

Panel: NORDIK 2025 (Helsinki, 20–22 Oct 2025)

University of Helsinki, Oct 20–22, 2025

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

Maija Koskinen

Representing the Nordic and the Nordicness in Cultural Diplomacy before and after 1989 - Art and Design Exhibitions as Cultural Diplomacy in, from and to the Nordic Countries (Panel of the NORDIK 2025).

Exhibitions are an important medium of international cultural exchange and diplomacy. When exhibitions are sent abroad or received as representatives of nations or related to geopolitics, they are often associated with definitions such as “the Nordic” which can be both a fact and fiction. This was significant towards the end of the Cold War when cultural diplomacy had become an established element of the conflict, as the Nordic-Baltic region held strategic importance. After 1989, the situation underwent radical changes with the establishment of new nations, alliances, and practices. Across the Nordic countries, the former socialist states and the new Baltic republics, many kinds of exhibitions and related activities (artist meetings, festivals, cultural programs etc.) were undertaken; some still active, some forgotten today—in a time of new threats in the region.

The panel invites presentations of new research on cultural diplomacy in the field of the arts. We are seeking original academic papers that address topics related but not limited to the following areas: foreign art and design exhibitions in the Nordic Countries, Nordic exhibitions in other countries as well as international events and networks. The focus is on the later phase of the Cold War, the transition phase of “1989” and the post-cold-war era of the 1990s. Presentations dealing with cultural diplomacy and the Nordic in today’s context are also welcome. Geographically, the panel is aimed at both the Nordic countries and their relations, and activities to and from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, and Germany. Presentations dealing with other geographical contexts are also welcome. Presentations can focus on the role of exhibitions, funding bodies, economic structures, political organizations, NGOs, art institutions (museums, art centres, NIFCA), and artists as diplomatic actors.

Please submit your proposal to session chair Camilla Larsson (camilla.larsson@sh.se) by 28th of February 2025.

The proposals must be in English and include a title, abstract of the theme/subject of the presentation (max. 300 words), and keywords plus a short author bio (max. 100 words), and contact information.

Session chairs:

Kristian Handberg, University of Copenhagen

Maija Koskinen, University of Helsinki

Camilla Larsson, Södertörn University

Reference:

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