

Traditional categories essential to cataloguing and describing objects (such as date, maker, and geographic origin) are opposed to the layered processes of creation, circulation, and reinterpretation that characterize much EurAsian material culture in central European collections. Museum labels pinpoint where and when objects were “made.” A methodology grounded in questions related to material histories shifts the emphasis to layering and adaptive reuse. These questions open new spatial and temporal contexts for objects, placing them more firmly in global circuits. The goal of this workshop is to bring these material entanglements to the surface and develop concrete measures that make them more visible to both scholars and the general public. To do so, the workshop brings together a group of international experts with Austrian collections and stakeholders to present cutting edge research and explore new avenues for teaching and outreach that place Eurasian materials at the center of thinking about central European collections.

The focus will be on the use and adaptation of raw materials (such as metals, minerals, bones, nutshells) to explore deep object biographies. The workshops will look closely at well-known EurAsian resources like lapis lazuli (Lake Baika and in the Kokcha River valley), ruby (Central and Southeast Asia), nephrite (most famously from Hotan), diamonds (Indian subcontinent), citrine (Ural Mountains), and coconut (Indo-Pacific). Workshop participants will also focus on less-studied materials such as chalcedony, aurochs horn, jasper, agate, rock crystal, amethyst, sardonyx, heliotrope, and garnet. Scholars will also present recent work on the global entanglements of central European mining experts, some of whom were commissioned to lead extraction projects staffed by enslaved persons in South Asia.

Contact

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Invitation

EurAsian Materials in Central European Collections

Funded by the FWF Cluster of Excellence
in EurAsian Transformations

5 and 6 June 2025, 9:15–19:00 and 10:00–17:30

Claudiana (Herzog-Friedrich-Straße 3, 6020 Innsbruck) and
Schloss Ambras (Schloßstraße 20, 6020 Innsbruck)

Thursday, 2025 June 5 - Claudiana (Herzog-Friedrich-Straße 3, 6020 Innsbruck)

- 9:15 Welcome address: **Robyn Dora Radway**
- 9:30–11:00 **Panel One: Collections** (Moderator Ulrike Tanzer)
- Margaret Tali**, Institute of Art History and Visual Culture, Estonian Academy of Arts
Collecting Chinese and Japanese material culture in Estonia: Johannes Mikkel Collection
- Tünde Komori**, Hungarian National Museum
Asian decorative ceramics in Hungarian archaeological collections
- Lucie Kodišová**, Czech National Museum
Tortoise shells
- 11:00–11:30 coffee break
- 11:30–12:30 **Panel Two: Materiality of Precious Objects** (Moderator Klara Maas)
- Suzanna Ivanic**, University of Kent
Playing with Boundaries:
Heliotropes and Garnets in Rudolf II's Kunstkammer
- Erika Kiss**, Hungarian National Museum
TBD
- 12:30–13:30 lunch (for conference participants)
- 13:30–15:00 **Panel Four: Mining** (Moderator Moritz Wallenborn)
- Wenrui Zhao**, University of Utah
The Materiality of the Golden Dream: Sumatran Ores and Central European Mining
- Petra Mátyás-Rausch**, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
The Transylvanian Gold and the Government: From Precious Metal Mines to the Mining Chamber
- Claire Sabel**, University of Vienna
Transformations in the Eurasian gem trade during the long seventeenth century
- 15:00–15:30 coffee break
- 15:30–16:30 **Spotlight on an ongoing technical investigation**
(Moderator Robyn Radway)
- Teresa Lamers**, Kunsthistorisches Museum
The CROWN Project: What optical and material analysis can (and can't) tell us about the Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire

- 17:00 **Keynote lecture** (Moderator Robyn Radway)

Ulinka Rublack, University of Cambridge
Inter-materiality and Meaning

- 19:00 **Dinner** (for conference participants)
Das Brahms

Friday, 2025 June 6 - Schloss Ambras (Schloßstraße 20, 6020 Innsbruck)

- 10:00–12:00 SCHLOSS AMBRAS, **Katharina Seidl**, Leiterin der Kunstvermittlung

- 12:00–14:00 lunch at Café & Bistro Ferdinand (Schloss Ambras) for conference participants and return to the Brenner Archiv (Josef-Hirn-Straße 5, 10. Floor, 6020 Innsbruck)

Friday, 2025 June 6 - Forschungsinstitut Brenner-Archiv, 10. Stock
(Josef-Hirn-Straße 5, 6020 Innsbruck)

- 14:00–15:00 **Panel Five: Armor** (Moderator Ulrike Tanzer)

Alan Williams, Wallace Collection
Damascus steel knowledge in Europe

Christine Frank, University of Innsbruck, Japanese objects
Regarding ‚Samurai‘: From a Rarity in the Cabinet of Curiosities to a Symbol of a Nation

Rahul Kulka, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Hofjagd- und Rustkammer
Adorned with borrowed plumes: The use of feathers for early modern arms and armour

- 15:00–15:30 coffee break

- 15:30–16:30 **Panel Six – object lightning rounds** (Moderator Klara Maas)

Marie Ngiam, University of Oslo
Object: Tortoiseshell Cabinet of 1660

Sundar Henny, University of Bern
Object: Ask the dust: The fate of stones and earth from the Holy Land, 1500–2025

Robyn Dora Radway, Central European University
Object: Nutmeg Containers by Hungarian Goldsmiths in Renaissance Mecklenburg

- 16:45–17:30 Outreach Brainstorm: moderator **Robyn Dora Radway**