

## 40th History of Technology Conference

### Colors in Technology – Technology of Colors

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Date 17–18 November 2017  
Venue Klostergut Paradies, Schlatt, Switzerland  
Organizer Iron Library, Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd  
Deadline 30 April 2017

### Call for Papers

The 40th History of Technology Conference will be held at the Klostergut Paradies in Schlatt near Schaffhausen, Switzerland on 17 and 18 November 2017. The Conference has served as an outstanding platform for the exchange of ideas between research, teaching and industry since 1978. The speakers and the invited guests come from universities, libraries, collections and museums or contribute their business and industrial experience. The conferences are renowned for the breadth and topicality of the papers presented. You can find information on previous conferences at:

[www.eisenbibliothek.ch](http://www.eisenbibliothek.ch).

This international and interdisciplinary event is organized by the Iron Library (Eisenbibliothek), Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd. Responsibility for the content of the conference is in the hands of a scientific advisory board consisting of Dr. Gisela Hürlimann (ETH Zurich), Prof. Reinhold Reith (University of Salzburg) and Prof. Friedrich Steinle (TU Berlin), and it is they who decide on the selection of the speakers.

We kindly invite interested persons involved in research, teaching and practice to apply to present a paper.

#### Conference topic in 2017: Colors in Technology – Technology of Colors

Throughout history, human cultures have used color to decorate their artifacts – amphorae and motor cars, textiles and smartphones – and technological processes have always been involved in obtaining and producing these colors, whether they are dyestuffs, pigments or paints. The 2017 Conference on the History of Technology will focus on Colors in Technology and Technology (or Technologies) of Colors, both in a European perspective and from a global-historical viewpoint.

The subject raises a host of different questions and aspects. How were such 'colors' manufactured? By whom and for whom? And how was trade organized? What is the social status associated with specific colors (dyes, pigments, and paints), with the painter's or dyer's trade and with other related trades? What are the gender-specific roles? Dyeing textiles and leather has long played an important role in society. Indigo and madder, to take but one example, have undergone societal and economic ups and downs depending on the particular constellation of requirements, resources, processes and markets. In early modern times, for instance, indigo production in India, along with the commercial network that grew up around it, spelt the end for the flourishing woad trade in Europe, but in turn it largely collapsed under the onslaught of the chemical synthesis of indigo in the 19th century. Is this pattern repeated elsewhere? How and when were hazards to health and the environment detected, and what was the impact on the manufacture and use of dyestuffs? The early modern age began to standardize colors, starting with 17th and 18th century color charts to the binding norms, say, of the RAL color chart – what was the background to this standardization in terms of natural history, trade

and fashion? How were color standards designed and developed and how did they gain acceptance given the well-known difficulties of quantifying color?

When did people start coloring – painting and dyeing – technical artifacts? Which individuals – if any – were involved in the decision to do so? What viewpoints are important here, in terms of the societal situation and cultural emblems on the one hand and technical or economic possibilities and scientific results on the other? Where and how was color expertise developed? These and similar questions apply to colors used in architecture and on vehicles, colors used in signaling and on uniforms and clothing, and colors applied to machinery and objects of everyday use. How did the economic, social, and scientific dynamics develop that underlie the now ubiquitous use of colors to distinguish goods and trademarks with their distinctively gender-specific component? Lastly, how have colors been used – and how are they used today – in painting, in other figurative arts, and in the media, starting with medieval manuscript production to color printing, photography and film right up to modern-day display technologies?

The reconstruction and restoration of historical coloring is becoming increasingly important, be it in works of art, in architecture or on technical objects. In what circumstances are such issues of interest? What practices and techniques, what historiographical and natural science research findings are involved, and how do the results affect science and society in turn?

Proposals for papers on these and other color-related subjects are welcome.

### **Format**

The papers may be read in English or in German. Papers in German will be translated simultaneously into English at the Conference. The papers should not be more than 20 minutes in length. Papers that have been prepared to scientific standards may be selected for publication in the specialized journal *Ferrum*, which is published annually by the Iron Library.

### **Synopsis**

Interested applicants are kindly invited to submit a synopsis of their paper – no longer than two A4 pages (4'000 characters) – in English or German, along with an up-to-date resume, by 30 April 2017 to the Head of the Iron Library, lic. phil. Franziska Eggimann ([franziska.eggimann@georgfischer.com](mailto:franziska.eggimann@georgfischer.com)).

### **Organizational matters**

The Iron Library, Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd, will assume speakers' travel expenses and the cost of room and board during the Conference. We expect that speakers will attend the entire Conference.

### **Timelines**

We request you to submit your synopsis by 30 April 2017.

The selection of the speakers will be completed by the end of May 2017.

### **Contact person**

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