



INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

NEWSLETTER

October 2021
Issue No. 468

COMING UP:

DIPLOMATIC SALON

October 21 at 15:00 at the Turkish Residence

'You don't look Turkish!'



NEW FORUM ACTIVITY:



'SING SONG'

November 4 from 13:00 - 15.00

At the Italian Ambassador's Residence





INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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Please always bring your membership card to events. For further information and updates, visit our website www.iforum.no.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the November *Newsletter* is **Monday, October 18**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen: rasmussene32@gmail.com and to int.forum@online.no.

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



From the President

Dear Members,

Normal days are here again. It's natural to enjoy the reopening, but foolish to be careless. Oslo buzzes as people emerge from their homes to liven up streets, stores and restaurants. Different faces, races, voices, heights, skin tones, costumes, cultures and cuisines are back.

So are physical meetings. At the last Board meeting, we sat for four hours discussing how to strengthen, deepen and widen the Forum, to provide even more choice of activities to our members, to make use of new opportunities, to nurture the bonds that connect us.

Magic happens when we meet in person – and a recent example is how we formed a new Forum group. Research shows that nuns live long and healthy lives. Why? When I asked this question to a group of 50-year-olds in London, the spontaneous answer was 'Because they are not married'. Funny, but wrong! The reason is that nuns sing a lot. Singing contributes to a sense of well-being, long life and good brain health.

Lydia Rostad, who was the leader of Forum's Choir, Maria Rosaria Gallo Colella, the Italian Ambassador's wife, who is an enthusiastic soprano singer in a choir, and I have brainstormed. An idea was born – and named – the 'Sing Song' Group that will also include singers without previous experience. As American singer Tara Kelly noted, 'Normal is magical. Every now and then, it turns nothing into something.'

And so we take steps towards enjoying the return to normal life. As the saying goes: We didn't want normal until we didn't have it anymore! Now we have it. So, we organise interesting Autumn get-togethers to celebrate the normal. Because, as Kelly says "Normal is an Ideal".

See you at our events!

Regards,

Anita Pratap

President

N E W M E M B E R S



This month the Board is very happy to welcome the following new members:

H.E. Marie Antoinette Sedin

Ambassador of Palestine to Norway

A heart-felt welcome!

Ingrid Ræder – GM – NOR

Ingrid is a former teacher with a host of interests, including the visual arts, classical music, Latin languages (Italian, Spanish and French). She wants to participate in the outings of the Special Events and Arts Committees as well as the Monthly Meeting. We wish her a hearty welcome!

Bernadette N. Kumar – FO – NOR

Bernadette is a medical doctor and a former member of the Forum. After some years abroad, she and her FO husband are now back in Norway. Bernadette is interested in many of the Forum activities, including Special Events, the Walking Group, Bridge and the International Book Club. We welcome her back!

F R O M T H E O F F I C E

Payment for events

Please **sign up before you pay** for an event when prepayment is asked for. The payment itself does not ‘sign you up’. If you forget to pay for an event, we will always send a kind reminder.

However, the Board has decided to apply an administrative fee of NOK 50.- for payments that are overdue.

Please make your payment **directly into the Forum account** (not via Styreweb) or by VIPPS to **591747**.

Remember to state your name and event in the payment.

We thank you for your cooperation.

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The Green Shift, Yes We Can!



Knut Anton Mork is a graduate of the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) with a PhD in Economics from MIT in 1977. He worked for 16 years in the United States, before returning to Norway. Professionally, he has gone back and forth between business and academia. He was Research Associate at the MIT Energy Laboratory, Professor at both Vanderbilt University and the University of Arizona. He also was Professor at the Norwegian Business School BI before spending two decades at Handelsbanken (Commercial Bank) as Chief Economist. His specialty is macroeconomics, with special emphasis on the importance of oil and gas in the global as well as the Norwegian economy. Since leaving Handelsbanken, he has taught at NTNU and BI and is currently engaged in research on investment and withdrawal strategies for the Government Pension Fund Global, better known as the Norwegian oil fund. Last year, he published *Oljeeventyret — som kom og gikk* and is currently working on a new book on the shift to a more sustainable economy.

- DATE/TIME:** Monday, **November 1** at 18:45 for (19:00)
- SIGN UP:** By email to the Office, int.forum@online.no as soon as possible and **no later than Thursday, October 14.**
- PLACE:** Vinderen Seniorsenter, Slemdalsveien 72, 0373 Oslo
- PRICE:** **Please sign up before you pay.** NOK 105.- preferably by **bank** payment to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled during the pandemic. Please state the event and your name in the transaction.
- TRANSPORT:** T-Bane 1 to Vinderen. Pay parking until 20:00 in the adjoining area.
- GUESTS:** Guests are welcome if there is room. **Members have priority.** Please bring your membership card and Corona certificate. **No-shows will be charged.**
- For last minute cancellations, please call Laila Haegh, mob.: 957 54 282

OCTOBER DIPLOMATIC SALON

October 21 at 15:00 at the Turkish Residence

'You don't look Turkish!'



That's what people tell **Gulhan Çorman**, wife of the Turkish Ambassador, when they meet her for the first time. Her husband **H. E. Fazli Çorman** will explain the historical origins of the Turks. In our first Diplomatic Salon, over a glass of wine or tea, we deep dive into the mosaic of faces that represent modern Turkey.

DATE: **October 21** at 15:00 at the Turkish Residence

SIGN UP: To Anita Pratap at int.forum@online.no. You will get a message confirming your participation.

PRICE: NOK 105.- for a gift. To be paid into the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by Vipps to 591747. Please state your name, date and name of event in your payment.

NEW ACTIVITY!

'SING SONG'

November 4 from 13:00 - 15.00

At the Italian Ambassador's Residence



Singing is fun and good for your health. International Forum starts a new group activity, an informal **sing-song** session, singing popular songs that most people know. No previous singing experience is necessary. **Lydia Rostad**, who was the Forum choir's leader, will guide us along.

Maria Rosaria Gallo Colella, spouse of the Italian Ambassador and a music enthusiast, invites us to her Residence for our inaugural session. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served.

SIGN UP: To Anita Pratap at int.forum@online.no

PRICE: NOK 55.- for a gift. To be paid into the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by Vipps to 591747. Please state your name, date and name of event in your payment.

NOVEMBER DIPLOMATIC SALON

November 17 from 15.00 to 17.00

An 8000-Year-Old Wine Tradition

At the Embassy of Georgia



© Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection Georgia

Nestled in the Caucasian mountains, Georgia has an 8000-year-old wine-making tradition that is in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Even today, wine is made, aged and stored underground in *qvevri* – large egg-shaped, beeswax-lined earthen jars. Georgia’s ancient wine-making heritage reveals much about the grape fermentation techniques that have endured through the millennia. It also shows that stone age people did not live a hand-to-mouth existence, cutting stones, hunting animals and making bone tools. They were inventive about making merry!

To learn more about this ancient tradition and to taste Georgian wine, the Ambassador of Georgia Maia Kipshidze kindly invites you to her embassy on Wednesday **November 17** at 15:00. Wine connoisseurs will also be present.

Maximum number of participants: 15

SIGN UP: To Anita Pratap at int.forum@online.no

PRICE: NOK 95.- for a gift, to be paid into the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or **Vipps** to 591747. Please state your name, date and name of event in your payment.

REMINDER SPECIAL EVENTS

🍅 Visit to Askim Fruit and Berry Press 🍅



DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **October 19**, at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: By email to the Office, int.forum@online.no as soon as possible and **no later than October 5**. Please mention the activity when you sign up.

When signing up please let us know a) If you plan on taking the train, b) If you will drive, c) If you will drive and have place for passengers, and d) If you would like a lift.

For more information, please see the September *Newsletter*.

WEEKLY AND MONTHLY BRIDGE



Both the weekly and the monthly bridge groups **need new players**.

If you are interested, please contact either **Kirsten Whist**,
email: kirsten@whist.as or mob.: 902 01 478,
or **Ida Tschudi Heilemann**, mob.: 400 40 846

ACTIVITIES

Cooking Group I

A big *Thank you* to Ruth for serving us a wonderful and tasty three-course autumn lunch. Eleven ladies, including the hostess, truly enjoyed seeing each other again after the summer.



The next gathering is going to take place at Ellen Vollebæk's home on Tuesday, **November 23** at 12:30. Ellen lives at President Harbitz gate 14, 0259.



Please sign up to Liss R. Laan, mob.: 906 10 922, or mail: liss.laan@gmail.com before November 9. The maximum number of participants is 10.

The group will have a special **Christmas cooking morning** on Wednesday, **December 8**. More details in the next *Newsletter*.

Liss R. Laan

R E P O R T S
SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

A Life in Photography

Black-and-white photographs by Sidsel Jakhelln Semb

Renowned photographer and IF member, Sidsel Jakhelln Semb, had an exhibition of many of her magnificent black-and-white photos at the September Monthly Meeting. Already in February, she had shown some of her pictures on Zoom, and now we were able to see them in real life.



Photo © Sidsel Jakhelln Semb

*Aunt Esther in her Four-Poster Bed
Princeton, New Jersey 1967*

The pictures are stunning. They have such an impact on the viewer, whether it be a beautiful landscape – like the one of Mount Everest, photographed from the Tibetan side at 5000 metres above sea level – or portraits of humans of all ages. The expressive force and the high photographic quality of the pictures made this exhibition unique.

Sidsel studied photography in Munich. Back in Norway, she first worked for several years in a large photo studio in Oslo before establishing her own. She was awarded the Ilford- Gerh. Ludvigsen A/S scholarship in 1970, as the only award-winning representative from Norway. The three other fellows came from Sweden and Finland.

Sidsel explained how she created her photographing career and what her focus and her interests are when it comes to photography. She is genuinely interested in people, and that became obvious when she commented on the large beautifully framed pictures that she had brought to the exhibition. Her pictures are impressive and of an outstanding quality.



According to one person in the audience, ‘The pictures are not only remarkable in terms of composition and technical perfection. There is a third layer, an undefinable level which makes you see the soul, the inner state of mind of the person portrayed. Pure state of mind, this is art, she said and referred to Leonardo da Vinci, who once claimed that *‘art [is] of slight use unless [it is] able to show what its subject [has] in mind. Painting should aim [...] to reproduce the inner mental state by the attitude assumed. [it is the] equation of the actual outward projection of the inner condition of the mind.’*

Sidsel has also illustrated several books, and we enjoyed looking at some which she had brought along. We admired the quality of the photos. She has for instance documented all the buildings in the Skarpsno area in Oslo, some 180 houses, many of them embassies and residences for foreign diplomats. It was quite a challenge. It meant, among other things, that she had to be up early in the morning to take the pictures when the light on the buildings was just right.

It is an advantage when photographing architecture that the light comes in low in the early morning or in the evening. The best time is in May or June, when the leaves have not yet become so large that they conceal the buildings. Yet, newly sprouted leaves contribute to a nice ‘green’ feeling.

Sissel has illustrated books of different genres, for instance art and medicine. We are very grateful that Sidsel wanted to share the story of her ‘Life in Photography’ with us and let us see examples of her beautiful work.

Gunnel Anita Solheim

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

Walking from Grønland to Bjørvika.

The day began with drizzling rain and we feared the worst. However, by 10:00, the rain had stopped and the sun started to break through. Twenty-eight Forum ladies gathered at a square in Grønland in Old Oslo. The square was full of people of many nationalities, and colourful shops with all sorts of goods lining the streets.

We split into two groups, each with an Oslo guide who started by telling about life in Grønland when Oslo was Christiania. The area was then just a suburb, not wealthy enough to be included in the capital. All the rivers in the area were open and used in the timber industry, and Grønland square was a market place for meat, corn and other foods. In 1960, the T-bane (the ‘tube’) was constructed, along with the first supermarket, ‘Irma’. Today, Grønland offers good shops, many run by people of immigrant families, selling a variety of products at very competitive prices. Many fine restaurants get their ingredients from these shops.

The neighbourhood has some interesting old wooden buildings: ‘Asylet’ (the Asylum) from 1730 was a place where children were looked after while their mothers worked in the factories. It is now a popular restaurant. Grønland Basar, a modern shopping arcade, cleverly integrates the backs of remaining old wooden houses. ‘Grønlandsleiret’ gets its name from the clay soil (leire) and the green grass that once grew along the river bank. As we passed the old fire station, now a museum, we could see both the spire of Grønland church and the minarets of the local mosque, two landmarks in the area. Many street names recall the trading and industry of centuries past, such as Trelastgata (Timber Street).



Our guide pointed out the houses where Jens Evensen, renowned Norwegian politician, and German Willy Brandt, who lived in Norway during World War II. He joined the Norwegian resistance and eventually became Chancellor of West Germany in 1969. We were fascinated by all there was to see. ‘I’ve never walked here before!’ exclaimed one member of the group.

We then crossed over to Bjørvika via the amazing ‘acrobat’ bridge at the end of the Central Station, and walked down to the new district by the fjord, crossing Queen Eufemia’s street, named after Eufemia from Rügen, who married King Haakon V Magnusson in 1299. The street is lined with many different species of trees, each with a sign indicating the name of the tree and where in the world it grows naturally.

By the Munch Museum – tilting towards the harbour – lies ‘Norway’s Venice’ with canals running between the buildings. The area has become a popular place to live, with modern flats, sea-bathing facilities and parks. Schools and a cruise-ship berth are being planned. A gondola may also run from the twin ventilation towers up to the top of Ekeberg.



On the Opera-side, a public beach and a park are being constructed. We looked at the ‘sugar lump’, a small island named after a tiny white building that once stood on it, housing the offices of Nylands shipyard. The City plans to use it for cultural activities.

We then had a look at the sculpture in the sea, made to resemble slabs of ice, and floating saunas. These have become immensely popular and are in use all year round. The tour ended outside the new Deichman library, a truly impressive building with its cantilevered top floor jutting out over us. After thanking our guide for the tour, we went inside for refreshments in the café.

This walk enabled us to discover interesting aspects of Oslo: the old Oslo and the new Fjord city. Both areas have a lot to offer. Grønland has so much history, and is now an exciting multicultural and colourful part of the city. Bjørvika, with its striking new buildings and recreation areas directly on the fjord, is a spectacular and popular addition to the city.

Many thanks to the Special Events Committee for arranging this tour.

Rosemary Hauge

ART COMMITTEE

New Horizons, Ephemeral Style at the Centre for Contemporary Art NITJA

The Akershus Art Center has moved the NITJA, the new Centre for Contemporary Art centrally located in Lillestrøm. The name of the centre is derived from the Norse name for the river Nitelva, which runs through the city.

Fifteen Forum ladies participated, and we were guided by Monica Holmen, who – together with Martina Petrelli – curated the exhibition. The works by five artists revolve around the themes of nature, culture, the human psyche and coexistence.



The first thing that you see when entering is a monumental sculpture group by **Joel Arontes Correia**. His work is often inspired by old ruins, but this piece, created especially for the NITJA exhibition, reflects his own history for the first time. He has found parallels between his Portuguese upbringing and family heritage and the horizontal wood-siding architecture so typical of Lillestrøm. These parallels are mirrored in the methods used to construct his sculptures.

In the exhibition, you will discover the unrestrained imagery in **Linn-Mari Staalnacke's** paintings. Her works point to the realms of mythology and ritual. The use of neon colours makes her paintings dream-like and surreal, reflecting the human psyche and evoking the absurd lurking in our sub-consciousness.

With an inquisitive approach to gardening and apiculture, **Stan D'Haene** uses untraditional methods to explore parallels between nature and culture. Outside the art centre, you will also find a sculpture serving as a bug hotel, welcoming various species of insects. Inside the exhibition hall, D'Haene has created a large mural. The engravings on the wall refer to edible insects – showing how both animals and humans leave behind visual traces.

Traces also serve as a point of departure in **Lorenzo Vitturi's** work, such as in the *Caminantes* series, for which he retraced his father's journey from Venice



across the Atlantic to open a Murano glass factory. Objects and materials from his trip, including Peruvian textiles, stones and minerals, ropes and Murano glass, are included in the exhibition both as photographs and as a site-specific installation. By assembling these artefacts, Vitturi explores his personal history and reflects on cross-cultural encounters.

The exploration of materials and icons permeates **Anders Holen's** work, echoing both modernist art works such as Henry Moore's sculpture *Large Reclining Figure*, or the signature glass architecture of Apple stores. Holen both challenges and evokes these references using bronze, glass and composite materials – then installs the result in

combination with ephemeral materials such as water, fire and light.



We thoroughly enjoyed the visit through this fascinating display in such an impressive new building. The art centre also makes room for a series of cultural activities for both young and old.

The art centre will have 6-7 different exhibitions in the coming year, featuring both Norwegian and international artists. *New Horizons, Ephemeral Style* runs until October 22.

Bee Lauren Ellingsen

The Walking Group



The Ladies on their way to Skjennungstua



Exploring the undergrowth. Berries or mushrooms?

IMPRESSIONS OF NORWAY

Going North!

Photographs and Text by H. E. Iwona Woicka-Żuławska

Ambassador of Poland to Norway

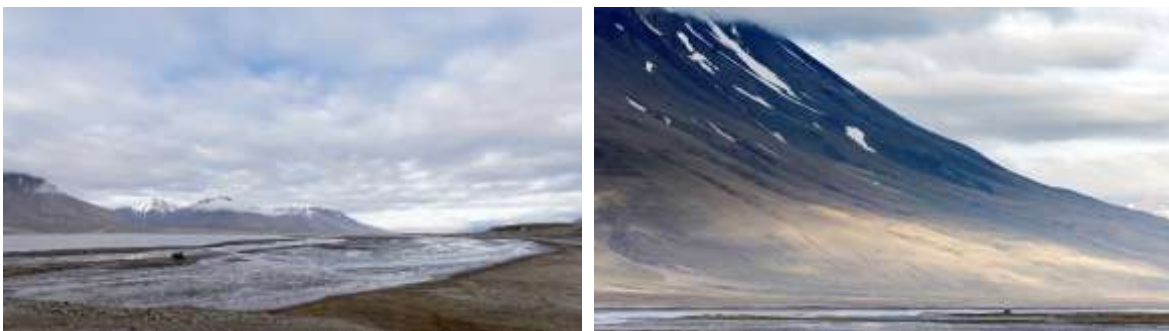


Svalbard – a place like no others, truly special in so many ways

It can teach you about the incredible forces of nature – the uncompassionate cycles of polar days and nights, as well as - the resilience of humankind even in the most adverse circumstances. When approaching Longyearbyen by plane in July, we could still see the footprints of past winters, the snowy mountains, plateaus and glaciers.



No trees and only minute traces of human activity are visible.



On the ground, suddenly, you are confronted with the magnificence of nature, the vastness of the landscapes and its tone-on-tone colours. A sense of emptiness suddenly surrounds you, encompassing everything.



Nowadays, it is still so easy to imagine how small and insignificant human life and efforts seemed during the era of the great expeditions to the Far North! The famous Norwegian explorers Fridtjof Nansen (left) and Roald Amundsen - but also the Polish Henryk Arctowski and Antoni Dobrowolski – dreamt of discovering new lands and seaways, conducting scientific research in polar regions, learning how to adapt to the harsh weather conditions of the Far North. Interestingly enough, Amundsen, Arctowski and Dobrowolski together took part in the expedition to Antarctica, on board the *Belgica*.

Fridtjof Nansen and his dog

Nowadays, scientists are still fascinated by the magnetic beauty of the Arctic, the peculiarities of its geology and its biodiversity. Moreover, this tradition of Norwegian-Polish cooperation in the field of scientific exploration of arctic regions is continued on Svalbard, where in 1957 the permanent Polish Polar Station at Hornsund was established.



If we look around, we see that the local fauna and flora is very well adapted to the extreme climate. At the University Centre at Svalbard (UNIS), we learned for instance that certain insects have the ability to get rid of all excess water in order to cope with very low temperatures or they produce antifreeze substances so as to not perish during winters. Even the trees adapt to the extreme weather

conditions – the birches and willows of Svalbard are not bigger than mosses in other parts of the world.



Svalbard Poppy

Despite the harsh climate, you find flowers almost everywhere during the short polar summer. However, because of the low average temperature, the flowers are pollinated not by bees but by some fly species. This is the case with the Svalbard poppy.



Eider ducks – famous for their soft warm down – nest close to buildings in an attempt to protect their chick from arctic skuas (*storjo*) and foxes. You can also see puffins, flying or swimming in the Isfjord - incredibly clumsy during takeoff but amazing swimmers. Also, it is not difficult to spot representatives of the animal kingdom. It is quite common for example to see reindeers grazing, even in the city centre.



Eider duck



Puffin

These are monogamous birds, who can live for up to 40 years, if they are lucky enough not to cross paths with a sea eagle.



If you leave Longyearbyen by boat, you may find walruses chilling out on one of Svalbard's beaches. In Isfjorden, you find traces of human settlements and mining activity – almost all of them now closed.



Abandoned settlements



The Seed Vault

Today, Longyearbyen's economy is not based on coal mining anymore, but on science, education and tourism. The Vault Seeds is one of the important landmarks, proving this shift.



Still, there are some remnants of the earlier mining activity, especially in the older part of the town; however, Svalbard is now more renowned for being a paradise for wilderness enthusiasts, often involving dog sledging.

Svalbard will stay with me for a long time.

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Winter Time Starts

Sunday, October 31



On Sunday, **October 31**, at **03:00**, the clocks are turned **back** one (1) hour to **02:00**. Sunrise and sunset will therefore be one hour earlier than the day before.

Autumn Moods in Oslo



Every season has its charm!



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

Date: October 7, 2021