

Strategy 2025-2029

Public art Norway (KORO)

KORO



Iver Jåks: Sun and Wind (1996). Sami National Theatre Beaivváš and Sami Sámi High School and Reindeer Herding School in Kautokeino, 2024.

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KORO's strategy 2025-2029

I What is KORO?

Public Art Norway (KORO) is the Norwegian government's national body for art in public space, organized as an agency under the Ministry of Culture and Equality. KORO's work with art falls under the arm's length principle.

II What does KORO do?

Access to free artistic expressions is crucial in an inclusive society where there is room for disagreement and a diversity of opinion. KORO promotes an open, enlightened public conversation and strives to ensure that free artistic expressions will play a key role in shaping our shared public spaces.

With three distinct art schemes plus self-initiated projects, KORO produces and finances public art throughout Norway as well as at Norwegian consulates and embassies abroad. KORO manages and mediates a large, decentralized art collection that is accessible to people indoors and outdoors across diverse public arenas.

Representing and facilitating a national and professional community for public art, KORO offers professional advice to other official actors in the field. KORO promotes methods and practices that ensure that artists and curators throughout Norway enjoy stable and satisfactory working conditions. Moreover, KORO helps produce new knowledge in the field through conferences, seminars, publications, and awards.

III KORO's social mission

KORO shall ensure that as many people as possible will be able to experience high-quality art in public spaces throughout Norway, both indoors and outdoors. KORO shall also help develop the field of contemporary art and provide artists with paid opportunities.

IV KOROs goals and role in society

1. Free Artistic Expression

According to the report submitted by the Freedom of Expression Commission (NOU 2022:9), free artistic expression lies at the very heart of what the legal provisions on free speech are meant to protect. The state is obligated not only to permit free speech, but also to actively facilitate such speech. KORO works on behalf of artistic autonomy and shall promote knowledge about how art benefits individuals, society, and democracy. Within our own field, the tension between artistic autonomy and local involvement is particularly relevant: meaningful involvement is a prerequisite for developing art projects in public spaces, even as free artistic expression needs to be upheld.

- a) KORO shall strive to ensure that artists and curators can produce artistic expressions without risking censorship or sanctions.
- b) KORO shall develop and refine models that simultaneously involve local recipients and protect artistic autonomy.
- c) KORO shall apply its best practices in this field as an advisor to other commissioners and actors working with public art.

2. Art for the Community

Culture contributes to experiences of community, and KORO's mission is about creating encounters with art in areas where people already are. In our day and age, however, public enterprises no longer constitute meeting places in the same way as before: services that were previously based on physical meetings have now become digitized, and major public venues, such as universities, hospitals, and governmental buildings, are subject to stricter access control. For KORO, it is therefore ever more crucial to prioritize areas where art can fulfil key functions for diverse communities. At the same time, existing works that are already part of KORO's collection must be made available to a larger audience, both physically and digitally.

- a) KORO shall strive to ensure that art is considered early on in public construction projects and that works of art shall be placed in such a way that as many people as possible have access to them.

- b) KORO shall strengthen its advisory work and production assistance in order to facilitate the completion of public art projects.
- c) KORO shall strive to ensure that the works of art in its collection reach a larger audience by engaging in a closer dialogue with recipients and facilitating more loans of works in KORO's collection for exhibitions.
- d) KORO shall develop communication strategies that create commitment, interest, and a sense of co-ownership among wide-ranging audiences.

3. Representativeness and Visibility

The field of art is a vital social arena for promoting diversity and encounters between various cultures and groups, and KORO strives to broaden the range of voices and stories in the public sphere. KORO has also been charged with ensuring that processes related to public art are being developed, overseen, and carried out by people with different skill sets and backgrounds.

- a) KORO shall emphasize cultural diversity and representativeness both when commissioning external artists and curators and when hiring new employees for the organization itself.
- b) KORO shall help ensure that public art creates and disseminates narratives about diversity, both by producing new works and by presenting the existing works in its collection.
- c) KORO shall strengthen its collaborations with groups that promote diversity, including Indigenous peoples (the Sámi) and national minorities (Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Forest Finns, Jews, Roma, and Romani people/Tatars), when developing new projects and maintaining existing works.

4. Working Conditions for Artists

KORO carries out its artistic mission by curating and producing art, allocating grants, and managing and publicly presenting the works of art in its collection. Another essential part of these efforts is to share knowledge with other actors in the field, help them develop skills, and offer advice. Unpaid work, low remuneration, and poor working conditions remain a challenge for many self-employed artists. KORO has a particular responsibility for developing a framework that meets stakeholder needs, promotes true artistic freedom, and ensures stable and satisfactory conditions for artists and curators.

- a) KORO shall help develop an overarching "principle of values" for the field of art in line with the recommendations stated in the white paper *Kunstnarkår* ("The Status and Working Conditions of Artists", Report to the Storting no. 22 2022-2023).

- b) KORO's methods and overall framework shall be informed by perspectives from artists and the artistic community, and, in tandem with the experience and knowledge culled from individual projects, this work shall benefit the entire field.
- c) KORO shall strengthen its dialogue with relevant regional actors in the art field and develop networks and meeting places to facilitate the exchange of experience and expertise.

5. KORO's Collection and Knowledge Production

KORO has been producing art ever since its founding in 1977 and now manages an ever-growing collection of public art. This collection reflects the agency's history and decades of curatorial and artistic practice. The collection includes key works and artists from both Norwegian and international art history. KORO's fiftieth anniversary in 2027 will be a strong opportunity to begin examining the agency's central role in developing the field of art in Norway during this period. At the same time, KORO shall be a visible promoter of innovative thinking and professional development within the field, and as an ongoing part of our core mission we will develop research projects that are relevant to the field's actors, both through self-initiated projects and in collaboration with others.

- a) KORO shall make its collection more prominent in the public sphere by preparing comprehensive plans for the entire life-cycle of a work of art, including acquisition/production, use, management, educational and mediation activities, conservation, and research.
- b) KORO shall draft recommended standards and practices for collection-related work for public art based on the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums. These standards shall be transferable to other actors within the field of public art.
- c) KORO shall develop research projects and educational initiatives that promote reflection on the significance of the agency, the wider field, and the collection, both in the context of art history and in a wider social perspective.

6. The professional community

KORO represents a professional community with nation-wide expertise within the field of public art that is completely unique in Norway. The employees are specialists in their respective fields and possess valuable knowledge of the complex and interdisciplinary systems behind all stages of the conceptualization, production, administration and management of art in public space. In order to maintain its position as a visible promoter of professional innovation and development in the field, it is decisively important that KORO is able to retain this expertise. Keywords in this context include professional development opportunities, good working conditions, and a satisfactory and stimulating working environment.

- a) KORO shall help all of its staff develop professionally. In dialogue with each individual employee, managers shall assess the need and opportunities for courses, specialization, acquisitions of research literature, study trips, stays at other institutions, and temporary leaves for the sake of further education.
- b) KORO shall be a socially inclusive and professionally stimulating community of colleagues. This entails the transparent flow of information and a broad co-ownership of the agency's activities across the various sections and projects. Joint opportunities for professional development within relevant disciplines shall be given priority in order to ensure that KORO is a professional community to which the entire staff feels they belong.
- c) KORO shall be cognizant of the importance of visibility for both the agency itself and the individual employees. An outward-looking professional community that is in contact with the field at large is vital both for the organization as a whole and for future recruitment efforts.