



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

OSLO, NORWAY

February NEWSLETTER 02/2021

2	Forum Diary
3	President's Page
4	From the Office
4	From the Board
7	From the Nomination Committee
9	Obituary
10	Coming Events
11	Reports
15	Impressions of Norway
19	Around Oslo

Number 462



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

Telephone: 973 25 290 Website: www.iform.no

Visiting address

Kronprinsens gate 3, Victoria Passasjen

Board 2020 – 2021

Anita Pratap (President), Sissel Lindeman, Yan Donko, Gulhan Çorman, Heidi von Weltzien Høivik, Wenche Mohr, Elizabeth Rasmussen, Elizabeth Groth Kolby (Deputy) Patricia Leon de la Barra (Deputy), Signe Howell (Deputy), Patricia Blackwell (Advisor)

Office Coordinator

Dorota Steensland

Office Team

Patricia Blackwell, Karin Skoglund

Office hours

Please email queries

Email

int.forum@online.no

Editor

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

Secretary

Elspeth Walseth

Treasurer

Anne-Lise Fasteland

Auditor

Verena Krienke

Bank account number

Art Committee

Jane Steenbuch

Monthly Meetings

Laila Hægh

Berit Lindstrøm

Special Events

Mona B. Reinboth

Activities

Anita Solheim

Forum Diary

Date	Event	Time	Page
March 1	Monthly Meeting: Dr Teresa Berents	18:45	9

LAST MINUTE UNAVOIDABLE CANCELLATION

To avoid unnecessary delays at events due to waiting for members who do not turn up, please telephone the contact person directly. No-shows will be charged.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the February Newsletter is Thursday, **February 25**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen and to int.forum@online.no.

From the President



Dear Members,

This is the season when we gain about five more minutes of sunshine – every day! The sun rays get brighter, the days get longer. In Norway, we are lucky to live in nature, surrounded by fjords, forests and snow-capped mountains, topped by a vast sky that stages nature's ever-changing moods, colours and patterns.

Just as even the darkest winter ends, human nature ordinarily overcomes gloom and despair. Literature, theatre and art illustrate a fundamental human truth: 'Terrible things happen, yet life goes on.' It can. It must. It will.

The vaccines are coming, but so are the virus variants. In these circumstances, we must go outdoors or online until indoor physical meetings are permitted again. As in January and February, the March Monthly Meeting lecture will be conducted on Zoom. Details are provided inside if you need assistance with Zoom. Please don't hesitate to take contact.

Making life go on requires effort. Like the long sun rays, our members have shone their light on the Forum with their positivity and persistence. They contribute their time and energy, knowledge and experience, talent and skills, year after year. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Board has unanimously decided to establish the 'Member of the Year' Award to honour one member every year for outstanding contribution to the Forum. Please nominate a candidate you believe deserves this award. You can email your nomination; details are given below.

We are privileged to have members who bring life and light, brightening the Forum like the sky outside.

Enjoy the light of the ever longer days ahead,

Stay Bright, Stay Healthy,

Anita Pratap

President

FROM THE OFFICE

Monthly Meeting Payment Refund

Any payment received from members for cancelled monthly meetings is kept for future meetings. If you want it refunded, please email Treasurer Anne-Lise Fasteland, [mentioning which meeting you](#) have paid for. Remember to include your bank account number.

Zoom Assistance

Rather than cancel because of the corona restrictions, the Forum has successfully conducted two Monthly Meetings on Zoom. The March 1 Monthly Meeting will also be held online. If you need assistance on how to use Zoom, please contact any one of us, we are more than happy to ‘tutor’ you:

Anita Pratap:

Elizabeth Rassmusen:

Gunnel Anita Solheim

FROM THE BOARD

Member of the Year Award

Until now, International Forum has had only one award: that of Honorary Member. The criteria for receiving this award are extremely high and rightly so. Since the Forum was started in 1979, only six members, including the founders, have received this rare privilege.

During the years, very many of our members have contributed and worked with dedication to achieve the aims of our organisation. In recognition of their service, the Board has established a “Member of the Year” Award. Karin Skoglund received the first award in 2020. In future, the award will be presented every year at the AGM in June. More details about the award and the nomination form are given below. We invite our members to nominate a person whom you believe deserves this award for 2021.



Guidelines for Nominating International Forum's Member of the Year Award

Introduction:

The purpose of the International Forum's Member of the Year Award is to honour a member who, over a number of years, has given outstanding service to the running of the organisation, in accordance with its aims.

§ 1 The **Member of the Year Award** may be given to a full member in appreciation of commendable service to International Forum.

This may be for

- a) having made significant contribution to the running and/or advancement of International Forum
- b) long, exceptional and dedicated service that has benefited the organisation.

§ 2 **Who is eligible for nomination**

- a) Members who have held one or several positions in International Forum,
- b) Current Board and Deputy Board Members are **not** eligible.

§ 3 **Nomination procedure**

Any member may propose a nominee. The Board will evaluate the nominations. A majority decision will prevail. The Board's decision is final.

- a) All proposals should be submitted to the Board using the Nomination Form or by emailing the corresponding information as requested in the form.
- b) The reasons for proposing the nominee should be fully described.
- c) The completed form should be sent to **The Board, c/o The President**, not later than April 15.

§ 4 **The Award**

The recipient will be presented with a gold plated IF brooch at the AGM in June. An article about the recipient will be published in the Newsletter.



Nomination Form
for International Forum's Member of the Year Award

a) I propose: _____ as Member of the Year* ----
*Please fill in the current year

Please list the nominee's activities related to IF, including positions held:

Please state as fully as possible your reasons for proposing this nominee:

Proposing member:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Memb. no.: _____ Mob.: _____

Email: _____

IF member since: _____

**Please email your nomination to The Board, C/O The President,
int.forum@online.no**



FROM THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The Nomination Committee is now starting its work

We are looking for members who would like to take an active part in the running of the International Forum over a period of time. Please feel free to suggest yourself or submit the name of another member whom you think would be able to contribute in some way.

It doesn't necessarily take a lot of time to be a member of a committee, and it can be very rewarding. It is also a good way to learn more about the International Forum and to become better acquainted with other members.

The Nomination Committee prepares a list of nominees, which is submitted to the Board. At least six weeks before the AGM (Statutes §3.2), the list of all nominees will be published in the Newsletter. Members may then send the Board further proposals, which can be put on the final list for election at the AGM. There is no vote by proxy at the AGM. The candidate receiving the most votes will be elected.

Included in this month's Newsletter is a form for your proposals, which we hope that you will fill out. Please return it **as soon as possible (by email or post) and no later than March 1** to the Leader of the Nomination Committee: Ellen Vollebæk.

Do remember that your suggestions will form the basis of the Committee's proposals when members are nominated for election at the Annual General Meeting in 2021.

We cannot emphasise how much we look forward to receiving the names of as many nominees as possible.

Thank you!

The Nomination Committee:

Ellen Vollebæk (Leader) and Vicky Alme



Proposal(s) for Nomination

Proposals:

I (name) Tel:

Propose myself and/or:

..... Tel.:

for the position of *:

and

propose: Tel.:

for the position of *:

*President, Board Member, Committee leader, Committee member

Nomination form to be sent to:

Ellen Vollebæk

IN MEMORIAM

Elisabeth Bennett



With great sadness, members of the International Forum received the news that Elisabeth Bennett died on January 16, 2021, after fourteen years of illness.

Elisabeth grew up in Tromsø, but lived in Oslo for most of her life.

She was a loyal and dedicated member of the Forum for thirty years and served as a Deputy to the Board for two years. A long-time member of the Monthly Meetings Committee, she always welcomed us to events with her warm smile when receiving our payment.

Elisabeth was also an enthusiastic member of the Cooking Group and her cooking skills came to the fore at the enjoyable lunches and dinners she served at her home in Kongleveien.

The Dispatch Team remembers the lively conversations, discussions and laughter when we met at the Office each month to prepare the Newsletter for the post.

Elisabeth was always positive and optimistic throughout her long illness and had a wonderful gift for spreading warmth and happiness. As Patricia said, ‘she added a “glow” to the room she was in.

Elisabeth will be greatly missed by all of us who knew her.

Elspeth Walseth

COMING EVENTS

All events and activities will be organised in compliance with the applicable Corona restrictions.

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

Teresa Berents on Skin Health and Disease



Teresa Løvold Berents is an MD with a PhD, a specialist in skin and venereal diseases. Ms Berents has her medical degree from the University of Oslo, where she also specialised in dermatology. Her main field is atopic eczema and surface skin problems in younger children.

She will talk for about 20 minutes and then take questions from the audience.

DATE/TIME: **Monday, March 01** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

SIGN UP: By email to int.forum@online.no no later than **Wednesday, February 24.**

PLACE: The meeting will be on Zoom

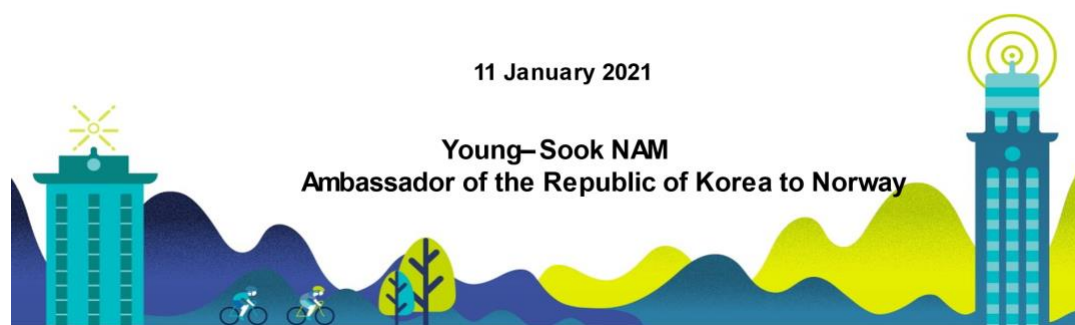
R E P O R T S

January Monthly Meeting

The Korean Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H. E. Young-Sook Nam, gave a Zoom lecture on Korea's experience with Covid-19 on Monday, January 11. This was the first Monthly Meeting to be held on zoom, and 27 IF members participated.

Sharing C O V I D – 1 9 Experiences **The Experience of the Republic of Korea** **from a Comparative Perspective**



© H.E. Young-Sook Nam.

The Republic of Korea has been very successful in fighting the Corona pandemic and is a shining example for other nations, something the President Anita Pratap drew attention to in her introduction of the Ambassador.

Korea and Norway have adopted different approaches to the pandemic because of their demographical, social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics. She hoped that the experiences Korea has made can be useful for Norway. The population in Korea is ten times larger than that of Norway, but the country has only one fourth of Norway's surface area; which means that the population density is very high. Also, more people in Korea live in dense urban communities, which makes social distancing difficult.

The Ambassador presented the timeline for the spread of the Corona virus worldwide, from the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in China in December 2019. By February 26, 2020, the virus had reached 48 countries, including Norway. Both Norway and Korea have had relatively low numbers of Covid-19 cases, compared with other countries.

Korea was one of the first countries outside of China to be hit by the pandemic. The first serious outbreak came in late February 2020. The government response was swift and efficient, and the authorities were able to quickly control the contagion. In late August, there was a second, albeit relatively small new wave, which was due to the government's relaxing of social distance measures. Also, certain religious groups did not respect the Corona restrictions and gathered in huge numbers.

In mid-August, anti-government rallies in Seoul were attended by more than 10 000 people from across Korea, which could have contributed to the outbreak. Then in December 2020, Korea faced a third wave of Covid-19 and the country still has to be vigilant.

So, how was Korea able to handle the pandemic so well? The answer is perhaps that the country has a robust health care system with a high number of hospital beds per inhabitants. It also has an advanced information and communication system, and – not least – its inhabitants have a high sense of civic responsibility.

Another factor is that Korea learned important lessons from the MERS outbreak in 2015. MERS was caused by a virus with an underlying pathogen similar to that of the Corona virus, which makes the data and experience from that epidemic relevant to the current Covid-19 situation. Back then, the government was criticised for not having been prepared enough for an epidemic. That is no longer the case.

Korea is a vibrant democracy with an economy that relies heavily on international trade and the flow of people, goods and services. The strategy adopted sought to curb the spread of the virus while keeping society and the border open. There has been no lockdown. The government has accompanied this openness with a stringent contagion control in order to preserve the freedom of movement, specifically in Seoul, and – whenever possible – keep the channels of international exchange open.

The strategy has focused on transparency, democratic values and civic engagement, and the three Ts: Test, Trace, Treat.

By mid-February 2020, the testing capacity was 20 000 per day, with numerous drive-through and walk-through test sites, which made it easy to track the spread of the virus. The testing is followed by contact tracing. The authorities have access to electronic data from mobile phone, credit cards, and surveillance cameras. Only relevant anonymous information is disclosed to the public, not personal information. The strategy relies on self-quarantine and a tracing app. People register their symptoms on the App every day, and the data are monitored by health officials twice a day. The officials are alerted if the quarantine is broken.

Patients with mild symptoms are not allowed to stay at home, but are moved to treatment centres across the country with 24/7 medical care. Treatment and testing are free of charge for all, Koreans, as well as foreigners.

2. Korea's Response to COVID-19
TEST, TRACE & TREAT

TREAT

- ✓ Designation of hospitals for infectious disease for COVID -19 patients only
- ✓ Prioritization of medical resources and stratified treatment
 - mild symptoms: quarantine in Living Treatment Centers
 - from moderate to severe symptoms: care at infectious disease hospitals
- ✓ Free Treatment for all confirmed patients, including foreigners

© H.E. Young-Sook Nam.

The border remained open, but Korea has monitored and tracked both inbound and outbound travellers. There is mandatory testing and self-quarantine for 14 days for all incoming travellers. These rules are being firmly enforced.

Korea has adopted a comprehensive 'holistic' government approach to handling the pandemic, and all levels of government are involved in the process. And the authorities have adopted a policy of transparency with daily public briefings.

All these factors and no lockdown have allowed the Korean economy to operate much as usual. The estimated fall in GDP in 2020 was just a little more than 1%, which is the smallest decline among the OECD countries.

After her presentation, the Ambassador answered a host of questions with precision and clarity.

We thank H. E. Young-Sook Nam for this very interesting and informative lecture.

Gunnel Anita Solheim

The Walking Group



Photo by Kumiko Larssen

Despite slippery wood paths and the occasional drizzle, seven well-shod ladies enjoyed a lovely walk around Bygdøy on Friday, January 22. We do keep the recommended distance when we walk, but that does not stop us from having fun. Many thanks to Kerstin Peterson for arranging such good Covid-19 free meeting places!

Berit Lindstrøm

IMPRESSIONS OF NORWAY

**By Ms Yan Donko, wife of the Ambassador of Austria to Norway.
She is also an IF Board Member.**

A Chinese Artist's Norwegian Inspiration

In the past three years, I have travelled extensively through Norway and tried to capture the magnificent and picturesque landscape and scenery in my paintings. I wanted to depict classic local motifs using Chinese techniques. The pictures may seem a bit unusual at first, but probably also strangely familiar, as a result of the mix of regional Norwegian themes and the clearly Chinese form.

The first two pictures that I want to share with you are both buildings:



Sandnessjøen Church

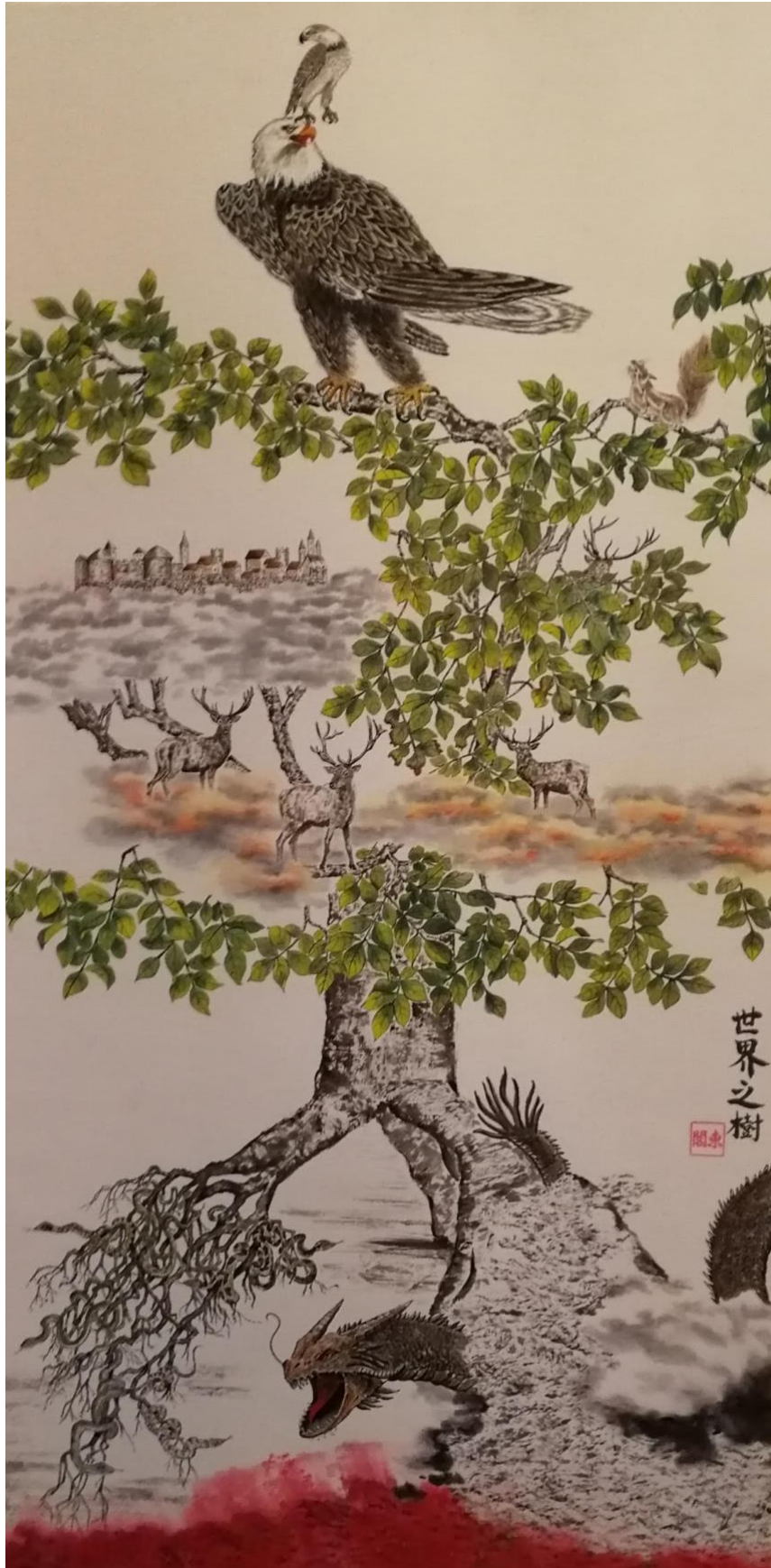


Ledaal House

The next piece is a large painting measuring 138 cm × 80 cm. The Chinese believe that a dragon lives in high mountains; and in my painting, you can see one prowling in the Lofoten Mountains. The ‘Viking salmons’ have banded together, jumping out of the water in order to fight off the dragon.



Somewhere in Lofoten



Yggdrasil

Yggdrasil is a gigantic ash tree supporting the universe, a tree that played a central role in Norwegian mythology.

The tree was connected to three worlds: the underworld, the world of the giants (Jotuns), and the world of the Norse gods.

Yggdrasil supports the universe and overspreads the world and binds earth, hell, and heaven together.

This large painting was created in 'free style' and is mounted on a hanging scroll.

The work below is based on the story about the mythical Fenrir, a wolf well-known from Norse mythology. Fenrir was the son of the ‘trickster’ god Loki and Angerboda, a Jotun. The Norwegian mythology has its parallels in Taoism.



Fenrir Howling

An important element in Chinese art is the use of characters. The name of this piece of work is The Power of Softness. The Chinese signs literally mean ‘The power of the soft water.’ Taoism teaches us that the gentle spirit of water – the goodness of water – is able to overcome that which is tough and difficult with softness.

Yan Donko

AROUND OSLO

Visit Oslo's Guide to Urban Street Art

Over the last ten years, urban artists of international standing and local art enthusiasts have turned the streets of Oslo into one of the city's most interesting and vibrant art scenes. We have mapped out some of the highlights – get your hiking shoes ready for a gallery visit out of the ordinary. The artists are from all corners of the world.



Face on a Street Pole. Photo: Visit Oslo

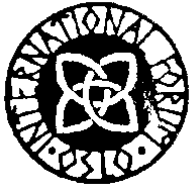
From the city centre, we recommend taking any east-bound metro train and start your explorations from Tøyen T-bane station. Tøyen is a neighbourhood particularly rich in urban art, and even aims at becoming Scandinavia's largest outdoor gallery before the Munch Museum leaves the area in 2020.



The Court Yard. Photo: Visit Oslo

There is a [clickable map](#) you can access in order to get information about the location and artists of selected works and graffiti areas. Due to the nature of urban art, some works may have been altered or may even have disappeared.

<https://www.visitoslo.com/en/articles/urban-art-in-oslo/>



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Org.no: 994 566 806

President Anita Pratap

Editor and Layout: Elizabeth Rasmussen and Editorial Team
Editorial Team: Elspeth Walseth and Josephine Kamsvåg
Dispatch Team: Susan Hahla, Kerstin Petersen, Mona Reinboth, Mette Svadberg, Wenche Undrum, Elspeth Walseth and Patricia Blackwell

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit **all** material.

Date: February 11, 2021

