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Guest Curator and Principal Lead for the international scholarly exhibition
and research publication, *Gothic Modern, 1875–1925*

Creating Emotions: Art, Decadence and Cultural Wellbeing in Transnational Spaces of Nordic Women's Creative Exchange, 1880s-1910s

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14–16

Arcanum A112,

University of Turku

To launch a new international project and collaboration, Prof. Juliet Simpson's seminar explores neglected intersections between art, decadence and health in expanded spaces of Nordic transnational cultural transfer and women's creative agency at the twentieth-century's turn. Focusing on a key group of artist trailblazers, notably, Marianne Stokes, Helene Schjerfbeck, Bertha Wegmann, Anna Ancher and the writer Agnes Henningsen, discussion illuminates their richly creative friendships, sister artist networks and innovative collaborative practices. As widely travelled, intensely mobile artist actors, sharing creative encounters in Skagen, Pont-Aven, St Ives and the Bohemian-Hungarian lands, the paper sheds light on their cosmopolitanism and ambitious new visions of modernist art. These visions, as explored, interlink new spaces of artistic and creative freedom, with expanded routes to women's psychological wellbeing and agency. Pivotal is to illuminate via Stokes, Schjerfbeck, et al. their reworking of Decadent practices of cultural difference and the 'new woman', in boldly fresh constructs of healthful female intimacy, emotional freedom and vitality. As we will see, these challenge and transcend normative late 19th-century patriarchal and Decadent misogynistic stereo-

types of the 'weak', 'neurotic' and 'predatory' woman as muse, lover or would-be creator. Rather, the paper's conclusions illuminate the creative strategies, inventions and emotions that fuelled potently embodied artistic modernisms and spaces, unlocking new routes to health, visibility and societal agency for women cultural actors.

*The seminar is organised by
Centre for Culture and Health
Words for Care: Literature, Healthcare and Democracy
Department of Finnish Literature &
Department of Art History*



Marianne Stokes by Peder Krøyer, 1886



Helene Schjerfbeck, Marianne Stokes and Anna Ancher,
c.1881