

MUSEUM WHY?

Nordic network for rethinking art museums of the future

All in a current state of transition, the three Nordic art museums Malmö Konstmuseum (SE), Trondheim Kunstmuseum (N) and Nykyaiteen museo Kiasma (FI) have together with Copenhagen University's research centre Art as Forum (DK) formed a creative learning network for sharing and developing new perspectives on the art museum of the future. Rooted within a Nordic tradition, the network questions and experiments with the art museum as an institution - ultimately asking the question: museum why?

Museums in the Nordic region (and throughout the world) are facing challenges and demands for change arising from both outside political and economic changes, from the observation that Western hegemonic ideas of art and culture are no longer valid nor socially sustainable, and from internal wishes to create museums that are better, more inclusive and have relevance to broader sections of the publics they intend to serve. The newly established network and collaborative project *Museum Why?* aims to use the momentum gathered from the respective partners' current institutional development to investigate the role of art museums in the future.

"At the present it is especially important to ask the question Museum Why? because the civic foundations that museums were traditionally built upon are changing rapidly. The network will help to open important contemporary discussions about the role of museums in society - both within the museum sector and the academic discipline of museum studies"

- Rasmus Holmboe, postdoc at Copenhagen University, Art as Forum Research Centre

While there are regional differences and nuances, the Nordic context remains relevant as the institutions share obvious similarities in terms of demographics and models for government as well as their interdependency on the welfare state. The network is thus rooted in a Nordic tradition but with an international scope inviting both Nordic and international artists, scholars, curators and culture workers to contribute with their perspectives on why - and how - we need art museums in the future.

"We regard 'Museum Why?' as an important network and learning platform for investigating how future art museums can be catalysts for change. We see the network, which in its form is inclusive, accumulating and circulating, as a starting point for being able to create wise, immersive and innovative perspectives on the role of the art museum in the future."

- Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg, Director Malmö Konstmuseum

Under the three interconnected subheadings; decoloniality, sustainability and infrastructure the network will span over a three year period (2021 -2023) and encompass three public seminars, a special issue journal, as well as a final conference and publication.

“We are looking forward to learn from our Nordic colleagues on issues of both social and ecological sustainability. We wish to inspire and be inspired by our Nordic colleagues as we engage ourselves in sustainability work aiming towards a more adaptive, responsible and greener art institution.”

- Kati Kivinen, Chief Curator, KIASMA

Seminar November 2021 Towards a future museum glossary: A for Ability, T for Trust

The first public seminar *Towards a future museum glossary: A for Ability, T for Trust* will be hosted by Trondheim Kunstmuseum in Trondheim, Norway and will take place 25-26 November 2021. Through a programme of lectures, workshops and discussions the seminar aims to help museums and their audiences speak about the museum, its duties and purpose in the future, and to better understand their respective roles and the basis of



their interaction.

“The starting point was to create an imaginary new vocabulary for the museum of the future. We hope that this seminar can be part of developing and contributing to a new vocabulary for art institutions.”

- Marianne Zamecznik, Curator, Trondheim Kunstmuseum

For more information and tickets, please visit: <https://trondheimkunstmuseum.no/en/museum-why>

The next seminar will be hosted by Malmö Konstmuseum and is scheduled for 2022. Activities, events and open-calls will be announced on www.museumwhy.com.

Interested in contributing?

The *Museum Why?* network is always looking for new perspectives on our work. Please contact project manager Nanna Balslev Strøjer at (email address). We look forward to hear from you!

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PARTNERS:

Malmö Konstmuseum (SE), Malmö Art Museum

Founded in 1841, Malmö Konstmuseum is one of the leading art museums in Scandinavia. The museum building, built in 1937, is located in the Malmö Castle complex in Malmö in southern Sweden. The museum is governed by the City of Malmö and houses several important collections and historical donations, including major collections on Nordic modern and contemporary art. The collection is contains over 40.000 works, primarily covering the period from the 16th century to the present day. The Art Museum is in the midst of a major transformation and is working to open the museum to a wider and larger audience and is working to ensure that a new museum building can be built and opened in the near future.

Trondheim Kunstmuseum (N), Trondheim Art Museum

Trondheim Kunstmuseum shows exhibitions of both contemporary art and works from its extensive collection of Norwegian and international art. Trondheim Kunstmuseum was founded as Trondhjem Kunstforening in 1845, and is today a consolidated part of Museene i Sør-Trøndelag. With the ambition to be an important and innovative regional and European art museum the museum produces 6 to 10 exhibitions annually spanning over two venues. Trondheim Kunstmuseum is currently going through the first steps of a process of relocation, reinvention and proposed artistic merger with Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum (National Museum of Craft and Design). In connection to this, the museum takes the opportunity to look at the roles and expectations that form the relationship between an art institution and its public.

Nykytaiteen museo Kiasma (FI), Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

The Museum of Contemporary Art was established in 1990. Since 1998, it operates at the heart of Helsinki city in the Kiasma building, designed by Steven Holl. Today Kiasma is the largest museum for contemporary art in Finland, ranking among the main Nordic institutions of contemporary art too. Kiasma is part of the Finnish National Gallery. The mission of Kiasma is to present, collect, commission and preserve the art of our time: It offers interesting encounters with art and new perspectives on life. It is a place where people meet art and where everyone is welcome. It collects current contemporary art that reflects the times as broadly as possible.

Kunsten som Forum Forskningscenter (DK), Art as Forum Research Centre

The New Carlsberg Foundation research centre Art as Forum at University of Copenhagen develops a specific branch of art studies dedicated to the particular *mode of existence of art* that pertains to its relation to the public sphere, embracing both the public that art presupposes and the actual publics that it addresses. In aesthetics and art studies, the experience of art has mostly been conceptualised as an individual matter. But it is also a defining feature of art in the modern period, that the encounter with artworks places the beholder in a particular community of others that share this encounter. In this sense, art—in all its forms and shapes—constitute the premises of a communal experience.

By focusing on art and communality, the centre ambitions to provide an important supplement to traditional art studies and eventually also enhance our tools to analyse individual artworks, to understand their histories and to measure the significance of aesthetic experience. Broadening the conceptual and interpretive approaches to art, Art as Forum furthermore hopes to be able to give a more comprehensive description of the societal value of art.