Call for contributions

Reclaiming art!

Creative expression as a building block in our social foundations

"Art can convey pain, it can open up the way for more authentic empathy, it can create greater social cohesion."

- Anaïs Duplan

Arts and culture are at the heart of human experience. They are prerequisites for democratic citizenship, a crucial part of the freedom of expression, and represent an important form of counterfactual thinking; showing us what *could* be. Numerous artists and scholars have shown that the arts carry the potential to resist dominant narratives, foster our collective imagination, and build more just and inclusive societies.

Today we undoubtedly live in challenging times. All across the world liberal democracy is under threat. Values such as gender equality, minority rights, freedom of speech, artistic and academic freedom, and the traditions of humanism and critical thinking are increasingly questioned. In this context, many artists and artistic researchers sense a need to recalibrate their practices to meet the ethical and aesthetic challenges of the moment. What role can the arts and culture play in our digitalized, rapidly transforming societies?

For more than half a century, scholars and practitioners have pointed to the dangers of commodifying arts and culture. The rebranding of the arts as 'creative industries' in the 1980s led to an increasing legitimization of creativity through its contribution to GDP, a framing that has since been reinforced by the adoption of culture by global corporations such as streaming and tech giants. As Justin O'Connor argues in *Culture is not an industry* (2024), this move risks stripping the arts of their rebellious position as well as their role as community builders. If we understand this as a broader "disarmament of the arts," where does that leave us in today's cultural struggles? The time seems ripe to call for a reframing of artistic practices and of creativity more broadly, as well as of how we teach and think about the arts.

At AR@K 2026 we seek to take stock, rekindle our original impulses of creativity, (re)stimulate our senses, and reconnect with artistic communities across disciplines. The symposium aims to gather researchers from all creative fields, build bridges between theory and practice, and welcomes research contributions (both artistic and academic) on topics such as, but not limited to:

- Art and the commodification of creativity
- Art as "a significant part of an organized community"
- Artistic practice and/or research as community building
- The arts and the authoritarian turn: Practices of resistance
- How can artistic research cultivate solidarity, public value, and imaginative counter-worlds?
- Anti-authoritarian performative practices
- Art and the body - traditional and alternative ways to knowledge
- Art as communal leadership
- Artistic practice and/or research as catalysts for change
- Explorative forms of teaching and learning in the arts
- Art education and democracy
- Reaching new audiences - art and inclusivity
- Creative practice in the age of algorithmic governance
- Artistic research as cultural critique
- Artistic responses to political polarization
- Reclaiming slowness, care, and attention in artistic practice
- Exploring art in times of crisis and climate imaginaries
- The limits and possibilities of institutional critique
- Artistic practice as a form of civic engagement
- Speculative practices and radical imagination in rehearsing futures
- Art and the body – traditional and alternative ways to knowledge

We welcome abstracts for possible contributions to AR@K 2026. Abstracts must have a title, be **limited to 200 words,** and include: 3–4 keywords, disciplinary field, format of presentation, your name, affiliation, contact information, and a mini-CV (max 100 words) summarizing your artistic and research practice. All materials should be submitted as a single **PDF document.**

Proposals for pre-constituted panels are also accepted and should include: title of panel, 3–4 keywords, a 100-word summary of the topic, and **three complete abstracts.**

Title documents with your last name and artistic field, for example "Surname_Film.pdf".

In addition to traditional paper presentations, we welcome a **variety of formats**, including performances, workshops, posters, screenings, and installations. Technical equipment and stage facilities (such as black boxes) are available. Presentations should be in English.

Regardless of format, presentations at the symposium should **not exceed 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes** for questions and comments. If the standard time is insufficient, **please state your needs clearly in the abstract.**

Please note that, while exceptions can be made, the symposium is planned as an onsite physical event without digital or online presentations.

Your abstracts should be submitted through the EasyChair submission page https://easychair.org/conferences?conf=ark26 by November 3, 2025.

The conference fee is 600 NOK (approx. 50 EUR) and covers registration, attendance, and lunches.

Artistic Research at Kristiania - AR@K - is an annual, interdisciplinary symposium on artistic research hosted by Kristiania University of Applied Sciences in Oslo, Norway. The 2026 edition is organized in collaboration with Atelier Nord, Oslo's leading venue for mediabased art.

For information on previous contributors and program schedules, please consult our website: https://www.kristiania.no/forskning/forskningsgrupper/arak/