



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

February
NEWSLETTER
02/2017

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Number 418



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0120 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 Staff	Vicky Alme, Lillan Akcora, Sigrid Langebrekke, Kirsten Wensell
Neighbourhood Contact	Office Staff
Auditor	Karin Skoglund
Website	www.iforum.no

Forum Diary

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PAGE
February 16	Visit to the Oslo Stock Exchange	11:00	Jan NL
March 06	Norwegian National Tourist Routes	19:00	4
March 16	Art - The Great Graphic Boom	12:00	7
March 21	Special Events - Norway Designs	09:30	5

From the President



Dear members,

We are experiencing a strange winter this year: rain and snow, mild and cold – but worst of all: the ice on the streets that makes it dangerous for all of us to both walk and drive. I hope that most of you have managed without falling or crashing. I know that many of you have been down with the flu, but I do hope that you all feel better now.

The month of February started with a very special event. I hope that those of you who attended the presentation of the exhibition at the Munch Museum and the following visit of *Emma & Edvard: Love in a Time of Loneliness* on February 1 enjoyed it! The Director of the Museum Stein Olav Henrichsen and the Chief Curator Jon-Ove Steihaug introduced us to the Museum and the relevance of Munch's work in a modern perspective. They also introduced Ms Mieke Bal – who has curated the current exhibition and who told us about her special journey with Emma and Edvard. This was a unique introduction to the exhibition. A great 'Thank you!' to all of them!

It was also a great pleasure to see so many representatives from the Diplomatic Corps and members and friends of International Forum attending the event. About 126 people had signed up. Thanks to the efficient volunteers who helped out during the event, we managed to organise everything smoothly within the time frame we had been given.

I am truly grateful to you all, but most of all I have to thank Anita Pratap, who came up with the idea for the event, and who put in considerable time and effort to make it a great success!

February is the time of the year when the members of the Nomination Committee start their challenging work to find candidates for the different positions in the Forum. If you would like to get involved either as member of the Board, the Executive Committee, the Office, or one of the different Committees, please let us know. I am sure that many of you would like to participate in running the International Forum, so please come forward, you are all very welcome!

Siri S. Frigaard
President

COMING EVENTS

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

The Norwegian National Tourist Routes

The Monthly Meeting Committee is very pleased to announce that at our March meeting Mr. Per Ritzler from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration will talk about the National Tourist Routes of Norway.



There are many truly beautiful roads in Norway. Eighteen of them have been chosen for their especially picturesque scenery and tourist-friendly infrastructure, including attractive rest stops and impressive belvederes. The routes cover more than 1,850 kilometres along the West Coast, in Northern Norway, and in the mountainous areas of Southern Norway. The Norwegian authorities have coordinated the establishment of accommodation, cultural and outdoors activities, places to eat, exhibitions and the sale of local arts and crafts, and a series of natural experiences along the tourist roads.

The project started in 1994 and was initially limited to only a few roads; but in 1998, the Norwegian Parliament decided to expand the project. In 2004, eighteen routes had become part of a larger scheme. The goal was to ensure the necessary upgrades for an official opening of the National Tourist Routes in 2015. This included devising new rest areas, car parks and viewpoints, in addition to clearing undergrowth and vegetation.

The Public Roads Administration's view is that the use of good design will enhance the visitors' experience. Most of the architecture along the various routes has been designed by young Norwegian architects. However, French-American Louise Bourgeois and Swiss Peter Zumthor have designed lay-bys in Varanger and Ryfylke. Artworks have been installed at selected spots, including a bear's winter lair by the American conceptual artist Mark Dion at Aurlandsfjellet.

All routes were signposted and officially approved by 2012. That year, the architecture magazine *Topos* awarded the project a special prize for its use of architecture, and noted in particular that it was a public-sector focus on aesthetic design.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **March 6** at **18:45** for (19:00) *For more information, please contact IF Office.*

SPECIAL EVENTS

Norway Designs, not just a shop!

Norway Designs is not just a shop; it is an institution and part of Norwegian culture. This year, Norway Designs celebrates its 60th anniversary.

In 1957, Mr. Per Tannum founded Norway Designs with focus on promoting Norwegian design, arts and crafts. Today, the shop comprises an area of 900 m² and offers a wide selection of articles: glass, ceramics, jewellery, watches, clothing, toys, bathroom and kitchenware, paper and office articles. Norway Designs is extremely strict when choosing products for sale – only the best in design and quality is good enough. The items on sale are mostly from Norwegian and Nordic artists and companies, but products from further afield can also be found. The keywords are quality and design, and Norway Designs endeavours to be abreast of and even ahead of, what is happening in the design movement.



The Special Events Committee invites you to take part in an exclusive visit to Norway Designs. The Shop Manager, Mr. Trond Kinn, will tell us about the history of the company and its founder, Per Tannum. Mr Kinn will also present one or two Norwegian designers and tell us about their work. After the talk, he will show us around Norway Designs and all its departments.

You will notice that the visit starts at 9:30, a bit earlier than usual, but this is so that we can have the shop to ourselves for a while before customers start arriving.

Afterwards, we will walk down to Aker Brygge for lunch, so please join us if you wish!

DATE/TIME: Tuesday March 21, **09:15** (for 09:30)

For more information, please contact IF Office.

THE ART COMMITTEE

The Great Graphic Boom **American Graphic art 1960 – 1990**

The Art Committee has the pleasure of inviting you to a guided tour of the exhibition *The Great Graphic Boom* at the National Gallery with works from the days when the United States began to dominate Western art, and the City of New York emerged as the pre-eminent art metropolis.

Around 1960, the visual arts in America experienced an explosion of intense and diverse activity. Abstract expressionism, pop art and minimalism became central idioms in the artistic visualisation of Western values and American identity.



The exhibition focuses on a lesser-known aspect of this crucial chapter in post-war art: the intense interest in graphic media among many leading artists of the period. For some, graphic art became the defining form of expression, while for others it was important during a phase in their development.

The exhibition presents works by 25 artists, from Jackson Pollock, Helen Frankenthaler and Agnes Martin to Andy Warhol and Vija Celmins, and is a collaboration with

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. It runs from March 3 – May 28.

More information at <http://nasjonalmuseet.no>

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **March 16** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

For more information, please contact IF Office.

Cooking Group

Wednesday, February 22 at 13:00 NB! NB!

After a very informative and interesting Russian morning in Irina's home, where we were introduced to Russian Christmas traditions and dishes, we now move onto Peru, where Betty was born and grew up. Liss R. Laan. *For more information, please contact IF Office.*



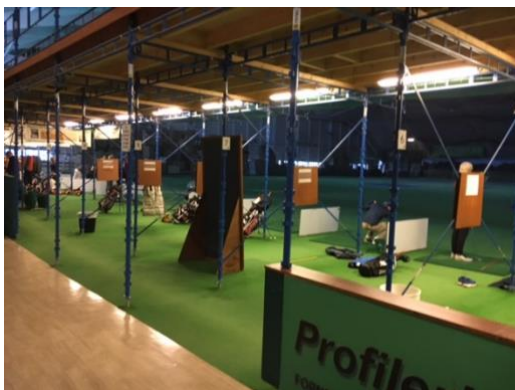
Liss Laan

Monthly Wednesday Bridge

The March Bridge will take place on February 15 at 10:30 at the home of Åsny Wedege Walters. Welcome! Inger Støtvig
For more information, please contact IF Office.

Indoor Golf

The Indoor Golf Group has resumed activities for the winter season 2017. We usually start with a coffee. We have a special price for balls, and private lessons can be arranged. All levels of golfers are welcome – also beginners– so, please do come along!



Hilary Sem has been in charge for the Indoor Golf Group for 18 years! Now I have agreed to continue her good work. We play in the old aircraft hangar at Fornebu. There are many tees, a brand new putting green and several golf simulators. Many of the group's members have now retired and we are looking for new enthusiastic golfers!

We welcome any member of International Forum who would like to join our group for the winter season! Come and try us once anyway; you can play as often or as seldom as you wish. Easy and free three-hour parking for IF members! Hillary will join us whenever she is in Norway.

TIME: Thursdays at 10:30

CONTACT: **Anne-Sofie Trosdahl-Oraug:**

For more information, please contact IF Office

R E P O R T S

MONTHLY MEETING Tone Bruun on Epidemics

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



Dr. Bruun explained what epidemics are and how they spread and what the greatest challenges are for the people working to control infectious diseases. An epidemic occurs when an infectious disease affects a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time. Epidemiology is the analysis of how outbreaks can be prevented. Every week, the EU publishes the Communicable Disease Threats Report to inform all member states and EEA countries about the possible current threats to the public's health.

Tone Bruun and Ruth Klungsøyr

The Public Health Institute's main mission is to find clusters of infectious diseases at an early stage so as to be able to prevent or curb the scope of the outbreaks. The measures depend on the disease detected. For instance, one case of measles on average infects as many as 18 people, whereas one case of Ebola normally infects only three people. The public reaction is explained by the deadliness of the latter and the familiarity of the former.

Dr. Bruun specifically warned against the relatively new and potentially dangerous trend of parents in developed countries *not* wanting to vaccinate their children, a decision sometimes motivated by the moderate risk of side effects, claiming that such an attitude poses a risk to the community at large. The Public Health officials always have to weigh contagiousness up against deadliness when establishing its priorities and responses. Polio is on the rise globally, as are some other all but eliminated children's diseases. Before 1800, 70% of children died and the population growth was slow because of epidemics. Vaccination is really the most effective preventive measure against deadly or incapacitating diseases.

Ms Bruun then proceeded to give a historical overview of epidemics, starting with the infamous Black Death (1346-53), and ending with the recent outbreaks of Ebola (2013-16) and the Zika virus (2015-2016).



Plague doctor

The Black Death killed around 50 million people in Europe, out of a total population of approximately 80 million. The disease came to Norway in 1349. The epidemic probably originated in China around 1346, from where it quickly spread via merchant ships to the most remote parts of the known world. The bubonic plague returned intermittently for four centuries, it was a constant threat, and marked the public imagination and folk tales for centuries to come. The 'doctor' treating the sick wore a beak-like protective mask filled with herbs believed to fight off the miasmatic vapours produced by the disease.

Smallpox was another dreaded deadly infection and more than 60% of people infected with this disease died. It was highly contagious and it was not until 1796 that a smallpox vaccine was developed from cowpox. Dr Edward Jenner discovered that milk maids seldom developed the illness. Between 1966 and 1980, the global Smallpox Eradication Programme was carried out, and today the virus only exists in a couple of laboratories.

Polio was another dreaded disease. Most people recovered from polio without any symptoms, but others became severely handicapped. A vaccine was designed in 1955 – however, there are still outbreaks of Polio in countries such as Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan. India has been free of polio for the past three years.

The Spanish flu was a pandemic in the period 1918 – 1920 and caused the death of approximately 50 to 100 million people worldwide. More people died from the Spanish flu than from the war! Around 500 million people were infected by this deadly strain of influenza. Indeed, the flu is still by far the most deadly infectious disease, killing scores of people every year, in particular among the elderly and people who are already weakened by other illnesses.

In the 20th century, improved hygienic conditions and better nutrition led to a significant decline in the number of people who died from infectious diseases. Pasteurization in particular contributed to a sharp decrease in deaths as the century proceeded. Penicillin, discovered in 1928 and subsequent antibiotics also had a huge impact in battling transferable diseases.

In the 1980s, HIV/AIDS infected around 80 million people in sub-Saharan Africa and relatively quickly spread to other parts of the world. So far almost 35 million have died globally and 45 million live with AIDS or test positive for HIV. Today, 80% of cases are found in central Africa.

The Ebola virus first occurred in 1976 in West Africa. To disseminate, the Ebola virus needs blood. The first major outbreak in recent times occurred in 2013, in Guinea, and quickly transmitted to people in other western sub-Saharan countries. The first cases were probably caused by fruit bats (many epidemics are caused by close contact with animals) – who, because of extensive logging came in closer contact with people in the villages – and body fluids. It is not air borne. Ancient burial traditions did nothing to facilitate the work of health personnel. Many health workers died during the epidemic. The response of relief organisations was slow and too late. In Nigeria, draconian preventive measures, developed during a previous polio outbreak, limited the Ebola outbreak, and in 20 days the epidemic was under control. A vaccine, developed in less than one year, has proven to be almost 100% effective.

The latest scourge, the Zika virus, spreads via the *Aedes* mosquito. Seventy countries now have reported the presence of the virus. The infection, known as Zika fever or Zika virus disease, often results in no or only mild symptoms, similar to a very mild form of dengue fever. While there is no specific treatment, rest seems to help with the symptoms. The only effective prevention is protection against mosquito bites.

The virus caught the world's attention in 2015, after a major outbreak in Brazil that had a huge impact on new-born babies. Zika can spread from mother to foetus, and in some cases it causes microcephaly (a medical condition in which

the brain does not develop properly resulting in a smaller than normal head) and other neurological disorders. However, it has been discovered that the virus also spreads through sexual activity. Scientists are working to develop a vaccine, but that work may take several years.

Dr. Tone Bruun gave us a truly inspiring lecture and answered a lot of questions from the audience afterwards. It is obvious that public health is a topic many people find interesting!

Ruth Klungsøyr

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Ibsen Museum

On January 10, twenty-one ladies from International Forum attended a guided tour of the Ibsen Museum, and fourteen of us went to the new Palmen restaurant at the Grand Hotel for lunch afterwards.

The visit to the Ibsen Museum in Arbiens gate in Oslo was indeed very interesting. We saw the beautiful and spacious apartment where Henrik Ibsen and his wife Suzannah resided during the last fifteen years of the writer's life. Our guide, well informed about both Ibsen's writing and personal life, gave us a vivid picture of what everyday life in the household might have been like.



The famous writer had very strict routines, she told us: a brisk walk in the morning, then breakfast before sitting down to work on his plays. Then at an exact hour, he put on his top hat and walked down to Grand Café, returning home to eat, and then more writing.

It was fascinating to see his study and imagine the famous author at work. It was also intriguing to get to know more about his wife, Suzannah, her life and the part she played in their relationship. The guide talked about these topics, and, at the end of the tour, concluded with Suzannah and the role which women in general played in all of Ibsen's work.

Anita Solheim

A R O U N D O S L O
The 20th Hanami Day 2017

花見の日：日本の日

Japanese Day at the Museum of Cultural History
Sunday, March 5, 13:00 – 15:00

Bring your children and friends. Enjoy the day together with us! Our event is open to everyone! **Please join us with your smile** 😊

Japanese music, sing-along, and poetry reading. Japanese martial art, Ikebana, Kimono-ladies, I-go (Chess), and children's activities. Japanese tea and rice crackers (pot-luck).

If you have a Japanese dress in silk or cotton, *Kimono or Yukata*, or a costume, please feel free to wear it!

We rely on volunteers, so if you would like to help, please contact organiser Hiroko Kimura: hiroko.grf@gmail.com or mob.: 958 73 034



Photos by H. Kimura: SAKURA in full bloom

DATE/TIME: Sunday, **March 5** at **13:00 - 15:00**

PLACE: Norwegian Museum of Cultural History (Historisk museum)
Frederiksgt. 2 (Tullinløkka)

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: Siri Frigaard

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit all material.
Printed by Utenriksdepartementets Hustrykkeri.
February 15, 2017

