



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

December
NEWSLETTER
12/2018

2	Forum Diary
3	President's Page
4	From the Board
5	From the Office
5	Coming Events
8	Activities
8	Reports

Number 438



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

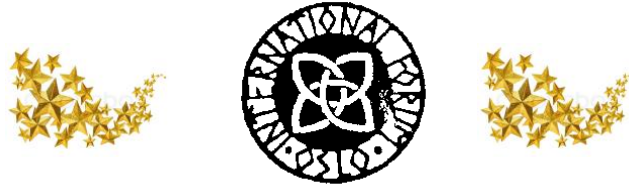
Org.nr. 994 566 806

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 Coordinator **Dorota Steensland**
Office Team Lydia Afolabi, Lillan Akcora, Kirsten Wensell, Anne-Sofie Trosdahl-Oraug
Board 2018 – 2019 **Sally Bergan** (President), Anita Pratap, Anne-Grethe Skagestad, Soo Lan Høegh Henrichsen, Heidi von Weltzien Høivik
Treasurer **Anne-Lise Fasteland**
Auditor **Verena Krienke**
Website www.iforum.no

Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
January 7	MM - Sigrid Bratlie on Genome Editing	18:45	5
January 17	Håkon Bleken: "Do not go gentle"	11:45	7
January 24	The Norwegian Red Cross	11:45	6
February 12	40 th Anniversary Celebration	18:00	4

From the President



Dear Members,

During the Christmas holidays in Norway, different traditional Norwegian foods are found in abundance at the local grocery store. One particular Norwegian delight is a specially cured fish, which defies description, and is a favourite of many. This 'favourite' is a fish called 'lutefisk' in Norwegian, a dried cod fish that has been preserved in ash (lye), over a period of time, so that the fish is totally transformed into something colourless, relatively shapeless, and a bit wobbly.

Many years ago, during the holiday season, I decided to surprise my husband with a lutefisk dinner, although I had never made it before. Well, I heated up the water and prepared the fish for a quick boil. Boil it did. In fact, in a matter of a short time, when I opened the lid of the pot to check its 'progress', I found no fish – nothing except boiled water. 'What happened to that thing?' I thought. Believe it or not, I remember looking up at the ceiling, thinking it might have escaped from the water and taken flight. Not up there! Truly puzzled, I even began to search the floor thinking the fish could have taken a more practical detour from the pot. It was like an incredible magic trick and I was, apparently, a magician – *now you see it, now you don't*.

I learned later that to avoid dissolving your lutefisk, as I had done, you need to give it tender, loving care during preparation, since it is fragile due to the curing process. It should be heated preferably in an oven with a good portion of butter, condiments and eagle-eye supervision by the cook. And then, *voila!* – a genuine Norwegian holiday dinner is ready for consumption. One can only say, 'Håper det smaker' – 'I hope it tastes good', the Norwegian equivalent of *bon appétit*.

With that, I would like to wish every member of International Forum a warm and wonderful holiday season and a bright, prosperous and peaceful New Year. I would like to thank you all for your participation and enthusiasm throughout the year. It's that spirit that makes International Forum such a great organisation!

A special thank you goes to the Board members, the Office Coordinator and Office team, the Editor and Editorial team, the Dispatch team, the Treasurer, the Auditor, the Secretary, and the Executive Committee leaders and their teams for their excellent work.

Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sally Dorgan'.

President

FROM THE BOARD

REMINDER

We look forward to seeing YOU
at our 40th Anniversary Celebration

February 12, 2019

18:00



Please sign up **right away** and be part of this wonderful evening!

For those of you who have already made a deposit, the deadline for the remaining NOK 500 is **January 10**. For those who haven't made a deposit, the last day for signing up with a full payment of NOK 750 is also **January 10**.

Please make your payment to the International Forum account

1600.40.36631

**We are celebrating 40 great years of
friendship and international understanding.**

All information can be found in the October *Newsletter*.

*The Anniversary Committee needs to know how many members will be participating, so please let us know **now** if you will be joining us!*

Thank you!

Sally Bergan

Do you have questions? Please contact: IF Office.

FROM THE OFFICE

Office Hours During the Holidays

Please note that the IF Office will be **closed** between December 17, 2018, and January 7, 2019. You are welcome to send us emails during that period. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Dorota Steensland
Office Coordinator

COMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING

Sigrid Bratlie on Genome Editing

January 7, Sigrid Bratlie, PhD in Molecular Biology, Senior Advisor at the Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board, will speak about biotechnology and specially CRISPR – a simple but powerful tool for editing genomes. It allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function. Its many potential applications include correcting genetic defects, treating and preventing the spread of diseases, and improving crop yields. She will speak about the possibilities and limitations – also about the ethical concerns that it raises.



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

For more information, please contact IF Office

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to the Norwegian Red Cross



The Norwegian Red Cross is part of the largest volunteer movement in the world: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The organisation has societies in 119 countries with a total of 17 million volunteers and staff, working to help and support vulnerable people in their respective communities. The Norwegian Red Cross has activities throughout Norway, with around 50 000 volunteers. In addition, the Norwegian Red Cross mobilises support for sister organisations around the world, including the Afghan Red Crescent Movement and Kenya Red Cross. The work ranges from emergency response projects and field hospitals to more long-term projects. During our visit, we will learn about the work carried out by the Norwegian Red Cross both at home and abroad.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **January 24** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: By email to int.forum@online.no and bskate@online.no in **the same email** or leave a message at the Office, tel.: 22 83 62 90, no later than **Tuesday, January 15.**

For more information, please contact IF Office

ARTS COMMITTEE

Håkon Bleken – “Do not go gentle”



Håkon Bleken – 90 years old and still going strong – is one of Norway’s most famous artists. He is now celebrated with an exhibition consisting of works from his many years of production.

Bleken started as an abstract painter inspired by cubism; however, already in the sixties he changed into a more figurative style and narrative expression. His best period seems to be now, dealing with physical decay and death.

An exhibition well worth a visit. We hope to see you there!

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **January 17** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN/UP: By e-mail to int.forum@online.no and kersapeter@gmail.com or leave a message at the Office, tel.: 22 83 62 90 as soon as possible and **no later than January 10.**

For more information, please contact IF Office

ACTIVITIES

Indoor Golf Group

The Indoor Golf Group has started up again. We meet every Thursday at 10:30, starting with a coffee. We have a special price for balls and private lessons can be arranged. All levels of golfers are welcome – also those who are beginners – so do come along! Free parking.

TIME: Thursdays at 10:30

For more information, please contact IF Office

R E P O R T S

OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING

Sigrid Langebrekke on the Nobel Institute

Thirty-nine enthusiastic members gathered at Vinderen Seniorsenter on October the 1st to hear IF member Sigrid Langebrekke talk about the Nobel Institute and the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sigrid started working as Event Manager at the Institute in 1989, the year His Holiness the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize, and she retired in 2012, when the European Union was the prize winner. Sigrid's talk provided us with a deeper insight into both the history behind Alfred Nobel, the man and the various prizes that carry his name, but with special emphasis on the Peace prize.

Alfred Nobel – a Swedish chemist, engineer, inventor, businessman, and philanthropist – was born in Stockholm in 1833 and died in 1896 at Villa Nobel, his residence in San Remo, Italy. He was the son of a businessman and became a chemist in his father's weapons factory in 1853. By 1873, Alfred Nobel was one of the world's richest men. He invented dynamite and established 60 factories in 40 different countries.

Alfred Nobel did not enjoy good health. He suffered among other things from depression. In addition to his Italian residence, he owned houses in France, Sweden and Russia. Upon his death, these countries argued about where Nobel had really resided, each hoping for his taxes. Sweden won.

In 1895, Nobel's fortune was an estimated SEK 33,3 million. The income from investments was to provide five prizes for outstanding research and work in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Peace, Literature and Physiology or Medicine. The Peace prize was to be administered by the Norwegian Storting. Norway was in a union with Sweden at this time.

The Norwegian Peace Prize Committee has five members, elected by the Parliament, each for six years. All have Norwegian nationality and the committee is to be politically independent. Only the chairperson can talk to the press. The Nobel Foundation bought the building which houses the Nobel Institute in 1901 and the first Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 to Henri Dunant.

The question is: how does one become a peace prize winner? The answer is: by *nomination*. Many different groups and individuals can nominate a person or organisation, and usually at the first annual count there are some 300 nominations. The only requirement is that a nomination be submitted before February 1 in the year of the prize. The committee then meets in February and sets up a short list of 10 – 15 candidates. Usually there are between six and eight meetings before a choice is made. The committee's choice is announced in October.



Each year a different artist is asked to design the Diploma. The medal is of pure gold (value about NOK 100 000). The ceremony is always on December 10 and the winner's lecture held on December 11.

Sigrid then told us about some behind the scenes episodes from various laureate's prize ceremonies, sometimes stories of hurdles of a political nature. One happened in 1990, when the President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev was not able to leave Russia and therefore sent one of his ministers to receive the Diploma and medal on his behalf. Then in 1991, Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi sent her husband and two sons.

'Hiccups' of a different kind but no less difficult arose in 1993 when the prize was shared by Nelson Mandela and Frederik Wilhelm de Klerk and the appointed artist Jacob Weidemann had only made *one* diploma. Apparently, he did not like de Klerk... Another awkward situation occurred in 1994 when Kåre Kristiansen withdrew from the committee in protest at the choice of Israeli Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Yasser Arafat. Kosher food and Shabbat also became a problem.

Another controversial winner was the German pacifist Carl von Ossietzky, in 1935. Hitler was of the opinion that no German should receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Also, not every laureate wants the prize! In 1973, Kissinger sent his ambassador to collect it and never gave the customary Nobel lecture.

Security can sometimes pose problems. In 2007, Al Gore refused to take the diplomatic car from the airport, but took the train, causing all the other passengers to wait on the platform until the next train. In 2009, President Obama came with an entourage of 800 persons. Norway had to borrow *diplomatic cars* from Germany! In 2010, the prize was awarded to the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. He was not allowed to leave China. Solution was an empty chair... and then there was an expectant guest who had to be taken out and rushed to the hospital as her labour started a little early. The baby was born before the speeches had started.

December 10 ends with the Nobel Banquet at Oslo's Grand Hotel, which is attended by the Norwegian Royal family. On December 11, the laureate meets the President of the Storting and the Prime Minister.



The amount of money changes and depends on the return on the investments made. In 1901, the prize amounted to NOK 150 000 + which was a huge sum back then.

Gorbatsjov received NOK 4 million, and this year it will be NOK 9 million.

During the 2nd World War no prizes were given.

Sigrid's talk opened a peep-hole into a whole new world: the working of

the Nobel Institute, and the activities leading up to the ceremony. So much work, so much planning! And you always need a contingency plan for all the things that *may* happen!

Thank you, Sigrid, for such an exceptional talk. The Peace Prize ceremony will never be quite the same after this.

Vicky Alme

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Geir Gokstad on the Gokstad Ship

An interesting presentation of the Gokstad ship, discovered in a Viking tomb excavated in 1880, at Gokstad Farm close to the town of Sandefjord.

What made this presentation especially interesting is Geir's family background. The Gokstad ship was excavated from a mound found on his great-grandfather's estate. Today the ship and its content, including the bones of a male person, are all preserved in the Viking Ship Museum at Bygdøy, Oslo.



Viking ships found in mounds were used as boat graves for very important people or Kings. So, who was the very prominent person in this almost 1000-year-old ship?

Gokstad appears to have been a trading centre. The area abounds with burial grounds. Many artefacts have been found on the Gokstad Farm, including an Arabic silver coin. Archaeologists have found the remains of a small town and a bridge dating back to 500 BC. The coast line and the seaway were further in than today. In the 9th century, the small town - discovered by ground-penetrating radar - was strategically located and protected by Stivlesund, a narrow strait that could be effectively closed off. Cairns in the vicinity were used as look-out posts.

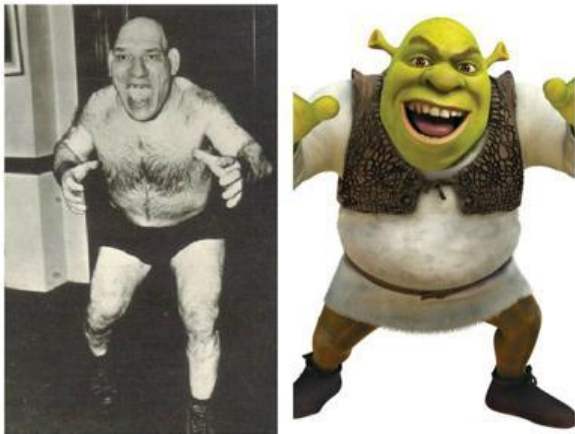
The Gokstad ship was built with oak wood cut somewhere in Vestfold around the year 890. Dendrochronology was used to determine the age of the wood. The boat had a woollen home-spun sail. The burial mound itself dates to approximately 897.

In addition to the remains of a man, the Gogstad ship contained kitchen tools, harnesses, a game board, fishing tools, six beds, a tent, three smaller boats, twelve horses, six dogs and a peacock. Definitely objects worthy of a prominent and powerful person.

Unfortunately, the burial mound was plundered some years after it had been made, according to some by the Danish king Harald Blåtann (*Bluetooth*), who probably wanted to ‘disturb’ the dead and maybe acquire control of a strategically important area. All valuable objects and weapons as well as most parts of the dead man’s skeleton had been removed.

The Gokstad ship had been a rapid boat, very navigable in shallow waters and the shipping lane. It was moved to the garden of Oslo University, but relocated in 1928 to its present home at the Viking Ship Museum. The Gokstad man’s relics were reburied on June 15, 1928, in the mound at Gokstad. Mr Gokstad’s uncle, father and grandfather attended the re-entombment.

Who was the mysterious man in the mound? To find out, the mound was re-opened in 2007 and the bones brought back to Oslo for examination. The investigation revealed that he had definitely been killed fighting, injured by a sword, an axe and a knife. The man must have been attacked by at least two people.



The bone structure also indicated a tall man with extremely large muscle attachments. He measured between 180 and 185 cm, and was around forty when he died. He probably suffered from a condition called acromegaly. Acromegaly is a hormonal disorder that develops when your pituitary gland produces too much growth hormone in adulthood. When this happens, your bones increase in size,

including those of your hands, feet and face. The condition usually affects middle-aged adults.



DNA analyses to prove the hypothesis that he was Olav Geirstadalv have failed. New historical evidence points in the direction of a Tore Haklang (*big chin*), who died around 872, the son of Hårek Kjötve, a vassal of the Danes who ruled over Viken and Vestfold.

The Gokstad ship may have taken part in the battle of Harfsfjord in 872.

Thank you for a very personal and informative account; very entertaining!

Rusty Akcora

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to Wettre Microbrewery

On a rather grey day in November, a group of ladies from International Forum, and one bold husband, made their way to the big red barn at Søndre Vette gård in Asker. This barn now houses Wettre Bryggeri and Kråka Pub. The farm is beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the Oslo Fjord. Muscovy ducks were running freely in the yard. Sigrid Riddervold of the Special Events Committee and her husband Hans, who live in Asker, were there to welcome us with ‘gløgg’ – a hot, sweet spicy drink – and some snacks.

There was a proper pub atmosphere in Kråka, which was originally the barn’s ‘møkkakjeller’ (the cow dung cellar), with whitewashed stone walls, a bar, rustic long tables and benches. After a while, we all sat down for lunch. We were each served a tray with four glasses containing different beers. On the tables there was *flatbrød* and *rømme*, (thin crispy flatbread and sour cream), and wooden platters heaped with various types of ‘spekemat’ – cured meats – and sausages. Absolutely delicious and top quality! The conversation became livelier as the beer tasting progressed!



Sigrid introduced Hans Ellef Wettre, the owner of Søndre Vette gård. He told us about the beers that we were tasting: 1. Lys Lager, a pale lager 2. ‘Pink Pride’, a beer containing raspberry juice, 3. ‘Juleøl’ (Christmas beer) and 4. Bøkkøl (bock beer). These ranged in alcohol content from 4.7%, for the lager, to over 12% for the *bøkkøl*. Needless to say, those who were driving were given alcohol-free beer! While we enjoyed our lunch, Hans Ellef told us about the farm and the brewery business. The Wettre family have owned the farm since 1720. There used to be cattle in the barn; but in 1953, the cattle were sold and

the barn emptied. In the years 1968 to 1994, there was a printing business that made wallpaper. (The wallpaper in Norges Bank came from here.) In the following years, there were various enterprises such as a café and shops for clothes and interior design. Then these also closed down and the barn was empty again.



In 2010 Hans Ellif decided to start a brewery business, Wettre Bryggeri. By 2012, the firm was established, and on May 17, 2015, the first beer was brewed. The first year, they produced 8000 litres of beer. After expanding the brewery in 2017, they now produce 60.000 litres of beer of 22 different sorts. The beer can be bought at the farm and in local Meny supermarkets. The strong beers, those with more than 4.7% alcohol, can be bought at Vinmonopolet. People can also order beer with their own personal labels.

A popular product at this time of year is their 'Julekalender', a Christmas calendar, which is a box with 24 bottles or cans of beer! On Fridays, from 16:00 to 24:00, Kråka Pub is open to the public. Here people can enjoy pub activities such as darts and shuffleboard.

In 2018, Wettre Bryggeri was awarded Asker and Bærum's Entrepreneur of the Year prize (*Gründerprisen*). This prize is awarded every year to a local innovative business which is able to make money. Hans Ellif told us that his own personal income from the business is not great at present but hopefully will improve.

After lunch, we went upstairs to the brewery to see the enormous steel tanks and bottling equipment. Hans Ellif explained the beer-brewing process and the ingredients, which comprise various types of corn, water and hops. The beer is filled in glass bottles or aluminium beer cans. Most of the residue from the process is sold as food for animals, and the rest to a bakery as an ingredient for bread!



Then we went down again to the pub to enjoy a cup of coffee and a slice of Sigrid's homemade apple cake. Many of the ladies took the opportunity to buy some beer to take home. We all agreed that this was a very interesting visit with a delicious lunch and tasty beers. Thank you, Sigrid, and the Special Events Committee for arranging this very special outing.

Rosemary Hauge

ART COMMITTEE

***MOONRISE* at the Munch Museum**

MARLENE DUMAS - RENÉ DANIËLS - EDVARD MUNCH

Those of us who made our way to this exhibition were treated to an unusually exciting, innovative and compelling art experience. To me, this is definitely the best of the double exhibitions that the Munch museum has curated.

Marlene Dumas is new to nearly all of us, as is René Daniëls. It was Daniëls who introduced Dumas to Munch. Dumas first visited the Munch Museum in 1981. Munch's dynamic use of brushstrokes and his 'unfinished' canvas inspired both these Dutch artists.

Edvard Munch painted his life with all the uncomfortable truths of jealousy, eroticism, anxiety and death. He said he did not paint what he had seen, but what he saw. Dumas says she does not paint what she sees, but what the painting

wants her to see. Her works are dramatically modern versions of Munch. Christiania high society was shocked by Munch's unfinished brush strokes and by his choice of many taboo subjects.

Marlene Dumas calls her work a study of the soul; a study of certain hereditary phenomena that are decisive for a human being's life and fate. She holds a mirror to the same taboo subjects as Munch depicted, but in our own contemporary society. She believes that childhood and being young are inextricably tied to intense vulnerability and awakenings. Munch's art is very much tied to his childhood experiences of death.

Dumas chose the title because 'moonrise is about the ability to be moved, realising that everything is changing over time. The moon rises and the night falls. The i's are mourning their dots.' She does not find Munch's work dark and morbid, 'they shine like the moon.'

Dumas claims that the beginning of an exhibition is very important. The first works here are self-portraits of herself, and Munch. The works chosen all have extremely piercing eyes and a definite choice of very bright colours juxtaposed to cool shades. The colour is carrying the tension in their eyes, in their lives. We are being prepared for what Munch saw, and what Dumas wants us to see in her paintings.

The exhibition opens with Munch's own story of creation, *Alpha and Omega*, and ends with Dumas' interpretation of the classic story of *Venus and Adonis*. There is much loneliness and angst and love and Dumas wonders where eroticism has gone to in the art of her generation. 'My generation cherishes loneliness prizing it even above sex. They are so sensitive; they are allergic to each other.'

Her favourite work of art by Munch is apparently his *Death of Marat*. The brushstrokes carry the wild anger and fear of both Munch and Tulla Larsen. Munch is laid out on his bed, brought down from the Cross, and she stands naked and alone between his palette on the table and her broken hopes of marriage. Munch has literally and symbolically stripped the victim and the perpetrator, and their silent scream is all that is left.



Much of the exhibition dwells on being young, feeling naked and alienated. The moonlight is the very white light which Dumas shines on these young people. We must be moved, see the change, and mourn the destroyed lives. Small girls ask us not to touch them and *Geoffrey and Georgia* is the result when we do. Munch's worker greeting his daughter, and two small children playing on a

beach, stand out in stark contrast. Munch has many tender works on children. Child abuse is a subject of our time.

Munch portrayed many naked young men, and his *Standing Naked African* does not appear to have sexual undertones. Dumas, on the other hand, arrests our attention with a young boy with an erection in *D-rection*. The painting hangs alone. He is alone, alienated, and Fate is choosing his direction. The work becomes clearer in the next room when you see *Sacrifice* where the same boy crouches behind several naked male backsides.

Likewise, Munch's model in the brothel is clearly scared and miserable, and the painting no doubt shocked his public to the core. Her loose hair is enough. Dumas' *Magdalene* is burnt out, a sad shell of herself, with only a ray of light in her abdomen, still just burning until her flame will be lost. *Model with Boots*, on the contrary, is a stunning colourful rendition of a woman in the brothel seemingly pleasuring herself into ecstasy. Her tilted head reminds us of Munch's *Madonna*, but Dumas has chosen not to use the most iconic paintings of Munch. Munch's version is very beautiful, and so is this painting of Dumas. The women shine with eroticism.

The painting that caused most consternation in the group is called *Snow White and the Next Generation*. I will dare to suggest my own interpretation. It immediately brought to mind Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Manet's *Olympia*.



You only have to look at the same red bed, white bed clothes, black hanging and scary black cat to compare with Dumas' *Snow White*. A child seems to be praying at the back of Titian's rendition. In Dumas, the children are in her world. Our modern Olympia is totally exhausted, with no help, and she has no desire to be alluring.

Our thanks to Sigrun Rafter for her wonderful guided tour and to Victoria Berge and Bente Brandt for arranging the event.

Jane Steenbuch



The Board Members and Deputies 2018 – 2019

Sally Bergan, President
Anita Pratap
Anne-Grethe Skagestad
Soo Lan Høegh Henrichsen
Heidi von Weltzien Høivik

Treasurer: Anne-Lise Fastland

Auditor: Verena Krienke

*

Office Coordinator: Dorota Steensland

The Office Team:

Lydia Afolabi
Lillan Akcora
Kirsten Wensell
Anne-Sofie Trosdahl-Oraug

*

The Editorial Team:

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen
Patricia Blackwell
Elspeth Walseth

wish you all the best for the coming festive season!

Issued by the Board of the International Forum

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

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit all material.
Printed by Utenriksdepartementets Hustrykkeri.
December 13, 2018