



INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

NEWSLETTER

October 2022
Issue No. 479

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **November Newsletter** is **October 14**. 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

Is autumn a time of joy or melancholy, radiance or deepening darkness, dwindling resources or abundance, beauty or its farewell? The answer of course is that autumn is all of these and more. *Either/or* are words that limit. Much more powerful is the word *and*. It is inclusive, embracing both possibilities and paradoxes – which is what life is all about.

Like autumn, life brings beginnings and ends, arrivals and departures. We are shaped by the events that we experience in our lives. However, people do react differently. Long Litt Woon's world shattered when her husband died. She took up mushroom picking in the forests of Oslo, embarking on an outer journey of discovery to heal her inner journey of grief. She forced herself to travel from a painful end into a new beginning, without roadmaps, signposts or destinations to guide her.

Today, she is a certified mushroom expert and author. Instead of becoming lonely and bitter, she found a new hobby that steered her into a whole new world, empowering her with knowledge and purpose that helped her regain her energy and enthusiasm. She is flying to Argentina to write a new book and learn the tango. She illustrates the saying: 'When we complete this journey called life, what matters most is not what we achieve, but who we have become.'

Month after month, International Forum opens up new worlds of possibilities through events organised by our creative committee leaders. These occasions offer little journeys of education and entertainment, insights and friendships. Meteorology, photography, lectures, salons, books, art... all these have the power to surprise us, stir our emotions, make us laugh and even challenge our way of thinking.

Looking forward to an autumn of shared microjourneys!

Best regards,

Anita Pratap

President

COMING EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

Reminder

Visit to the Norwegian Meteorological Institute



We are all interested in the weather! Meteorologists from the institute will be our guides. We will see the forecast room, have a look at the observation instruments in the park outside, and visit the ‘Tall Hall’, also known as the ‘Data Hall’. This very special building opened in 2011, and was the first building in Norway made of low-carbon concrete. It was designed by Pir II Architects, with a focus on climate efficiency.

After the tour, those who wish may join us in Frederikke, the main student canteen.

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

SIGN UP: To Rosemary Hauge no later than **October 3**.

PLACE: Meteorologisk Institutt, Henrik Mohns plass 1, 0313 Oslo. A few minutes’ walk from Forskningsparken T-bane station or the tram station (same junction).

For more information, see the September *Newsletter*.

THE ART COMMITTEE

The New National Museum

Thursday, October 20



The New National Museum is finally open, and you are invited to a guided tour of this enormous space. It houses over 6000 permanent works, and has regular separate exhibitions. Not only is a visit a must to see the permanent home for all the art that we have missed for years, the building itself is also well worth seeing.

We have to select what to see in the time we have, but without a doubt our selection will tempt you back.

DATE/TIME: **October 20** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: To Bente Brandt as soon as possible and no later than **October 13**.

The event is open only to members.

Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please

email int.forum@online.no for an application form.

Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board

PLACE: National Museum, Brynjulf Bulls Plass 3, 0250 Oslo

PRICE: NOK 265.- (this includes the entrance fee) **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

TRANSPORT: Buses 54, 30 and 31 and tram 13 all stop at Nationaltheateret. Tram 12 stops right outside the museum.

Maximum 20 participants.

Guests are welcome if space available.

There are numerous restaurants in the area for those who wish to stay for lunch.

No-shows and cancellations after the deadline will be charged.

For last-minute cancellations please call Bente Brandt
mob.: 994 62 761.

DIPLOMATIC SALON

Día de Muertos - Day of the Dead

This unique Mexican tradition is a UNESCO 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'

November 2 at 11:00

Hosted by the Ambassador of Mexico, H. E. Ulises Canchola



All cultures mourn their Dead. Mexicans celebrate them. On the Day of the Dead or *Día de Muertos*, traditionally held on November 2, Mexicans playfully and joyfully honour their dear departed with rituals and remembrance, retelling amusing anecdotes about them in a spirit of fun and affection. This Mexican tradition is different from Catholic and secular traditions like All Souls Day or Halloween.

Ambassador Canchola will present the 'Ofrenda' (Altar decorated with offerings of flowers, fruits and sweets for the Dead) and explain the historical origin and meaning of this Mexican *fiesta*. There will also be a photo exhibition titled *La Muerte en el Altar* (Altar of Offerings to the Dead) by photographer Tomás Casademunt. The salon will include music and the traditional reading of irreverent poems or *calaveritas* dedicated to the departed. During the event, we will be offered 'pan de muerto' (bread for the dead), a typical Mexican pastry prepared for the festivity. Another part of the tradition is to drink 'Atole' (a sweet drink made of corn with an added flavour that could be vanilla, coconut or chocolate).

Tufts- and Harvard-educated Ambassador Canchola is a veteran in law, diplomacy and multilateral negotiations. He has served his country in New York, Vienna, Geneva and Teheran.

DATE: **November 2** at 11:00

SIGN UP: By **October 21** to Anita Pratap. Please **sign up** before paying.
Seats on first come first served basis.

Please pay after seat confirmation. Address and details will be emailed to the attendees.

The event is open only to members.

Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email int.forum@online.no for an application form.

Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board

PRICE: NOK 55.- for a gift.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Ross Wetherbee

November 7



The Monthly Meeting Committee is proud to invite our members for a presentation by Dr Ross Wetherbee, researcher in ecology and natural resource management at the Faculty of Environmental Science and Nature Management at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) at Ås.

Dr Wetherbee has a PhD in Ecology and Natural Resource Management from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (2021), an M.S. in Ecology from NMBU & the University Center on Svalbard (UNIS), and a B.S. in Biology from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF). He has published a series of articles on veteran trees and their significant role in sustaining the ecosystem.

He will talk about veteran oaks, insect diversity and ecosystem in southern Norway.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **November 7** at 18:45 (for 19:00)

SIGN UP: To Elizabeth S. Rasmussen **no later than** Wednesday, **October 2**.

The event is open only to members.

Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email int.forum@online.no for an application form.
Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board

PRICE: NOK 105.- **Please sign up before you pay.** Please make your payment **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

TRANSPORT: T-Bane 1 to Vinderen. Pay parking in the adjoining area until 20:00.

Guests are welcome if there is room. No-shows will be charged. For last minute cancellations, please call Elizabeth Rasmussen on mob.: 406 02 686

SPECIAL EVENTS

The University's Astronomical Observatory

November 17

The Special Events Committee is very pleased to invite you to a guided visit of the University's Astronomical Observatory at Solli in Oslo.



The Observatory at Solli plass



The Rotunda © Hans Fredrik Asbjørnsen

The observatory from 1833 is one of the oldest buildings built for the University. The architect, Christian Heinrich Grosch, cooperated closely with Professor of astronomy Christopher Hansteen. Parts of this neo-classical building were in themselves a large scientific instrument. As the city expanded, it was no longer possible to use the observatory because of light pollution from the sky above. It therefore closed in 1934 and the operations moved to Blindern.

The Observatory is now a museum used mainly for teaching activities for school children. Danish-born Christian H. Grosch, one of Norway's most important architects, also designed the university buildings in Karl Johans gate. The Observatory holds a special place amongst his buildings.

Bjørn Vidar Johansen, Administrative Manager of the Section for Museum of University and Science History, an expert on the history of the Observatory, will guide us round this beautiful and interesting building, which was thoroughly restored for the University of Oslo's Bicentenary in 2011.

DATE/TIME: **Thursday, November 17** at 10:45 (for 11:00 Group 1)
[Thursday, November 17 at 11:45 (for 12:00 for a second group if needed)]

PLACE: Observatoriegata 1, 0254 Oslo

The Observatory is located a couple of minutes walk from the roundabout at Solli plass. Walk down Observatoriegata and follow the signpost pointing to the right into Observatorie terrasse, a cul-de-sac (blind alley) till you see the Observatory on your left.



PRICE: NOK 25. – for a gift for the guide. Please make your payment preferably by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event** and **your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

SIGN UP: Rosemary Hauge no later than Tuesday, **November 8**. Please supply your telephone number in case we need to contact you.

The event is open only to members.

Members: Please sign up as indicated in the Newsletter

Non Members: if you would like to become a member, please email int.forum@online.no for an application form.

Please note membership is not automatic. Applications are processed and decided by the Board

TRANSPORT: Many buses and trams 12 and 13 stop at Solli plass.

LUNCH: There are a number of restaurants at and around Solli plass. Espresso House offers a simple sandwich-type lunch.

Maximum number of participants is 30, in 2 groups of 15.

Guests are allowed if space available. Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged. For questions or last-minute cancellations, please contact Rosemary Hauge

ART COMMITTEE

Pre-Announcement **Henie Onstad Art Centre** **November 24**

The art committee invites you to join us on a guided tour at Henie Onstad Gallery for a retrospective of Niki de Saint Phalle.



Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) made a name for herself on the international art scene during the late 1950s and early 1960s, developing a new role for the artist in close dialogue with the media of television. She is especially known for her boundary-defying architecture and public sculptures.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **November 24** at **11:15** (for 11:30)

SIGN UP: By email to Josephine Kamsvåg, email:
josephinekamsvaag@icloud.com as soon as possible and no
later than **17 November**.

PLACE: Henie Onstad Art Centre at Høvikodden
More information in the November *Newsletter*.

ACTIVITIES

Cooking Group I

How lovely to be able to meet again, and what fun we had! Thank you all for such a lovely and enjoyable afternoon. The next gathering will take place at Jennifer Alvenes' home on Wednesday, **October 26 at 13:00**. Her address is Øvre Ullern Terrasse 55, 0380 Oslo (mob.: 992 45 030).

Please sign up no later than Friday 21 to Liss R. Laan, mob.: 906 10 922 or email: liss.laan@gmail.com.



The colours of nature are turning yellow now that autumn is approaching. The school holiday is the first week of October, so look forward to meeting at the end of October.

Liss Laan



BOOK CLUB II



Autumn 2022 Programme

New members are welcome!

TIME: 13:00

(August 4: Isabell Allende, *The Petal of the Sea*)

(September 1: E. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*)

October 6: Amor Towles, *The Lincoln Highway* at Solrun's place.

November 3: Edward P. Jones, *The Known World*, place to be decided.

December 1: Jenny Erpenbeck, *Go, Went, Gone*, place to be decided.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Heidi Von Weltzien.

R E P O R T S

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Report September Monthly Meeting

‘Last, but not least nor worst – How does Covid-19 compare to other pandemics,’ was the title of Dr Hoddevik’s lecture at the September Monthly Meeting. Dr Hoddevik, a pathologist working at the University Hospital of Oslo, holds a PhD in molecular biology and neuroscience and is the author of *Virus på reisefot: En reiseskildring om virus og mennesker* (Viruses on the move: A travelogue on viruses and people). His main goal, he says, is to inform people about viruses and pandemics and to replace fear with knowledge.



Dr Hoddevik described the structure and properties of viruses and how they were discovered. They are so small that they could not be visualised until the electron microscope was invented in the 1930s.

One main characteristic of a virus is that it has no metabolism, and no cell membrane, only DNA or RNA inside a protein coating. To reproduce itself, it must infect a host cell and program this cell to produce replicas of the virus.

The scientific study of viruses is called virology. The viruses vary in the way they travel; that is, as to how they are transmitted and how they operate once they are inside the body of the host or victim. Some penetrate cells in the nervous system, like for instance the rabies virus; some enter the mucosa of the respiratory organs, like the SARS-CoV-2, which causes Covid-19 disease; yet others attack the immune cells, like the HIV-virus.

Dr Hoddevik talked about three of the major viral infections: smallpox, AIDS, and influenza. He also listed the known pandemics caused by viruses: The Spanish flu in 1918, the Asian flu in 1957, the Hongkong flu in 1968, the Swine flu in 2008 and SARS in 2010. The focus of the lecture was, however, on the Covid-19 pandemic, which is still ongoing, and on the vaccines being developed against this virus.

The name *vaccine* comes from ‘vacca’, the Latin word for cow (*Variolae vaccinae* = smallpox of the cow). In 1796, Edward Jenner inoculated the young son of his gardener with the *vaccinia* virus (cowpox) and confirmed the boy’s immunity to smallpox. In 1798, the first smallpox vaccine was developed. Over the 18th and 19th centuries, systematic implementation of mass smallpox immunisation culminated in its global eradication.

In 1975, the vaccination program against smallpox was ended in Norway. Several factors allowed the *variola* virus causing smallpox to be eliminated. Firstly, the access to and advent of a vaccine that gave long-lasting immunity (if not also lifelong) against the disease. Secondly, the virus itself was quite ‘stable’ and did not mutate as often as do other viruses. Thirdly, smallpox is only spread by individuals who have symptoms, namely the very easily recognisable rash. It was therefore possible to use the vaccine in a targeted approach, thus vaccinating all those people who had been in contact with an identified smallpox-infected person. This strategy, called ring vaccination, was the very key to the swift eradication of smallpox. It was made possible because the virus’ reservoir only involves humans.

Not so with the Corona viruses and the covid-19 pandemic. The most important reason why the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been able to cause a worldwide pandemic is its highly contagious nature, and a human harbouring the virus can contaminate others even if the infected person does not have the slightest of symptoms. This phenomenon is known as asymptomatic spreading and the virus propagates during the incubation period of the disease before symptoms arise.

Immunity from a Covid-19 vaccine or from a Covid-19 infection is not as long lasting as that of many other vaccines and infections. It is therefore seemingly not possible to achieve herd immunity as one does with infections such as influenza. Also, the reservoirs of the Corona virus are both animals and humans, which makes eradication all but an impossible task.

The Covid vaccine, however, is very useful in that it does protect against severe illness and it reduces the spread of the disease. As the SARS-CoV-2 virus mutates repeatedly, the hope is that it mutates into a variant that gives less severe illness and ends up acting more like a common cold virus.

Dr Hoddevik's speech was very interesting and his use of the metaphor of the travelling virus was not only amusing, but also helped us understand the properties of viruses and how experts can use this knowledge when dealing with infectious diseases.

After his lecture, Dr Hoddevik answered engaged and interesting questions from the audience about the different forms of vaccines against the Corona virus, their benefits and undesirable side effects. Dr Hoddevik is very much in favour of vaccination and his advice is to follow the recommendations from the health authorities.

Interestingly, he mentioned that people born before 1975, most of whom have been vaccinated against smallpox, probably are resistant to the smallpox virus, and perhaps also have at least partial immunity against the monkeypox virus that is currently spreading in both Europe and the United States. This assumption is based on the fact that most people who contracted monkey pox were born later than 1975.

Gunnel Anita Solheim



For those who are interested:

Eystein Hellstrøm Hoddevik (2021) *Virus på reisefot; En reiseskildring om virus og mennesker*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm. ISBN: 978-82-02-70099-7

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit To Bygdø Kongsgård Farm

A group of 31 members from the International Forum enjoyed a wonderful guided tour by Mari Bjørnsrud Gabrielsen at Bygdø Royal Farm on Tuesday September 13.



Throughout the centuries, the farm has been a monastic estate, a royal residence, a public park and a model farm. Since the 12th century, it has been a place of innovation, new agricultural methods and animal husbandry.



During its 800 years of agricultural history, the farm has been influenced by the ideas of European monastic orders and the Danish authorities. Since about 1900, innovation has been the central focus of the farm, which today is run as an ecological operation.

In 2004, his Majesty King Harald transferred his right of disposal of the farm, the forest, and the park to the Norwegian state, which in turn transferred the administration to the trust known as the Norsk Folkemuseum (Norwegian Folk Museum).

Bygdø Royal Farm produces around 350 000 litres of milk and 11 000 kg of meat every year. The farm has been ecological since 2011. It is very important for the farm to always ensure the good health and welfare of the animals. The farm is member of a certified organisation called DEBIO. The modern cowshed was built in 1977 and was the 4th cowshed in Norway to allow cows to walk around freely within a limited space, to be milked and to lay down and eat as they want.

The farm's herd, including calves, counts 140 heads. We were so fortunate to watch two 2-day old calves. Mother cows and calves are allowed to be together for a minimum of three days. Thereafter, the calves are separated from their mothers. The milk tank takes 5000 litres. Three times a week, Tine Dairy collects the milk. Six to eight quality tests of the milk are performed before the milk reaches the consumers as ecological semi-skimmed milk from Bygdø Kongsgård.



Bygdø Kongsgård farm has its own 730 000 m² ecological grass production area which is ploughed and sowed every 5th year. It is not allowed to use artificial fertilizers or any kind of weed killer. The farm produces 80% of its grass fodder. One cow eats approximately 50 kg of grass and drinks 100 litres of water in a day.

At the end of our walk, we visited the stables, although all the horses were out in the fields together with the cows, enjoying a beautiful day and lots of green space. Really a healthy kind of animal husbandry.

Thank you so much Mari and the ladies for a lovely day, coming together and feeling the nature.

Mona Bækkelund Reinboth

ART COMMITTEE

Autumn Exhibition at Kunstneres Hus

In the late 1800's, many Norwegian artists left the country to work abroad. In an attempt to discourage them from leaving, it was decided to hold an annual exhibition of contemporary art in Norway to offer them support and recognition. The exhibition, which is being held for the 135th time is a showcase for 100 artists who are either Norwegian or who reside in Norway. Any artists may apply to be included and the exhibitors are chosen by a jury elected for two years at a time. This year, 2,300 artists applied and of the 100 chosen, 62 are showing their works publicly for the first time. The youngest is only 19 years old!

This year's exhibition is wide-ranging, not only in terms of the techniques and materials employed, but also in the themes and subjects which reflect and interpret the times we live in, both philosophically and politically. So many of this year's works are remarkable and unique. They represent such diverse subjects as the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, family relationships, dictators, old age, and political polarisation.



The *Angry Bird*, a 'swan' sculpture by Torunn Myrann, uses materials that threaten animal life such as outdoor plastic chairs and garbage to demonstrate how our abuse of nature causes pain and suffering for birds. Amalia Olsen's *Woman and the Work Life* presents an image of women being perceived as 'disabled' when they become mothers: no longer participants in society and consequently more dependent on others. Siri Borges has created an 'ice cream' dessert composed of North Sea shrimp, oil and condoms! One of the most powerful works is a bust of King Harald V which clearly shows his sorrow and pain after the events of July 22, 2011. Lena Trydal has produced a large painting showing Mohammad bin Salman, Donald Trump, Kim Jong-Un and Vladimir Putin enjoying a pleasant picnic together in the park, amidst a backdrop strewn with voting tabs, gold bars and grenades.

This year's 'Høstutstilling', which runs until October 16 is definitely worth a visit, not only because the artists' works are innovative and entertaining but because they bring an even deeper meaning to the expression, 'art imitates life'.

Trudy Brand-Jacobsen

A R O U N D O S L O

Akerselva

Perfect for a walk, both during daytime and at night



The river Akerselva runs from Maridalsvannet through the centre of Oslo and into the Oslo Fjord. The river is 8 km of recreation, through forests and industrial history, fishing, swimming and several waterfalls. The highest waterfall is next to Honse-Lovisas hus (a small, red house) and the Beier bridge. Take the tram to Storo and walk down. For those who like exercise, walk up!



In autumn, there are lots of activities along the river.

For more information, please click on the link: [Gems along the Akerselva river \(visitoslo.com\)](http://visitoslo.com)



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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

Date: October 3, 2022