



# **INTERNATIONAL FORUM**

**OSLO, NORWAY**

**December**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**12/2016**

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**Number 416**



# INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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## Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
January 09	Monthly Meeting Tone Bruun on Zika	19:00	4
January 17	Visit to the Ibsen Museum	11:15	7
January 24	Gallery Walk – downtown Oslo	11:45	8

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## From the President



Dear members,

The Christmas season started on November 29 with a warming and interesting lunch at the Asker museum. Not only were we guided around the museum before we sat down to enjoy a very tasty soup made using Hulda Garborg's private recipe, but we were also entertained by Tuva Syvertsen, a well-known folk singer, who sang, played the *Hardangerfele*, and also gave a charming presentation. A heartfelt 'thank you' to Tuva for coming and to her grandmother Birgit for bringing her, and to the Special Events Committee for this perfectly organised and delightful outing!

The Forum ended year 2016 with the traditional Christmas meeting at Vinderen Seniorsenter on December 5, with excellent food and a friendly atmosphere. Some of us were even lucky enough to win prizes in the raffle. To those of you who did not win: *better luck next year!*

I also would like to congratulate all of us for a singing the Christmas songs so splendidly. We all had to join in, as most of the choir members were down with the 'flu. That did not dampen our spirits: we all did our best with the voices we have been given, and we managed! Thank you so much to the Monthly Meeting Committee for the lovely food and professional organisation.

After my first six months as president, I would like to thank you all for your never-ending support, your hard work, and your willingness to lend a helping hand. The Forum is fortunate to have such loyal members and I am fortunate to have your support.

Christmas is now just around the corner, and I presume that you are all busily running around, and that you try to do too much to do in order to make everything perfect for the festive season with family or friends. A well-known person once said: 'Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.' So, don't miss it; enjoy the moments, and enjoy your family and friends!

I am looking forward to seeing you all again in 2017 and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and lots of happiness for the year to come!

Christmas greetings,

*Siri S. Frigaard*  
President

## *FROM THE OFFICE*

### **Help required with the IF website**

Are there any members who would like to help keep the website up-to-date?

You should be familiar with using a PC / Mac and have a good working knowledge of English.

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

## *COMING EVENTS*

### **Tone Bruun on Epidemics**



Dr. Tone Bruun is a Senior medical officer specializing in infection control, epidemics and social medicine at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. She monitors infectious diseases that practitioners are under obligation to report to the Norwegian health authorities and is currently working on her doctoral thesis on the rotavirus vaccine.

In light of the Ebola and Zika epidemics in recent years, Dr. Bruun will talk about epidemics and how they spread and what the greatest challenges are for the people working to control infectious diseases.

**DATE/TIME:** Monday, **January 9** at **18:45** for (19:00)

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

# INTERNATIONAL FORUM IN COOPERATION WITH THE MUNCH MUSEUM

## Invitation to an Extraordinary Encounter and Exhibition at the Munch Museum



*Edvard Munch, Self Portrait 1882*



*Mieke Bal – by Roberto Conciarto*

What do Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, French writer Gustav Flaubert, the Dutch cultural theorist Mieke Bal, and the 2008 financial crisis have in common?

The International Forum in cooperation with the Munch Museum invites you to discover the surprising connections in an encounter with the internationally-renowned Mieke Bal, who curates the first-of-its kind exhibition in Oslo's Munch Museum titled *Emma and Edvard: Love in the time of Loneliness*. The exhibition includes famous and rarely exhibited works of Edvard Munch and video installations of Mieke Bal's and Michelle Williams Gamaker's project *Madam B*, a critical portrayal of contemporary consumerism and social pressures. Mieke Bal will talk on topics ranging from capitalism to loneliness, from politics to madness, from art to religion, from adultery to the dullness of every day existence.

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, **February 1**, 2017, from 14:00-16:00

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### The Ibsen Museum



The Special Events Committee has the pleasure of inviting you to a visit to the Ibsen Museum. Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright and poet, was born in 1828 in Skien and died in 1906 at Arbins gate 1, Oslo. He is recognized as the founder of the modern drama and is, alongside William Shakespeare, the most performed playwright in the world.

The Ibsen Museum's main attraction is Henrik Ibsen's home in Oslo. Here he lived the last eleven years of his life and wrote his two last plays. His home has been restored to the way it was when Ibsen and his wife Suzannah lived there from 1895 to 1906. The authentic interiors include Ibsen's furniture and personal belongings. The rooms comprising his study, library, bedroom and dining room show Ibsen's private sphere and illustrate his life in later years.

The guided tour also includes an exclusive lecture about Ibsen's wife Suzannah and the role women played in Ibsen's work.

**DATE/TIME:** Tuesday, **January 17**, 2017, at 11:15 (for 11:30)

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

## ART COMMITTEE

### Gallery Walk in central Oslo

The Art Committee is very happy to invite you to a gallery walk in the centre of Oslo on Tuesday, January 17! We will meet up outside Kunstnerforbundet in Kjeld Stubs gate 3 (close to the Oslo Town Hall) at 11:45. We will start at the Town Hall and have a look at their exhibition first!

Then we may drop into Gallery Willas, next door, before we continue to Gallery Blomqvist, where we will have a guided tour of Marian Heyerdahl's exhibition.

Finally, you may wish to continue on your own to other small galleries in the vicinity!

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

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

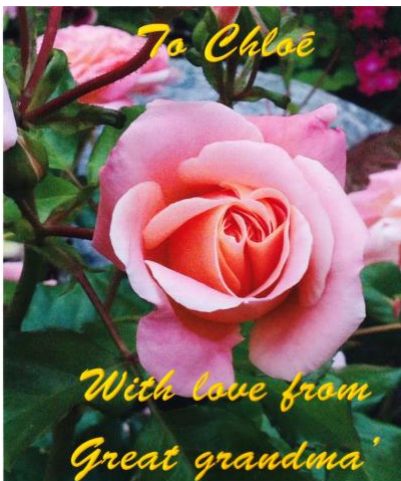
## ACTIVITIES

### **NEW!** Photo-workshop

#### Starting in January 2017

Learn how to use your photographs creatively! Do not let your beautiful shots and precious memories disappear among thousands of other pictures on your computer. Organise your photos so you can find them easily and use them to make beautiful, personalized cards or to make picture collages for yourself and for friends!

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*



### Cooking group

We are a small group of ladies who love good food and are interested in sharing recipes and learning from each other. We meet in each other's homes about once a month. The cost of the ingredients is shared between us.

The January cooking session is going to be a bit special. Our Russian member will present us with a traditional Russian Christmas dish.

**Contact:** Liss Laan

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

## **International Forum's Book Club**

The Book Club is full for the time being, but we are working on establishing a new parallel group. If you are interested in starting a new reading group or participating in one, please contact Anita Solheim.

*For more information, please contact the IF Office.*

## **R E P O R T S**

### **NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING**

*'Traditional customs, not religion, are responsible for violence against women,'  
says Ambassador of Pakistan to Norway.*

'You are being diplomatic!' Ambassadors are usually vexed by this type of comment, because it implies that the person is evading or sugar-coating the truth. By definition, a diplomat is a country's representative abroad, adept in managing international relations and dealing with sensitive matters. A skilled Ambassador is one who evaluates the facts and tactfully tells the truth. The Ambassador of Pakistan to Norway, H.E. Riffat Masood is an excellent example of a skilled diplomat whose credibility emanates from her intelligence, objective analysis, honesty and intellectual integrity.

Guests and Forum members listened in rapt attention as Ambassador Masood spoke on the challenges and opportunities in South Asia and their impact on women. Delving into the contradictions and complexities of South Asia, Ambassador Masood pointed out that the region is home to no less than three nuclear powers in addition to the largest concentration of poor people in the world. Pakistan has 'to coexist with adversaries such as India and Afghanistan and cooperate with competitors such as Iran, the Gulf States and the regional grouping of South Asian nations.'





*H.E. Ambassador Riffat Masood and Anita Pratap*

‘The problems that face women globally are more manifest in traditional and poor communities, she noted. “Women continue to be treated as property and not individuals. Many are illiterate and unemployed, lacking opportunities and empowerment.’ Referring to acid attacks and honour killings, she observed that ‘women are subjected to violence and discrimination based on traditional customs that have no basis in religion.’ Atrocities committed against women take place throughout the South Asian region regardless of religion. Pakistan’s efforts to uplift women include setting up a statutory Commission on the Status of Women, microfinance programs, distance learning aiming to educate illiterate women, as well as introducing women’s rights laws in provincial and national legislatures.

‘The problems of low growth, high inflation, energy shortages, terrorism and deficiencies in education, health, and gender equality are compounded by global factors such as the financial crisis and climate change,’ Ambassador Masood said, adding that ‘Pakistan has spent more than \$85 billion combatting terrorism in our streets and alleys.’ Beset by economic, social and political difficulties, Pakistan has yet to ‘realise the dream’ of a nation state created especially for South Asian Muslims who wanted to live as one nation in peace, dignity and justice. One hurdle in Pakistan’s trajectory to its rightful destiny is ‘political instability, as the nation has swung between martial law and democracy’. 2013 was a milestone year in that it saw the first ever democratic transfer of power.

Following her lecture, Forum members asked a host of questions, which Ambassador Masood answered with her characteristic candour – the media, the judiciary, civil society, NGOs, human rights activists, lawyers and women’s organisations are increasingly vocal in Pakistan, but they still lack coordination and mobilisation, she said.

Her optimism regarding the future is tempered with realism. Still, despite the ‘formidable challenges’ she hopes for the best. ‘The prospect of change mainly rests with Pakistan’s youth, who by 2025 will form 65% of a population of nearly 227 million.’ She is convinced that education is the key to unlock empowerment and prosperity. ‘Education is the only way out of poverty, the only way to escape economic, psychological and social deprivation,’ she said.

Outlawing discrimination, enabling inclusive growth, ensuring good governance, providing essential services in health, education, energy, water and sanitation to every citizen, promoting entrepreneurial culture, educating and creating jobs for the youth are all vital to the stability and prosperity of the region. She concluded, ‘Our ultimate aspiration is to see Pakistan among the ten largest economies of the world by 2047 when we shall celebrate one hundred years of independence’.

Anita Pratap

## ART COMMITTEE

### Oslo Architecture Triennial:

*After Belonging. In Residence. On Residence and the Way we stay in Transit*  
Thursday, November 10

Twenty-two members of the International Forum gathered to experience this exhibition. There was much food for thought as we listened to our excellent guide. Many of us stayed for lunch to continue the discussion.

This exhibition is housed at the Architecture Museum, which dates back to 1830 and was originally built as part of Christiania's financial district. The themes of this project focused on our ever-changing world in which we have all become global citizens. People travel more, but their reasons for doing so are extremely varied and complex: They range from social and economic causes to wars and religious persecution.

The question posed by the participating architects was how this transience affects our need to feel that we 'belong', and specifically how this mobility influences, or should influence, the design of our residential and public spaces.

Since our sense of identity is strongly linked to where we live, the goal for the future is to create 'homes' that not only meet our basic needs, but also our spiritual and communal ones. The architects involved in this project believe that traditional styles of design must be replaced by those that are not only utilitarian, but which also reflect artistic and philosophical aspects.



The exhibition focuses on ten locations around the world: *Oslo Airport, Torshov* (Oslo), *Kirkenes* (Northern Norway), *Dubai* (the United Arab Emirates), *Prato* (Italy), *Copenhagen* (Denmark), *Tensta* (Sweden), *New York* (USA), *Risaralda* (Colombia) and *Lagos* (Nigeria).

The first project relating to Oslo is *Oslo Airport*. Since more than 24.6 million people pass through this airport every year, the challenge is to make it as welcoming and pleasant as possible. While strict regulations and routines need to be in place, there are procedures and practices that can contribute to it being a more ‘humane’ experience; i.e., screens showing international news, centres where passengers can access liquids that have been discarded due to security limits (i.e., alcohol, hand creams, etc.), information blogs and so on.

The second exhibition relating to Oslo is found in the Borough of *Torshov*, Oslo. This project focuses on the Torshov Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers, which has the capacity to house as many as 200 people of all ages – people coming from all over the world. While its primary mandate is to provide basic and sparse but safe accommodation, the centre also aims to help people feel more connected and integrated to the local community.

The question is what constitutes a personal shelter? And how do you manage to combine a lack of privacy and personal items with a feeling of belonging? One initiative now in place is the availability of private rooms and activities such as working at the on-site apple orchard, and participating in a Community Festival.

We then moved on to *Kirkenes*, which borders Russia in North-eastern Norway (the outer part of Schengen). Although people from both sides could travel freely and meet in a local bar during the Cold War, this practice eventually came to a stop owing to a fear of spying and lack of security. Today, the town has become a strategic point for the coexistence of scientific, industrial, oil, and tourism activities. Due to the heterogeneous, intermingling and mobile population, architectural design here has created an atmosphere in which dialogue is facilitated, thus contributing to reduced tensions between the two nations.

The following are some of the other highlights – all very interesting:

‘*Dubai* – Healthcare Tourism’: i.e., designing luxurious patient facilities to attract an overseas, high-end medical clientele.

‘District of *Prato* – Made in Italy’ – labelled products which are sold commercially throughout the world.

‘*Copenhagen* – Home Sharing’: Renting someone else’s home for a brief period of time in order to use that space as a background for your own, personal fantasy life.

**‘Tensta’** (Situating outside Stockholm): This homogeneous landscape of housing blocks is the result of the government’s ‘Million Dwelling Program’ for the years 1965-1974, aimed to alleviate the housing shortage of that period. Since 90% of the inhabitants are immigrants – whereof most have not been integrated – the goal is to explore how architecture and urbanism have failed to meet the needs of this community.

**‘New York City – Self-Storage Facilities’**: This part of the exhibition examines the transformation of personal storage units – originally meant for affluent suburban households – into ‘stacked corridors’ that house the belongings of a growing body of young professionals. Due to their frequent changes of residence, combined with precarious housing conditions, these lockers allow tenants’ belongings to remain ‘fixed’ for indefinite periods of time.

**‘Lagos (Nigeria)’** examines how religious communities are housed in private homes.

Trudy Brand-Jacobsen

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