

Sessions for NORDIK 2022:

Session: Not just Art: Pre-Modern Collections and Collecting

Session organizers:

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Session description:

From the rich ecclesiastical collections of the Middle Ages to scientific collections in the age of enlightenment - the history of collecting stretches well beyond just the history of art collections and early connoisseurship. The session seeks to broaden the concept of pre-modern collection and explore new ways of thinking of collecting as an art-historical phenomenon.

The aim of this session is to focus on pre-modern types of collecting that were not primarily motivated by aesthetic concerns, but instead served religious, political, memorial, scientific, or antiquarian interests. Cabinets of curiosities are previously well-known examples of how disparate objects and artefacts were collected, categorized, and put on display with the purpose to both entertain and to represent a microcosmos of the world. However, in this session, we would like to broaden the perspective to also include other kinds of pre-modern collecting practices, such as monastery collections, ancestral portrait collections, or pretiosa collections that might have received less interest in previous art-historical research.

We encourage proposals that examine specific collecting practices and strategies, individual collectors, places, and display. Examples of objects and artefacts collected could include (but not be limited to) manuscripts and books, coins, maps, memorabilia, ancestral portraits, portrait miniatures, medals, relics, biological and zoological specimens, gemstones, minerals, death masks, mummies, and prints. Examples of places could include (but not be limited to) dioceses and monasteries, corporations, palaces, libraries, and universities.

Keywords: pre-modern collections and collecting.

Session: Architects as collectors

Session organizers:

Anna Bortolozzi, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University

Please send your proposal with a title, an abstract (maximum 1500 characters incl. spaces) and a short cv (maximum 250 characters) to the following address: anna.bortolozzi@arthistory.su.se

Session description:

In the collections of the National Museum in Oslo there is a wooden chest from the office of the Norwegian architects firm Bjercke og Eliassen (1914-1960). It contains over 1600 photographs, prints and postcards that were taken, purchased or received by Andreas Bjercke and Georg Eliassen during their professional life as architects. Ranging from Italian Renaissance palaces to Scandinavian vernacular architecture, the images gathered in the chest were accurately organized according to topographical criteria, and to their physical format and size. All photographs were pasted on cardboard, alone or in sets. The chest and its content constitute a collection of models functional to the activity of the two architects' studio, a documentation of their interests and architectural culture, and material evidence of their collecting practice.

The Oslo chest is only one example of the countless collections of drawings, prints and books, art works, antiquities, and rarities gathered by architects since the Renaissance. The present session welcomes papers dealing with architects' own collections ranging from the 15th century to the present days. The use of collections in education, design practices and workshop activity of architects, the purchase and organization of collections, the instrumental role of collections for professional and societal recognition, are some of the possible topics papers may address.

Session: The Catalogue Raisonné: Above and Beyond Collections

Session organizers:

Ane Hejlskov Larsen, Associate Professor, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

Tove Haugsbø, Senior Curator/PhD, KODE Art Museums and Composer Homes, Bergen, Norway

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Session description:

Digital technology and the activities related to information gathering, storing and displaying are revitalizing the catalogue raisonné. The format of the catalogue raisonné as a systematic list of art objects makes it possible to take the biographical research in new directions. In addition to establishing the authenticity of an artist's oeuvre, the interactive catalogue provides the researcher a means of studying the works from different perspectives. In digital space, public and private collections meet each other and most importantly, different resources can be tailored to analyse the art and the artist. The possibilities of digital resources seem endless, e.g. exhibition history, artistic networks and works by other artists, as well as site and historical or technical photography. The catalogue raisonné is not only expanding as a category, but it is also evolving into an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field with outputs mediated in many formats; from monograph publication, exhibition display, and database to conservation strategy reports and auction evaluation. Certainly, the methodologies are changing too.

This session will be an arena for discussing the art historical, technical, and analytical aspects of making a catalogue raisonné in the digital age. We welcome catalogue raisonné projects in all stages – and we propose the establishment of a Nordic research network about catalogue raisonné.

Suggested topics:

- Digital versus printed publication
- The relationship between catalogue raisonné and monographic exhibition
- Provenance research and connoisseurship
- The relationship between the art market and the catalogue raisonné
- Technical art history and the conservator's knowledge
- Challenging traditional categories of painting, graphics, drawings, etc.
- New roles of the biography
- The catalogue raisonné, diversity, gender and intersectionality
- Rethinking methodological approaches, analogue as well as digital
- State of the art of cultural heritage digital infrastructure
- Innovative case studies of the catalogue raisonné
- Reflections on the challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration on the catalogue raisonné

Keywords: Catalogue Raisonné; Digital Art History; Technical Art History; Biography; Provenance; Diversity and Gender Politics; Connoisseurship; Monographic Exhibition

Session: Collecting Knowledge: Early Modern Books between Theory and Practice

In 15th-century Europe, the increase in paper production, the invention of the printing press, and the corresponding sophistication of graphic media like woodcuts and engravings set the ground for the subsequent development of new genres of books.

Here, scientific investigation and collecting practices found a common platform. Artists and scholars gathered all kinds of material and produced all sorts of manuals. This could be collections of knowledge in "books of secrets", offering recipes on a wide range of subjects from cosmetics to fireworks, or it could be collections of images in terms of illustrated volumes presenting e.g. art, architecture, dress, ornaments, botanical, zoological or geological material. Sometimes, the exemplary material came from the admired antiquity, but collections of exotics in terms of non-European materials appeared as well. These collections in books went hand in hand with the establishment of collections of actual art works. In the 17th century, the Roman collector Cassiano dal Pozzo even defined his collection of drawings and prints as a "paper museum".

But how were illustrations used in the books? Which strategies of image making conditioned them? And what was the relation between text, theory, and practice? Were especially the early manuals intended as tools for productions and manufacturing of objects, or was their *raison d'être* rather the collection of knowledge as such?

In this session we welcome papers of 15 mins discussing books as collections between theory and practice and between image and materiality, and predominantly focusing on the 15th to the 18th century.

Session: 1½ hour, with 3-4 papers of 15 mins each

Organizer: Maria Fabricius Hansen, Dept. of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen
mfhansen@hum.ku.dk

Keywords:

Books, graphic art, visual culture, collections of art and knowledge, manuals, materials, theory and practice

Session: Providing propositions: Collections as agents in institutionalising processes of the 20th century

Session organizers:

Magdalena Holdar, Lecturer in Art History, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University
Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe, Associate professor in Art History, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University

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Session description:

It is convenient to see modernism's cultural identity as shaped by the institutions where its canon, through collections and exhibitions, has been repeatedly displayed. But what collections and principles for collecting preceded the narratives on modernism that eventually were naturalized, through museum collections, exhibitions, research, and education? What other stories and definitions were at play before its master narrative was eventually set?

Art historian Jeremy Braddock argues that the various modes of which contemporary art was collected and shown in the early 20th Century, provided a plethora of propositions as to what art could be and how it might be understood. The diverse modes of display and dissemination of these collections acted as 'provisional institutions', to quote Braddock. Although based in the subjective position of the collector, these provisional institutions nonetheless had agency to 'intervene in and reform cultural practice' before eventually setting, in the public collections and museums.

For this session, we define 'provisional institutions' not only as the collections themselves, but also as the strategies through which they were presented, i.e. in (private) galleries and studios, anthologies, and other publications. The session explores issues on the agency of collections to model future histories, through individual collectors' strategies for collecting art, and their methodologies for assembling, organizing, and communicating their collections. It welcomes papers that in a broad sense discuss the modelling capacity of collections to shape art historical narratives, or provide alternatives to them. Also, it invites presentations on the various modes for display, with which such (alternative) narratives were communicated.

Keywords: alternative institutions, agency, modelling histories, canon formations, assembling/assemblage

Session: What's in Store? Intersectional, indigenous, and decolonial perspectives on collection work

Organizers:

Johanne Løgstrup, Curator & PhD Aesthetics and Culture, School of Communication and Culture
Aarhus University, jolo@cc.au.dk

Line Ellegaard, PhD Fellow, the New Carlsberg Foundation research centre Art as Forum Department of
Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen, wtz299@hum.ku.dk

Session description:

This panel departs from the double meaning of the notion 'what's in store' – that is what is held in storage and what is to come – to discuss collections in and out of storage and the current and future potentials of working with collections from intersectional, indigenous and decolonial perspectives. The aim of the panel is to raise questions such as: How to engage meaningfully and ethically with the conflictual histories embedded in the legacy of the Western Museum of Art through collections? What are novel methodologies for decentering, pluralizing and diversifying collection work in the long run, especially if these collections denote violent traditions of ownership, or, are contested in terms of their value as objects of art within a Western canon?

In light of these critical and pressing questions, many museums have begun to actively rethink their work with collections. This has seen an array of new methodologies in museum practice, such as the invitation of artists, external curators, and other experts to engage critically with collection histories and artworks. Whilst often proposing innovative approaches, such temporary interventions inevitably outsource collection work and keep institutional practices intact. Similarly, inclusion of more women, LGBT+, non-white, non-western artists in collections might merely expand a Western art-historical canon, leaving the power structures and governing logics of the museum unchanged. This panel seeks examples of practices that go beyond this bind, and invites practical, analytical, and speculative examples of collection work in the Nordic region that instances permanent changes.

Keywords: decolonial, intersectional, indigenous

Session: Passing on stories - Collective memories and the canon

Organizers:

Johanna Rosenqvist, Guest Professor in History and Theory of Craft at Konstfack (Stockholm, Sweden).
email: johanna.rosenqvist@lnu.se

Ellen Suneson, freelance curator and PhD student in Art History and Visual Studies at Lund University, Sweden. email: ellen.suneson@kultur.lu.se

Session description:

What are we subjected to when presented with stories about art's past in the context of classrooms or collections? In order to prepare students for a profession in the humanities or in the field of artistic production and reception at large, art history courses in higher education are obliged to provide them with an understanding for the collection of texts, debates or works of art that are considered particularly important or characteristic to account for, for example, a particular time, place or cultural development. At the same time, the continuous repetition of certain dominant stories about art's history oversimplifies complex cultural developments, often privileges white, Western, or male individuals, and contains a tendency to "pass on" biased models for interpretation and artistic value over generations.

One common strategy to tackle the problem of canons is to first provide students with knowledge about central artworks, persons, debates, or texts of art history and then problematize these dominant narratives by introducing students to (also canonized) texts that criticize these dominant stories of the discipline's past. Inspired by influential suggestions on how to tackle the problem of canons differently in classroom settings, such as affective engagements with works of art, this session invites papers that contemplate on novel approaches to work with dominant cultural canons in the setting of undergraduate art history courses, curatorial practices, or guided tours in museums.

We welcome explorative papers on possible futures as well as descriptive examples from the past.

Session: Doing Art History Online

Organizers:

Anna Orrghen, Department of Art History, Uppsala University. anna.orrghen@konstvet.uu.se

Anna Dahlgren, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University,
anna.orrghen@konstvet.uu.se

Session description:

As an effect of the increasing digitization and online publication of art collections during the past 30 years, the notion of armchair scholarship has a new meaning. Just a click away, art collections from around the globe are now instantly accessible to anyone with a computer and an internet connection. What does this rapidly growing, and occasionally overwhelming, access to a digitized art history mean for the discipline of art history? What is at stake for our discipline?

This session aims to investigate this increased distribution and access critically from the perspective of art historical scholarship. What are the main benefits and pitfalls when working with online resources for art historical studies? How might this transition from onsite to online access influence the practices and methods of art history? In what way does this mediated access to art collections alter our perception of the art's content and materiality? Conversely, how does the increased digitization alter our understanding, use and interpretation of analogue collections?

For this session, we invite papers that engage with and take a critical stance towards these and similar questions. We also welcome historiographic studies of scholarship based on digitized online collections. What is their topical focus, theoretical approaches and institutional background? What is the demographic of the online art collections and what are the further implications of the most possibly uneven distribution of digital access across the globe?

Keywords: art collections, online collections, art history, disciplinary challenges

Type of paper: Abstract (250 words). Authors of accepted papers will be offered to develop their papers to be part of a planned publication. In order to facilitate that process authors of accepted papers will be asked to submit an elaborated written abstract (2000 words) one week ahead of the conference.

Session: Artists' Books: Networks and Collections

Session organizers:

Jóhannes Dagsson, Associate Professor, Department of Fine Art, Iceland University of the Arts.
e-mail: johannesdags@lhi.is

Session description:

For at least sixty years, artists' books, have been an important if somewhat ill-defined part of the artistic practice of various artists. Artists' books have taken on different roles and functions, within different practices, been exchanged by mail and thus created a transnational network to foster radical new ideas on art, society, and culture or taken on traditional roles of art objects.

These items run the entire range of artistic expression from the abstract and the conceptual to the personal and the political, also forming a substantial body of information on typography, papermaking, graphics, bookmaking, design, and creative writing. Artists' books are art items in between practices that open up intriguing questions concerning networking between artists as well as how they are conserved in collections today and made accessible in a comprehensive manner.

This session examines how artists' books can be viewed as in between objects. For example, libraries define them sometimes as books, sometimes as works of art, and sometimes as unique books. The same goes for art galleries, the art market, and art museums, and even within different art practices and networks of artists they can be hard to pin down as art objects. This often results in a lack of a defined approach to this kind of work, but it also opens up different ways of interpretation, situating it within different artistic practices and networks as well as different collections.

Keywords: Artists' books, Networks, In between, Collections, Transnational, Art objects, Art practices,

Session: Polish Art in Nordic Collections, Post-1945 Until Today

Session organizers:

Camilla Larsson, Lecturer in Art History at the Gerlesborg School of Fine Art, Stockholm, and lecturer at Curating Art (International MA), Stockholm University

Karolina Kolenda, Assistant Professor at the Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

Małgorzata Kaźmierczak, Assistant Professor – Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

Session description:

Organised after 1989, exhibitions such as “EUROPA, EUROPA Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa” at the Kunsthalle in Bonn in 1994, “After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe” at Moderna Museet in Stockholm 2000, “Promesses du passé” at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2010, have been instrumental in promoting art and artistic practice from Central and Eastern Europe, and equally significant as a part of broader cultural processes of meaning-making.

Undoubtedly, temporary exhibitions effectively draw the public (and scholars’) attention in the here-and-now, but they can arguably fall short in maintaining this attention due to their limited duration. In that sense, temporary exhibitions are rather dependent on how the organizing institution manages to keep their history alive. A fixed position within a collection would seem to secure a much more stable future in respect to national or regional representation. However, collections are not by default transparent and accessible to researchers and the public, neither are they by any means free from biased systems of exclusion and canon formations. This session is dedicated to a closer examination of the presence of Polish art in the collections of the Nordic Region and focuses on the time-period of post-1945 until the present day.

We are seeking original academic papers that address topics related but not limited to the following areas:

- Representation of particular artworks, artists, and artistic genres and media of Polish origin in private and public collections.
- Specific strategies (or lack thereof) of collecting art from Poland.
- Public displays of collections of art from Poland informed by curatorial strategies of revision of the 20th- and 21st-century art history in the light of global and post-colonial perspectives.
- Art critical reception and scholarly interests in art from Poland in private and public collections.
- The history of art as the history of exhibitions and collections in respect to canon formations.
- Making sense of Polish art in the Nordic Region – changing perspectives on art from the former Eastern Bloc before and after 1989.

Key words: collecting strategies, transnational relations, Polish art, Nordic Region

Please submit a proposal for a 20-minute paper, together with a short biographical note, to Camilla Larsson, camilla.larsson@sh.se.

Session: Home is Where the Art is. Critical perspectives on artistic residences in the Nordic Countries 1850–1950

Session organizers:

Tonje Haugland Sørensen, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, University of Bergen

Tove Haugsbø, Senior Curator/PhD, KODE Art Museums and Composer Homes, Bergen, Norway

Further information and submission: tove.haugsbø@kodebergen.no

Session description:

The nineteenth century is often presented as the birth of the modern art world. However, parallel with the foundation of museum and institutes there was a development of the semi-public sphere of the artistic residence. The homes of artists, composers and writers increasingly came to be seen as extensions of their respective artistic practices. Their homes became a hub for artistic networks, for challenging conventional assumptions of what made up a home (for instance queer artists, queer homes) while also being creations of arts and stylistic innovation in their own right. All this ensured that an artistic residence, often with expansive gardens and an intended interplay between home and topographical location, is best grasped as a highly interdisciplinary and multimedia entity. This demands the development of new approaches towards the material. This session wishes to explore just these avenues by focusing on two distinct, yet entwined, processes:

- How to approach and engage with the artistic residences, and to expand our understanding of the artists and artworks associated with them?
- How to approach these homes from a museological perspective? What issues arise when an artist residence in its full complexity is defined as museum object, e.g. in regards of preservation and curating?

This session will explore these questions and others by focusing on artistic residences in the Nordic Countries from 1850 to 1950. It will welcome presentations on several topics such as (but not limited to):

- The home as a work of art
- The interrelationship between art and life
- Interactions between interior and exterior, and house, garden and landscape
- The interaction between fine arts and artisan works in artistic residences
- The home as a social-creative environment
- The tension between a public art sphere and a semi public/private art sphere.
- Preservation, reconstruction and authenticity when treating artists' residences as museological objects

Keywords:

Artist home, artist residence, artist colony, museum, garden, architecture, museology, biography, topography, interdisciplinary, multimedia, authenticity

Session: Blind Spots - hidden narratives and how to deal with them

Organizer:

Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Susanna Pettersson, Director General, Associate Professor in Museology

Martin Olin, Director of Research, Associate Professor in Art History

The presentation of museums traditionally (and not surprisingly) celebrate what is already in the collections. But what about the artists, subjects and type of objects that have been neglected historically and are poorly represented, if at all? How can institutions identify and explore these missing categories in a constructive way? How should such accounts impact future collecting? During the last decades, institutions have paid close attention to the representation of women artists and taken various types of action. Increasingly, similar considerations are being made for national minorities and other groups excluded from the 19th-century white male Western notion of a museum collection. At present, contemporary questions concerning for example migration and transnational identities cast light on mechanisms of exclusion in art history writing and collecting practices. Where do we move on from here?

This session intends to focus on the following questions: How do art definitions, used by museums explicitly or implicitly, operate in the shaping of the collections? Which are the competencies needed for the mapping and understanding of the needs required for the dynamic development of collections? What should be the future strategies to enrich and diversify the narrative? How can acquisition and research policies be active tools to this end rather than hallowed rules to adhere to? How does all of this relate to museum ethics and the idea of social responsibility in contemporary society?

We welcome theoretical and critical approaches as well as case studies of ongoing projects that can serve as inspiring examples. Please send your proposal with a title, an abstract (maximum 1500 characters incl spaces) and a short cv (maximum 250 characters) to both the following addresses:

susanna.pettersson@nationalmuseum.se

martin.olin@nationalmuseum.se

Session: Under one roof. How can we make collection displays of merged museums for contemporary audiences?

Session organizers:

Mai Britt Guleng, Curator Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo
mai.britt.guleng@nasjonalmuseet.no

Session description:

Many of today's museums are the result of mergers of older public institutions and / or private collections. This means that special collections assembled to serve the needs and interests of specific periods become part of new museum contexts. This session will focus on merged museum collections displayed under a single roof. What theoretical and practical issues do museums face when planning such exhibitions for 21st century audiences? What considerations underlie choices concerning exhibition design and structure, selection of exhibits, accompanying texts, and other didactic elements?

Many of the larger museums of decorative and applied arts that arose in the 19th century presented their collections on a chronological basis, using categories such as style, "school", or period. They drew on academic accounts of art historical evolution. When the Tate Modern opened in London, it broke with this tradition by introducing thematic, non-chronological presentations. The Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) and Nationalmuseum in Stockholm renewed the genre further by mixing art forms.

Contributions to this session will discuss how merged museums reflect temporal concepts – chronology, anachronism, past, present, contemporaneity, and future – when exhibiting their collections. Concepts of time link in to value discourses about the individual, politics, and society. In the 19th century, museums used the art of the past as a moral and artistic guide for contemporary society. Are the museums of today reversing this relationship by turning the present into a measure of the past? And how should we meet modern cultural- political demands for diversity and inclusivity in the context of collections built around other parameters?

Contributions will be based on concrete examples from Nordic museums. They may apply a national, regional and / or international, and comparative perspective. Papers should address the structure and subject areas of exhibitions and related didactic elements. Contributions should be theoretically oriented and may be based on both art historical and artistic research.

Keywords: Collection, displays, Merged museums, Chronology, Anachronism, Historicity, Contemporaneity Presentism, History, New Art History, Postcolonialism, Feminism

Session: Nordic (Art) Museums and the Question of Decolonization

Session organizers:

The session is convened in collaboration between the research networks "Decolonizing Nordic Museums? Objects, Agency, Display" and "The Art of Nordic Colonialism: Writing Transcultural Histories". We are also in close dialogue with the session proposal "Rethinking (Trans)National Galleries in the North"

Contact information:

Mathias Danbolt, Associate Professor of Art History, University of Copenhagen, danbolt@hum.ku.dk
Mårten Snickare, Professor of Art History, Director of Accelerator, Stockholm University, marten.snickare@arthistory.su.se

Session description:

Western museums are a burning issue: heated debates on the return of objects; Indigenous and formerly colonized peoples claiming the right to their histories and heritage. Decolonization has emerged as a key concept as new generations of scholars, museum staff and audiences are seeking radical re-evaluations of museums and their colonial complicities. Could museums function as "sites of conscience" (Hicks 2020, 15) and platforms for re- establishing Indigenous sovereignty (Finbog 2020)? While ethnographic collections have taken center stage in the current critique of museums, the role of art museums in histories and logics of coloniality has received less attention (Vestergaard Jørgensen 2021).

In this panel we invite papers that discuss, analyze and reflect upon the ways in which Nordic museums and their collections have been and remain complicit in processes of colonization, home and abroad, as well as on decolonial resistance to museums and their histories, legacies and effects. In seeking to contribute to strengthening the debate on the future role and relevance of museums, the panel seeks papers addressing topics including but not limited to:

- Analyses of existing attempts to decolonize museums of art and material culture in a Nordic context broadly construed (with special interest in experiences from Sápmi, Kalaallit Nunaat, the Faeroes Islands, and areas formerly connected to Nordic colonial empires in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia);
- Institutional responses to decolonial claims in the Nordic region;
- Repatriation and contested ownership of art and museum objects;
- Shared agency and Indigenous sovereignty;
- Politics of collecting, conserving, mediation and display.

Keywords: Coloniality; Decolonization; Colonial collecting; Colonial contact zones; Repatriation and ownership; Shared agency.

We invite proposals for papers as well as round-table discussions.

Session: A new enlightenment? Working to make digitised collections sustain democratic engagement

Session organizers:

Merete Sanderhoff, Statens Museum for Kunst (DK) / session chair (msa@smk.dk) Kira Kofoed, Thorvaldsens Museum (DK)
Karin Glasemann, Nationalmuseum Stockholm (SE)* Jonathan Beck, Scan The World (UK)

Session description:

Art museums have a tradition of acting as gatekeepers to their collections, controlling who has access to use their images and knowledge for which purposes, thus maintaining exclusive power over the narratives they foster. In a digital era, the reasoning behind this kind of gatekeeping is challenged.

Firstly, digitisation has made it easy to share museum images and data without risk of breaking or losing valuable information at the source. Secondly, brought up with the participatory internet, people are getting accustomed to having a voice and are expecting museums to let them take part in shaping and nuancing cultural and historical narratives. Thirdly, in a time where severe misinformation is undermining public discourse, knowledge-based institutions such as museums have a new obligation to share trustworthy data openly on the internet to stem the destructive current of 'alternative facts'. In order to achieve this, we can't maintain control over how the art is used, and perhaps we shouldn't? As Peter B. Kaufman writes in *The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge*, artworks – like apples – are subject to a 'law of gravity' that requires them to eventually fall out of copyright and into the public domain. Museums need to understand and embrace the implications of that.

For this session, we call on educators, curators and researchers from Nordic art museums who are interested in exploring public engagement in how art history is written, by opening up their digitised collections to free re-use by citizens outside the museum walls. We also welcome representatives from community-driven knowledge- and data-sharing platforms that are showing a new public demand for access to our common cultural heritage. What can they teach us about the untold narratives and hidden potentials in our collections?

Suggested type of papers:

1. Type: Art history / digital humanities research

Subject: Theoretical and ethical reasoning behind opening up art collections in a digital age

2. Type: Case studies / practice-based research

Subject: Practical examples of public engagement and re-use; lessons learned from interacting with communities outside museums

Keywords

digitalisation, commons, public domain, democratic engagement, art collections, 3D scanning, communities, volunteers, citizen science

Session: Challenging canon: Exhibition production as a critical institutional practice

Session organizers:

Christine Horwitz Tommerup, Curator of 19th century art, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, chto@glyptoteket.dk

Julie Lejsgaard Christensen, Head of Interpretation, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, jlch@glyptoteket.dk

Lærke Maria Andersen Funder, PhD, research assistant, Museology, Aarhus University, klalmf@cc.au.dk

Kamma Overgaard Hansen, PhD, independent art historian and research assistant, Aesthetics and Culture, Aarhus University, aekkoh@cc.au.dk

Session description

Making a museum exhibition holds great potential to challenge institutional and disciplinary canons. When collections are revisited and re-evaluated, new knowledge and perspectives are progressed: Recent exhibitions have shown how criteria for canonization are revealed and opened to questioning when art

works are reinterpreted in new contexts (e.g. *Le modèle noir: de Géricault à Matisse*, Musée D'Orsay 2019; *Why are You Angry*, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 2020).

Working with collections in the physical exhibition space enables a dialogue between theoretical perspectives and exhibition practice (Bjerregaard 2020; Sheikh 2019). With this session we wish to develop our understanding of the exhibition process as critical to the production of knowledge in a museal context and to discuss the potential of this knowledge in stimulating development of canonical concepts and institutional practices.

We invite contributions from both museum professionals and university-based researchers to participate in developing the following perspectives further:

- How can the exhibition process be used to challenge both institutional and disciplinary canons?
- How does the exhibition work raise theoretical issues? And how can these issues be explored as part of the exhibition process?
- How can the museum exhibition's concrete physical manifestations be used to challenge existing canons in an academic as well as broader public context?

Furthermore, we wish to discuss the institutional implications of critical exhibition practice, in particular reflecting on how institutions with strongly defined identities and histories may be able to integrate challenging perspectives into their collections.

Keywords:

Challenging canon - Canonization - Critical exhibition practice - Production of knowledge

Session: Gender, sexualities and collections

Session organizer:

Associate professor Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen, NTNU, Norway ulla.angkjaer-joergensen@ntnu.no

Associate professor Sigrun Åsebø, University of Bergen, Norway, Sigrun.asebo@uib.no

As part of the NRC project *The Feminist Legacy in Art Museums (FLAME)*.

<https://www.ntnu.edu/flame>

Session description

In the past decades, there has been a growing interest in issues of gender, sexualities and diversity in art museums. Museums have explored their collections and collecting practices from gendered perspectives, both in temporary exhibitions of women artists, feminist art and as part of more permanent collection displays. This session will focus on the different perspectives questions of gender and sexualities bring to collections, collecting, and the curating of collections. How do we curate with gender and sexualities in mind? Whereas women dominate as museum visitors, curators and pedagogical staff, collecting has traditionally been connected to masculinity. What role does gender and sexuality play in collecting and in the narratives of collectors, their identities and philanthropy? Historically, women have always been collectors and benefactors; who were they, and what impact did they have? Will it make a difference for our public collections, that cultural policy has made art museums more dependent on private collectors and donations? Art museums deal with cultural history, yet at the core of art collecting lie an aesthetics that insists on the autonomy and inherent value of the art object. Does art collecting and museum curating still reproduce structures where women, gender and femininity are read as cultural history, and aesthetics as universal (and masculine)? The division between art and craft has been drawn along gendered lines, will the institutional consolidation of museums of craft/design with museums of fine art and architecture (i.e. The National Museum in Norway) open doors for women and feminism? The session welcomes papers dealing with empirical case studies, theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Papers may be both part of empirical studies focusing on women, gender and sexualities in collections, related to curating/collections in museums and other institutions, or be of a more theoretical or interdisciplinary character.

Key words: Gender, sexualities, diversity, art collecting and collections, curating.

Session: Repositioning Design (In) Collections: 1960–1980

Session organizers:

Leena Svinhufvud, Educational Curator, Head of Learning, Design Museum Helsinki, e-mail: leena.svinhufvud@designmuseum.fi

Sabina Maria Rossau, Postdoc at Designmuseum Danmark and University of Southern Denmark, e-mail: smm@sdu.dk

Session description

The topic of this session relates to the changing roles and nature of design collections in the 1960s and 1970s. Following in the wake of Scandinavian Design's international claim to fame, this late post-war period saw design as a professional field moving away from the tradition of decorative arts, while at the same time being re-read and developed as an agent for societal and environmental change. This political aspect and impact was of particular relevance to the established social democratic paradigms of the Nordic countries. With the advent of 'new art history' in the 1970s, the role and status of design changed from that of the 'minor arts' into gradually being acknowledged as a field in its own right, akin to art history.

The session welcomes investigations on how collections of design objects were formed, changed, redefined or reinterpreted within this period, and how new exhibition projects and strategies aimed to create new 'canons' or new 'collections' to challenge and/or supplement existing collections of design objects – typically the collections of decorative arts museums founded in the latter half of the 19th century. What's more, the session is open to contributions that not only focus on the transformations that design collections and the discipline of design itself underwent at this time (internal discourses), but also asks about the changing relation between politics and design (interdisciplinary discourses) and the democratization of design (public discourses) in this period. Finally, investigations into the subsequent repositioning of 1960s and 1970s design within collections is also relevant.

Keywords: 1960–1980, design, museums, collections, exhibition

Session: Trash or Treasure. Public Care for Private Collections

Session organizers:

Peder Valle, Doctoral Research Fellow, University of Oslo, Peder.Valle@nasjonalmuseet.no

Beata Labuhn, PhD Research Fellow at The Oslo School of Architecture & Design (AHO), Norway, Beata.Labuhn@aho.no

Session description:

An inextricable link exists between private and public collections. Before the establishment of public cultural institutions, it was up to private collectors – aristocrats, magnates, connoisseurs, fetishists and hoarders of sorts – to preserve and propagate their more or less coherent assemblies of their objects of interest. Some of these cabinets of curiosity remain as independent private museums, while others have been absorbed by public museums and archives. In many cases the foundation and continuous growth of public institutions relies in part on private donations. The task of critically assessing the quality and relevance of proposed and accepted gifts from private benefactors remains therefore at the heart of public collection management.

This session calls for contributions discussing – either through specific case studies or general reflections – the significance and implications of private collections as constituents of public collections. What is the role of the curator when private collections are accepted into public ones? Does the meaning of a donated private collection change over time? How do public institutions deal (over time) with patron stipulations accompanying private donations? Does a crown piece or a remarkable patron of a private collection justify the accession of ‘inferior pieces’? How are these ‘inferior pieces’ registered and preserved? Do curators anticipate the possibility of reappraisal and public re-introduction of ‘inferior pieces’ in the light of the ongoing re-interpretation and re-negotiation of cultural heritage? How does the consideration of the patron as ‘original curator’ affect research and the way we think about public curation, culture and society?

Keywords:

Private Collections, Public Institutions, Curation

Session: Collective Histories: On the Radical Potential of Permanent Exhibitions

Session organizers:

Organizer: Research group Visual Culture, by Postdoc Tonje Haugland Sørensen (UiB), tonje.sorensen@uib.no, Tuva Mossin (UiB), tuva.mossin@uib.no, and Jakob Myklebust Huus (UiB), Jakob.Huus@uib.no

Session description:

Permanent exhibitions are pivotal to art museums and can be read as “spaces of experience” or “sites of narratives.” In relation to national museums, such narrative power has been deeply entangled with the formation of ideas concerning national identity. Permanent exhibitions have thus played a significant role regarding which collective histories have been told, and consequently which have been marginalised to the point of invisibility. Attempts at radical subversion of established traditions for permanent exhibitions have historically been met with highly emotional critique and wide public reaction expressing that not only the narratives of art, but also deeply rooted ideas of national identity were at stake. Examples include the re-curation of Norway’s Nasjonalgalleriet in 2005, as well as the transformation of Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum into the Sámi Dáiddamusea in 2017. The reaction to both examples showed that challenging the canonising and often national narratives of permanent exhibitions is an emotional minefield eliciting reactions from far outside the world of art and museums. The questions elicited by this session is therefore how do we deal with permanent exhibitions? What are their histories? Can and should they be challenged?

In such an engagement, we propose that a combined historical and contemporary perspective is necessary, with a particular focus on how the radical potential in permanent displays can engender alternative visions through welcoming historically suppressed narratives. The proposed session is based on the current research focus of the research group Visuell Kultur at the University of Bergen, led by Prof. Sigrid Lien. In addition to the open CFP, the session will include presentations by several research group members.

We welcome submissions concerning (but not limited to):

- The history of permanent exhibitions
- Collection and curation histories
- National narratives and museum displays
- Critical museological perspectives such as queer, decolonial, indigenous, and gender perspectives and their impact on permanent exhibitions.
- Museum as a public sphere

Keywords: radical democratisation, public spheres, museums, permanent displays, queer, new media, digitisation, Sami collections, indigeneity, coloniality, museal interventions, Norwegian museological history.

Session: Rethinking (Trans)National Galleries in the North

Session organizers:

The panel is convened as part of the research network “The Art of Nordic Colonialism: Writing Transcultural Histories”.

Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen, PhD student, SMK – National Gallery of Denmark and University of Copenhagen, avj@smk.dk

Nivi Christensen, Director, Nuuk Art Museum, nich@sermersooq.gl

Karina Lykke Grand, Director, National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, karina@art.fo

Session description:

National galleries are ‘powerful resources for nation building’ (Kneil 2016). In art history and museum studies, research on nationality has had a substantial place, particularly with a focus on the 19th century – a period crucial for the foundational narrative of ‘the nation’ as something in and of itself. In recent years, however, there has been a call for attention to the entanglements in the North Atlantic and to move beyond the idea of fixed national borders (Danbolt 2018; 2021; Körber 2021; Gremaud and Thisted 2020). What does this mean for the idea of the national gallery? With this panel, we propose to ask: what is a national gallery if we attend to transnational connections rooted in Scandinavian colonialism? How is a concept like ‘the national’ rethought in former colonial areas such as Greenland and Sápmi where the building of new national galleries is under debate (Hansen 2020; Christensen 2015)? How is the shared past told in the national galleries? How can the idea of (trans)national galleries be re-imagined for the future?

For this session, we invite papers to reflect on the notion of (trans)national galleries – past, present, and future in order to move beyond methodologic nationalism in the study of these institutions. We invite scholarly reflections and analyses as well as presentations based on hands-on museum work, and artistic practices.

Keywords: National galleries, colonial history, transnationalism

Session: When Private and Public Collections meet

Session organizers:

The session is organized by the research group Modernism(s) at the University of Agder:

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Session description:

Private patronage of the arts has long historical traditions and has led to philanthropic investments, urban development, and the establishment of art museums. In the absence of adequate state funding for the arts, the generosity of individuals can fill a significant gap in the cultural life of a city or a nation. In Kristiansand at the Southern tip of Norway the regional museum Sørlandets Kunstmuseum is being transformed into the new museum Kunstsilo at the initiative of investor and private art collector Nicolai Tangen. In 2017 the Sørlandets Kunstmuseum in Kristiansand had approximately 500 000 NOK (Norwegian Krone) to spend on art, while the Tangen Collection, which the future museum will dispose of, acquired art worth 40 million NKR. In turn, The National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo, had 10 million on its purchasing budget but acquired art for 76 million from the private initiative Sparebankstiftelsen DnB. Jorunn Veiteberg, the author of the report *Å samla kunst* (Kulturrådet 2019), thus questions “who writes art history?” Her report shows that private collectors are gaining increasing influence over what is displayed in Norwegian art museums and over what is being bought and collected.

We invite papers that discuss the challenges and possibilities of such private initiatives. Paper topics may include, but are not limited to:

- To what extent does private ownership lead to privatizing public heritage?
- What art histories might be forgotten, and what art histories might be discovered?
- Will private collections supplement and strengthen the museums possibility to tell diverse stories of art and art history?
- Will private collections help museums to become more open democratic institutions?

Session: Bringing Collections Home

Session organizers:

The session Bringing Collections Home is convened by the research group “Worlding Northern Art” (WONA), UiT - The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø.

Current research group members are Svein Aamold, Marthe Tolnes Fjellestad, Monica Grini, Henrik Gustafsson, Hanne Hammer Stien, Elin Haugdal, Hanna Horsberg Hansen, Katrine Rugeldal, Irene Snarby and Stephanie von Spreter.

For further information and submission of papers, please contact:
Stephanie von Spreter, stephanie.von.spreter@uit.no

Session description:

Through the Sámi repatriation project *Bååstede* (2014-2019) the transfer of more than 1600 objects from the Norsk Folkemuseum / the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History and the Museum of Cultural History at University of Oslo to six Sámi museums in Norway was made possible. Although the concept of repatriation in *Bååstede* was used to describe a physical homecoming, historian Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2018) talks about other forms of repatriation when he describes how Sámi individuals and communities re-engage with material from photographic archives and collections. Similarly, Kirsten Dobbin (2013) speaks about visual repatriation in which it is not necessarily desired to have physical objects and photographs returned, but rather elements of history, memory, and identity that are embedded in the images found in collections. Art historian Anja Heiß (2017) advocates that restitution and provenance research can only be meaningfully carried out within collections, and that institutions need to problematize their own collections through such curatorial/institutional projects.

Alongside research projects and art historical investigations, artistic and curatorial interventions can contribute to alternative forms of repatriation and restitution, working both with(in) collections, involved communities and the wider public. An example of such a project is Sámi artist Katarina Pirak Sikku’s longstanding engagement with the pictorial and written material of the archive and collections of the former State Institute for Racial Biology, held by the library of Uppsala University. Another example is the art and research project *Ládjogahpir* (2020) developed by Sámi artist Outi Pieski and archaeologist Eeva-Kristiina Harlin, introducing rematriation as a counter-concept to the patriarchal concept of repatriation.

Bringing Collections Home welcomes papers addressing research projects, as well as artistic and curatorial interventions in collections/archives that enable and critically reflect on processes of repatriation, restitution, and care. Questions raised in these papers can include:

- How do museum professionals, curators, art historians and artists work to re-engage with archives and collections to create different kinds of homecoming?
- What kind of concepts and methods can be applied to successfully repatriate and reconstitute material that belongs to descendants of violated individuals and communities?
- How to address the public to make them aware of such violations?

Keywords:

Worlding, (visual) repatriation, artistic interventions, curatorial interventions, homecoming, collection and archival research, Sámi repatriation, rematriation, re- engagement, re-enacting, care

Session: The 'problem' of the Design Archive as a collection

Session organizers:

Dr Christina Pech, KTH Stockholm Sweden christina.pech@arch.kth.se

Dr Mark Ian Jones, UNSW Sydney Australia mark.i.jones@unsw.edu.au

Session description:

This session speaks to the heterogeneity and complexity of the design archive as a collection. Archives often occupy an uncertain position in cultural politics; they represent different holders who may safeguard cultural heritage, display exemplars for practice, or serve corporate interests. As the first wave of professional designers of the 20th century have retired, design archives as a type have expanded globally. However, the transdisciplinary practice of design means it often falls between categories making these archives vulnerable to scattering across different collecting institutions. While design archives represent both the outputs and processes of designers, there is an overwhelming perception of value bestowed upon the artefact, the drawing, the maquette, the prototype. But what of the ephemera of design practice that can reveal alternative narratives beyond the physical - the contracts, correspondence, invoices, receipts, etc.? Even if objects are circulated in the present, the knowledge beyond the object often remains peripheral and hidden in the archive.

For this session, we seek proposals that explore the diverse nature and potential of design archives and how they can enhance the understanding of design as a discipline. How is the discipline's entanglement with economics, industry, craft, and education reflected in individual cases? What are the possibilities and the threats in contemporary collecting and archiving of design? What can design archives do that other archives cannot?

We particularly welcome case studies grounded in research of archival documents that can highlight the infrastructure of knowledge production, qualify design networks and relationships, or frame non-canonical narratives.

Keywords: Design, design history, archives, alternative narratives, cultural heritage, knowledge production, design networks

Session: New Perspectives on Jewish Art Collecting and Patronage in the Nordic Countries

Session organizers:

Rasmus Kjaerboe, PhD, curator, The Hirschsprung Collection raskjr@hirschsprung.dk

Session description:

Collectors and patrons with a Jewish background have made significant contributions to the cultural history and the arts in the Nordic countries. The Hirschsprung Collection and the Design Museum in Copenhagen along with Goteborg Art Museum and Thiel's Gallery in Stockholm are just some of the museums that are deeply indebted to Jewish patrons. Jewish families have equally supported a number of prominent artists during the nineteenth and early twentieth century through networks of connections, money, commissions and friendships.

In the past decades, Jewish Studies have seen a number of vital developments in shedding new light on the vibrant interplay between Jewish identity, art, culture, modernity, national identity, politics and integration. Despite this tremendous growth in international scholarship, empirically as well as theoretically, Nordic art history and museum studies are only just beginning to engage with the fascinating, Jewish heritage of modernity.

This session seeks to explore important themes of Jewish patronage and collecting in the history of art and museum studies of the Nordic countries. Speakers are invited to (1) present case studies in patronage and collecting throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or (2) to present on analytical and theoretical themes of identity, collecting, patronage and art.

Keywords: Jewish studies, museum studies, history of collecting, identity.

Session: Exhibiting and collecting art of the North in Eastern Europe – exhibiting and collecting art of Eastern Europe in the North

Session organizers:

Kristian Handberg (The University of Copenhagen) handberg@hum.ku.dk

Yulia Karpova (The University of Copenhagen), Yulia.karpova@hum.ku.dk

Session description:

The session invites presentations on how art, design and architecture of the Nordic countries has been presented in the neighboring region of Eastern Europe and the corresponding cases of exhibiting and collecting Eastern European art in the Nordic countries. The connections between the Nordic countries and Eastern Europe have been largely overlooked in Nordic art histories, both before, during and after the Cold War divide. With this session we would like to highlight cases of contact through specific exhibitions, exchanges, participation in fairs and events, and collecting activities actively creating a presence of one region in the other. We will prioritize papers presenting new material and those, who will discuss the impact of these activities in the most interesting way.

Potential topics could include:

- Grand exhibitions and fairs like the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö 1914.
- Russian and Eastern European art and design at Nordic exhibitions, like Nordisk Udstilling for kunst og industri, Copenhagen 1888.
- The Russian/Soviet Avant-garde exhibited and collected in the Nordic countries.
- Eastern European art and design in Nordic museums.
- Nordic art and design in Eastern European museums.
- Exhibitions of Nordic art in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.
- Exhibitions of Socialist art and design in the Nordic countries during the Cold War.
- Cultural diplomacy, exhibitions and collecting.
- Post-Soviet/Post-communist relations between the Nordic and Eastern Europe.
- Current cases: The most recent exhibiting and collecting activities.

The paper proposals must be in English and include a title, short description of the theme/subject of the paper (max. 250 words), contact information and a short bio, all in 1 page.

Session: The fear of knowledge. Artists' book collections

Session organizer:

Lejla Mrgan, PhD student, University of Copenhagen and The Thorvaldsen Museum, lejla@hum.ku.dk

Session description:

In his 1960 contribution to the prestigious Reith Lectures at BBC Radio, art historian Edgar Wind points to a problematic notion central to art history: the idea that that knowledge impedes the imagination of the artist.¹ The transition period between the Enlightenment and Romanticism is fundamental to the ratification of this idea, as the notion of the ideal artist changed radically in this period. Moving away from the earlier conception of the artist as a *doctus artifex*, i.e. a learned artist rising above mere craft through erudition and intellect, Romanticism firmly established a new artistic ideal: the artist as an intuitive genius unmarked by the “touch of cold philosophy”, as John Keats puts it in his *Lamia* (1820). The twentieth century, of course, challenged this notion through ready-mades and conceptual art, but the fear of knowledge lived on. It recently resurfaced in Denmark in connection to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts when several prominent politicians juxtaposed the more academic, desk-based disciplines of research, theory, reading and writing against artistic practice.² What's essentially at stake here is the very understanding of the relationship between art and thinking.

This session invites papers that discuss this problematic juxtaposition by looking at the way artists have collected, used, and read books.³ Which books did artists own? How did they collect them? How did books circulate amongst artists? And how were books involved in artistic practice? By examining these questions, the session hopes to widen our understanding of artistic practice and education, and to open inquiry into broader questions regarding the nature and history of knowledge and the artist as a figure – in the past as well as today.

¹ This lecture was published a few years later in the book *Art and Anarchy*, 1963.

² The debate started in early 2021, in the wake of a larger debate about the leadership and organization of the Academy. See for example the piece written by the then Minister for Culture in Denmark, Joy Mogensen, “Kunst bør ikke være en skrivebordsøvelse”, *Jyllandsposten*, 20.02.21

³ For one of the only investigations into this question to date, see Heiko Damm, Michael Thimann, and Claus Zittel, eds., *The Artist as Reader: On Education and Non-Education of Early Modern Artists*, 2013.

Session: Letters from the archive: Collecting and researching artists' letters in Art History

Session organizers:

PhD, Mag. Art Karen Westphal Eriksen. kaer@smk.dk

Session description:

There is increasing interest in artists' correspondences as grounds on which to uncover and establish new art historical research. In Denmark, a series of online databases has made collections of artists' letters available to scholars globally. This reflects scholarly practices, where the free denotation of the 1990s and 2000s have evaporated in favor of archival fact and empirical groundwork. This session wants to open up a field of enquiry in between the two: What types of meaning can we derive from artists' correspondences and archives? Working with collections of letters as archival materials not only offers opportunity to work with interdisciplinary analysis considering collections of letters as expressions of aesthetics – verbally and formally, thus venturing into literary criticism and genre studies. This session invites papers, which engage with letters and correspondences in art history as case study and as methodological problem: How do we work with artists' letters? Can we talk of coherency or only heterogeneity in a collection of letter? What potentials and what pitfalls do we encounter? Is it a practice that sits too close to biography, leaving art and aesthetics behind or does it hold potential for uncovering artistic practice and aesthetics – and in which ways? Papers that consider the formal expressions of the letters as reservoirs of art historical meaning are particularly welcome.

Session: Archiving Machines: the life (and archival death?) of counter-culture collections

Session organizers:

Dr. Wylie Schwartz, Visiting Assistant Professor, Modern and Contemporary Art History and Theory
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Session description:

Questioning the 'drive to archive' has become increasingly central to contemporary arts and humanities practice, an impulse that becomes especially poignant in a digital age where works are notoriously difficult to preserve. How does one collect art that is degradable or made with equipment that becomes obsolete?

But what about works that were designed specifically not to be collected: works which attempt to defy commodification, are ephemeral, performative, or situated in public places? In Denmark, the 1960s and '70s were a rich, experimental period in artistic life, yet most of the radical 'new' art taking place was happening almost exclusively as an underground activity, while the existing art institutions remained indifferent, if not hostile to the changing tide. This often meant that any attempts to preserve this work fell into the hands of alternative centers – or individual private collectors – who would invent their own system of archival logic to catalogue the collection.

And, what happens when the archive gets archived? That is, later, when a more mainstream institution such as a university, museum or library takes over its care? Detached from its original function, the archive moves to a new place, which results in a loss of context. Having been dismantled, dismembered, re-categorized and re-contextualized, in its new institutional setting, the experimental milieu of the counter-culture organization and its 'wild' archival machinery becomes lost. Somewhere in the process, its preservation becomes its destruction.

This panel invites papers that address issues of how to preserve collections of works that are inherently ephemeral, along with what happens when a counter-culture archive becomes archived.

Topics may include:

- Studies of archives of the counterculture
- Examinations of the archival logic and machinery of personal or private archival collections - preservation and archiving digital media and/or ephemeral art practices
- Conceptualizing media archives in the age of digitization
- Preserving counterculture under the stewardship of a mainstream institution

Session: A Future Government Art Collection

Session organizers: KORO working group

Elisabeth Byre, Curator and Leader of the art project in the new Regjeringskvartalet Nora C. Nerdrum, Curator and Leader of KORO's Art Department

Ida Højgaard Thjømmøe, Producer Drew Snyder, Senior Curator

Contact: Drew Snyder: ds@koro.no

KORO is in the early phases of a large-scale public art project in the new Regjeringskvartalet (Government Quarter) in Oslo, Norway. The building project, one of the biggest in Norway's history, consists of moving 16 ministries of the Norwegian government together with the Office of the Prime Minister into one area in central Oslo. In 2020, as part of our preliminary activities leading up to this project, KORO registered 3,291 art works held across the 16 ministry offices located in different parts of Oslo. As these ministries will be leaving their current offices and moving into the new quarter, the question of what is to be done with these art works presents itself. The results of the 2020 registration process show that each department has had its own collecting practices, some more comprehensive than others. After mapping all the works and generating overviews across for example medium of artwork or gender of artist, common qualities emerge that say something about the histories and contexts behind their acquisition.

In addition to these 3,291 works, the bulk of which are drawn from Norwegian art history from 1970 – 2000, there are further art works of a high art historical and social value that have special connections to Regjeringskvartalet and play central roles in our project. This includes the Picasso/Nesjar works that were cut off from Y-blokken before it was torn down as well as the other integrated works from 1959 that are currently being preserved and restored in Høyblokken, Hannah Ryggen's government tapestries which received new layers of meaning after the terrorist attack on 22 July, 2011, and more contemporary art works that are part of KORO's larger collection such as Do Ho Suh's Grass Roots Square at the R6 government building. One of the four curatorial pillars of KORO's project in the new Government Quarter deals with the reuse and reactivation of already existing art works. After having been parts of different constellations, these works will, following the building plans, come to varying extents under one new umbrella. Critical questions around the idea of a "collection" present themselves when these groups of artworks, with their different provenances, impulses and representative aspects behind them, become grouped together within a new whole. The complexity of the situation is further compounded by the addition of new works that KORO's current project will produce.

Session description

KORO is in the process of reflecting on the above questions with the provisional thought towards a newly constituted future Government Art Collection. What would it mean to call all these works a "collection"? Whose histories and what priorities does the idea of a "collection" foreground or obscure? How does working within the context of the Norwegian government impact these questions? Is it worth trying to "correct" historical shortcomings of what is already there, or are these shortcomings themselves reflective of a historical reality that is important to understand and deconstruct? What are the implications of a government art "collection" for the future, how is it managed, how is it activated, in what directions might it grow?

These are starting points for KORO's session proposal on the formation of collections in public space. The session proposes to take the new Regjeringskvartalet as a core case study while also leaning on KORO's experience managing its own collection of nearly 8,000 works in public space across Norway and at embassies and consulates abroad. We expect project plans to have advanced by the fall of 2022 to where we can speak more clearly about what these structures might look like. We would also like to

place this conversation in an international and historical context, with outside guests who can give papers with critical perspectives on this issue aimed also at deepening our own research into the question of national art collections in public space today.

Keywords: Government collection; national identity; (de)canonical formations; collecting in public space; future models

Session: Curating Identity, Shaping a People

Session organizers:

Patricia Berman (Wellesley College): pberman@wellesley.edu or +1 (781) 283- 2048; Cynthia Osiecki (National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo): Cynthia.Osiecki@nasjonalmuseet.no or + 47 947 81 387; MaryClaire Pappas (Indiana University): maryclaire.pappas@gmail.com or +47 483 69 993

Session description

This panel brings together papers that analyze how museum curation and collecting practices in Norway have helped to shape and mold the Norwegian subject during nation-building in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Norwegian art history emerged as both a consequence of and an active agent in, the construction of Norway as both a nation-state (a political entity) and a nation (an ideological formation). With this panel, we aim to make visible the ways in which collecting practices in museums have not only helped to shape a canon but have also served nation-building and its associated social engineering. We will also include papers that analyze the persistence of the canon since its formation in the nineteenth century to define and shape the idea of the Norwegian subject. The aim of the panel is to contribute to a critical historiography of the formation of Norwegian art history inter alia museum practices, making visible the process of canon formation through archives and collections. The three proposed papers touch on three different moments of canon formation, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, the mid-to later nineteenth century, and the early twentieth century. We further highlight the ways in which nationhood as a cultural formation, notions of national prestige, and the boundaries of an imagined polity, as embedded in institutional practices, were intertwined in the first instance with gender and ethnicity. In that regard, we argue that museum institution building has been both a form of archiving and willful forgetting. We are particularly eager for dialogue with others involved in critical historiography across the Nordic countries.

Key Words: nationalism, nineteenth century, modern art, social engineering, archive, curation, collecting

Papers will be given by Cynthia Osiecki, Dr. Patricia Berman, and MaryClaire Pappas. Chair for the panel: TBD

- Cynthia Osiecki's paper will focus on building an art collection for the Norwegian nation from 1837 onwards. In its first three years, the National Museum of Art in Christiania solely bought foreign paintings mirroring the collecting practices of other national institutions established around Europe. When did the focus shift from collecting international paintings to art made by Norwegians?
- Dr. Patricia Berman's paper will focus on the curatorial contributions of P. A. Munch and colleagues in the mid-nineteenth century and the ways in which Munch's formulation of a "Norwegian people" were invested in historical collections and history writing itself. The categorization and distribution of material cultural materials and the ways that national narratives were invested in them will be discussed.
- MaryClaire Pappas' paper will analyze the "Art in Schools" exhibitions at Oslo *Kunstnerforbundet* in the 1910s, focusing on how artists associated with this locale mobilized together to help place printed images of canonized works of Norwegian visual culture within children's schools. The artists mobilized around "Art in Schools" believed these images would help foster children's vision, their artistic sensibilities, a sense of patriotic duty, and most importantly good taste for domestic art and culture.