5th Conference of Baltic Art Historians (Tallinn, 8-9 Oct 26)

Estonian Academy of Arts, Room A101, Põhja pst 7, Tallinn, Oct 8–09, 2026
Registration deadline: Oct 8, 2026

Liisa Kaljula

5th Conference of Baltic Art Historians: Art History in Uncertain Times.
Conference of The Estonian Society of Art Historians and Curators.

The conference will be held in English.

The conference aims to explore the voice of art history in relation to both contemporary and historical cultural, social, and political processes. We encourage participants to reflect on the role of art history as a discipline, as well as on the responsibilities of art historians and curators as individuals engaged in public discourse. What is the value of their expertise? How does it relate to power structures and public debate? What roles do traditional and emerging art historical methodologies play in addressing current issues? In what ways are scholarly and curatorial practices shaped by, or actively engaged with, broader social movements and political ideologies?

The conference continues the series of Baltic art historians' conferences, including Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region (Tallinn, 2009), (Un)blocked Memory: Writing Art History in the Baltic Countries (Kaunas, 2011), Representing Art History in the Baltic Countries: Experiences and Prospects (Riga, 2016), and Baltic Art Histories: Roles, References, Relations (Vilnius, 2024).

The conference is organized by the Estonian Association of Art Historians and Curators. The main organizer of the conference is Anu Allas, the committee includes Emili Kelle, Hanna Õunapuu, Merike Kurisoo, and Liisa Kaljula.

Programme

Thursday, 8 October

10.30 Gathering and opening words (Liisa Kaljula, Anu Allas)

11.00–12.30 I Panel: Art and Power
Chair Gregor Taul
Baiba Vanaga (Latvian National Museum of Art)
Wilhelm Neumann and the Riga City Art Museum during World War I
Jovita Jankauskienė (Independent researcher, Kaunas)
The Heteronomisation of the Art Field in Authoritarian Lithuania: Cultural Policy, Censorship, and Regimes of Recognition

Giedrė Jankevičiūtė (Lithuanian Institute for Culture Research)
Lithuanian Art under the Sign of Hakenkreuz

12.30–13.30 Lunch

13.30–15.00 II Panel: Continuous Past
Chair Margaret Tali
Ieva Astahovska (Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art)
Decoloniality, Monuments, and Erasing or Understanding the Past
Anu Allas (Estonian Academy of Arts)
Revisiting “Thinking Pictures”: Bildstreit on the Background of War
Ramutė Rachlevičiūtė (Vilnius Academy of Arts)
What Form did Lithuanian Surrealism Take, and How does it Manifest Itself Today?

15.00–15.30 Coffee break

15.30–17.00 III Panel: Activating Archives
Chair Ingrid Ruudi
Kai Stahl (University of Turku)
Additional Insights into the History of Estonian Art: The Three Mei Sisters and their Oeuvre
Laine Kristberga (University of Latvia)
Writing the History of What Was Not Supposed to Exist: Performance Art, Canon Formation, and Historiographic Silence in Soviet Latvia
Andra Silapētere (Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art)
Safety Zones and Shifting Timelines

18.00 Open Lecture
Chair Anu Allas
Curating Socialism. Sven Spieker (University of California) in conversation with Anders Härm (Estonian Academy of Arts / Kumu Art Museum)

Friday, 9 October

11.00–12.30 IV Panel: Negotiating Knowledge
Chair Epp Lankots
Andres Kurg (Estonian Academy of Arts)
Architectural Historian in Uncertain Times: Jean-Louis Cohen and Cold War Asymmetries
Virve Sarapik (Estonian Academy of Art)
Negotiating the Canon: Soviet Encyclopedias and the Production of Art Historical Knowledge
Krista Kodres (Estonian Academy of Arts)
(Art) History and “Postmodernism”: Epistemological Uncertainty in the Uncertain 1990s

12.30–13.30 Lunch

13.30–15.00 V Panel: Creative Interventions
Chair Magdaleena Maasik
Linara Dovydaitytė (Vytautas Magnus University)
Emotional Heritage: Affective Encounters with a Dissonant Past in a Museum

Linda Kaljundi (Estonian Academy of Arts)
How to Reframe Monuments – and/or the Practices of Art History and Curating?
Agnė Narušytė (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute)
Artists and Art Historians at War: The Case of Three Films by Darius Žiūra from Ukraine

15.00–15.30 Coffee break

15.30–17.00 Roundtable on Art History Writing in the Baltics
Chair Liisa Kaljula
Kristiāna Ābele (Art Academy of Latvia), Krista Kodres (Estonian Academy of Arts), Giedrė Jankevičiūtė (Lithuanian Institute for Culture Research)

The conference is supported by Estonian Cultural Endowment and Böckler-Mare-Balticum-Foundation.

Reference:
CONF: 5th Conference of Baltic Art Historians (Tallinn, 8-9 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 26, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54400>.