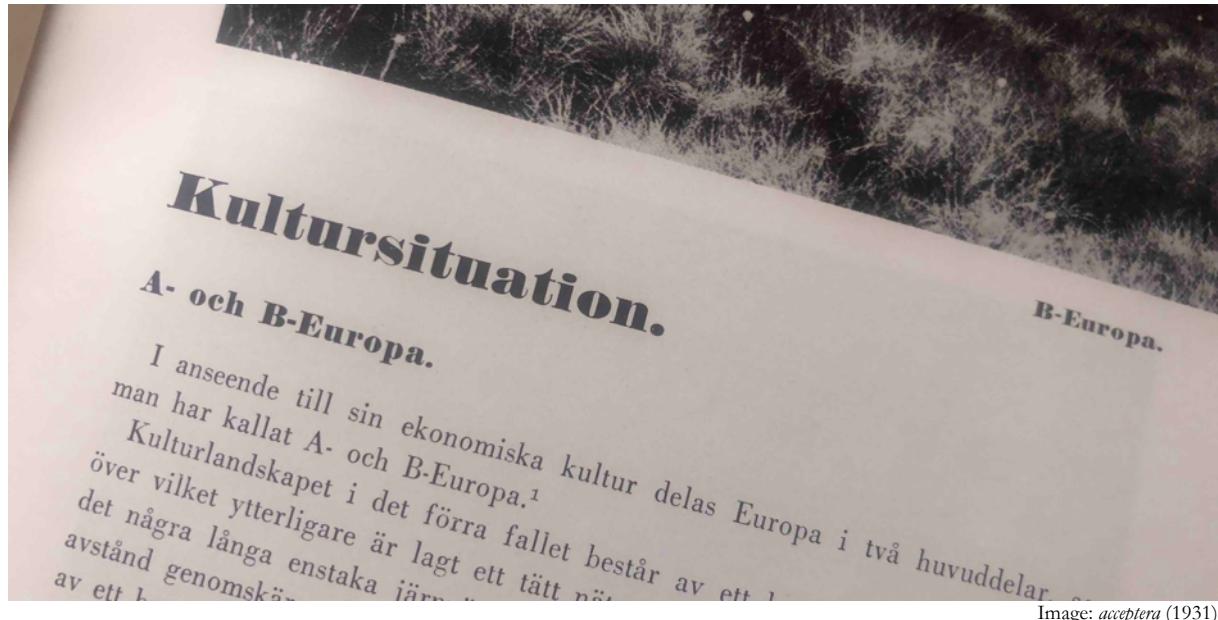




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2nd *Call for Papers:* Many Places, Many Design Histories

The Nordic Forum for Design History Biennial Symposium, 6-8 May 2026, Ubmeje/Umeå, Sápmi/Sweden



Design as a practice is undergoing substantial transformations. Ideas about what is considered to be design, as well as who designs, and where design is done, have expanded. How is this expanded understanding of design reflected in how we comprehend, write and exhibit design's history? In this symposium, we hope to bring together and explore which other stories can become visible when design histories are made from diverse places, with multiple materials, and through interdisciplinary perspectives.

Sidestepping the binary oppositions that long formed a *leitmotif* in design history – between design or craft, urban or rural, center or periphery, industrial or handmade, modern or traditional – this symposium encourages participants to think about and discuss design from viewpoints of inclusion, and as a development through a variety of histories. As this is the first time the Nordic Forum for Design History convenes in Sápmi, it offers an alternative vantage point to conventional perspectives within 'Nordic design', which have been situated, formulated, and institutionalized in metropolitan areas of the global North. It is there that the 'modern' and the 'innovative' have been sought and found, defining the economic and cultural capital that has come to shape design history as a discipline. As a result, complexities, power struggles and practices from other geographies have disappeared, creating design historical blind spots. Also, being in Sápmi, it becomes unavoidable to call attention to the darker side of Western modernity where histories of colonialism seldom have been included in the understanding of design history from the Nordic region.

We welcome contributions that reflect on a wide variety of world makings, and that discuss a broad range of micro histories. Contributions could present case studies of design or craft that have been formulated outside the traditional center, or methodological inquiries and material explorations, as well as reflections upon the institutional frameworks of design.



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We wish to encourage contributions of design histories that speak *from* and *with* many different Nordic geographies and practices. We welcome the exploration of how alternative design historical perspectives are reflected, or could be reflected in a new way, within museums, design organizations, archives, and interdisciplinary contexts.

We encourage papers discussing how design museums could – or already do – work with diverse practices and communities, and examples of museums which might not be considered a “design museum” which have in interesting ways opened up new perspectives on design history. What design histories could for example be found in regional museums? Or what design histories could be told from places and perspectives where “design” is defined from other than art historical viewpoints?

Keynote speakers



Gunvor Guttorm, Professor in duodji (Sámi arts and crafts, traditional art, applied art) at Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino in Norway. Her research is interconnected with cultural expression in the Sámi and indigenous societies, especially duodji. The focus of her research deals with duodji in a contemporary setting, and indigenous people's context. She has written extensively about how the traditional knowledge of Sámi art and craft is transformed to the modern lifestyle. In an Indigenous world, she has participated as invited speaker at Indigenous research congresses and participated in exhibitions in Sápmi and abroad. From 2016 -2018 she worked in a reference group for the exhibition “Let the River Flow”, organized by the Office for Contemporary Art, Oslo. She has also been editor together with Harald Gaski and Katya Garcia Antón of Let the River Flow. An Indigenous Uprising and its Legacy in Art, Ecology and Politics (Office for Contemporary Art Norway/Valiz Amsterdam 2020).



Bart Pushaw is Assistant Professor of art history at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA. They received their PhD in Art History from the University of Maryland and then was a driving member of the international research collective “The Art of Nordic Colonialism: Writing Transcultural Art Histories” based at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Pushaw's teaching, research, and curatorial work focus on art histories of the Circumpolar North, with emphasis on the global dimensions of the Indigenous Arctic. They deploy their research to advance rematriation campaigns of cultural heritage back to Indigenous stewardship, especially in Kalaallit Nunaat, Alaska, as well in the Caribbean. They recently served as curatorial consultant on the advisory board for *The Wider World and Scrimshaw*, an exhibition on the relationship between U.S. whaling and global Indigenous Pacific arts at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The exhibition *Art in the Age of the Anthropocene*, where Pushaw curated a section on global Arctic arts at the National Gallery of Estonia, won “Exhibition of the Year” in 2023. They are at work on their first book *Colonial Inuit Art and the Atlantic World*.



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Submissions:

We invite submissions in the formats of papers, panel discussions and pictorials. If you have a suggestion for another format, please submit an additional description of the format you propose. Proposals will be reviewed by the conference convenors, appointed peer-reviewers, and the Nordic Forum for Design History's board and working group.

Please submit an abstract of 300-400 words, including a title and a 50-word biography (50 words each if multiple authors/persons).

Deadline: 30 September 2025

Notification: 15 December 2025

Submissions and conference enquiries: nordicforum2026@umu.se

Symposium convenors

Maria Göransdotter, Associate professor, Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University.

Elin Manker, Associate professor, Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University.

Christina Zetterlund, associate professor, Department of Design, Linnaeus University.

About the Nordic Forum for Design History

The Nordic Forum for Design History was founded in 1983 by Norwegian design historian Fredrik Wildhagen in collaboration with Dane Mirjam Gelfer-Jørgensen and Swede Lars Stackell. It is an open forum for scholars working within the field, a network which in recent years has expanded beyond the Nordic region. The Nordic countries take turns in hosting this event: the forum's last conference in 2023 was hosted by the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Norway.

The forum's network base is at the University of Southern Denmark Kolding.

https://www.sdu.dk/en/om_sdu/institutter_centre/medle/samarbejde/nordisk-forum-for-designhistorie

To join the forum's email list, please contact: Pernille Dahl Kragh, pdk@sdu.dk

The Nordic Forum for Design History's board and working group

Anders V. Munch, Professor, Department of Design, Media and Educational Science, University of Southern Denmark, Kolding, Denmark.

Dr Denise Hagstrømer, Senior curator, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway.

Dr Leena Svinhufvud, Leading Researcher, Architecture & Design Museum Helsinki, Finland.

Maria Göransdotter, Associate professor, Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University, Sweden.

Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir, Director, Museum of Design and Applied Art, Garðabær, Iceland.



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Val Plumwood. “Shadow places and the politics of dwelling”, *Australian humanities review*. 2008:44.

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Liisa-Rávná Finbog, *It speaks to you: making kin of people, duodji and stories in Sámi museums*, diss. Oslo: Oslo University, 2020.

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Matthew Wizinsky, *Design after capitalism: transforming design today for an equitable tomorrow*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2022.