap of Day 1 (Linda Andersson Burnett)

**Session 3:** Short presentations (part 3)

Chair: Laurence Talairach

10:10 – 10:20 **Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel** (Naturhistorisches Museum Wien):  
Book project NHM Vienna „13 Frauen – aus der Geschichte des Museums“

10:20 – 10:30 **Alix Veilhan** (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, MNHN):  
"Telling Four Centuries of Women's presence at the Muséum national  
d'histoire naturelle: The Challenges of a Book Project"

10:30 – 10:40 **Zoë Simmons** (Oxford University Museum of Natural History):  
"Down through the ages; a collections-based hunt for women entomologists"

10:40 – 11:10 Discussion

11:10 – 11:30 **Break**

**Session 4:** Short presentations (part 4)

Chair: Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel

11:30 – 11:40 **Sabine von Mering** (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin): "*FINDing* hidden  
figures – highlighting *Frauen in der Naturkunde* at the MfN Berlin"

11:40 – 11:50 **Siobhan Leachman** (Wikimedia Aotearoa New Zealand):  
"Wikidata and Women Scientific Illustrators"

11:50 – 12:00 **Sophia Gräfe** (Humboldt University Berlin): "Making Order: Women's Labour  
and Image Archives in the History of the Natural Sciences"

12:00 – 12:30 Discussion

12:30 – 13:00 Wrap up and next steps

## **Bio notes of presenters**

**Linda Andersson Burnett** is a Wallenberg Academy Fellow and Associate Professor of History of Science and Ideas at Uppsala University in Sweden. Her research focuses on Scottish and Swedish Enlightenment studies as well as the role of natural-history travel and university teaching in state-building and colonial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Linda is currently the P.I. of the research programme *Instructing Natural History: Nature, People, Empire* at Uppsala University, which investigates the history of instructions in relation to colonial collecting and travelling. She is the co-P.I of the CNRS International Emerging Actions research project (WOMNH-19; 2024–2025) with Laurence Talairach.

**Elena Canadelli** is currently Associate Professor of History of Science at the University of Padua, where she is also Scientific Director of the Botanical Museum. Her research focuses on visual studies in science, science museum studies, and cultures of collecting natural history objects in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has been President of the Italian Society for the History of Science and Editor-in-Chief at *Nuncius. Journal of the Material and Visual History of Science* since 2021.

**Grace Ellis** is a senior at Yale majoring in American Studies with a concentration in Public Humanities. Her research interests include Native American History, Critical Indigenous Studies, Settler Colonial Studies, the history of anthropology, and women's intellectual history. She interned for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum at the National Anthropological Archives, where she developed her presentation "Storytelling and Silences."

**Celia Emmelhainz** manages the National Anthropological Archives in the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian. Emmelhainz holds a master's in anthropology from Texas A&M, and a master's in library and information science from Kent State. Her recent research focuses on women's career choices in libraries, archives, and museums.

**Paola Bernadette Di Lieto** is a PhD student in Historical studies at the University of Padua and Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She collaborates with the Museo Galileo and the Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci. Her research focuses on the history of Italian scientific heritage, from the Unification of Italy to the twentieth century.

**Sophia Gräfe** is a cultural studies and media studies scholar working at the intersection of media studies and history of science. She is a Research Assistant at Humboldt-University Berlin as well as a Guest Researcher at the Naturkundemuseum Berlin, where she has initiated the editorial project "Images of Nature" together with art historian Julia Bärnighausen in 2020. Her research interests include Visual History of Science, Natural History Image Archives, Science Film, and Film & Animal Studies. In the current Winter Semester she teaches a class on „Women in the Natural Sciences“ at HU Berlin.

**Anita Hermannstädter** is an historian, exhibition curator and cultural manager. Since 2012, she has been working at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin as the co-founder and co-lead of the Centre for the Humanities of Nature department at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin that addresses the political, societal and cultural dimension of a natural history museum.

**Stefanie Jovanovic-Kruspel** is an art & museum historian working at the NHM Vienna, where she is the curator of the "Hochstetter Collection Basel" – the bequest of the NHM Vienna's founding director Ferdinand von Hochstetter. Stefanie is especially interested in the

architectural histories of natural history museums of the 19th century and their role as media of science communications. Besides this her research focuses on the history of collections (especially entomology) and visualisation strategies of natural sciences in the 18th and 19th century.

**Mary Margaret Lea** recently graduated from the University of Virginia with a B.A. in Anthropology. She is an intern at the Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Her research investigates how GLAM institutional practices shape women's roles.

**Siobhan Leachman** ([0000-0002-5398-7721](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5398-7721)) is a Wikimedian and independent researcher actively involved in multiple Natural History related projects focusing on women. In 2018 she was awarded the Auckland War Memorial Museum Medal and is a Companion of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. In 2023 the Wikimedia Foundation named her Wikimedia Laureate.

**Sarina Schirmer** is part of the Center for the Humanities of Nature at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and is currently completing her Master's degree in History at the Freie Universität of Berlin. Her interests lie in the fields of colonial collecting practices and environmental history, as well as the history of knowledge production.

**Zoë M. Simmons's** work in the Hope Entomological Collections has led to a specialism in historic collections research, particularly regarding identification of type material. She has an interest in the material culture of natural history collections, especially relating to insects and/or Victorian era collections such as the Octavius Pickard-Cambridge Exotic Araneae specimen collection and archive.

**Laurence Talairach** is a Professor of Victorian Literature at the University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès and an associate researcher at the Alexandre-Koyré Center for the History of Science and Technology. Her academic interests span medicine, natural history and British literature in the long nineteenth century. She is currently co-PI of a CNRS International Emerging Actions (IEA) research project (WOMNH-19; 2024–2025) with Linda Andersson Burnett.

**Alix Veilhan** – editor at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, in the General public editions. This department publishes exhibition catalogs, children's books, essays, as well as publications that showcase collections and scientific research.

**Sabine von Mering** ([0000-0003-2982-7792](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2982-7792)) is a biologist and data scientist at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin. Her work in the science programme 'Collection Future' focuses on linking collection data and knowledge contextualisation. She holds a PhD in botany and is an active Wikimedian. Her research interests include the history of natural history, especially of research expeditions, scientific contributions of marginalised groups with a focus on women botanists, and global networks of collection agents.

**Hanna Wüste** finished her Master's degree at the Humboldt-University of Berlin in July 2024. Between 2022 and 2024 she worked at the Center for the Humanities of Nature at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin. She will start her PhD thesis in the project "Killing to Keep: Violent Field Practices and Natural History in the Age of Empire" at the University of Basel in April 2025.