Kunstsentrene i Norge
Contemporary Art Centres in Norway

Seminar:
Artist run institutions –
possibilities and challenges in our times

Wednesday 11.02.2026
09:30–16:00
Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo

Organised by Kunstsentrene i Norge in collaboration with Kunstnernes Hus.

Program

09:30–10:00	Registration and coffee	
10:00–10:30	Official opening by Øystein Strand, Director of Public Art Norway (KORO) and incoming Director of Arts and Culture Norway	
	Welcome	Merete Hovdenak Sarah Lookofsky
10:30–11:00	Presentation: “Independent spirit”	Monika Georgieva
11:00–11:30	Presentation: “Artists Make Change”	Julie Lomax
11:30–12:30	Panel discussion moderated by Merete Hovdenak: “Artist run institutions - artsist inside and outside the institution”	Monika Georgieva Julie Lomax Kathrine Wilson Miriam Wistreich

Program

12:30–13:15	Lunch	
13:15–14:00	Presentation: “Insights from DCA, a network of French art centers: some self-reflection on governance and some deals with our freedom of programming.”	Isabelle Reiher Émilie Renard
14:00–14:30	Presentation “Thinking big and small “	Axel Wieder
14:30–14:45	Coffee break	
14:45–15:45	Paneldiscussion moderated by Sarah Lookofsky: “The commercial and non-commercial institutions: art as business / fundraising / sponsorship”	Axel Wieder Irija Øwre Ruben Steinum Trygve Luktvasslimo
15:45–16:00	Short summary and thank you	Karen Rosness

Bios and institutions



Monika Georgieva is an independent curator based in Vienna. In 2020, she cofounded Laurenz, an independent exhibition space for artistic experimentation and discourse, which she co-directs with artist Aaron Amar Bhamra. Alongside this, she currently collaborates with Kunsthalle Wien and teaches in the fields of architecture and curatorial practice. From 2023 to 2025 she served as artistic director at Kunstverein Eisenstadt. She is an alumna and former fellow of the de Appel Curatorial Programme in Amsterdam.

Photo: Aaron Amar Bhamra.

Laurenz: The projects we realize under Laurenz are often concerned with expanding the classical understanding of exhibition making and look for inspiration in different disciplines. Hosting and working with the existing conditions, often thematizing them and allowing them to take the main role rather than just being a context, is an important part of our collective practice and the way we communicate with artists and cultural practitioners.



Merete Hovdenak has been the executive director of the KiN-network Contemporary Art Centres in Norway since 2016. She is also chair of board at RAM gallery. She is a certified museum curator (NMF) and holds a Cand.philol in Art History from the University of Oslo (2004). Hovdenak previously worked as a curator at Galleri Würth and as curator and head of department at Gråmølna, Trondheim Kunstmuseum. From 2010 to 2012, she was based in Paris, where she studied museology at the SIEM/ PhD-program at École du Louvre. She has published numerous texts within art history and museum studies.

Photo: Jan Khür / Studio Abrakadabra.

Kunstsentrene i Norge (Contemporary Art Centers Norway) KiN is a nationwide membership organization for Norway's 15 regional art centers. Founded in 2010, the association works to strengthen and highlight the role of art centers as key players in Norway's contemporary art landscape. KiN promotes collaboration, professional development, and the dissemination of contemporary art, and provides support through regional project grants for visual arts. Through its work, KiN helps ensure artistic freedom and makes art accessible to a wide public across the country.

Julie Lomax is the CEO of a-n The Artists Information Company, and has over 20 years' director-level experience in arts organisations and national funding bodies, she's a dedicated champion of artists and their role in the world. Julie has held roles as the Director of Development at Liverpool Biennial, fundraising to support ambitious artists' commissions, Director of Visual Arts at Creative Australia, where she led on artists funding programmes and international partnerships, and Director of Visual Arts at Arts Council England, leading on artists development, visual arts policy and investment in arts organisations.

Photo: Joel Chester Fildes.



A-n The Artists Information Company are the artists' advocate. Guided by their members and advised by our Artists Council, they campaign on crucial issues, from fair pay to intellectual property, ensuring that artists' voices are heard and shaping policy at the highest level. Open to every artist, our inclusive, open-minded community connects members to the services and opportunities they need to thrive, empowering them to make change for the better.



Sarah Lookofsky is the Director of Kunstnernes Hus in Oslo, a kunsthalle founded by artists in 1930 that includes exhibition spaces, a cinema, and artist studios. As the institution approaches its centennial, Lookofsky hopes to explore how art and its institutional armatures inherit and respond to histories amid contemporary crises. Previously, Lookofsky was Associate Director of MoMA's International Program in New York, focusing on modern and contemporary art from Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. She has served as Dean of the Academy of Fine Art in Oslo (2020–2023) and as faculty and head of the Curatorial Studies program at the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program (2010–14).

Kunstnernes Hus (The Artists' House) is an art institution in the centre of Oslo. Established by artists in 1930 to show contemporary Norwegian and international art, Kunstnernes Hus has since become one of the most important art institutions in Norway. It is owned by the independent, artist-led foundation Stiftelsen Kunstnernes Hus. With exhibitions, films, guided tours, events and cinema, Kunstnernes Hus is a major venue for art and culture.



Trygve Luktvasslimo is a multidiciplinary artist - and he is also the chair of North Norwegian Art Centre. His debut feature film The Bitcoin Car (2023) had national theatrical and digital release and premiered internationally at Slamdance. The Vegan Toothbrush's (2019) soundtrack by organist Gunnar Idenstam is released on Toccata Classics, the film was screened at LIAF, Inversia Murmansk, Kunstnernes hus, the University of Bergen and Columbia University, and is in the Norwegian library collection. His current work is exploring "cracks" which includes his 24-chapter short story Xmas in the Crack (Instagram 2025) and movie The Carpenter's Crack (in development). He was Festspillene i Nord-Norges Festival Profile in 2022-23.

Photo: Dorota Milewicz.

Nordnorsk kunstnersenter (North Norwegian Art Centre) is Northern Norway's regional center for contemporary art, in Svolvær. Our aim is to create interest for art and arts and crafts in the region through a regional and international orientation. The Centre runs Kunstnerhuset Svolvær, a residency house for artists located on the island of Svinøya. Every other year North Norwegian Art Centre organises Lofoten International Art Festival – LIAF.North Norwegian Art Centre, founded by the region's artist associations.



Isabelle Reiher has been Director of L'Institut d'art contemporain since November 2025 (Villeurbanne, Lyon, Rhône-Alpes, France), also Fonds régional d'art contemporain of Rhône-Alpes region. A tool for creation, experimentation and research in contemporary art, the Institut d'art contemporain (IAC) develops in situ (1,200 m2) an activity of exhibitions combined with the constitution of an art collection (nearly 1,900works) with international influence. Between 2019 and 2025 Reiher was appointed director of the Olivier Debré Center for Contemporary Creation in Tours.

L'Institut d'art contemporain. A tool for creation, experimentation and research in contemporary art, the Institut d'art contemporain (IAC) develops in situ (1,200 m2), an activity of exhibitions combined with the constitution of an art collection (nearly 1,900 works) with international influence. It extends its research activities, ex situ, by disseminating its collection throughout the Auvergne-Rhône- Alpes region, as well as nationally and internationally.



Karen Rosness has been communications advisor at Kunstsentrene i Norge since 2024. She is also General Manager at Oslo Art Guide and is currently project manager for the new edition of Oslo Art Weekend, taking place 28–31 May 2026.

Photo: Jan Khür / Studio Abrakadabra.



Émilie Renard is currently director of Bétonsalon – Centre for Art and Research in Paris since 2021, with a program mainly based on the politics of sensibilities. From 2013 to 2018, she was director of La Galerie, Contemporary Art Centre, Noisy-le-Sec, where she has sought to make the artistic program of the art centre a lever to influence the social, aesthetic and symbolic relationships between the people who animate it: artists, teams, publics, partners. Her researches are based on the power of art to act within the structures of the imagination and society. She is attentive to the ways in which power relations operate within institutions, distribute roles and prioritize practices. To overcome these divisions, she seeks to connect what is separate within and around the practices of art: the work of art and its administration, the majority and the minority states, the theory and the daily practices.

Bétonsalon is a centre for contemporary art and research. An art centre that aims to provide hands-on experience of creativity in all its forms. A centre for research in action and in theory, where the forms of research and those of its sharing are to coincide and nascent languages develop. A source of situated practices and knowledge which, in collaboration with the Université de Paris Cité, generates new angles of approach, as it addresses common or divergent perspectives.



Ruben Steinum is Director of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA). He leads the foundation in alignment with its mission to expand opportunities internationally for contemporary art from Norway. In this role, he centres artists and embraces a both-and way of thinking –welcoming complexity and paradoxes while focusing on strengthening art's position in society, protecting artistic freedom, and contributing to shaping the future together.

OCA - Office for Contemporary Art Norway is a foundation promoting contemporary art from Norway internationally. OCA expands international opportunities and contributes to global exchanges through various activities, including grants and residencies, research visits and network development, public programmes, and publishing. OCA is funded by the Ministry of Culture and Equality and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is the commissioner for Norway's contribution to the visual arts section of La Biennale di Venezia.



Axel Wieder has been the Director of the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art since August 2024. From 2018 to 2024, he has been director of Bergen Kunsthall where he produced a widely acclaimed, interdisciplinary program with an international focus and local roots together with his team, which encompassed exhibitions, live projects, and a broad event and outreach program. Previously, Wieder was the director of Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm (2014–2018) as well as Head of Programmes at Arnolfini in Bristol (2012–2014).

The Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art takes place every two years at different locations in Berlin. Since its first edition in 1998, the Berlin Biennale has been committed to create experimental exhibition and event programs, together with renowned curators, presenting bold artistic and political positions in dialogue with Berlin's urban space. The Berlin Biennale explores international artistic developments of the present day that make the unseen and unfamiliar tangible. Each edition brings together artists, thinkers, and interested audiences from different areas of society, opening up a dialogue with the inhabitants of the city.



Kathrine Wilson is Curator and Director of the Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Lillestrøm, Norway. From 2012-2023 Kathrine was the Managing Director and Curator of Kunsthall Oslo where she was also one of the founding members, working as Project Manager from 2010. She was Director and co-curator for the collaborative project space "Munch Museum On the Move – Kunsthall Oslo" from 2016-2019. She was the chair of The Association for Norwegian Kunsthalles from 2021-23 and a board member from 2017. Kathrine has a multifaceted background that ranges from medical researcher, project manager and clothes designer.

Nitja senter for samtidskunst (Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art) is specialized in exhibiting and communicating both Norwegian and International Contemporary Art with a focus on young artistic practices. Nitja produces and presents Norwegian and International Contemporary Art with a focus on young artistic practices. Social responsibility is at the core of Nitjas' practice, particularly via The Art Visit and Pilotgalleriet, these two departments for art education- and dissemination offer exhibitions and workshops to social-health institutions and day centers, and produce and mediate exhibitions, artist meetings and workshops for schools in the Viken County.



Miriam Wistreich is the director of UKS. Her current interests revolve around questions of infrastructure; how to build and sustain art spaces and structures that create more caring and equitable institutions. She was previously Artistic Director at Hotel Maria Kapel, an artist-in-residence and exhibition space in the town of Hoorn. As part of the Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology, a curatorial platform for planetary becoming, she co-curated the 2020 biennial Alt_Cph: Patterns in Resistance. She is an alumnus of De Appel Curatorial Programme and has previously worked with organisations such as I Can't Dance I Don't Want to be Part of Your Revolution and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, NL, SMK – National Gallery of Denmark, and Louisiana Museum of Modern art.

Unge Kunstneres Samfund (Young Artists' Society) is an Oslo-based institution for contemporary art and a Norwegian membership organization. Founded by artists for artists in 1921, UKS has since established itself as one of Norway's core experimental venues for the arts; convening, exhibiting, and supporting critical voices of contemporary artists, with the objective of having both an artistic and political impact within and beyond its region.



Irija Øwre (Oslo, Norway) is the Director of Format. She has twenty years of experience in the gallery sector and has worked in the fields of visual art and craft, both nationally and internationally. She also serves as a consultant for art collections and has been a member of committees for journals and the design industry. She holds a master's degree in art history, with a thesis focusing on the art market's power to define the history of art.

Format was founded in 1991 and is a leading gallery for contemporary crafts and design in Norway. The gallery aims to strengthen the position of Norwegian contemporary crafts and design internationally and through working with both established and emerging artists the gallery reflects the various tendencies in contemporary crafts and design today.

Assosiation of Art Centres in Norway

– A Nationwide Network of Contemporary Art Centres

