



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

April
NEWSLETTER
04/2018

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Number 431



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0117 Oslo, Norway

Org.nr. 994 566 806

Visiting address Arbins gt. 2, Victoria Passasjen, 5th floor
Telephone 22 83 62 90
Office email int.forum@online.no
Office hours Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10 - 12
Office Administrator Gunvor Klaveness
Office Team Lydia Afolabi, Lillan Akcora, Sigrid Langebrekke,
Kirsten Wensell
Current Board Sally Bergan (Acting President), Jasmine Sonali Palipane,
Anita Pratap, Soo Lan Hoegh Henrichsen, Anne-Grethe
Skagestad.
Treasurer Vicky Alme
Auditor Karin Skoglund
Website www.iforum.no

Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
April 17	The Norwegian School of Sport Sciences	10:45	March NL
April 26	Nesodden Kunst- og Næringspark	12:30	10
May 7	S. R. Paulsen on Norwegian Defence and Security	18:45	7
May 30	Forum Singers 20 th Jubilee Concert	19:00	11
May 24	Architectural Walk: the Barcode	11:45	9
June 5	Royal Park and Picnic	09:45	8

From the President



Dear Members,

Ready or not – here comes spring! Time to rush to the kitchen cabinet, grab a bucket, fill it with soap and water and start washing your windows. Yes, that light outside is really pouring in and revealing the spectral traces King Winter left on the window panes. And, of course, all that ‘invisible’ dust that has accumulated on every surface and in the dark corners of your home during the winter has suddenly become very visible and must be dealt with. Then, it’s out with the rugs to give them a good ‘spring beating’. It’s work which demands a bit of time, but once it is completed and the gleam of spring sunlight brightens up your living room through your pristine windows, you know your efforts have been rewarding.

This leads me to thoughts about International Forum. Now, what crazy correlation is this, you say? I’m just thinking, when you see a job which needs to be done, it’s probably time to rise to the occasion and do it. No one forces you to do the job, but you realise it’s necessary and that someone has to do it.

We all have to make an effort in order to keep our International Forum in operation. We have to volunteer a little of our time, perhaps to work in the IF office or to lead an activity group. International Forum depends on voluntarism.

The job you volunteer to do in International Forum greatly benefits the organisation and should take probably no more than only a couple of hours a week. The reward is knowing it’s a job well done – it is an accomplishment. You have served your fellow members, and you have made a difference.

Please consider volunteering to do a job in International Forum, and to help keep our wonderful organisation functioning, as we have done during the last nearly 40 years.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sally Bergan'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sally Bergan, Acting President

FROM THE BOARD

S O S

To all Forum members - your help is desperately needed!

We are sorry to announce that both Vicky Alme and Gunvor Klaveness will be stepping down after the AGM in June. Thereafter the International Forum will be without a **Treasurer** and an **Office Coordinator**, unless two members step forward and are willing to help us out. These are two **key positions** for the running of our organisation and without someone to take over, it is unlikely that the Forum will be able to function at all!

The Board welcomes any suggestions which may lead to a solution of this problem. If you are able, or can think of anyone who might be able to take on one of these jobs, please contact Sally Bergan as soon as possible for more information. Full introduction to the work involved will be provided and any necessary training or assistance will be given.

International Forum needs your contribution. Thank you.

Sally Bergan, Acting President

International Forum Website Editor Wanted!

This would involve inserting the latest *Newsletter* and updating information about events and activities. The work can be done from home and should not take more than a few hours each month.

Some knowledge of how a website works would be helpful but not a necessity. However, experience from using a Mac or a PC is required, together with a competent level of written English. Instructions will be made available.

If you can help or know someone suitable, please contact the IF Office.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, June 11 at 18:00 at Vinderen Seniorsenter

In accordance with the Statutes of the International Forum, formal notification is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting to be held at Vinderen Eldresenter on Monday, June 11, 2018 at 18:00.

In accordance with the Statutes, the proposals from the Nomination Committee shall be sent to members no later than six weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting and a preliminary list of proposals for nominations for the Board, Deputies and Committee Leaders have been included in this Newsletter.

The Annual Report will be sent out in May.

Members' proposals regarding matters to be dealt with by the Annual General Meeting should be submitted to the Board, c/o Sally Bergan, International Forum, P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0117 Oslo, **no later than May 11** (four weeks prior to the AGM, see the Statutes § 3.2).

The final notice, the Agenda, a complete list of proposals for nominations, and information about signing up, will be in the May Newsletter.

The Board

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the President
2. Approval of a member to take minutes of the meeting
3. Approval of two signatories to the minutes
4. Approval of four tellers
5. The Board's Annual Report
6. The Treasurer's Annual Report
7. Membership Fee
8. Proposal for an Amendment to § 2 Membership of the Statutes
9. Elections
10. Other Business

Comments:

Pt. 8 The Board proposes the following change to the Statutes § 2.1

Application for membership, sponsored by two members shall be approved by the Board. Members or spouses / partners of members of the Diplomatic Corps and of the Norwegian Foreign Service shall always be eligible for membership. Not more than forty percent of the total number of members shall be of the same nationality. This limitation does not apply to the Norwegian Foreign Service.

[NB § 8 in the Statutes: **Amendments to the Statutes**

The Statutes may be amended by a General Meeting with the consent of at least 2/3 of the members present. Proposals for amendments to the Statutes must be sent to members at least six weeks in advance.]

More detailed information will be posted in the May *Newsletter*.

COMING EVENTS

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

Mr. Steinar R. Paulsen on Norwegian Defence and Security



Steinar R. Paulsen (b.1939) graduated from The Royal Norwegian Naval Academy in 1964 and began a distinguished career in the Royal Norwegian Navy.

In the years 1978-1981, he served as personal Aide de Camp to HM King Olav V. Later he became Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Allied & Norwegian Defence Forces, North Norway.

After leaving the Navy, he pursued a successful business career in Saudi Arabia and South East Asia with Norwegian companies. Returning to Norway in 2003, he was appointed Business Development Director of Fritas AS, and during the last 5 years has supervised projects financed by the Leif Höegh Foundation.

One of his present main projects is 'ALDRI MER' (www.aldrimer.no). This project is monitoring the build-up of Norway's defence forces related to the country's commitments to NATO.

Steinar R. Paulsen is a member of Rotary International, Oslo Military Society, the Norwegian Anchorite Club and Det Norske Selskab.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **May 7** at 18:45 for (19:00)

For more information, please contact the IF Office.

BOARD EVENT

The Royal Park Tour and Picnic



The Board is proud to announce a tour and picnic in the Royal Park (Slottsparken). This tour is an exclusive privilege granted to the International Forum and will take place on Tuesday, June 5. Our guide will be the Head Gardener Ms Ane Senstad Guldahl, and possibly her colleague, depending on the number of participants. Ane S. Guldahl is a botanist from the University of Oslo who has worked as head gardener at the Botanical Garden in Oslo and at Ringve Botanical Garden in Trondheim.

The tour will take place regardless of weather conditions. The participants are therefore advised to dress according to the weather conditions, and in particular have adequate, comfortable footwear. The planned picnic, however, is contingent on the weather.

Please bring something to sit on, as we will sit on the ground. The participants are expected to bring their own picnic lunch. Note: Alcohol and BBQ-ing are strictly forbidden.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **June 5** at **09:45** for 10:00 - 11:30

For more information, please contact the IF Office.

Visit to The Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH - Norges idrettshøgskole)



Tuesday, **April 17** at **10:45** for 11:00. For details, see the March *Newsletter*.

ART COMMITTEE

Architectural walk: The Barcode

The Art Committee has the pleasure of inviting you for its spring architectural walk around Bjørvika and the Barcode.



Completed in 2012, the Barcode is now an iconic architectural ensemble in Oslo. In the heart of the city, the Barcode is part of the vast urban development of Bjørvika, known as ‘the Fjord City’ alongside the Opera House, the Deichman Library, the new Munch Museum, and Sjørenga residential pier.

If its audacious architecture was controversial some years ago, it has now been accepted as a great accomplishment which puts Oslo on the map of contemporary architecture.

We invite you to walk into the Barcode, in order to understand its layout and to have a closer look at some details of its architecture. You will also discover some hidden places!

The tour will be given by IF and Art Committee member Chloé Turlotte.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, May 24 at **11:45** for 12.00

For more information, please contact the IF Office.

Nesoddparken Kunst- og Kulturnæringscenter
Thursday, April 26 at 12:30



Sculpture in snow



Do you want to be touched?

SIGN UP: Please follow the StyreWeb link:

<https://iforum.portal.styreweb.com/arrangement/ArrangementSession2?ID=VUCsLew>

Or send email to both int.forum@online.no no **later than April 19**

For more details, see the *March Newsletter*.



Forum Singers 20th Jubilee Concert

The Forum Singers choir started up 20 years ago, in 1998. We would like to invite you to our Jubilee Concert on Wednesday May 30 at 19:00 at Vestre Aker Menighetshus. As usual, we have a varied repertoire: a mixture of folk songs, jazz, pop, and ballads in several different languages. We also have some sing-alongs so that you, the audience, can join in. Our conductor Eva Landro, a freelance soloist who sings in 'Det Norske Solistkor', has been conducting us since 2016. Our excellent pianist, Margrete Moen Birkedal, will again accompany us. Both Eva and Margrete will be treating us to solos. After the concert, a tempting finger-food buffet with wine and beverages will be waiting for you to enjoy. All this for NOK 250,- (NOK 50,- for children).

The concert will be held at our favourite venue, Vestre Aker Menighetshus, a pleasant and cosy place with good acoustics. There is plenty of free parking on the church grounds, and the venue is easily accessible by public transport - trams and buses go almost to the door. So please do join us! Bring your friends and family for an enjoyable musical evening with delicious refreshments.

DATE/TIME: **Wednesday May 30 at 19:00** *For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

ACTIVITIES

Monthly Wednesday Bridge

Welcome to the Wednesday Bridge in April. The date is April 18 at 10:30.

We play duplicate bridge and have a great time!

For more information, please contact the IF Office.

Cooking Group I

A big thank you to Kari for hosting us in fantastic winter weather with such lovely food. Our Brazilian member Dulce was this month's hostess, on April 12..



Warm regards from Liss R. Laan

REPORTS

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

Sissel Høihjelle Michelsen on Female Genital Mutilation

On the first Monday in March, Sissel Høihjelle Michelsen, International Inner Wheel Board Member, talked about her endeavour, through the Fistula Project - to end FGM (female genital mutilation) and all kinds of systemic violence against girls and women worldwide. FGM includes 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. Today, according to the World Health Organisation, more than 200 million girls and women in 30 countries have been 'cut'.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, but most commonly before the start of puberty. The mutilation is carried out

without any kind of anaesthetic and is very painful. In addition to physical health problems, FGM can also cause long term problems with sex, childbirth and mental health.

There are four main types of FGM:

1. Removing part or all of the clitoris
2. Removing part or all of the clitoris and the inner labia (lips that surround the vagina) with or without removal of the labia majora (larger outer lips)
3. Infibulation: narrowing the vaginal opening by sewing together the labia so that the opening will be just big enough to let urine and menstrual blood pass.
4. Other harmful procedures to the female genitals, including pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping or burning the area.

FGM is often performed by traditional circumcisers or cutters using knives, scissors, scalpels, pieces of glass or razor blades. Most often they are women who do not have any medical training.

FGM is carried out for various cultural, religious and social reasons within families and communities in the mistaken belief that it will benefit the girl in some way (for example, as a preparation for marriage or to preserve her virginity). However, there are no acceptable reasons that justify FGM. It is a harmful practice that is not required by any religion, and there are no religious texts that say it should be done. There are no health benefits of FGM.

FGM usually happens to girls whose mothers, grandmothers or extended female family members have had FGM themselves or if their father comes from a community where cutting is common.

FGM started in Egypt. Today it is also prevalent in East and West Africa, south of the Sahara. The worst cases of infibulation are found in Somalia, Eritrea and parts of Ethiopia. In some African countries, support for the practice has declined, but unfortunately the numbers are up in parts of Asia, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. Because of migration, we also find women who have undergone FGM in most European countries, including Norway.

Sissel told us about Safia y Abdi Haase, a Norwegian of Somalian origin who came to Harstad 1992, where she settled. One day she was summoned as an interpreter to a Somali woman who was about to deliver her first child. This experience was to change Safia's life.

The pregnant woman had come to Norway nine months before, married by correspondence. She had been infibulated and her inexperienced husband had not managed to open her during intercourse. However, enough semen had come into her to make her pregnant. During her pregnancy, she had not seen either a doctor, midwife or nurse. At the hospital, they discovered that her vaginal

opening was too small for the baby to come through, and a gynaecologist was sent for. However, labour had started. The baby got too little oxygen and had to be revived before mother and child were airlifted to the University Hospital in Tromsø. The baby survived, but with serious brain damage.

After this, Safia decided that she would make it her mission in life to work against FGM. Safia herself, who was an illiterate when she came to Norway, decided to learn to read and write and get an education. Today she is a registered nurse and has also obtained a master's degree. She is a valued member of Inner Wheel Norway and has been fighting FMG through this organisation for many years – also in cooperation with the Norwegian Government. For her work, she has received the Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav, Knight 1st Class.

So how can we stop this barbaric custom? Sissel and Safia both believe that the solution lies on education, information and a greater equality between men and women. Through Inner Wheel Norway, they have sent a proposal to the International Inner Wheel (which has more than 100 000 resourceful members all over the world) asking that all the countries in which IW has clubs should cooperate in the 'Stop FGM' Project. This will hopefully be decided on at the IIW Convention in Melbourne in 2018.

Laila Hægh

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Deichman Public Library

On Thursday, February 22, twenty Forum ladies attended a guided tour of the main public library in Oslo, named after its founder Carl Deichman, a book collector who donated 6069 books to the City in 1780.

The library, which was free to all, was opened in 1785 in Raadhusgata 13. It was based on Deichman's collection and later supplemented by other donations. The present building from 1933 is neoclassical and was inspired by American public library buildings. From the window, you can see the tiny Kristi cemetery next door, which is Oslo's oldest cemetery. However, the most striking feature of the premises is a fresco by Axel Revold (1887 –1962) depicting workers, skyscrapers and planes as well as the leading men of the early 18th century.

The original book collection is still intact, but has now grown to more than a million books housed in the main building, as well as nineteen local branches, including special libraries in prisons, hospitals, schools, etc. The library now includes films, music, magazines and much more. Events and courses of many kinds are held in the various libraries. We were shown a very attractive children's department complete with a group of visiting small children.

The employees are busy preparing for the move to the new main building at Bjørvika, close to the opera, in 2020. Some of us were surprised to hear of all the activities which take place at the library. It is possible to borrow not only books and films, but also musical instruments. Other equipment such as computers and even sewing machines and other types of technical equipment can be borrowed for use on the premises, and a great variety of courses are organised.



We were also taken up into the attics, where all the oldest editions of newspapers and magazines are stored as well as historic law books and government documents. Many of us were fascinated to see where the TV series *Brenner og bøkene* was filmed. It was not hard to imagine that secret illegal meetings that took place in the numerous secluded places in this building during World War II: Dramatic stories are still told of members of the resistance having to flee the premises.

We are grateful to the committee for arranging this most interesting event and are looking forward to seeing the *new* library when it is completed.

Kathleen Monsen

Lund Hagem Architects & Atelier March 20, 2018

It was quite an experience to make the perilous trip over ice and snow – and a great relief to meet up with fellow Forum members also interested in art and architecture – and together make our way past the Pushwagner wall and climb up to the fascinating workshop of architecture, where the City of Oslo is being re-invented.



Einar Hagem, one of the five owners of the practice, welcomed us. He gave us a fascinating introduction to what is happening in Oslo today. I feel we certainly have a lot to learn, and I will urge all interested Forum ladies to join in the learning experiences so cleverly arranged for us by the Special Events Group.



We learned about the dynamic dialogue with nature, the existing architectural environment, the poetic and the practical. It is fascinating to see the virtual reality available in our modern times, enabling us to see the future. Let us follow along as best we can.

We lunched companionably at Tjuvholmen, and everyone looked forward to the coming Easter events.

Thank you! Wenche Mohr and Astri Sunde for giving us another thought-provoking experience!

As we view the building sites, we will remember ‘Rome was not built in a day!’

Elizabeth Bøhn

THE ART COMMITTEE

Visit to the National Gallery - 'Faithless Pictures'

Twenty-five faithful Forum ladies listened intently to Kathleen, our guide, and none of us quite knew what to expect from this exhibition with the strange title.



The first work we saw was the one to the left, by Ida Ekblad, who in 2016 found a poster of a young girl on the internet and used it for her project. She was taken to court, won her case, and then put herself on the poster. The childish smiley represents the toothless ease with which we hit *likes*, smiling at each other without a thought. Alfred Jaar's iconic photo of Obama and Hilary (and others), watching

the moment that Bin Laden was caught, is juxtaposed with a blank TV screen. The photo has been proven to be staged and was not even taken on the same day. Millions of people *liked* this photo. What should we believe? What is the original and what is the copy? What is blank, fake news? We are so easy to dupe.

The featured artists address the power of the image over reality. They expose the illusion, the manipulation, and the masks – playing, borrowing and stealing in best post-modernist manner. We live now in a digital age, and artists are holding up a mirror to our reality. In this fragmented visual world, glimpses of truth are hard to find. They help us to see the pictures we no longer see. The clichéd visual culture of television, the internet and commercial magazines needs criticism and correction. The Marlborough Man is a myth, and Jessica Simpson slips into the long line of exploited women.

The walls of the Greek temple that housed the gallery plaster casts are lined with large TV monitors, like a modern frieze, as we walk the green matting admiring our gods of a FIFA World Cup Final. The Parthenon Frieze near the ceiling is lost and lowly by comparison. The truth is that this 2006 football match was scandalous, but most of us are ignorant to the fact. Who cares?

The collection is a wake-up call. The art of intervention that we saw, Torbjørn Rødland with his plastic bag posing amongst the New Romantics, seemed simple compared to the manipulation and shameless abuse exposed by 40 artists. They all use oblique images to show us the oblique techniques of the media and politicians. No one goes straight to the point anymore.

Our thanks to Victoria Berge and Katarina Plavnik for organising this event, which was definitely worth seeing. Entirely in place that we felt an image overload.

Jane Steenbuch

Munch Museum - *With Closed Eyes* – Munch/Gauguin

On February 27, 2018, we were thirty-three ladies from the International Forum, and our excellent guide was Nikita Mathias.

Edvard Munch was 15 years younger than Paul Gauguin, and the two never met each other; so, the exhibition begs the question as to what we can discover in the juxtapositioning of various works that will give new insight and understanding.

The exhibition looks primarily into the graphic works of the two artists, and shows how innovative they were in this medium, be it lithography or woodcut. It suggests that Symbolism is what ties their works together. The symbolist genius who looks further into things, the concept of the artist as a seer. Gauguin and Émile Bernard, the founders of Symbolism, chose primitivism to turn back time and show the simple life, often including mythical fantasy that take the scene beyond the visual and into symbolist thinking.



Munch's figures have a deeply ambiguous emotional effect on the viewer, and the artist is understood as a sort of spiritual medium. We are looking beyond the person, and through a symbolic landscape, to see the mystery of life in a new way. Both artists look with intensity into the raw emotions of humanity, and both use a symbolist landscape to intensify these feelings.

The chosen works include many women and young girls. Munch and Gauguin examined the female predicament. To talk of them as misogynists, and even as misusers of nubile girls, is, in my opinion, going a step too far. However, it is true that the women have sad faces, they carry a weight on their shoulders, and they seem entrapped in melancholy. With their eyes closed, Munch and Gauguin go behind the faces and depict the desire, pain and anxiety. The Symbolist seer has an empathetic gaze.

Those who are disappointed not to see more Gauguin – or Munch – oil paintings should go slowly and look closely at the graphic works. Remember that they are using innovative techniques and the detail is quite startling. Their eyes are wide open as they print out intricate drawings of life seen with their eyes closed.

Jane Steenbuch

AROUND OSLO

Peer Gynt at the Akershus Slott



Outdoor Theatre

Karpedammen

Thursday, June 7 – June 10 at 19:00

This is a production by Norwegian director Svein Sturla Hungnes. The music is by Edvard Grieg. Mr Hungnes has dedicated years of his life to Peer Gynt and has played the main part many times.

Hans Marius Hoff Mittet plays Peer Gynt and *grande dame* of Norwegian theatre Lise Fjeldstad plays Mother Åse.

More than 30 actors and 40 musicians participate in this production.

For tickets, please see

<https://www.ticketmaster.no/event/peer-gynt-pa-akershus-festning-billetter/558993>

Issued by the Board of the International Forum

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Editor and Layout: Elizabeth Rasmussen and Editorial Team
Editorial Team: Elspeth Walseth and Patricia Blackwell
Acting President: Sally Bergan

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