

The Nordic Miracle (Helsinki, 20–22 Oct 25)

University of Helsinki, Finland, Oct 20–22, 2025

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

Maike Teubner

"The Nordic Miracle": exhibition histories from the 1990s to the present (Panel of the NORDIK 2025).

This session explores the 1990s as a period of heightened international interest in contemporary art from the Nordic countries. Since this time, a vibrant young art scene emerged on the global stage, with several cities in the North being designated as European Capitals of Culture. Art critics enthusiastically described this phenomenon as a "Nordic miracle" (Bossé/Obrist 1998) and referred to it as a "Scandinavian wave". However, alongside increasing global interconnectedness, regional labels began to face issues of legitimacy. Many artists responded by critically engaging with regional attributions and the legacy of National Romanticism in their work.

This raises several questions: How have Nordic artists presented and continue to present their work during this period of growing international attention? How do their practices engage with the construction of "Nordicness"? What concepts and ideas have been employed to present and contextualise contemporary Nordic art in exhibitions? What strategies did curators use to position Nordic art within the global art scene? Moreover, the "Nordic" has become a potent label in place branding and the promotion of cultural production in various forms, including film (Nordic noir) and food (Nordic cuisine). How do these branding strategies differ from the contexts of the visual arts?

We welcome proposals on the following topics:

- Exhibitions and artistic works from the 1990s and beyond that reflect on the notion of the "Nordic"
- Critiques of hierarchical relationships between centre and periphery
- Cultural policy funding programmes and institutions supporting Nordic art (e.g. NIFCA)
- Place branding strategies in/and the art world
- Comparative perspectives in Nordic and non-Nordic contexts

Session chairs:

Katharina Alsen, Research Associate, Hamburg University of Music and Theatre, katharina.alsen@hfmt-hamburg.de

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

Keywords: contemporary art—curation of art exhibitions—art criticism—place branding—comparative analysis

Reference:

CFP: The Nordic Miracle (Helsinki, 20-22 Oct 25). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 20, 2025 (accessed Mar 13, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43732>>.