



ibidem

Art in Battle

Art in Battle is a collection of essays that explore the relationship between art and war. The essays are written by a variety of authors, including artists, writers, and scholars. The collection is divided into three sections: the first section contains essays on the role of art in war, the second section contains essays on the impact of war on art, and the third section contains essays on the relationship between art and the military.

The essays in Art in Battle are written in a clear and concise style, and they provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between art and war. The collection is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of art and war, and it is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the role of art in society.

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Foreword

Art in Battle is about art, ideology and politics. The project is a collaboration between KODE and the research project “Modernism and Christianity” at the University of Bergen, and it involves a conference, an exhibition and a publication. Its starting point is a dark chapter of our recent history: the only known official presentation of so-called degenerate art outside the Third Reich, which took place in Norway. The exhibition *Art and Non-Art* (1942–43) was inspired by official art exhibitions in Nazi Germany that sought to distinguish between “exemplary Aryan” art and modern, supposedly “degenerate” art, and to “cleanse” museum collections of the latter.

When *Art and Non-Art* was shown in Bergen in January 1943, several of the works presented as exemplary were borrowed from Bergen Picture Gallery (now KODE). 19th Century paintings by Frits Thaulow, Gerhard Munthe and Kitty Kielland were thus appropriated and used to promote Nazi art propaganda. The exhibition booklet is disturbing. Today, the rhetoric surrounding the show – echoing the demand for a “cleansing” and the notion of “degeneracy” in art – seems not only hostile to modern art, but also to invoke the deeper abyss of human suffering caused by Hitler’s regime.

Art in Battle was launched in connection with an international, cross-disciplinary conference held at KODE in August 2014, featuring invited speakers from Norway, Europe and the USA. The articles in this present publication represent a selection of these conference presentations. Matthew Feldman, who is Professor of Modern History at Teesside University and an expert on the contemporary Far Right, was an official conference respondent and has written a summarizing afterword for this publication.

The exhibition *Art in Battle*, shown at KODE from September 4th 2015 to February 7th 2016, focused on the ways in which art and art institutions were used and staged during World War II. To provide a context for *Art and Non-Art*, the show also included works exhibited in the *Great German Art* exhibitions in Munich from 1937 to 1944, where the “new” German art of the Reich was promoted. Along with productions by soldier-artists stationed in

Norway during the war, these create a complex picture of Nazi art. Just as the selection for *Art and Non-Art*, the works reveal a certain arbitrariness in National Socialism's art ideology when it was put into practice.

Questions about artistic freedom are brought to a head under conditions as extreme as those fostered by the Third Reich. At the same time, we gain more clarity about what is at stake: Which values do we take for granted? When and how can art become "dangerous"? Under what conditions do art and art museums exist during times of war, martial law and other exceptional circumstances? Under what conditions do they exist now?

We are deeply grateful to all the contributors, and I owe great gratitude to our collaboration partners and co-curators Gregory Maertz, Professor at St John's University in New York, and Erik Tonning, Professor at the University of Bergen as well as key staff members at KODE, Frode Sandvik, Curator, and Line Daatland, Director of Art and Design. I am also thankful for an excellent collaboration with Deutsches Historisches Museum (Berlin), the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design (Oslo) as well as public archives and private collectors in terms of loans and expertise. Finally yet importantly, I would like to thank the Fritt Ord Foundation and Bergen Research Foundation for their generous financial support.

Karin Hindsbo

Director KODE – Art Museums of Bergen

Exhibition

KODE Bergen 4 September 2015 – 7 February 2016

Abbreviations:

DHM = Deutsches Historisches
Museum (Berlin)

NM = The National Museum
of Art, Architecture
and Design (Oslo)

[Cat 1]
J.C. Dahl (1788–1857)
Birch Tree in a Storm, 1849
KODE – Art Museums of Bergen
Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



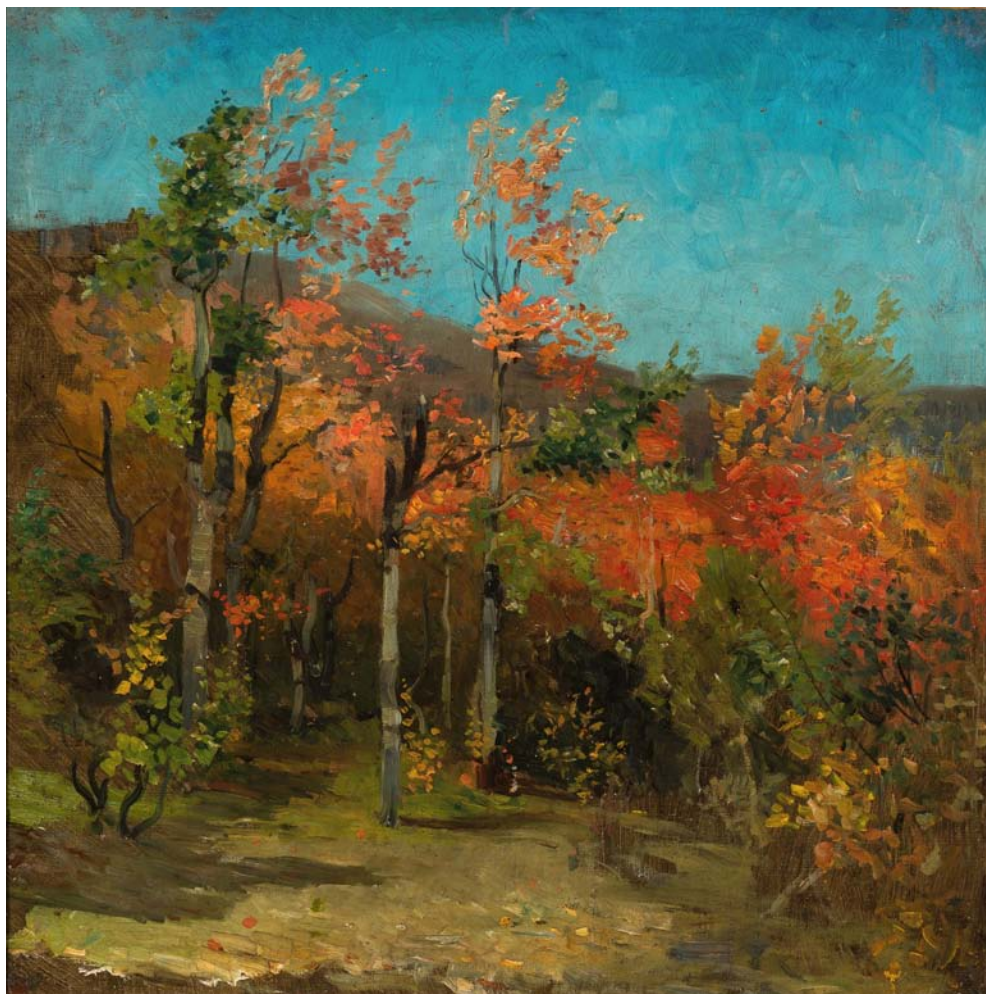
[Cat 2]

Gerhard Munthe (1849–1929)

Autumn Study, c. 1876

KODE – Art Museums of Bergen

Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



[Cat 3]
Gerhard Munthe (1849–1929)
Early Spring, 1887
Rasmus Meyer Collections
KODE – Art Museums of Bergen
Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



[Cat 4]
Frits Thaulow (1847–1906)
The Doctor's Horse
(The Long Wait), 1888
KODE – Art Museums of Bergen
Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



[Cat 5]
Frits Thaulow (1847–1906)
Ravensborg Country Store, 1891
KODE – Art Museums of Bergen
Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



[Cat 6]

Kitty Kielland (1843–1914)

Peat Marshes at Jæren, 1897

KODE – Art Museums of Bergen

Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse



[Cat 7]
Edvard Munch (1863–1944)
Youth, 1908
Rasmus Meyer Collections
KODE – Art Museums of Bergen
Photo: KODE/Dag Fosse

