

CALL FOR PAPERS

Embodied Histories: Cultural History of, in, and through the Human Body

September 4-6, 2024, Potsdam, Germany (on site)

Human actions and interactions are mediated and expressed through the body. Even abstract thoughts and philosophical ideas are transmitted through moving and acting bodies (speaking and hearing; writing and reading). Beyond contacts and interactions among themselves, throughout history humans have also sought to establish contact and relationships with transcendental spheres and divinities through bodily movements and performances even while remaining firmly bound to the materiality of bodies and the material world generally. Embodied Histories refers to the cultural history of the human body – for example, what humans have thought and said about bodies, how they have moved, and what they have done to their own and others' bodies – but also to telling cultural history through the human body, investigating how bodies and body conceptions have been impacted by political, social, economical, and cultural shifts. How do individual human bodies function within and in relation to social, civic, and political bodies? How do collective images and normative ideas of the body influence and shape individuals and their body practices? Embodied Histories is interested in investigating the cultural history of both whole bodies and body parts – as well as the bases and rationales for the subdivision and fragmentation of bodies.

For its 2024 conference, the *International Society for Cultural History* invites paper and panel proposals on the theme of “Embodied Histories.” Historians and contextually oriented scholars working on any period or location are encouraged to explore (but are by no means limited to) the following topics:

- representations and conceptualizations of the human body and its parts
- categorizations, marginalizations, and discriminations of the body; racialized bodies, gendered bodies
- histories of medicine and of therapy
- changing bodies from childhood to old age
- disability history
- politics of the body
- body norms, their negotiations, and their social and cultural repercussions
- cultural constructions of beautiful, healthy, and desirable bodies
- bodily performances and practices in different contexts
- commodification of the body and its parts
- bodies and body parts in religious contexts
- bodily functions, body fluids and gasses, and their cultural significance
- punishments and constraints of the body and its parts; bodily (self)control
- temporary and permanent body modifications and enhancements
- discourses and practices of the dead body
- bodies in movement, mobile bodies, bodies and political borders
- bodies in personal and social interaction
- **bodies in conflict and war**
- perceiving and perceived bodies
- bodily pleasures
- violence to and abuses of the body
- boundaries of the body, their transgressions, and their violations
- reconstructing history through the body: reenactments, experimental archaeology

- topographies of the human body and identification of its components

As always, we also welcome panel and paper proposals on methods and theories of cultural history; new approaches to cultural history; and the history of cultural history. Plenary speakers:

- Vanessa Agnew (TU Dortmund)
- Jasmine Nichole Cobb (Duke University)
- Christopher E. Forth (University of Kansas)
- Christian Laes (University of Manchester)

Instructions:

We welcome proposals for both panels (120 mins) and individual papers (20 mins). Panel proposals should include a panel title, a panel description (500-1000 words), and biographies of each participant (80-100 words) in a single PDF file. The panel description should sketch the topic and the format of the panel and include the abstracts for the individual contributions to the panel. Please indicate whether you need the committee to appoint a panel chair. Panel proposals including participants from more than one institution and representing diversity in terms of disciplines, career stages, and gender are particularly welcome.

Individual paper proposals should include an abstract (300 words) and a biography (80-100 words) in a single PDF file.

Proposals and inquiries should be sent to isch2024@uni-potsdam.de by **Jan 7, 2024**. Those individuals whose abstracts are accepted for presentation will be notified by the **end of Feb 2024** and will be expected to become [members of the ISCH](#).

PhD candidates and early post-docs may apply for a 400 Euro travel grant. Please motivate your application for a travel grant in your proposal (200 words).

Presenters are invited to consider submitting articles to the ISCH's official peer-reviewed journal, [Cultural History](#), published by the Edinburgh University Press and monographs and edited volumes to [the book series](#) it publishes with Routledge.

The conference will feature a prize competition for the best paper presentation by an early career researcher. PhD candidates and early postdocs (up to five years after completion of PhD) who are interested in participating will have to submit a script of their presentation (max. 3000 words excluding notes and bibliography) and the visual support they used during the presentation (Powerpoint, Prezi or similar) by Sept 15, 2024 to the prize committee. Further information will be communicated during the conference.

For the latest ISCH conference news, visit the conference website www.isch2024potsdam.de. For any questions about the ISCH conference, please contact the program committee at isch2024@uni-potsdam.de.