1920s | 2020s (online/Berlin, 3-4 Dec 26)

Online / Kunsthaus Dahlem, Berlin, Dec 3–04, 2026
Deadline: Sep 30, 2026
www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/khi/forschung/projekte/entartete_kunst/index.html

Meike Hoffmann

International Symposium // 1920s | 2020s: Art Markets – War Conflicts – Economic Crises.

The Research Center “Entartete Kunst” at the Freie Universität Berlin, the Kunsthaus Dahlem, and the Brücke-Museum in Berlin are pleased to announce a symposium dedicated to the art markets today and a century ago.

The 1920s, internationally romanticized as the “Golden Twenties,” “wild”, the “Roaring Twenties,” “Anni Ruggenti,” “Années Folles,” were marked by extreme economic, social, political, and technological upheavals and challenges in the wake of World War I. The global modernization boom had a great impact on the art production as well as on the art market. The interwoven dynamics were driven by:

• fluctuations ranging from economic booms, industrial growth, and rising consumption on the one hand, to speculative bubbles, economic and financial crises, and even the global stock market crash of 1929 on the other,
• the growing divide between poverty and wealth (exacerbated by economic crises), as well as by efforts at social reform,
• democratization and, at the same time, by political destabilization caused by violent attacks, propaganda, and coup attempts;
• technological innovations such as the invention of the automobile as a mass-produced product (which increased individual mobility and revolutionized the transport of goods) and radio as the first global mass medium of communication.

What exactly were these connections? And how did they manifest themselves; how did these contexts specifically affect the art market during the interwar period? Furthermore, are there also structural similarities in this regard between the 1920s and the 2020s? What exactly are they? Are there also fundamental differences between these times of upheaval? And if so, what are the new challenges in the 2020s, given the interplay of art markets, war conflicts, and economic crises? Can we learn from the historical transdisciplinary insights of the 1920s in addressing these challenges?

The international symposium “1920s | 2020s: Art Markets – War Conflicts – Economic Crises” aims to bring together researchers, practitioners from GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) institutions, universities and the art and antiques trade to discuss these questions and topics. We invite original research and critical perspectives (comparative or as case studies).

On Thursday, December 3, 2026, the symposium will open with a panel discussion about “The 1920s | The 2020s: A Babel of the Arts, Markets, and Democracies?” (in German) at Kunsthaus Dahlem, in collaboration with Brücke Museum. Conference date: Friday, December 4, 2026, online (via Zoom).

Conference language is English. Please submit the proposals with a 300-word abstract (including the title) and a short bio (as well as institutional affiliation) of no more than 150 words by September 30, 2026 to: Meike.Hoffmann@fu-berlin.de

Concept and organization: Meike Hoffmann, Dorothea Schöne and Dorothee Wimmer
Co-hosted by: Lisa Marei Schmidt, Brücke-Museum

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