

INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO, NORWAY

June NEWSLETTER 6/2019

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Number 444



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Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
September 2	Monthly Meeting TBA in August NL		
September 21	Ambassadors-for-Peace Marathon	TBA	8
September 24	Visit to Villa Stenersen	TBA	9

OBITUARY Grethe Frydenlund



It was with great sadness that we learned that Grethe Frydenlund died on May 17th. Grethe, as we knew her, was the founder of our organisation, International Forum, over forty years ago.

As a diplomat's wife (married to Knut Frydenlund, former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs), Grethe fully understood that women who were sent to different countries with their diplomat husband, often found themselves lonely and without a network to help them adjust to their new country. To her, it was important that those who were arriving in Norway should have an opportunity to seek contact with

others in a similar situation, to discuss their experiences, and to learn from each other. Her idea was that this could be achieved through lectures and study groups.

Furthermore, she felt that it was important to introduce Norway to those who were here for a short period of time or for a longer stay. Included in this was how to address the problems that foreigners might have in adjusting to life in Norway. She wanted to learn from other cultures and in return have Norway enriched by knowledge of other countries and cultures.

Grethe, together with three other far-sighted women of different nationalities, established International Forum in 1979 in Oslo. It was founded on the basis of four fundamental ideas:

- To promote friendship through understanding between individuals of different nationalities
- To help solve problems of a practical nature which foreigners may encounter in Norway
- To promote knowledge about the different cultural, social and economic backgrounds of the nations represented by the members
- To widen the choice of cultural and social activities open to foreigners in Norway

These were some of the many concerns and values which Grethe stood for. We in International Forum will be forever grateful for her vision, compassion, optimism, enthusiasm and infectious humour.

She was our honoured guest at International Forum's 40th Anniversary celebration on February 12th this year. How wonderful it was to have her there with us! Grethe will always remain an inspiration to us all.

Sally Bergan, President Patricia Blackwell

From the President



Dear Members.

As I take leave of my office as President, I would like to thank you all for these past two years. I have appreciated all the support you have afforded me. It has been a great experience and a true privilege to serve International Forum.

While writing this, I learned that International Forum Oslo's 'founding mother', Grethe Frydenlund, passed away, at the age of 88. She, along with three other farsighted women, saw how important it was for foreigners who came to Oslo from different parts of the world to meet, exchange ideas and experiences, learn about each other's countries and cultures, promote friendship through international understanding and get acquainted with Norway.

With much enthusiasm and optimism, International Forum was founded in 1979. International Forum invited Grethe to our 40th Anniversary. AND she came! So many people, especially those who knew her from the early days of IF, were delighted to see her – and she was thrilled to see them. I was seated next to her at the dinner table, and she told me about how much International Forum and being at the celebration meant to her. I am so glad and grateful that she had that opportunity to be with her fellow International Forum members once again.

Apropos the 40th Anniversary, a wonderful booklet has been produced for all our members, commemorating our organisation and the 40th Anniversary in February. Its pages are full of photographic memories. Some lovely pictures of Grethe are in there, too!

Looking forward, International Forum has a new and exciting year ahead, with excellent speakers at our Monthly Meetings and an abundance of activities for you to enjoy. Be sure to participate in the activities you like, and remember, International Forum relies on everyone's willingness to give a little bit of time to help out and keep it a viable and productive organisation.

Thanks for the memories everyone. You are a group of great and inspiring women! Best regards always,

Outgoing President

Sun Burgan

FROM THE OFFICE



If you have changed your address, telephone number or email address, please send an email to int.forum@online.no or a letter to the Office.

The International Forum Office staff will resume activity on August 12, 2019.

Membership Fee for 2019 – 2020

The Membership Fee is NOK **500**,- for full members and NOK 250,- for overseas or associate members.

Renewing Your Membership

Information about the membership payment procedure will be posted in the August *Newsletter*. You will be sent an invoice at the beginning of IF year 2019 - 2020.

Please let the Office know if you wish to change your membership category:

- e.g. if you are moving abroad, you can keep in contact with us by becoming an Overseas Member,
- or if you have thought of giving up your membership because you are no longer taking part in any of the Forum activities, but still want to keep in contact with us, you can become an Associate member,

If, for some reason, **you do not want to continue** your membership, we would appreciate it if you informed us in an email to int.forum@online.no or a letter to the Office **before August 15.** We will then take you off our lists and stop sending you the *Newsletter*.

We thank you for your co-operation.

The Office

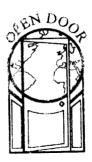
THANK YOU

Dear Members.

Thank you all for the most exquisite Holmegaard bowl. I love its beautiful shape and colour. It will fit perfectly in my home and on my dinner table. I will think of you all at International Forum when I use it.

With best wishes always,

Sally Bergan



A BRIEF HISTORY OF OPEN DOOR

The idea of Open Door was started in 1980 by the President of International Women's Association (IWC) Stockholm, Mrs. Elisabeth Sammann, while travelling abroad with her husband, a Rotarian. She was so impressed with the hospitality extended to him by fellow Rotarians in foreign cities, that she thought that an equivalent system could help members of International Women's Associations have a similar reciprocity, by 'opening their doors to each other' when moving to or visiting a city or town abroad.

IWC Stockholm supported her idea and appointed her Coordinator of International Relations – and Open Door was born. Mrs Sammann started with a register of nine Women's Associations that agreed to appoint an International Coordinator to welcome IWC women as guests to their clubs' [i.e. the Coordinator welcomes her to her club] monthly meetings and other club activities, as well as occasionally exchanging Club Newsletters and correspondence. At the end of 1983, her register had grown to a total of eighteen associations.

- 1. Open Door is a network of non-political, non-religious and non-commercial International Women's Associations whose membership is open to all nationalities, and which offers inter-club contact and communication.
- 2. Open Door enables members of affiliated associations to have guest status at monthly meetings. It provides an opportunity for club members moving to or visiting another country to find a group of internationally-minded women and to join or visit their Club.
- 3. When a club member visits or moves to a city or town where an affiliated association exists, she will be required to present her membership card or an introduction letter from her association to the membership officer or to the international coordinator of the affiliated association.
- 4. Membership in an affiliated association is not automatic. Each association is autonomous, and membership is governed by its statutes and legal rules.

- 5. Advice and support is available from the Chairman of Open Door to new associations writing their statutes, as well as establishing their organisation.
- 6. The Open Door Directory gives details of registered associations and is used by the International Coordinator to provide members of an association with the name, address and telephone number only, of the contact person of an affiliated association.

The information contained in the Directory is confidential and must therefore not be disclosed for commercial or any other purposes.

An increasing number of women are on the move either through their own career or with husbands whose professions are taking them to places far away from their home countries. In many cases, these women have to come to terms with giving up professional careers, leaving family and friends behind, being faced with a foreign language, and learning to live in a new culture.

All this can be daunting, but the immediate contact with women in similar situations, provided by International Women's Associations that open their doors, can make the transfer easier. The variety of activities and the possibility of forming new friendships can be a most exciting and stimulating experience. For these reasons the inter-club network is of great value.

The Open Door system is a way to help women who are moving internationally by providing contact with a network of women of different nationalities, thereby promoting mutual understanding, furthering cultural exchanges and cultivating friendship; all of which can lead to a richer and broader understanding of other nations and cultures.

Today – in fifty countries – there are more than seventy-nine International Women's Associations which 'open their doors' to members of sister associations.

If you are leaving the country and wonder if there is an International Women's Club where you are going, please contact me for more information.

Ellen Vollebæk
International Coordinator

COMING EVENTS

Ambassadors for Peace Oslo Marathon - September 21



Come September and it's Oslo Marathon time. For the third year in a row, the International Forum is organising an 'Ambassadors for Peace' team to participate in the Marathon. The 10-km run ('10 for Grete') will take place on Saturday, September 21 at about 16:00, starting at the Town Hall. The run will end by 18:00. Details to follow in the August *Newsletter*.

Thanks to our special arrangement with the organiser of the Oslo Marathon, we pay a reduced participation fee of only NOK 100.- per person. If you want an Oslo marathon T-shirt, it will cost an extra 100 kroner. Those who want to run the half or full marathon can do so through the 'Ambassadors for Peace' team for the same price. Members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and International Forum and their family members can participate. You can cancel anytime and your payment will be reimbursed provided that you notify before September 14. The Ambassador of Belgium, Nancy Rossignol, is the first to register and five others have already registered.

If you wish to participate in the 'Ambassadors for Peace' team, please email me for registration details.

Anita Pratap

SPECIAL EVENTS

Villa Stenersen

September 24

Special Events has pleasure in inviting you to visit Villa Stenersen, one of the most significant examples of Norwegian Modernism, and one of architect Arne Kosmo's most well-known works. Rolf C. E. Stenersen, financier, art collector and author, had this house built for himself and his family in 1939. In 1974, he donated the villa to the State. He wished it to serve as the prime minister's official residence, although only one prime minister, Oddvar Nordli, ever lived there. In 2014, the National Museum took over the administration of the villa and it is now a museum. We are looking forward to taking Forum members on a guided tour of this very special house.

A full announcement of this tour, with details for signing up, will appear in the August *Newsletter*. Until then, save the date: Tuesday September 24!



Special Events Committee

REPORTS

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

Textiles and Garments from the Philippines

At the May Monthly Meeting, the Philippine Ambassador, H. E. Jocelyne Batoon-Garcia gave a lecture on textile and garment production in her country.



It was fascinating to follow her description of how the production has evolved over time and how multicultural influences could be traced in the weaving techniques and patterns, colours and styles. The materials used were cotton, silk and wool, and pineapple leaf fibres.



Mrs Batoon-Garcia showed us how one can recognise the weaving patterns and garment fashions from the different regions of the Philippines. The indigenous groups from the north, middle and south each have their own traditions when it comes to colours, patterns and garments for men and women. Often the patterns reflect what people saw in nature, such as the stars, the mountains and the streams, and also animals. However, in the Muslim areas in the south, you will not find any representations of living creatures in the woven pattern.



In some part of the islands, beading is used to such an extent that the outfits become very heavy. Mrs Batoon-Garcia showed us on pictures. She and her staff set up a small exhibition in the adjoining room so that we could see and touch the different types of textiles and intricate embroidery.



Mrs Batoon-Garcia is very knowledgeable on culture and handicraft traditions in her country. Moreover, she has an engaging way of presenting her subject and used herself as a model when draping herself in a 'tube' of traditional fabric. This she transformed into a skirt (*saya*), a sun screen, a turban, and even a bag!





The exhibition of traditional fabrics and artefacts in the adjoining room attracted much attention from our members. We thank the Philippine Ambassador for this informative session, a glimpse into the culture of a country almost on the other side of the globe.

Gunnel Anita Solheim

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to the Norwegian Academy of Music Norges Musikkhøgskole

'Why should one subsidise something as useless as teaching music, when Ole Bull is a terrible organiser, has a bad temper, and is a little crazy? And now he wants the state to pay him for it too?' This citation by Robert Levin comes from a past NRK broadcast and illustrates the position of the Norwegian elites on the idea of public music education at the end of the 19th century.



And yet, a prominent musical family took on the challenge in 1883. The organist Ludvig Lindeman and his son, organist as well as composer Peter Lindeman, opened the Organ School in Christiania at the August Nielsen's Organ Factory. It all started with 12 students and the tiniest of public subsidies: 200 kroner from King Oscar II and 1000 kroner from the Parliament.

After several relocations, the school changed its name to the Music

Conservatory, moved to Nordahl Bruns gate in 1894, where it remained until 1973, when the Norwegian Music Academy was established.

Today, the Academy is ranked 2_{nd} in Scandinavia and the 13_{th} best in Europe. It has 750 students, 350 full-time employees, and organises 400 concerts each year. In addition to traditional teaching, owing to its healthy economy and modern facilities, the Academy also offers niche studies, such as Bulgarian folk music for weddings - a course with one single student - and South Korean harmonica.

Our guide Karina, a former student with a degree in music composition took us on a tour through the building. The Academy has two main concert halls. The largest, with 365 seats, is named after the founder and headmaster, Peter Lindeman (1858-1930); and the second, with 125 seats, is named after Robert Levin (1912-1996), a leading Norwegian pianist who became the first rector of the newly established Music Academy in 1973.

The Lindeman Hall has the largest of the variety of Academy organs. We spent a few minutes there listening to the baroque music played by a practicing student. The climate of this mighty hall with beautiful lighting, the sound of the solemn chords and elegant seating was a huge contrast to the next location that we visited: The Percussion Department.





We squeezed into a room overfilled with all kinds of percussion instruments, many of which hung on the walls. There were African balafons, drums, gongs, wind chimes, kalimbas, marimbas, glockenspiel and many more curiosities that could be rubbed, struck or scraped. As if this were not enough, the two cheerful percussion students explained that they were working on developing a new digital setting for the techno concerts on their computers!

After that we stepped into the piano workshop, a rather dim and soundless room with a few pianos and vintage-looking tuning tools. It takes two years of study to become a piano tuner and only five students a year are accepted on this training program.

The jazz section on the top floor has a laid-back and artsy atmosphere with posters and photos along the walls of a long corridor. Unfortunately, we did not bump into any future Garbareks, but we were lucky to meet Solveig Bergesen, a soprano student with a sweet timbre in her voice.

In one of the classrooms, she gave us a mini solo performance of her favourite repertoire. 'Solveig's song' and 'Last Spring' by Grieg and 'Song to the Moon', from Dvorák's opera *Rusalka*. She had a piano accompanist and the tutor by her side. The approving expression on the tutor's face and our applause were unambiguous. We wish her success in the future.

Our last stop was the library. In addition to having the largest assortment of printed music in Norway, the Library has an astonishing collection of 460 antique instruments. The presentation was made by Hans Olav Gorset, Professor of Flute, who is a fan of music instruments and also makes them himself. The collection results from both private and public contributors and has been accumulated a few passionate professors over the years. The instruments are catalogued by the initial letter of the name of the two memorable archive controllers. G stands for Professor Gurvin, who was interested in non-European instruments and L for Professor Lindeman, who focused on western instruments.





There was an array of striking and unfamiliar instruments, both by look and name and most of them can be used for teaching and live performances: African sansa - a mix of thumb piano and xylophone; East Asian plucking instrument - something of a banjo; Tibetan raga chung - a drum; Middle Eastern tanbur - a long neck string instrument or Chinese yunluo - a cloud gong. The western collection has bugles and horns from the beginning of the 18th century, violins in experimental shapes, mandolins and oboes, lute guitars, beautiful and precious violas made by Joachim Tielke, cisters (cittra or cittern) - English guitars from the Renaissance, and single rarities such as orphica - a portable piano; a clavichord with painted images of one-

time Trondheim; and surprising walking sticks: one like a flute, the other like a violin!

On the way to lunch, there was no need for any walking support... We took a comfortable ride in a voluminous elevator built for far heavier musical loads than the dimensions of our pleased-looking group.

Elizabeth Groth Kolby

ART COMMITTEE

Dag Hol and Shian Yuan Yachi Gallery 26, Nils Lauritssønsvei 26, Oslo

Nineteen Forum ladies went to this event, and if you were not there, you really missed something!

Dag and Yachi must truly be two of the most open and welcoming artists in Oslo. They opened their home, their garden, their studio, their gallery, and their hearts, and shared their knowledge of art, philosophy, Norwegian and Taiwanese history, yoga, meditation, Buddhism, Hinduism, and so on you only need to walk in their door, and the event just rolls out in front of your eyes. This can not be a short report.

Some of us arrived rather early, and we were taken into the house in order to stay warm. One whole wall of the room we were in was taken up by Dag's painting of *Hundorp*. I asked where in Norway this was, and Dag proceeded to give us a fascinating talk about the history of Hundorp.

Many of his works are on a grandiose scale sweeping the viewer into the glorious landscapes of Norway. A tour de force of every tiny detail of the nature around us, demanding that we stop and look and listen in these quiet locations. We find ourselves unravelling back through the centuries while a brooding cosmos



overhead watches the slow changes of Time. In *Hundorp* there are sacred stone circles, a fertility stone and a Viking mound where the King's Highway once wound its way on the great pilgrimage route to Trondheim. Snorre's

Heimskringla tells of King Olav's meeting with chieftain, Dale-Gudbrand, on this farm in 1021. He spoke to the farmers at this meeting place (tinget) in Hundorp.



We spent an entranced half-an-hour hearing about all of this, and this was before our tour even started! Their house is like a museum and everything in it has a story.

Dag met Yachi in Taipei in 2015. He went there to see the famous painting *Travellers between Mountains and Streets*, by 11th century Chinese artist, Fan Kuan. Nearly 7 ft high, the hanging scroll composition presents universal creation in its totality, and does so with the most economic of means. It is the Mona Lisa of Asia and is only shown every five years. It is not hard to understand why Dag was so interested in this work.

Yachi explained how the early Asian artists learned to make dreamlike landscapes with atmospheric *chiaroscuo* long before Leonardo da Vinci did the background to Mona Lisa. There are three levels in these Chinese works. You walk in on the bottom level looking up, climb a little

to the middle level where you can look both up and down, and then look down from the top of the mountains to the levels below you. You are everywhere all at once in a montage that is not realistic. Dag's paintings are, in contrast, photographic and you walk right into them. His works are realistic, and the atmospherics, the metaphysical messages, are in the location and in the cosmos above.

Yachi began her career in the traditional style of Fan Kuan, and has sold well in Taiwan. Below is one of her scrolls, ink painting, between Fan Kuan's and her new tulip painting. She discovered early that the world of plants enables her to share her profound feeling of the brevity of life.





Since coming to Norway, she has taken up a brighter palette and these blue tulips are going on auction at a charity dinner at the Grand Hotel on 5 June. The painting is a comment on the plight of immigrants with tulips fully opened and struggling for their lives. The background is chaotic, but the evil eye in each tulip can drive away evil and lend protection. The concept of the evil eye began in antiquity and varies widely among different cultures, primarily in West Asia. Charms and decorations are used to repel the evil eye. Belief in the evil eye is found in Islamic doctrine.





Yachi's large triptych, Grey Openness, is being prepared for an exhibition in Taiwan. This is not a sexual painting. The figure is in an opening yoga position. You choose whether you want to be open or closed. The word *closed* in Chinese sounds the same as the word for a 'lotus flower', which is a symbol of peace. A red lotus does not exist, but it is used as a literary lotus of the mind. Nature beyond Nature. In ink and acrylic, on rice paper, the Buddha-like meditating Mother is the mother of all, sharing everything and in a world that remains peaceful. In the bottom left-hand corner, Yachi has made a calligraphic note of Taiwan accepting gay marriage in May 2019. Yachi mentioned that the colours of the sky in this painting are inspired by Franz Widerberg.

In no way 'outdone' by his young wife, Dag is sending *Crescent Iceberg* to the Biennial in Beijing.





This is a contemporary comment on our human existential crisis in the time of melting icebergs. The stones that have been picked up by the ice are billions of years old, will drop into the ocean, and return to the universal soul. The moon waxes and wanes over our folly.

Dag is working on 24 paintings from some of the grandest places in Norway. Amongst others, Vørringsfossen, Aurlandsdalen, Beitostølen, Hundorp, Lofoten and Reine. He will be sending some to an exhibition at the Academy of Art in Rome in June.



Dag is a controversial artist in the art world, particularly in Norway, and has been villified in the same way as Odd Nerdrum and Vebjørn Sand. They have not gone down the road of contemporary art, and when Dag was at the Academy, there was little Knut Rose and Inger Sitter could teach him.

He sticks to his inner call, and hopes one day to open a museum in his house to give a home to his historic and eternal paintings of Norway. With rapid climate change they will probably become valuable images of a lost world.

One may be tempted to think that the painting below of Vøringsfossen has carried Dag into the field of contemporary art, but this is just the first of many layers that will become the great waterfall.





The Forum ladies were then offered lovely Mint or Cinnamon tea, and Dag talked to us about his love of India and the iconography of his Hindu Dancing Shiva Natarasj, Lord of the Ecstatic Cosmic Dance, that he bought home to Oslo. The dance within a wheel is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos.

The tour officially ended here, but we were then taken out into their wonderful Asian garden and shown the symbols and signs of the East, nestled in every corner of this little enclave in Oslo. There is a spirituality about the property that this couple brings to everything around them.

Dag and Yachi have a large age and cultural gap between them, but they have a common platform in their need to show the spirituality, peace and harmony that can be found in Nature. It is remarkable that these two passionate artists with their widely divergent techniques and concepts and cultures, work so closely together in one remarkable studio space. Yachi told us that her apartment in Taipei is minimalistic and Zen, whereas their house in Oslo is above average cluttered. Between them, they create artworks that are meditative and calming.



Thank you so much, Dag and Yachi! It was a wonderful and magical morning. And Thanks to Rosi and Jane for arranging this event.

Jane Steenbuch

AROUND OSLO

Guided tours of the Royal Palace



The Royal Palace is open to the public during the summer. All visitors should take a guided tour. Entrance by Slottsgården at the back/western side of the Palace. Each tour lasts for approx. one hour.





The guided tour takes visitors through some of the most beautiful state rooms in the Royal Palace: Cabinet Cloakroom, Cabinet Parlour, Council Chamber, White Parlour, King Haakon VII Suite, Upper Vestibule, Bird Room, Mirror Hall, Family Dining Room, Small Ceremonial Hall, Great Hall and the Banqueting Hall.

Guided tours in Norwegian (every 20 minutes)

Monday-Thursday and Saturday-Sunday: 11:00 – 17:00 Friday: 12:00 – 17:00

Guided tours in English

Daily: 12:00, 14:00, 14:20, and 16:00

Tickets may be purchased at ticketmaster.no, Oslo Visitor Centre, Narvesen and by tel. (+47) 815 33 133. Any remaining tickets will be sold at the entrance before each tour.

Children under three: Free

Children: NOK 105.-Students and seniors: NOK 105.-Adults: NOK 135.-

For private bookings, please call tel.: +47 815 33 321.

Zotora - Breath in the Mausoleum

Emmanuel Vigeland's Museum Grimelundsveien 8, Oslo 0775

Zotora is one of Europe and Scandinavia's first *didjeridoo* players. He has been continually perfecting his sound over the years. His concert offers contemplative music from what might be the mother of all wind instruments. Zotora learned to play the *didjeridoo* – a wind instrument developed by Indigenous Australians of northern Australia – on a trip to the Australian outback 30 years ago.

Since then he has been exploring the possibilities of this instrument using traditional circular breathing. His unique playing style and the depth of the sounds he creates has won the respect of both non-aboriginal Australian *contemporaries* and aboriginal elders – the traditional owners of this ancient instrument.



The concerts are held in 'Oslo's best-kept secret': the amazing Emanuel Vigeland Museum.

Dates:

Monday, June 17 at 19:00 Tuesday, July 16 at 19:00 Thursday, August 15 at 19:00 Saturday, September 14 at 19:00 Sunday, October 13 at 19:00 Tuesday, November 12 at 19:00 Thursday, December 12 at 19:00

For more information, please see

http://www.emanuelvigeland.museum.no/museum.htm or https://www.visitnorway.com/event/zotora-breath-in-the-mausoleum/259637/

Issued by the Board of the International Forum

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The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit all material. Printed by Utenriksdepartementets Hustrykkeri.

June 12, 2019