

International Conference

A History of Textile Cleanliness

Washing and Perfuming Fabrics from
the Medieval to the Modern Period

27, 28 & 29 May 2026

At the University of Bern
& the Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg

Laver au "Soleil"

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LABORA

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Burggemeinde
Bern

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A History of Textile Cleanliness

Washing and Perfuming Fabrics from the Medieval to the Modern Period

27, 28 & 29 May 2026

International conference organized by Moïra Dato (Institute of Art History, University of Bern) and Érika Wicky (Université Grenoble-Alpes/LARHRA)

Programme

Wednesday 27 May

UNIVERSITY OF BERN, HAUPTGEBÄUDE, KUPPELRAUM

free admission limited to available places

13:00–13:30 Arrival and Coffee

13:30–14:15 Introduction by Moïra Dato & Érika Wicky

14:15–15:30 PANEL 1 | CULTURAL AND SOCIAL
ATTITUDES TO CLEANING AND TEXTILE CARE |
MODERATION: TORSTEN KORTE, UNIVERSITÄT BERN

Isabella Campagnol (Istituto Marangoni)

Doing the Laundry in 18th-Century Venice: Washing in a City on Water, but Without Water

Marie Charvet (Nantes Université)

Whiteness vs Preservation: Laundresses and Housewives in 19th Century Urban France Public Washhouses

15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–18:00 PANEL 2 | THE SCENT OF CLEANLINESS
| MODERATION: ÉRIKA WICKY

Océane Fontaine Cioffi (Université de Tours)

The Scent of Clean: Perfuming Linen Between Health, Sensuality, and Material Care in Sixteenth Century Europe

Pauline Devriese (Universiteit Gent/Modemuseum Hasselt)

The Scent of Dress: Tracing the Separation of Scent and Dress in Daily Hygiene and Health Practices from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries in Western Europe

Lucille Lefrang (Université Grenoble Alpes) and Olivier David (Institut Lavoisier/Paris Saclay)

The Contemporary « Toxic » Smell of Clean: The Example of Galaxolide

18:00 Aperitif for the conference's participants

Thursday 28 May

ABEGG-STIFTUNG, RIGGISBERG

admission upon reservation at this [link](#)
(registration closes on 14 May 2026)



10:00–12:00 PANEL 3 | TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES OF
TEXTILE CLEANING | MODERATION: JEAN-ALEXANDRE
PERRAS, PARIS 4 SORBONNE UNIVERSITÉ / CELLF

Vendy Hoppe (University of Manchester/The Delmas Foundation)

Too Precious to Wash? The Care and Cleaning of Velvets in Early Modern Europe

Audrey Colonel-Coquet (Université Grenoble-Alpes/LARHRA)

The Cleanliness of Gloves in the 19th Century: From Home Cleaning to Washable Gloves

Eloïse Richard (Université de Genève)

Behind the White Coat: Cleaning and Sterilizing Hospital Textiles in the Early 20th Century

12:00–13:30 Lunch

13:30–14:30 Visit of the Conservation workshop and storage of the Abegg-Stiftung

14:30–16:15 PANEL 4 | CLEANING IN TEXTILE

CONSERVATION | MODERATION: REGULA SCHORTA,
ABEGG-STIFTUNG

Bettina Niekamp (Abegg-Stiftung)
*Textile Cleanliness – Some Case Studies of
Conservation/Restoration Treatments of Soiled Linen
Damasks, Burial Textiles, Tapestries and Liturgical Textiles*

Johanna Nilsson (Göteborg University), Jan Pettersson
(Göteborg University) and Karin Tetteris (Armémuseum)
*Traces of Environment and Humans: Interdisciplinary
Studies of Dirt on Historical Textiles*

Anna Robinson (University of Lincoln)
*In the Usual Fashion – Learning from and Deciphering 19th
Century Laundering Instructions*

16:15–16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30–17:30 **Visit of the permanent and temporary
exhibitions of the Abegg-Stiftung**

19:00 **Dinner for the conference's
participants, Bern**

Friday 29 May

UNIVERSITY OF BERN, HAUPTGEBÄUDE, KUPPELRAUM

free admission limited to available places

**09:00–11:00 PANEL 5 | THE ACTORS AND KNOWLEDGE
OF CLEANING** | MODERATION: RAPHAËL MORERA,
CNRS/EHESS

Olga Arenga (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)
*From Soap to Scent: Garment Care and Daily Labor in the
Barberini Archive*

Sara van Dijk (Rijksmuseum) and Danielle van den Heuvel
(Universiteit Utrecht)
White and Bright: Washing Linens in the Dutch Republic

Santosh Kumar Rai (University of Delhi)
*From Flowers to Chemicals: Textile Cleanliness and
Changes in the Handloom Industry of Colonial North India*

Monica Klasing Chen (Universität Heidelberg)
*Virtue or Science: Washing and Caring for Textiles in
Early-Modern and Modern China*

11:00–11:30 **Coffee Break**

**11:30–12:30 PANEL 6 | RELIGIOUS RITUALS AND
PRACTICES OF CLEANLINESS** | MODERATION:
CORINNE MÜHLEMANN, UNIVERSITÄT BERN

Juliette Calvarin (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
*«lynin cloth of witré colore»: Veronica's Veil, Linen
Vestments, and the Laundress*

Patricia Blessing (Stanford University)
*Textile Cleanliness in Islamic Law: From Hadith to
Ottoman Fatwas*

12:30–14:00 **Lunch**

**14:00–16:00 PANEL 7 | DIRT AND THE ABSENCE OF
CLEANING** | MODERATION: SASHA ROSSMAN,
UNIVERSITÄT BERN

Sylvia W. Houghteling (Bryn Mawr College)
*The Soil of Dyes: Ground, Water, and Scent in the
Making of Early Modern South Asian Textiles*

Léon Rochard (Sorbonne-Universität)
*«The world is like this cloth, misleading and fake»:
Clean, Dirty Textiles and the Question of Representation
in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands*

Alison Matthews David (Toronto Metropolitan University)
Offenders: Cleanliness and the Scent of Crime

Julia Guarneri (University of Cambridge)
*Dry Clean Only: Dealing with Unwashable Clothing in the
Twentieth-Century United States*

15:30–16:30 **Final discussion and closing remarks**



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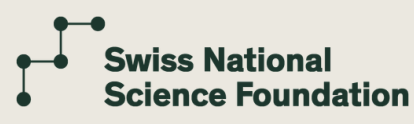


SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Olivier David (Institut Lavoisier / Paris-Saclay)
Raphaël Morera (CNRS-EHESS)
Corinne Mühlemann (Universität Bern)
Helen Wyld (National Museum Scotland)



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