

Call for Sessions: NORDIK 2025 (Helsinki, 20–22 Oct 2025)

Helsinki, Finland

Deadline: Sep 6, 2024

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Call for Session proposals:

NORDIK 2025: Why so Nordic? The 'Nordic' as fact and fiction in art history

Helsinki, 20th–22nd October 2025

The Nordic Association for Art Historians NORDIK came into being as an organizer of international conferences that since 1984 have brought together individual scholars and organizations with an interest in Nordic and Scandinavian art history.

The conferences, which occur every three years, forge connections between research environments in the five Nordic countries and have sustained the idea of a specific art history related to Northern Europe and the North Atlantic. Today, the very notion of a network of Nordic art historians raises questions. Who do we include in this community today? How do we look at the Nordic in art and its history? What does it mean to 'do Nordic art history'?

For the XIV NORDIK Conference of Art History in the Nordic Countries, we examine the 'Nordic' as fact and fiction. We invite scholars and all interested parties to reflect and discuss this contested concept.

A long period defined by wars, exploitation and intermittent exchange was transformed with the birth of new Nordic and Scandinavian identities at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Now, towards the end of the twentieth century, the divergent paths of the Nordic countries have suggested new transformations and divisions. In the new millennium, climate crises and war in Europe make the future seem wholly uncertain. Thus, a common history is undeniable, but its implications and meanings are contested.

The Nordic seems a powerful concept, equal parts liberating and oppressive. It has been a concept of exclusion – of colonized subjects, of the have-nots, of women – but it has also been a concept of radical alternatives to hegemony, whether in politics or art. Nordicness is defined as much from outside of the region. Romantic and racist frames of reference intermingle in fantasies of the North. Even the most powerful concepts and slogans erode with time, and the political and social structure of the Nordic welfare state with its strong cultural ambitions seems replaced by superficial branding. How has art, design and architecture contributed to the various concepts of Nordicness expressed through history? And how do we deal with the multiplicity of identities and interpretations connected to this term, today?

The NORDIK Association for Art Historians is hereby announcing a call for sessions for the conference in Helsinki 2025 under the heading 'Why so Nordic?'. Session proposals should preferably relate to the topic of the conference and to the Nordic countries. Preference will be given to session proposals that are at a high level of reflexivity and at the forefront of research and practice in art history or related branches of study such as visual culture, critical theory, landscape studies, or museum studies. Contributions based upon artistic research and practice are highly welcome.

Possible session proposals could touch upon:

- The historiography of Nordicness and Scandinavianism in art history
- The geographical borders and mental/spiritual confines of the Nordic in art and culture
- Collaborations, networks and conflicts between artists, art historians, critics, and dealers in and through the Nordics
- Constructions and critiques of Nordic and national imagery
- Arguments for expanding, revising or re-framing Nordic art histories
- Art, colonialism, oppression, and exploitation in the Nordic countries
- The hierarchies of a Nordic art system: art, architecture, design, visual culture...
- The institutional settings for Nordic art in museums and cultural heritage: exhibitions, archives, collections
- Public art and the Nordic Welfare model
- Welfare state, public support and progressive art policies

We will accept session proposals until 6.9.2024 after which a committee drawn from the members of the board of NORDIK together with representatives of the conference co-organizer, the University of Helsinki will make an inclusive selection.

Proposals for sessions (max 1 page) must include the following:

- a title
- a short description of the theme/subject of the session (max. 250 words)
- suggested type of session and number of papers included in it
- contact information of the organizers
- keywords

For each session organizer, a CV (max 2 pages) should be appended.

Accepted sessions are set to last 1 h 30 min and contain btw. 3 and 4 papers. A separate call for papers will take place in November 2024.

Please submit your proposal via e-mail to nordik2025@helsinki.fi.

Reference:

CFP: Call for Sessions: NORDIK 2025 (Helsinki, 20-22 Oct 2025). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 8, 2024 (accessed Apr 26, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42074>>.