

CHART

2025

Strengthening

Nordic

Collaboration

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Art Professional Symposium  
Organised by CHART & Art Hub Copenhagen  
at Thoravej 29

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# Foreword

by Julie Quottrup Silbermann, Director CHART

The Nordic art scene has always been defined by connection and by the shared belief that art grows stronger when ideas, knowledge, and resources flow freely across borders. With the Art Professional Symposium and the accompanying *Strengthening Nordic Collaboration*, CHART set out to revisit this spirit of collaboration.

The symposium emerged from a simple but essential question: What does Nordic collaboration mean today? In an art world that is increasingly global yet fragmented, this question feels more relevant than ever. The Nordic countries share values of equality, trust, and care, yet our institutional landscapes, funding systems, and audiences differ in scale and character. It is within this balance of similarity and distinction that we unlock the potential of collaboration.

This publication invites you to explore the many facets of Nordic collaboration — its shared values, structural realities, challenges, and opportunities. Through perspectives gathered from leading art professionals across the region, *Strengthening the Nordic Collaboration* presents key insights, reflections, and practical recommendations drawn from the Art Professional Symposium. Whether you wish to deepen your understanding of cross-border collaboration or explore new ways of thinking about institutional partnerships, we hope this publication serves as a tool to inspire a more connected, sustainable, and forward-looking Nordic art community.

Our hope is that this work will serve as both a reflection and a call to action, reminding us that the strength of the Nordic art scene lies in our ability to come together, to learn from one another, and to collectively form what comes next.

Enjoy the read.

# Acknowledgements

This publication *Strengthening the Nordic Collaboration* presents the main takeaways gathered from the Art Professional Symposium hosted by CHART and Art Hub Copenhagen held at Thoravej 29 on Wednesday 27 August 2025. The aim of the symposium was examining the current state of Nordic collaboration. The information presented is based on data gathered through recordings from the panel discussion and round-table conversations, which have been extracted and summarised by CHART.

We warmly thank everyone who participated in the Art Professional Symposium, and extend special thanks to our panellists Ruben Steinum (Director, OCA—Norway), Juha Huuskonen (CEO, Frame Contemporary Art Finland), Auður Jörundsdóttir (Director, Icelandic Art Center), Mariam Elnozahy (Artistic Director, Konsthall C), and moderator, Marie Laurberg (Director, Copenhagen Contemporary), for guiding the discussion with such clarity and care.



Panel discussion "Strengthening the Nordic Collaboration" during Art Professional Symposium 2025  
Photo by Joakim Züger / BARSK Projects

## Participating art institutions:

Akureyri Art Museum (IS); ARKEN (DK); Art Hub Copenhagen (DK); Copenhagen Contemporary (DK); Dansk Arkitektur Center (DK); Frame Contemporary Art Finland (FI); Frederiksberg Museerne (DK); Galleri F15 (NO); Gammel Strand (DK); Icelandic Art Centre (IS); Konsthall C (SE); Kristianstad Konsthall (NO); Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg (DK); Kunsthall Charlottenborg (DK); Kunsthall Spritten (DK); Kunstsilo (NO); Lunds Konsthall (SE); Malmö Art Museum (SE); Museum of Contemporary Art Roskilde (DK); OCA—Office for Contemporary Art Norway (NO); Ordrupgaard (DK); Simian (DK); Statens Museum for Kunst (DK); Taidehalli Kunsthalle Helsinki (FI); The Living Art Museum (IS); Wanås Konst (SE).

# Introduction

Since its founding in 2013, CHART has pursued a mission to provide a shared platform for Nordic contemporary art. Through the annual art fair, CHART has connected artists, galleries, collectors, and institutions across the region and beyond. The Art Professional Symposium extends this mission, acting as a dedicated initiative to strengthen ties, foster new forms of collaboration, and make more strategic use of existing resources.

The purpose of the symposium is to connect Nordic institutions and to establish a platform for exchange of knowledge and best practices. This publication gathers the knowledge generated at this year's Symposium to identify opportunities for institutions to work together in ways that strengthen the Nordic countries' shared cultural base and enhance their global presence.

Each Nordic country has its own cultural base—policies, institutional landscapes, and traditions—that shape the region in distinct ways. Denmark and Sweden, for example, have strong gallery scenes and collector bases, with Sweden particularly distinguished by its auction-house traditions. Norway benefits from substantial public funding driven by its oil economy. Finland's art scene is characterised by robust public institutions and a tradition of artist-led initiatives, though its private market is smaller. Iceland, given its scale, places particular emphasis on international networks and exchanges. Common to them all is the fact that they operate within a highly social field, one that is deeply dependent on relationships and collaboration:

"The art world is a people-driven industry, and every major or significant project that's realised is based on numerous people coming together and collaborating."

— Marie Laurberg, Copenhagen Contemporary

Rather than viewing these differences as limitations, they can be understood and leveraged as complementary strengths that, when connected, form a broader and more resilient Nordic ecosystem. We are pleased to be part of a new movement and look forward to follow the formation of new connections and initiatives across the region.



Art Professional Symposium 2025. Photo by Joakim Züger / BARSK Projects

# Why Nordic collaboration?

Collaboration across the Nordics is far from a new concept. Participants at the symposium reflected on the 'Nordic miracle', a period of heightened interest and cross-border collaboration in the 1990s, followed by a decline in exchange during the 2000s. The reason for the decline in collaboration was discussed, both due to the loss of stable institutions facilitating exchange and perhaps a structure being too focused on superficial values. From this, the question of "why Nordic?" was brought up:

"Since we're all based in the Nordic region and share a common purpose in helping the art scene thrive, it's worth asking: why? Why is the Nordic context a relevant framing? We work hard to foster a global mindset, which sometimes makes me ask whether a Nordic, or even Danish, focus still makes sense, or whether it feels old-fashioned."

— Marie Laurberg, Copenhagen Contemporary

This ambiguity offered a starting point as to discuss the relevance of the Nordic framing. With today's cultural landscape, where institutions face profound challenges from shrinking public funding, growing competition for private support, demands for sustainable practices, and changing geopolitical contexts, we believe it is time for reconnection across Nordic borders.



Round table discussion during Art Professional Symposium 2025  
Photo by Joakim Züger / BARSK Projects

## Guiding questions

1. What opportunities exist in current structures and resources with the Nordic art scene and how do we leverage them effectively?
2. What are the major obstacles against cross-border collaboration and how can we navigate them or work around them?

# 1.

## Why Nordic collaboration?

In order to leverage the benefits of Nordic collaboration—and to fully answer the "why Nordic?" question— this section presents the Nordic characteristics either enabling or restricting collaboration, asking:

— What Nordic characteristics enable or challenge successful collaboration?

- 1.1 Shared Nordic DNA
- 1.2 Small publics and collective scale
- 1.3 Geographic proximity and pragmatism
- 1.4 Nordic privilege and institutional responsibility

*Table 1: Key findings*

## 1.1 Shared Nordic DNA

The concept of a *shared Nordic DNA* emerged as both a facilitator and a challenge for collaboration. Grounded in common cultural values, it provides a foundation for smoother collaboration. However, assuming uniformity in aesthetics, traditions, or structures can be exclusionary, overlooking regional differences that must be acknowledged when presenting the Nordics as a unified identity. The shared Nordic DNA should be managed carefully regionally to function as an inclusive and fitting international brand:

"There is something like a Nordic DNA, if you will, but it's something we have to consider carefully as it drizzles down."

— Nanna Balslev Strøjer, **Malmö Art Museum**

Participants urged that the focus should instead be on sharing operational practices, rather than highlighting superficial similarities. By exchanging knowledge, methods, and best practices, institutions can strengthen the overall field, enhance reliability, and reduce precarity.

"From the outside, it looks very much the same. But when you zoom in, there are a lot of differences and peculiarities. This contributes to the complexity of talking about the Nordics because *it looks the same but it's not.*"

— Paola Paleari, **Art Hub Copenhagen**

Internationally, a shared Nordic DNA can therefore function as a recognisable cultural brand as individual characteristics and differences between the countries may be less visible. Regionally, it offers opportunities for collaboration but also conceals the differences between countries.

**Key takeaways:**

- Focus collaboration on operational practices and best practice sharing rather than assumed aesthetic or structural uniformity.
- Shared Nordic DNA is a potentially strong international brand but must be managed carefully to avoid exclusion and being misleading.



## 1.2 Small publics and collective scale

The structural reality of small national contexts, or "*small publics*", was presented to make collaboration essential for visibility, efficiency, and sustainability. Touring exhibitions, co-produced projects, programmes and shared infrastructure allow institutions to pool resources, reduce costs, and increase impact:

"We all have *small publics* compared to the other big nation states. You maybe use two years for producing an exhibition and then you only have a very small public that sees the show. In this sense, it's also a *sustainable idea to let exhibitions travel*, so we won't end up spending a lot of money and making a lot of things that very few people can see."

— Heiðar Kári Rannversson, Living Art Museum

From this perspective, collaboration becomes not only a creative or cultural choice but also a pragmatic necessity, ensuring cost-effectiveness and sustainable practices. Being small nations in a global context, the opportunities afforded by coming together were also highlighted:

"If we're further away on this planet than Europe, there is no chance that they will differentiate us. This shows the very concrete aspect of proximity and the size of the countries being fairly small and manageable. It's easy to collaborate, I would say, and *we should use that opportunity*."

— Ruben Steinum, OCA Norway

"Together, the Nordic region forms the 11th largest economy in the world; alone, each country is much smaller. This is where *pragmatism* comes in."

— Juha Huuskonen, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

Lastly, the idea of collective scale applies not only between countries but also among smaller institutions, where shared initiatives are vital:

"We do not get a lot of opportunities to run projects or work with artists *unless we are in collaboration*."

— Mariam Elnozahy, Konsthall C

Ultimately, collaboration across nations with small publics (and small institutions)—whether through shared exhibitions, equipment, or coordinated communication—enables extended reach, optimises resources, and strengthens the collective Nordic presence on the global stage.

### Key takeaways:

- Collaboration is essential for small publics and small institutions for visibility and sustainability.
- Sharing exhibitions and projects extends reach and maximises resources and strengthens international reach and influence.

## 1.3 Geographic proximity and pragmatism

A third answer to the “Why Nordic?” question highlighted the *geographic proximity* of the Nordic countries, enabling pragmatic collaboration. Participants saw this as an opportunity to foster cross-border connections to enhance transparency:

"This is something super pragmatic, that we are just so nearby. It's a simple step to go to the neighbouring country and see how things can develop."  
— Juha Huuskonen, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

Panellist Ruben Steinum exemplified the untapped potential in activating these pathways, noting that institutions in Oslo, often connect more with Bergen or Trondheim than with Gothenburg or Malmö, despite being geographically closer. He emphasised the importance of intentionally leveraging proximity to foster closer connections and enable smoother collaboration:

"We will of course continue to connect globally, but to return to the Nordic context, we should know what is happening with our neighbours. I've also realised for myself, how embarrassingly little I know of the scene in Denmark and in Sweden. How can we do things together, even on a smaller scale? For me, that is what pragmatism in Nordic collaboration is about. *We need to open up these pathways* and activate them further. Through that, we can get to know each other and understand how to work meaningfully. In this sense, it is both pragmatic and structural. So, that's part of the why."  
— Ruben Steinum, OCA - Norway

These reflections show that when countries are close, institutions can gain a better understanding of their neighbours' contexts—both organisationally and personally—through visits and simple engagement, learning about structures, resources, and priorities. This, in turn, can improve transparency and support smoother Nordic collaboration.

**Key takeaways:**

- *Geographic proximity* offers readily applicable opportunities for pragmatic collaboration on a smaller scale.
- Strengthening cross-border connections reduces knowledge gaps between neighbouring contexts, fostering transparency and *organic collaboration*.

## 1.4 Nordic privilege and institutional responsibility

The final key response to “Why Nordic?” was the Nordic countries’ grant structures providing privileged platforms for collaboration:

"We come from societies that are very similar with very similar structures. We are *extremely privileged countries*. It sounds romantic, but we are very privileged, even if we complain about lack of funding and everything else."  
— Auður Jörundsdóttir, Icelandic Art Center

The concept of *privilege* was widely acknowledged, prompting a call for greater responsibility:

"Being so privileged also comes with a responsibility: to set high standards and best practices, and to engage in collaborative work that builds connections and ultimately creates a supportive and equitable framework, including in areas such as gender equality."  
— Heiðar Kári Rannversson, Living Art Museum

"I think it's important, as we are in a position to set good examples, to show how to support artists and sustain best practices for artists and arts institutions. I think that's something we need to focus on a bigger scale and that's *something we should do together*."  
— Auður Jörundsdóttir, Icelandic Art Center

Being in a privileged position therefore carries the responsibility to set positive standards and create shared frameworks that support fair organisational practices and ensure accountability:

"I think that is a big to-do for everyone, to *seek out the voices that aren't represented here* and who need the institutions' scale of support."  
— Mariam Elnozahy, Konsthall C

Taken together, these reflections underscore that Nordic collaboration is not only enabled by structural advantages but also requires conscious efforts to uphold responsibility, accountability, equity, and inclusivity across institutions. The opportunity to set positive examples on a collective scale was highlighted as an important part of the Nordic collaboration.

### Key takeaways:

- The Nordic region has a *strong welfare-state tradition* providing fertile ground for collaboration.
- Nordic privilege *carries a responsibility* to establish high standards, using collaboration to create responsible frameworks.

Table 1: Key findings

Characteristic	Core idea	Implications for collaboration
Shared Nordic DNA	Nordic collaboration is built on shared cultural values of equality, trust, and commitment to quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Strong brand internationally if communicated with care.</li> <li>— Risk: Assuming regional uniformity can be exclusionary.</li> <li>— Focus collaboration on sharing operational methods, best practices and improving connections, rather than superficial similarities.</li> </ul>
Small publics	Limited national audiences make cross-border collaboration essential for visibility and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Opportunity to tour exhibitions and co-run projects to reach wider audiences.</li> <li>— Pooling resources reduces duplication, costs, and maximises impact for both small publics and institutions.</li> </ul>
Geographical proximity	Close distances allow practical, small-scale, and cost-efficient collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Facilitates resource sharing and frequent exchanges beneficial for small publics and institutions.</li> <li>— Strengthening cross-border connections fosters structural transparency and organic collaboration.</li> </ul>
Nordic privilege	The Nordic welfare model provides stable, well-funded conditions for collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Present fertile ground for collaborations.</li> <li>— The Nordic region should lead by example and establish best practices internationally by taking responsibility to allocate resources equitably.</li> </ul>
Nordic collaboration for global positioning	Combining regional pragmatism with a global outlook strengthens each nation's cultural visibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Collaboration enhances the Nordic cultural brand internationally.</li> <li>— Successful collaboration should avoid complacency and balance local authenticity with global competitiveness.</li> </ul>

# 2.

# Strengthening Nordic collaboration

The previous section highlighted the Nordic countries' common characteristics, shaped by smaller local publics and structural privilege presenting beneficial opportunities for collaboration.

At the same time, differences in cultural policies, funding structures, and traditions, combined with limited cross-border knowledge, emerged creating barriers to transparency and alignment. Rather than viewing these differences solely as obstacles, recognising and addressing them can help build a more resilient and adaptable Nordic art scene.

Building on these points, this section presents the different factors either sustaining or limiting Nordic collaboration. Some elements, such as fostering continuity and trust, can be implemented more easily on institution's own accord, while others, like reforming funding structures, require broader coordination and shared responsibility.

- 2.1 Continuity and trust
- 2.2 Funding structures
- 2.3 Institutional exchange across scale and scope

*Table 2: Key findings*

## 2.1 Continuity and trust

Participants argued that the central element in successful Nordic collaboration is continuity (in projects, institutions, and networks), serving as the foundation for long-term structures.

"What we really need is institutions that provide *continuity*. CHART is a fantastic example as you know it will be there next year, and that it operates in the Nordic context. That starts to build things."

— Juha Huuskonen, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

Durable platforms, recurring initiatives, and shared events—such as CHART or multi-year exchange programmes—are key to ensuring that collaborations deepen over time, fostering trust-based networks and systemic impact.

Barriers to continuity were also mentioned, such as short-term funding structures that limit the sustainable development of ideas, networks, and lasting platforms. Rigid funding models can therefore hinder collaboration, as they often fail to align with the slow, trust-based processes through which meaningful connections are formed.

"Most of the Nordic funding bodies require at least three partners, and that's a hindrance. Most of what we do in the field is relational, based on trust. *It takes a long time to establish a connection where you feel like you want to collaborate*, not just person-to-person, but also institution-to-institution."

— Milena Høgsberg, Freelance writer and curator

"Often you can apply for one project, and then when that's finished, the *funding is finished, and you cannot reapply with the same project*. And then you have to get creative."

— Rebekka Anker Møller, SixtyEight Art Institute

A lack of project durability poses a clear challenge to sustaining trust-based relationships. This can lead to a loss of knowledge between projects, risking a slowdown in development.

### Key takeaways:

- Recurring platforms are crucial to allow organic formation of trust-based relationships across institutions.
- Recurring institutional presence, initiatives, and long-term programmes strengthen the value and impact of collaborations.
- Short-term or one-off projects limit durable networks and long-term impact.

## 2.2 Funding structures

Existing funding structures emerged as both a driver and a barrier to collaboration. Many Nordic institutions, large and small, rely heavily on funding bodies, which hold significant power to shape and facilitate collaborative practices. Building on the previous section, short-term project funding and a lack of base support constrain development:

"There is a lot of project funding and short-term thinking, but we see institutions that have existed for a long time struggling with core funding, with rent, with staff, with basic costs. That is our biggest concern."

— Auður Jörundsdóttir, **Icelandic Art Center**

Also, a hindrance related to rigid rules—such as the three-partner requirement for certain Nordic grants presented in the previous section 2.1. The complexities of the funding structures from one country to another were additionally presented as a barrier to international actors engaging with the scene:

"[...] this lack of access can hinder international professionals from taking leadership roles, because without knowledge of the funding landscape, they struggle to secure the resources needed to keep institutions afloat."

— Milena Høgsberg, **Freelance writer and curator**

Differences in funding structures and requirements, can therefore *disadvantage smaller institutions and limit international engagement*.

Lastly, the adage “*go where the funding is*” was raised as a reminder that existing funding structures can also encourage collaborative practices:

"Something we all agreed on is that sometimes *you have to go where the funding is*. Often, Nordic projects begin simply because there is a strong presence of Nordic foundations to apply to. Then, in some cases, you look at how a project can be scaled to become Nordic in scope to secure funding."

— Nanna Balslev Strøjer, **Malmö Art Museum**

These reflections show how funding both enables and constrains Nordic collaboration: while it can catalyse projects and cross-border initiatives, short-term and uneven funding structures often undermine long-term stability, transparency, and equitable access, ensuring that practice shapes funding, rather than funding shaping practice.

### Key takeaways:

- Nordic funding bodies can catalyse cross-border projects and initiatives enabling Nordic collaborations.
- Funding models must align with practice to enable long-term, trust-based relations to create stable institutional networks and exchange.
- Greater transparency in Nordic funding structures would allow small and international institutions to engage more effectively.

## 2.3 Institutional exchange across scale and scope

To strengthen collaboration, participants emphasised the importance of expanding institutional exchange across *scale and scope*. Firstly, on the level of scale:

"How do we work on an institution-to-institution level? How we can support joint exhibition-making—not just, for example, a Yayoi Kusama exhibition, which was a great Nordic collaboration—but also exhibitions including smaller institutions. It's not only the big museums that collaborate with their mega-projects demanding substantial capital, that can do this; smaller institutions often have very limited resources and *may need a larger institution or partner with more leverage* to channel funding or even to facilitate discussions with funding bodies."

— Milena Høgsberg, Freelance writer and curators

Smaller institutions should receive access to the larger networks, visibility, and infrastructure of major organisations, while larger institutions could ensure equity, relevance and renewed insight by connecting with small, emerging or grassroots initiatives.

In terms of scope, collaboration should go beyond touring exhibitions or joint projects to include shared frameworks for sustainability, labour standards, accountability, and representation:

"Maybe what can be shared is more something at the source: *best practices, ways of operating, ways of making the field stronger, more reliable, less precarious*. If we strengthen the field, that will ripple outward and also create a bigger international presence."

— Paola Paleari, Art Hub Copenhagen

As previously mentioned, a practical solution proposed was to increase in-person connections across borders, helping institutions navigate structural and cultural differences and unlock the full potential of their exchanges:

"We will make sure to invite curators and professionals from across the Nordics to visit, to see what is happening, and to become part of these conversations. Through that, we can begin to understand how to work together more meaningfully. It is not about travel in itself, it is about *creating meaningful connections*."

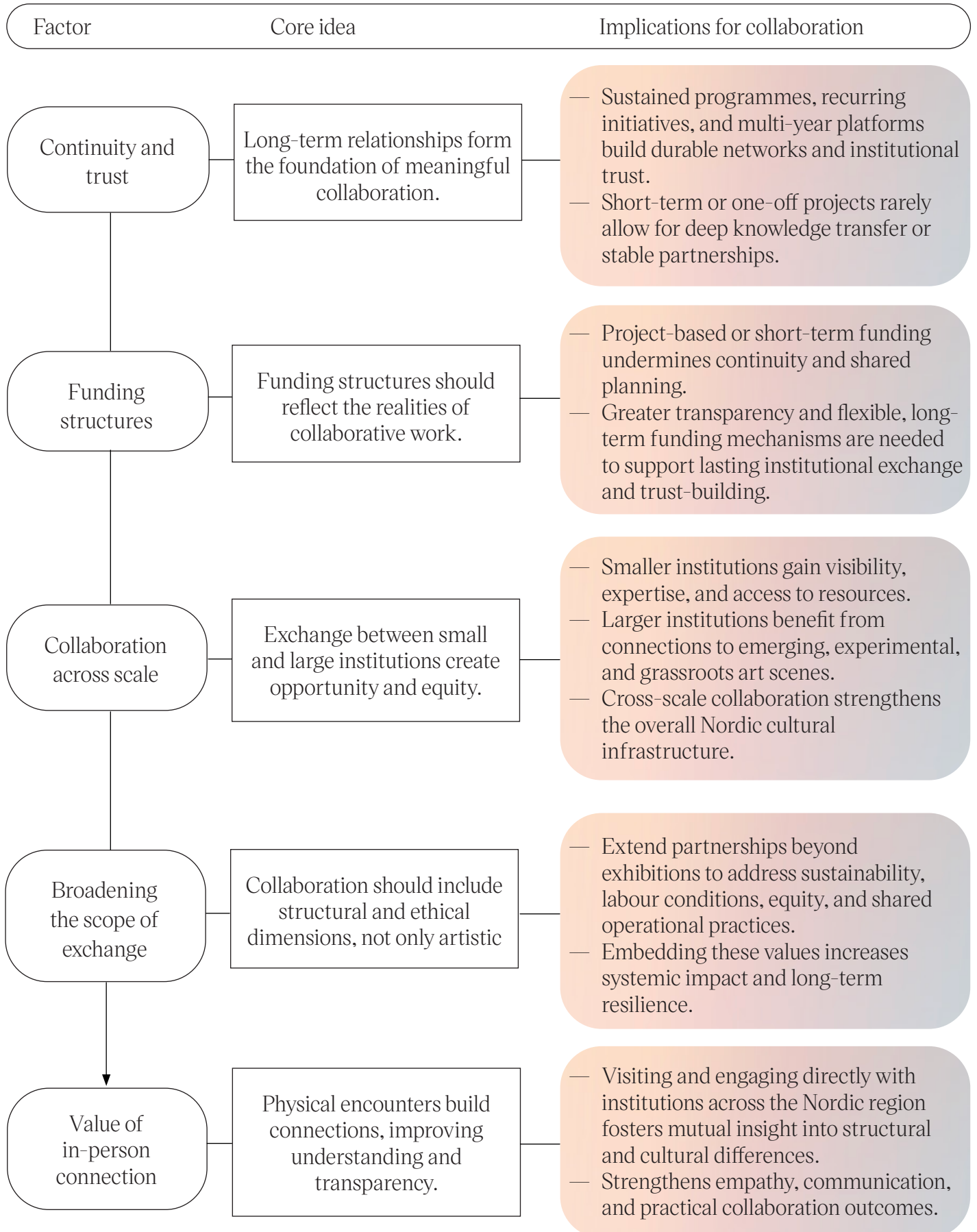
— Ruben Steinum, OCA—Norway

### Key takeaways:

- Expanding the *scales of collaboration* allows smaller institutions to gain access and visibility and larger ones to connect with emerging art scenes.
- Expanding the *scope of collaboration* to include structural practices, not just exhibitions, maximises impact of collaborations.



Table 2: Key findings



# 3.

## Next steps.

Building on the previous section's presentation of characteristics and factors that sustain or limit Nordic collaboration, this section presents the actions needed to support collaborative strategies and frameworks.

This section focuses on three key areas, each with questions linked to corresponding actions. Together, these strategies aim to foster sustainable, long-term collaboration while preserving institutional individuality and supporting underrepresented voices and institutional independence and distinctiveness.

- 3.1 Creating and sustaining a continuous, durable network
- 3.2 Ensuring equity and accountability
- 3.3 Sharing exhibitions, projects and initiatives

*Table 3: Opportunities for collaboration*

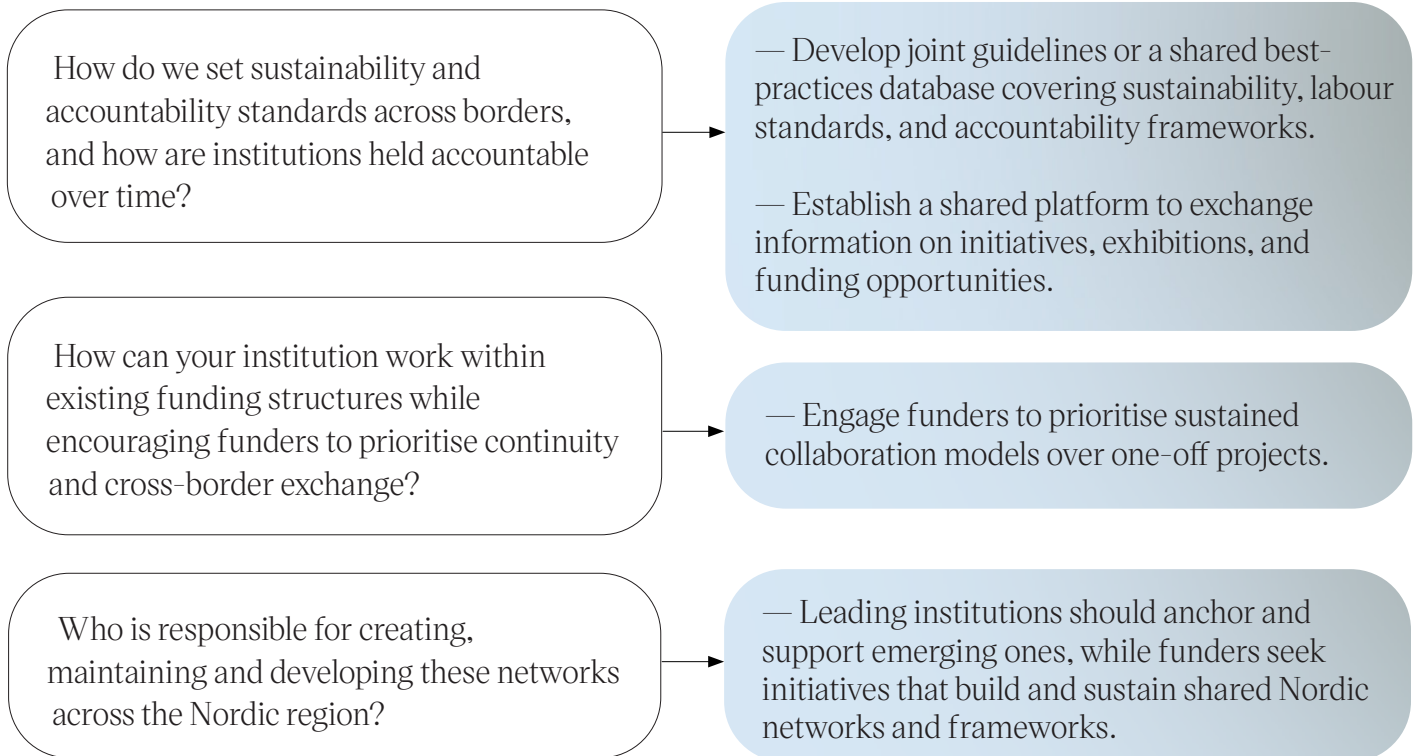
*Table 4: Barriers to collaboration*

## 3.1 Creating and sustaining a continuous, durable network

The complexity of the collaboration means that, first and foremost, there is a need for stronger coordination across institutions, borders, if more stable solutions are to be found. By creating robust, long-term networks, institutions can move beyond ad hoc partnerships and build relationships that enable trust, mutual understanding, and ongoing collaboration.

### Key questions:

### Action:

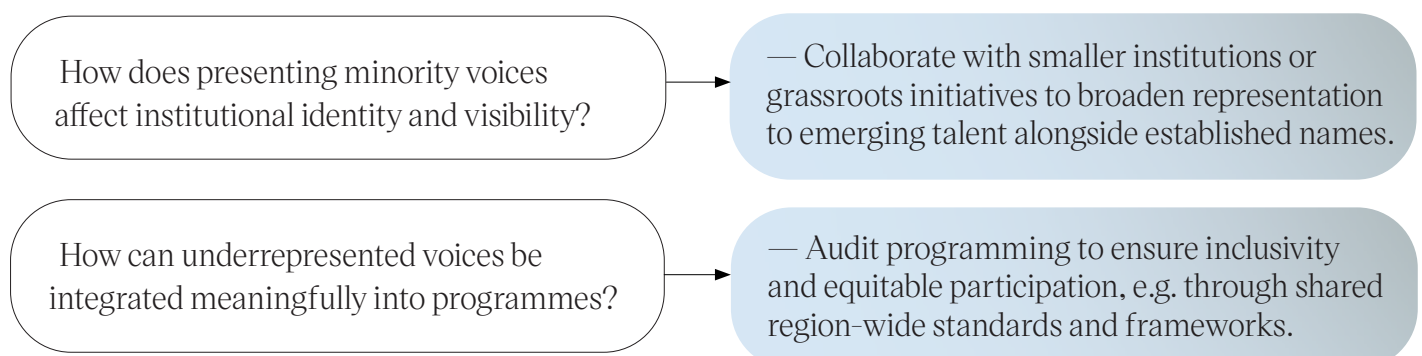


## 3.2 Ensuring equity and accountability

Institutions shape cultural narratives and influence whose voices are visible and valued. Promoting equity and accountability ensures that programming reflects diverse perspectives and enhances institutional credibility and responsibility.

### Key questions:

### Action:



### 3.3 Sharing exhibitions, projects and initiatives

To successfully share and implement projects and exhibitions across institutions and borders, there is need for more transparency in institutional exhibition planning.

A key question to ask within your institution is: *How can upcoming exhibitions include a collaborative element that adds value for both institutions and audiences?*

#### Key questions:

How can institutions retain individuality while engaging in shared or touring projects?

What are the risks/benefits? (time, energy, partnerships, challenges, materials, transportation, economics, interests, etc.)

#### Action:

- Define roles, curatorial responsibilities, and communication channels through collaboration agreements.
- Share curatorial resources and artists while creating room to maintain distinctive curatorial voices.

- Conduct regular evaluations of time, resources, partnerships, and logistics to ensure the desired outcome.

"I'd really love to see museums *collaborate more on exhibitions*. I know people can be hesitant about moving artworks around, but there are still so many ways to collaborate while remaining sustainable. At least where I come from, that doesn't happen very often. That would be a dream scenario for me.

One of the things we've been doing at CC in recent years is that we have developed a talent programme for Danish artists, and for artists based in Denmark, through which we commission and exhibit major new works. We have made a strong effort to provide them with sufficient curatorial support and funding to develop pieces that can stand alongside the major global superstars also featured in the exhibitions."

— Marie Laurberg, Copenhagen Contemporary

## Table 3: Opportunities for collaboration

The table below highlights the strengths and advantages that support Nordic collaboration. It outlines areas where institutions can build on shared values, resources, and networks to foster sustainable, inclusive, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Opportunity	Action / Focus	Level
Nordic shared values of openness, trust, and quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Use shared values as a foundation for joint projects and decision-making.</li> <li>— Emphasise value-based collaboration rather than stylistic uniformity</li> </ul>	Institutional
Small publics and close proximity make collaboration necessary and feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Encourage regional networks and engage regularly with neighbouring institutions.</li> </ul>	Institutional
Continuity and long-term platforms build trust, resilience, and durable networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Establish long-term programmes and networks, supported by multi-year funding.</li> </ul>	Institutional Structural Governmental
Expand collaboration across scales. Large institutions share visibility/resources, smaller bring agility/innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Create joint communication and exchange platforms to leverage the strengths of different-sized institutions.</li> </ul>	Institutional Structural
Expand collaboration across scope to include systemic practices (sustainability, labour standards, equity, accountability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Expand collaboration to include shared standards, guidelines, and best practices.</li> <li>— Implement policies and initiatives to support underrepresented voices.</li> </ul>	Institutional Structural Governmental

## Table 4: Barriers to collaboration

This table presents the challenges and obstacles that may hinder effective Nordic collaboration. It examines structural, institutional, and policy-related issues that require attention to ensure long-term, equitable, and resilient collaboration.

Barrier	Action / Focus	Level
Lack of transparency across borders complicate smooth and organic collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Increase knowledge of and visits to neighbouring art scenes to gain a better understanding of their structures and contexts.</li> </ul>	Institutional
Limited inclusion of smaller institutions or minority voices without active support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Introduce programmes or incentives to ensure visibility and participation of small institutions.</li> <li>— Implement policies and initiatives to support underrepresented voices.</li> <li>— Design communication and exchange platforms to leverage the strengths of different-sized institutions.</li> </ul>	Institutional Structural
Differences in national policy and funding complicate cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Harmonise funding policies or create cross-border funding frameworks.</li> </ul>	Structural Governmental
Short-term funding misaligns with practice, risking loss of knowledge and connections		

# 4.

## Cases and best practices.

To illustrate what successful collaboration looks like, best-practices were shared from the following prompt:

"Mention a project, exhibition, event, or something you have witnessed in the Nordic region during the past year that has inspired you and that you feel could point the way towards stronger collaboration and a more vibrant art scene."

— Marie Laurberg, *Copenhagen Contemporary*

Despite their different forms of collaboration, the cases share common principles as they *cross national boundaries, emphasise process and infrastructure, prioritise equity, and commit to continuity.*

- Case 1. Nordic Pavilion of the Venice Biennale
- Case 2. Dreaming Suburbs
- Case 3. The European Producers Club (EPC)
- Case 4. Borderland Poetics
- Case 5. Tal R & Mamma Andersson—About Hill
- Case 6. Buffalo AKG Nordic Art and Culture Initiative

## Case 1: Nordic Pavilion of the Venice Biennale

The Nordic Pavilion of the Venice Biennale was initiated in 1962 and is an initiative jointly operated by Finland, Norway and Sweden. The pavilion symbolises the longest-standing Nordic cultural partnership and is presented in the pavilion created by architect Sverre Fehn. Until 1984, the representation of each country was organised nationally and from 1986 to 2009 the pavilion was commissioned as a whole, with the curatorial responsibility alternating between the collaborating countries. Between 2011 and 2015, Sweden, Finland, and Norway took turns curating the pavilion alone. In 2017, they began joint curation again.

### **Collaborators:**

Sweden, Finland, and Norway (does not include the additional Nordic countries).



Nordic pavilion exhibition at the 19th Venice Architecture Biennale, 2025  
Photo by Ugo Carmeni

### **Takeaways:**

- A platform outside the Nordics showcasing and focusing on Nordic art.
- Shared curatorial responsibility fosters an enduring platform based on continuity and shared responsibility.
- The pavilion dissolves nation-state boundaries to create a unified presence.
- Highlights both the power and complexity of projecting a collective identity internationally.

“The Nordic Pavilion in Venice, which I still think is a really great project, also shows—and tries to break down—the nation-state barriers in this region.”

— Ruben Steinum, OCA - Norway



## Case 2: Dreaming Suburbs

A collaborative two-year project (2024-2026) centring on art organisations' responsibility in the contexts they operate in. It is a project initiated and led by small arts organisations across the Nordic countries.

*Dreaming Suburbs* moves beyond temporary interventions and works towards long-term, community-driven transformations. The project is co-funded by the EU's Creative Europe programme and co-funded by Kulturfonden för Sverige och Finland.

### Collaborators:

Konsthall C (SE), Konstfrämjandet Stockholm (SE), Museum of Impossible Forms (FI), Til Vægs (DK) and FEMMA Planning (FI).



The Research Station at Konsthall C  
Photo by Andrea Singer

### Takeaways:

- Exemplifies the power of small institutions leading cross-border, community-focused work.
- Extends collaboration beyond exhibitions to address contemporary and shared challenges.
- Uses Nordic privilege to highlight underrepresented contexts.

"We are involved in a project called *Dreaming Suburbs*, in collaboration with *Til Vægs* here in Copenhagen, and with *FEMMA Planning* and the *Museum of Impossible Forms*, both in Helsinki. This project examines various art spaces in suburban neighbourhoods and their influence on lived environments, particularly through processes of gentrification. This is a remarkable project, and they are, like us, very small institutions."

—Mariam Elnozahy, Konsthall C

### Case 3: European Producers Club

A Norwegian-led initiative established in 1993 that measures and discusses ecological footprints in the film industry. It is a platform for collaboration, innovation and joint mobilisation.

It offers members a trusted space where they can connect and share ideas and interests. EPC offer resources designed to strengthen the visibility, recognition, and inclusion of producers across festivals and academies.

**Collaborators:**

200 independent European TV and film producers from the EU.



Plenary working session hosted by the EPC and Fondazione Roma Lazio Film Commission  
Photo courtesy European Producers Club

**Takeaways:**

- Provides a pragmatic, long-term model for cross-border collaboration and exchange beyond projects with tangible outcomes.
- A platform that shares industry standards and sustainable practices.
- An example of collaboration where numerous actors come together in tackling shared challenges.
- An enduring platform building on continuous relationships and structures.

“The European Producers Club and Tool, started as a Norwegian project but is now expanding across the EU, provides a platform to plan and track your ecological footprint, alongside a club where these issues can be discussed. I think this is something super pragmatic to go to the neighbouring countries.”

— Juha Huuskonen, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

## Case 4: Borderline Poetics

Borderland Poetics is a three-year (2022–2025) collaborative programme focusing on networking, mobility, and exchange, connecting curators and arts professionals across the Estonian, Icelandic, and Lithuanian art scenes. The programme offers emerging cultural professionals the opportunity to gain first-hand international work experience and to contribute to the preparation and production of a major art event, through a paid role that promotes exchange between Wales and the Nordic-Baltic region.

### Collaborators:

CCA Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art (EE), Rupert (LT) and Icelandic Art Center (IS). Also partners in Finland and Wales. The programme is supported by the Nordic Culture Point.



Borderland Poetics, Open Call poster, 2022  
Courtesy Icelandic Art Center, CCA Estonia, Rupert

### Takeaways:

- Focuses on building long-term relationships and networks, without a physical outcome.
- Creates a shared cross-border initiative that fosters the development of trust-based connections over time.
- Collaborates to tackle shared contemporary challenges such as the visibility of small publics and minorities, acknowledging that these issues should not be solved in isolation.

"The only purpose of *Borderline Poetics* is bringing curators from these countries back and forth. There doesn't have to be a result or an exhibition, it is more about making connections. For us, being on an island, reconnecting with our close neighbours is extremely important, and our art scene wouldn't thrive without these connections."

— Auður Jörundsdóttir, Icelandic Art Center

## Case 5: Tal R & Mamma Andersson — About Hill

The exhibition "About Hill" is an example of a touring exhibition, first shown in Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg, Denmark, thereafter at Malmö Konstmuseum in Sweden and lastly in Museum MORE in the Netherlands. This collaborative exhibition explored the art of Carl Fredrik Hill through the works of the two contemporary Nordic artists.

### Collaborators:

Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg (DK), Museum MORE (NL) and Malmö Konstmuseum (SE).



Tal R & Mamma Andersson, About Hill, Installation view, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Oct 2022 - Apr 2023. Courtesy of the artists and Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg



Tal R & Mamma Andersson, About Hill, Installation view, Malmö Konstmuseum, May 2023 - Oct 2023. Courtesy of the artists and Malmö Konstmuseum. Photo by Helene Toresdotter



Tal R & Mamma Andersson, About Hill, Installation view, Museum MORE, Nov 2023 - Feb 2024. Courtesy of the artists and Museum MORE

"This exhibition emerged from a collaboration that offered new insights into Hill's work and legacy. The artists made highly personal selections from Malmö Art Museum's collection of 2,600 Hill drawings, bringing the works into a rare and fruitful dialogue between two of the Nordic region's most prominent painters. The close collaboration between institutions, authors, curators, artists, and gallerists made for a uniquely creative process — and an exceptional result."

— Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg, Malmö Art Museum

### Takeaway:

- A collaborative project and touring exhibition, expanding the reach of an exhibition to wider audiences.

## Case 6: [Buffalo AKG Nordic Art and Culture Initiative](#)

Launched in 2021, the *Nordic Art and Culture Initiative* serves as a unique platform in North America for art from the Nordic region, encompassing artists whose practices are tied to Nordic "landmasses" such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands. It aims to develop AKG's collection of contemporary Nordic art over the next sixty years through exhibitions, performances, and public art installations.



Miriam Backström (SE), *Others Will Know*, 2023, Installation View, Buffalo AKG Art Museum  
Courtesy of the Blum Family, General Purchase Funds and AKG Buffalo. Photo by Brenda Bieger

### Takeaway:

- The long-term Initiative promotes Nordic artists globally by presenting their work beyond Nordic-centric narratives, while strengthening transatlantic artistic ties.
- Fosters cross-border exchange between the Nordic region and North America.

"Buffalo, AKG Museum, has this Nordic project and they try to avoid the word 'Nordic' and just refer to it as a landmass."

— Juha Huuskonen, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

# Epilogue

The Art Professional Symposium set out to explore how Nordic art institutions can collaborate more effectively, guided by two core questions: (1) What opportunities exist in current structures and resources with the Nordic art scene and how do we leverage them effectively? (2) What are the major obstacles against cross-border collaboration and how can we navigate them or work around them?

The discussions revealed that Nordic collaboration is characterised by shared values, small populations, opportunities due to geographic proximity, and structural privilege. These qualities create fertile ground for pragmatic collaborations, allowing institutions to pool resources and reach wider audiences.

However, differences in cultural policy, funding, and traditions continue to complicate collaboration, limiting transparency, equity, and alignment. Effective collaboration depends on continuity, accountability, flexibility, and connecting across neighbouring contexts. By also broadening collaboration to include systemic practices, such as equitable representation, labour standards, and environmental responsibility, the Nordic art field can strengthen its global impact while remaining accountable to its diverse publics, as concluded by moderator, Marie Laurberg:

"We've discussed the need for more collaboration, recognising that the Nordics is a landmass, and the importance of showing the complexity of our communities and how art institutions support them."

— Marie Laurberg, *Copenhagen Contemporary*

Ultimately, the Nordic identity is most powerful when understood not as a uniform aesthetic, but as a shared platform of values. Future collaboration must be long-term, flexible, and process-oriented, ensuring that the region not only maintains but expands its cultural influence internationally.

This publication marks an important further step in CHART's mission to provide a shared platform for Nordic art professionals and to strengthen connections, fostering new collaborations, enabling strategic use of collective resources. The insights presented here point towards a renewed Nordic collaboration—one that is inclusive, sustainable, and globally relevant. We look forward to continue these dialogues and follow the collaborative work of Nordic institutions of all shapes and sizes.



