

**Call for Papers:**  
**Making Matters. Processes and Meaning of Crafting in Graeco-Roman Antiquity**  
International Conference at the University of Zurich, September 14-15, 2026

In times of generative artificial intelligence, fundamental categories such as creativity, authorship, and technical skill are being renegotiated. These contemporary developments also invite renewed reflection on historical forms of making and on the cultural meanings, attitudes, or epistemic implications embedded in processes of production within the complex and multilayered material cultures of Greco-Roman Antiquity. Within the framework of an international conference from September 14-15, 2026, at the Department of Archaeology, Classical Philology and Ancient Studies at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, we are seeking to discuss a variety of perspectives on meaning and value, attitudes and negotiations of making, and crafting. In doing so, the conference aims to shift the focus from the finished product to the production process, exploring it not merely as the execution of a preconceived idea, but as a site of cultural and historical meaning-making in its own right.

To complement our already finalized program of invited senior scholars, we are delighted to invite additional contributions from **early career researchers** (PhD candidates, PostDocs) from all fields of Ancient Studies (including, but not limited to, Classical Archaeology, Ancient History, Philology, Art History, Near Eastern Archaeology, Egyptology, etc.).

**The program is structured into the following thematic sessions and guiding questions:**

***Exploring the Anthropology of Making;*** How are acts of making embedded in social, cultural, or ritual contexts? *What role do practices of making play within various communities? What are theories and methods that prove fruitful to understand premodern societies and their practices of production?*

***Collaboration in the Making;*** How is making or crafting organized across individuals or groups? *What forms of collaboration, apprenticeship, hierarchy or specialization can be observed, and what does this tell us about categories such as agency, authorship or even creativity?*

***Narrations and Metaphors of Making;*** How is making described or conceptualized in textual or visual sources? *Which narratives or metaphors structure such conceptualization? How do such narratives, if even, relate to actual practices of production?*

***Crafting Change, Tackling Technique;*** How do techniques develop, adapt or persist over time? *What role does experimentation or failure play in making processes? What factors can be identified as decisive for technological decisions within the process?*

***Manufacturing Knowledge;*** How is knowledge negotiated and even generated through processes of making? *How is it preserved, transmitted, and sometimes lost? What forms of knowledge can we infer from studying ancient craft?*

***Gestures and Traces;*** *What traces of the making process can be identified on finished artefacts and how are they traceable – today and in antiquity? What does following such traces reveal about forms of situated creativity, spontaneity, or more structured and planned processes?*

***Making Artefacts, Creating Figures;*** *How can practices of crafting artefacts and creating images be brought into closer analytical relation? To what extent does the “design” and “idea” precede the process, or do they also emerge through it? In this perspective, how can we approach different types of artefacts in relation to their makers?*

We welcome submissions of abstracts (max. 300 words) along with a short biographical note by **30 April 2026** to the organizers Prof. Dr. Corinna Reinhardt and Sophie Preiswerk, [corinna.reinhardt@iaka.uzh.ch](mailto:corinna.reinhardt@iaka.uzh.ch) ; [sophie.preiswerk@iaka.uzh.ch](mailto:sophie.preiswerk@iaka.uzh.ch). Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered for all accepted speakers.