



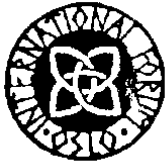
INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

February
NEWSLETTER
02/2018

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Number 429



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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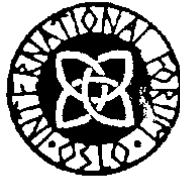
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Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
February 22	Visit to Oslo Public Library - Deichman	09:45	6
February 27	Paul Gaugin and Edvard Munch	11:45	7
March 05	Monthly Meeting on Female Genital Mutilation	18:45	5
March 15	Faithless Pictures – National Gallery	11:45	8
March 20	Lund Hagem Architects & Atelier	10:45	6

From the President



Dear Members,

Be careful what you wish for!

As I recall, in my December letter, I wished you an abundance of snow and a proper Norwegian winter. So, now you have it! (I guess I forgot about the rain, sleet, and icy sidewalks that come with it...) I hope the snow hasn't created any major problems for you, whether you are walking or driving.

The snow is beautiful, and I imagine the way to enjoy it the most is to take a walk on a well-groomed path in a park, or to put on your skis and head into the nearest forest. I must confess, I really don't ski anymore, but do enjoy a good walk in the snow, and whenever I go out these days, I make sure to strap cleats on my boots, or 'brodder' as they are called in Norwegian. They aren't particularly attractive items, but they help to keep you safe and upright on two feet.

The good news is that it's February, and as you have surely noticed, the days are getting longer, and the weight of winter's darkness is gently lifting as the sun faithfully returns to us.

On that happy note, I look forward to seeing you soon at our next Monthly Meeting and other Forum events!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally Bergan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sally Bergan, Acting President

F R O M T H E B O A R D

We are still looking for a new Treasurer!

International Forum is looking for someone who could consider taking over the duties of Treasurer when Vicky Alme steps down this year.

Whoever takes over will receive full information about the tasks involved together with detailed instructions on how to use the relevant online accounting system. We are posting this notice well beforehand so that the new Treasurer will have plenty of time to learn and to practice the skills required.

On average, this job will take a couple of hours each week either in the Office or at home.

We will also consider candidates from outside of the Forum.

For more information, please see the November *Newsletter*.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The Nomination Committee has started its work

The Nomination Committee is looking for members, who would like to take an active part in the running of the International Forum over a period of time. Please feel free to suggest yourself or submit the name of another member whom you think would be able to contribute in some way. It doesn't necessarily take a lot of time to be a member of a committee, and it can be very rewarding.

Included in the January *Newsletter* is a form for your proposals which we hope that you will fill out. Please return **as soon as possible** and **by March 1 at the latest** to the Leader of the Nomination Committee: Ellen Vollebæk,

Thank you!

The Nomination Committee:

Ellen Vollebæk (Leader)
Sigrid Langebrekke
Barbara Lee Ødegaard

COMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING



The Monthly Meeting Committee is proud to announce the speaker of the month of March: Mrs Sissel H. Michelsen, who will talk about her work to end female genital mutilation and systemic violence against girls and women worldwide.

FGM includes any procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs. The practice causes the death of numerous girls and women

every year, and for those who survive, it can cause severe health problems. According to the World Health Organisation, today more than 200 million girls and women in 30 countries have been 'cut'.

Mrs Michelsen is Director of Inner Wheel International. She has also worked many years as a teacher and now lives in Oslo.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **March 5** at 18:45 for (19:00)

For more information please contact the IF Office.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tour of the Oslo Public Library - Deichmanske Bibliotek

Thursday, February 22, at 09:45 (for 10:00)

On Thursday, February 22, we shall meet at the Oslo Public Library (official name: *Deichmanske bibliotek*). This Library is the municipal library of Oslo and is the country's first and largest library. It opened on January 12, 1785, following an endowment from Carl Deichman. The library's neoclassical main building is in the Hammersborg district, was designed by Nils Reiersen and completed in 1933

For more information, please see the January *Newsletter*.

Lund Hagem Architects & Atelier



Deichman: the new Oslo City Library by Lund Hagem Architects & Atelier Oslo
Lund Hagem Architects and Atelier was founded by Svein Lund and Einar Hagem in 1990 and has five partners today: Svein Lund, Einar Hagem, Mette Røsbekk, Per Suul and Kristine Strøm-Gundersen. Over the past two decades, the firm has been run with a consistent approach to Nordic design traditions.

All projects are undertaken with an approach that respects the surrounding landscape and enters into a dynamic dialogue with nature and the existing architectural environment. The work of Lund Hagem focuses critically on detail and the use of materials, both poetically and practically.

Their designs, whether a large edifice or a small cabin, reflect their belief in combining the latest advances in building technology with sustainable techniques and materials rooted in local tradition. Their skills and experience give them an advantage when designing energy-efficient passive houses and sustainable BREEAM certified buildings. BREEAM is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for master-planning projects, infrastructure and buildings. Lund Hagem has in-office certification BREEAM Accredited Professional (BREEAM AP) and is a member of the Norwegian Green Building Council (see www.ngbc.no).

Lund Hagem provides architectural and urban design services to both the public and private sectors. Their diverse portfolio includes a wide range of building projects, such as private villas and leisure homes, libraries and educational facilities, apartment buildings, offices and commercial facilities. The company has won numerous prestigious competitions and received a number of awards and citations for excellent design. Lund Hagem Architects is based in Oslo. DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **March 20** at 10:45 (for 11:00).



For more information please contact the IF Office.

ART COMMITTEE

With Eyes Closed: Gauguin and Munch The Munch Museum

Tuesday, February 27, at 11:45 (for 12:00)

The Post-Impressionists and the Expressionists broke the confines of art by turning inwards in order to mirror the human predicament with all its *angst* and passion. Gauguin said that he always closed his eyes to see, whereas Munch said that he did not paint what exists, but what he saw. The inner vision reveals a controversial view of women full of love, jealousy and anxiety.

For more information, please see the January *Newsletter*.

Faithless Pictures

National Gallery - March 15, 2018



In this exhibition, the National Museum shows works from the last four decades by close to forty prominent artists. Using a variety of approaches, they all address and discuss the relationship between the picture and the reality which we all see around us: a world obsessed with images and illusions. These are new times and the art is posing new questions. What truth is possible?

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **March 15** at 11:45 for 12:00

For more information please contact the IF Office.

ACTIVITIES SPRING 2018

NORWEGIAN CONVERSATION (brush up your Norwegian)

The only requirement is that participants have had a few Norwegian lessons and are prepared to have fun. We meet once a month (Fridays from 11:00 – 14:00) in private homes to give non-Norwegian speakers a chance to discuss daily matters with native speakers. We practice Norwegian in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. No fixed subjects, no homework. The hostess serves a light lunch and/or refreshments.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

DRAMA READING GROUP



The play readings are held once a month in members' homes. Plays chosen are both old and new. The dates for the readings are flexible and usually decided a month in advance depending on how many can attend on a certain date. A light lunch is served between acts.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB I



We meet on the third Wednesday of the month in a member's home to discuss a book, usually a novel from the worldwide literature, chosen by the group. The hostess serves a light lunch. This spring we will read the following books:

Lincoln in the Bardo by George Sanders; *A Whole Life* by Robert Seethaler; *Autumn* by Karl Ove Knausgård; and *House of Names* by Colm Tóibín.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB II



The gatherings take place once a month on a Thursday in one of the members' home and the hostess serves a light meal. In January and February, we shall read the following books: *Never let me go* by Kasuo Ishiguro, and *Out stealing horses* by Per Pettersson. The February meeting is on the 15th at Bodil's house in Røaveien 20 (500 meters down Vækerøveien from Røa metro).

For more information please contact the IF Office.

CHOIR GROUP



The Forum Singers practices every fortnight on Wednesday evenings from 18:30 - 20:30 in Frogner Kirkestue at Frogner Church. We meet at 18:15 in order to start promptly at 18:30. We are about 30 members and we give two concerts a year with a varied repertoire.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

COOKING GROUP I

The first cooking morning in 2018 was very nice with good food and as usual a lot of good laughter.



February is the winter holiday month and we decided to postpone the next cooking morning till March 14. It will be a joint venture between Kari Eeg and myself.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

COOKING GROUP II

This is a small cooking group for maximum 6-8 participants. Right now, we are only three, so there is **room for new participants!** The gatherings take place in the homes of the participants on a rotation basis, and the hostess decides the menu and buys the ingredients and beverages. The cost of the ingredients will be shared between the participants. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 12, at 14:00 at Gerd Berit Lavik's, Gråkamveien 10 F, 0779 Oslo.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

INDOOR GOLF

This is an indoor activity between November and the end of April when outdoor golf is impossible. We usually start with a coffee. We have a special price for balls, and private lessons can be arranged. All levels of golfers are welcome – also beginners – so, please do come along!



At Fornebu Indoor Golf Centre, where we practice, there are many tees, a brand new putting green, and several golf simulators. Many of the group's members have now retired and we are looking for new enthusiastic golfers! We welcome any member of the Forum who would like to join our group for the winter season 2018. Come and try us once!

You can play as often or as seldom as you wish. Easy and free three-hour parking for IF members!

TIME: Thursdays at 10:30. (Another weekday is possible if desired).

For more information please contact the IF Office.

PHOTO CLUB /



We are truly grateful to Sidsel Jakhelln Semb, IF member and professional photographer, for participating in the January workshop and for sharing her skills with us. Her pieces of advice and demonstrations really came in handy and we hope that maybe she will be able to visit us again. We would also like to thank Irina and Solani for bringing some of their own photos for Sidsel to evaluate. Sissel showed us how important correct lighting is and how cropping can greatly improve a picture.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

MONDAY DUPLICATE BRIDGE

We play at Ris Menighetshus Peisestue between 09:50 and approximately 13:15. Everyone can choose whether to pay a "semester fee" or NOK 50.- per session. If you wish, you can bring your own lunch; coffee and cookies are provided.

If you are interested, please contact one of the organisers below. Let us know as early in the week as possible. It would be good to sign up with a partner; however, if you do not have one, we can try to find one for you if possible.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

MONTHLY WEDNESDAY BRIDGE GROUP

We usually meet on the second or third Wednesday of the month, depending on the holidays. We are usually 8 or 12 players, now and again 16. We play duplicate bridge and enjoy a light lunch afterwards. You are most welcome!

The March Wednesday Bridge will take place on the 14th at 10:30.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

SWIMMING AT LYSEBU

(The Danish Cultural Center at Voksenkollen)



International Forum members are most welcome to swim at wonderful Lysebu and only have to show their IF membership card at the front desk. The fee is NOK 100.- upon presentation of your IF card. This is not a group activity as such, but IF members can use this great, newly renovated facility as a group or individually. Any questions?

For more information please contact the IF Office.

COURSES

ENGLISH

Individual courses tailored to your needs. Refresher courses for conversation. All levels.

For more information please contact the IF Office.

SPANISH

Beginners, Intermediate Level and Advanced Level.

Wednesdays: Beginners at 15:00 to 16:00, Intermediate at 16:00 to 17:00, and Advanced at 18:00 to 19:00

For more information please contact the IF Office

TRADITIONAL NORWEGIAN ROSE PAINTING



Rosepainting (“rosemaling”) is a traditional Norwegian folk art which goes back to the 1700s and which is still alive in many parts of the country. Morning and evening courses can be organised for large or small groups. For more information, please

For more information please contact the IF Office.

R E P O R T S

JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

Mrs Marit Nybakk on the Norwegian Election System

The first Monthly Meeting in 2018, on January 8, dealt with the topic of the Norwegian Election System. Our guest speaker, Mrs Marit Nybakk, shared with us her own experience with elections, democracy and gender equality in Norway.



She is the longest-serving Member of the Norwegian Parliament and the longest-serving female politician of all time. Indeed, altogether, she has served in the Parliament for a period of about 31 years. Until October 1, 2017, Mrs Nybakk was the First Vice President of the Parliament. The position is ranked fifth

in Norway after the King, the President of the Parliament, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister, and before the various Cabinet Ministers.

Ms Nybakk’s political career has covered numerous prestigious positions: the Norwegian Labour Union (LO), President of the Nordic Council, Chair of the Standing Committee on Defence, amongst others.

In 1986, the whole world was surprised when Gro Harlem Brundtland presented her Cabinet in which eight of eighteen ministers were women. It was the year that Mrs Nybakk entered the Parliament. Since then, it became a norm in Norway that at least 40 % of representatives should be women. On January 17,

2018, the re-elected Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg presented her new cabinet. Of twenty ministers, including herself, ten were women. All the leaders of the three coalition parties are women. The gender equality rate has reached 50%, which is quite impressive. When powerful women are politicians, society can change.

As a foreigner, I cannot but wonder: How do women achieve such prestigious positions? Why is this possible in Norway? In many countries, gender equality in politics is not only impossible but also unimaginable. Norway seems to be a Wonderland of equality. However, unlike Alice's Wonderland, equality is the goal for most people in Norway working in human resources, education, political parties, the legal and electoral systems, a goal that provides hope, inspiration and role models for those of us who still dream.

The Norwegian national election for Parliament and local municipal elections take place once every four years, alternating in such a way that there are elections every second year. At present, the Parliament has 169 seats, of which 150 are regular seats. The so-called levelling seats ('utjevningsmandat') are an expression of 'positive discrimination', ensuring a fair representation of remote regions.

The total population of Norway is now 5,3 million and Oslo is gradually approaching 700 000. Even though Oslo is the capital and has the largest population, it has only 19 delegates, whereas the northern regional counties are proportionally better represented.

Mrs Nybakk pointed out to us the historical significance of 1814, the 'Year of Miracle'. Although we tend to relate it superficially to May 17th, the national day, 1814 was the year when the Norwegian Constitution was drawn up in great hurry amidst the turmoil of world politics and war. The 'men at Eidsvoll' were representatives of communities from across the country, who travelled to Eidsvoll Manor House in order to vote for and decide the future of the nation. The manor is now the National Centre for Constitution and Democracy and is considered the cradle of Norwegian democracy.

The representatives from the northernmost counties, Finnmark, Troms and Nordland, did not arrive in time owing to poor communication and the long distance to travel. It is interesting to note that not only the compensatory seats were voted on in their absence, they were also given certain tax benefits that the people of the northern counties still enjoy.

The average age of the men at Eidsvoll in 1814 was 42 years old! The assembly abolished nobility in Norway, unlike the other Nordic countries.

Mrs Nybakk also talked about the history of universal suffrage in Norway. General suffrage for men was introduced in 1898. In 1911, Mrs Anna Rogstad was elected member of Parliament as the very first woman representative

(although she could not vote!). Upon her entry into the assembly hall, all the men stood up out of respect and courtesy. Mrs Rogstad was one of the founders of the Norwegian Women's Rights Association and the Association for Women's Suffrage. All women got the right to vote in 1913. At present, the voting age is 18. However, a still younger voting age is under consideration.

When asked what the most memorable event was, Mrs Nybakk recalled that in June 1991, when the Blessing Ceremony for King Harald and Queen Sonja took place in the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. Mrs Nybakk, a staunch anti-apartheid activist, was flying to South-Africa where Nelson Mandela had just died.



Mrs Nybakk with Sally Bergan (left) and Ruth Klungsøyr (right). Pictures: Hiroko KIMURA

Mrs Nybakk is the current leader of the Norwegian Women's Rights Association, following in the footsteps of Anna Rogstad, and she will continue her work. She also told us about being a mother and an MP in the past.

A smiling Mrs Nybakk spoke to us openly and informally. We all learned so much and we enjoyed a really inspirational evening. I would like to thank Mrs Nybakk and the Monthly Meeting Committee for arranging this event.

Hiroko Kimura

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to the Norwegian Salvation Army

Members of International Forum were warmly welcomed to the main office of the Norwegian Salvation Army on January 24, 2018. Director of Communications Geir Smith-Solvåg gave us an inspiring insight into the background, work and mission of the Salvation Army, abroad as well as in Norway.

In London in 1865, Cathrine and William Booth established a movement whose goal was to work against social injustice and spiritual poverty. The strategy focused on creating a better society which would address the needs of all human beings. The couple understood that it is difficult to enlighten the needy about the gospel when they lacked food, clothing and basic dignity. Their slogan became: SOUP, SOAP and SALVATION, which ever since has been the guidelines for the work of the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army created a bit of controversy as a result of their playing music on the streets, allowing female preachers, working against human trafficking, helping abused children in the slums, and working relentlessly to improve the living and working conditions of the destitute.

The Salvation Army is a very diverse organisation built up as a type of 'communal church' which cares for the *whole* human being. The Salvation Army is an international gospel movement and part of the universal Church of Christ. The message builds upon the Bible, and the services are inspired by the love of God. They are represented in 128 countries and use 175 languages. More than one million soldiers and 150 000 adherent members make a difference in kindergartens, schools, hospitals and clinics worldwide. They also care for prisoners and have launched many rehabilitation programs for former criminals. Salvation Army soldiers help patrol cities at night and provide for the homeless and drug abusers. The Norwegian organisation has around 1 700 employees, 6 000 members and scores of volunteers in some hundred local chapters or 'community churches'.

The mission of the Salvation Army is universal, although the chapters in each country adjust to the local needs and traditional ways of helping people. In Norway, the Salvation Army is doing a fantastic job in terms of caring for drug addicts, homeless people, and prisoners who have served their time. Many get job training through a system of Salvation Army run second-hand shops called Fretex.

Thank you! to Geir Smith-Solevåg for giving us a wonderfully inspirational morning, and for answering all our questions, and for introducing us to the great work that is carried out around the world by the Salvation Army.

Mona Bækkelund Reinboth

ART COMMITTEE

Marina Abramovic: *The Cleaner*

Henie Onstad Art Centre – January 11, 2018

Sixteen members of International Forum braved the inclement weather to visit this retrospective exhibition of the works of Marina Abramovic: *The Cleaner*. We were fortunate to have Karen as our excellent guide, to explain and highlight the 120 works of art covering five decades, focusing primarily on ‘Performance Art’.

Mrs Abramovic was born in 1946 in Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia. Unlike many other artists, she has chosen to share her background with the public because she feels that it is her past that has formed and influenced who she is as an artist. Her family, while not rich, had considerable influential capital in the politics of the time.

However, there was considerable conflict and turbulence in her home and so, at an early age, she was sent to live with her grandmother, who provided her with a calmer environment in which to thrive.



In her teens, Marina Abramovic began a classical art education which she found boring. There are some examples of her early paintings on exhibition which – although she thinks they’re embarrassing and the products of an undeveloped artist – she was convinced to include in this exhibition so as to show her development throughout the years.

Mrs Abramovic moved to Amsterdam and in the next phase of her work, she began working with photographic art. In one exhibit, she uses photos of herself

to represent movement, or more accurately, travelling without movement as it can only be depicted in still photographs. In another auditory exhibit, we hear her screaming until she can't scream anymore, lying on the floor.

Her belief is that interactive or performance art has a long history and that art does not need to be flat or one-dimensional. While this tradition may exist, she is the first we have seen who continuously pushes herself to the limit, not only artistically but also mentally and physically.

In 'Rhythm 10', we see a chronological set of 10 photographs which show the artist throwing a penknife very quickly at the spread-out fingers of her hand, resting on a table. We witness the progression of this very old 'game' as more and more blood appears in the photos. Again, one is forced to ask what kind of psychological state allows a person to push themselves into doing something that no one else would do? In this piece, as well as in many of the others, we see Marina Abramovic using her performance art to demonstrate her belief that creating ideas and concepts is easy, but that the performance of those concepts is difficult, or at least should be.



There are many complex and compelling smaller collections or works. 'Rhythm 0' comprises 72 objects which can be used to cause either pleasure or pain. Using herself as an object, Marina Abramovic invited the public to use these objects to do whatever they wanted to her body. In this way, the public became part of the art piece. This installation had a strong impact on her because she

saw that, once the thin veil of civilisation was lifted, i.e., rules, people would often behave in a very cruel and hurtful way.

On November 30, 1976, Mrs Abramovic met a man named Ulay (Uwe Laysiepen) at one of her performances. She believed this encounter was a turn of fate: they were both born on November 30. Like her, Ulay was a performance artist, and the meeting was the beginning of a collaborative and personal relationship that lasted for 12 years. Together they created a number of performance pieces, employing photography and videos – pieces that demonstrated their desire to push the genre to the limits.

In ‘Imponderable’, they stand naked, staring at each other, at the entrance of the Gallery while visitors have to pass through the very narrow space between them. In ‘Bow and Arrow’, the two artists demonstrate the theme of trust by facing each other, with Ulay holding an arrow aimed directly at Marina’s heart, who is holding the bow.

When their relationship ended in 1988, they incorporated this into their art as well by videotaping the event, which was named ‘The Lovers’. Each started walking towards each other from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China, (which took 3 months) eventually meeting in the middle to say their final goodbyes.



Mrs Abramovic was very affected by the war in the Balkans, her homeland, and she spent the next few years exploring the idea of war in her art – from its idealised commemoration and nationalism to the horror and pain of its reality.

In 1997, she created a piece about wars in general. She installed herself, during the summer, in a hot and humid cellar in a basement in Venice. There, she had collected 2,500 bloody cow bones and, while dressed in a white dress, she spent 6 hours a day, for 6 days, vigorously trying to scrub the blood off these bones. It became evident that no matter how hard she scrubbed, she would never be able to remove all the blood and smell, just as humans would never be able to erase the shame and memory of murderous wars and atrocities.

Abramovic's most famous work to date is *The Artist is Present*, which was performed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2010. She sat in a chair for eight hours a day (736 hours in total!) and members of the public were invited to sit opposite to her, each staring at each other but without speaking. One could choose to sit for thirty seconds, three minutes, or a whole day. The entire event was photographed and videotaped. This was an interesting challenge for many, since most people are raised to avoid staring at others.

As demonstrated by the above examples, Marina Abramovic is an artist who stands far outside the boundaries of what we often consider as art. And, if only to push ourselves beyond the limits of what we are comfortable with, perhaps this is one exhibition that should not be missed!

Trudy Brand-Jacobsen

AROUND OSLO

PLANET EARTH

Friday, March 2, 2018, at 19:30
Oslo Spektrum



Planet Earth II – Live in Concert is a unique showing of nature footage in incredible 4K-Ultra-HD mode on a gigantic screen. The film is shown alongside a live performance by the *City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra*, conducted by Matthew Freeman. For more information, please see <https://www.visitoslo.com/en/whats-on/events/major-event/?TLp=1228979&Planet-Earth-II--Live-in-Concert&startDate=1519945200000&startTime=19:30>

Oslo International Church Music Festival

March 2 – 11

Oslo International Church Music Festival presents church music from the Middle Ages up to the present time, making it an important mediator of both early music as well as contemporary expression. Enjoy some of the world's leading choirs, orchestras and soloists; celebrate High Mass, visit an exhibition, take a tour of the city's church organs, or attend a master class, enjoy the festival's café and participate in family performances for children.



For more information in English, please see <http://www.kirkemusikkfestivalen.no/index.php?lang=en>

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