Shared Horizons (Basel, 1-2 Oct 27)

Basel, Oct 1–02, 2027
Deadline: Dec 14, 2026
shs.pl/open-call/

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Shared Horizons. Artistic Relations between Switzerland and Poland.

International Conference jointly organised by the Swiss Association of Art Historians (VKKS | ASH-HA | ASSSA) and the Association of Art Historians in Poland (Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki SHS).

The shared history of Poland and Switzerland has been shaped by a complex web of commercial, academic, religious, diplomatic, and political ties. Like a diptych unfolding over the longue durée, from the Middle Ages to the present day, it brings into dialogue two countries whose relations have developed through successive exchanges and mutual influences. This unsuspected affinity calls for closer attention to the reciprocal representations, imaginaries, and national self-images at stake in these interactions. To do so, it is necessary to move beyond the framework of Realpolitik and to acknowledge that these exchanges also forged a distinct history of artistic relations between the two countries.

Building upon these historical foundations and seeking to foster lasting cooperation, the annual conference of the Swiss Association of Art Historians (VKKS | ASHHA | ASSSA), organised jointly with the Association of Art Historians in Poland (Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki SHS), aims to explore the shared horizons of the two countries. We invite scholars and practitioners, art historians, museum professionals, curators, conservators, and artists to reflect upon the character and significance of Polish-Swiss artistic relations from thematic and dialogical perspectives that move beyond individual case studies or biographical narratives. Artistic relations are understood here as a dynamic process of cultural co-creation in which ideas, memories, and sensibilities are continually transformed and passed on. The annual conference seeks to examine models of cultural transfer as well as differing perceptions of art, landscape, identity, and modernity.

1. CALL FOR PAPERS
Contributions may address both historical and contemporary interactions, including present-day forms of institutional and artistic collaboration. We particularly welcome papers presenting new discoveries, methodological approaches, and research perspectives. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:
• artistic migration, exile, refuge, neutrality, and artistic communities abroad, past and present; art and cultural responsibility in response to contemporary social, political, and environmental crises;
• the reception of Swiss and Polish art: private collections, museums, and galleries;

• Polish art through Swiss eyes; Swiss art through Polish eyes;
• from the Alps to the Tatras and back: landscape, ecology, and environmental perception;
• national myths and political imaginaries;
• modernist and contemporary artistic practices: conceptual art, architecture, design, and graphic design;
• institutional cooperation, curatorial networks, artist residencies, collaborative practices, and the social role of museums and cultural institutions.

2. CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR A FINAL PANEL DISCUSSION

The conference will conclude with a panel discussion (duration: one hour) on possible Future Cooperations between Switzerland and Poland. We particularly encourage proposals with the potential to establish long-term collaboration between institutions, researchers, artists, and cultural organisations in both countries. Those interested in participating in this discussion are asked to submit proposals focusing on:
• exhibitions and curatorial projects;
• collaborative research initiatives;
• educational and public engagement programmes;
• archival and digitisation projects;
• artist and researcher residencies;
• community-based and inter-institutional initiatives;
• other projects relevant to the conference theme.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals should be submitted in English and include:
• author's name;
• current institutional affiliation;
• e-mail address;
• an abstract of no more than 400 words;
• an updated curriculum vitae.

Please send all materials by 14 December 2026 to: info@vkks.ch. All submissions will be peer-reviewed by the conference committee. Applicants will be notified of the outcome in early February. Travel and accommodation costs for participation in the two-day conference will be covered within the limits of the available budget.

CONCEPT AND ORGANISATION

Dominic-Alain Boariu (Board Member of VKKS / University of Fribourg); Régine Bonnefoit (President of VKKS / University of Neuchâtel); Anna Czyż (President of SHS / Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw); Dorota Lekka (Collections Representative of SHS).

CONTACT

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