



International conference

# Cold Altitudes

Knowledge, Imagination, and  
Experiences of Mountain Ice

**11–12 May 2026 | 09h–17h**

University of Fribourg,  
Switzerland

Keynote speaker:

**Mark Carey** University of Oregon

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[Livestream available](#) | [Full programme & registration:](#)



In partnership with:



From glaciological expeditions to mountain poetics, this conference explores how societies have known, represented, and inhabited mountain ice – glaciers, snowfields, and avalanches – across the humanities and social sciences.

**Conference organiser: Christine Bichsel and Katja Doose**

**Monday, 11 May**

**09:00 – 09:15**    **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

**09:15 – 10:15**    ■ **Keynote Lecture: Mark Carey** (University of Oregon)  
*«Glacier forensics: Dissecting global wealth and local health in mountains»*

**10:15–10:45**    **Coffee Break**

**10:45–12:15**    **Panel 1**

**Mourning, Grief and Ecocriticism**

- **Jean Chamel** (University of Lausanne)  
*The Loss of Ice. Living Intimately the Transformation of High Alpine Mountains, through Shock, Sadness, Relativization and Adaptation*
- **Georgina Drew** (Adelaide University)  
*Romancing the Snow: Hindu Faith, Himalayan Glacial Melt, and Reflections of an Icy Paradise Lost*
- **Mine Islar** (University of Copenhagen)  
*Meltdown: Emotional Responses to Glacial Melt and Their Impact on Climate Action*

**12:15–13:30**    **Lunch Break**

**13:30–15:00**    **Panel 2**

**Glacier science: Measurement and knowledge production**

- **Lucas Müller** (University of Geneva)  
*Modelling Avalanches: Mathematics, Practicality, and Authority of Swiss Snow Science, 1955–1998*
- **Tatiana Saburova** (Indiana University Bloomington)  
*Garden of Glaciers: Mountain Ice, Plants, and Botanists in the High-Altitude Regions of Central Asia*
- **Arsalan Ihsan** (Rice University)  
*Glacial Encounters: Scientific Knowledge and Local Practice in the Karakoram Region*

**15:00–15:30**    **Coffee Break**

**15:30–16:30**    **Panel 3**

**Artificial glacier engineering and intervention**

- **Albert van Wijngaarden** (Scott Polar Institute)  
*Protected by Blankets, Cannons, and Reflective Beads: The Representations of Mountain Ice in the Scientific Literature on Novel Technoscientific Proposals Aimed to Save it*
- **Jason Chan** (Harvard University)  
*Glacial Speed in Compressed Time: Soviet Glaciology, Rural Experiences, and the «Melt Ice, Thaw Snow» Campaign in Maoist Northwest China, 1958–1960*

**16:30 – 17:30**    **Documenting ice**  
**Benjamin Buchanon** (Documentary film and discussion)

**From 19:00 —Welcome Dinner**

Tuesday, 12 May

09:15–10:45 Panel 4

**Conceptualizing Ice: Boundaries, Imaginaries, Representations**

- **Lilian Kroth** (University of Fribourg)  
*Glacier Contours and Boundary Work on the Line*
- **Tom Simpson** (University of Warwick)  
*India's Mountains and Antipodean Ice*
- **Natália Melo and Bergsveinn Þórsson** (University of Évora & Bifröst University)  
*Melting glaciers in exhibitions: Multivalent symbols across disciplines and geographies*

10:45–11:15 Coffee Break

11:15–12:45 Panel 5

**Scientists on the glacier: actors and practices**

- **Murat Yolun & M. Nuri Tunç** (Adıyaman University)  
*Governing Ice in the Ottoman Empire: Bureaucracy, Labor and Knowledge*
- **Reynaldo de los Reyes Patiño** (University of Geneva)  
*Mapping Tropical Ice: Oil Geologists and Glaciers in Latin America*
- **Michael Bravo** (University of Cambridge)  
*Etudes sur Glaciers: the biopolitics of Louis Agassiz as listener and observer.*

12:45–14:00 Lunch Break

14:00–15:30 Panel 6

**Ethnographies of ice**

- **Sofia Gavrilova** (Leibniz Institut)  
*Ice, Memory, and Imagination: Ethnographic Perspectives from Poi Mazor*
- **Dani Inkpen** (Mount Allison University)  
*Tracking Footprints in the Snow and Across Newspapers*
- **Anna-Maria Walter** (Technical University München)  
*Subaltern Glaciology: For Epistemological (In)Difference and Alternative Imaginations of the Mountain Cryosphere*

15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:30 Panel 7

**Literature, poetry, and affective ice**

- **Matteo Stampino** (University of Bergamo)  
*Feeling at Home in the Ice: Solastalgia in 21st-Century Climate Fiction*
- **Saba Pirzadeh** (Lahore University of Management Sciences)  
*Glacial Containment and Cryosocial Relations in South Asian Fiction*
- **Marzia Varutti** (University of Geneva)  
*Icy Elegies: Eco-poetry and Anticipatory Grief for the Loss of Ice*

17:30–18:00 Final discussion