

Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, Durham University
Tuesday, 5th May, Durham



CNCS Postgraduate Conference

Nineteenth-Century Culture in the Flesh

The Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies (CNCS), which is based at Durham University and includes the University of Newcastle, Northumbria University, and Teesside University, is pleased to announce its annual Postgraduate Conference, to be held in person at **Durham University** on **Tuesday 5th May 2026**. Postgraduates from all disciplines are invited to submit a proposal for fifteen-minute papers. Our keynote speaker for the event is Professor Carrie Vout (Cambridge).

The theme of this year's conference is '**Nineteenth-Century Culture in the Flesh**'. The nineteenth century provides examples of intricate representations of figures, objects, and other cultural traces. The body in particular - Physiognomies and 'types' – stimulated artwork, literature, statues, archaeology, ethnography, medicine and anatomical studies which often overlapped and informed each other. Elsewhere, nineteenth-century audiences interacted with this corpus of nineteenth-century culture. This conference thus invites participants to consider broader questions related to experiences and embodiments of nineteenth-century culture: How might audiences have understood, interacted with and experienced cultural products in the flesh? How might we parse the idea of 'culture in the flesh' in the nineteenth century in different ways? To what extent do we need to reevaluate and re-learn nineteenth-century approaches and methodologies for understanding the relationship between culture and flesh?

CNCS now invites papers that consider cultural products 'in the flesh' in a broader sense, their receptions, and their scrutiny in the nineteenth century. Papers may address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- 1) How did nineteenth-century audiences interact with cultural products and how were they received?
- 2) How might we reproduce the experiential worlds of the nineteenth century – through historical and contemporary methods and expectations – and apply them to our understanding of bodies and culture?
- 3) How does this advance the recovery of marginalised histories?

- 4) How does thinking about nineteenth-century culture in the flesh inform fields such as the study of classical reception (and others)?
- 5) How might representations of forms and factors in culture reveal hierarchies of power in the nineteenth century and today?

Please submit a 250-word abstract and short bio by **9th March 2026** to Ben Thompson (ben16.thompson@northumbria.ac.uk), Oliver Rzycki (oliver.c.rzycki@durham.ac.uk), and Shio Mitsuhashi (shio.mitsuhashi@durham.ac.uk). Applicants will be informed by the week beginning 23rd March 2026.

The CNCS Postgraduate Committee: Ben Thompson, Oliver Rzycki, Shio Mitsuhashi
Director of CNCS: James Koranyi



Robert Seymour (1798-1836), *A phrenologist examining a man's characterful head*