

Call for Papers:

## **Working With Paper: Gendered Practices in the History of Knowledge**

Workshop, January 6-8, 2016

Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin

In recent years, the practices, tools and material objects of knowledge production have taken centre stage in histories of science. Studies have focused on uncovering the processes of observing nature, constructing scientific instruments and models, and collating, managing and appropriating information; this has led to a deeper understanding of how intimately learned and scientific activities were embedded in artisanal, cultural and social contexts. This workshop builds on this rich historiography to explore the ways in which such practices were impacted by notions of gender. We will do so by focusing on practices surrounding one of the most basic materials used for knowledge-making and knowledge-keeping: paper. To date, investigations of paper technologies and paper work have rarely addressed issues of gender, a fact all the more surprising considering the ample evidence that these practices were performed by women, often even more so than by men. Additionally, many of these activities also occurred in highly gendered spaces, such as the household, the office, or the laboratory. This workshop intends to merge the analytical frameworks of material culture and gender by asking the following questions: How did working with paper impact notions of masculinity and femininity in different contexts? How did paper-related epistemic practices shape working cultures in the history of knowledge? What role did paper play in the construction and codification of knowledge? By focusing on paper use in a variety of contexts, we aim to examine the myriad of nuanced ways in which gender framed

knowledge production practices and, in turn, how paper tools, technologies and objects themselves materialized knowledge and notions of gender.

Our aim is to address gendered paper practices, broadly defined, since the early modern period. We invite proposals using innovative methods to analyze both gender and paper. We particularly welcome projects that investigate:

- paper objects (e.g. instruments, models, toys, theatres)
- paper technologies and information management systems (e.g. notebooks, card catalogues, tabulation and computing, tables, and graphs)
- paper making (e.g. materials, technologies, paper reuse, and recycling)

We warmly welcome proposals which explore the above topics in non-European contexts.

Please e-mail your proposals of up to 350 words and a curriculum vitae as a single pdf-file to [paper@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de](mailto:paper@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de) by May 15, 2015. Applicants will be notified of decisions by June 15, 2015. Accommodation and travel costs to Berlin will be covered by the MPIWG.

Organizers:

Carla Bittel (Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles), Elaine Leong (MPIWG Berlin, Germany), Christine von Oertzen (MPIWG Berlin, Germany)