



Call for papers: “The Secrets of Nature”, Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry (SHAC) Postgraduate and Early Career Conference.

A conference taking place on Friday March 20th 2026 at the Allard Pierson Artis Library, Plantage Middenlaan 45, 1018 DC Amsterdam

Deadline for submissions: January 5th 2026

This conference seeks to explore the relation between (al)chemical work and “The Secrets of Nature” within and beyond the laboratory. By foregrounding this theme, this conference emphasizes the central role of nature in Alchemy and Chemistry, disciplines that have been fundamental to the History of Science and to Intellectual History more broadly.

This conference invites participants to consider how the theme of Nature has been explored, represented, and debated across different contexts and periods. This topic allows for a wide range of approaches, from textual and visual analysis to conceptual and methodological reflections. The aim of this conference is to create an academic setting in which early career researchers can come together, share their work, and open new conversations about the place of the natural world in the history of alchemy and chemistry. We are delighted to announce that **Prof. Dr. Frank James** and **Dr. Timothy Grieve-Carlson** will deliver the keynote lectures at this event, which will be hosted in the Allard Pierson Artis Library, located in Amsterdam’s historic Plantage district. Surrounded by 19th-century architecture and botanical gardens, Artis has long been a center for the study and display of the natural world, playing a key role in the development of the History of Science in Amsterdam. Participants

will also have the opportunity and are encouraged to engage with the rich collection of the State-owned part of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica of the Allard Pierson; the manuscripts and printed books from the collection are available for consultation, offering researchers the chance to work directly with sources. Access the collection online using the links provided below.

<https://www.allardpierson.nl/en/natural-history>

<https://www.allardpierson.nl/en/collection/history-of-science>

<https://www.allardpierson.nl/en/esotericism>

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Conceptions of nature in alchemy, chemistry, and natural philosophy.
- (Al)chemical emblems and other visual strategies to transmit (al)chemical knowledge.
- (Al)chemical practice and the development of Early Modern medical knowledge in botanical gardens, for example the case of the Hortus Medicus in Amsterdam.
- Environmental history and historical understandings of the natural world.
- The transformation of substances: chemical processes and their conceptual frameworks.

We welcome proposals for 20 minute talks by graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and early career scholars who have received their doctorate no more than three years ago. If you are interested in presenting your work, please send an abstract of approximately 300 words and a short bio to SHAC Student Representative **Amber Rozenrichter** at **studentrep@ambix.org**. The deadline for submissions is 5th January 2026.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Amber Rozenrichter at the above email address.