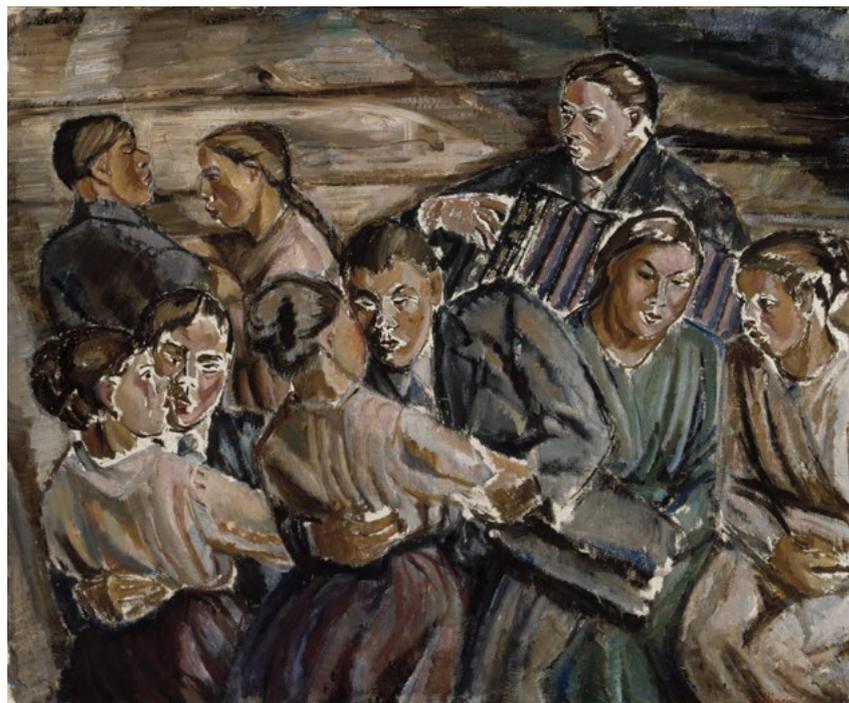


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Conferences: [no title] NORDIK XII 2018 Copenhagen 24–27 October 2018

Conference Session: 'Art, Artists and Art Institutions in Times of War and Conflicts'

Hanna-Leena Paloposki, PhD, Senior Researcher, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki



**Tyko Sallinen, *Barn Dance*,
1918, oil on canvas,
114.5cm x 138cm
Finnish National Gallery /
Ateneum Art Museum**
Photo: Finnish National Gallery /
Antti Kuivalainen

The Nordic Association of Art Historians (NORDIK) organises an academic conference every three years. In 2015 the conference was held in Reykjavik and this year it took place in Copenhagen at the University of Copenhagen. Three keynote lectures and 18 sessions were held during the three conference days.

I co-managed a two-part session, 'Art, Artists and Art Institutions in Times of War and Conflicts', along with Maija Koskinen (University of Helsinki). The theme originates from our research interests. Maija Koskinen is due to defend her doctoral thesis, *Artistically Regenerating and Politically Topical – The exhibitions of Kunsthalle Helsinki 1928–68*, in January 2019. The thesis examines Kunsthalle Helsinki and its impact on the Finnish art field in the context of power and politics before, during and after the Second World War. She will

focus next on the Finnish art field during the Cold War. I wrote my PhD (2012) on *The role of art exhibitions in Finnish-Italian relations concerning the visual arts from the 1920s to the end of the Second World War*. My current research topic is Finnish art exhibitions in the 1930s in the international, political, and nationalist contexts and in promoting Finland.

The session description explains the aims, study areas and questions that we wanted to examine:

A war permeates and affects the whole society: it inevitably impacts and shapes the conditions of the art field. During the First and Second World Wars, artists and art institutions had different kinds of possibilities and restrictions on action, depending on the political situation in each country and its position in the war. Some of them were overt and explicit, others covert or hidden. However, the effects of the World Wars and the following Cold War on art, artists and the Nordic art field are still an almost entirely unstudied area in art history and only recently has it begun to elicit wider interest. The Second World War, for instance, has been considered mainly as a kind of a rupture, after which the development of art continued.

The session discusses topics concerning artists, exhibition policies, art criticism, the art market and Nordic networks during the years of trouble and uncertainty in connection to nationalism and politics. The key question is the 'freedom' of art and the art field in times of war and conflict.

The first part of the session, titled 'Exhibiting Political and National Positions during and after the Second World War', consisted of three presentations:

- 'Abandoned Terrain: Danish Art Exhibitions during World War II', Kerry Greaves, PhD, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- 'An Act of Spiritual Preparedness – Exhibiting Art in Sweden during the Second World War', Hedvig Mårdh, PhD, Uppsala University, Sweden
- "'Only as a Weapon of Propaganda": Henry Moore in the Nordic Countries', Christina Brandberg, MA, PhD Candidate, University of Loughborough, UK

The second part of the session focused on Finland, with the title 'Artists and Nordic Networks in the Years of Conflict from the 1910s to the 1940s' and comprised two presentations:

- 'A Finnish Painter and His Art of 1918: Tyko Sallinen's *Barn Dance* and *Fanatics* in the Context of Conflicts', Eeva Hallikainen, MA, Postgraduate student, University of Turku, Finland
- 'Nordic Networking in Times of Conflict: The Case of Wäinö Aaltonen', Tutta Palin, Acting Professor, University of Turku, Finland

All of the presentations included studies of exhibitions, some discussed networks, and in all of them politics and nationalism were key issues. Exhibition studies is a theme that is becoming a significant research trend in art history – there was another session in the conference related to it, 'Futures from the Past? Nordic Exhibition Histories'. The years of both the World Wars and the Cold War are also coming more into focus in studies of the art field in different countries. Evidence of this could also be seen in the animated discussions we had together in our session in Copenhagen.

The next NORDIK conference will be organised in Norway in 2021.

For details of the full conference programme, visit

https://nordikxii.dk/images/NORDIK_XII_-_Full_programme_2018.10.15_3.pdf