

Cross-Border Contacts in Nordic Art (Helsinki, 20–22 Oct 25)

Helsinki, Oct 20–22, 2025

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

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CROSS-BORDER CONTACTS IN NORDIC ART: PUBLIC INTERFACES OF ARTISTIC CIRCULATION 1900-2000

Session at the NORDIK art history conference in Helsinki.

We invite scholars to join a session exploring the vital cooperation between artistic networks, galleries, and museums across the Nordic region throughout the 20th century. Recent research reveals that from 1945 to 1990, Nordic exhibitions constituted half of all foreign exhibitions in Sweden's major art institutions, with the 1980s and '90s being the most vibrant periods of cross-border interaction. Despite this, the motivations, resources, and contexts that drove these connections remain largely unexplored.

Traditionally, art history has focused on the interactions between Nordic artists and the major international art centers. However, the "horizontal" relationships within the Nordic region—between institutions, artists, and cultural actors—deserve greater attention. We currently lack a comprehensive understanding of connections within the Nordic art world, including the art market, collectors, patrons, art schools, museums, and state agencies.

This session seeks contributions that examine the public platforms of artistic exchange in the Nordic region, such as exhibitions, art or trade fairs, feminist manifestations, political festivals for peace or against nuclear power, public art, art journals, and conferences etc. during the 20th century. We aim to investigate the conditions and outcomes of these collaborations, the networks of professionals, key funders, and the institutions that facilitated them. Additionally, we are eager to explore the various media and public spaces where these collaborations unfolded, and the visions they communicated to a Nordic audience.

We welcome scholars interested in deepening the conversation around the important interactions that have shaped the Nordic art community and in uncovering the untold stories of artistic cooperation in the region.

Session chairs:

Marta Edling, Södertörn University, marta.edling@sh.se

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Please submit your proposal to session chairs by 28th of February 2025.

Keywords: artistic circulations—cross-border connectivity—regional collaborations

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