



INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

NEWSLETTER

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **June Newsletter** is **Monday, May 16**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen and to int.forum@online.no. The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit all material.



From the President



Dear Members,

There is an old Chinese saying: ‘If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing (a *man* must be behind this saying!). If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help others.’

Our members did just that and the Ukraine donation for war victims totalled NOK 11.050. This money was transferred on April 12 to the bank account for Doctors without Borders, earmarked for its humanitarian work in Ukraine. Thank you all!

The suggestion for the donation came from our member Åsny Wedege Walters. The Board discussed, approved, published the appeal and the members did their part. Within a fortnight of the idea reaching the Board, the money was transferred to Leger Uten Grenser (MSF). You all are experienced, widely-travelled, talented and thoughtful. We look forward to receiving more good ideas from you.

There is no better occasion than the AGM on June 9 for us to discuss new ideas. This is our first physical AGM in three years, so we would like to hear your thoughts on future opportunities and challenges. You only have to sign up. Your presence is important.

This AGM is also a time for celebration. The pandemic has been a difficult journey and we have not met each other as often as we would have liked to. There is much to look forward to. After our AGM procedures are completed, we can relax, enjoy each other’s company, eat, drink wine, have fun and laugh. As William James, the Father of American psychology said, ‘We don’t laugh because we are happy, we are happy because we laugh.’ Wisdom from ancient China to modern America reminds us that happiness lies in enjoying the simple pleasures of life.

Anita Pratap

President



FINAL NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

17:45 (for 18:00)

Vinderen seniorsenter

For more information on the AGM, please contact the office.

The Grethe Frydenlund Award

Our First President and Founder
whom we remember with
affection and gratitude



May 20, 1931 – May 17, 2019

The Board has decided to rename the Member of the Year Award to the Grethe Frydenlund Award as this recognition is given not for contribution for a particular year, but for years of dedicated service. Named after our Founder, the Award honours members for their spirit and hard work, spanning years, if not decades.

This year, the Board is delighted to announce that the
Award has been given to
PATRICIA BLACKWELL



© Gunnel Anita Solheim

Patricia Blackwell is a worthy recipient of this Award. She was part of the original team of members and her contribution to the running of the Forum, her meticulous attention to detail, her knowledge, skills and talent have helped shape International Forum into what it is today. She was the editor of the Newsletter, a member of the office team and an advisor to the Board for several years. She has an impressive institutional memory of the Forum.

The Board is pleased to present Patricia Blackwell with the Grethe Frydenlund Award for 2022. The Award will be presented at the AGM on June 9. An article about Patricia will be published in the June *Newsletter*.

We thank you, Patricia, for your outstanding contribution!

Anita Pratap

ARENDALSUKA

Global Outlook

A Transformative Decade

Keynote Speakers:

Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs **Anniken Huitfeldt**

Former Prime Minister of Australia **Kevin Rudd**

Administrator, United Nations Development Programme **Achim Steiner**

Senior Director of Africa Finance Corporation **Ayaan Adam**

August 15 from 12:00 to 14:00



Organised every year during calendar week 33, Arendalsuka is Norway's most important meeting place for policy debates, attended by the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, party leaders, CEOs, bureaucrats, professionals, academics, foundations, federations, NGOs and the general public. In keeping with Arendalsuka's purpose of engaging the public and encouraging informed opinion, all events are free, but some require registration.

'Arendalsuka', Norway's biggest annual political festival, is becoming more and more popular. Last year, over 110,000 people attended Arendalsuka, the five-day festival of lectures, events, concerts and exhibitions held in Arendal. Please visit <https://arendalsuka.no/>

The 2022 Ambassadors' Roundtable

De-globalisation?

*A stocktaking of where we are headed:
isolation, regionalisation or continued global integration*

August 16, 2022 from 9:00 to 11:00

Keynote Speakers:

H. E. Amr Ahmed Ramadan, Ambassador of Egypt

H. E. Nicolas de la Grandville, Ambassador of the European Union

**H. E. Kerin Ayyalaraju, Ambassador of Australia to Denmark, Norway
and Iceland**

H. E. Sharon Hudson-Dean, Chargé d'Affaires, USA



The 2021 Ambassadors' Roundtable in the beautiful Old Town Hall

The Ambassadors' Roundtable is a conversational, interactive event with keynote speeches and a Q & A session with the audience. It is followed by a prominent Norwegian commentator analysing the key political and economic trends in Norway in the wake of the geopolitical changes.



Arendal's Old Town Hall

This year, for the second time, the Ambassadors' Roundtable is organised in cooperation with the Mayor of Arendal, Robert Cornels Nordli. This event will take place at Gamle Rådhus, the beautiful, historic building on Arendal's waterfront.

Both events will be moderated by **Anita Pratap**.

OTHER COMING EVENTS

ART COMMITTEE

Exhibition by

Synnøve Anker Aurdal

Tuesday, **May 31** at 11:45



This year's summer exhibition at the Astrup Fearnley Museum will feature significant works by Synnøve Anker Aurdal (1908 – 2000), who was one of Norway's most prominent textile artists.

Her vast knowledge of both the Norwegian weaving tradition and the contemporary art discourse made her a true pioneer within the field. In her oeuvre, she moved from traditional craftsmanship to arts and crafts and eventually into visual art, a genre in which she has emerged as a central figure.

During her lifetime, she contributed greatly to the recognition of textiles as a form of artistic expression. Early on in her work, Anker Aurdal incorporated the non-figurative as a central element and she was crucial in the launching of modernism in Norway.

This exhibition is comprised of works that already are in the Astrup Fearnley Collection, as well as a selection on loan, which together will form a unique and seminal overview of her outstanding body of work.

Synnøve Anker Aurdal was educated at a weaving school run by sisters Karen and Ragnhild Prestgard in Lillehammer and at the Statens Kvindelige Industriskole (arts and crafts college for teachers) in Oslo from 1932 to 1934.

In 1941, she had her debut show with an exhibition at the prestigious Kunstnerforbundet. Afterwards, she created several public commissions, including Høyseteteppet (1958-61) in Håkonshallen in Bergen (with Ludvig Eikaas and Sigrun Berg) and Norway's gift to Iceland for its 1100th anniversary in 1974.

In 1982, she represented Norway at the Venice Biennale.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **May 31** at 11:45 for 12:00

SIGN UP: By email to the Office: int.forum@online.no or leave a message at the Office. tel. 22 83 62 90 as soon possible and no later than Monday **May 23**.

PRICE: Entrance fee is NOK 100.- to be paid individually at the ticket counter at the museum. NOK 175.- should be paid for the guide to International Forums bank account **1600 40 36631** or by VIPPS 591747. Please state the event and your name in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payment and in the dialogue box for VIPPS) as soon as your registration has been confirmed.

The event will be cancelled if less than 12 people sign up.

PLACE: Astrup Fearnley Museum, Strandpromenaden 2, Tjuvholmen

TRANSPORT: Tram 12 or bus 21 and 54 to Aker Brygge. Bus 32 to Vika Atrium. T-bane to Nationaltheatret, a short walk from the museum.

Maximum participants: 30

Guests are welcome if space is available. Members have priority.

Please remember your membership card.

For last minute cancellations, please call Inger Ræder
mob.: 976 88 795

NB! Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to Østmarksetra

Tuesday, **May 10**



The Special Events Committee has the pleasure of inviting Forum members to a visit to Østmarksetra, close to Ulsrud lake. We will have a guided explanation of its history, followed by lunch. The *seter* is a timber building in a classic national romantic style. The building contains many antiques and interesting artifacts. It opened its doors in 1926 as a sports café. The Engblom family has been the owner since 1946. Østmarksetra has a restaurant and rooms for special occasions.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **May 10** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

For more information, see the April *Newsletter*.

R E P O R T S

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

Kjell Magne Bondevik

On the work of the Oslo Center

Mr Bondevik is the founder and Executive Chair of the Center, an independent non-profit organisation working in the fields of democratisation and democratic governance. The Center has ongoing human rights projects and democracy development programs in many countries around the world, in Eritrea, Iran, Kenya and Ethiopia. Even in North Korea. The Center's expertise is sought after, and projects are set up on the request of emerging democracies that wish to develop their countries based on democratic values and rules.

According to Mr Bondevik, the threat to peace in Europe has never been greater than it is now. These are indeed very uncertain times. He grew up in Molde after the Second World war, during the Cold War between East and West. The Cuba Crisis in 1962, when the tension between the USSR and the USA was at an all-time high, could have ended in war. In 1968, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia to suppress the reforms proposed by

Alexander Dubček. That same year, Mr Bondevik visited the Berlin Wall and he met Dubček in Prague.

Would things one day change? Could Europe one day be united? These were questions Mr Bondevik asked himself. On November 9, 1989, when Mr Bondevik was the new Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Berlin Wall was breached. Something was also ‘brewing’ in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Three countries, three driving forces: In Poland it was the labour movement that was behind the freedom movement; in Prague, it was the intellectuals; and in Hungary economists. All with a common cause, but with a very different approach.



The old communist world was changing. The Norwegian embassies in the east reported on the unusual situation and the different freedom movements. In less than two years, the Warsaw Pact, The Berlin Wall, and the Soviet Union were history. They had all collapsed. Most of the former Soviet republics turned their attention to the West. Some became members of NATO. There was a feeling of a ‘new order’. For many years, cooperation and development was high on the agenda. A new, more peaceful Europe seemed to emerge.

In 1990, the apartheid system in South Africa was ended. Nelson Mandela was a key player in the development of a free and democratic country, based on his doctrine of reconciliation. Mr Bondevik met with him and was surprised at the moral fibre of Mandela. No thirst for revenge, only a deep wish to heal the nation. He even chose the former president F. W. De Klerk as his prime minister. For many years, the world seemed on the right course.

Then, suddenly, on February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. And there was again war on European soil. An increasingly aggressive Russia had annexed

Crimea in 2014, so it was not totally unexpected that Ukraine was a target of a Russian ‘expansion’, yet still a shock.

Mr Bondevik has met Putin several times, in Russia and then in Oslo when Putin was a newly appointed prime minister in Yeltsin’s government in 1999. Mr Bondevik had the impression that the man was unprepared and uncomfortable. A very different person from the man we see today. However, he has become increasingly confident and authoritarian, and difficult to negotiate with, believing it seems that he is the only person who can govern his country and restore Russia to its former ‘greatness’. He has become an enemy of democracy.

The Oslo Center has had many projects in Ukraine since the annexation of Crimea. The main focus has been on democracy building. The Ukrainian politicians were eager for change, and wanted to learn how to build a sustainable democracy: How a government needs to cooperate with other parties and the opposition; how to run a democratic government; how to set up coalitions and make them work; and how to communicate. The Ukrainians were openminded and the project seemed to be on a good track.

However, since the invasion. the communication has been interrupted: emails are not always delivered, the internet is down a lot of the time, the situation is very uncertain. This was a disaster for Ukraine, and a serious threat to peace and democracy elsewhere.

The work for democracy is more important than ever. One of the most important principles of democracy is the protection of civil society, including gender equality, political opponents, ethnic minorities, the right to education, and the environment. The Oslo Center promotes equality at all levels. The Center is currently working on projects in Tanzania, Somalia, and Uganda.

After the speech, there were many questions. One regarding the reason for the invasion. What motivated Putin? Will it be possible to have him removed?

The vision of Russian history and culture seems to dominate Putin’s policy. He wants to restore the ‘Russian empire.’ His views are based on a misinterpretation of culture. He claims not to believe that Ukraine has a culture of its own, or that it is an emerging democracy with relatively normal elections and citizens that support the changes. In Russia, Putin’s opponents are arrested or they simply disappear...

This was indeed a very interesting evening, with a lot of food for thought.

Elizabeth Rasmussen

ART COMMITTEE

Kirsten Kokkin's Studio

On April 6, 23 members of the Forum found their way to Erling Lorentzen's childhood home in Husebyveien. The palatial red-brick house was designed by the architect Magnus Poulsson in 1918, the same architect who designed Oslo Rådhus.

What a wonderful place to have a studio! Kirsten Kokkin wished us all welcome and we squeezed ourselves around her large studio. She began by telling us that as a young girl her great dream was to be a ballet dancer. When she was told she was too heavy boned for such a career, she decided to become a sculpturer of dance and movement. She went, amongst others, to the Academy of Art in Oslo and the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm and had her debut in 1972.



The artist in her studio

Her choice of sticking to figurative sculpture very much in the modus of Michelangelo, Bernini and Rodin did not go down well in the world of modern European sculpture. She told us that her move to the USA in 1987 was the best thing that happened to her. She felt born again as an artist in a country that appreciated figurative expressive art. Nobody asked her to become more modern and she immersed herself in finding expression for emotions, psychology, and movement. She has a great skill for figurative art and is an

excellent teacher. At present, she is an Associate Professor at Oslo National Academy of the Arts teaching the BA course in figurative arts.

Kirsten Kokkin started our tour by taking us through all the stages of making a bronze statue. You can read all about lost-wax bronze casting, but it is still difficult to understand without seeing it. Kirsten showed us the iron rods, the clay made of oil and sand that is modelled around them, and the rubber that is smeared all over many times. Then packed into plaster and hot wax is poured into the rubber. The wax is then fired out and bronze poured in. Finally, the pieces of a large sculpture will be welded together. As she said, the making of a sculpture is not just an art, but also a craft. There are several foundries just north of Denver and the best school in the world.

To make large or monumental sculptures in our modern era 3D prints are made and the statue is recreated in Styrofoam. I asked how that is done and Kerstin laughed and answered that she has no idea. So there!



Ecstatic Dream

Ms Kokkin moved on to her statue of *Queen Sonja* that is now in the Royal Palace Park. The Tourist Association commissioned this sculpture for the Queen's 80th birthday and Sonja sat as model in the Castle. The Tourist Association wanted her in her favourite walking gear, plus fours (slacks), flannel shirt and famous scarf. Not what you would expect in a royal figure! She is sitting on a big stone so that children, or anyone, can sit there with her. An unusual royal statue, but immensely popular! It had to be cast here in Norway.

Flight was her first commission in the USA and has become her signature piece. It stands outside the Peninsula Hotel in Beverley Hills (NOK 9000 per night!). The scarf gives extra physical support to the figure as well as giving the dynamics of either helping or hindering her flight. This female figure is either

reaching for something or fleeing something. There is both pain and joy in the expression.

Kerstin has about 100 big installations in the world, and there are 9 copies of each. She gets lots of commissions for horses and has made many ballet dancers. Ms Kokkin has also done a bronze statue of Crown Princess Märtha, commissioned for the Norwegian Residence in Washington D.C. in 2005. This was an important commission for Kirsten, and it was former Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk' s idea to have a copy made for the Royal Palace Park in Oslo.



The Triangle



Flight

Ms Kokkin then showed us *Ecstatic Dream*. A powerful lunging horse carrying a female figure lying in ecstasy on its back. Engulfed in passionate feeling, exposed and vulnerable. This is a dangerous ride and suggests what happens when you follow your heart. The piece was hugely unpopular in the USA thanks to its nakedness. I thought it a stunning work of art.

The Triangle was commissioned by Veidekke/Vy as a prize for HMS (Health, Environment, and Safety). It stands outside VY's head office in Karenslyst Allé. Beginning with the letter V created by two figures leaning outwards, the artist then placed a third figure above them, creating a triangle. They are building something, and they are entirely dependent on each other for safety.

This event was a wonderful experience for us all. We opened our eyes to the international status of Kirsten Kokkin and to her total professionalism in everything that she does. On top of that, she is a lovely lady: open, warm, and disarming.

Thank you to Rosi Løvdal who made this all happen.

Jane Steenbuch

*Happy Constitution Day!
May 17*



Gratulerer med dagen!



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

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